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## Selling "SDI" to Europeans: Arguments, Metaphors and Adversary Images

by

*Rüdiger Zimmermann*

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Ballyvaughn, Ireland

August 9-16, 1987





**Selling "SDI" to Europeans:  
Arguments, Metaphors and Adversary Images**

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The conference held at Ballyvaughn, Ireland, in August 1987 was the beginning of an on-going international intellectual interchange on topics related to the discourse of peace and security and international society. It will include annual meetings, the second to be held in summer 1988, again in Ballyvaughn. Sponsored by the University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, the conferences are intended to foster general inquiry into these scholarly topics and to stimulate research and teaching that incorporates these perspectives at University of California campuses. This year's series of working papers comprises the writings which seventeen authors submitted to their colleague-participants in preparation for the 1987 conference. Some have been updated somewhat before publication here. Some have been published elsewhere and are reissued here by permission. The Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation hopes that these working papers will help to interest even more scholars in pursuing these lines of thought.

James M. Skelly  
Series Editor

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## Selling "SDI" to Europeans: Arguments, Metaphors, and Adversary Images

### 1. Background, method

In order to trace back in a short contribution the way in which quality papers such as the *Economist* have helped to convince European opinion leaders of the advantages of President Reagan's so-called Strategic Defence Initiative, one inevitably has to be selective. I have decided therefore to concentrate on two areas:

— The *Economist*. This can be justified because it is probably more influential on the really powerful in the Federal Republic than any other paper in English. But I am also analyzing texts from other papers, especially *The Times*, *Herald Tribune*, *FAZ*. My focus is clearly on papers in English since in the longer term I hope to find out to what extent American and British perception of world events shapes the spectacles through which we West Germans are made to see the world and to fit them into a proper image of it.

— A relatively broad analysis. The rationale behind this is that refined methods of persuasion seem to play a surprisingly minor role even in the educated press, at least in the *Economist*: Controversial stand-points that one might expect to be presented by linguistically subtle techniques such as modality hedging, negation combined with (indirect) questions and the like are rather expounded in a comparatively straightforward manner (linguistically speaking). Either subtlety is not considered to be necessary by opinion makers, or they rely on a more confident, almost authoritarian presentation. The burden of persuasion in favour of Star Wars seems to be on two levels of argumentation (the more rational approach) and on the metaphorical anchoring of this new development in established everyday categories (the more emotional appeal). Therefore this contribution is largely confined to the elementary analysis of what SDI *is*, *has* and *does*. This simplification, which sacrifices the few intellectually more tempting intricate statements, may also be justified in the light of research on the decay of memory: as time goes by details are forgotten; what is preserved in memory is the main referential and predicational information in straightforward affirmative form. On the other hand it might be more worthwhile to focus on the "instructional" implications of the metaphorical frames opened over and over again in the media talk about Star Wars. This is the level of pseudo-argumentation/persuasion that the *Economist* and other papers investigated seem to rely on most heavily.

So I will proceed in the following way: I will first outline the presentation of the issue, sketching typical references to SDI and the arguments in favour of it. Then I will compare the presentation of the protagonists: Reagan as the champion of the free world and Gorbachev as the new representative of Soviet Russia. Finally, I will summarize the metaphors of good and evil.

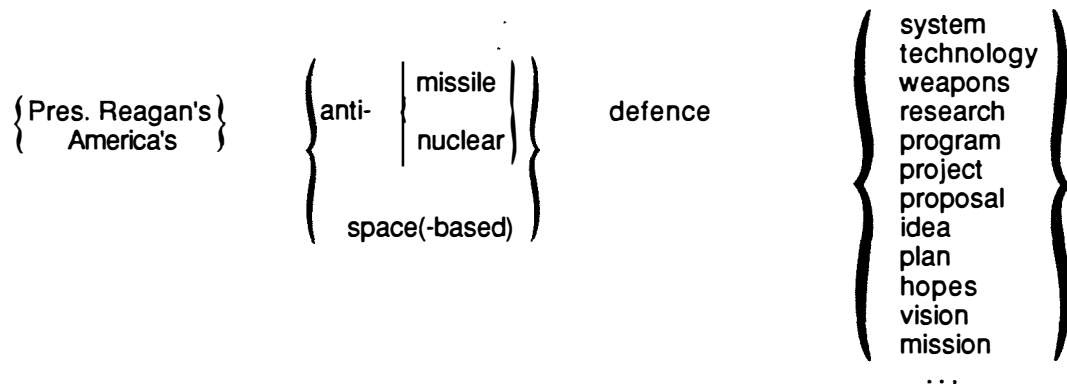
## 2. The Issue

### 2.1. Standard reference

What is SDI? How is it referred to?

