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# EARLY PHASED DEPLOYMENT OF SDI AS A NATIONAL INSURANCE POLICY

*Jack F. Kemp\**

## I. INTRODUCTION

In March of 1983, President Ronald Reagan gave new hope to future generations when he proposed the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Far from being the "Star Wars" it is often derided as, it is a promise of greater security and stability in a dangerous world.

SDI should be viewed as the greatest peace initiative and defense safeguard in postwar history. Most of its opponents appear totally unconcerned by the far larger Soviet programs in both strategic defense and in strategic offense. These opponents also appear unconcerned about the long-term instabilities and risks inherent in strategic deterrence based solely on the threat of "mutual assured destruction" (MAD).

Today, the need for early phased deployment of strategic and related regional and tactical missile defenses is clearer than ever before. The security of the United States and the future of sound arms control are becoming increasingly dependent upon a national commitment to accelerate the move from research to deployment of SDI's first phases. Some would mistakenly continue to limit the SDI program in the name of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. However, the United States must stop restricting and delaying SDI deployment because of a treaty long ago broken by Soviet violations. This is especially true in light of the Soviet Union's enormous and ongoing military investment.

With the United States achieving substantial progress, and with adequate funding, initial deployment of a comprehensive SDI could begin in 1992 with an Accidental Launch Protection System (ALPS). This system would become an essential defense insurance policy for the future of the United States. It would also help to create a safer, more stable world.

The following essay first examines the policy reasons for the accelerated phased deployment of SDI. After a discussion of Soviet arms control violations and Soviet initiatives in space, the piece will focus on the Soviet negotiations push against SDI. The essay will then explain the rationale supporting a U.S. go-ahead for accelerated SDI deployment and will consider the ALPS plan as a first step. Finally, the essay will evaluate the future of SDI.

## II. SDI: REASONS FOR ACCELERATED DEPLOYMENT

There are at least four major reasons why the United States should accelerate deployment of SDI as a vital insurance policy for its own defense, for that of

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its allies, and for the safety of the entire world. These reasons include: the deterrence aspect of SDI, Soviet cheating in arms control agreements, the Soviet ABM Treaty "breakout," and the improvement of conventional arms and other "spinoffs."

#### **A. Deterrence: From MADness to Defense**

The United States needs SDI in order to move away from the long-term instabilities of deterrence based exclusively on the suicidal threat of MAD. It is within the power of the United States to prevent war by basing deterrence increasingly on defense rather than relying on offensive weapons to avenge a Soviet strike. Such a shift would be both highly ethical and highly prudent for American citizens and their children.

Each deployment step of SDI would contribute a significant measure of deterrence against attack and protection against missiles, whether launched in anger or by accident, and from whatever source.

#### **B. Soviet Cheating**

The West needs SDI as an insurance policy against Soviet cheating in arms control agreements. This includes the newly adopted Intermediate Range Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty and the proposed Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).

As detailed in comprehensive Reagan Administration reports to the United States Congress, the Soviet Union has systematically violated major existing agreements, including understandings reached at the first and second round of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I and II), the ABM Treaty, two chemical weapons conventions, two nuclear test limitation agreements and the Helsinki Accords.

SDI and associated tactical and intermediate-range anti-ballistic missile technologies would provide deterrence and protection against such cheating. It would also help to prevent Soviet exploitation of serious definitional, data and verification problems in the INF and proposed START treaties—problems which are likely to prove largely intractable.

#### **C. Soviet ABM Treaty Breakout**

The United States needs SDI as an insurance policy against the Soviet Union's increased efforts to achieve a decisive monopoly in strategic defense systems. Soviet strategic defense program expenditures are estimated by the Defense Department at two hundred billion dollars over the past decade. This is some twenty billion dollars per year, five times higher than the current U.S. spending level for strategic defense of some four billion dollars per year.

The Soviet strategic defense program includes the modernization of the two-layer antiballistic missile system deployed around Moscow, as well as accelerated preparations in the form of radars, missiles and tests for nationwide territorial antiballistic missile defense.

The massive Soviet effort to dominate space has a civil defense counterpart which is worth noting. An extensive network of deep tunnels for Soviet political and military leaders and for key industries also reflects the Soviet belief in strategic defense and in the ability to prevail in a nuclear conflict with the United States.

#### **D. Improved Conventional Arms and Other SDI Spinoffs**

SDI technologies will provide important spinoffs and benefits for improving the West's conventional defenses against far larger Soviet forces. For example, lasers and tracking sensors have clear anti-armor, anti-aircraft and anti-cruise missile applications which could prove particularly cost-effective in meeting the growing Soviet conventional arms threat. Furthermore, as with the U.S. space program of the 1960's, SDI technologies may also prove beneficial to nonmilitary areas such as medicine and industry.

### **III. SOVIET ARMS CONTROL VIOLATIONS AND THE SOVIET PUSH FOR STRATEGIC DOMINANCE IN SPACE**

In assessing the requirements for SDI, Americans should have no illusions about the Soviet Union's aim to achieve strategic dominance with its own strategic defense programs, notwithstanding recent or existing arms control agreements. This aim is exemplified by Soviet arms control violations and the Soviet push for strategic dominance in space.

