The Washington Post 'Death Beam' hoax

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In an editorial column, entitled "NCLC: 'A Domestic Political Menace," in the ***Washington Post*** of Sept. 24, 1976, Katharine Graham's ***Post*** stated, for the record, that it would never report on anything U.S. Presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche actually did or said; but, that LaRouche's name would appear in its publication only at such times as the ***Post*** elected to defame him.[1] In the Sunday, October 17, 1999 edition of the ***Post,*** that 1976-1999 tradition of defamatory hoaxes was upheld, this time using the name of Air Force Major-General (ret.) George Keegan as the ***Post'***s choice of stand-in for the name of the ***Post'***s most hated Nemesis, today's U.S. Democratic Presidential pre-candidate LaRouche.

The latter item is a mish-mash published under the byline of ***Post*** staff writer Michael Dobbs, published under the title "Deconstructing the Death Ray." It appears from reading that article, that Dobbs is wearing scrambled eggs for brains. The article has no intrinsic, redeeming merits, not even obscure and tiny ones; but, like the ravings of British Foreign Office head, Jeremy Bentham's agent, French terrorist and madman Marat, Dobbs' incoherent ranting does shed light on the pro-George W. Bush state of mind of the ***Post*** itself.

The historical facts bearing on the ***Post'***s Oct. 17th hoax, are, in chief, the following. I begin by identifying the issue motivating Dobbs' literary hoax.

In 1913, British novelist H.G. Wells concocted the proposal, that nuclear weapons should be developed and used as weapons so awful, that nations would give up their sovereignties to world government, rather than risk future general wars.[2] Science-fiction writer, and leading Fabian Society ideologue Wells was dead serious; and his proposal, morally perverted as it was, had a scientific basis in the reports of British-Canadian chemist, and Rutherford associate, Frederick Soddy. Wells, after a thorough briefing in the topics of the Soddy lecture-series, was thinking of a radium or radium-like fission bomb. The idea of a uranium-based fission weapon came more than a decade later.[3]

Circa 1928, Bertrand Russell publicly declared his reconciliation with H.G. Wells, and with Wells' current book, ***The Open Conspiracy,*** Wells' world-government plot.[4] From that time on, Russell became the leading spokesman for Wells' policy of world-government through terror of nuclear weapons. Russell, aided by his assets N. Bohr, Leo Szilard, and Eugene Wigner, became the principal organizer of the actual development of nuclear-fission weapons by the U.S.A., Canada, and the U.K. Russell became also the designer of the doctrine of world-government through arms-control. Russell's doctrine, as presented by Russell's lackey Leo Szilard, became the doctrine of the U.S. government, as pushed by the Pugwash Conference organization, and by John J. McCloy, McGeorge Bundy, Henry A. Kissinger, et al.

The core of the doctrine of Russell and Szilard, as pushed

1. Stephen S. Rosenfeld wrote: "We of the press should be chary of offering them print or air time. There is no reason to be too delicate about it: Every day we decide whose voices to relay. A duplicitous violence-prone group with fascistic proclivities should not be presented to the public unless there is reason to present it in those terms. . . ."

2. H.G. Wells, ***The World Set Free*** (London: Macmillan, 1914).

3. Jonathan Tennenbaum, ***Kernenergie: Die weibliche Technik*** (Wiesbaden, Germany: Dr. Böttiger Verlags-GmbH, 1994); see also, Jonathan Tennenbaum, "The Women Who Founded Nuclear Science," ***21st Century Science & Technology,*** Spring 1991.

4. H.G. Wells, ***The Open Conspiracy*** (London: Victor Gollancz, 1928).

by McCloy, Bundy, Kissinger, et al., has been that there shall be no effective defense ever developed against a general ("strategic") bombardment by nuclear ballistic weapons. The policy was, and is: by this means, the gradual elimination of the sovereign nation-state shall be accomplished. This, according to John J. McCloy's perverted notion of "the rule of law"—that of Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Clinton-hating U.S. Representative Henry Hyde today—shall make way for true world government. That form of world government should be recognized as a new Pax Romana-style world empire, a concept which has no essential difference from the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte's Romantic notions of the model of Roman law (e.g., Code Napoleon), and his notion of himself as Pontifex Maximus of a future new Rome-modelled empire, perhaps under his son, a Habsburg heir and putative "King of Rome."