For at least potentially thoughtful readers outright euphemisms such as *peacemaker* or *peacekeeper* are far too blunt. Apart from would-be neutral terms like SDI itself there seems to be a tendency to prefer a level of reference between honesty and dishonesty which is abstract and positive enough to be acceptable. We might call this "linguistic camouflage."

The most frequent reference made is through the terms *Star Wars* and *SDI* (much more often that the full form, and whenever short references are required). But apart from this, the *Economist* has preferred descriptive paraphrases and ad hoc compounds of a positive character since the first announcement of the plan. As usual in Nukespeak the words *defence*, *research*, *system*, *program*, *project*, *technology* prevail. (*Space*) *weapon* is rare. Leaving details aside, the following all-purpose reference schema is available for use:



These elements can be combined to form a variety of compounds and phrases according to the needs of contents and style, e.g.

*anti-missile defence system* (very frequent)

*anti-missile research (plan)* (also frequent)

*anti-missile proposal*, etc.

*anti-nuclear missile program*

*anti-missile research program*

The last examples show that the second and fourth elements can also be combined. There seems to be no restriction in creativity as long as the usual positive or neutral key terms appear. (This is, by the way, also the language of arms advertising.)

It may be worth noting on the other hand that the *Economist* tends to use *Star Wars* as the unmarked form while the *Herald Tribune* and *The Times* rather do it the other way round.

"...Star Wars whose official name is the Strategic Defence Initiative" (2.8.86:31, *Ec.*),

"...SDI, popularly called Star Wars" (18.9.86:3, *HT*)

## 2.2. Metaphorical reference

What is the essence of SDI?

What does it mean to us?

Metaphors are either inserted into this general referential schema in the last slot or added to it.

— The oldest defensive metaphor is, of course, *shield* (as many metaphors it was used by Reagan in his original speech of March 1983).

missile-destroying defens(iv)e shield

anti-missile shield

effective shield

It is in partial competition with the rather protective metaphors *roof* and *umbrella*:

impermeable umbrella protecting American cities, American nuclear umbrella;

solid roof of protection, missile-proof roof over the whole US, leak-proof anti-missile

roof that would provide some protection.

The *screen*, also a protective metaphor, seems to rather refer to reduced versions of SDI (while the others tend to be used for the full-fledged plan; although there is the occasional *partial shield*, 16.12.85:57):

anti-missile defence screen, defensive screen, a smaller screen that would provide some protection.

Late 1984 and 1985 in particular saw the emergence of the "instructional" metaphors *lever* and to some extent *card*:

anti-missile lever, incomparable lever SDI, unmatchable lever, bargaining lever, most powerful card, anti-missile peg.

It is as yet unclear to me, whether the shield as part of a cognitive frame WARRIOR (with missiles as *swords* which *chop* and *slice* the enemy, 12.1.85:9f.) is being replaced by the more peaceful frames HOUSE (a stock phrase of Chancellor Kohl: "The house of our Federal Republic"), WEATHER and STINGING INSECTS. With the *shield* goes the *enemy*, but the *umbrella* and *roof* are as familiar notions as can be; the conflict has disappeared (we can relax). Missiles as stinging insects or other animals also make the human enemy disappear, they are appropriately anchored in established weapons terminology (*Hornet*, *Mosquito*, *Sting Ray*, *Cobra 2000*, ...), and the implicit instruction of the STINGING INSECT frame leaves no room for positive interaction: protect **us** and eradicate **them**.



I think it is a major task for our kind of research to try and find out whether there is conscious "metaphorical engineering" or whether the proponents of this antagonistic spirit spread their metaphors intuitively.)

### 2.3 Arguments in favour of SDI

Most or all of them have been introduced by President Reagan himself or other political or military advocates of SDI, but they are presented with different emphasis in the *Economist*.

#### 2.3.1 Rational argumentation within the security context

Why does the West need SDI?

I can be very brief here, only creating a background for "emotional" argumentation.

