

LaRouche's SDI: A U.S.-Soviet Agreement for Peace and Development

by Jeffrey Steinberg

May 23—In early 1977, a group of patriotic U.S. intelligence officials, mostly veterans of the wartime OSS, approached Lyndon LaRouche and embarked on a nearly 40-year collaboration that persists to this day. Although they were attached to different agencies—some official, some private—they were all part of the institution of the U.S. Presidency.

The immediate trigger of the approach was LaRouche's election-eve 1976 half-hour prime-time TV broadcast, in which he warned, as the U.S. Labor Party's Presidential candidate, that a vote for Jimmy Carter was a vote for a Trilateral Commission apparatus that was committed to a thermonuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union. The LaRouche broadcast detailed the agenda and personnel of the Trilateral Commission and warned, prophetically, that a Carter victory would usher the Trilaterals into every key national security, foreign policy, and economic post within the government.

The message these patriots delivered to LaRouche was blunt: His assessment of the takeover of the White House by the Trilateral Commission was correct, and he was asked to be part of a patriotic resistance to the genuine danger of thermonuclear war.

LaRouche was not a newcomer to the U.S. Presidency. As an Army Medical Corps soldier in the China-Burma-India theater in World War II, he had strongly reacted to the death of President Franklin Roosevelt in April 1945 with a warning that a "great President" had been lost, and had been replaced by a "little man," Harry S. Truman.

Back in the United States in 1948, he had written to Gen. Dwight David Eisenhower, urging him to run for President that year as a Democratic Party candidate. Eisenhower had responded in writing to LaRouche, ex-



Lyndon LaRouche on national television, Nov. 1, 1976

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plaining that he was not yet ready to run for President, but appreciated the message of encouragement. After spending the 1950s and early 1960s battling against the scourge of McCarthyism, LaRouche had plunged into political activism in the 1960s, in the wake of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. In August 1971, he had warned, in an editorial in the weekly newspaper *New Solidarity*, which he had founded, that when Nixon pulled the plug on the Bretton Woods System, he had doomed his own Presidency, and had set the United States on a course of economic ruin through rampant Wall Street speculative looting of the real economy.

The early 1977 approach, effectively co-opting him into a position within the institution of the U.S. Presidency, was an upgrading of an already long-standing relationship with the powers and responsibilities of the Executive Branch of the U.S. Federal government. LaRouche was more than ready to fulfill those responsibilities.

The Strategic Defense Initiative Vision

In May 1977, *Aviation Week* published an account of Gen. George Keegan's assessment that the Soviet Union had made significant breakthroughs in particle-beam lasers, which could give Moscow a strategic edge in developing defensive systems against incoming thermonuclear weapons. LaRouche, who had earlier founded the Fusion Energy Foundation, saw the merits in General Keegan's warnings. Keegan had recently retired as the head of U.S. Air Force Intelligence, and had earned a reputation as an independent, hard-nosed strategic analyst.

Through his newly established ties to key patriotic segments of the U.S. intelligence community, LaRouche directly intervened to launch what later came to be known as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). LaRouche called for U.S.-Soviet collaboration to fully explore the prospects of beam defense, and argued that such a joint Soviet-American project could bring an end to the insane doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), under which mankind faced a constant threat of thermonuclear annihilation.

Through the former OSS circles, and other channels, LaRouche developed lines of collaboration with Ronald Reagan, the former California Governor who was already seen as a leading contender for the 1980 Republican Party Presidential nomination. Reagan had come to the same conclusions as LaRouche about the insanity of MAD, largely through his collaboration with Dr. Edward Teller of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California.

When LaRouche entered the Democratic Party Presidential primaries for 1980, he based much of his campaign on the push for beam defense collaboration with the Soviet Union. He continued his relentless campaign to expose the Trilateral Commission, now focusing his attention on another Trilateralist running for President, Republican candidate George H.W. Bush.

During a Presidential candidates debate in New Hampshire, sponsored by the National Rifle Association in early 1980, LaRouche had an opportunity to speak directly with Reagan, and the two men began a personal collaboration that would have historic consequences, culminating with President Reagan's March 23, 1983 nationwide TV address, in which he announced the launching of the Strategic Defense Initiative.

When Reagan was elected President in a landslide victory over incumbent Jimmy Carter, Reagan and his

circle of close advisors further drew LaRouche into the Presidency. Beginning in early 1981, first under the auspices of the CIA, and later under the auspices of the National Security Council, LaRouche established a back-channel dialogue with high-level designated officials of the Soviet government, posted at the Soviet embassy in Washington, D.C.