To understand today's world-government-oriented dogmas of nuclear weapons, arms-control, and globalization generally, we must look back to such would-be imitators of ancient pagan Rome as the sponsor of Gibbon, Britain's Lord Shelburne, Napoleon Bonaparte, and on to Benito Mussolini's concept of fascism, and, also, the ideas of a post-war SS imperial state ruling Eurasia and beyond, a conception which Hitler initially premised upon Mussolini's fascist model. The defense of "universal fascism" by Kissinger associate Michael Ledeen, for example, is fully congruent, in content of practice, with the current, "globalization" and "free trade" dogmas of "Third Way" ideologues such as Prime Minister Tony Blair and Vice-President Al Gore.

Although "globalization" achieved a global victory with U.S. National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger's SALT I and ABM treaties, this was not yet solid victory for the utopian ideologies of Wells and Russell. A patriotic reflex from among many nations recognized something of the danger these utopian policies represented to civilization in general. Among those patriotic reactions, this produced an understandable reaction from among military and other traditionalists. Among these traditionalists was physics-trained R.A.F. veteran (a U.S. volunteer) and mid-1970s head of U.S. Air Force Intelligence, Major-General George Keegan. The utopians' reaction against Keegan was savage, but appears relatively mild when compared with the reaction—then, and now—from bastions of utopianism such as the *Washington Post*.

The attack on Keegan, LaRouche, and Teller

Keegan was persuaded that the 1972 ABM treaty was a hoax against both science and military competence. The same hoax which ***Post*** writer Dobbs defended, so passionately, if with utter incompetence, in the Oct. 17 piece.

From my knowledge of Keegan during the late 1970s, and a bit later, I would concede that his motives were, in part, those of a political right-winger, and not particularly astute politically. However, although not a West Point product, he had elements of a Classical educational background, and basic competence in physical science and its military applications. However, as I knew him and his concerns, his interest in strategic and other forms of ballistic missile defense was Classical military concerns, rather than "right-wing." He was a capable, well qualified flag-rank military officer, and, by the evidence of his work as head of Air Force Intelligence, an exceptionally qualified intelligence officer in science-related military matters.

Keegan was far better qualified, more honest than Lt.-Gen. Daniel Graham, former author of the discredited pre-Tet Offensive intelligence assessments in Vietnam, and then, during the late 1970s, chief of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). Graham was Keegan's leading opponent within the military-intelligence community during the middle 1970s. Later, during the period from Summer 1982 through the close of 1983, Graham, then a resident kook deployed by the Mont Pelerin Society's Heritage Foundation, appointed himself my chief public political adversary and Dr. Edward Teller's, on military and science issues. By the early 1980s, Keegan was no longer the issue; Teller and I were. I had become the principal target of my old enemy, Friedrich von Hayek's Mont Pelerin Society.[5]

Look at Dobbs' ranting Oct. 17th piece. Where, contrary to Dobbs' hoax, did Keegan learn about Soviet scientific feasibility for developing particle-beam applications? According to Dobbs, his own chief source is John Pike of the Federation of American Scientists, an institution not unknown to me from relevant former times. I do not doubt that misinformation from that source might be blamed in large part for creating the fraudulent character of the ***Post***'s piece. Prostitutes, literal and pen varieties, tend to pick up infections that way. Dobbs traces the source of the "particle beam" capability story to a study of the patterns seen in work around a Soviet experimental facility in Kazakstan. Keegan's reference to particle-beam applications did not come from Air Force Intelligence studies of that facility. The reference to Soviet particle-beam applications came from an earlier lecture and physical demonstration, delivered at Lawrence Livermore Laboratories, by a Soviet physicist, L. Rudakov, who brought his demonstration apparatus with him for that demonstration!

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5. According to Michael Deaver, then heading prospective Republican Presidential candidate Ronald Reagan's ***Citizens for the Republic,*** the libel of me which appeared in ***Citizens for the Republic,*** originated with a Hong Kong meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society. These attacks were launched chiefly, jointly, by Mont Pelerin's Heritage Foundation front, and by the Anti-Defamation League, in Spring 1978. In 1979, these same attacks were escalated by a cabal featuring the ***New York Times*** and former Senator Joseph McCarthy counsel Roy M. Cohn, the latter the sponsor of the career of one Dennis King. The ***Times'*** 1979 attacks were a continuation of the ***Times'*** attempted cover-up, in January-February 1974, for what was later officially documented to have been an FBI plot to arrange my "elimination" by the Communist Party U.S.A. The ***Washington Post*** attacks on me in a 1976 editorial statement, were a reflection of the continuing ***Times-Post*** arrangements overlapping the ***International Herald Tribune.***

The Post's 'death ray'

The following are excerpts from Michael Dobbs, "Deconstructing the Death Ray: We Were So Scared of the Secret Soviet Weapon, We Spent Billions. Oops," published in the Washington Post *on Dec. 17.*

At the height of the Cold War, blurry satellite photos of an obscure nuclear complex in the deserts of Kazakstan served as a kind of giant Rorschach blot onto which American intelligence analysts projected their worst nightmares.