- a. It is a *defensive* concept, not an offensive one like MAD. (Let me add in parentheses that the *Economist* mentions the first-strike capability applied in SDI very rarely and only as a (tentative) hypothesis, e.g., 28.9.85:19f.).
- b. Priority for defensive weapons enables us (and hopefully them) to drastically *reduce* offensive weapons down to *token forces*. (We will have to see whether it is precisely this symbolic character of offensive nuclear weapons that excludes their complete withdrawal from Europe/ West Germany: As tokens of an American pledge to link its fate to ours, we could not possibly dismantle them, even though they may be superfluous from a military point of view.)
- c. SALT II is dead, something new has to replace it anyway, and SDI is the only possible concept. (This argument forgets who declared SALT dead.)
- d. SDI is almost "confidence building" (a term that the *Economist* seems not to use at all in this context): The Russian generals want their SDI too, and if they don't manage because of inferior technology the US must offer them their share of SDI. (This confidence-building argument is not very convincing in a general dispute paradigm.)
- e. SDI would "*stabilize* the nuclear balance" (16.2.85:57). It would make "the world a stabler place" (9.3.85:15). Thus, what we can get is "smaller securer nuclear armouries for both sides" (12.1.85:9).
- f. SDI is an *asset* in arms control negotiations. As the original *effective shield* for the whole US had to be keyed-down to an *imperfect city shield* and then to a *silos-and-headquarters-protection screen* the argumentation in favour of SDI presented it more and more as a *bargaining chip* or a (*trump*) *card*. In the *Economist* this is preferably captured in the *lever* metaphor which goes well with the idea of the Soviet Union as an immobile block, which has to be moved (see below).

I leave it to the political scientists to decide whether a., b., e., and f. are not the only candidates for arguments possibly relevant in a military and arms control context: Defensiveness, reduction to offensiveness, therefore more stable security. c. and d. at least are to my mind pseudo-arguments.

### 2.3.2. *Rational argumentation outside the security context*

- a. SDI is such a *technological challenge* (e.g., 16.2.85:58: "Exciting technological work") that politicians could not possibly restrain the drive of researchers (13.4.85:15).
- b. SDI is *business*: there is "big development money to be made" (16.2.85:58, a particularly luring pseudo-argument in West Germany).
- c. SDI is largely *non-nuclear*. Here the *Economist* tries to persuade European public opinion by using its dominant value: "...most of the proposed anti-missile weapons are not nuclear devices" (12.1.85:9). It seems that this blunt attempt to further SDI was not repeated, but emphasis was increasingly placed on the marginal character of nuclear weapons: "...SDI should continue, because it is a chance of removing nuclear weapons from the throne of absolute power" (18.10.86:14).

### 2.3.3. *Emotional argumentation*

There is a third level of argumentation which relies even more overtly on emotional appeal.

- a. SDI is *moral*. This is elaborated in the *Economist*, which had not exactly stressed the mass-annihilation character of nuclear weapons before: all of a sudden there is a "moral point," from the first articles reacting to Reagan's Star Wars speech. Its purpose was to "recover some of the high moral ground from the Roman Catholic bishops and the peace movement" (26.3.83:16). The West's preparedness "to kill millions," "to slaughter millions of Russians," is "nagging at the conscience" (22.12.84:9 and 12.1.85:9, proper thoughts for Christmas and the New Year). So SDI becomes "a morally acceptable lever" (heading 12.1.85:9). The morality theme is reiterated around Reykjavik.
- b. SDI helps to make a "basic point of *psychology*": "The swords-man's hand relaxes a bit once he has got a shield on his arm" (12.1.85:9). (Incidentally, this issue is a rare case of a metaphorical frame being played out fully.) This is the psychological version of the stability argument.
- c. SDI furthers *freedom*. It is only repeated in this case that President Reagan "claimed" that SDI "would free the world from threat of nuclear attacks" (7.7.84:13).

Let me conclude this part by observing that the emotional, metaphorical level figures prominently in the *Economist's* titles, headlines, cartoons, and layout (cf. below).

### 3. Today's protagonists: Gorbachev and Reagan

If argumentation in favour of SDI is the positive side of the coin, the conjuring-up of established adversary images is the negative and — in the *Economist* — perhaps more important one, at least after the appearance of Mikhail Gorbachev on the international scene. In connection with SDI and arms control talks, we can disregard the Soviet leaders before Gorbachev. Andropov's term was too short, and in Brezhnev and Chernenko the Soviet system and its leaders were seen to be in unison.