#### **A. Soviet Arms Control Violations**

President Reagan's December 2, 1987, report to Congress on Soviet noncompliance with arms control agreements cited an expanded pattern of Soviet violations of the ABM Treaty. One such instance involved the Krasnoyarsk radar in Siberia which, because of its inland location and interior direction, and its proximity to major Soviet intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launch sites, marks a clear violation of the ABM Treaty. President Reagan's report cited another Soviet radar installation under development at Gomel as a new Treaty violation.

In addition to the ABM Treaty violations involved in the Krasnoyarsk and Gomel radars, President Reagan's report cited several troublesome activities, which suggest that the Soviets may be preparing for unilateral deployment of a prohibited nationwide ABM defense. These activities include, first, the apparent testing and development of components required for an ABM system which could be deployed to a site in months rather than years; second, the probable concurrent testing of air defense components and ABM components; third, the development of a modern air defense system, the SA-12, which may have some ABM capabilities and, fourth, the demonstration of an ability to reload ABM launchers and to refire the interceptor missile in a period of time shorter than previously required.

#### **B. The Soviet Push for Dominance in Space**

According to an in-depth report made public in November 1987 by the Defense Department, *The Soviet Space Challenge*, the Soviet Union has opened up a significant U.S.-Soviet "space gap." This inequity results as the Soviets vigorously pursue programs to assure that their capability for military control of space includes strategic defenses.

Even prior to the Challenger disaster in January 1987, which set back U.S. space launches for many months, the Soviet Union had undertaken about twenty times as many space launches as the United States, with substantial military

implications. Similarly, the Soviet Union has a space station in place which conducts extensive military experiments. The United States has no such facility. These efforts significantly contribute to Soviet capabilities for a wholesale breakout from the ABM Treaty.

### C. The Soviet Negotiations Push Against SDI

It is ironic that, as the possibility of a wholesale Soviet breakout from the ABM Treaty and the need for an SDI insurance policy are both greater than ever before, the Soviet Union has had some success in its all-out effort to delay and kill the U.S. SDI program while accelerating its own.

It is clearly the Soviet Union's highest arms control priority to assure a Soviet monopoly in strategic defense, particularly in space, by pushing for SDI funding cuts and testing restrictions, and by seeking to kill off any U.S. SDI deployment, even while threatening the United States and its allies with ABM Treaty breakout and blackmail.

At the arms control negotiations in Geneva, and at summit meetings, the Soviets are pressing the United States to eliminate the possibility of early phased deployment of SDI. First, they demand that the United States commit itself to abiding for seven to ten more years by a treaty that the Soviet Union long ago broke with its violations. Second, the Soviets continue to insist that the progress of START negotiations in achieving deep cuts in strategic weapons be linked to severe constraints on the U.S. SDI program.

I am convinced that, while certain START cuts, accompanied by appropriate sublimits and safeguards, could have merit on their own terms, their implementation would require the insurance policy of an early, incrementally deployed SDI to deter against Soviet cheating and to safeguard U.S. national security.

Commenting on the clear Soviet negotiations objective directed against SDI, former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger told me, on November 21, 1987, "The thrust of the Soviet proposal is to impose artificial constraints on SDI that will prevent us from developing and deploying strategic defenses." Secretary Weinberger added that the Soviet proposal on testing parameters "contains many loopholes and is unverifiable." *Caveat emptor.*

## IV. UNITED STATES GO-AHEAD FOR ACCELERATED SDI DEPLOYMENT

As both nations negotiate to reduce strategic nuclear arsenals and the risks of war, it is important that the United States keep Soviet programs, broken agreements and diplomatic goals in mind at all times. In addition to safeguarding the future of the United States through sound negotiations, it needs to draw fully on the best of U.S. technology to accelerate deployment of missile defenses.

Let the air be cleared regarding where the Soviets stand on feasibility. While some have characterized SDI as a fantasy or a fraud, the Soviet Union's far larger investments in its own strategic defense programs clearly indicate that the Soviets believe strategic defense to be feasible. However, it was only recently that any Soviet official, in this case General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev himself, began to acknowledge that the Soviets had any SDI program at all.

I am convinced, as are many of the best U.S. scientists, that SDI is in fact far more a political than a technological problem. I have visited the laboratories

where SDI research is taking place; much significant progress is being made. In June of 1988, I undertook an intensive three-day fact-finding trip to learn more about SDI. My briefings included a review of major SDI elements and a demonstration of the overall program's National Test Bed, a facility which is integrating the operational elements of the comprehensive SDI system.

The scientific and technological strides achieved since my briefing visits are truly outstanding. For example, in the areas of discrimination, acquisition, tracking, computers, and optics, the United States has crossed new thresholds. Many major components of these systems can be made substantially lighter, smaller and more cost-effective than scientists thought feasible in the past.

