SYSTEM II
90500

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING
July 1, 1986, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 noon, Room 208

SUBJECT: Program Briefing on SDI (Ø)

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

The Vice President's Office:
Mr. Craig L. Fuller

State:
Secretary George P. Shultz

Special Advisor to the President
  and Secretary of State for Arms
  Control Matters Paul Nitze

Special Advisor to the President
  and Secretary of State for Arms
  Control Matters Edward Rowny

Assistant Secretary for Politico-
  Military Affairs H. Allen Holmes

Treasury:
Secretary James A. Baker, III

Defense:
Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger

The Director, Strategic Defense
  Initiative Organization
  Lt. Gen. James A. Abrahamson

Lt. Gen. John F. Wall, Commander,
  U.S. Army Strategic Defense Command

Justice:
Attorney General Edwin Meese, III

Energy:
Secretary John S. Herrington

Assistant Secretary, Defense
  Programs, Admiral S.R. Foley, Jr.

OMB:
Director James C.
  Miller, III

Acting Associate Director
  National Security and
  International Affairs
  Philip A. DuSault

CIA:
Director William J. Casey

National Intelligence
  Officer for Strategic
  Programs Lawrence K.
  Gershwin

USUN:
Ambassador Vernon A.
  Walters

JCS:
Admiral William J. Crowe

Assistant to the Chairman
  Lt. Gen John H.
  Moellering

ACDA:
Director Kennth L.
  Adelman

Assistant Director
  Michael Mobbs

OSTP:
Acting Science Advisor
   to the President and
   Acting Director Dr.
   Richard G. Johnson

NASA:
Associate Administrator
   Office of Space Flight
   Admiral Richard H. Truly

White House:
Mr. Donald T. Regan
Admiral John M. Poindexter
Mr. David L. Chew

NSC:
Mr. Rodney B. McDaniel
Colonel Robert E. Linhard
Mr. Steven E. Steiner
Mr. William Tobey

MINUTES

Admiral Poindexter began the meeting, noting the importance of a program update for participants in view of progress to date, the vital nature of the program, and the need for support from Congress. He continued that the upcoming Vector Sum experiment (classified Top Secret) may draw allegations, albeit incorrect, that it is contrary to the restrictive interpretation of the ABM Treaty. Senator Gore had already expressed such concerns, but apparently had been reassured by a discussion with General Abrahamson and Ambassador Nitze. (TS)

Secretary Weinberger introduced the briefing and noted the importance of boost phase intercept, saying that those who favor exclusively terminal defense only want to kill the SDI program by eliminating its potential to protect people. (C)

General Abrahamson delivered a program briefing describing progress in technologies applicable to boost, mid-course, and terminal phases of ballistic missile defense. He also introduced Lt. Gen. John Wall, who described a successful experiment (known as FLAGE) involving technologies applicable to theater missile defense. General Abrahamson concluded by describing the upcoming Vector Sum experiment. (TS)

Secretary Weinberger noted that the Congressional actions threatened the SDI program by trying to force concentration on terminal defense through both legislative directive and funding cuts. (C)

Admiral Poindexter asked if the new definitions proposed by the USSR relating to the ABM Treaty would restrict only tests in space. (C)

General Abrahamson answered that the Soviet proposals would prohibit all laboratory simulations which would give confidence that a space-based system or component would be feasible. (C)

Secretary Weinberger observed that the Soviets were attempting to destroy the U.S. program with their new definitions. (C)

Mr. Regan noted that the briefing had mentioned four possible surveillance systems and seven possible weapons. He asked

whether ultimately we would choose to pursue certain systems
while dropping the others. (C)

General Abrahamson answered that the program was designed to
prevent an Achille's heel and that meant devising two means for
each function. (C)

Mr. Regan asked if this meant that for each function there would
be six systems, two for each phase of a ballistic missile
trajectory. (C)

