Nuclear proliferation and the renaissance of the SDI

by Michael Liebig

On May 11, India carried out three underground nuclear tests in Pokhran, in the Rajasthan desert (the site of its 1974 nuclear tests), and two days later, two further tests followed. On May 28, Pakistan carried out five underground nuclear explosions in Baluchistan, near the Iranian and Afghanistan borders. These atomic explosions on the Indian subcontinent signify the beginning of the end of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, which began on July 1, 1968, with the signing of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) on the part of the "nuclear powers," the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. France and China were to be welcomed into the nuclear circle later. In essence, the NPT means that the development and possession of nuclear weapons remains limited to a Club of Five, today the U.S.A., Russia, China, Great Britain, and France—the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

The cardinal errors of the NPT

The NPT was born with an irreparable congenital defect: the arbitrary, discriminatory division between "nuclear powers" and have-nots. The NPT means that international law is arbitrarily imposed by a minority of states at the expense of the rest—which is a contradiction in terms, according to international law. This "nuclear apartheid" contradicts a just and therefore stable world order, in an obvious and flagrant manner. Every sovereign nation-state must have the right to develop all technologies—civilian, military, or "dual use"—which it considers necessary for its economic and social development as well as its national security.

Depite all the anti-nuclear hysteria, nuclear energy remains a decisive and inalienable component of any economic development. The mastery of civilian use of nuclear energy necessarily contains the technological potential to develop nuclear weapons as well, should the occasion arise. Even an ingenious NPT regime, equipped with heavy sanctions, does not alter this fact.

Sober analysts of international and military policy know that in the long run, the proliferation of nuclear weapons is not to be prevented. The American nuclear physicist and military expert Edward Teller, who contributed decisively to the development of the first American hydrogen bomb, said, following the recent Indian tests: "It now seems that the governments that are responsible for roughly half the population of the world already have nuclear explosives. Therefore the proliferation is an accomplished fact. We should look for ways how to live with that. We should start thinking, not in terms of what we wish, but in terms of what is reality."

LaRouche and the SDI

Together with Lyndon LaRouche, Teller belonged to those few who convinced President Ronald Reagan to announce his Presidential directive on March 23, 1983, for the creation of a defensive system against offensive nuclear warheads, which was to become known as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Reagan declared at the time, that the most modern defensive technologies should render nuclear weapons and the missiles carrying them, "impotent and obsolete." As early as 1979, LaRouche had led a campaign in the United States and internationally, whose aim was to overcome the regime of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) or "balance of terror," which had reigned since 1949.

LaRouche declared that it could not be accepted that nuclear offensive weapons, particularly missiles carrying nuclear warheads, should be made into the "ultimate" weapon. Nuclear weapons could not be "forbidden," and eliminated from the world; however, nuclear weapons could be rendered harmless through the most modern defensive systems, based on "new physical principles." LaRouche had called for a crash program for the development of beam weapons, since 1979—systems with high-energy lasers, plasma or particle beams—for defense against nuclear missiles. The firepower (energy density) and mobility (speed of light) of such defensive systems with "directed energy," surpasses kinetic offensive systems like missiles, by orders of magnitude. The effectiveness of beam weapons as a defense from nuclear weapons—demonized in the 1980s by the Soviet leadership as "Star Wars"—and their contribution to global strategic stability, were acknowledged by Russian President Boris Yeltsin in spring 1993, during his summit meeting with President Bill Clinton in Vancouver.

LaRouche's elaborated strategic formulation of defense from nuclear weapons, begun in 1979, contains the key to

global security and stability today—beyond the NPT regime. It can be said with certainty, that no nuclear war in Asia is threatened as a result of the recent nuclear tests on the Indian subcontinent. Neither India nor Pakistan plans any aggression or threatens world peace.

However, independent of the events on the subcontinent, there are undeniable, very serious security problems, which flow from nuclear weapons proliferation. But, regarding this very real "remaining risk," of nuclear proliferation, there is a positive way out, through SDI defensive systems. Since the end of the Cold War, the world has not become in any way more stable. That is, there is at present no threat of nuclear world war, with massive attacks of intercontinental nuclear missiles; but, without a doubt, there must be an effective protection against nuclear threats, in a world shaken by crises and conflicts. Even though the sovereign right of nation-states to unlimited development of all scientific-technical resources, including civilian and military nuclear technology, cannot be disputed, it is just as indisputable that there are or could be national leaders in the future, who could be ready to deploy nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in deliberate criminal aggression against other states.

