

shouldn't depend on how many neighbors you have." He and others also object that cost was a consideration in the decision. They argue that the Clean Air Act mandates that regulations be developed to protect public health without regard to cost. Furthermore, the cost of regulation in this case is minor, they say.

EPA last year also proposed to revise exposure standards for facilities that are regulated by the Department of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), but these plans have been scrapped too after an apparent jurisdictional fight. EPA would have set an exposure level to reduce the fatal cancer risk by a factor of 10 at nuclear weapons plants and halved the risk for facilities licensed by the commission.

The cost of these EPA regulations would have been negligible, according to staff estimates. Nevertheless, top energy

EPA officials admit that the decision represents a departure from past policy.

department officials and the NRC during the past year have vigorously opposed stricter regulations, arguing that their standards were sufficient. Federal legislators from states with such facilities have also written to the agency to protest the proposal. EPA staff decline to say what role the opposing agencies played in the agency's decision.

The agency did announce that it would propose new standards regulating underground uranium mines, but the environmentalists were hardly heartened by the news. Brooks Yeager, a Sierra Club lobbyist, says the decision represents even

further regulatory delay. "They've had 5 years to develop a standard and now there's still no schedule for a final rule. We have no confidence that they'll do anything."

The heat is still on EPA to regulate radionuclides. Environmental groups are going back to court, arguing that the agency has not lived up to a court order issued last year. The Sierra Club has filed a suit contending that Ruckelshaus acted in contempt of court. And the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee chairman and its ranking minority member wrote to Ruckelshaus, urging him to reconsider his decision. Chairman Robert Stafford (R-Vt.) and Jennings Randolph (D-W. Va.) said, "We are hard pressed to understand [your] decision . . . we do not see how a decision not to regulate at this time is consistent with requirements of the Clean Air Act. . . ."—**MARJORIE SUN**

Schlesinger Attacks Star Wars Plan

Despite an aggressive White House marketing campaign, President Reagan's plan to defend the public against nuclear missiles—popularly known as his "Star Wars" plan—continues to attract criticism from nuclear weapons experts. This, at least, was one message of a recent conference on space and national security in Bedford, Massachusetts.

A number of speakers at the conference, which was cosponsored by the Air Force and by the MITRE Corporation, a major Air Force contractor, ripped into the program and assailed the President for misleading the public in his initial April 1983 announcement about it. "The heart of Reagan's speech was the promise that someday American cities might indeed be safe from nuclear attack," said James Schlesinger, a former Secretary of Defense and arms control adviser to President Reagan. It is entirely unrealistic, he said. "There is no serious likelihood of removing the nuclear threat from our cities in our lifetime or in the lifetime of our children."

Schlesinger, who received classified briefings on the program as an adviser to the recently dissolved President's Commission on Strategic Forces, said that he doubted whether an effective space-based missile defense could actually be constructed, whether it would be affordable, and whether it would add to global stability. "Any [space] defense is going to suffer some erosion," he said, "and an effective opponent will develop defense suppression techniques and punch a hole in whatever . . . is deployed. . . . Even if we were able to develop a hypothetical leakproof [missile] defense we must bear in mind that there are means of delivering nuclear weapons other than nuclear missiles. I point this out because the United States Air Force has long argued that air defense systems are penetrable." Schlesinger added that the cost of a defensive missile shield would be at least \$1 trillion, and that its development would adsorb funds drastically needed by conventional weapons programs.

He noted, however, that continued missile defense research is important, as did virtually all of those attending the meeting. He said that a number of recent Pentagon studies have indicated that a mixture of defensive and offensive weapons can indeed enhance global stability. But "all of these studies rest upon an assumption" that the number of offensive weapons will be constrained at the same time a missile shield is deployed, and it is unlikely that the Soviet Union will agree to such constraints so long as the United States is endeavoring to build the shield—a consummate Catch-22. Finally, Schlesinger said that talk of abandoning nuclear deterrence based on offensive weapons because of its alleged immorality is "reckless," "immature," and "pernicious." "We are going to rest on [this policy] for the balance of our days," he said.

Somewhat less strident criticisms were also voiced by Abram Chayes, a Harvard law professor; Albert Carnesale, academic dean at the John F. Kennedy School of government; and Richard Garwin, a physicist at IBM. Retired Lieutenant General James Stansberry, a former commander of the Air Force Systems Command, gently criticized the program for its failure to have a concrete goal. "I've seen a lot of people spend a lot of money over time, when people didn't know quite what they were up to," he said. He added that the tough questions about the program "haven't been debated enough."

At the meeting, both Lieutenant General James Abrahamson, the director of the missile defense program, and Gerald Yonas, its chief scientific adviser, consciously downplayed any hopes of using it to defend cities. Abrahamson acknowledged that "there is no perfect weapons system, there is no panacea," and Yonas said that the program's only purpose is to "search for technology to see if we can find an alternative to the present system. . . . our program is the President's program."—**R. JEFFREY SMITH**