#### 3.1. *The leaders and their systems*

As I have tried to show in some detail elsewhere, the *Economist* prepared its audience for the first major confrontation between the two leaders in Geneva by establishing a double contrast: Gorbachev in comparison to the Soviet system as opposed to Reagan in comparison to the U.S. system.

The line develops in the following fashion:

- Gorbachev is the skilful, strong leader of a weak, bad system.
- Reagan is — at least for the time being — the maladroit, weak leader of a strong, good system.

So if Reagan had lost out in the leadership stakes in the public eye and — look out! — was in danger of losing in Geneva as well, then there was no reason for serious concern for prudent people: In the battle between systems the West is clearly superior, and that is what counts.

Before I can sketch how Gorbachev was presented in relation to the Soviet system, I have to outline briefly its characterization in the *Economist*.

#### 3.2. *The prototypical Soviet enemy*

As an educated paper the *Economist* knows how stereotypical our adversary image of the Soviet Union is. It even makes fun of Reagan's ghost-writers who seem to use Swinburne, so that what he wrote about the tsars holds now for Soviet leaders: "The Moscovite Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils of Despotism" (22.12.84:42, again a good reminder for Christmas). But this schematic perception of the traditional Western condescension to Russia is only seen as the beam in the other's eye: Some main aspects of it are reproduced in the *Economist*.

For a background compare this early eighteenth-century German version of the traditional adversary image (from Lev Kopelev's *Russia project*: Keller 1985:25): the Moscovite appears as "malicious" in manners, "nicely Hugarian," i.e., "most cruel" in nature and character, "nothing at all" in intellect, and "infinitely crude" in character, being "extremely treacherous" as to his main vice,

loving "the club," "painful" in war, "apostate" in religion, having "generous" lords, spending his time "with sleeping," comparable to "a donkey," living "in snow."

Whenever a geopolitical issue comes up or there is important news from the Soviet Union, the *Economist* refers to these stereotypes or deals with them in an article (cf. "other bloodstain," 17.9.83, after Korean jetliner; or, after human rights progress, the reminder of the "butchery" in Afghanistan, 3.1.87:12). In the Star Wars phase this adversary image came to the fore most clearly with respect to Chernenko (19.5.84, 16.2.85) who was referred to as "the most archetypical Russian leader" since the Revolution (19.5.84:13). The stereotypical traits of this adversary image are largely from the intellectual, social, and economic sphere, more physical aspects do not appear at all. There are not so many traits that might be dangerous to us in the West:

— The most directly threatening one, cruelty, is only mentioned quite rarely: we are reminded of Stalin's "carnage," of the "bloody occupation" of Afghanistan, of the readiness to cause disruption, and that is about it.

This seems to be an audience-specific restraint which is not shared by popular papers on either side of the English Channel. It is an important question to me whether quality papers can rely on an educated readership to flesh out what is missing, also against the background of historical knowledge. If we take adversary images as comprehensive cognitive schemata, then the *if X, then Y* pattern ought to work implicitly.

In the German adversary image of the Soviet Union this cruel trait is embodied in "the Cossacks": A Christian Democrat MP's defence of higher military spendings at the cost of the social budget reminded us of this: "What's the use of a good social system when the Cossacks are coming?" (quoted from *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 23.8.85:1).

— A second potentially disquieting trait is the incalculable side of the Soviet-Russian soul: They "run risks," are "prone to fight," "frightening": but this is not so dangerous either.

— A third trait is their preference for quantity over quality (often the form of intensifying *more - more - more*). This is in fact a reason for — real or would be — fear of the East's numerical superiority. But does the West's superior quality (never forgotten in the *Economist*) not easily make up for this?

— This unfriendly and morose character ("sulky" and the like) may not be pleasant and create problems in negotiations, but it is not dangerous.

— Then there is alcoholism (the fight against which gave Gorbachev the nickname of *mineralny sekretar*, "secretary mineral"). This is not seen as a threat to the West either.

— The same holds for the higher nomenklatura which is a "gerontocracy" of "elderly wheel-chair revolutionaries"; this tends to suggest a somewhat harmless enemy. — The injustice of the

system with perks for the "priviligentsia" can be no matter of concern for us either. Should the West not congratulate itself on such an enemy?