Some passionately believed that the facility was the center of Soviet efforts to build a particle-beam weapon that could zap American missiles out of the sky. . . .

It took the collapse of communism for Soviet scientists to reveal the secret. . . . There are few more striking examples of the twisted consequences of faulty intelligence than the controversy surrounding the Kazakstan facility, which was given the acronym P-NUTS for Possible Nuclear Underground Test Site. Paranoia about P-NUTS . . . [led to] President Reagan's decision to launch the multibillion-dollar "Star Wars" program in 1983.

Despite the dire warnings of a Soviet breakthrough in exotic space weapons and the subsequent investment of billions of dollars for research, directed-energy weapons remained only a glint in the eyes of Cold Warriors. Two decades later, the United States has largely abandoned its efforts to develop a functioning beam weapon. . . .

"This is probably the most significant instance during the Cold War of a policy that derived from an incorrect intelligence estimate," says John Pike, a defense analyst at the Federation of American Scientists. ". . .[A] textbook case of satellite imagery being misinterpreted, leading to a huge increase in funding. . . ."

. . . U.S. scientists had tried to develop particle beam weapons in the early '70s, under a project code-named Seesaw, but ran into overwhelming technical problems at virtually all stages of the research effort. The political climate changed in 1977 when Maj. Gen. George Keegan, a former head of Air Force Intelligence, went public with his concerns about a particle beam gap with the Soviet Union.

"This was clearly the genesis of Star Wars," said Pike, referring to the Strategic Defense Initiative championed by Ronald Reagan, which has cost the United States a total of around $50 billion over the past 15 years. "Keegan's assertions were controversial and far from universally accepted. Nonetheless, they were a significant force in generating the political environment that led the Carter administration to say we needed a larger directed-energy weapons program."

What actually happened, opposite to Dobbs' hoax, is the following.

During mid-1977, Keegan met with associates of mine from the Fusion Energy Foundation (FEF). He outlined his study, and identified the difficulties he had had with colleagues and opponents such as Graham. He asked FEF to provide him an assessment of some of the crucial evidence which Graham et al. had ridiculed. An FEF team, headed by one Dr. Steven Bardwell, a plasma physicist, pulled together a study of instances in which known Soviet technology might provide Moscow the scientific capability for deploying an operational ballistic missile defense system of a type based upon "new physical principles," as distinct from so-called "kinetic energy" intercept systems.

The Kazakstan site was included among the numerous topics in Soviet industrial technology which would be relevant to a U.S.A., or Soviet design of such a strategic ballistic defense capability. These studies included studies of such capabilities as phased-array radar systems for monitoring nearby space, in Earth orbit, or beyond. It included studies of special techniques for relevant sorts of rail systems, and so on, and so on. The report which Bardwell et al. gave to Keegan focussed on the following proposition. We knew, beforehand, that Soviet science recognized and was capable of defining an effective panoply of strategic ballistic missile defense based upon what are termed "new physical principles." The question was: could the Soviet economy actually deploy such technologies — outside the realm of laboratory and related tests? The further question, on which I focussed my personal attention, during late 1977 and beyond, was, could both the U.S.A. and Soviet Union jointly develop such systems, that as a way of getting out from under the common threat of general ballistic missile assault?

FEF's work to that effect had been developed as a by-product of both my general specialization in the matter of Riemannian manifolds for purposes of long-range studies in technological attrition, and my rejection of the mechanistic delusion, that so-called "Coulomb Forces" operate as law within the range of the sub-atomic and nuclear "infinitesimally small." My views in such matters coincided with my own emphasis on a modern view of Platonic "hylozoic monism," a view of Riemannian physics, and of the work of Vernadsky et al., which I had set forth as the science policy of our publishing effort, in memoranda of March-April 1973. It was those memoranda which had pushed the importance of controlled nuclear fusion, and which had been the sparkplug for the founding of the Fusion Energy Foundation.

