

Wednesday, August 27, 1986

## The Red Team

*They're working to beat the Soviets' countertactics*

LIVERMORE, Calif. (AP) — They don't change their diets to cabbage and borscht or move to cold climates and wear fur hats, but they do read every Soviet scientific journal they can find and pore over satellite photographs of weapons testing sites in Siberia.

They're the Red Team, a key element in Pentagon planning for Star Wars, and their job is to think how the Soviets could foil President Reagan's dream of a defense against nuclear attack.

"We Red Team everything. Our job is to find if there is something that would prevent this program from being useful," said Robert Perret, a scientist and Red Team member at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

Scientists at Livermore, a federal weapons laboratory, are working in lasers, particle beams and other exotic devices that might be part of the ground- and space-based system envisioned for Star Wars, known as the Strategic Defense Initiative.

The main Red Team efforts, said Perret, are determining what technology the Soviet Union is capable of devising to outsmart potential U.S. strategic defense and what similar weapons the Soviets would be able to deploy.

The results "are among the most closely held information in the Star Wars program," says Perret. The Livermore team started examining possible countermeasures to strategic defense even before Reagan called for stepped-up research in the area in March 1983.

To play the game, the Pentagon enlists help not only from physicists at labs, but from experts at the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency and from political scientists at universities and research institutes.

Helping to coordinate the overall effort is the Systems Planning Corp., one of whose top executives, Sayre Stevens, spent much of his 20 years at the CIA analyzing Soviet defenses.

"The first stage of Red Teaming is to do an analysis that will look for fatal flaws, any real embarrassments," Stevens said in an interview at his suburban Washington office. "You really need a bunch of inventors to focus on that problem."

The next step is to have "the intelligence people look at what the Soviets are capable of doing now, what they may be able to do 15 years down the road, and what drives them" to make certain economic and security decisions, he said. "What the intelligence analysts cannot look at are unexpected technological breakthroughs or political changes."

Once the inventors — people like the physicists at Livermore — have come up with gadgets the Soviets might use to foil Star Wars, American weapons designers figure out how to counter them. And so on.

Pentagon consultant Sydney Drell, a Stanford University physicist who has criticized aspects of the Star Wars program, feels that the Red Team review is vital to make sure that missile defenses cannot be defeated easily and cheaply.

The team, he says, "has to be not only of high technical quality, it has to be a team that has independent backing" to prevent the administration from putting forth its views without challenge.

The head of the Star Wars program, Air Force Lt. Gen. James Abrahamson, said in his annual report to Congress that the main Red Team accomplishment so far has been an analysis of steps the Soviets could take to outsmart the High Endoatmospheric Defense System. HEDS is designed to spot and destroy warheads as they re-enter the atmosphere and close in on their U.S. targets.

From April to November 1984, the Red Team cooked up 28 countermeasures. In the following year the "Blue Team" managed to come up with 15 counter-countermeasures, and through June 1985 yet another group, the Umpire Team, mulled over the findings.

According to the report, the Star Wars Red Teams have not yet tackled the problem of how an attacker might undermine what analysts consider to be most revolutionary aspect of Reagan's vision of strategic defense: the systems designed to destroy attacking boosters as they break through the atmosphere and before they release their warheads and decoys.

The nuclear explosions could destroy the satellites outright or disable their electronic systems. Among the

