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MEETING OF THE  
SENIOR PRESIDENTIAL ADVISORS  
February 3, 1987

SUBJECT: The SDI Program

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

The President	Mr. Edwin Meese
The Vice President	Admiral Crowe
Mr. Craig Fuller	Mr Kenneth Adelman
Secretary Shultz	Mr Donald T. Regan
Ambassador Nitze	Mr James Miller
Ambassador Rowny	Mr Frank C. Carlucci
Secretary Weinberger	Gen Colin Powell
	Col Robert Linhard

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

- Tab A -- Meeting Attendance List (S)
- Tab B -- Meeting Agenda and Meeting Memorandum (S)
- Tab C -- Mr. Carlucci's Prepared Talking Points (S)
- Tab D -- Preparatory Material for the President (S)
- Tab E -- Post-meeting Package on Leaks (TS)

The meeting opened at 1:50 pm in the Situation Room. Mr. CARLUCCI announced that Mr Gates, unable to attend, had sent a short statement. Mr. CARLUCCI then read the statement that highlighted, once again, that the Soviet Union:

- was continuing work on its own ABM systems;
- was working on a new generation of both offensive and defensive systems; and
- was pressing forward towards significant heavy lift capability.

Mr. CARLUCCI then began the agenda (Tab B) and framed the first issue for discussion using the talking points attached at Tab C.

After this introduction, the following discussion ensued. (N.B. These notes reflect the thrust of the remarks made. And while the notetaker did try to capture the speakers words as closely as possible, these should not be considered verbatim notes.)

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WEINBERGER: If we want to deploy SDI, especially in light of continued Soviet activity, we need to consider the most effective way to proceed.

We have nothing to deploy now, nor do we anticipate anything upon which to base a deployment decision in the next year. There is nothing we should take "off-the-shelf" and consider for deployment. Rather, we need to focus on deploying something that is both effective in its own right and a part of a later, integrated system.

We have been looking at options, various paths and degrees of concurrency. The progress that we have made is astonishing.

Space-based Kinetic Kill Vehicle (SBKKV) technology is most promising, and the most likely to yield earliest results. We are in a position to recommend further testing of SBKKV, looking at the possibility of an initial deployment in the 1993/4 time frame.

We don't need to decide more about this now than to decide that we should focus on deploying a phase of SDI capability as an initial deployment. We will be unable to achieve our overall objectives at once.

We should see if, with proper testing and development, we can recommend an initial deployment of 60 garages carrying SBKKVs capable of killing some 2,000 weapons in boost phase. So we will need to be in a position to give the OK to the necessary testing and development.

We will need to be able to conduct realistic tests. The Delta 180 test proved that we could distinguish metal [i.e., the booster] within the plume [generated by the engine's firing]. Delta 181, having found the missile in the plume, should test if we can hit the missile. We can't conduct such an intercept under the restrictive interpretation (RI). However, under the legally correct interpretation (LCI) of the ABM Treaty, we can do the Delta 181 test and see if we can hit the missile. If the answer is yes, then we are well on the road to a useable technology.

We should think of the concept of phased SDI deployments like building a house. The 1st phase deployment is like laying the foundation of the house. The 2nd phase can be like putting up the walls; the 3rd, the ceiling.

We need to be able to move to planning for such activity now. Specifically, we need you, Mr. President, to decide the following:

1. that the concept of phased deployments is OK;

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2. that you would like to deploy the 1st phase as soon as we can; and
3. that we can immediately restructure the SDI program to follow the LCI.

[At this point, Secretary Weinberger read large sections of NSDD 192, which was the October, 1985, decision document covering the President's initial judgment on the interpretation of the ABM Treaty.]

WEINBERGER: In October, 1985, you set certain criteria for moving to the LCI. It is now February, 1987, Mr. President, and the costs of maintaining the RI are now very high because of the astonishing success of the SDI program.

We could move to the LCI immediately. There may be no need for an announcement. You could simply allow us to do the planning under the LCI to prepare you to decide if you feel we can really support the 1993 option that I have suggested. Other options may also arise and be OK.

We don't need you to announce a deployment decision or a date. All we need is the OK to press on under the LCI and the associated funding.

There is no rush to field something before the end of your Administration.

However, without an OK to move to the LCI, I fear that we will have to conduct ineffective testing and, as a result, we may lose funding for the SDI program.

