

# National News

## 'Beam weapons policy doesn't exist'

The State Department is insisting on the record that the United States has no policy to develop space weapons systems, and is considering measures to ban them.

At the April 27 State Department briefing, spokesman Alan Romberg was asked to comment on Soviet leader Yuri Andropov's attacks on President Reagan's beam-weapons decision as an effort to ensure the "militarization of space."

After countering that the Soviets have demonstrated they do not have peaceful intentions in space, Romberg announced, "Other than an effort to develop an ASAT [anti-satellite] capability to match the Soviets', we are not planning any space weapons systems." Romberg cited previous U.S. support for controls over arms in space, including the ABM treaty, and added, "Our national space policy commits us to consider further space arms control measures that would ban or otherwise limit specific weapons systems if those measures are shown to be verifiable, equitable, and in U.S. national security interests. Until these problems are resolved, we will not be able to address questions of further negotiations."

Another State Department official reported privately that "very confusing signals are coming down," and that State Department policy remains to seek arms control agreements in space and oppose the "militarization" of space.

## Keyworth backs beam weapons

Presidential Science Adviser Dr. George Keyworth told the Electronics Industries Association April 20 that "the United States'—and the world's—best hope for continued peace and security lies in our ability to employ the best technology to make revolutionary changes in our defense systems. I can think of no clearer illustration of that than President Reagan's proposal last month for a radically new strategic defense."

Keyworth then denounced the "quick negative responses" from some scientists and experts, and the "opinion that the subject of

missile defense was taboo." This view, which he characterized as that of "a handful of self-appointed spokesmen," has been reported in the press as the consensus of the scientific community.

"In 1933," Keyworth reminded the executives, "Lord Rutherford, the father of nuclear physics, said that 'anyone who expects a source of power from the atoms is talking moonshine.'"

Karman, the aeronautical pioneer, discounted the feasibility of supersonic flight and the feasibility of navigation off the gravitational field of the earth. And in 1945 Vannevar Bush offered the opinion that a workable ICBM was an impossibility.

"What's amazing is not so much their flawed vision, as the short period it took to reveal it. . . . I refuse to believe we have to be resigned forever to mutually assured destruction. . . ."

"We should consider how new knowledge and new technology might change the way we view these issues in the future. And we should be looking at what technologies to pursue more rigorously."

## Wall Street group runs opposition

The Wall Street Bipartisan Committee on the Budget—the "gang of six" former cabinet secretaries run by Robert McNamara and Brandt Commissioner Peter Peterson of Lehman Brothers Kuhn, Loeb—is still trying to cut the President's defense budget and establish a "congressional dictatorship" against him, despite the necessity of higher spending to carry out the new ABM policy.

Reagan's administration must be dismantled, a spokesman for the McNamara committee said privately April 26. Before the President can deal with the world debt crisis, "the first thing that will blow up in his face will be a political crisis around his defense budget policy. There is going to be a sharp conflict by late summer between Congress and the President, with both parties against him. This is the end of Ronald Reagan's ability to run the Congress."

"Both the Senate and the House have passed the recommendations on defense and other budget cuts made" by the McNamara Wall Street committee, the economist bragged. "The Bipartisan Committee has asked

for a \$20 billion cut from Reagan's current defense spending projections for 1985, and the Senate has already announced for a \$15 billion cut. The House wants to cut even more."

Asked about beam weapons, he said that they were completely rejected in the Bipartisan Committee's budget projections.

## Education panel decries 'educational disarmament'

The National Commission on Excellence in Education, initiated by Education Secretary Terrell Bell in 1981, issued its findings at a White House press briefing April 26.

The commission declared that "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people." The panel specifically attacked the "smorgasbord" of high school electives that have undermined the curriculum.

To remedy America's "unthinkable, unilateral educational disarmament," the panel has recommended an emphasis on "new basics," including four years of English, three years of mathematics, science, and social studies, and a half-year of computer science.

President Reagan endorsed the report and used the occasion to reiterate his support for tuition tax credits and educational vouchers. This report is the latest of a half-dozen recent studies which have documented the same critical situation.

The report called the United States "at risk" for allowing other nations to "match and surpass our educational attainments. . . . Concern, however, goes beyond matters such as industry and commerce. It also includes the intellectual, moral, and spiritual strength of our people."

## Constituents polled on defense policy

Representative Frank Wolf (R-Va.) is polling his constituents on their support for the

President's new doctrine emphasizing strategic defense.

"President Reagan has proposed a new long-term defense policy for the United States to counter the Soviet missile threat based not on a build-up in offensive weapons systems," Wolf's questionnaire reads, "but instead, through the development of defensive weapons, to intercept attacking missiles in flight. During the next two decades, the President has called for an all-out effort for the United States to use its technology to construct and base an antiballistic missile system in space.

