

News Digest

By the Associated Press

SDI scientists: Star Wars needs a treaty to succeed

LIVERMORE, Calif. — Scientists designing Star Wars say it may be impossible to orbit the weapons until a detailed arms agreement with the Soviet Union is worked out.

Space-based weapons can be extremely vulnerable to attack, especially at the moment they are put into orbit, said Robert Perret, chief of a unit at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory which is assigned to examine and test weapons policy.

"In a historical perspective, the Soviets have demonstrated the national will to oppose in an active and violent way actions which they find threatening, if they can," said Perret, citing the Russian destruction of a civilian Korean airliner in 1983 and the downing of a U.S. U-2 spy plane flown by Gary Powers in 1960.

"If some kind of agreement can be reached that protects the deployment phase for both sides, then you can get past a fairly hard point," said Perret, who acknowledges that his troublesome questions may have "been a thorn in the side" of the Pentagon in the early stages of other weapons systems.

President Reagan has strenuously denied that he will allow the Soviets to have a veto over Star Wars research or deployment, and maintains that the program is not a bargaining chip to be traded away for a cut in offensive weapons.

"We do not need a treaty with the Russians to deploy Star Wars," said one State Department arms control expert.

"However, it would be vastly more desirable if we could reach an agreement to amend the Anti-Ballistic missile treaty and reduce offensive weapons before we deploy space-based defenses," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The State Department official considered it unlikely that the Soviets would, as Perret suggested, shoot down orbiting defenses as America sends them up, but the prospect clearly upset him. "It would be a provocation. We would have to respond."

In recent speeches, Reagan has emphasized that strategic defenses must go hand in hand with arms control, and a team of senior American negotiators went to Moscow this month to talk with the Russians about linking Star Wars with reductions in nuclear arsenals.

However, the Strategic Defense Initiative is still in the research stage, and administration officials have not publicly outlined how an agreement would be structured to allow deployment of missile defenses.

Much of the research on the space leg of strategic defense is being carried out at Livermore, a Department of Energy lab administered by the University of California.

Livermore scientists are prime researchers on the X-ray laser, a nuclear-driven device that might have defense applications, and the free electron laser, which Pentagon officials are promoting as a more likely energy

source to knock down enemy missiles during the boost phase.

Perret and other Livermore scientists who back Star Wars go further than administration officials in stressing the link between negotiations and strategic defense.

George Miller, director of weapons development at Livermore, objects to viewing strategic defense "as a bargaining chip to be thrown in when the Soviets agree to cuts in strategic arms."

The lab's leading Star Wars critic, however, doubted that Kremlin leaders will ease their opposition to Reagan's plan enough to allow the United States to deploy space-based defenses.

"What you are doing is putting the whole program in the hands of a Soviet veto. They can unilaterally say, 'no,' and I don't see any reason they wouldn't," said Ray Kidder, a Livermore weapons researcher who has been outspoken in his opposition to Star Wars.

Space-based defenses are specifically banned by the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which can be abrogated on by either side on six months notice.

Published reports have said that Reagan is proposing a seven-year delay in deploying weapons that would violate the pact. But State Department officials and Livermore scientists say that by the early 1990s, orbital strategic defenses will still be under development and that none could be ready much before the turn of the century.

In Brief

Soviets grant visas

MOSCOW — Soviet authorities on Tuesday issued exit visas to the family of freed Soviet human rights activist Anatoly Shcharansky, his brother Leonid said.

Leonid Shcharansky said he received a visa, as did his mother, Ida Milgrom, his wife, Raya, and their two children, Alexander, 14, and Boris, 1.

"I just got the papers today and I haven't had a chance to buy any tickets yet, so I don't know when we will be leaving," Shcharansky said. He said earlier his family had been told it had permission to leave by next Monday, Aug. 15.

The family plans to leave the Soviet Union for Israel via Vienna, Austria, the normal route for Jewish emigrants, Shcharansky said.