The Rudakov lectures at Livermore had served us associ-

ated with FEF as a point of reference, a demonstration of the point at which both "super-lasers" and "particle-beam" technologies were emerging from confinement to laboratory experiments and related pioneering tests. What had been set forth as Soviet Military Doctrine, in the original edition of Sokolovsky's famous work, was now at the point of going over from laboratory frontiers into preliminary phases of large-scale applications. Our estimate was, that under the conditions of crash-program development missions, such as the impetus President Kennedy had given to the Moon Landing Mission, the laboratory work now in progress on a limited scale, could effect a technological revolution within a period as short as a decade.

In my view, Keegan did put his own political spin on the results of the report he received, but he did not fake results. If one reads the Bardwell report today, and reads it for what it says, it is John Pike and Dobbs, who have perpetrated the fraud. More to the point, is the dirty politics behind the ***Post'***s publication of Dobbs' hoax: Why are they lying about that, in this way, at this particular time? The article has no relevance, but the ***Post'***s share in the hysteria which the skyrocketting of my Presidential pre-candidacy had stirred up among the circles of Vice-President Al Gore, Bush circles, and some others. Pay attention: you shall soon discover that I am right on this latter point.

Documentation

Publications associated with Lyndon LaRouche and the Fusion Energy Foundation (FEF) produced a voluminous literature on antiballistic-missile defense between 1976 and 1983, when President Reagan adopted the Strategic Defense Initiative. We select here just two examples, which give the lie to the scribblings of the Washington Post*'s Michael Dobbs.*

The Rudakov revelations

The report excerpted here, titled "Soviets Propose to Close Fusion Gap, Offer Cooperation to U.S.," was issued by the Fusion Energy Foundation on July 20, 1976, and was printed in the weekly New Solidarity.

During his whirlwind tour of the U.S. research labs in July, leading Soviet fusion researcher Dr. Leonid Rudakov proposed to close the "fusion gap" and combine U.S. technology with Soviet science by having key components for a prototype fusion reactor built in the United States.

Rudakov, in talks with groups of U.S. scientists, had detailed how his research team at the Kurchatov Institute in Moscow achieved the release of controlled thermonuclear fusion energy via electron beam-induced fusion for the first time anywhere in the world. The Soviets plan to construct a prototype fusion reactor based on this approach by 1980.

The Soviet daily *Pravda* had reported in March 1976 that Kurchatov researchers had "opened the road for development of an all fusion energy system" with their successful experiments on electron beam pellet fusion systems. This approach to the release of controlled thermonuclear fusion energy is similar to that of laser beam pellet fusion: an intense beam of high-energy electrons is used to compress and heat a small pellet of fusion fuel. Just as in the case of the internal combustion engine, the resulting microexplosion would provide energy for generating electricity or other industrial applications.

Electron beams have several advantages over laser beams since high-energy, efficient systems can be constructed with existing technology. But in the past the electron beam has had a disadvantage in that the high-energy electrons (electrons of several million volts) tended to penetrate the outer shell of the pellet, preheating the fusion fuel and therefore making it thermodynamically impossible to obtain the necessary high compressions of the fusion fuel.

Work by Soviet scientists, such as that of V.N. Tsytovich on high energy plasma turbulence (see *FEF Newsletter,* June 1976), may provide the means to achieve "anomalous" absorption of high-energy electrons in a properly prepared plasma—and the details given by Dr. Rudakov tend to confirm that this is how he succeeded.

Rudakov identified the critical question which must be answered in any theoretical understanding of how the electrons interact with the pellet: what kind of behavior exists in the plasma which causes it to react with the formation of extrmely high, self-generated magnetic fields, so that it can then absorb many times more energy than would otherwise be predicted. . . .

Rudakov reported that the construction of an electron beam pellet fusion power reactor had already been put into the next Soviet five-year plan and will be completed by 1980. . . .

'Sputnik of the Seventies'

A pamphlet with the above title, subtitled "The Science Behind the Soviets' 'Superweapon,' " was issued by the U.S. Labor Party on May 31, 1977. The following excerpts were written by Dr. Steven Bardwell.

. . .The real story of the Soviet Union's weapons development is not a military one at all, but, rather, a scientific and industrial one. The key to understanding why the U.S. did not develop such a weapon and why the Soviets were able to, lies in the policies of scientific research, energy development, and industrial progress that each country pursued. Each of the technological ingredients which went into making such a "death ray" possible were the result of the Soviet Union's crash program for fusion development, a commitment to basic science research many times larger than that of the U.S., and a continuing, aggressive policy of industrial development. It is the welding together of these three areas of basic science, energy policy and industrial expansion that is crucial.

