Into the 21st Century

- CERN modified its Super Proton Synchrotron (SPS) so as to be able to accelerate lead (Pb) nuclei to relativistic speeds and have them impinge on a lead foil target. At the moment of producing the quark-gluon plasma a critical temperature of some 100,000 times that at the centre of the sun and an energy density seven times that of normal matter is reached.
- **3. 13th June 2000 Brookhaven, USA**
- In June the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (RHIC) constructed at Brookhaven National Laboratory started accelerating gold nuclei in opposite directions around a 3.8km ring surpassing the CERN experiment.

Into the 21st Century

- In turn it will be surpassed when, in 2005, CERN's A Large ION Collider Experiment (ALICE) becomes operational. The study of the quark-gluon plasma as a new state of matter is just beginning!
- Reference to the RHIC facility as the "Hubble Telescope" of Nuclear Physics seems most appropriate though RHIC "sees" further!