

Asteroid, Financial Blowout Redefine Strategic Threat

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Feb. 17—Between the admission by Bill Gross, the head of PIMCO, the world's largest bond trading company, that the world is facing a “financial supernova,” and the events of Feb. 15, when a surprise meteorite explosion over Russia coincided with a near-Earth asteroid pass, the world has entered a new strategic universe.

Most importantly, prominent scientists, led by the Russians, have made clear that there is now a common mission for mankind: to defend the Earth against asteroids, meteors, and comets, which are far more prevalent in our environment than the vast majority care to consider. U.S.-Russian collaboration to this end, of the same type originally proposed in 1983 by President Ronald Reagan with his Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), is now urgent—but it cannot be accomplished without a restructuring of the global financial system, starting with the imposition of Glass-Steagall in the United States.

One of the dangers stemming from the trans-Atlantic bubble and the moves toward U.S.-Russian collaboration—which the British played the crucial role in sabotaging back in 1983—is that the London-centered financial oligarchy will speed up the timetable for war and dictatorship to defend their ever-more-fragile grip on power.

European sources have confirmed that they believe a major financial event has already occurred, and that central bankers are desperately attempting to cover up the damage by releasing a new “wall of money.” One London insider noted that Italy's Monte dei Paschi di Siena scandal has already drawn in Germany's huge

Deutsche Bank and Wall Street's JP Morgan Chase, and that the buildup of scandals against the big City of London banks—the Libor scandal and recent revelations of massive drug and terror money laundering by HSBC and Standard and Chartered—has put the financial elites on the defensive.

Under these fragile circumstances, the buildup of military confrontations in Southwest Asia and the Asia-Pacific has taken on more ominous strategic dimensions in recent days.

Russia Issues New Warnings

This was highlighted in a number of statements by top Russian government officials, warning about the spread of regional conflicts. Russia's UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin this week warned the United States that any plans for military action against Iran to halt the country's purported nuclear weapons efforts, would only guarantee that Iran, in self-defense, would aggressively seek a nuclear deterrent. He also warned that Qatar's continuing gun-running to Syrian rebels was driving that situation towards a regional conflict and beyond.

At a major defense-policy review session, sponsored by the State Duma and the Regional Council, on Feb. 14, Gen. Valery Gerasimov, the new Chief of Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, provided a detailed review of Russia's defense modernization program, while warning of the spread of regional conflicts and the likelihood of perpetual wars around the globe, fought over natural resources.

At the same time, discussions between the Russians and NATO members on the U.S. ballistic missile defense shield that threatens Russia's defenses, have hit a brick wall. On Feb. 15, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Meshkov reiterated that Moscow continues to insist on U.S. and NATO written guarantees that their missile defense systems will not be aimed at Russia's strategic potential. If damage is done to Russia in the process of carrying out the U.S. missile defense program, Russia will take asymmetric measures, he said.

Pacific Tinderbox

In the Asia-Pacific, North Korea's announcement Feb. 12 that it had conducted an underground nuclear test, just months after the D.P.R.K. successfully launched a satellite, put the issue of regional security back in the headlines. Although the D.P.R.K. informed both the Chinese and American governments in advance of the test, Pyongyang's latest step towards obtaining a deployable nuclear bomb has raised the specter of a regional nuclear arms race. It is no secret that both Japan and South Korea each has the ability to build a nuclear bomb in a very short period of time. President Obama contacted his Japanese and South Korean counterparts by phone soon after the North Korean underground detonation, and assured both countries that the United States continued to maintain a nuclear umbrella over the region.

In a sharply worded editorial, the official Chinese news agency Xinhua wrote on Feb. 18 that China would not serve as Washington's "deputy sheriff" in the region, noting that the U.S. policy of aggressive sanctions and threats against the D.P.R.K. had lawfully driven North Korean rulers to seek a nuclear deterrent. A number of leading voices in South Korea and the United States have proposed that North Korea should be openly admitted into the nuclear club, noting that Pyongyang would never launch a nuclear attack, since it would mean instant obliteration in a retaliatory strike, and that a recognized, nuclear-armed North Korea would add stability to the region.

Washington intelligence sources report that the D.P.R.K. has privately approached U.S. officials with a proposal to resume the Six-Party Talks on nuclear disarmament and other regional security matters.

Lyndon LaRouche on Feb. 18 warned that the world is precariously close to a thermonuclear war. He explained that, while no one is openly scheming for such a war of extinction, the momentum towards regional

conflicts, centered in Eurasia, could easily lead to a global confrontation. LaRouche noted that every major war, since the ouster of German Chancellor Bismarck in 1890, escalated from more limited conflicts, that quickly spiralled out of control. In every instance, the very forces that should have been pressing for war avoidance, fell into the trap of escalating the conflict, until the point that no side could back down.

Not for the first time since the advent of thermonuclear weapons, we are nearing such a break-point today, LaRouche warned.

Cosmic Shock

The Feb. 15 asteroid near-Earth flyby and the nearly simultaneous meteor explosion over the industrial Chelyabinsk region of Russia has caused a shock to the system that could be a blessing from heaven.

The meteor explosion, as it passed through the Earth's atmosphere, was about 25 times the size of the Hiroshima nuclear bomb, and injured more than 1,000 people. Had such a meteor impact occurred over a large city, the loss of life and damage would have been immense.

The issue of Strategic Defense of the Earth (SDE) from such asteroids, meteors, and comets has now suddenly become a matter of urgency for all of mankind.

At a United Nations conference on the peaceful uses of space taking place in Vienna, Austria Feb. 11-22, scientists from around the world were confronted with the unexpected meteor event in Russia, which poses new scientific questions and challenges. The issue of SDE, which has been promoted by top Russian officials, is now gaining international traction, as it becomes clear that the world is not at all prepared to deal with this growing threat.

SDE is an expansion of the original Strategic Defense Initiative, promoted by LaRouche beginning in the late 1970s, and fully embraced by President Reagan in his March 23, 1983 nationwide television address. By the late 1980s, due to the Soviet leadership's intransigence, and sabotage from within the U.S. political establishment, the SDI was, in effect, killed, and along with it, much of the vital work of NASA was virtually shut down.

This week's events—the warnings of a hyperinflationary blowout and the asteroid flyby—call for a radical paradigm-shift in policy, beginning with the reinstatement of Glass-Steagall, to pave the way for a revival of NASA's mission, starting with an acceleration of Mars exploration and the charting of Near-Earth Objects.