The granting of the exit visas was part of the arrangement that freed Anatoly Shcharansky in February.

He was released in an East-West exchange after nine years in prison on charges of spying for the United States. Both Shcharansky and the United States denied he was a spy.

DeCamp to seek re-election

ALBION — Sen. John DeCamp said Tuesday he'll seek re-election rather than try to petition onto the November ballot as a candidate for governor.

DeCamp, who circulated petitions but didn't turn them in, said he'll support Republican gubernatorial nominee Kay Orr.

"The only thing I would do is function as a spoiler," the veteran lawmaker said Tuesday.

In June, DeCamp described the race between Mrs. Orr and Democratic nominee Helen Boosalis as a "state prom queen contest." DeCamp on Tuesday described Mrs. Boosalis as a fine woman but said her election "would be disastrous economically."

"I'm convinced Nebraska's economic future will rest heavily on what occurs in this election," DeCamp said.

The four-term Republican state senator from Neligh will run against challenger M.L. Dierks for the 40th district seat. A spokesman for Dierks said DeCamp's comments Tuesday were meaningless.

In the May primary, DeCamp finished behind Dierks and received only 29 percent of the vote. In 1980, DeCamp finished second in the primary but won the general election.

State meat seal suggested

LINCOLN — Sen. Tom Vickers of Farnam wants to follow Florida's successful formula for selling orange juice to capture a bigger share of the national market for Nebraska red meat.

Vickers, a rancher, suggested Tuesday that Nebraska begin stamping its red-meat products with a seal of approval, letting shoppers know that the products meet stricter quality standards.

"It's one thing to encourage Nebraskans to buy Nebraska products," he said at a Statehouse news conference. "I would like to expand that idea much more to encourage American housewives ... when they went to a meat case they would look for the Nebraska stamp."

Vickers said his idea was hatched while accompanying his wife to the grocery store. He said his wife made sure she bought orange juice that contained a Florida seal of approval, which seemed more important to her than any particular brand.

Florida has developed quality standards for citrus products that surpass the standards in other states, he said.

"It seems to me that we ought to take a lesson from Florida ... and create a mechanism so we could possibly set a quality standard and then develop a Nebraska logo or stamp or seal of approval authorized by state government," he said.

Vickers said that devising state standards for red-meat products that exceed standards elsewhere would give Nebraska producers an edge in a market that continues to grow more competitive. Nebraska red meat must pass U.S. Department of Agriculture standards.

Stricter Nebraska standards could, for instance, require producers to certify that their livestock were taken off antibiotics for a certain period of time, he said.

Increasing national sales of Nebraska red meat could increase demand for the state's surplus feed grain and would be an internal economic development tool that would help the entire economy, he said.

"An active red meat industry will provide one more way to utilize the grain produced by our farmers that is close to home," he said.

Vickers said legislation probably would be needed to develop a Nebraska standard for its red-meat products. He said he would push for a state inspection system only if the state and producers could identify economic benefits.

Ragweed may bring misery

OMAHA — Growing conditions this summer have been ideal for producing a bumper crop of ragweed, the principal culprit in the fall hay fever season in Nebraska, an allergist said.

Weather will determine whether the abundant ragweed brings misery to people who are allergic to its pollen, said Dr. Linda Ford of Papillion, president of the Nebraska Allergy Society.

"The plants are primed. If we have typical August weather, we will have a big year for allergy sufferers," Ford said.

Clown case argued

NORTH PLATTE — A Lincoln County district judge will rule on pre-trial motions to disqualify some evidence in the sexual-assault trial of an entertainer known as Windy the Clown.

Frank Collins, 52, of Murray, Utah, is charged with first-degree sexual assault in an alleged assault on a 26-year-old mentally retarded man. Collins' performances as Windy the Clown took him to cities in the United States and Canada and included shows teaching children how to avoid sexual attacks.

Collins, who is out on bond, is accused of assaulting a client at the North Platte Opportunity Center last August.