General Abrahamson answered that the multiple systems would not
be necessary immediately, but would be designed to deal with a
responsive offensive threat. (C)

Mr. Regan asked how many missiles out of 100 would be knocked
down during the boost phase. (C)

General Abrahamson answered that the goal was about 60 - 80
percent for each phase and that this would contribute
significantly to deterrence. (C)

Mr. Regan observed that if the layers of defense were each 80
percent effective one missile would get through. (C)

General Abrahamson noted that the SDIO was working to find means
for preventing even one missile from getting through and also
observed that the likelihood of any attack would be diminished
because Soviet planners would have little confidence that
missiles would reach their targets, even if defenses were not
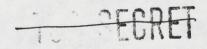perfect. (C)

Secretary Weinberger said that the challenge facing SDI becomes
easier once the boost phase eliminates 80 percent of missiles
launched, making the job for other phases simpler. He continued
that pursuing several concepts for each function is important as
a hedge against failure and also because it allows faster
progress. (C)

Mr. Regan asked at what point choices would be made to narrow
alternatives. (C)

Secretary Weinberger answered that it is a function of
funding. (C)

General Abrahamson continued that last year's cuts had already
forced him to narrow options by scaling back three of four laser
projects. (C)

Admiral Crowe asked if the Soviet proposed definitions are not
accepted, would the SDI be constrained by the ABM Treaty in the
early 1990's. (C)

General Abrahamson answered that this would indeed be the case. (C)

Secretary Baker asked which Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee voted with Democrats to force SDI to concentrate on terminal defense. (C)

Secretary Weinberger answered that it was Senator Cohen. (C)

Secretary Weinberger noted that those who sought to force SDI to focus on point defenses through legislation or funding cuts would kill the program and play into the Soviets' hands. (C)

Admiral Poindexter asked Ambassador Nitze to brief the group on the converstion with Senator Gore. (C)

Ambassador Nitze said Senator Gore was troubled because the Vector Sum experiment seemed to resemble an intercept of a Soviet missile in boost phase and to look like an ABM Treaty violation. Ambassador Nitze explained that this is not the case because the object being intercepted will be in orbit rather than in a ballistic missile trajectory, while satisfies the Treaty requirement that tests not be "in an ABM mode," and because the planned interceptor will not have ABM capability. (TS)

Mr. Miller asked how much is known of relevant Soviet activities. (C)

General Abrahamson answered that we have some information which forms the basis for analysis of potential Soviet countermeasures and that work is underway to analyze other possible tactics the Soviets might pursue. (C)

Secretary Weinberger observed that the Soviets are vigorously pursuing both strategic offenses and defenses and that both are a cause for concern. (C)

Mr. Adelman asked what effect the loss of space launch capability would have on SDI's timetable. (C)

General Abrahamson answered that one experiment will be delayed two years, although some of the results have been attained through other means, while another experiment will be delayed at least a year. (S)

Mr. Adelman asked if this applied to Vector Sum. (TS)

General Abrahamson said this experiment will be delayed at least two months because of problems with Delta rockets. (TS)

Attorney General Meese observed that SDI offers many potential commercial by-products and asked whether this could be used as a selling point with Congress. (C)

<u>Secretary Weinberger</u> said that this argument is very persuasive with foreign governments. (C)

<u>The President</u> asked if there is not some way to convince the program's critics on the Hill. (C)

<u>Secretary Weinberger</u> said that the Administration had gone out of its way to make sufficient information available to Congress; he ascribed opposition to SDI to basic philosophical differences. (C)

<u>The President</u> congratulated General Abrahamson and his staff on progress to date. He described SDI as a strategic necessity and a crucial part of our three part response to the Soviet strategic threat: modernizing our retaliatory forces; negotiating deep, equitable and verifiable reductions of nuclear weapons; and taking steps now to provide future options for the possible introduction of strategic defenses. (C)

In closing the meeting, the President asked all those present to do everything possible in public and in private to obtain the needed political support for the program. (C)