

The Soviets are sending moles into SDI . . . and they're British

by Laurent Murawiec

A memorandum of understanding will be signed within a few weeks between the United States government and the government of the United Kingdom. Britain, it seems, now supports and wishes to help out with the Strategic Defense Initiative, and will be the first NATO nation to formally "join" the American space-defense effort.

Only last March, Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe had expressed views strongly opposing the SDI in a much-publicized speech at the Royal United Services Institute; without issuing a sweeping, categorical rejection of President Reagan's initiative, Howe had put so many "questions" in the way of developing space defense that the editorial writer of *The Times* of London, had dubbed his speech a "unilateral declaration of independence" from SDI.

Has the view in London so drastically changed that Howe's objections, often restated by Mrs. Thatcher and numerous other officials, have now been brushed aside? Sources in London report that the SDI memorandum of understanding, which might be signed as early as the end of this month, is merely a "technical framework agreement, with a commercial content, one that will enable British companies to jump in and get their share of the contracts parcelled out by the Department of Defense."

Intense, last-minute negotiations are presently being conducted between London and Washington to iron out the terms of the memorandum, which principals on the British side describe as "vague . . . a declaration of commercial intent by the British government." During the summer, British Defense Secretary Michael Heseltine "demanded," in an official approach, that \$2 billion in contracts be awarded British companies. A close collaborator of the secretary explains that "Heseltine is monumentally unconvinced by SDI. If it were only him, he'd have nothing at all to do with it. But for political reasons, he's got to keep a public face."

A study on the SDI was recently published by the right-wing Conservative think-tank, the Center for Policy Studies (CPS), the hard-core of the apparatus that took over the Tory Party after its 1974 electoral debacle and imposed the "hard-line" Margaret Thatcher over the dead political body of extreme liberal Edward Heath. The report, authored by the

respected veteran of British wartime scientific intelligence, Prof. R. V. Jones, formally rejects "population defense" as a valid aim of SDI, in favor of limited "point defense," the defense of missile sites—thus, a rejection of the *doctrine* of SDI, in favor of the mere *technology* of SDI deployed in the framework of the existing MAD doctrine. The task then is not to "render nuclear weapons obsolete" and create a world of mutually assured survival, but to "enhance deterrence," i.e., preserve the era of thermonuclear terror.

The fact that such a statement comes from CPS, which would vehemently deny any affinity with the "Foreign Office wets"—Thatcherite jargon for advocates of extreme appeasement—is indication how deep official opposition to the SDI really is. "We don't need all that fancy four-layered particle beam-weapon stuff in space," a British defense observer summed up London's real thinking.

Things by stealth

So, why should Mrs. Thatcher's government sign a document that lays the basis for SDI cooperation? To sabotage SDI from the inside? What else has London done to American policies for decades?

One of the principal officials in charge of the British side in the SDI negotiation explained: "The terms we're discussing are much more relevant to an overlap with the strengthening of NATO's conventional capabilities, what Carrington has called the 'conventional defense initiative,' than to the SDI. We're talking conventional technologies, advanced conventional: surveillance, guidance, acquisition, sensors, homing, assessment of battle-damage. That can all be agreed upon within an SDI framework but have nothing to do with the elimination of deterrence. The problem is political, it is Reagan himself: He's committed himself so much to population defense and complete protection that he cannot back out of it. *Therefore, we must ease the Americans gently out of this situation. We don't want to rock the boat with Reagan personally. You know us. We're doing things by stealth.*"

In order to "ease the Americans out" of what informed Whitehall opinion calls the "extravagant claims that the SDI can defend populations," a complex process, now in a phase

of acceleration, has been set into motion, involving many facets of the powerful British intelligence, influence, and media apparatus. The *Economist* will organize a jumbo conference on Nov. 21-22 in Brussels, "SDI: the European View," which will be addressed by French Science Minister H. Curien, who will discuss President Mitterrand's politically motivated Eureka counter-proposal; anti-SDI fanatic Harold Brown, who was Jimmy Carter's defense secretary; FIAT's Gianni Agnelli of the Trilateral Commission; U.S. Undersecretary of Defense Richard Perle; SDI chief Lt.-Gen. James Abrahamson; and former British Defense Ministry Chief Scientist Sir Ronald Mason, co-author of an anti-SDI book.

