

ALL APPEARED
ON PAGE 1-AWASHINGTON TIMES
26 November 1986

Kremlin has spent \$150 billion on its 'star wars,' CIA estimates

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THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Soviet Union has spent \$150 billion on its own version of the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative over the last decade, the No. 2 man at the Central Intelligence Agency said yesterday.

That is 15 times what the United States has spent in the same period, said CIA Deputy Director Robert M. Gates.

It has bought the Soviets so much know-how and military hardware that they may be preparing to abandon a treaty banning most defenses against nuclear missiles, he said.

While conceding that intelligence estimates of Soviet spending "are based on an arcane and, in absolute terms, not particularly reliable science," Mr. Gates said "it is our judgment that over the past 10 years, the Soviet Union has spent nearly \$150 billion on strategic defense."

The Pentagon previously has said that the Soviets have a \$1 billion-a-year laser weapons program. The \$150 billion figure is believed to be the first public estimate of total Soviet spending on missile defense during the last 10 years.

The United States will spend \$3.5 billion on SDI in fiscal year 1987. President Reagan had requested about \$5.4 billion.

Mr. Gates, in a speech yesterday to the World Affairs Council of Northern California, said the funds have been used for research on exotic technologies like those that characterize President Reagan's SDI, rockets for intercepting enemy missiles, ballistic missile detection radars, a vast air defense capability and hardening for Soviet missile silos, command bunkers and other military sites.

A copy of the speech was released in Washington.

"Taken together, all of the Soviet Union's ABM [anti-ballistic missile] and ABM-related activities are more significant and more ominous than any one considered individually," Mr. Gates said. "Cumulatively, they suggest that the U.S.S.R. may be preparing an ABM defense of its national territory."

In another development, the CIA

official said U.S. intelligence has discovered a ninth huge radar being constructed as part of a network on Soviet borders — the third new installation discovered this year.

U.S. officials have said the radars could be used to defend against nuclear missiles, while the Soviets have said they are for early warning of a missile attack. Previously, U.S.

officials had acknowledged eight such radars.

Mr. Gate's remarks followed Monday's report in the authoritative British journal Jane's Weapons Systems that Soviet strategic defense research is much more advanced than is commonly believed. Jane's also said that the Kremlin is benefiting from "a very dark cloud" over U.S. space programs.

SDI, commonly known as "star wars," is the research program Mr. Reagan launched in 1983 to study methods of protecting the nation against attack by nuclear ballistic missiles.

The Soviet Union has denied the existence of its own missile defense programs and consistently has opposed the U.S. SDI program — a stance that led to a deadlock in arms control talks at last month's superpower summit in Iceland.

Mr. Gates said the Soviet Union may be preparing to "break out" of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which bans all but a small missile defense force in the belief that neither side will launch a nuclear strike if both are vulnerable.

The CIA official said the Soviets are replacing the missile defense system around Moscow with new radars and a two-layer system of long- and short-range missile interceptors based in silos that may be reloadable. The system will have the full 100 launchers allowed by the ABM Treaty and could be operational by 1988, he said.

"The Soviets also are developing components of a new ABM system which are apparently designed to allow them to construct individual ABM sites in a matter of months rather than the years that are re-

quired for the silo-based ABM systems going into Moscow," Mr. Gates said. The new devices could violate the treaty's ban on development of mobile, land-based missile defense systems, he said.

"We estimate that by using these components, the Soviets could undertake rapidly paced ABM deployments to strengthen the defenses of Moscow and defend key targets in the western U.S.S.R. and east of the Urals by the early 1990s," Mr. Gates said.

Critics of the administration's characterization of the Soviet missile defense program say the Moscow defenses could easily be overwhelmed by a concerted U.S. missile attack.

They also have charged that a Pentagon estimate that 10,000 scientists and engineers are working on the Soviet laser weapons program alone is based solely on intelligence estimates of the floor space in Soviet research and development facilities.

And, the critics say, the Soviet Union lags in two areas crucial to the success of a sophisticated strategic defense: powerful computers and sensors to detect and track an enemy attack.

But Mr. Gates said that "the Soviets are devoting considerable resources to improving their abilities and expertise in these areas," adding that theft of technology from the West has helped solve the problem.

In other comments on the Soviet missile defense program, Mr. Gates:

- Estimated that the Soviets could test the feasibility of a ground-based laser for missile defense by the late 1980s and of a neutral particle beam to disrupt satellites by the 1990s.

- Said the Soviets are investigating excimer, free-electron and chemical lasers for missile defense, as well as X-ray lasers, which draw their energy from the explosion of a nuclear bomb.

The Soviets clearly believe that strategic defense is possible, Mr. Gates said, as he called for support of the U.S. program.

"In the Soviet view, a U.S. decision at this point to give up on defense and to rely solely on offensive weapons for deterrence not only would preserve their monopoly in strategic defense, but would be a key indicator of a loss of U.S. will to compete militarily," Mr. Gates said.

"Failure to proceed with an American strategic defense would hand the Soviets a unilateral military advantage of historic consequence," he said, "with awesomely negative implications for strategic stability and peace."