

## Eye on Washington by Nick Benton

### 'Concerned Scientists' flip their lids

There was a "falling out among thieves" at a press conference of the KGB-asset Union of Concerned Scientists here on May 30. The IBM Corporation's Dr. Richard Garwin, under pressure of questioning from this reporter, disassociated himself from a UCS national television advertising campaign against the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Two ads have begun to appear on national networks, flagrantly misrepresenting the SDI. The first, portraying a child singing "twinkle, twinkle, little star" to a star, suddenly shows the star blowing up and consuming the child, fraudulently portraying the SDI as an offensive, rather than defensive, system, targeted against civilian populations. The second ad features Victor Weisskopf of MIT saying, "If we put weapons in space, the Russians will put weapons in space." The ad does not mention the fact that the Soviets are already ahead of us in beam defense development, and have been working on it for, as Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger has said, at least 16 or 17 years.

When confronted on the deliberate distortions contained in the UCS advertising campaign, Dr. Garwin blurted out: "I had nothing to do with those TV ads." Henry Kendall, the president of UCS who shared the podium with Garwin, blanched, then leapt to his feet to attack me for asking the question. One press wire account reported that "reporters asking hostile

questions seemed to panic the UCS officials, who were desperately trying to find journalists who would ask friendly questions. With the officials refusing to answer a hostile questioner at one stage, the conference turned into pandemonium."

Dr. Garwin was also forced to break with the UCS's insistence that the SDI could never work: "I have never said strategic defenses cannot work. If you spend enough money, you can make them work. . . . The problem is countermeasures. Sure, we can make big mirrors and lasers and make them work."

This flatly contradicted the text of a full-page ad the UCS had purchased in the *New York Times* that very morning, which stated, "Star Wars is technologically naive. There is not a shred of scientific evidence that it will work."

Garwin, however, lied that the Department of Defense "doesn't really think the Soviets are putting much effort into a laser defense system of their own."

### Weinberger: Garwin is not well-informed

Later that day, I asked Defense Secretary Weinberger during a press conference at the Pentagon to respond to Garwin's claim: "Mr. Secretary, Mr. Garwin this morning at his press conference tried to intimate that the Department of Defense doesn't really believe that the Soviet Union is aggressively pursuing an equivalent of a Strategic Defense Initiative on their own side. He often makes these kinds of remarks in the absence of Department of Defense personnel. Can you set the record straight on your Department's perception on the nature of the Soviets' program?"

Weinberger responded: "Yes, I'm delighted you asked that question, as

they say. We perceive without the slightest equivocation and without the slightest hesitancy or doubt, that the Soviets have been pursuing very vigorously, quietly, and in the way they're able to do in a closed society, active research, looking towards the development and deployment of a Strategic Defense Initiative, that would have the effect of making our missiles impotent and useless."

He went on to specify that the Soviets have been working on such a program "for 16 or 17 years."

As for Garwin, Weinberger said: "The person you quoted either has not had the opportunity to have access to the latest information in recent years, or he has perhaps quoted someone who said or he wanted to have say what he wanted to hear."

Weinberger added, "If you ask for my opinion, as you have, fortunately, we don't have the slightest doubt about it. The Soviets are very busy, very active, spending a lot of money—about as much on defensive activities as on offensive, and that's a very large amount of money in the Soviet Union."

He concluded, "I think it is absolutely incumbent that we pursue as vigorously as possible at the amounts requested by the President, the Strategic Defense research initiative; simply because we cannot afford to have anything like a Soviet breakthrough that we are not prepared to deal with. It would be a very much more dangerous world if the Soviets should get this and we should not."

James J. Kilpatrick, in his syndicated column which appeared in the *Baltimore Sun* on June 5, described this exchange at some length, noting that "Mr. Weinberger's remarks went almost unreported." The press, he said, found that "the Walker spy story and the \$659 ashtrays made for livelier leads."