CARLUCCI: Cap (Weinberger), the first issue under discussion is simply the concept of phased deployment.

WEINBERGER: Well, on that, phased deployment is the only way to go. We simply will never be able to do it all at once. Programmatically, it is the only way. The Soviets may get there first.

I am not interested in a point defense. The 1st phase deployment must be an area defense.

CARLUCCI: What do you say to the arguments on the hill that phased deployments could lead to instability?

WEINBERGER: The logic of the argument is faulty, and that is key. The same players argued that we should not deploy MX without a defense.

SDI may be the only thing that keeps the Soviets at the negotiating table. They agreed to the ABM Treaty only after ABM passed the Senate by 1 vote.

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The Soviets may not sign any agreement if we don't press forward. We should press forward. It will provide much better leverage.

As long as the 1st phase involves a boost-phase capability, it is not destabilizing.

CARLUCCI: Do others see any problems with the concept of phased SDI deployments?

CROWE: The Chiefs support SDI and the concept of phased deployments. They do feel that SBKKV technology is very promising. However, they feel that they simply do not have enough information now to decide to deploy anything in 1993.

WEINBERGER: I agree. We don't know enough now to decide.

CROWE: I agree. We do have problems yet to resolve, especially in C3. The software issue is very tough. At this point, the single biggest challenge may be battle management.

WEINBERGER: However, we are making great strides in computational capabilities to: discriminate decoys from warheads, and to compute the trajectories needed to kill vehicles in flight. We are experiencing a real expansion of knowledge.

CROWE: But it still remains a challenge. In addition, a heavy lift vehicle is needed, both for general national needs and to meet the challenging requirements of a 1993 deployment option. We need more information on whether we can build a suitable heavy lift vehicle by 1993.

WEINBERGER: The Soviets are already building heavy lift capability.

THE PRESIDENT: Didn't we already approve pressing forward towards heavy lift capability in NASA's management plan?

CROWE: That was based on a different time table.

VICE PRESIDENT: But, was that for SDI?

WEINBERGER: It supports both civil and defense needs.

SHULTZ: I didn't know that the Secretary of Defense had made specific recommendations [as outlined in CARLUCCI'S introductory talking points] in December; or, for that matter, that the President was briefed on this subject. However, I have informed myself on the issues involved. General Abrahamson has briefed me several times lately on the status of the SDI program.

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In my view, we have done well on the issue of survivability. I also share the sense that we have accomplished many important things.

I am equally impressed by the unanimity of the view of the Chiefs, expressed on several occasions, that it is not to the US benefit if the Soviet Union departs from the ABM Treaty.

Phased deployments will require that we depart from the ABM Treaty. It is my view that we should not start on phase one unless you know what will follow in the entire integrated system. This must be considered prior to any deployment decision. However, once you satisfy our conditions, the only way to proceed is in a phased manner. This is very sensible to me.

But we are not in a position to decide on a phased deployment now. I agree with the Chiefs that there are problems to be resolved, like C3, and we need more information on phases two and three.

So, Mr. President, in summary, I agree both with Cap and with Bill Crowe.

CARLUCCI: Do you mean that you agree conceptually with the idea of a 1st phase, on which phases two and three could build?

SHULTZ: We need to know the next steps [phases two and three] before we cross the ABM Treaty [by deploying phase one]. If phase one is simply countered by the Soviet Union breaking out, that is not good.

WEINBERGER: Mr. President, there is not a lot of daylight between our positions [Shultz-Weinberger]. By the time we need to consider a real deployment of phase two or three, we can determine if we need more SBKKVs or something based on other technologies. By 1993, we will be in a position to make such a decision.

We need to keep our options for 1993 open. There is no need to decide today. There is no need to decide today even if the initial deployment should be SBKKVs.

The Soviets could counter SBKKVs only with great effort, and in the process, our defenses would introduce great doubt into their military planning.

It is not our idea just to deploy a phase one system and stop; but to go on make ballistic missiles obsolete. The first phase system should make a start and contribute to this overall goal. We should only deploy something if it will be an integral part of the whole system.



We are making great strides. ...

SHULTZ: [Interrupting] With respect to the 1993 option, it is my sense that, when questioned, General Abrahamson smiles as he says 1993. Others, who have managed other similar programs, say we should add a few more years to that estimate. 1993 is, at best, the earliest possible date; the most likely date is later. This must be kept in mind because it plays with what we do in Geneva.

