

Japan opens debate on beam defense

by Linda de Hoyos

In the first week of June, the serious interest among Japan's policy-makers in beam-weapons defense systems came to the fore. Heralding the debate was the release in that week of the Japanese edition of *Beam Defense: An Alternative to Nuclear Destruction*, written by the Fusion Energy Foundation in the United States under the direction of Lyndon LaRouche. Uwe Parpart-Henke, FEF director of research, was in Japan to announce the book's release and to hold seminars with the country's top political, military, and industrial elites on the technical feasibility and strategic necessity of beam-weapons systems.

On June 5, over 65 parliamentarians from the Liberal Democratic Party heard Parpart-Henke give a report on beam-weapons at the party's headquarters, with an audience including retired generals and the representatives of the Ministry of Science and Culture. The attendance, according to one Japanese observer, was unprecedented for such a seminar when parliament is out of session—an indication of the “serious interest here in beam weapons.” The following day, Dr. Parpart addressed 200 leaders of the defense sections of Japan's major industrial firms, at a seminar sponsored by the Keidanren industrial association.

Option for survival

The Japanese interest in beam weapons comes at a point when Japan's relations with the Soviet Union are at an all-time low, having skidded downward after the Soviets' downing Sept. 1 of the KAL airliner and the simultaneous collapse of U.S.-Soviet relations. Japanese policy-makers do not need a nuclear freeze operative like Adm. Eugene LaRoque to tell them—as he did on May 24—that Japan is a target of Soviet nuclear attack under conditions of nuclear war between the two superpowers. Even with the U.S. nuclear umbrella and the front line of Korean and U.S. defense forces in South Korea, it would be easy for Moscow to wipe out the Japanese islands in minutes.

Nor do the Japanese have any illusions about the resentful calls coming from such circles as the Heritage Foundation in the United States for Japan to upgrade its conventional defenses and act immediately on its commitment to defend its vital

sea-lanes. A conventional buildup would still leave the Japanese nearly defenseless in the face of nuclear attack from the Soviet Union.

Those Japanese who are serious about their nation's defenses are looking to an alternative strategy: beam weapons. The development of beam weapons neatly solves Japan's problems: They would come close to making Japan the “unsinkable aircraft carrier” that Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone has promised it will be, and because beam weapons are used exclusively for defense, they can be developed within the limitations of the country's postwar constitution which prohibits any Japanese offensive capability.

In February of this year, Japanese Foreign Minister Shintaro Abe gave the first public indication that Japan considered beam weapons its best option. In answering a question in parliament, Abe reported that Japan was willing to work with the United States in a joint beam development program. Such a program, he said, would violate neither the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty nor the Japanese constitution.

However, reports from Washington and Tokyo indicate that the United States has been uncooperative in implementing such a proposal, which originally the Reagan administration had been pushing, even though the Japanese advances in the development of fifth-generation computers would help solve the problems involved in beam-weapons targeting capabilities.

The high-profile publicity accompanying the publication of the *Beam Defense* book is one signal that Washington's paralysis on the beam-weapons issue has not deterred Japan. Published in Japanese by Jiji Press, the book is a concise report of how beam weapons work, how they represent the replacement of the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction with one of Mutually Assured Survival, and how beam-weapons development would create a technological breakthrough that would usher in a new industrial revolution. The book is written in a popular style, in order to bring this crucial issue before the lay public. As of now, 18 Japanese news outlets are lined up to run reviews of the book.

There are hints that the Japanese have other motivations for pushing beam weapons at this particular point. Around the cover of Jiji's edition of the book is a red sash with a call to make beam weapons and the doctrine of Mutually Assured Survival the basis for reviving talks between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Prime Minister Nakasone is working with leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement to help mediate for the renewal of the talks. In a wire dated June 6, Jiji reported that “at the London summit [OECD nation heads of state], Nakasone plans to take the initiative in opening debate on how to bring the Soviet Union back to the negotiating table on the reduction of Intermediate Nuclear Forces in Europe.” It is of course not known if Nakasone will raise the issue of beam weapons at the summit. But one thing is clear: The Nakasone government correctly perceives that beam weapons—not umbrellas, nuclear or otherwise—are the weapon for peace.