— Since all this goes together with the inferior intellectual quality of the officials (*incompetent, thoughtless, boring, lazy*, etc., again and again) above all with their mental immobility, the consequences are obvious: The Soviet system is "lagging behind" (the key-term).

— The lack of human rights (perhaps the area where adversary image and reality correspond most neatly nowadays) may be more suited to reinforce our positive autostereotype than to create problems between nations and systems.

(Let me just add in passing that all this seems to be presented with a good deal of antislavic condescension, if not racial prejudice.)

This leaves us with no more than three (potentially) threatening traits of the Soviet-Russian character:

1. Its striving for military hegemony, coupled with a fondness for sheer quality,
2. the untrustworthiness of the Russians,
3. their "divided mind": you never know what side you will be dealing with, the introverted or the aggressive one.

But on the whole, the *Economist* would share Kissinger's view as expressed in the *Observer* (20.10.85:11): "Brezhnev ... was not a bad leader to deal with." Things looked different with somebody of Gorbachev's calibre.

### 3.3. *Gorbachev at face value*

Gorbachev was and is different, so different that it seemed to take the *Economist* a while to come to grips with him. This way of putting it implies that the *Economist* had a line for integrating Gorbachev into our perception of the world right away, rather than the emergence of such a line with the course of events.

In the leading two articles (preparing the public for Geneva, 7.9.85:16f. and 12.10.85:14f.) the new agile, quasi Western M.G. was still disturbing for our experience; he seemed like "one of us": "a great communicator of Russia's own," "an up-to-date and energetic salesman," "relaxed, intelligent, refreshingly approachable," speaking "plain language." It just could not be true! And immediately before Geneva he also seemed to be in better shape than the American president: "Mr. Gorbachev dances and Mr. Reagan staggers" (2.11.85:15; Gorbachev as a dancer again; 7.3.87:59).

This earlier phase of presentation proceeded to see Gorbachev as a product and (at least) as a prisoner of the Soviet system and its mentality: He would not be able to change anything important; and a comparison of the systems is comforting.

In a next step the seeming discrepancy between the system (the familiar traditional adversary image) and its unheard-of type of [leader] but is a product and representative "of them," then particular caution is called for, caution against the double-faced Gorbachev.

### 3.4. *The double-faced Gorbachev*

At close inspection it occurred to the *Economist* that this "pragmatic," "sensible," "ironical" man, "impatient with ideologies" did not only "give Russia a friendly face," but he also had the following traits: His answers to human-rights questions were "snapping," "thundering," he is not free of "stock phrases," wants to "bully" and "frighten" the West Europeans, "tramples/stomps" over East European interests, is even "a born table-thumper" in the Khrushchevian tradition.

Let me mention in passing that such negative characterizations are of course not restricted to the explicit verbal level, but that the visual channel is addressed through cartoons and pictures often supplying what is missing in the text. Cf. the interaction of photographs and texts (often from two different articles) with regard to lack of freedom and human rights (13.7.85:16f.). The left page has a short article on how Gorbachev calls the Eastern European countries "to order": He thumps the table in Khrushchev style. That is written in an unfriendly but open manner. The right page has an article entitled "False blushes." It uses the uncovering of medical crimes by South African doctors in connection with Steve Biko's death to remind us of the supposed maltreatment of Sakharov by Soviet doctors. The title refers to "unconvincing signs of human-rights embarrassment" without naming those responsible. Who is responsible for such things in the Soviet Union is shown in a photograph above the first article. It is small and badly lit, certainly preferred to a better and clearer one available, in order to serve its purpose. It shows Gorbachev looking upwards (a bit like a police photo). His gaze is directed towards the headline of the second article: "False Blushes." And Gorbachev looks up from behind a wall, the wall, which is of course the symbol of communist brutality.

But above all Gorbachev is a "seducer" in negotiations. So the *Economist* can link him to the divided mind of Russia through a series of competing characterizations: "Gorbachev-the-charmer" and "Gorbachev-the-bully," the "sprinter" and the "realist." This is nicely brought to the point in the self-contradictory "slow sprint." If Gorbachev therefore also appears as a typical Russian, who as a leader may turn out to be "just another Russian boss," the West still has to beware of him as a negotiator because of "the innocent look in Gorbachev's face" (15.3.86:16). And it must deal with his arms control and reduction proposals as befits Soviet proposals in general: "propaganda rabbits being pulled from a hat" (*The Guardian*, 18.11.85:1).