WEINBERGER: Only a few years ago, the earliest projections were 1998/9. It is now realistic to talk about 1993.

I base my estimates not only on General Abrahamson's view but also on the view of my oversight group. It has recognized Abe's optimism, and feels that it is realistic.

ADELMAN: It would be imprudent to go forward with phase one if we needed phases two through four to maintain stability. We must judge that phase one is good for us on its own merits.

WEINBERGER: I agree; and I believe that we can meet that challenge.

SHULTZ: If we are to protect the 1993 option at all, we will need heavy lift capability; so we should press on with the pursuit of that heavy lift capability now.

CROWE: We could get along for a while [in 1993] without a new heavy lifter.

WEINBERGER: We could use available Titan IVs.

MILLER: Do we need a different heavy lifter than NASA wants?

WEINBERGER: No.

REGAN: But are we talking about two vehicles: one for OSD and another for NASA?

WEINBERGER: No, just one vehicle.

[At this point, CARLUCCI used his prepared points to move the discussion to the issue of the legally correct interpretation (LCI) of the ABM Treaty. He turned to Secretary Weinberger to begin this discussion.]

WEINBERGER: The issues of the LCI and the program are interlocked. To move to phased deployment, we need the most economical and effective way to test. For example, under the restrictive interpretation (RI) we have to use Delta 181



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to test, trying for a near miss. This is a silly way to test, especially if the LCI is legally correct.

The ABM Treaty forbids the deployment of ABM components based on other physical principles (OPP) without prior agreement. But even in the absence of such an agreement about deployment, it places no restrictions on the development or testing of such devices. This position has been sustained by our legal experts. We should be able to do anything we wish short of deployment.

It would be a monstrosity of logic to follow the RI for some number of years and then attempt to shift to the LCI. We should opt now to go for the most effective path.

CARLUCCI: Do we need integrated testing now?

WEINBERGER: Yes. We don't need a test this year; but we need to begin planning for such a test this year. The first such test could come in 1988/9.

CARLUCCI: You don't mean 1988. The budget is already submitted.

WEINBERGER: It could be 1988. We could reallocate funds.

CARLUCCI: So you hold the possibility of such a test in calendar year 1988?

WEINBERGER: I don't know the exact date; but I do know we need to begin planning for it now.

MEESE: It seems that we have general agreement from all Administration lawyers that the LCI is acceptable.

ADELMAN: Yes. We had. But there is new evidence. We need to look at the new evidence to be prudent. It may not have a bearing on the issue, but we must be sure.

WEINBERGER: There were discussions by Ellis; loose conversation at the SCC some 13 years after the treaty was signed. Ellis should be retired.

SHULTZ: We need to adopt a strategy to support the LCI because we need the LCI to achieve the full potential of SDI.

We need a strategy because we need to garner support effectively, in a manner that can be supported by Congress. Nothing will be gained by an announcement or reprogramming if Congress cuts SDI funds.

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I believe that there is a way to accomplish this via a process of discussion with the Senate and the House, and with our allies also. Judge Sofaer sent me a copy of a memorandum tasked by the NSC staff which provides such a plan.

Three main issues must be handled; and this can only be done in collaborative way with Congress if we are to avoid having our water cut off:

1. Sofaer has already focused on the negotiating record and we have made this available to some in Congress. Attacks from these quarters have diminished. We need to make this record available to others in Congress so they can see for themselves.

2. We need to consider the common law of treaties. We must examine more fully the practice and understand what both parties have been doing under the treaty over the years.

-- The ACDA General Counsel recently put out a paper on this and Sofaer began receiving calls about it before he even had a chance to read it himself.

ADELMAN: That was just a compilation of the various statements collected.

SHULTZ: It was released on the record and made immediately available to the press. So this needs to be dealt with. Sofaer has completed a draft memorandum on this subject, and he is confident that we have a case, but he requires more time to work on it and prove that it is correct.

3. Representations were made at the time of ratification that also must be dealt with. Secretary of Defense Laird did say that the US understood the treaty as presented under the narrow interpretation when he was asked. Some in the Senate are now claiming that that is the interpretation that the Senate ratified. We need to work this through carefully before engaging on this point so that we put ourselves in a position so that we can successfully assert our position in light of what we and the Soviets have been doing.

