

National News

General exposes Soviet laser breakthroughs

Air Force Gen. John Piotrowski, chief of the U.S. Space Command, warned in Washington on Oct. 23 that the United States must take measures immediately to deter "Soviet aggression in space." Piotrowski said that the Soviets have developed lasers powerful enough to destroy U.S. satellites in low orbit, and to attack satellites at altitudes of 22,000 miles.

The United States needs to be able to launch replacement satellites, to counter Soviet actions in event of war, he said, adding that the Pentagon must convince Congress of the need to carry out anti-satellite testing and related actions, to deter "Soviet aggression in space."

Piotrowski told reporters that Soviet ground-based lasers could knock out reconnaissance satellites at an altitude of 400 miles and damage those at 750 miles. Within five years, he said, Soviet lasers will be able to knock out U.S. military communications in geosynchronous orbit, and could threaten American satellites that are part of the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Twenty million Americans are hungry

A study released under the auspices of the Harvard School of Public Health, by the Physicians' Task Force on Hunger in America, documents that 20 million Americans do not get enough to eat. Worst affected are infants, the elderly, and former blue-collar workers who have dropped out of manufacturing into the service sector.

According to the study, the number of Americans living under the poverty level has increased by 36% since 1979. Of all 13 million new jobs "created" since 1981, 8.2 million bring in earnings of less than \$7,000 per year, so that even families with a relatively secure income are facing problems.

As the study reports, consumer prices

have gone up by 32% since January 1981, which means that many families cannot afford more than one meal per day.

The data for the study was drawn from field investigations in four regions: Texas and Louisiana, where oil and natural gas industries are in decline; Minnesota and Iowa, where farms are endangered; Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia, where steel and mining jobs are disappearing; and California's "Silicon Valley."

Peacelinks boosts ties to Mother Russia

Elizabeth Leach, wife of Iowa congressman Jim Leach, held a press conference on Oct. 27, announcing the results of a tour of the Soviet Union by the Peacelinks organization. The tour was touted as the first such exchange between U.S. and Soviet women's organizations.

Leach said that Peacelinks hopes that the agreement reached with the Russians will lead to increased visits to the United States by "grass roots" Soviet women and their families, and to publication exchanges in American and Soviet women's magazines.

Another member of the delegation was Elinor Bedell, wife of a former Iowa Democratic congressman.

AIDS set to explode in New York City

The AIDS epidemic will explode in New York City within the next four years, overwhelming city hospitals with more than 109,000 patients, according to a secret city report published in the *New York Post* on Oct. 28.

The report estimates that 414,794 city residents are infected with AIDS, but have yet to show symptoms. "We are going to have a major rupture of the health care system—lack of beds, not enough nurses, doctors, beds, x-rays—none of them will be available if these projections are accurate,"

said Kenneth Raske, president of the Greater New York Hospital Association. "Patients may not ever get in or may not receive adequate treatment. . . . The occupancy rates in New York City hospitals now are at or near capacity and the emergency rooms are backed up."

The report was prepared under the auspices of New York City Health Commissioner Stephen Joseph, who has recently said that he would favor notification of spouses and sexual partners of those testing positive for the AIDS virus.

U.S. denounces Iran's role in terrorism

The State Department on Oct. 27 issued a report on Iran's sponsorship of international terrorism, stating that "Iran is currently one of the world's most active states supporting international terrorism and subversion against other countries," and has been since "the revolutionaries who came to power in Iran with the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini" seized the U.S. embassy in Teheran in 1979.

"The Government of Iran regards terrorism as an integral tool of its foreign policy," the report charges, and "has shown exceptional readiness to use terrorism and subversion of other governments." The report lists numerous terrorist incidents in which Iran and its terrorist arms, such as Hezbollah and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard, have been involved.

It was the U.S. State Department's own policy of fostering Islamic fundamentalism which toppled the Shah of Iran and brought Khomeini to power—a fact which, naturally, the report does not admit, but which *EIR* has documented. In our issue of Nov. 28, 1986, for example, we published documents showing that Carter administration officials had met in 1978 with Dr. Ibrahim Yazdi, one of Khomeini's closest associates, to brief him on U.S. efforts to overthrow the Shah. Such channels were maintained during the Reagan administration, by the covert intelligence operation which is now under scrutiny in the "Irangate" affair.

