

“would mitigate for them the most negative effects of a U.S. program outside the strict interpretation of the ABM Treaty,” the 1972 pact negotiated by Henry Kissinger with input from Nitze, which bans a comprehensive shield against nuclear attack. Administration officials who are investigating Nitze’s role with CISAC say they believe the Soviets may submit some form of the proposal to U.S. negotiators at the Geneva arms talks or in Washington right before the summit begins, even though earlier Soviet proposals of this sort were rejected as too restrictive.

Days before CISAC participants left for their Oct. 26-28 trip to the Soviet Union, Wolfgang Panofsky wrote to another member of the panel to describe “Nitze’s suggestions” for promoting SDI testing limits that would restrain the program in a way pleasing to the Soviets, while easing past President Reagan’s earlier objections to such limits.

‘Controversial step’

The minutes of a Sept. 9 session of CISAC describe comments by panel member Michael May, associate director of Lawrence Livermore, which is heavily involved in SDI research, asking Harvard scientist Ashton Carter for “a more careful definition of the boundary between allowed and forbidden activities under the ABM Treaty regime.” “This was a controversial step for Nitze,” the minutes continue, “and so must be kept quiet.” The minutes also indicate that the “back-channel” from Nitze through CISAC to the Soviets was Jim Timbie, who had taken part in preparations for the Shevardnadze-Shultz meeting in September, where Shevardnadze tabled a set of restrictive “threshold limits” for SDI testing, which would have crippled the program.

At another point in the meeting, committee members expressed concern that their studies and talks with the Soviets “not be hostage to one small group in State” working for Nitze. But Wolfgang Panofsky dismissed the fear. “Panofsky said we had the flexibility to feed question ideas to State to then ask us,” the minutes of Sept. 9 state. “Panofsky said he hoped to close the loop with Timbie this afternoon and then assign CISAC members to write outlines of the proposed studies . . . [including] May’s suggestion of defining where to draw the boundary between allowed and forbidden activities under the ABM Treaty.”

Apart from members of the administration, officials at the Justice Department, State Department, National Security Council, and the Pentagon have all begun inquiries into whether or not CISAC members and Paul Nitze, respectively, violated their security clearance and a presidential order to stay away from negotiations that would make the SDI a pawn in arms control. In addition to writing President Reagan, Republican legislators have written to the new FBI Director William Sessions, requesting that a full investigation be conducted to see whether the scientists involved in the Vilnius, Lithuania negotiations violated their security clearance.

‘Flat earth society’ launches a new assault on the SDI

Dr. Richard Garwin of IBM Corp., a leading opponent of the Strategic Defense Initiative, argued in a heavily attended debate on Capitol Hill on Nov. 17, against President Reagan’s conception of a reliable strategic defense that would make the doctrine of nuclear “deterrence” obsolete. He further insisted, against overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that the Soviet Union does *not* have an “SDI” program of its own.

The debate, titled “Is the Strategic Defense Initiative in the National Interest?” pitted Garwin and Carl Sagan of Cornell University, propagandist for the “nuclear winter” hoax, against Strategic Defense Initiative Organization (SDIO) director Lt. Gen. James Abrahamson and former Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle. We publish here excerpts.

Garwin: . . . The President’s goal was to be able to give up persuasion of the Soviet leaders not to attack us or our allies, instead rendering a nuclear attack harmless. Last year, in a debate with me in Baltimore, General Abrahamson’s special assistant defined quantitatively what SDI must accomplish for its leaders to believe that they have successfully carried out their mission and deterred nuclear war.

He said the Soviets could right now destroy 6,000 military targets in the United States with their strategic nuclear weapons. He said that if SDIO could show us the way to limiting the Soviet targets destroyed in the United States to 3,000, then the Soviets would be deterred; not accomplishing their military goals, they would never attack. But what about defense of population that we’ve heard about now, that that was the President’s goal? Would they defend our cities? No, he said, there is no military benefit to the Soviets in destroying U.S. or allied cities, so they would not strike them and we would not need to defend our population. According to SDIO, the Russian bear has become the Soviet pussycat. Apparently, SDIO says, we are to forget about preventing Soviet compulsion, coercion of U.S. or its allies. We’re

supposed to forget about the threat that Secretary Perle has been stressing for the last 15 years. By that logic, nuclear war could be reliably prevented and freedom preserved by our unilaterally giving up our entire military. We would have no more military targets to be destroyed, therefore no threat of war.