"What is your position on this proposal?"

Constituents are then given options to favor, oppose, or indicate that they are undecided about the President's initiative.

## Planetary exploration program proposed

The Solar System Exploration Committee (SSEC), established in 1980 under the NASA Advisory Council, on April 17 released the executive summary of its study on a program for planetary exploration through the end of this century.

The core program lays out a goal of launching a planetary mission every two years. It also adds a new goal for the program, of great potential importance—the preliminary assay of near-Earth resources on the Moon and Earth-crossing asteroids.

Since the beginning of the space program, the planetary exploration part of NASA's space science efforts has seen many ups and downs. Funding for the programs peaked in the early 1960s, reaching a level in today's dollars of \$900 million. This was the period of the burst of missions to Earth's nearest neighbors.

Then the funding dropped by two-thirds and peaked again in the mid-1970s with the initiation of the Voyager missions to the outer planets and the Viking missions to Mars. By 1980, planetary exploration was down to less than \$300 million in current dollars. Robert Frosch, then administrator of NASA, asked the SSEC to outline a long-range program which would alleviate the extreme swings in funding.

The recommended program of the SSEC concentrates on fundamental solar system

exploration. Planetary scientists are now looking again at a U.S. return to the Moon, this time to stay. They have pointed out that a full resource evaluation is necessary before we can plan to colonize our neighbor.

The SSEC chose its missions to meet the four goals set for exploration.

The primary goal is the determination of the origin, evolution, and present state of the solar system. The second is the understanding of the Earth through the new science of comparative planetology. Getting an understanding of the relationship between chemical and physical evolution of the solar system, and the appearance of life is the third goal. The fourth goal is the survey of resources available in near-Earth space, which includes the Moon.

## PIK to bolster farm machine sales?

Unit sales of farm machinery in the United States have declined an average of 50 percent since 1979 with an accelerated decline during 1982. The Department of Agriculture calls low farm income, high interest rates, and rising farm debt the cause.

Unit sales of all categories of tractors have fallen since the mid-1970s, but in 1982, sales of machines with 40 or more horsepower were down 26 percent from 1982 and down 55 percent from 1979. Combine sales declined about 40 percent below last year.

Farm suppliers have tried discounting and waving finance charges, to no avail.

A group of farm-related businesses have formed AGARI-PIK Service, Inc. to try to increase sales to farmers who are participating in the the USDA's Payment in Kind (PIK) program, in which a farmer is given surplus supplies of a crop he agrees *not* to grow. AGARI-PIK will act as a clearinghouse where farmers can use their PIK certificates to establish lines of credit. This credit can be used at participating businesses.

A similar scheme is being run by International Harvester, which puts the farmer "in touch with a commodity buyer" who provides a future hedge price against his PIK certificates in the form of cash. An International Harvester spokesman claimed that it was "an innovative way to stimulate sales" but "was not at liberty" to reveal who the "commodity buyers" were.

## Briefly

● **HENRY KISSINGER's** trouble with Italian authorities broke into the Eastern Establishment press April 25, when the *Philadelphia Inquirer* printed a brief account released by the U.S. embassy in Rome. U.S. embassy spokesman Joseph Johnson acknowledged that two magistrates investigating the murder of former Prime Minister Aldo Moro sent an "informal inquiry" asking if Kissinger would be available to speak to them, but the embassy replied that "it did not seem to us that he would have the time."

● **REP. JACK KEMP (R-N.Y.)**, in a late April radio interview, said that the Federal Reserve Board is responsible for the beginnings of an "economic recovery," not the Reagan administration. Fed Chairman Paul Volcker's money loosening and lowering of interest rates have been more significant than the President's tax cuts, according to Kemp.

● **SEN. JOHN GLENN (D-Ohio)**, the one-time hero of the 1960s manned space program, cast his fate with the environmentalist wing of the Democratic Party in his April 21 announcement of his candidacy for the presidential nomination. "We must have leadership that understands the potential of modern science, both for good and for evil," Glenn stated. [Technology] can cause lost jobs, environmental destruction, nuclear disaster, and an Orwellian nightmare of government control."

● **THE WASHINGTON POST** blacked out a syndicated column by Jack Anderson which named Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and eight sitting and former congressmen as possible customers in the cocaine ring that is under investigation on Capitol Hill. Other congressmen named by Anderson are Parren Mitchell (D-Md.), Gerry Studds (D-Mass.), Charles Wilson (D-Texas), and Ronald Dellums (D-Calif.).