

Weinberger: The Soviets have never accepted MAD

by Kathleen Klenetsky

After months of reticence on the subject, the Reagan administration has kicked off a public offensive to educate the population and leadership of the United States and its allies on the threat posed by the Soviet Union's own massive strategic defense program—and tell them why the West must embark on an equally ambitious program if it wants to survive.

At the same time, key administration officials, ranging from the President himself to Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, are reiterating at every opportunity that the SDI is not a bargaining chip, and under no circumstances will it be sacrificed as the price of an arms-control agreement.

As late as Oct. 4, shortly after Mikhail Gorbachov, in Paris, and the Soviet negotiating team, in Geneva, formally unveiled the details of the latest Soviet arms-control proposal, President Reagan vowed before a Parsippany, New Jersey, fundraiser to continue research on SDI, the "defensive shield that won't hurt people, but will knock down nuclear weapons before they hurt people." Asked if he would consider abandoning SDI in exchange for deep cuts in Soviet offensive nuclear weapons, Reagan flatly declared: "I ain't going to do it."

Weinberger: Soviets reject MAD

So far, the most important statement in the Administration's campaign to expose the facts of the Soviet defense program, has come from Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. In a major address Oct. 3 to a conference on strategic defense sponsored by the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, the Pentagon chief stated, in the bluntest terms yet heard publicly from an administration official, what *EIR* has contended for years: that the Soviets not only have a huge SDI program, but, far more importantly, long ago abandoned the doctrine of mutual assured destruction—if, that is, they ever accepted it in the first place.

Telling his audience he wanted to explain why "we cannot regard SDI as a bargaining chip to be negotiated away," Weinberger declared that his prime goal was to "correct a fundamental deficiency in the debate over SDI," namely, the lack of discussion about *why* the President decided in March 1983 to push forward on developing a strategic defense for the West. Weinberger then recounted what led to Reagan's decision.

The SDI didn't come out of nowhere, as its critics imply, said Weinberger. It emerged from the administration's "broad reassessment of our foreign and defense policies, which asked the question—what must we do after a decade of neglect of our forces?"

That reassessment, said Weinberger, led to a "very troubling conclusion: The Soviet Union had rejected the notion of deterrence through agreed vulnerability. In fact, the Soviets had been modernizing and increasing their offensive arsenal and simultaneously stepping up their defensive programs—all with the clear aim of gaining a first-strike capability." Indeed, he said, defense lies at the core of Soviet strategic-military policy, "the Russians believe a defense against ICBMs . . . will be a reality in the future," and are currently expending vast resources on achieving it.

Weinberger had extraordinarily harsh words for those "policy-makers" who, "with supreme arrogance" thought they had "educated the Soviets on the realities of nuclear deterrence," as allegedly evidenced by the ABM Treaty and détente. "If the Soviets had agreed," he stressed, "they would not have engaged in this massive and costly build-up, and at the same time spent roughly as much on strategic defense systems as on their enormously expensive offensive strategic systems.

"The arms limitation agreement proved little more than a fleeting record to the existing balance of forces," he contended. "The Soviets continued to modernize and add to their

nuclear arsenal with so many weapons with such accuracy and throwweight that they threatened our retaliatory force. Since 1971, they have deployed at least four new types of ICBMs, nine improved versions of their existing ICBM and SLBM force, and we will soon see their new intercontinental bomber."

In terms of strategic defense, said Weinberger, the Soviets not only have the world's sole operational ABM system, they have constructed a large phased-array radar at Krasnoyarsk, a "clear violation" of the ABM Treaty; developed "rapidly deployable ABM engagement radars and interceptor missiles," and have "probably tested surface-to-air missiles, normally used against bombers, to intercept ballistic missiles."

Moreover, Soviet research into "advanced strategic defense technology—such as particle-beam weapons, radio-frequency weapons, kinetic-energy weapons, and high-energy lasers—has been extensive," said Weinberger, noting that "more than 10,000 of their scientists and engineers are involved in this effort, and, in some cases, they have made great progress well beyond the research stage—for example, the Soviets now have ground-based lasers that could interfere with our satellites. By the late 1980s, they could have prototypes of ground-based lasers able to hit ballistic missiles."

