

DDP ARIZONA NEWSLETTER

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JASTROW CALLS ABM TREATY THE MOST POTENT WEAPON IN THE SOVIET ARSENAL

If the US fails to deploy strategic defense, in the interest of preserving the ABM Treaty, the US could be destroyed before the end of the next decade, according to Robert Jastrow, founder of NASA's Goddard Space Institute. Dr. Jastrow spoke at a meeting sponsored by Tucson DDP on May 29, 1986.

The Soviet leaders are running out of time, he said, citing the fall in life expectancy and the increased infant mortality. Last year, 55,000 Russians died of alcohol poisoning. To maintain their power and privileges, the Soviet hereditary aristocracy depends solely on military might. Rather than lose their power, they might resort to adventurism.

The Soviets have a first strike arsenal: at least 5000 warheads of sufficient yield and accuracy to destroy any US military target. The US has 900 comparable warheads. (Although the total number of US warheads is impressive, Jastrow pointed out that the majority are carried by the "air-breathing" part of our strategic triad -- B-52s and cruise missiles -- which would be unable to penetrate Soviet air defenses.)

At present, Jastrow said, our deterrent rests primarily upon our Trident submarines. A Soviet attack could destroy submarines in port (about 2/3 of our force), and the 200 Soviet killer subs could probably stalk and destroy some of those that were on station. Because of difficulties in communications, about half the surviving submarines (maybe six) would launch their missiles. A single submarine carries enough warheads to destroy the 200 largest Soviet cities. However, loss of their "cloak of invisibility," due to a breakthrough in anti-submarine warfare, could render the Tridents vulnerable to preemptive destruction sometime in the next decade. Methods now being tested by the Soviets include synthetic aperture radar (which detects perturbation in the waves and wavelets on the ocean's surface); sensitive radiation detectors in space; and infrared sensors.

US retaliation would also be blunted by Soviet strategic defenses, which absorb about \$40 billion annually (five times the amount allocated to SDI). This includes \$10 to \$12 billion for air defenses, \$3 to \$5 billion for civil defense, and \$15 billion for "Star Wars." According to CIA reports, production lines for manufacturing large numbers of radars and interceptors exist, and a nationwide system could be deployed within the next ten years. Jastrow believes that the components might even be stockpiled already.

Jastrow notes that the Soviet military build-up has occurred largely within the constraints of existing arms control agreements, though serious Soviet violations have also occurred. He noted the parallel to the treaty between Britain and Germany in the 1930s which was supposed to prevent the recovery of the German navy. The Soviet fifth generation nuclear arsenal makes a mockery of Gorbachev's arms control proposals because of the mobility of the SS-24 and SS-25 missiles.

Although it has not restrained the Soviets from building as fast as they possibly can, the "arms control process" has left the US essentially naked to a Soviet attack. To preserve this status quo, Soviet leaders are desperately trying to derail SDI, with the aid of US physicists, journalists, politicians, arms controllers, and others. Jastrow bluntly referred to many anti-SDI arguments as lies, motivated by ideologic concerns. He speculated that one reason for opposing SDI is that it would undo the life's work of the arms controllers. Jastrow believes that the ABM Treaty is the most significant accomplishment in the career of Richard Garwin, a physicist who is among the most vocal of the SDI opponents. [For an interesting parallel, see this newsletter, Nov. 85: Matthew Meselson, architect of the Biologic Weapons Convention of 1972 is also the inventor of the bee feces theory of yellow rain.]

TELLER AND BECKMANN TO SPEAK AT ANNUAL MEETING

The Fourth Annual Meeting of DDP will be held at the Dallas Downtown Hilton on October 18-19 (Saturday and Sunday). A wide range of subjects will be covered, beginning with response to the Mexico City earthquake, a Delta airliner crash, and toxic terror (such as the Tylenol scare). Response to nuclear accidents (such as Chernobyl) will be discussed by Dr. Robert Ricks, Director of the Radiation Emergency Assistance Center/Training Site. Dr. Petr Beckmann, publisher of Access to Energy, will speak on nuclear proliferation and terrorism. Dr. Edward Teller will join other experts for a question and answer session. Dr. Kenneth Lucas of Phoenix will debate Dr. Wes Wallace of Physicians for Social Responsibility on the ethics of physician participation in civil defense. A tour of the FEMA shelter for key government personnel will be offered. For complete details and registration information, contact the program chairman, Dr. Orient, 325-2689.

HOW HOT ARE DR. HAUGHTON'S RUNNING SHOES?

The running shoes of Dr. Dennis Haughton of Phoenix, pictured on page 1 of The Medical Tribune, July 23, 1986, were said to radiate at a rate "over 100 times background" after being in Kiev at the time of the Chernobyl accident. This report is typical of media accounts, which give the radiation rate in units of "times normal." How hot is that? It is impossible to say. The background in Colorado is "2.5 times normal" if Texas is defined as normal (250 vs 100 mrem/yr). An area near the Library of Congress receives "700 times normal" if normal is defined as what Congress allows at the boundary line of a nuclear power plant. A whole year's exposure of "50 times normal" is within NRC standards for occupational exposure. These figures refer to total body irradiation. The volume of tissue irradiated is crucially important. The safest available treatment for hyperthyroidism -- radioactive iodine -- delivers up to 10,000 rads (10 million millirads) to the thyroid, and about 14 rads to the body. Also, the duration of exposure is important. A dose of "100 times background" for a week might subject a person to the dose he would have received from living in Colorado for a year (where the cancer rate is lower than elsewhere.)

A meaningful report of radiation exposure would give the dose (rems, rads, etc). But journalists seem to be more interested in alarming the public than in enlightening them.

FEMA PROPOSES SHELTERS FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND PUBLIC RECORDS

With cutbacks in the civil defense budget, the federal government seems to have abandoned the idea of helping the ordinary citizen survive a nuclear attack. However, FEMA has drafted a plan to spend \$1.5 billion to construct 600 bomb shelters for local government officials between 1988 and 1992. These shelters would also preserve essential public records, such as deeds to land.

The Soviet Union already has 1500 "Fuehrer bunkers" to protect 175,000 members of the Nomenklatura from nuclear attack. These are in addition to the shelters for military leaders and essential workers (about 30% of the labor force), according to Jastrow.

To provide for the continuation of essential government functions in the aftermath of an attack seems to be a step in the right direction. But do ordinary citizens deserve more than an exhortation to rely on "self help"?

UCS POLLS SCIENTISTS ON EFFECTIVENESS OF SDI

A poll conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Assoc. on behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists asked "what percent of Soviet warheads launched in a massive attack do you think would be able to penetrate . . . the best designed strategic defense system? Forty seven percent answered that SDI would be better than 80% effective (allowing <20% penetration); 35% thought SDI would be less than 80% effective; 18% weren't sure.