#### 4. The metaphors of good and evil

Whereas the *Economist* repeatedly characterizes Reagan's position as ideological and ridicules his formula of the "evil Empire," it contributes at the same time to the maintenance of Western mistrust and a feeling of superiority towards the Soviet Union in such a way that our stereotypes remain an unquestioned aspect of our perception of the world. This is particularly striking in everyday metaphors which bring reports and editorials to the point, preferably before Christmas (and the summer vacations), when there is time for leisurely reading.

##### 4.1. Established general metaphors

Antagonistic metaphors must be seen against the background of traditional political imagery. — One of the most productive metaphorical concepts is the MEDICAL one: The leading politicians are the potential healers of the world's illnesses. Not only the adversary "demi-Gods in white" (as we call them in Germany) but also our own prescribe us arms control talks as "tranquilizers," as "Valium" (13.10.85:13). But can that possibly help if arms control has adopted in the U.S. the character of "a damaging American obsession?" "A dose of Salt" should not be expected to work wonders. (19.10.85:14: cf. "the summit syndrome;" 23.6.84:16. The *Economist* already printed an earlier letter to the editor about these "paranoid phantasies of all too many American academics," 7.4.84:4.)

Since an appropriately careful approach to arms control can be positive on the other hand, arms control itself becomes the PATIENT: although some "mourners" already feel like "shovelling earth on its coffin," "arms control is not dead," but "with a spell in the intensive-care unit, the patient can be revived" (13.10.84:13f.).

There can also be a one-sided version of medical imagery as in the American notion of the *surgical strike* where I wonder, however, whether its inventors overlooked the implications or counted on them to be supplied in the American public: The real world healer, the U.S. president, might use the scalpel of Pershing II to free the sick body of mother Russia from the Soviet cancer.

But in general the traditional DOCTOR frame is neutral, and it is no longer unproblematic for the *Economist* which reports that doctors sin against their oath in South Africa just as they do in the Soviet Union.

##### 4.2. Antagonistic metaphors

This may be an additional reason why more unambiguous, older, and somehow deeper metaphors prevail in the antagonistic representation of East and West, particularly the US and Soviet Union as well as their leaders.

— In historical-cultural terms the SU appears as *Sparta* or as *Byzantium* (predominantly from the military and intellectual or social point of view, respectively), whereas the US/the West is essentially *Athens* or classical *Greece* or *Rome*: mechanical rigidity, suppression, cruelty, and corruption on the one hand as opposed to rational mobility, democracy and efficiency on the other (6.7.85, 12.10.85).

An alternative version of this motif, *Gandalf* versus *Mordor* seems so far to have been something of an isolated joke (24.12.83:7).

— In a more elementary layer of animal metaphors, often from the world of fairy-tales, Soviet Russia appears as the *bear* as well as the *wolf*. Since I have so far traced this metaphor back over not more than the last four years, I can only cautiously indicate a distribution: the one, predominant side of the Russian soul, i.e. the immobile one, is represented by the old-Russian bear with its also homely endearing traits. Thus the Chernenko phase from early 1984 is captured as "hibernation in summer": "The bear curls up" (e.g., 19.5.84:13, 1.9.84:14).

It seems that with the appearance of the "formidable" Gorbachev this is increasingly complemented by the image of the wolf. The wolf refers at times to the Soviet system (not the Russian people, of course), at times already, though indirectly at first, to Gorbachev himself (7.9.85:17). Relatively early Gorbachev's "bite" and his "iron teeth" are mentioned (30.3.85:10). But it is only with the approach of the Geneva summit that the metaphorical frame is played out fully: Gorbachev's landing by plane in Paris becomes his "descent upon" the unsuspecting Western European sheep, he "left his marks" there, and the question is raised whether it was "the wolf from 'Little Red Riding Hood' who strode through Paris last week" (12.10.85). If this still gives the impression of a playful remark not to be taken seriously, a second article in the same issue shows that the metaphor is being established systematically.

Before we can start reading the second article on page 61 a caricature catches our eye: Standing on the ground of Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, all prepared for his departure and looking towards the West, puts his hat on. But wait a minute! He is not only putting his hat on, but his whole face! And we realize that it is not Gorbachev who is getting ready for his journey, but that it is the Soviet Russian wolf departing for the West who is pulling Gorbachev's mask over his head.