More than a military strategy

But, global security and stability cannot be achieved through technological exclusion, non-development, and the enforced "freezing" of economic and political changes. Such an approach to the shaping of a world order is in its very essence reactionary. The forced congealing of the world order, under conditions of world financial and economic crisis, would only further elevate economic, as well as political-military, tensions. Fundamental military-strategic changes, like the decision of states to develop nuclear weapons, must always be seen in the larger strategic context, which includes the economic, political, and cultural dimensions.

This is clearly shown in the recent decision of the Indian government to carry out nuclear tests. India is a democratic country, which will soon have the largest population in the world, and, like China, it has possessed a continuous civilization for over 3,000 years. India is still a poor country, but has the largest middle class in the world—250 million people—and a well-educated, skilled labor force. Despite the continuing poverty and underdevelopment in rural areas, India has made great economic progress in the 50 years since independence. Why then should India not develop nuclear weapons, when England and France, which are small countries in comparison, have been given the right?

The Indian government's decision for the tests must be considered in the strategic context of the so-called "Asian crisis," through which the most dynamic region of the world economy has been driven into economic regression and political destabilization. For years, the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization, and Western governments have pressured India, not only to joint the NPT, but to liberalize and deregulate its economy, trade, and especially financial markets and currency structures. Had India capitulated under the pressure, rendering its currency convertible, and deregulating its economy and financial markets, then the country would have found itself in a condition comparable to that of Indonesia, today on the brink of financial, economic, and political collapse.

Therefore, no one should be amazed, if India makes use of its sovereign right to decide, by itself, what is right for the nation. The nuclear tests were no "impulsive act" of "nationalistic adventurousness," but rather appear to be the result of a soberly considered and carefully calculated decision.

When LaRouche presented his "strategic package" of beam weapons defense systems, he made clear that the SDI was not to be seen only as a question of military strategy in the narrow sense. In 1984, LaRouche wrote:[1] "If we want to use the term strategy correctly, then we must understand it as comprehending the whole area of political, economic, and cultural activity. The science of war is simply an essential component of the comprehensive science of statecraft. . . . Out of two separate but interlinked reasons, the key to the world strategic situation lies in the development of the so-called Third World. . . . Given the fact that nuclear mass murder [can be prevented] through the deployment of technologies which are able to eliminate the large part of the deployable nuclear potential . . . the demand for 'technology transfer' in the developing sector [assumes] a considerable meaning. . . . The material use of such a policy is significant, but this is in no way self-serving. The moral and psychological use of technological progress is by far more significant than the mere material gain. In a society with backward, stationary technology, each individual is subjected to more or less the same grind as his parents and grandparents. Human behavior seems to be frozen in fixed forms. . . . Then it happens, that one estimates one's fellow man, according to these characteristics. In a climate of technological development, on the other hand, daily practice shows that the value of the individual in society is measured by his creative capacities. . . . Paradoxical though it may sound, the economically wasteful expenditures on national defense will put into motion what can lead to the greatest development leap in the material situation of humanity. . . . This is already the case, in the mastery of energy-dense organized plasmas and by the production of efficient, coherent energy beams."

Where non-proliferation leads

It must not be overlooked, that there is a direct connection between the 1968 NPT and the 1972 Soviet-American Anti-

1. Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. Epilogue to *Strahlenwaffen—Militärstrategie im Umbruch,* Munich, 1985. The quotation is retranslated from the book's German text.

Ballistic Missile Treaty. The ABM treaty concerns, however, only defense against intercontinental ballistic missiles by anti-missiles. Defensive systems on the basis of "new physical principles"—beam weapons—are not included in the ABM treaty. The strategic consequences of the ABM treaty were devastating, in that the consolidation of the regime of nuclear Mutual Assured Destruction was demanded. If, for any reason, the mutual nuclear deterrent were to fail, then a catastrophic nuclear world war would have been the necessary consequence. This ostensibly hopeless imprisonment in the "MAD trap" led the postwar generation in both America and in Europe, to widespread cultural pessimism, cynicism, and thence to the rock-drug-sex counterculutre.