In short, I agree with Cap. Cap is right. We need to move to the LCI. However, we need to do it effectively. We need to convince and win support before we move.

At the same time, it is conceivable that the negotiations could result in an agreement on prohibited activity that would help us, especially on moving to the SDI testing we desire, and would build support for SDI.



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Max is now authorized to listen and probe; but to adhere to our position that the LCI is legally correct and that's that. He will continue to do this. This is a satisfactory tactic for now; but we may find a moment in the near future where movement is a good idea.

Right now we are not ready or able to examine options internally.

We also need some sort of process to allow the implementation of the LCI.

Sofaer suggests a 5-6 month program. I don't see why 5-6 months is a problem. There is nothing we need to do to the FY88 budget for now, and current Congressional appropriation language limits us to the narrow interpretation.

I fully agree with your hope, Mr. President, of moving to a world with fewer nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. The proposal made at Reykjavik was a good one. The immediate agreement to reduce offensive arsenals by 50% would be even better.

If we are able to deploy a perfect SDI shield, great. It would mean that we have achieved the "0 ballistic" situation called for at Reykjavik. That is where the SDI program is going, and we should recognize it.

This possibility also means that we will need enhanced defenses against cruise missiles, bombers and conventional forces. All of this will cost more money, in addition to the costs of SDI deployments.

The level of real spending for the Defense budget is orders of magnitude too low. We need to get this reality in play. We need, and will need more than 3% growth. There is no reason why higher levels can't be supported by our economy. We need to make the public realize that if they want a safer world, they have to pay for it -- and it will be more expensive. We need to get this into play while we have some time to go.

In summary, I support the LCI. We need a process so that we can implement it effectively, so that it will be supported. We also need to show our public where SDI is taking us and what our future needs will be.

WEINBERGER: I like the part about your supporting Cap. We do have a major disagreement on the subject of negotiating what is prohibited. To engage in such a negotiation, we will eventually have to prohibit something; and I don't know what that could be.



SHULTZ: We need to see if there is anything. We can't discuss this now within the Administration, so we can't prepare to negotiate. If the Soviets realize our situation they will see they are in clover. They will be able to press us knowing we will never agree. [The notes of the last two sentences of the Secretary's remarks are very brief and the resulting reconstruction may not be accurate even in its basic thrust.]

WEINBERGER: The Soviets want to strengthen the ABM Treaty. If we sit down to negotiate, they can only conclude that there is something that we are prepared to prohibit. But we have a position under which nothing which is based on OPP (save deployment) is prohibited.

Further, I believe that 5-6 months of study will impact on our program and is unnecessary. The common law of treaties is not applicable here. It has only been since 1983/4 that we have had the possibility of using other physical principles. Laird's remarks should not bind us. He was talking about traditional technologies. We really don't need to spend 6 months working up good arguments.

We need to stay away from negotiations on what is permitted and prohibited.

George (Shultz) is correct that we can never leave ourselves with our deterrent down. We will need air defense and improved conventional capability. It is vital that we don't take down our strategic offensive nuclear capability before enhanced conventional capability is in place. Therefore, we need to watch the reductions schedules.

In any case, all agree that any additional prohibitions are almost certainly going to be unverifiable. There should be no additional agreements on prohibitions. We should prepare a strong case for the LCI and press on.

ADELMAN: All agree to the need to move the program to the LCI. To make a deployment decision, we will need integrated testing. You would not buy a car based on the assurance that all the individual pieces were fully tested, but the car was never assembled and driven.

We need to do three things:

1. We need to look at all the legal evidence to ensure that we are correct.
2. We need to have clear idea of the specific tests under the LCI vice the RI, and why each is needed.
3. It is fine to talk about activities in the ABM under the ABM Treaty, as long as we are trying to get the Soviets to buy the LCI.



We should go nowhere beyond the LCI. Anywhere beyond LCI is a wilderness, a swamp, especially since we don't really know what the Soviets are doing [in advanced defenses] and what they are driving for.

MEESE: The 5/6 month study that Sofaer suggests can be done in 3 months. We should consider concurrently going forward with the planning needed to restructure the program.

The idea we should pursue is not to see if we can sell the LCI, but to sell it. We will need a massive, big deal sales job -- and it should be seen as a big deal.

