

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE C-12

WASHINGTON POST  
11 February 1985

JACK ANDERSON

## GAO Audits Soviet Spy Satellites

**P**resident Reagan's "Star Wars" defense plan won't be limited to destruction of incoming Soviet missiles. The Pentagon also wants the capability to blind the Soviets in the crucial early stages of a nuclear exchange by neutralizing their spy satellites, which keep tabs on U.S. ships and other retaliatory forces.

The truth is that Star Wars is nothing new. Both sides have had military satellites in space for years. Indeed, Pentagon analysts have been working out priorities for the various kinds of Soviet satellites that would have to be knocked out. According to a secret General Accounting Office study obtained by my associate Dale Van Atta, there are four types of Soviet spy satellites that would have to be destroyed. Here are the satellites and the reasons they qualify for top priority:

- **RORSAT** (radar ocean reconnaissance satellite): The GAO report describes the deployment in Star Wars language, saying, "These satellites provide real-time tracking and targeting data to users in the vicinity of the target or non-real-time data to central control points."

In this context, "real-time" means that the location of an American ship is known to Soviet monitors in the area the second the satellite picks it up. It takes longer ("non-real-time") if the Soviet ships aren't monitoring the satellite themselves and the information must get to them by way of a Moscow clearinghouse.

How good is the Soviet RORSAT? The GAO report says it "can probably detect destroyer-size ships in good weather and aircraft-carrier-size

ships—or smaller ships in close proximity to each other—in rough seas."

- **EORSAT** (electronic intelligence ocean reconnaissance satellite): "These satellites are used with RORSATs for detection and tracking of naval vessels in open or coastal waters," the GAO report states, adding:

"The EORSAT is possibly the Soviet space-based system which is most capable of sea target detection. It provides targeting data of about 2-kilometer accuracy to anti-ship missile platforms (on other ships, helicopters, etc.). In land or air warfare, it would also be used to detect airborne warning and control systems, radar sites and operating airfields."

- **ELINT-3** (third-generation electronic intelligence satellite): "These satellites operate in a record-playback mode and can locate pulsed emitters to a best accuracy of about 10 kilometers," the secret report explains. They can pick up anything that sends out a radio signal, whether it's a radio station or a hand-held transmitter, and locate it within 10 kilometers on the first orbit."

- **Advanced ELINT**: Pentagon intelligence experts anticipate deployment of a new ELINT system by the end of 1985.

"Of particular concern," the GAO warns, "are improvements in the data resolution [accuracy], the storage capacity and possibly the ability to transmit data in real-time to tactical users." Tactical users are the units out on the battlefield, as opposed to strategic weapons forces and units that must be sent long distances from their home bases.