By the same token, the NPT meant a tension-laden freezing of the strategic status quo between the nuclear powers, on the one hand, and the have-nots in North and South, on the other. Parallel to this, international policy, particularly economic and finance policy, which up to the end of the 1960s had aimed at economic development of the whole world, including emphatically the Third World, was constrained and reversed.

Whereas since 1968, more than 160 nations, including Germany and Japan, have signed the NPT, a number of important countries, including India, have refused to do so. The most important "unofficial" nuclear power is Israel, which has so far not carried out any "physical" nuclear tests, at least not on its own territory, but which has a far-reaching nuclear arsenal, including medium-range missiles. South Africa seems to have stopped its advanced nuclear weapons program. Iraq tried to develop nuclear weapons, but must not have come very far before its attempts were destroyed by massive assaults by Israel (1981) and the United States (1990-91), followed by the UN control system still in force. Those successor states to the Soviet Union in 1991 which had nuclear weapons, have given them up in the interim. One must assume that the pressure on Iran regarding its nuclear technology capabilities will grow drastically, and threats or military attacks cannot be excluded. British and Israeli interests could again attempt to push the United States into a confrontation with Iran, or press ahead themselves.

Not only does the NPT, with its limitation of national sovereignty and of scientific-technological development potential, undermine the economic, social, and political stability in the world; in the long run, as Edward Teller rightly stresses, the NPT regime does not "function."

Nonetheless, it seems that the five nuclear powers are not willing to introduce a change of course in their bankrupt nonproliferation policy. On June 4, the five foreign ministers of the nuclear powers met, in order to map out how the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) could be saved, in the wake of the Indian and Pakistani tests. Apparently, they want to exert massive political and economic pressure, on India especially, to freeze its program for the development of fully deployable nuclear weapons and delivery systems. It is doubtful that this will work, since India will probably not give in, and there are significantly different positions among the five, which are going to grow in the future.

A new beginning

The initiative for a new beginning in proliferation policy, must certainly come from the only remaining superpower, the United States. Only the U.S.A. has the weight to make a new beginning in shaping the strategic world order, as well as the new world financial system. And only the United States is economically and technologically in a position to rapidly produce effective SDI systems, in order to counter the undeniable "remaining risk" inherent in the spread of nuclear weapons. In this connection, it must not be overlooked that Russia still possesses enormous technological capacities in the area of beam weapons missile defense. Through an improvement of Russia's overall economic situation, a very important contribution could be made quickly, toward production of defensive systems, to counter the remaining risk, and thus to reach a global strategic stabilization.

Russian recognition of this potential was reflected in an article in the daily *Izvestia* on June 4, which, according to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newsline: "argued that Russia should propose a global anti-ballistic missile system under the aegis of the UN, but at the same time ensure that its own theater ABM system is reliable 'in the face of potential regional crises in the Near East, the Korean peninsula, and southern Asia.' "

An example: the Airborne Laser

Exactly one month prior to the first Indian nuclear test series, on April 13, the American magazine *Aviation Week* carried a noteworthy article by the former Republican Congressman from New Jersey, Jim Courter. In the article, entitled "Missile Defense: There's Still Hope," he wrote: "Last month marked the 15th anniversary of President Ronald Reagan's call for a new approach to security against nuclear attack—an approach based on anti-missile defense rather than the threat of mutual annihilation." Since then, $50 billion has been invested to realize Reagan's vision, but with rather paltry results. The reasons for this, he argued, lie not in the technical realm, where enormous progress has been made. Rather, it is a question of the lack of political will to achieve a deployable missile defense system, and in its stead, "ideological prejudices" have been cultivated. Courter asks: "Is this really the same nation that landed men on the Moon nearly 30 years ago? The nation that developed the Titan ICBM in six years? The nation that invented the Internet? How is it possible that this nation needs more than a generation to find even a minimal defense against ballistic missiles?"