The subject of the dialogue was the proposal for joint work on a new doctrine of Mutually Assured Survival, replacing MAD. LaRouche's proposal, elaborated in a series of reports by the Fusion Energy Foundation and *Executive Intelligence Review*, and presented at a series of major international conferences in Washington and in European, Asian, and South American capitals, called for a revolution in science and physical economy—and an end to the Cold War on mutually beneficial terms. LaRouche, still living in New York City, made frequent trips to Washington throughout 1981-1983, meeting with his Soviet counterpart, and then reporting in person to a senior official of the National Security Council (NSC), Richard Morris, who was a top aide to National Security Advisor Judge William Clark. Written reports were submitted to the NSC on all of the trips.

In 1988, testifying as a character witness for LaRouche in Federal Court in Alexandria, Va., Richard Morris told the court that LaRouche and his associates had been involved in seven classified national security projects on behalf of the Reagan Administration—including the SDI.

On March 23, 1983, Ronald Reagan concluded a nationwide television address from the Oval Office with the following announcement:

In recent months . . . my advisors . . . have underscored the necessity to break out of a future that relies solely on offensive retaliation for our security. Over the course of these discussions, I have become more and more deeply convinced that the human spirit must be capable of rising above dealing with other nations and human beings by threatening their existence. Wouldn't it be better to save lives than to avenge them? Are we not capable of demonstrating our peaceful intentions by applying all our abilities and our ingenuity to achieving a truly lasting stability? I think we are—indeed we must!

After careful consultation with my advisors, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I believe



Ronald Reagan Presidential Library

President Reagan announces the SDI on national television, March 23, 1983.

there is a way. Let me share with you a vision of the future which offers hope. It is that we embark on a program to counter the awesome Soviet missile threat with measures that are defensive. Let us turn to the very strength in technology that spawned our great industrial base. . . . What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest upon the threat of instant U.S. retaliation to deter a Soviet attack; that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reach our own soil or that of our allies? . . . Isn't it worth every investment necessary to free the world from the threat of nuclear war? We know it is!

...I clearly recognize that defensive systems have limitations and raise certain problems and ambiguities. If paired with offensive systems, they can be viewed as fostering an aggressive policy and no one wants that. But with these considerations firmly in mind, I call upon the scientific community in our country, those who gave us nuclear weapons, to turn

their great talents now to the cause of mankind and world peace; to give us the means of rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete. . . . We seek neither military superiority nor political advantage. Our only purpose—one all people share—is to search for ways to reduce the danger of nuclear war.

President Reagan concluded his historic message with a note of cautious optimism:

My fellow Americans, tonight we are launching an effort that holds the promise of changing the course of human history. There will be risks, and results take

time, but I believe we can do it. As we cross this threshold, I ask for your prayers and your support.

Lyndon LaRouche immediately congratulated President Reagan for his courageous announcement, declaring:

For the first time since the end of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, there is, at last, hope that the thermonuclear nightmare will be ended during the remainder of this decade. Only high-level officials of government, or a private citizen as intimately knowledgeable of details of the international political and strategic situation as I am privileged to be, can even begin to foresee the earth-shaking impact the President's television address last night will have throughout the world.

Under instructions from President Reagan, days after the March 23, 1983 speech, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger formally conveyed a proposal to the Soviet



1983 pamphlet by LaRouche's National Democratic Policy Committee

government, that the two nations work together to develop and deploy a strategic ballistic missile defense system.

Backlash

Even before President Reagan's historic speech, forces in London, Moscow, and Washington were moving, with increasing desperation, to preempt the President from launching his Strategic Defense Initiative.

In Moscow, the attitude towards the LaRouche back-channel shifted markedly, when General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev died in November 1982, and was replaced by the long time KGB Director Yuri Andropov. Although Andropov took ill in mid-1983 and died on Feb. 9, 1984, his brief tenure as Soviet leader coincided with the Reagan SDI offer.

For a variety of reasons elaborated by LaRouche's Soviet interlocutor, Mr. Shershnev, Andropov rejected the Reagan offer. In part, Andropov feared that the United States would go through a surge of scientific and technological breakthroughs that would be absorbed into the overall civilian economy in ways that would leave the Soviet Union in the dust. He had also received air-tight guarantees from leading British and American policy-makers, including Henry Kissinger, Walter Mondale, and the Bush family, that Reagan would be blocked from adopting the SDI program, so closely associated with Lyndon LaRouche.