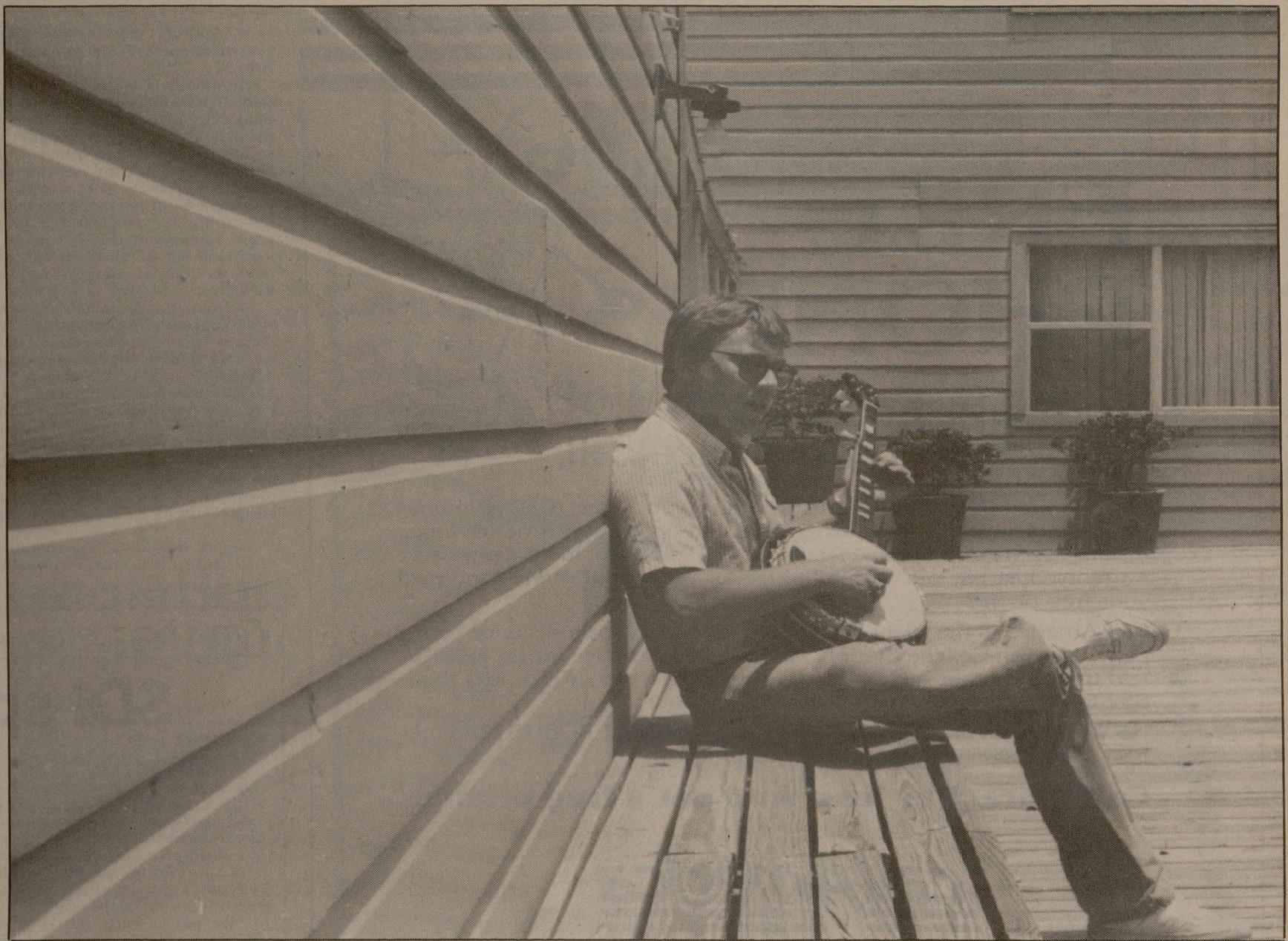


Photo by Melanie Perkins

## Banjo On My Knee

Mark Harlan, a junior civil engineering major, enjoys the sunshine while he plays his banjo in the Newport Condominiums courtyard.

countermeasures suggested for this are satellites kept in orbit half-way to the moon, making them difficult to reach, "hardening" them against explosions, arming them to shoot at killer satellites, or surrounding them with attack satellites.

Paul Stares, an analyst at the Brookings Institution of Washington, said one problem with war

games of this type "is how much built-in bias exists and how much the Red Team analysis is taken into account when the decision comes to actually produce the weapons."

No place seems more distant from gray wintry Russia than Livermore, which nestles among vineyards and wineries in a valley above San Francisco, and where scientists spend their lunch hours jogging and their

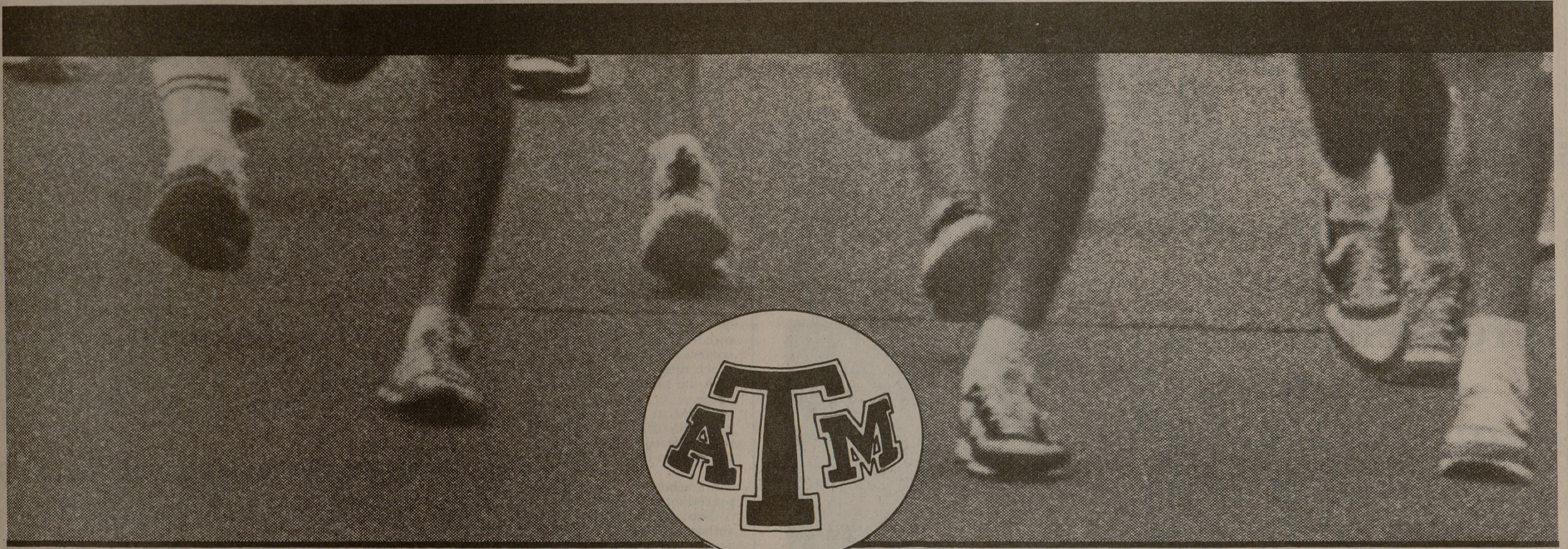
leisure time contemplating the nearby mountains, coastal resorts and merits of local wines.

"The question is how much the mind-set of the Red Team reflects the mind-set of the Russians," said Stares, author of a book on the military uses of space.

Is it hard to mimic the psychology of Soviet physicists, isolated in the

vast steppes of the Soviet Union?

A former CIA analyst who worked in the agency's missile defense section agrees that "it is not that hard to figure out what the Russians can and cannot do. The evidence is there," in Soviet scientific literature and intelligence data. The analyst, who spoke anonymously, declined to give details of Red Team analysis.



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