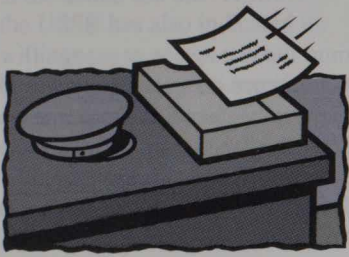


DEFENCE NOTES



Star Wars Developments

■ In late September, General Abrahamson announced his intention to resign as director of the US Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) to take a position in the private sector. Earlier that month, Abrahamson presented revised cost estimates for a "Phase I" SDI deployment of a system to destroy ballistic missiles launched against the US. The Phase I plan called for the deployment of 3,000 space-based interceptors carried on 300 satellites, with up to 2,000 ground-based interceptors in support. It would require a combination of space-based and ground-based surveillance systems.

The official costs of this system, planned for deployment in 1998, went from an estimated US \$60 billion in early 1987 to \$120 billion in early 1988. In June the Defense Department asked Abrahamson to reassess the programme. By reducing the number of interceptors and making the sensors less complex, the new proposal recalculates the cost at close to the original estimate of \$60 billion. It is not clear how the changes will affect the original Department of Defense requirement that the Phase I system be capable of intercepting thirty per cent of a 5,000 warhead Soviet attack.

However, a recent study by the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) suggested that a Phase I type system might destroy anywhere from "a few to a modest fraction" of the warheads in a large Soviet attack. The OTA study, part of which was declassified and released in June, considered that the system might be technically deployable in the

1995–2000 period. However, the study suggested that it would only make sense to deploy if there were high confidence in the technologies required in Phase 2 – in the period 2000–2010 – when the defence would need to employ directed-energy weapons, and measures to counter probable improvements in Soviet offensive forces.

Sharing SDI With the Allies

■ While doubts mount that SDI budgets will be sufficient to maintain the pace required for the first phase of deployment, it has become clear that earlier promises of extensive allied participation in SDI research have not materialized. By the end of 1987 about US \$127 million in contracts had been awarded to foreign firms. When the British government signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the US in 1985, they hoped for more than \$2 billion in contracts over a five-year period; by the end of 1987 British firms had obtained only \$30 million worth.

Canada did not sign a Memorandum of Understanding, and there has been little commercial interest in the SDI programme. A report in the *Globe and Mail* (10 October) suggested that SDI contracts to Canadian firms totalled less than \$1 million.

New Bombers and Air Defences

■ In August, at Kubinka airbase outside Moscow, US Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci sat in the cockpit of the most modern Soviet bomber, the Blackjack. Close-up views of the Blackjack confirmed that its dimensions and probable range were exactly as described in releases by the Pentagon. The Pentagon accounts were reportedly based on US reconnaissance satellite photographs dating from the early 1980s. Twelve Black-

jacks may now be deployed, with the expectation that the aircraft – which resembles the US B-1 – will replace about a hundred older Bear bombers dating from the mid-1950s.

As new combinations of penetrating bombers and long-range cruise missiles enter the arsenals of the superpowers – including the US B-2 "stealth" bomber scheduled for public unveiling in mid-November – the problems of early warning and defence against cruise missiles are being taken more seriously. Although still very small by comparison with SDI, the Air Defence Initiative (ADI) has a budget of US \$200 million for 1989. The US Navy appears to be emerging as a prominent participant in the programme. The Navy is researching passive and active acoustic sensors to improve the detection of cruise-missile submarines in coastal waters. More generally, the ADI research programme appears to be concentrating on technologies for airborne surveillance systems that would eventually replace the North Warning System in Canada and other ground-based radars. According to the 1987 Defence White Paper, Canada is participating in the ADI programme.

US Bases Overseas

■ During the past several months the United States has discussed the renewal of agreements on military bases with three allies: the Philippines, Spain and Greece. In the Philippines, where the US operates Clark air force base, Subic naval base and other facilities, it has agreed to a substantial increase in direct payments to Manila (from US\$ 180 million to \$481 million per year), as well as to other financial subsidies. The agreement is expected to lead to further talks on the status of the bases after the leases expire in 1991.

Spain, having previously refused to extend the lease of a US air force F-16 base, has agreed to

the continuation of three other US bases on Spanish territory. Greece, however, has confirmed that a US air force base at Hellenikon, near Athens, will be closed when a defence agreement expires at the end of 1988. There are three other major US military installations in Greece, the future of which are now under negotiation.

Finally, reports from Iceland indicate that NATO is seeking a second air base in that country to reduce pressure on the existing US base at Keflavik. In the event that the request is refused, a location in Greenland is also said to be under consideration.

UN Peacekeeping

■ The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to UN peacekeeping has renewed interest in both peacekeeping and the United Nations. The mediating role of the Secretary-General in the Afghan and Iran-Iraq cease-fires is generally seen to have restored credibility to the organization, which nevertheless continues to suffer from serious financial deficits. In an unexpected move, President Reagan signalled a change of heart towards the UN by offering to pay US \$144 million out of the total US deficit of \$520 million.

The Soviet Union has also discovered the value of peacekeeping. In early October Vladimir Petrovski, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, proposed in New York that a permanent UN peacekeeping force be established, and offered Soviet support in its creation. In response, the Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark, declined to comment directly on the Soviet proposal, but affirmed Canada's interest in establishing peacekeeping on "a more professional and broader basis." □

– DAVID COX