Even after the Reagan SDI speech, the Soviets continued to receive assurances that the program would be blocked from within the U.S. government. Instead of embracing the Reagan offer of SDI collaboration, Moscow adopted a hostile-aggressive policy of opposition, which included a barrage of media slanders against Lyndon LaRouche, including demands for his elimination.

Years later, Richard Morris confirmed to this author that, on the day of the SDI speech by the President, James Baker III, then President Reagan's Chief of Staff, had attempted to sabotage the delivery of the missile defense remarks, removing them from the final draft of the President's speech just hours before the scheduled television address. National Security Advisor Clark, in a total breach of protocol, bypassed Baker and went directly to the President to encourage him to restore the three-minute segment in the speech. Reagan readily



Ronald Reagan Presidential Library

Attempted assassination of President Reagan, March 30, 1981

agreed with Clark.

But the last ditch effort by Baker, reflecting Bush's adamant opposition to SDI, had its consequences. From the very outset, the LaRouche-Reagan-Teller plan for a joint American-Soviet scientific collaboration on new-physical-principle systems of missile defense was sabotaged—from the inside and from the outside—at every turn.

Bush versus LaRouche

There are still unanswered questions surrounding the choice of George H.W. Bush as Ronald Reagan's Vice Presidential running mate in the 1980 elections. Like LaRouche, Reagan had been a harsh public critic of the Trilateral Commission and its policies of controlled disintegration of the world economy. Bush had been an active member of the Trilateral Commission, right up to the eve of his own 1980 campaign for the GOP nomination. Yet, at the Republican nominating convention, after rejecting a proposal to name Gerald Ford as his running mate in what was publicly characterized as a Co-Presidency arrangement, Reagan was persuaded to name Bush as a lesser evil. It was a tragic, and unnecessary error, as Reagan was vastly popular and virtually assured of a landslide victory—without a Ford or Bush on the ticket.

On March 30, 1981, Ronald Reagan was shot by John Hinckley as he exited the Washington Hilton Hotel. President Reagan had only been in office 69 days when he was nearly killed by an assassin. Although the



George Bush Presidential Library and Museum

George H.W. Bush accepts the Republican nomination as President, August 18, 1988.

President survived the shooting, it left him weakened, and this provided the opening for the Bush team to assert more and more control over the Reagan Presidency, as time passed. The ability of the Bush faction to sabotage the Reagan-LaRouche SDI collaboration was but the most consequential element of an internal sabotage of the Reagan Presidency.

The anger of the Bush apparatus, including the neo-conservatives, at LaRouche and his successful partnership with President Reagan, led to the launching of a bogus criminal investigation into LaRouche and his associates, culminating in the Oct. 6-7, 1986 raids on LaRouche offices in Leesburg, Virginia by over 400 Federal, state, and local law enforcement officers, backed up by U.S. military SWAT units. A personal communication from LaRouche to President Reagan, as well as an intervention by LaRouche's allies within the U.S. intelligence services and the Presidency, prevented a bloodbath and the assassination of LaRouche.

The raid, however, represented the end of the Reagan

Presidency for all practical purposes. Reagan's last act on behalf of the shared strategic agenda with LaRouche took place in the very week that the Leesburg raids were taking place. In Reykjavik, Iceland for a summit with then-Russian General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov, an Andropov protégé, Reagan rejected Gorbachov's plea to abandon the SDI, in return for an agreement to sharply reduce the nuclear weapons arsenals. True to his commitments to the LaRouche beam defense proposal, Reagan refused to abandon his vision of Mutually Assured Survival and the new physical principles revolution at the heart of the proposal.

The battle over the Strategic Defense Initiative was a battle inside the institution of the Presidency. Lyndon LaRouche forged a policy alliance with the President on an historic mission that altered the course of history. While the SDI was sabotaged from being fully realized, by the treachery of Yuri Andropov, Henry Kissinger, George H.W. Bush, and others, the legacy of that effort would play out later, during the Bill Clinton Presidency, when LaRouche was once again called upon to serve as a critical channel to Russian scientific and governmental circles who understood the great, lost opportunity of 1983, and sought to revive the spirit of collaboration between Washington and Moscow under different circumstances, but on the basis of the same principles.



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

October 1986 assault on LaRouche headquarters in Leesburg, Va.