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Space defense network a dream, says Prof

Technical problems would hobble viable laser-based defense plan

By Michele Matassa
Of the Emerald

If Pres. Ronald Reagan is looking for a foolproof space-defense system, he's dreaming, according to two University political science professors.

Prof. William Baugh says there are "enormous technical problems to be overcome" in developing the space-based laser defense which Reagan publicly sketched for the first time in a speech last week.

And, in the nuclear age, perfection is important, Baugh says.

The laser system works on the assumption that the beams make contact with enemy nuclear weapons in order to damage them beyond use. If one missile penetrated the lasers, it could do great damage.

Baugh says he always analyzes "leakage rates" when judging a defense system's effectiveness.

"The British won the Battle of Britain by being able to knock down about ten percent of the German bombers that were flown against them, which meant that they had to absorb the bomb loads of ninety percent of the German bombers. And they survived."

"In the nuclear age you can't do that," Baugh says.

Prof. Arthur Hanhardt admits certain space defense systems would be feasible but agrees that technical capabilities

wouldn't allow for perfection.

Planning to solve those technical problems within even 20 years would be a "heroic assumption," Hanhardt says.

If Reagan's proposed research does lead to deployment of space lasers, the result would be a continuation of the arms buildup, say Baugh and Hanhardt.

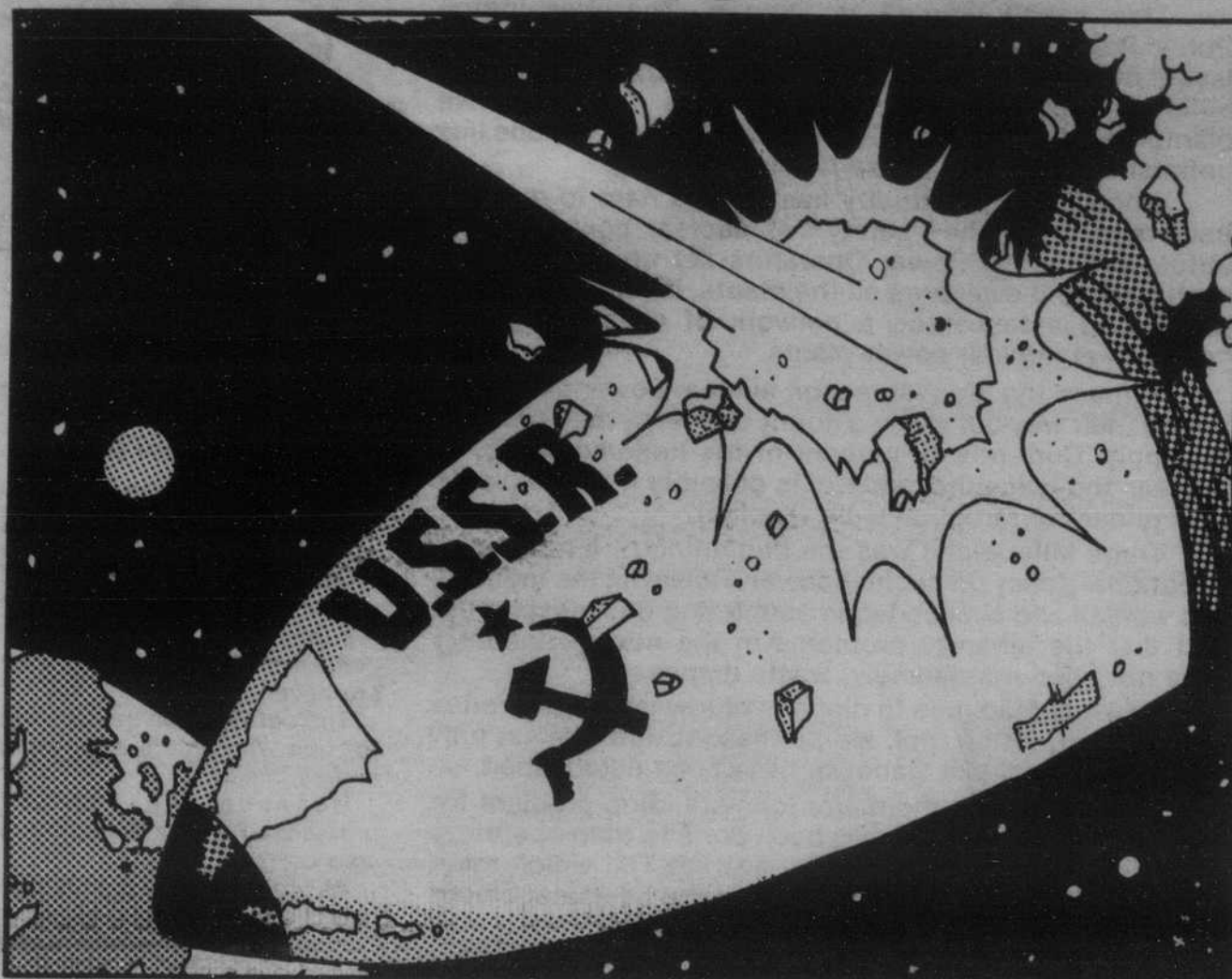
"Assuming that you could get the network... into space, you would have to prevent the Soviets from putting up a comparable network. That is, you'd have to use the weapons, which is an act of war, presumably."

