

This brought Dr. Carnesale to his fourth question: What would it cost? The cost of the research programme was known, but what about the cost of deployment. "We have no idea," he said. "If you don't know what the technology is and you don't know what the objective is and you don't know what the threat is, estimates of cost are just silly."

How would the Soviet Union react? The SDI programme would stimulate Soviet countermeasures, in an attempt to frustrate or overwhelm the defence systems, of the sort outlined by Dr. Yonas. In addition, the Soviet Union would certainly step up its own strategic defence programme.

What was the Western European response? The key fact for the European Allies, said Carnesale, was that, in the forty years that the Soviet Union had had nuclear weapons, those weapons had never been used against Western Europe. For this reason, Europeans liked the status quo and were skeptical about any changes to the balance of forces in Europe. But there were other concerns about SDI. The French and the British worried that if both superpowers deployed ballistic missile defences (BMD) their independent nuclear arsenals would no longer function as effective deterrents. They also feared that, if both the United States and the Soviet Union had BMD, they might consider Europe a "safe" place for a conventional or even a nuclear war.

What would be the effect of SDI on arms control? SDI was clearly on a collision course with the ABM Treaty, a treaty which Dr. Carnesale had helped to negotiate. The conviction underlying that treaty, a conviction equally true today, was that increased defence would lead to increased offensive arsenals. Furthermore, if space-based ballistic missile defence were to go forward, there would certainly be no prospect of any kind of limitations on anti-satellite (ASAT) weaponry.

Dr. Carnesale felt that the notion of sharing the SDI technology with the Soviet Union was so patently absurd it was hardly worth discussing. During the presidential debates, Mr. Reagan had said, "This technology will work and we should share it with the Russians." Mr. Mondale had replied, "This technology won't work and it is so important, we should not share it with the Russians." Carnesale's suggested compromise: "If it works, don't share it; if it doesn't work, share it."