Based on that general method, the Soviets, as an adjunct of their overall industrial policy, have succeeded in perfecting the following chain of technologies:

1. A welding method which has allowed the construction of a huge steel chamber capable of containing an atomic blast. . . .

2. The chamber is equipped so that it can turn the blast from the atomic weapon exploding inside it into a pulse of electricity. Using a technology called pulsed magnetohydrodynamics (MHD), a burst of electrical energy containing the energy equivalent of millions of pounds of TNT can be released in a fraction of a second. This machine, if it were to fire one bomb a second, would generate twice as much electricity as the whole of the United States! The initial work on MHD generation came from plasma research in the Soviet fusion and fossil fuel energy generation experiments. The U.S. abandoned all work on MHD about a decade and a half ago, until Soviet successes with their experimental U-25 plant resulted in a small, currently running U.S. program. The Soviet U-25 plant is now supplying power for the Moscow subway system. . . .

3. Once the electrical pulse has been stored in the capacitor, the capacitor is discharged in a controlled way and the electrical energy is used to generate a high-intensity electron beam. As was reported in *New Solidarity* in April 1977, the Soviets have made fundamental breakthroughs in their beam-induced fusion research program under the direction of Leonid Rudakov and have perfected a means for generating electron beams at least twice as intense as any in the United States. These beams are used in their fusion program. The diode construction and propagation methods of the electron beams can also be used in the first stage of the generation of a beam for weapon use.

4. Using the intense beam of electrons, plasma processes can be used to generate a beam of atomic nucleii. There are a number of approaches to this process, but the most interesting technology (which the Soviets have perfected and is still several years from success in the West) is a method for generating almost monoenergetic, "cooled proton" beams. This plasma technology makes it possible to generate a beam of protons which fires a burst of energy equivalent to a million pounds of TNT up to 10 times a second!

This technology was proposed by G. Budker in the United States in 1967 and met with uniform ridicule in U.S. labs. It is now opening up the possibility of studying matter/antimatter collisons in scientific experiments and is being tested for use in medical applications, water purification and military applications.

5. Once the beam is generated, it must be guided to its target. (In military applications, this would be an intercontinental ballistic missile.) This involves a radar capable of siting the beam and a sufficient knowledge of beam-gas-plasma interactions so that the beam can propagate through the atmosphere to reach the missile. The Soviets have had a long program of study of beam-plasma interactions and have pioneered most of the conceptions involved in the application of propagating beams. This technology is also being applied to plasma electronics—using beams to generate intense microwaves, for example—and to the study and use of the astrogeophysical plasmas, the ionosphere and magnetosphere. Relevant in this regard are the recent experiments the Soviets have conducted with high intensity, broad-band radio transmission, which disrupted Atlantic ommunication channels repeatedly last fall.

If all these technologies have been integrated by the Soviets, as all available information indicates is the case, the Soviet Union is near to perfecting a weapon which is capable of being deployed to destroy any offensive capability of U.S. ICBMs. . . .

There are three areas especially where Soviet basic science has excelled, and, interestingly enough, each of these areas has a direct relation to the applications cited above.

The first of these areas is hydrodynamics, the study of the motion of continuous media, classically, fluids, but under certain circumstances including gases and solids. . . .

Research in this field is especially difficult and has lagged in the West, because the field of hydrodynamics, and especially that of shock waves in fluids, is characterized by "nonlinearity"—the property of a system whereby its evolution occurs through the generation of complex structures. Even classical hydrodynamics is famous for its difficulty. The description of explosive phenomena is even more difficult because these self-ordered, highly structured phenomena proceed contrary to the common-sense notion of evolution in the direction of decay and disorder.

It is not that the Soviets have developed any new scientific techniques, but they have unquestionably been bolder and more imaginative in their application of the difficult mathematics required. Thus, they have tried to solve the problems, in a causal, analytic, and rigorous way. When similar problems have been dealt with in the West (which has not been as often), the tendency is to solve the equations with a computer, and ignore the conceptual challenge of the nonlinear behavior of the fluid.

The second field in which the Soviets have excelled is in a theoretical branch of physics called "analytical mechanics." Again, this is a discipline within physics requiring mathematical skill and a willingness to develop new conceptions of the "natural" direction of evolution. There has developed a large school of U.S.S.R. mathematicians who have perfected the mathematical techniques of Riemann especially and have pursued a theoretical study of the conditions under which a system will evolve in a self-ordering, or disordering, direction. . . .

Third, and most importantly, the Soviets are years ahead in their theoretical understanding of plasma physics—the science of the ionized gases which are required for fusion development and for beam weapons. . . .