

# THE SDI REPORT

February 20, 1992  
No. 41

*A Review of Developments in the Strategic Defense Initiative Program*

## SDI Issues Update

**U.S.-Russian strategic defense cooperation draws near.** On March 23, 1983, Ronald

Reagan called for a "research and development program to begin to achieve our ultimate goal of eliminating the threat posed by strategic nuclear missiles." Few believed that Reagan's dream would become reality. Today, however, after the collapse of the Soviet regime, support is building in the United States and Russia for just such a cooperative project. In a televised address in Moscow on January 29, Russian President Boris Yeltsin urged a U.S.-Russian effort to "develop, then create and jointly operate a global defense system." The speech came just days before Yeltsin met with George Bush at the United Nations in New York and at Camp David, Maryland, where he reiterated his proposal. The U.S., since 1985, officially has sought increased strategic defense cooperation at the Defense and Space Talks (DST) in Geneva. As the Soviet breakup accelerated over the past two years, the Pentagon's Strategic Defense Initiative Office (SDIO) has put forth concrete proposals for using Russian science and technology to speed SDI.

Last year, SDIO proposed to buy the Soviet Union's *Topaz* space nuclear reactor, although the sale has been held up by bureaucratic opposition in

the Pentagon and the National Security Council. Over the past few months, SDIO quietly has been circulating a proposal to buy Russian technology and to put Russian scientists to work on a range of

**If the United States remains steadfast in its pursuit of the SDI program and in defending its negotiating position at DST... that the Soviets will come to agree to a treaty that will allow the deployment of effective strategic defenses.**

— The Heritage Foundation  
July 10, 1990

American SDI projects including high speed electric switches known as "tacitrons," electric rocket thrusters, space nuclear power, and liquid fuel rocket engines. Such cooperation could cut U.S. development costs in some cases by 80 percent and halve development time for new technologies. With support building on both sides, U.S.-Russian cooperation on strategic

defense now seems just a matter of time.

**Bush urges Congress to support SDI.**

George Bush in his State of the Union Address on January 28 affirmed his support for SDI and the next day requested \$5.4 billion in SDI funding for fiscal 1993, which is \$1.3 billion over the amount

**I think the time has come to consider creating a global system for protection of the world community. It could be based on a reorientation of the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative to make use of high technologies developed in Russia's defense complex.**

— Boris Yeltsin  
January 31, 1992

appropriated by Congress for fiscal 1992. Bush's statement of support for SDI was accompanied by a call for \$50 billion in additional deep cuts in the defense budget. This includes sharp cutbacks in strategic nuclear offensive weapons, including the B-2 bomber, the "Midgetman" small intercontinental missile, the Advanced Cruise Missile (ACM), and the *Trident II* submarine-launched

missile. Bush's statements demonstrate a marked shift in U.S. priorities from strategic offense to strategic defense in light of the Soviet demise and

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the heightened threat of missile proliferation around the world. Bush reminded Congress, "we must have this [SDI] protection because too many people in too many countries have access to nuclear arms." In light of renewed opposition to SDI from such key legislators as Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, the Maine Democrat, budgetary success for SDI in Congress this year will require sustained and consistent political support from the White House.

**Gates warns Congress about perils of missile proliferation.** Director of Central Intelligence Robert Gates on January 22 gave the Senate Armed Services Committee a sobering assessment of global trends in missile development and deployment. According to Gates, "several countries have missiles that could carry nuclear warheads and threaten U.S. interests, forces, or allies." He confirmed that China and North Korea continue to export missiles and missile technologies, and that Syria is seeking extended-range missiles from North Korea in addition to the advanced *Scud*-type missiles already supplied. Finally, Gates warned that turmoil in Russia and the other states of the former Soviet Union may result in a flow of ex-Soviet military scientists and engineers to such countries as Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Syria.

## SDIO Developments

**Pentagon gives SDIO "green light" on key programs.** Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition Donald Yockey on January 28 issued a directive giving SDIO authority to proceed with development of the Theater High Altitude Area Defense System (THAADS) and the Theater Missile Defense Ground-Based Radar (TMD-GBR). THAADS will be a missile capable of intercepting and destroying shorter-range ballistic missiles in the upper reaches of the atmosphere; TMD-GBR will track the incoming missiles and direct THAADS interceptors against their targets. Yockey's decision came at the advice of the Pentagon's oversight Defense Acquisition Board, which discussed the two programs at its January 21 meeting. Approval is a victory for SDIO Director Henry Cooper, who in a December 9 memo to Yockey accused him of delaying THAADS.

## Congress

**Mitchell slams SDI, seeks to reverse congressional consensus.** George Mitchell took dead aim at SDI on January 16 at the National Press Club in Washington. In a speech on budget priorities, the Senate Majority Leader declared that he would seek at least \$15 billion in funding cuts for SDI over the next five years—about a 50 percent cut — while limiting the program to research. Mitchell's position stands in contrast to the Missile Defense Act of 1991, which calls for deployment of a ground-based limited missile defense of the U.S. by 1996. Mitchell's statements are a rare slap at fellow Democrats, particularly Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn of Georgia, who last year hammered out the consensus Senate position on SDI with the committee's ranking Republican, Senator John Warner of Virginia.

## Arms Control

**Bush moves toward voiding ABM Treaty.** According to a news report confirmed by The Heritage Foundation, the Bush Administration has excluded the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty from a list of U.S.-Soviet arms control treaties that the U.S. would like to continue in force with Russia or other former Soviet republics. The list was presented to leaders in Alma Ata, Kiev, Minsk, and Moscow by a delegation led by Under Secretary of State Reginald Bartholomew in January. Congressional sources inform *SDI Report* that there is an ongoing battle within the Bush Administration over whether or not to junk the treaty. The ABM Treaty, which bans all but the most limited strategic defense deployments, would remain the single biggest obstacle to an effective missile defense of the U.S., and of Russia, if the two sides were to decide to keep the treaty in force.

## SDI at Heritage

**Released,** on February 19, "U.S.-Russian Cooperation Can Reduce Nuclear Risks of Soviet Breakup," a *Backgrounder* by Heritage Foundation Deputy Director of Defense Policy Studies Jay Kosminsky. Among the recommendations: a cooperative U.S.-Russian SDI research and development program.

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Accession Number: 3662

Publication Date: Feb 20, 1992

Title: SDI Report, A Review of Developments in the Strategic Defense Initiative Program

Personal Author: Kosminsky, J.P.

Corporate Author Or Publisher: The Heritage Foundation, 214 Mass. Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002-4999 Report Number: 41

Comments on Document: SDI Issues Update

Descriptors, Keywords: US Russian Strategic Defense Cooperation DST SDIO Bush Yeltsin Missile Proliferation Pentagon ABM Treaty Arms Control

Pages: 00002

Cataloged Date: Aug 04, 1992

Document Type: HC

Number of Copies In Library: 000001

Record ID: 24420