"If you didn't use them and you allow the Soviets to put up their network, then you've reestablished a stalemate. You've simply extended the weapons stalemate to new territory, namely outer space," Baugh says.

But he suggests that arms escalation in space may not be such a bad idea, compared to its alternative.

"An arms competition in space would not have to be a terrible thing if it directed the focus of attention and competition off of things that destroy people and property on the surface of the planet," he says.

Hanhardt points out the danger of a race toward workable anti-ballistic missile systems (ABMs).



Graphic by Shawn Bird

"The first country to get to a credible ABM system would have an invulnerable force and wouldn't have to worry about retaliation," Hanhardt says.

This safety would cause a "great temptation to engage in a first strike," he says.

Is Reagan preparing for a first strike?

Hanhardt downplays the possibility but says deployment of the system could

spook the Soviets and their leader, Yuri Andropov.

"The U.S. probably doesn't plan to engage in first strike capabilities but you've got to put yourself in the place of Mr. Andropov," he says.

The Soviets may not expect a first strike from across the Atlantic, but they could still be too wary to ignore the possibility, Hanhardt says.

Both professors deny scat-

tered concerns that Reagan's proposal violates the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972, signed by the United States and the Soviet Union. It banned the deployment of all ABMs except for one system ringing each country's capitol.

Because Reagan is calling for research only, not deployment, he has not violated the ABM Treaty, the professors say.

Nuke weapons protesters released

Most were given 'bar-and-banned' forms

By Richard Burr
Of the Emerald

Four University students were released Tuesday from a California prison following a non-violent demonstration at Vandenberg Air Force Base.

The students, members of Eugene Direct Action, were released from Lompoc (Calif.) Federal Penitentiary after being threatened with contempt of court unless they revealed their true names, says Beth Plowman, an EDA member who attended the demonstration. About 10 University students were among more than 800 arrested March 22.

Most people arrested were released on "bar-and-banned" forms that prohibit them from returning to the base, Plowman says.

Some demonstrators, including the four students, were held longer because they penetrated so deep inside the large base confines that they breached base security. One EDA member reached the shuttle launch center, she adds.

"We never really conceived or planned of people being held this long," Plowman says. Students took care of registration before they left, she says.

But Andrew Harvey, a freshman fine arts major, is still in custody, Plowman says.

The man, along with several other protesters, is being held in Florence, Ariz., because the California prisons apparently are full and can't handle the numerous demonstrators, Plowman says.

The group does not know when Harvey will be released, she says.

EDA members were arrested at a similar protest staged in January. At that time, members were released on "bar-and-banned."

Some of those demonstrators returned to the base despite the forms' prohibition, Plowman says. Although they were photographed and fingerprinted last time, the authorities apparently find it too costly to run computer cross-checks on the protesters, she says.

The group originally planned to protest MX missile testing at the base, but Congress' reluctance to fund the missiles caused a delay, Plowman says.

Demonstrators instead protested the biweekly test-firing of Minutemen missiles and fitting of Minutemen missiles with MX warheads, she says.

Group members protested against the missiles because they are first-strike weapons, Plowman says.

The EDA plans to return in June for more non-violent protests.

Reagan offers Soviets weapons reduction plan

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Pres. Ronald Reagan's offer to trim the number of nuclear missiles to be deployed in Europe if the Soviets pare their arsenal of medium-range warheads is being well received by America's European allies.

But the man who negotiated the SALT II treaty for the United States says the Soviets probably will find "there's nothing in it for them."

There was no immediate official response from Moscow as Reagan prepared to further explain the U.S. policy shift in a speech today to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council.

But American arms expert Paul Warnke, in Washington, said, "To the extent that it appears to call for equality of warheads between the United States and the Soviet Union, it would mean that the Soviets — if they made a 50 percent cut — would then be confronted with the entire deployment of American ground-launched cruise missiles and Pershing 2s," Warnke said.

Reagan is en route to a four-day holiday weekend at his ranch near Santa Barbara and stopped in Los Angeles to make a speech originally billed as a major arms policy address.

Administration officials had said privately that Reagan would announce in the speech the expected shift from his proposal to ban all U.S. and Soviet missiles aimed at Europe. But, when it was learned that most European newspapers would miss the speech because of holiday schedules, Reagan summoned NATO ambassadors to the White House and announced the essence of his new negotiating position before departing for the West Coast.

The NATO allies, who had been consulted before the proposal was put on the negotiating table in Geneva earlier this week, said in a statement that "it represents a significant step

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