

show that at the time, the idea was criticized by Department of Defense analysts, as "unrealistic." Also, the system would be unable to shoot down enough enemy missiles to be effective. The documents were released by General Abrahamson, head of the SDI Office, in response to a request from Senator Johnston. General Abrahamson suggested that the assessment was correct at the time but said that the rate of technological advance since then has been "phenomenal."

A report from the offices of Senators Proxmire and Johnston concludes that although no final decision has been made public, the SDI programme has already been reoriented towards technologies that could be deployed by the mid-1990s. The report states that there is a "black programme" within SDI "which is developing a blueprint for deploying strategic defenses in the near term."

On 24 April the American Physical Society released a study on the laser and particle beam technologies that would be required for the SDI programme. The study concluded that it would take at least ten years to determine whether or not it was even feasible to use these technologies in a SDI system. According to the study there are still formidable technological obstacles to overcome and some of the most crucial technologies would have to improve by factors of one hundred to one million.

Soviet Military Power

■ In March the US Department of Defense released its annual report, *Soviet Military Power*, describing the latest Soviet military developments. The report states that the Soviets are reconsidering their traditional strategy of "rapid offensive operations" in the European theatre. This change is attributed to the increased sophistication of NATO conventional weapons and new US and NATO doctrines of deep attack that would carry the war deep into Warsaw Pact territory. Furthermore, the sheer size of the arsenals and improved capabilities on both sides have apparently led the

Soviets to believe that a European conflict would be of much longer duration than they had previously thought.

The nature and extent of the Soviet ballistic missile defence (BMD) programme is also raised in this year's *Soviet Military Power*. It is an area in which there has been considerable dispute between the various intelligence agencies

concerned. The Pentagon states that the Soviet Union is in the process of developing a nation-wide BMD system; something that is prohibited by the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The CIA puts the probability of this at ten percent or less. In an apparent compromise, *Soviet Military Power* states that, taken together, Soviet BMD activities "indicate a significant com-

mitment to enhancing the strategic defenses of the USSR and suggest that the Soviets may be preparing an ABM defense of their nation."

Whence the Threat to Peace

■ In February 1987 the Soviet Union released its equivalent to *Soviet Military Power*, entitled *Whence the Threat to Peace*. The last issue of the Soviet publication was published in 1984. This latest edition is of particular note because it contains Soviet estimates of the nuclear forces of the US and the Soviet Union. In the past the Soviet Union has been reluctant to release its own estimates of the two nuclear arsenals and has generally only done so as part of arms control negotiations such as SALT.

The estimates presented are those given to President Reagan by General Secretary Gorbachev at their meeting in Reykjavik in October. By Soviet estimates, the US has approximately 14,800 nuclear warheads on 2,208 strategic delivery vehicles and the Soviet Union has about 10,000 warheads on 2,480 delivery vehicles. *Whence the Threat to Peace* also places heavy emphasis on the need to maintain the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and reiterates the Soviet view that the US Strategic Defense Initiative will be destabilizing and lead to a new arms race.

The Last Titan 2

■ According to an *Associated Press* report of 7 May, the last operational Titan 2 intercontinental ballistic missile was deactivated by the US Air Force in early May. At one time fifty-four Titan missiles were deployed in concrete silos in Arkansas, Arizona and Kansas. The Titans were among the earliest missiles to be placed in the US arsenal. They were large, not very accurate, and prone to accident. They carried what by present standards is an enormous multi-megaton warhead. The AP report said the silos they leave behind will be left open for some months to allow Soviet surveillance satellites to confirm that they are empty. □

ALLIANCE NEWS

Meeting of the North Atlantic Assembly

■ During the weekend of 23 May legislators from the NATO countries gathered in Quebec City to discuss economic, political and military issues. Among the subjects raised by the Parliamentarians at the conference were the future of Mikhail Gorbachev's reform initiatives in the USSR, and the role of strategic defenses in Western security.

As leader of the host country, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney spoke to the Assembly. The speech ranged across the spectrum of arms control and security issues, however, Mr. Mulroney made specific reference to the US Strategic Defense Initiative. Canada continues to support research into strategic defence, but Mulroney cautioned: "... extreme care must be taken to ensure that defences are not integrated with existing forces in such a way as to create fears of a first strike... and second, we cannot allow strategic defences to undermine the arms control process and existing agreements."

Anglo-French Nuclear Cooperation

■ A meeting in March between the British and French defence ministers laid the groundwork for closer coordination of the two countries' nuclear forces. André Giraud and George Younger announced on March 10 that their governments are seeking to formalize close, but largely *ad hoc* exchanges on questions relating to their nuclear forces.

According to a report in the *Economist* (14 March) the U.K.-France accord is an indication that they are considering the possibility of a combined European nuclear force in the event that the United States withdraws its nuclear forces. The new Anglo-French nuclear cooperation comes at a time when the presence of American nuclear missiles in Europe has been made uncertain by the progress in the superpower arms control negotiations.

Revival of the Western European Union

■ As the superpowers move closer to an arms control agreement Western European countries are moving to revitalize the Western European Union (WEU). The seven-member body (Britain, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg) was formed in 1954 as a defensive pact and was part of the allied effort to bring West Germany into NATO. The WEU is the object of increasing interest because it is the only exclusively European body with a mandate to deal with matters of defence.

In December 1986, French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac proposed a Charter of Western European Security Principles in a speech to the WEU assembly in Paris. The main elements of Chirac's proposal are that nuclear deterrence remains the only way to ensure European security, and that Western Europe must retain its link to the American deterrent force.