But — thank God — the Geneva summit shows that Gorbachev-the-wolf's teeth "were not — after all — made of steel" while "Mr. Reagan's smile was not just tooth-paste" (23.11.85). The American counterpart is not the *eagle* (although it does appear, e.g., in the cartoon 13.10.84:13), but the bucolic cognitive schema is complemented by the *shepherd*, and it is probably no exaggeration to add that — not only in the *Economist* — the imagery of the "good shepherd" is insinuated: *this* U.S. president appears not only as a healer but, at least in the U.S. context, as a possible *Messiah*. One does not make statements of such a kind directly, but there is the occasional hint: Western public opinion just has to let President Reagan carry on with SDI, and he



will be able to prove "that he has thought of a way of saving the world" (concluding sentence, 9.3.85:15).

## 5. The function of arms control (summits)

### 5.1. Traditional concepts

To a large extent reference to arms control negotiations and summits is linked to a set of traditional metaphorical frames which I would like to subsume under "antagonistic entertainment."

— Negotiations are (like) card-play, particularly poker, and other forms of gambling (*card, trump, hand, chip* etc.) or like chess (*grand-master, pawn*, etc.).

But the political leaders should stick to serious games, otherwise — i.e. under the influence of impatient public opinion — their behaviour can become childish, a poor show: "Let's play detente in space" says a headline (23.6.84:53), and the accompanying cartoon shows Reagan and Chernenko standing on the two sides of a Star Wars type computer-game called *Satellite Wars*.

— Narrowly linked with gambling is the business metaphor: *bargaining chip, strike a deal, marketing, selling*, etc.

— The show component is stronger in the theatre frame: *stage, curtain, role*, etc. (esp. 27.9.86:13)

— Among sports metaphors boxing stands out: the leaders are *prize fighters* who *punch and slug*, trying to get each other *in the corner* (9.3.85:14; remember the dancing Gorbachev and the staggering Reagan mentioned above). — (The same article may be drawing on another sports metaphor, from baseball: "How an anti-missile peg might square with the missile limiting round hole" [heading].)

— "Argument is war" say Lakoff/Johnson, and this is of course a productive metaphor: propaganda battle-field, firing, barrage of proposals, etc., mostly with reference to the other side.

### 5.2. New metaphors

The predominant, more or less traditional, metaphorical concepts interact to some extent with a more friendly and a more sombre one:

— Summits can be a relaxing drink: "double summit, please" says a title, and cosy hearth associations are played out. When the two great leaders meet at the summit, however, the effect is that of a large whiskey: a warm glow, a relaxed feeling, a tendency to put the slippers on. Look, the superpowers are getting on fine with each other, there's no need to worry" (4.10.86:15). This is all right for public opinion as long as the West does not take it seriously; then it becomes a tranquilizer (cf. above). The implied instruction to the reader is obvious: don't panic because of all of this peace and freeze propaganda, relax.

— But negotiations on nuclear issues, particularly arms control, can also be a trap: "Are they trapped?" asks a title (13.10.84:13), and the cartoon shows the bear and the eagle behind bars made of missiles.

### 5.3. *The symbolic function of arms control (negotiations)*

There is perhaps a more abstract symbolic layer to the significance of arms control. I can only indicate the direction of my idea and illustrate it with short quotations.

— The Soviet Union tries to instrumentalize arms control talks: "Russia will try to use them [i.e., negotiations] to jostle the West into giving up the anti-missile lever" (12.1.85.10). The instrument in question here as elsewhere is the wedge designed to split NATO, a recurrent theme.

— To the West as a whole this implies caution, patience, "cool-nerved firmness" (12.7.86:15f.), particularly with regard to its own public opinion which has caught the arms control bug.

The most succinct formulation that I have found is that arms control negotiations are "a test of the West's self-discipline" (22.12.84:9). This symbolic argumentation deserves a deeper analysis. At least in my country issues of nuclear content have tended to be ultimately reduced to this symbolic level: the decisive argument in favour of Pershings and Cruise Missiles was our reliability (with appeals to the German tradition of solidarity), opposition to SDI was a case of anti-Americanism and — ironically — the final consent of the Christian Democrats to a double-zero solution was accepted, despite supposedly better rational arguments — for the sake of "Bündnistreue" [loyalty to the alliance].

## 6. **The dispute paradigm — and no alternative**

In the sense of Wertsch, the *Economist* allows for no alternative to a "particularistic" point of view; security partnership and the like remain foreign words to its readership.

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