

Perle shows true colors, against SDI

by Leo F. Scanlon

During the first week of the new congressional session, a curious group of “strategists” was summoned before the Senate Armed Services Committee and asked to review the strategic threats to the United States today. Among them was Richard Perle, assistant secretary of defense during the Reagan administration, erstwhile “hardliner” on defense issues, who was considered by the credulous as one of the architects of the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Perle stepped from behind his carefully cultivated image, and presented himself as what *EIR* had long claimed he was: a saboteur of the SDI program and an advocate of policies which are little more than unilateral disarmament. Perle’s attack on the SDI and support for the point defense systems advocated by committee chairman Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), had conservatives all over Washington buzzing. They should only have been surprised that Perle spoke so honestly, or almost so, in public.

Many of those conservatives had perhaps forgotten that before his incarnation as a fire-breathing Republican standard bearer, Perle had interned with Democrat Henry “Scoop” Jackson. Perle is emerging as the heir-apparent to the position now occupied by Albert Wohlstetter, the author of the *Discriminate Deterrence* report, the blueprint for the Bush administration’s condominium arrangements with the Soviet Union. Wohlstetter has been the mentor of Perle since Perle dated his daughter at Hollywood High School. The ability to adopt political camouflage is the stock-in-trade of Wohlstetter and the group of former Trotskyists and Social Democrats who entered the intelligence services in the late 1930s, and the skill has been adequately demonstrated by Perle.

Sabotage of the SDI

The case of the SDI is exemplary of the pragmatism of this grouping. Perle developed his reputation as a supporter of President Reagan’s program largely on the basis of his attacks on congressional attempts to use the ABM treaty and other arms control agreements to justify defense budget cuts. Behind this façade, Perle was engaged in a vigorous international effort to wreck the SDI.

EIR caught Perle in the act in 1986, when he traveled to Japan to provide an official briefing to the Japanese government on the SDI program. At the time, leading figures of the Japanese scientific and industrial community were participating in an *EIR*-sponsored seminar which was examining the

mutual benefits that collaboration on the project would provide to each nation. But Perle was telling the Japanese government that it should distance itself from the program, since it would come to an end as soon as Reagan left office.

Perle performed a similar mission in Europe, dousing support for the SDI among the NATO allies, contributing materially to the Soviet propaganda blitz against the program in Europe. Perle was subsequently identified to *EIR* as one of the people suspected to be part of the “X Committee” which controlled the spying activities of the Jonathan Pollard network.

Perle’s disarmament scheme

During his recent testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, Perle answered a question posed by Sam Nunn with the canard, “I have never thought it possible or affordable to deploy a perfect defense.” He went on to say, “I wouldn’t rush to deploy something—wouldn’t rush to deploy ‘Brilliant Pebbles’ [the only SDI system that has survived recent budget cuts—ed.], but I would continue a vigorous R&D program . . . would re-orient the program in terms of the objective of the relatively near-term deployment and the fairly comprehensive defense toward the partial defense.”

Senator Nunn said, “So, you’d be moving the goal backward in terms of time of deployment and you would be going for a less complete defense, more of a partial defense?” To which Perle replied, “That is correct.”

As for his role as an erstwhile opponent of the goals of the Russian empire and its war machine, he told Sen. John Warner (R-Va.) that the Reagan administration “projected—I didn’t always believe it—but as a country we projected vast increases in Soviet strategic forces in the absence of arms control agreements. I don’t believe those projections now, didn’t believe them then. But nobody believes them now . . . that’s why I’m not keen to rush” to build strategic weapons.

Perle further called on the Bush administration to unilaterally carry out conventional weapons cuts in Europe, far in excess of any number proposed for discussion in Vienna, a move which would be accompanied by a cessation of production of most current weapons systems, and the array of strategic weapons designed to catch up with the enormous and still growing Soviet arsenal.

Such a reckless course can be pursued, according to Perle, because the Soviets are going to be “thrown out of Eastern Europe.” His fellow panelist, defense analyst Phil Karber, found this a bit too much, and interjected, “I think Richard was speaking euphemistically, not literally. I don’t think the East Germans or anybody else are going to throw the Soviet Union out of Eastern Europe, out of East Germany, if the Soviets don’t want to go. If there’s one place they’ll fight to stay if they decide it’s in their interest to stay, it’s going to be East Germany, and all the riots to the contrary, they’ll stay.” Richard Perle merely shook his head in vigorous disagreement.