

# National News

## SDI is officially on chopping block

The lead story of the U.S. Army newspaper *Stars and Stripes* on Feb. 5 reports that U.S. National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft participated in a report calling for dropping the idea of a "Star Wars shield," and concentrating instead on making land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles mobile.

President Bush has significantly upgraded the role of NSC director, and Scowcroft's role in the preparation of the report puts the Strategic Defense Initiative officially on the chopping block.

The report, "issued with unusual bipartisan support" on Feb. 3, was sent to the White House in hopes that Bush would accept its basic premises and ask Congress to act on them.

*Stars and Stripes* comments, "If the main recommendations of the 18-month study are adopted, it will mean official recognition that former President Reagan's dream of a space-based missile defense system—under the Strategic Defense Initiative, popularly known as Star Wars—is dead. It also will mean a renewed U.S. commitment to completing a broad arms control agreement with the Soviets at the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START)."

Carter administration Defense Secretary Harold Brown, who co-chaired the panel that compiled the report, claimed that a nationwide defense against missiles is not feasible and that the United States must retain and improve the doctrine of nuclear deterrence.

The panel also included "members of the national security priesthood," including Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee; Sen. John Warner of Virginia, the ranking minority member on the committee; Sen. William Cohen (R-Me.); Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wisc.), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee; Robert McFarlane, former U.S. national security adviser; R. James Woolsey, former Undersecretary of

the Navy; and Amos A. Jordan of the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown.

## Urban decay a self-feeding process

Roderick Wallace, at the Department of Epidemiology and Social Medicine of Albert Einstein College of Medicine, released a new study in January entitled, "A Synergism of Plagues: 'Planned Shrinkage,' Contagious Housing Destruction and AIDS in the Bronx," which demonstrates that urban decay creates a self-feeding shockwave of murder, drugs, and AIDS.

Wallace attacks the policy of "planned shrinkage" developed by the New York City RAND Institute which closed many fire stations, and which triggered a process he termed "contagious urban decay." When fires break out, people are driven into other neighborhoods, which become overcrowded, leading to more fires and further abandonment of housing.

Wallace points out that the spread of drugs is ordinarily contained by a kind of social immune system, a network of personal relationships mediated by churches, clubs, schools, and community groups, which are destroyed by contagious urban decay. The result is accelerated drug addiction, skyrocketing homicide rates, infant mortality, and, most recently, rampant AIDS spread as the forced migrations have mixed IV drug users into previously relatively drug free populations.

## Top Democrats call Bush 'one of us'

New York Gov. Mario Cuomo told 140 House Democrats gathered at the Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, for their annual "issues conference" on Feb. 4, that the presidency of George Bush presents Democrats with "a

moment of extraordinary opportunity" to implement the Democratic agenda.

Bush has heard "the voices of people crying for help. . . . The man chosen to be our President, after having tried it another way for a long time, has begun talking like one of us," Cuomo said. "We should make the most of it."

Clark Clifford, a longtime fixture of the Washington establishment, extolled Bush in a *Washington Post Magazine* story on Feb. 5 on the preparation of his memoirs. "I had a fairly close relationship with Prescott Bush, George Bush's father," Clifford said. "I found him to be intelligent, a splendid public servant. He brought the boys up exceedingly well."

Clifford insists that for Bush to be successful, he must not "buckle under to the ideology of the right wing," which he has shown himself sensitive to in the past. On whether Bush really agreed with Reagan, Clifford comments, "He's had to take a public position of having to approve everything that's gone on. But I would be surprised if he did approve of everything. Eight years ago, when he took a look at Reagan's economic policy, he delivered himself of a striking expression: voodoo economics—an interesting little indicator. But then he had to suppress any indicators of criticism."

## Soviet spetsnaz threat to U.S. energy grid

For the first time, a U.S. government official has publicly acknowledged that Soviet unconventional war-fighting units, or *spetsnaz*, are a threat to U.S. targets, especially the nation's energy grid.

Edward Bodolato, deputy assistant secretary for energy emergencies, told the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee on Feb. 8 that his office has developed procedures to determine possible threats and to respond to energy emergencies, and is taking steps to improve security. Top priority, he said, would be given to protecting electrical power systems, because power lines are most vulnerable to attack.

"The Soviet Union has an unconventional warfare capability, *spetsnaz* units, to which it has assigned the mission of crippling the West's industrial infrastructure, particularly its vulnerable energy systems, before an outbreak of hostilities," Bodolato said. "Although the main *spetsnaz* target appears to be Western Europe, the potential for such action in the United States cannot be ruled out."

