U.S.-Soviet compromise hard to find on 'Star Wars' issue

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. and Soviet positions on "Star Wars" have hardened in the aftermath of the Geneva summit, American officials say, making it more difficult to find a compromise that would clear the way for a comprehensive nuclear arms control agreement.

Moscow is understood to have promised further concessions in its latest arms control proposal — moving closer to the U.S. position — if the administration will drop its Star Wars research program officially known as the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Space-based weapons, along with strategic and intermediate-range missiles, are the subjects of the U.S.-Soviet arms control talks scheduled to resume in Geneva on Jan. 16.

A member of the U.S. summit delegation said President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev engaged in "a dialogue of the deaf" on Star Wars in Geneva, with neither conceding any validity to the other's point of view.

Reagan stressed SDI's potential as a defensive shield against nuclear attacks, several informed officials said, while Gorbachev saw it as a ploy to develop a first-strike capability for the United States — to attack without fear of counter-attack.

When Reagan proposed his open laboratories strategy for each nation to send scientists to keep track of the other's Star Wars research, Gorbachev countered with his own open laboratories offer for each side to make sure there wasn't any research at all.

The result was that there was no real discussion of what Star Wars is about, and no progress made toward the American goal of drawing Moscow into a dicussion of how to mix offensive and defensive weapons systems, according to participants.

Several officials said the U.S. position had definitely hardened, in part because of the Soviet attitude at the summit.

Officials suggested that before the summit Reagan was signaling flexibility by emphasizing that the United States would insist on its right to conduct Star War research, but without mentioning testing or development.

Gorbachev had in the past suggested the Soviets might not oppose laboratory research. Between those two positions, some officials said, there was room for a compromise. But Gorbachev refused to discuss research at the summit, the officials said.

"They tried their level best to break down our position without offering anything in return, and they didn't get away with it," said Paul H. Nitze, senior arms control adviser to Reagan.

A senior State Department official said, "The Soviets made a big mistake in the way they dealt with SDI. It's a very personal thing with the president. And they've got to deal with it that way."

"They can't just say it's a product of the military-industrial complex, that it's expensive and will cost a trillion dollars, and therefore you shouldn't do it," added the official, who insisted on anonymity.

In post-summit comments, Gorbachev insisted there can be no progress on a strategic nuclear arms control accord without an end to Star Wars.

Street gangs

Notorious Chicago group seeks recognition as religion

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Members of what police say is one of Chicago's most notorious street gangs are testing the First Amendment with a lawsuit seeking recognition as an organized religion — with rights to preach in prisons.

Corrections authorities say the class-action lawsuit is crucial to the state prison system's future.

They say the request for religious status is a guise to cover gang recruiting and to organize illegal activities within prison walls.

"If the inmates should happen to prevail in this case," said Illinois Corrections Director Michael Lane, "it would guarantee no one would be able to manage the Illinois prison system."

The El Rukns say they are peace-loving adherents of Islam and their intent is to spread Allah's word to the incarcerated.

They follow the Koran's teachings and have adopted Sunni Islamic belief structures and prayer regulations, said leader Amir Reico El.

The El Rukns contend their group has a constitutional right to practice its religion and should be given the same rights afforded other religions by the Illinois Corrections Department.

"A group could be a religion and a street gang," said the El Rukns' attorney, Thomas Peters. "Their beliefs are traditional Islamic beliefs."

At least one other Chicago gang, the Black Disciples, has incorporated as a religious group.

And prison officials say other gangs may follow suit if the El Rukns succeed.

"They're waiting in the wings on this one," Richard DeRobertis, a former Stateville Correctional Center warden, testified at the trial, which resumes Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Danville.

The El Rukn Organization is headquartered in an abandoned theater in an improverished area of the city's South Side.

Called the Grand Major Mosque, the building resembles a fortress with a steel front door equipped with 2-inch diameter steel bars.

Authorities estimate the gang's membership at several hundred.

Citing security concerns, the El Rukns declined to comment on their size.

The group's leader, Jeff Fort, once convicted of misappropriating federal funds from a job-training program, is in a federal penitentiary in Texas on a narcotics conviction.

Peters said 100 to 200 El Rukns are in Illinois prisons.

Detective Robert Simandl of the police Gang Crimes Unit said the gang supports itself by the sale of "narcotics, with any other criminal activity that they can make money on."

What's up

Wednesday

STUDENTS AGAINST APARTHEID: will show the film "Generations of Resistance" at 8:30 p.m. in 601 Rudder.

INTRAMURALS: informational meeting for basketball officials will be at 6:30 p.m. in 164 Read.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT: the Student Senate meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. in 204 Harrington.

HURST-EULESS-BEDFORD HOMETOWN CLUB: is meeting at 7 p.m. in 607 Rudder.

CAMAC: is meeting at 7 p.m. in 504 Rudder.

RESIDENCE HALL ASSOCIATION: is meeting at 8:30 p.m. in the party room of Casa del Sol apartments.

A&M CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP: is sponsoring a program on "Beating the Blues: How to Triumph" at 7:30 p.m. in the Soil and Crops Sciences Building.

MSC TRAVEL: is meeting at 7 p.m. in 404 Rudder.

Thursday

TEXAS A&M EMERGENCY CARE TEAM: is meeting at 7 p.m. in 404 Rudder.

PHI LAMBDA UPSILON: is meeting at 5 p.m. in 229 Chemistry Building.

TAMU STUDENT ART FILM SOCIETY: is showing Pasolini's "The Canterbury Tales" at 7 p.m. in 103 Soil and Crop Sciences Building.

MSC TRAVEL: is meeting to have Aggieland pictures taken at 7 p.m. in the MSC lounge.

SOCIETY OF WOMEN ENGINEERS: is meeting at 7 p.m. in the Zachry lobby.

DELTA SIGMA PI: is meeting for elections at 9 p.m. in 150 Blocker.

TAMU SYMPHONIC BAND: is having its annual fall concert at 8:15 p.m. in Rudder Auditorium. Tickets are $1 for students and $3 for non-students.

Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, no less than three days prior to desired publication date.

History today

Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 4, the 338th day of 1985. There are 27 days left in the year.

Today's highlight in history:

On Dec. 4, 1783, Gen. George Washington bade farewell to his officers at Fraunces Tavern in New York. In a choked voice, the departing chief commander of the Continental Army said, "With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take leave of you."

On this date:

In 1816, James Monroe of Virginia was elected the fifth president of the United States, defeating Federalist Rufus King.

In 1875, William Marcy Tweed, the "Boss" of New York City's Tammany Hall political organization, escaped from jail and fled the country.

In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson set sail for France to attend the Versailles Peace Conference. He thus became the first chief executive to travel outside the country while in office.

In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the liquidation of the Works Progress Administration, which had been created in 1935 to provide work for the unemployed during the Depression.

In 1942, U.S. bombers struck the Italian mainland for the first time in World War II.

In 1945, the Senate approved U.S. participation in the United Nations.

Thought for Today: "Well done is better than well said." — Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790).

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