Defense attorney Kent Florum presented motions to prohibit evidence of Collins' past sexual conduct. The lawyer also wanted to bar testimony of the alleged victim. The man didn't report the alleged assault for four months and his report wasn't corroborated, Florum said.

The trial, which was to begin Tuesday, was rescheduled for Sept. 16.

Soviets call talks failure, accuse Israel of arrogance

MOSCOW — Talks with Israel were a failure, the Israelis were "arrogant" in bringing up the issue of Soviet Jews and the Kremlin refusal to resume diplomatic relations remains firm, a government spokesman said Tuesday.

Israeli officials in Helsinki expressed surprise at Gennady Gerasimov's sharp tone. The talks were held in the Finnish capital Monday, scheduled to last two days, but the Soviet delegation broke them off after 90 minutes.

The Israelis said they thought the meeting was positive and suggested the Soviet Union was trying to belittle it to forestall Arab criticism.

Soviet and Israeli delegations met to discuss a Soviet proposal to send a

delegation to Israel to check holdings of the Russian Orthodox Church, functioning of the Soviet interest section at the Finnish Embassy and the status of Soviet citizens living in Israel. Many of the Soviet residents are Russian Orthodox-priests and nuns.

Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel said last week that he believed the Helsinki talks could lead to renewal of relations, which the Soviets broke after the 1967 Middle East war.

Israeli officials in Helsinki said it was constructive that formal talks were held for the first time in 19 years. Israel says the question of a Soviet visit remains open, with an Israeli return visit to Moscow as a condition.

At his news conference, however, Gerasimov said there was no question of an Israeli visit to Moscow and the proposal for a Soviet visit to Israel was dropped. No optimism was evident in his statements.

The Helsinki talks were to have been narrowly focused, Gerasimov said. He complained that the Israelis insisted on raising points "clearly beyond the framework of the consular nature of the talks."

Those included the Middle East situation in general and Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union, which Israeli groups insist be linked to any negotiations between the two countries.

Companies gearing up for satellite launch business

SPACE CENTER, Houston — "Have Rockets — Will Launch" is the message from companies gearing up to grab their share of an estimated \$6 billion space launch business created by the government's decision to remove commercial satellites from NASA's shuttle.

Companies that manufacture or are planning to launch space rockets said their phones started ringing earlier this month when rumors circulated about the change in government policy.

President Reagan confirmed the rumors Friday by announcing that only 14 of 44 satellites scheduled for the shuttle would be carried into orbit once the craft resumes flights in 1988. And on Tuesday, Martin Marietta announced that it is offering its Titan III to launch commercial satellites.

Denver-based Martin Marietta said it is the only company in the nation currently operating a production line for space launch vehicles and the first launch could be as soon as early 1989. Titans have had 129 successful flights in 134 launches; the last two failed.

Reagan's announcement "was a green light for the ELV (expendable launch vehicle) industry. We anticipate a very strong investor response," said Mark Daniels of Space Services Inc.

Daniels said Space Services has signed two customers to launch a total of eight satellites on its Conestoga II, capable of putting only 300 pounds into a high orbit. The first launch is expected late next year.

Rick Endres, corporate vice president of Transpace Carriers Inc. which owns the marketing rights to the Delta rocket, said his company believes there is a need for 120 satellite launches, both military and commercial, over the next six years.

Endres estimates that satellite launch service from now until 1992 represents about a \$6 billion business, and other companies confirm the estimate.

Jack Isabel of General Dynamics, which makes the Atlas Centaur, said seven companies have made inquiries. He said his firm expects a need for 15 to 16 launches a year in the long term.

The Air Force is expected to make a decision on Feb. 8 about a new medium-sized launch vehicle. Martin Marietta, General Dynamics and a partnership of Hughes Aircraft and Boeing Aerospace are all bidding for the contract.

Whoever wins the contract will have a guarantee of at least four Air Force Satellite launches a year, enough to keep a production line open.

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