

Beam-weapon effort under fiscal attack

by Robert Gallagher

In its Jan. 27 issue, the prestigious *Defense Daily* reported that 1980 Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche had, at a recent press conference, "claimed that the pro-defense Heritage Foundation is secretly trying to kill all budget items relevant to development of space-based defensive beam systems." LaRouche had charged the Washington, D.C.-based foundation with acting on behalf of British policy circles, who have an "understanding" with Soviet head of state Yuri Andropov, to sabotage the Reagan administration's commitment to advanced military R&D.

Now, with its Jan. 31 release of the proposed FY1984 Defense Department budget, the Pentagon has confirmed LaRouche's charge.

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's budget statement is based on an explicit endorsement of the doctrine of "flexible response," a policy that entails a conventional arms buildup and deployment of tactical nuclear weapons for "limited" nuclear conflict. These are needed, according to Weinberger, to enable the United States "to respond flexibly to Soviet aggression at all points along the spectrum of violence."

The Heritage Foundation called for just this policy in its *Agenda '83* defense policy statement in mid-January. Last year, Kenneth Adelman, director-designate of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), endorsed the Carter administration's flexible response memorandum, known as PD-59, in the Heritage Foundation journal, *Policy Review*.

Weinberger's budget statement includes a special appendix with excerpts from statements of past defense secretaries, including PD-59 authors Harold Brown, Robert Strange McNamara, and James R. Schlesinger, to bolster the administration's adoption of the policy. Ironically, McNamara cynically denounced the same "limited nuclear war" policy in a public endorsement of the nuclear freeze just two days later.

The FY1984 budget includes a 12 percent cut in funding for the Army's development of missile-based antiballistic missile systems to \$709 million. The budget confirms that for FY1983, this program received a 40 percent cut to \$519 million from funds requested last year. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency programs for space-based beam weapons received increases that barely cover inflation—from \$140 million in FY1982, to \$160 million in FY1983.

This net cut in ABM development is consistent with the Heritage Foundation's insistence on cutting advanced technology programs to fund a conventional buildup.

Washington sources report that there has been a "falling out" among allies in the defense community over the *Agenda '83* policy. Conservatives are now attacking the Heritage Foundation's "fiscal conservative" dogma and emphasizing that defense technology can pay for itself through its impact on the civilian economy.

Science driver

At a Jan. 26 press conference, retired Air Force Gen. Daniel Graham responded to a question from *EIR* correspondent Ronald Kokinda stating, "The question tends to show how technical questions impact not only security and military problems but help solve our economic problems as well. Military solutions can pay for themselves," he emphasized, "and we should look at military solutions that drive in that direction."

Graham was speaking at the founding conference of the U.S. Global Strategy Council. *EIR* had asked: "Given the tremendous strategic implications of beam weapon ABM systems in shifting us out of the Assured Destruction doctrine and into Assured Defense, and the impact of putting a science driver back into the economy, what will be your advocacy role for such systems?"

After Graham spoke, former Florida Democratic Sen. Richard Stone added that he wanted to remind the audience of "the Soviet advantage President Kennedy faced when he came into office. President Kennedy announced two national goals to cope with this," Stone said. "To have a better space science program than the Soviets and to land on the Moon. This is an excellent example of how the establishment of national goals can lead to greater military preparedness, greater scientific programs, and a greater economic advantage. That program led to tremendous economic spinoffs which are still benefiting us today," he concluded.

Dr. Steven Bardwell, *EIR* military editor, demolished the contrary, anti-technology arguments of the nuclear freeze movement in recent debates with freeze leaders Dr. Bernard Feld of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Bill Ramsey of the St. Louis-based Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign. When at the St. Louis debate Bardwell exposed the freeze as a cover for a conventional arms buildup, citing its endorsement by Vietnam War architect Robert McNamara, Ramsey insisted, "McNamara has changed his mind. You can't doubt his sincerity."

MIT physicist Feld is a veteran opponent of ABM systems, who testified against the Nixon administration's Safe-guard ABM program before Congress in 1969. After Bardwell had knocked down Feld's arguments against the feasibility of beam weapons, Feld admitted what was at issue in the debate: "Look," he said, "there is one fundamental difference I have with you. I don't believe in technological optimism."