Certainly, he continues, there is no danger today of a Russian nuclear assault against the United States, although

the technical reliability and command and control system of the Russian nuclear arsenal are declining. And then, there are, in over 30 states, still about 10,000 short- and medium-range missiles which can be equipped with mass destruction warheads. The U.S. troops stationed overseas and their allies lie within the range of these missiles. Considering this situation, Courter calls for the rapid production of missile defenses with "directed energy," concretely, the Airborne Laser (ABL). In this system, which is in an advanced stage of development, a chemical laser and an Adaptive Optic aiming system, which keeps the laser beam focussed in the atmosphere, are installed on a Boeing 747. The ABL can destroy missiles in the boost phase at a height of 12 kilometers and a distance of 500 km. For about $11 billion, eight ABL systems could be built in two to three years, and stationed in endangered regions. The special significance of the ABL systems is that their effectiveness is orders of magnitude greater than that of anti-missile systems, like the Patriot. In the Gulf War, the Patriot achieved a low ratio of hits against the primitive Iraqi Scud missiles.

A leap in security and technology

The ABL is a good example to demonstrate that there exist quick and effective possibilities to counter dangerous situations which can evolve from the spread of weapons of mass destruction. As said above, the United States must take the first step toward establishment of defensive systems against nuclear risks, although Russia also possesses a broad array of blueprints and prototypes for beam weapons missile defense. But, there are also other states that have the financial and technological potential to protect themselves, through the development of beam weapons, from the dangers to national security posed by mass destruction and aggressive weapons. All developed industrial nations and also the developing nations could protect themselves with air-, land-, and sea-based beam weapons.

SDI defense systems also offer two essential economic advantages: Not only are beam weapons technically superior on physical grounds, but they are also cheaper than the "slow" anti-missiles. Beam weapons are also cheaper to mass produce than offensive weapons. They represent a key technology for industry as a whole: Already today, machine tools which work with high-energy beams, are progressing very rapidly.

The tremendous economic significance of high-energy-based technologies was already, in the early 1980s, a central feature of LaRouche's SDI strategy. It was LaRouche's proposal at the time, that SDI systems in what was then the East bloc and the West should be introduced in parallel, in a cooperative manner, not only to ensure security from a nuclear war, but to give the world's economy a technological boost.

Despite all the blather about the post-industrial "information society," in reality, more than ever, the growth of the world economy and a higher living standard for the world's population, depend on the expansion of industrial production, infrastructure, and energy production. The coming "third industrial revolution" will encompass the full utilization of the electromagnetic spectrum—for example, laser machine tools, nuclear energy, magnetic levitation railways (as in the Eurasian Land-Bridge concept), and space travel. How often in history, have new technologies produced great changes initially in the military branch, and then dramatically changed and advanced the economy as a whole!

In this sense, Edward Teller was absolutely right, when, in the early 1980s, he said that the internationally agreed introduction of beam weapons for missile defense, would not only provide strategic stability, but would also be a decisive step toward the positive, constructive commencement of the great "common aims of mankind."

Documentation

LaRouche on the SDI

The following is excerpted from a speech by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. to an EIR *conference on Feb. 17, 1982, in Washington, D.C.*

. . .Turning to the question of the strategic arms debate itself. We have an insane policy, totally insane. Some of this is discussed as a matter of ridicule by people I don't like in the press. But the fact is, we develop a B-1 bomber and MX missile, which is essentially a conception which belongs to the early 1960s drafting board. But since we got around to developing it late, we said it was the newest thing—even though in terms of strategic geometry, it is already out of date and obsolete. We have not yet built the B-1, and yet it is already obsolete. Then, some people say, well, it's a political problem in terms of cost-benefit analysis to get the Congress to go along with the B-1, so let's go ahead with the MX. But the MX is supposed to go with the B-1! What are we going to do with the MX? . . .

What about second-strike capability? The word is out: submersible? Let's have submersible second-strike capability. Nonsense! At present, I'm looking into two methods for making any submersible a first-strike target! The assumption that a submersible is undetectable as a second-strike capability is utter nonsense technologically at this time. Every form of submersible is inherently detectable. It is simply a matter of doing adequate research and development into systems

which can detect and pinpoint these at all times. A submersible in the next five years will be as inherently detectable as a fixed-place rocket. So why spend money on this?

Someone points out that our troops are illiterate and drug-addicted and can't handle complicated weapons. So let's go back to electronically guided bows and arrows: the policy of Sen. Gary Hart over at the Armed Services Committee, a real stone-age Maxwell Taylor. Of course, in war, the infantry soldier with whatever technology is the basis of war-fighting. But we don't arm them, we don't train them, we don't select them. We have an "all-volunteer" army. We had a slogan for it in the 1930s: "USA"—"Useless Sons Accommodated."