Significant advances in discriminating live warheads from decoys have been made through an active flight test program of sensors. Substantial gains have been made in the integration of space-based laser technologies, from reducing the power requirements to enhancing laser beam pointing and tracking, and to the optics required to focus the beam. U.S. scientists have also resolved outstanding issues of high velocity ground-based interceptors, including problems of cooling the kill vehicle, separation of the shroud prior to intercept, and elimination of foresight error.

The SDI program has demonstrated that streamlined management structures and adequate funding can save significant development time. Funding cuts have clearly delayed several programs and will probably do so in the future, what with the current spending of four billion dollars for fiscal year 1989 falling short of the \$4.8 billion Reagan Administration request and the original Department of Defense request of \$6.2 billion. Yet, other experiments conducted on an accelerated schedule have proven once again what the United States can accomplish when it is determined and bold in laying out a course of action.

One message comes through loud and clear from all the scientists and program managers with whom I have spoken: With adequate funding and a lifting of current testing restrictions, SDI is ready to move rapidly from the drawing board to actual implementation.

#### **V. AN ACCIDENTAL LAUNCH PROTECTION SYSTEM AS A FIRST SDI STEP**

The United States can now, in my opinion, go ahead with full-scale development of ground-based interceptors and the supporting sensors to protect the U.S. against accidental or unauthorized launch of ballistic missiles (the ALPS program), whether launched by the Soviet Union or by a third country such as Muammar Qaddafi's Libya or Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran.

Accordingly, I have proposed an amendment urging early deployment of an ALPS system at Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota as an initial and integral step to a comprehensive SDI. Such an initial step, to be integrated as soon as possible with space-based SDI elements, could include exoatmospheric and endoatmospheric interceptors, ground-based radars and other technologies available now or in the very near future. Beginning in 1992 at Grand Forks, this system could also be expanded to other sites and, in moving beyond the ABM Treaty, to more than one hundred launchers at each site.

Interestingly, even within the terms of the ABM Treaty, two sites with one hundred launchers each would be permitted in view of the fact that at the

December 1987 summit, both Soviet and the U.S. negotiators stated a commitment to the ABM Treaty "as signed in 1972." In 1972, at the Treaty's signing, the two countries had not yet signed the 1974 Protocol that reduced the two permitted deployment sites to one site. The initial Grand Forks site is estimated to cost about ten billion dollars, with additional sites along the U.S. coastlines estimated to cost about three billion dollars each.

On May 11, 1988, there were 167 votes cast in favor of my amendment in the U.S. House of Representatives. On May 13, Senator Malcolm Wallop (R-Wy.) received 37 votes for essentially the same amendment in the U.S. Senate. I believe these Congressional votes show a significant movement in support of SDI deployment to provide increased protection and deterrence for U.S. security.

#### **VI. SDI: THE FUTURE**

Even at a time of budget restrictions, there should be no question whether the United States can, as a matter of highest priority, support SDI as a fundamental defense insurance policy for the benefit of its own people, its allies and friends. There should be no question whether the United States can do so at a spending level above the current level of 1.5 percent of the U.S. defense budget, or one-third of one percent of the total federal budget. Working closely with its key allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, as well as Israel and Japan, the United States should accelerate, not cut, SDI and its related anti-tactical ballistic missile programs.

I am confident that, with the commitment of President George Bush and with congressional support, the American people would strongly endorse such a step and that the appropriate funds would be provided. Funding could come from several sources, including the closing of unnecessary military bases and the reduction of national debt-servicing costs through monetary reforms that would lower interest rates.

SDI is a problem of vision and leadership. Some show their bias and their ignorance by calling SDI a fantasy and a fraud; they would essentially eliminate SDI. Others support some research and eventual deployment. But all too few yet support the necessary acceleration of early phased deployment of SDI.

Those in the anti-SDI brigade ignore the substantial technological progress achieved by the SDI program. They ignore Soviet violations of arms control agreements and the massive Soviet strategic defense and offense programs. They would lock American citizens and their children into a MAD deterrence policy. They would circumscribe, delay or cripple the U.S. SDI program by insisting on U.S. adherence to narrow terms of a treaty long ago broken by the Soviet Union.

The anti-SDI forces insist on a perfect SDI system. They forget that under the current MAD policy, all nuclear missiles would get through, but that each SDI layer would provide additional protection from missile attack. Thus, they would keep from the American people and the nations of the world the substantial benefit that each incremental SDI deployment phase—such as ALPS—would bring in complicating a potential attacker's plan and in providing significant additional deterrence and security.

#### **VII. CONCLUSION**

We must put these false arguments against SDI aside. We must act in support of the American people's desire for strategic defense—a desire reflected in poll

after poll. I am encouraged by the substantial congressional support that Senator Wallop and I received for our 1988 ALPS amendments. Above all, I believe it is simply not prudent to continue any longer—especially in the name of a treaty long ago broken by the Soviet Union—to constrain and to delay accelerated deployment of SDI. Let us move now to put our SDI national defense insurance policy into place as a highest national defense priority.



