

# Moscow threatens retaliation if U.S. develops strategic defense

*As the Geneva arms talks prepare to convene, Soviet propagandists are saying in no uncertain terms that their principal concern is to stop the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative, and that they will not negotiate on the terms which President Reagan has offered: cooperation to achieve Mutual and Assured Survival based on parallel U.S. and Soviet development of strategic defense capabilities. "Washington's current lack of desire to negotiate a ban on the militarization of outer space could become a major stumbling block in resolving the issues of medium-range and strategic nuclear weapons," said a commentary circulated by the Soviet news agency Novosti on Jan. 4.*

*Soviet political commentator Valentin Falin, in an article published in the government newspaper Izvestia on Dec. 14, 1984, threatened that the U.S.S.R. could take retaliatory measures—such as installing missiles on the Moon—if President Reagan persists in his strategic defense program. Falin is the first deputy chief of the International Information Department of the Soviet Central Committee, and was formerly ambassador to West Germany. The following is an abridged text of his article.*

U.S. Defense Minister Caspar Weinberger declared recently: Space defense, which Washington has made up its mind to build, is required to make ballistic missiles "inefficient and unnecessary," and in this way help to "free the threat of nuclear war." At the same time, without taking a breath, he added: "We do not at all intend to weaken our readiness to react appropriately to any other threat to our security from nuclear as well as non-nuclear weapons."

Thus the nuclear threat in the best case is only reduced. For whom and how much? The first to be registered in the waiting room of "increased security" is, of course, the United States. According to the newest Pentagon estimates, the immediate "strategic threat" to the United States can ultimately be reduced nine-tenths. If everything works as planned.

Something in the Washington model of a "secure world" is not right. What is it? The *Wall Street Journal* wrote that "de facto, the U.S. is asking the Soviet Union to assist in the modification of the treaty on anti-missile defense systems, to permit the development of space war weapons, and then turns

to her with the request to curtail their own [Soviet] defense, given that defense in the spirit of space wars would work for sure."

The most zealous supporters of "destabilizing" the enemy with the help of the arms race certainly calculate how soon the belts would be tightened so much that the Soviet Union could neither breathe in nor breathe out. But the experienced Latin lawyers used to say: The wise man begins his analysis with the result, and what was first in the intention, will be last in the implementation. The majority of American military and civil experts, many authoritative political activists, consider the concept of "star wars" fundamentally unsound. Former Defense Minister R. McNamara predicts that "the SDI will die away on its own, but we [the U.S.] will pay a huge price for it—politically, economically, and militarily."

In the summer of [1981], C. Weinberger already openly prophesied the readiness of the administration to abrogate the ABM Treaty, if the results of the research conducted in the country were more impressive than the reasons for keeping to the treaty.

Reagan's March 1983 declaration concerning the construction of an "impenetrable shield" against nuclear missiles therefore only dotted the "i," in the sense of a definite choice of political orientation and the conclusion of the debate inside the administration itself. We go for space, the President decided.

In June 1982, before the "stars" speech of the President, the USAF Space Command was established. Then Washington formed a management board headed by General J. Abrahamson to coordinate the work on the "strategic initiative" program, with the mandate to conduct four demonstrations of the most important technologies for such systems before 1990. At the end of November of this year, in the interest of improving the utilization of space systems and planning the future, the United Space Command (USC) of the U.S. armed forces emerged under C. Weinberger personally.

## Soviet countermeasures

Even non-specialists realize that there is a multiplicity of ways to—using Washington terminology—depreciate the "space shield." The simplest way is to fill space with a mass

of waste, which will make the highly refined systems of detection and discernment similar to a tracking dog, compelled to find a track which is sprinkled with a mixture of tobacco and pepper. And if you install on the ground and on the water a permanently functioning firework of infra-red signals, recalling the exhausts of thousands and thousands of missile engines, then even the computers of the 10th generation will lose heart.

But it is also not difficult to imagine something more complex. Missile bases on the Moon, for example. It is a three-day flight to our natural satellite. If the Americans, covered behind a "space shield," decided to use their first-strike weapons—only for "containment," of course—then they would be visited from the Moon within three days. If

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they attacked the bases on the Moon first, then they would cross paths with the weapons of retribution on their way. There is also the option of semi-orbital and orbital missiles, the only defense against which is not to have such [anti-missile] systems at all. The deployment of superheavy missiles at the bottom of silos or the creation of devices to paralyze all systems of communication and control in space, air and water and, perhaps, the lines of electricity supply, might repel the inclination for a first strike.

It is unnecessary to speak of the fact that the side which is threatened by an "imperceptible" first-strike weapon, connected with a developed ABM system, might consider it feasible not to imitate the stupid foreign bungling and concentrate on enforcing the instruments of "mutual destruction" [strategic offensive weapons—ed.]. So that the 10 percent non-interceptable warheads which Washington apparently considers an acceptable risk, would increase to 30 or 50 percent, neutralizing the threats from American forward-based weapons. Finally, there is no ABM option which abolishes the fact that an exactly known quantity of nuclear bombs, simultaneously exploded over one's own territory, would have irreversible global consequences.

One might object—how is that? What with the test-ban treaties on nuclear explosions in the three spheres, on the

principles of government activity in the research and utilization of space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies?

I share the standpoint of M. Bundy, G. Kennan, R. McNamara, and G. Smith, expressed by them on the pages of the last issue of the journal *Foreign Affairs*. "The ABM treaty," they write, "is at the very center of the efforts to limit strategic arms with the help of international agreements. . . . This treaty for its own basic purpose serves as a guarantee not against defense as such, but against unrestrained competition."

Wasted opportunities in politics mean added complexities and increased dangers. Washington today is not simply blocking the road to progress. It is trying to eradicate everything that was done jointly by the governments before the current administration. Such insanity and adventurism make even the U.S. allies shudder. "The French government," Defense Minister C. Hernu declared in the middle of November 1984 in the National Assembly, "fully understands the unusually serious, unusually significant risk with which the possible deployment of defensive systems in space is fraught for the stability of the equilibrium between East and West, for Europe and for the security of the whole world."

Is this understood in Washington? They understand it in their own way. "Who controls space, controls the whole world," they say there. They proceed from the fact that relocating the arms race into space will open up the sluices for new forms of competition in all directions. The Pentagon plan is to step up programs for offensive strategic and theater weapons, nuclear and non-nuclear, land- and naval-, missile and aviation weapons. C. Weinberger declared on Dec. 6, 1984, that the military preparations of the U.S.A. and NATO as a whole will be realized independently of the results of the upcoming Soviet-American negotiations in Geneva on Jan. 7-8 of next year. In the words of another administration official, G. Shultz is going into the meeting with A.A. Gromyko not to curtail the American space plans, but to "explain them."

Comrade K.U. Chernenko, replying to the message from the Fourth Congress of the movement "International Physicians against Nuclear War," urgently underlined: "The militarization of space, if we do not succeed to stop it, will render null and void everything which was achieved so far in the field of arms limitation; it will push the arms race into other directions, and sharply increase the threat of nuclear war. . . . In the contemporary troubled world, it is of the utmost importance that all the governments that bear on their shoulders the terrible and expensive burden of nuclear arsenals, recognize their historic responsibility for the fate of mankind, and by concrete deeds promote the lessening of the nuclear war danger and the normalization of the international situation."

In our age, weapons don't render weapons harmless, but the common sense and good will of governments do. Only they, and nothing else.