More realistically, there is now the very real prospect of deep cuts in the Soviet nuclear weapon force, beginning with 1,500 warheads to be eliminated in the INF treaty to be signed in three weeks here in Washington, and a cut of 50% or more in strategic nuclear weapons. This is a surer way and a quicker way to preserve those military targets in the United States than by continuing with the research program which is bound to fail.

Now, am I against strategic defense? Absolutely not. I think the unprecedented indifference that you heard about from Secretary Perle, ignoring the threat of the missiles fired by accident, or a single missile fired by an errant Soviet commander, ignoring the threat to the Minuteman, is caused by the fact that the leaders of the United States have not had presented to them limited programs to accomplish these limited options soon and economically.

Over the decades, I've been much involved in this sort of thing and have proposed, for instance, close-in defense of the Minuteman silos, taking advantage of the fact that a Minuteman silo survives if you can keep the nuclear warheads more than a couple hundred yards away. No interest in this government or in previous administrations, because we do not regard the threat to Minuteman as real. . . .

Abrahamson: Throughout this debate, what you often hear are, in my judgment, oversimplistic arguments on a very, very complex subject. So I must start with a description of what the program truly is. . . . The objective is very clear. The objective was laid out in the President's program and has not been modified. It was a threefold challenge that the President laid out. The first one was, "Isn't there a strategy that might be more effective for all the unknowns of the future?" And that strategy is one, a search for a strategy that would not keep the nation naked to the worst weapon that's ever been developed in history.

Secondly, that a strategy by itself is insufficient, in fact, to prevent war. In fact, the strategy must be supported by true technical development so it can be implemented. And finally, a very important element right from the start was to use our development, to use our technical prowess to enhance the ability to achieve meaningful arms reductions in the process. And it is the combination of all three of these elements that truly is the Strategic Defense Initiative. It is not merely an attempt to build a laser or to go to war in space. . . .

Garwin: . . . Let me address another question as to why the Soviets have such a large program in defense and in every one of these areas discussed in the SDI. First, they don't! The

defense literature itself says that there's no evidence that the Soviets, although they work in neutral particle beams for fusion research and so on, no evidence that they have a weapon program in neutral particle beams. They do not have the space-based ABM experiments thus far that we are proposing. They have had in the distant past anti-satellite tests as we have had, and they have a deployed system for defense against ballistic missiles in the Moscow area, their one site permitted under the 1972 ABM Treaty, just as we had a better system operated for the year 1975-76 in Grand Forks, North Dakota. . . .

Abrahamson: I think I do need to add a comment. It is continually posed that a partial defense or a defense that is building by phases, one step at a time towards the President's long-term goal is either to defend strategic weapons or people and that is not the case. If it were exactly the kind of terminal defense and limited to the terminal defense as Dr. Garwin has indicated, that might be the case. Then we would have to make a choice. Do we put those terminal defenders around a city or do we put them around a Minuteman field? That's precisely the function of a layered defense--to ensure that we can attack the ballistic missiles at the most efficient area and that's when they're just getting started and layers behind that, and what we defend depends on what the Soviets are shooting at, and we will indeed be defending people.

We will be defending people right from the start. It won't be a perfect defense, but, in the long run, we will continue in a responsible way and the responsible way to build anything as radical as this is a step at a time, to get experience in that first step and then build toward a second step, enhancing the technology at each step of the way. . . .

Question: Since the Soviets are, and are likely to remain, adversaries, why isn't SDI likely to provoke the Soviets to deploy additional offensive weapons in order to offset U.S. defensive deployments and to enhance their own deterrent forces?

Abrahamson: If we were limited, and limited our thinking, to terminal defenses of the kind that Dr. Garwin is talking about, that would be exactly the case. A single layer with a single countable number of responsive missiles; all they have to do is to try to add a few missiles in order to change that. That's very different than with a layered defense. For example, five layers with only 60% effectiveness at each layer--and by the way, this is an example. That's all it is, but we have very real possibilities of building to that level at this point. It's quite clear that it's possible. Instead of just one or two or three additional missiles, we talking about 293. It's impossible for them within their economic constraints to deal with a layered defense by doing precisely that. . . . They're logical people on the other side; they're logical adversaries. And they would pick the approach that wouldn't break the bank for them.