Pentagon may have to fire 150,000

The Defense Department will lay off between 100,000 and 150,000 civilian employees—more than 10% of its civilian workforce—if the provisions of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget-cutting amendment are put into effect on Nov. 20, the *New York Times* reported Oct. 25.

Under the “automatic sequestering” provisions of the law, \$23 billion will be cut, divided approximately evenly between defense and other programs, if the administration and Congress do not come up with any alternative formula before the cutoff date.

According to the Pentagon, about \$2 billion would also be cut from contracts with local companies that paint barracks, maintain and clean buildings, and operate support services on military bases throughout the country. Repairs on ships, tanks, aircraft, and equipment done by civilian contractors would also be delayed or canceled.

The states with the largest number of DoD civilian employees are: California, with 135,000; Virginia, with 106,000; and Texas, with 63,600.

Jesse Jackson backs ‘Marshall Plan’ concept

Democratic presidential candidate Jesse Jackson took a page from the campaign program of Lyndon LaRouche, in a speech in Atlantic, Iowa Oct. 27, which denounced the International Monetary Fund and called for a “Marshall Plan” for Third World development.

According to a report in the *Des Moines Register*, Jackson called his plan a Pan American Energy Security Alliance, and proposed that the United States, Japan, and West Germany take the lead in launching a “Third World economic development Marshall Plan similar to the postwar drive to restore the economies of Western Europe and Japan.” Saying that the plan would per-

mit the Hemisphere to become energy self-sufficient, Jackson said that Third World countries could then afford to expand their oil production, which would further reduce their debt and make them hungrier buyers of U.S. products.

“If they’re paying to buy grain and and tractors and oil rigs and drills and technicians, rather than paying all of their money back to the IMF and the banks,” he said, “it reduces our deficit because it gives us a market.”

Teamsters will rejoin AFL-CIO

The AFL-CIO executive board voted unanimously on Oct. 24, to allow the International Brotherhood of Teamsters to reaffiliate, after a 30-year separation. The Teamsters are currently the target of a Justice Department probe aimed at putting the nation’s largest independent union under government receivership, on the grounds that it is “mafia-controlled.”

The AFL-CIO denies that the Teamsters’ motivation is the Justice Department’s vendetta against it, and maintains that the main motivation was to make labor organizing more effective—they would no longer be trying to organize the same workers.

The Teamsters’ political action committee is raising money hand over fist, while the AFL-CIO is having difficulty raising money from its membership. The IBT will thus bring a huge dowry to its marriage with the labor federation.

The *New York Times* quoted a senior administration law-enforcement official said to be closely involved with the government’s suit: “It’s an absolutely brilliant move by the Teamsters’ lawyers. . . . It will render it much more difficult and politically unpalatable to bring an action against the Teamsters when they are under the AFL-CIO’s umbrella.” He said the Justice Department was having second thoughts about trying to take over the entire 1.8 million-member IBT, and was considering concentrating on individual locals.

Briefly

● **TURKEY** faces a U.S. aid cut-off, should it fail to make \$400 million in back payments within the framework of the Foreign Military Assistance agreement. In recent negotiations, Washington rejected Turkish proposals to reschedule \$4 billion in debts and to decrease the interest rates on previous credits.

● **MICHAEL ARMACOST**, undersecretary of state for political affairs, left Oct. 24 on a tour of the Philippines, South Korea, Japan, China, Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia. In Manila on Oct. 26, he announced the early delivery of \$75 million in aid to the Philippines, and affirmed U.S. support for President Aquino.

● **CYRUS VANCE** and Elliott Richardson continued their push for a U.N. peacekeeping force to replace U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf, in an appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Oct. 28. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger opposes the proposal, saying that peacekeeping forces could only work after a cease-fire had been reached.

● **AL KATZ**, who shot and killed a Merrill Lynch executive and himself on Oct. 26 in Miami, after losing \$4 million on the stock market, had a 10-year association with the Wall Street firm of White Weld, and the FBI. Katz (a.k.a. Arthur Kane) joined the Federal Witness Protection Program in 1976 after being nabbed for mail fraud, and was involved in illicit financial “sting” operations for the FBI. To finance his scams, Katz maintained a \$170,000 credit line with White Weld. The company’s chief executive officer was the late David Weld, father of Assistant U.S. Attorney General, William Weld.

● **THE SOVIET UNION** is working to conclude an agreement with the United States for “joint anti-drug efforts” of the two countries’ Customs services, according to Radio Moscow. A similar accord was recently reached with Great Britain.