Michael Gent, president of the North American Electric Reliability Council, an industry association, said that the utilities had been asked by the National Security Council in 1983 to set up a nationwide security system after terrorist attacks against U.S. targets. "They were concerned that trained teams of foreign-sponsored saboteurs could attack a number of key electric system facilities and cause extended and widespread outages that would compromise national security and seriously disrupt the economy," Gent testified.

A staffer for the committee, which is conducting hearings to examine the vulnerability of telecommunications and energy resources to terrorism, testified that duplicating systems would prevent full-scale loss of service, but major disruptions could occur from widespread attacks.

## Unexpected reversal in LaRouche case

A motion by defense attorneys brought about an unexpected reversal by the government on Feb. 9, in the Alexandria, Virginia federal case against Lyndon LaRouche and six associates. The "Alexandria Seven" were imprisoned on Jan. 27, on conspiracy charges. LaRouche and his five male associates won the right to remain together in the Alexandria jail for 100 days, to assist their counsel in preparation of their appeal, rather than being dispersed to federal prisons all around the country.

Defense attorneys had attempted to get Assistant U.S. Attorney Kent Robinson to agree to this arrangement earlier in the week, but Robinson, unmoved by argu-

ments of fairness and due process for these defendants, refused to cooperate.

Defense attorneys determined that they would have to file a motion before Judge Albert V. Bryan to get the relief they were seeking for the prisoners. Once the government was served with the motion, Robinson reversed his position, and asked the judge for the prisoners to be allowed to remain in Alexandria for 100 days. Judge Bryan reportedly signed the order immediately.

## One in 200 N.J. newborns carries AIDS

The results of a statewide study sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control testing newborns in New Jersey for AIDS infection has shown that one in 200 are carriers of the virus, the *Newark Star Ledger* reported Feb. 10.

The study tested the blood of virtually all babies born during a three-month period. Dr. Molly Joel Coye, the state's health commissioner, reported that this was "the first time in the nation" that such a study was conducted on a statewide scale. Of the nearly 30,000 newborns tested, 0.49% tested positive for antibodies to HIV.

"The numbers in our study are disturbing, but extremely useful, because they help us more accurately project the future needs of HIV positive mothers and children for health service. These levels of infant exposure to the AIDS virus tell us that there will be a rapidly growing need for the network of services we now have in place," Dr. Coye told the press.

According to Coye New Jersey ranks second only to New York in the number of pediatric AIDS cases. New Jersey ranks fourth among states in the number of AIDS cases.

The *Hudson Dispatch* added that, by Jan. 31, 187 children under the age of 13 had developed AIDS. Of those, 149 were black or Hispanic, and 171 were the children of parents who were at a high risk of contracting AIDS, mostly because they were intravenous drug users.

## Briefly

● **RICHARD ARMITAGE** has been chosen to replace Gaston Sigur as assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs. Armitage, 43, has been assistant secretary of defense for the past five years. In 1985, he was involved in the overthrow of the Ferdinand Marcos government in the Philippines.

● **LAWRENCE Eagleburger**, the nominee for deputy secretary of state and a Kissinger associate, is likely to be hit by a scandal because he "was until last month director of a bank facing charges for money laundering," according to the *Sunday Times* of London Feb. 5. LBS Bank of New York was indicted by a grand jury in Philadelphia in November 1988, after a government sting codenamed "Operation Flying Kite."

● **HENRY KISSINGER**, along with former French President Giscard d'Estaing and former Japanese Premier Yasuhiro Nakasone, is drafting a book for the Trilateral Commission which will be a review of East-West policy. The book is supposed to be the main foreign policy intervention of the Commission into the Bush administration, and will be released at their April meeting in Paris. Assisted by Bill Hyland, Kissinger will concentrate on arms control policy.

● **A PARTICLE BEAM** test on a rocket will take place soon, according to a statement by O'Dean Judd of the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization, made at a Feb. 8 press conference sponsored by the Global Foundation.

● **PRESIDENT BUSH** presided over a meeting of the National Security Council Feb. 10 to review U.S. policy options toward Afghanistan after Feb. 15, the date when the last Soviet troops are supposed to have pulled out. Among the issues said to have been discussed was whether the U.S. should "rethink" its large covert military aid program to Afghan rebels.