A nation that cannot maintain an organized civilian army in depth is a nation unwilling to fight in its own defense. So why kid ourselves about it?

It has been calculated that a 10% exchange of thermonuclear capabilities between the two superpowers would mean a fall-out in long-lived radioactive isotopes which would swirl around the world to the effect that no warm-blooded animal life will exist two years after that exchange. So what the devil is the sense of even talking about reducing the number of missiles?! That is no solution to this problem. You want to go in the direction of a showdown, with a weapon you can't use! But you might use it, and therefore you live under the threat of nuclear suicide.

How do you get out of this? It's elementary. If I put into space orbit a number of platforms with particle relativistic beam weapons, chemical-powered x-ray or not, which can target any missile in mid-flight, and I proceed to develop that system of detection, I can kill the proverbial 99% of missiles and aircraft carrying nuclear weapons in mid-flight. You can't do it with laser weapons because they have problems, but with relativistic beam weapons which deliver a relativistic shock to a missile, you can fire as if with bullets and kill these things in mid-flight. That is the only solution to the nuclear weapons problem.

Then, why the hell don't we develop it!

Why don't we sit down and agree with Moscow to develop these blasted things? Because they are important to both the United States and the Soviet Union for the mutual defense of each nation from the sword of thermonuclear Damocles. Plus we have Israel with thermonuclear capabilities. Pakistan has been given nuclear capabilities by Israel and Britain in the form of the Islamic bomb which is scheduled to come on line this spring. Brazil is developing its own nuclear weapons capability. South Africa probably has it. China, which has gone insane, has a thermonuclear capability given to it by the British and others.

We have a problem. Not only do the superpowers have thermonuclear capabilities, but many nations wholly out of our control are increasingly coming into possession of nuclear weapons and access to missile delivery capabilities—we have a problem of third powers which could engage in nuclear war becoming the trigger for nuclear power between the superpowers.

Therefore, we must have the ability that if East Podunk decides to have a nuclear war and shoot off missiles, we'll damn well shoot them down. We must have a policy that we will not tolerate the actual deployment of thermonuclear missiles against any target on the face of the Earth by any nation. And we must agree with the Soviet Union on that question. We must agree that we will agree to destroy anybody's thermonuclear missile or airplane carrying a missile which goes up into the air. We've got to make this planet safe.

The idea that we can hold back weapons development, the idea that we ought to have as an objective holding back technological progress in arms and warfare, is sheer idiocy. It always has been idiocy. The only solution is to organize our civilian basis to expand our economic power, to funnel credit selectively into the places that will restore our economic power, and to follow a foreign policy based on credit for viable infrastructure projects for developing nations; to expand especially our corps of engineers to do such things as to build a high-speed railroad from the Atlantic Coast across the Sahel region of Africa; to build a large water-system between the Congo watershed and Lake Chad region of Sahel.

Our aim is to strengthen the stability of nations through an outpouring of American economic power and American technology in cooperation with each nation.

At the same time, we must have an orderly national defense and a policy of agreeing with Moscow, since we're both going to be around, we presume, for a long time to come, that we shall both insist on full-speed ahead arms-race development of relativistic beam weapons.

If we do this, particularly if we proceed in the totally opposite direction from the austerity policy, and the kinds of economic and monetary policy of the founding fathers of this nation are adopted, a dirigistic system of credit, promoting the development of high-technology agriculture, high-technology manufacturing and infrastructure, extending the same policy as a matter of relations to the developing nations—then we can eliminate or solve the kind of crises we face in the April-May period. If we do not, but continue in this utopian nonsense which McNamara and Henry Kissinger typify over the recent period, or we proceed with such sheer idiocy as the China-Korean-Taiwan cooperation around a presumably sunken oil deposit in the China Sea—that kind of nonsense—or proceed with the Seaga-centered Caribbean Basin project the way that idiot David Rockefeller wants to do this, and continue to tolerate Voicker—we shall not survive because we have lost the moral fitness to survive, by refusing to make the kinds of policy shifts I have indicated.