Go up and do it. Make the effort massive if needed. I will help with assets. If it really looks like it will take 4 months, lets find out by pressing for 3 months.

[Secretary Shultz left the room to go to the Hill for a Congressional hearing.]

THE PRESIDENT: Why couldn't we just go ahead [and restructure the SDI program] without making any announcement? We could let others bring up any problems, and we could respond to them.

We could, and should point out that we are not going as far as the Soviets have gone "under" the ABM Treaty. We may have only 5 years to prepare, since the Soviets are already installing battle management radars.

If the Soviets press on with both their offensive and defensive improvements, we will be hurting.

Why should we go to Congress, just do it?

CARLUCCI: You already issued an NSDD [192] which made commitments.

THE PRESIDENT: But how does that NSDD read?

[Secretary Weinberger gave the President a copy of NSDD 192 to review. The President read portions of the NSDD aloud. He noted that it was a good position, well stated, and had stood the test of time. He also noted that it permitted him to move as he had suggested.]

WEINBERGER: You will note, Mr. President, it sets as one of the conditions "adequate funding."

CARLUCCI: The problem with your approach, Mr. President, is that if we surprise the Congress, they could simply cut SDI funding.



ADELMAN: I agree. We should not attempt to bushwack the Congress. It will simply result in funding cuts.

[The President returned to reading NSDD 192 aloud.]

ROWNY: Mr. President, the SDI program is now approaching critical mass, so it would be good to announce your intention to restructure the program.

NITZE: To build the support that we will need, Mr. President, you must inform them of your restructuring.

WEINBERGER: You don't need to ask them; but in order to support your action, you do need to tell them.

[The President continued reading NSDD 192. He completed reading the section involving Soviet violations.]

THE PRESIDENT: The whole story is in this NSDD. It covers the Soviet violations. It explains that I evaluated the price involved in my decision. It sets the criteria that "as long as the program receives adequate support." It's all laid out.

The NSDD makes it clear that my decision not to restructure the program in 1985 was temporary, but that I clearly retained the right to move to the broader interpretation when needed.

CARLUCCI: Mr. President, we are agreed on a number of points.

1. We are agreed on the concept of phased deployments.
2. We are agreed on the need for more priority on the heavy lift vehicle.
3. We are agreed on moving to the LCI when the correct foundation is laid.

We now need to discuss the arms control aspects, including the issue of negotiating permitted/prohibited activities, and the process of implementing the points made above. We will carry on this discussion at next week's meeting to focus on these areas.

We need to be able to implement our decisions effectively; and the only way we can do this is if our deliberations on this sensitive issue stay within this room.

MEESE: I want my lawyers to get with Sofaer to see how we can help.



THE PRESIDENT: We do need to effectively work this issue with the Congress.

WEINBERGER: Don't forget you, Mr. President, and not the Congress, interpret treaties. The Congress can't impose an interpretation of the treaty on you because of Constitutional grounds.

CARLUCCI: Our next meeting will be next Tuesday.

[The meeting was completed at 3 pm.]





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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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NOTED

ACTION

March 26, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR GRANT S. GREEN

FROM:

BOB LINHARD *BL*

SUBJECT:

Minutes of Senior Advisors' Meeting on SDI:  
February 3, 1987

Attached (next under) are the minutes of the Senior Advisors' Meeting held on February 3, 1987. In addition to the basic minutes, I have tried to attach the relevant associated documents to make a complete package for the record on this meeting.

Given the sensitivity of the product, I have taken the liberty of putting the minutes on numbered paper. I would hold copies of this set of minutes to an absolute minimum.

I don't think that FCC needs to review these prior to their being placed in the record.

With attachments removed, this memorandum is UNCLASSIFIED.

Recommendation

That you accept these minutes for the record.

Approve 6

Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_

Attachments:

- 2/3/87 Senior Advisors' Meeting Minutes (TS)
- Tab A -- Attendance List (C)
- Tab B -- Meeting Agenda & Meeting Memorandum (S)
- Tab C -- Mr. Carlucci's Prepared Talking Points (S)
- Tab D -- Presidential Preparatory Materials (S)
- Tab E -- Press Reporting of the Meeting (TS)

DECLASSIFIED

White House Guidelines, August 28, 1997

By CS NARA, Date 4/13/02

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