What this augurs, said Weinberger, "is a very rapid Soviet 'breakout' from the ABM treaty." Coupled with Moscow's "clearly rejecting the concept of agreed mutual vulnerability (although many nurtured in the ways of the sixties still can't seem to admit it)," there is only one "prudent course of action: change our own doctrine and programs. We must seek and secure a defensive capability that could ultimately lead to the end of nuclear missiles. This is not only prudent, it is far more in keeping with our democratic ideals than a mutual suicide pact. . . . A research program into all forms of strategic defense is an absolute necessity for the long-range peace and security of America and our allies."

Weinberger's address precipitated an immediate panic from the leaders of the arms-control mafia. Ex-Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, one of the principal architects of the MAD regime, spoke to the Philadelphia conference the day after Weinberger. "I can't believe Weinberger said that the Soviets have dropped reliance on deterrence," sputtered McNamara. "I read the headline in today's *New York Times*, and I couldn't believe it. So I reach the speech itself, and sure enough, he did say it. It's incredible!"

Soviet breakout

Weinberger's speech was one, albeit major, element in what emerged during early October as a carefully designed campaign by the administration to make the case that, without the SDI, the West doesn't stand a chance against the Russian bear. As Weinberger said in response to a question at the Philadelphia conference, "if the Soviets develop and deploy a strategic defense before we do, the world will be a very much more dangerous place."

At that same conference where Weinberger spoke, Lt. Gen. James Abrahamson delivered a status report on both the Soviet and U.S. SDI programs, stressing that while "amazing progress" has been achieved by the United States in such areas as the free-electron laser, the Soviets are spending 50% of their military budget on defensive systems, to great advantage. Abrahamson, in terms unusually harsh for him, lashed out at the "hypocritical" Soviets, for excoriating the U.S. SDI, at the same time that they themselves are violating the ABM Treaty with their programs.

Abrahamson also pointedly warned that, without the political support of the American people, and financial support from Congress—which this year alone gouged nearly one-third out of the administration's funding request for the program—the best efforts of American scientists will be stymied.

Responding to pleas from SDI supporters on Capitol Hill, the administration also took its case to Congress. On Oct. 4, CIA officials reportedly gave a classified briefing on the Soviet SDI program to 65 members of Congress. According to published reports, Congress was told that the Soviets have devoted 1.8% of their entire Gross National Product for the last 15 years to the project. That amounts to between \$10 and \$20 billion dollars a year—compared to the pathetic \$1.77 billion the United States spent in FY1985.

Bolstering their briefing with satellite photographs, CIA officials said that the Soviets have a grand design for strategic defense which includes: maintaining its three-to-one superiority over the United States in land-based offensive nuclear weapons, so that it will possess a first-strike capability and putting in place a massive anti-missile defense system to destroy any surviving weapons that the United States would use to retaliate.

The briefers also stated that the Soviets have been throwing massive resources into three key areas for the past 15 years—anti-ballistic missile and radar systems; laser, particle-beam and kinetic-energy weapons; and land-based anti-satellite systems—and were on the verge of developing laser, kinetic-energy, radio-frequency, and particle-beam weapons systems.

On the same day, the Pentagon issued a report on "Soviet Strategic Defense Programs" outlining details of the Russian military's various efforts to develop a defensive shield. One hundred thousand copies of the report will be distributed to the public.

Adding force to the administration's educational campaign was the announcement made simultaneously by Weinberger in his Philadelphia speech and by the Pentagon in Washington, of a hugely successful SDI-related 27. Weinberger reported that the Air Force had successfully tracked a small Navy rocket in space with a laser beam for the first time. "We succeeded for the first time in demonstrating our ability to track a sounding rocket in space with a low-power visible laser after adjusting the beam for atmospheric distortion," Weinberger declared.