The British sabotage of President Reagan's purposes will involve a process of "consensus-building," which is also known as the "delphic method." In essence, American officials will be told that the President swore last December to Mrs. Thatcher that SDI is only a research program; that consultations with the Allies must take place before development proceeds, and certainly before testing and deployment; that consultations with Moscow must also take place in the framework of the ABM Treaty. Since "complete defense is impossible," some form of an agreement can be reached on a more limited objective of defending missile sites with ground-based terminal-defense beam weapons. "European opinion" would settle for such a limited format, which would avoid all that unpleasantness, wouldn't it?

The *Financial Times*, whose strategic policy-outlook closely reflects those of the British foreign policy apparatus (Foreign Office, Royal Institute for Strategic Studies, International Institute for Strategic Studies), minced no words in its Oct. 2 editorial: "If President Reagan has called the pre-summit summit in the hope of securing Western approval for the proposition that he should, if necessary, pass up the chance of a major arms control deal with the Soviet Union in order to keep his hands free for the unrestricted pursuit of Star Wars, he must quickly be disabused. Western public opinion will simply not tolerate that proposition." Mrs. Thatcher, we are informed, "if there were to be a bald choice between SDI and arms control . . . could not afford to side with President Reagan against arms control . . . if the Soviet Union is seriously proposing the first significant arms reduction agreement in the history of nuclear weaponry, Western public opinion will not be in the least impressed by U.S. complaints that the opening Soviet offer was 'one-sided' . . . The Soviet proposals . . . offer the chance of negotiating a historic arms control deal which cannot be passed up. . . . Some curbs on the SDI may be unavoidable as part of that deal. . . . If President Reagan remains as rigid as ever in his adherence to the sacrosanctity of the Star Wars enterprise, his pre-summit summit may prove very risky indeed for the solidity of the Western alliance."

A series of meetings and international conferences accompany and orchestrate the sabotage effort. IISS will organize a week-long "SDI Task-Force" meeting beginning

Oct. 14 outside London. The Institute has been a principal international purveyor of falsehoods and denigration of SDI since March 1983. "It's time to get some arms control sense going in Washington," stated a Foreign Office official. "Weinberger is starting to feel tired, he's under immense pressure, he might be thinking that it's time to go. He's lost a lot of constituencies, and so has Richard Perle. Weinberger and the other inhibitors of technology transfer [to Moscow] in Washington are going to be slammed and seen off," asserts a Defense Ministry spokesman.

Coordination with Gorbachov

An editorial in the *Economist* at the end of September commented on the "defection" of the KGB's London station chief to the British: "The most intriguing thing about Mr. Gordievsky was the role he had been playing in smoothing relations between Britain and Russia. Russia still wants Mrs. Thatcher and other Europeans to help it influence American policy." Intriguing, indeed.

Gordievskii, the *Economist* informs us, before his defection, "rose in the esteem of both his Russian bosses and his British friends. . . . A cultivated man of the Andropov-Gorbachev type . . . under his pen, KGB briefings to Moscow became more highly regarded than anything the Ambassador or his staff was sending back." Further, "the success of Mr. Gorbachev's visit to London last december rested heavily on Gordievsky briefings—play it cool, do not attempt to trade on the peace movement, there are better ways of influencing the Thatcher government, Mrs. Thatcher herself can be talked to and will convey reasonable messages to Reagan."

The *Economist*, adds: "The same sense of managing the relationship also flowed the other way. Gordievky briefings underpinned Mrs. Thatcher's advice from the Foreign Office. . . . Her visit to Mr. Reagan at Camp David to discuss his Strategic Defense Initiative found her explaining Russian intentions and extracting undertakings not to develop SDI beyond the research stage without consulting Western Europe. Mrs. Thatcher may or may not have heard the name Gordievsky; but she was using his stuff."

This gives some idea of the MI-6/KGB collaboration against the United States and the Western alliance that underlies the perfect alignment of Soviet and British postures on SDI.

There are some doubts concerning the bona fides of Mr. Gordievskii, who, as the story goes, escaped detection from his KGB masters for up to 19 years—an enviable record for a double-agent, and astonishing in its implication that his MI-6 control was more leak-proof than it is noted for. Rumors in London have it that the content of his "revelations" is extraordinarily empty, "routine," and taught "nothing new" to the debriefers. But then, perhaps Mr. Gordievskii is simply continuing, in a slightly different professional position, his role of "smoothing the relationship between Britain and Russia," a relationship dedicated to sabotage of SDI.