

Future in space



Controversies over SDI clouded by propaganda

By Tammy Kirk
Staff Writer

Dr. James Oberg, a McDonnell-Douglas engineer on contract to NASA, said Wednesday that his main purpose for speaking on Strategic Defense Initiative was not to discuss the policies involved or to choose positions, but simply to tell the truth.

But too often, Oberg said, people choose positions on projects such as SDI, and then "make" evidence to fit their argument.

Briefly, SDI, better known as Star Wars, is a defense initiative which would make use of emerging technologies such as laser and high-energy particle beams to destroy Soviet missiles before they strike their targets. This strategic concept is the result of President Reagan calling on scientists to discover new ways to render nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete.

Oberg said, "Soviet reality is what they say it is."

Oberg gave numerous examples of what he called misleading Soviet propaganda concerning space and space weapons and used a slide presentation to present his evidence.

Oberg presented two pictures a group of Soviets. The "before" picture was of a Soviet spaceman, a chief space designer, and a military officer. Because the Soviets claimed that the particular project being worked on had no military influence, the military officer was air brushed away for publication.

Pravda, the official governmental Soviet newspaper, Oberg said, accuses the United States of using shuttles as "space spies." But, Oberg said the Soviets neglected to report on their own "space spies."

Oberg, an engineer who has studied Soviet weapons, also spoke of the difference between the anti-satellites called "satellite killers", which are

designed to destroy other satellites, and "killer satellites", which are designed to destroy other targets such as ICBMs.

Presently, only anti-satellites are operational, Oberg said.

But Soviet statistics show that killer satellites have been operational for the Soviets since 1971, though not in space, Oberg said. And, he added, some propaganda in the United States claims "that no real harm exists," even though four consecutive Soviet tests were successful in 1971.

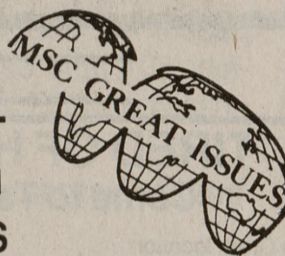
However, the Soviets chose not to present the facts to the public by reporting these killer satellites as only in the experimental stage, Oberg said. Yet, when the launching pads are covered with snow, they're the first to be cleared, Oberg added.

Oberg said the Soviet Union and the United States must tell the truth and go on with the SDI from there.

ABORTION (a - bor shun)



1. The termination of pregnancy before the stage of viability
2. The expulsion of an embryo or fetus prior to viability



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Professor says U.S. not behind in arms race

By MEG CADIGAN
Staff Writer

The United States is not behind the Soviet Union in the arms race, a University of Arkansas professor said Wednesday night.

In his speech, "Alternatives to the Strategic Defense Initiative," Dr. Art Hobson said the United States is ahead of the Soviets in terms of weapons accuracy of U.S. weapons and its ability to retaliate following an attack by the Soviet Union.

Hobson said the SDI will be able to:

- Protect land-based missiles.
- Defend against cheating after offensive arms are reduced to a minimum.
- Partially defend against retaliation following a U.S. first strike.

He said one drawback SDI is that it will not be able to "provide an impenetrable shield around the United States."

Hobson said that SDI cannot

provide absolute protection against a Soviet first strike unless the number of arms are reduced.

Hobson, a member of the Union of Concerned Scientists, said the United States has a superior retaliation capacity due to the location of its missile concentration. He said the United States has 2,000 ICBMs (land-based missiles), 6,000 SLBMs (submarine-based missiles) and 3,000 missiles loaded on bomber planes.

The Soviet Union has 6,500 ICBMs, 2,700 SLBMs and 300 missiles loaded on bomber planes, Hobson said. He said the Soviet Union hesitates to attack the United States because the United States has a large concentration of air and sea-based missiles, which are not easy to attack.

Hobson said SDI, combined with a difficult-to-locate group of missiles, would give the United States a first strike capability with little fear of retaliation from Soviets.

Hobson said the alternative to SDI is a combination of defense and arms control. Because the accuracy of missiles is rapidly increasing, Hobson says a number of warheads can be attached to one missile and thus increase the amount of damage that each missile can do.

Therefore, Hobson said, the number of missiles, when each side has such a large stockpile, is irrelevant. The number and strategic location (air, land, sea) of missiles will become important if the amount of weapons each side is allowed to have are reduced.

In considering the arms control issue, Hobson said it is important to look at the situation from the perspective of the Soviets, too.

"It's hardly ever pointed out that we could do the same thing (attack them and wipe out their retaliatory forces) to them, only worse," Hobson said.

Convicted killer prepared to die, but thinks chances of stay likely

Associated Press

HUNTSVILLE — Convicted killer Jay Kelly Pinkerton said Wednesday he's prepared to die next week, but believes he has a better chance of receiving a stay than in August when the Supreme Court spared him just before his scheduled execution.

"I don't look for the execution to take place, but then that's not totally in my hands," Pinkerton said in what could be his last meeting with reporters. "If it does take place, I accept it. If not, I accept that also. There's nothing I can do to change that."

Authorities charge suspect in 'Fondra Firebug' cases

Associated Press

HOUSTON — An 18-year-old electronics wizard authorities say is the "Fondra Firebug" — an arsonist believed responsible for more than a dozen Houston area fires — was charged with arson Wednesday.

Damon Henry Downs was arrested Tuesday night in the parking lot of a southwest Houston shopping center, said Fire Department spokesman Bill Paradoski. He was being held in the city jail on \$500,000 bond, police spokesman J.C. Mosier said.

Police said a man had called them claiming responsibility for several fires and identifying himself as the "Fondra Firebug," a name taken from the French word "fondra" which means "will melt."

Downs was already set to appear in court Wednesday on a misdemeanor charge of making a harassing

"I was prepared before. I've been prepared quite a long time now."

Pinkerton, 23, faces lethal injection before dawn Tuesday for the rape-slaying of Sarah Donn Lawrence, 30, in 1979.

The former meat cutter was 17 when he was arrested for killing Lawrence, who was raped, stabbed as many as 50 times, had her throat slashed and body mutilated during a burglary of her Amarillo home. The woman's three children slept in a nearby room during the carnage.

Pinkerton also was convicted of capital murder for the stabbing death of Sherry Welch, a former

beauty queen who was the victim of a similar attack.

"I'm working on an appeal brief — around the clock," said Pinkerton, who would become the youngest person to be executed since the Supreme Court allowed the death penalty to be resumed in 1976. "I think this time I'm going to do a lot better."

On Aug. 14, as he was waiting to be strapped to the gurney in the Texas death chamber, the Supreme Court voted 6-2 to keep him alive. The prison warden informed him of the stay at 11:43 p.m. Execution was scheduled for just past midnight.

The high court subsequently rejected his appeal and a state judge set Nov. 26 as Pinkerton's third death date.

"My case was not denied — only refused, which allows me to continue my appeal," Pinkerton said Wednesday. "I'm not through with that court until I file every document available to me. In comparison with then (August) and now, I believe my chances of obtaining a stay are greater than they were before."

The appeals are based on what he says was his illegal arrest, inadmissible evidence and inadequate defense counsel.

Pinkerton would become the 11th Texas inmate to be executed since the state resumed the death penalty in 1982.

Since early this month, Pinkerton, a convicted burglar with a history of juvenile crime, has been in segregation as punishment for rules violations, including one incident in which he threw urine on a prison guard.



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