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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301'S SEE

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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: SEP 07 2018

JUN 14 1982

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: M-X Missile Program -- Response to NSDD 35 (U)

(1) Since receiving Judge Clark's memo of May 17 forwarding your National Security Decision Directive 35 on the M-X program, the Department of Defense has taken the steps necessary for immediate implementation of its provisions. I fully support the provisions of NSDD 35, including particularly the need to maintain IOC of the M-X missile in 1986. The program we are pursuing does everything we can to keep the R&D and procurement activities on track for the 1986 IOC.

(2) Closely Spaced Basing (CSB) appears to some to be the most promising route to pursue at this time. The fundamentals of the concept are not new in principle -- in fact, the Townes Panel report of last year recommended that we pursue the benefits we could gain from silo spacing which would pose fratricide problems to the Soviets. The superhard silo designs which are needed will be a natural outgrowth of work we have already done. The fact that the M-X silo deployment could be located on a small part of existing Government reservations from which the public is already excluded should help eliminate insurmountable environmental objections. Finally, the survivability growth options of deception and Ballistic Missile Defense are intended to assure a high degree of survivability of the basic CSB deployment into the indefinite future; and the CSB system can be designed so that a future Deep Underground deployment will use common support facilities.

(3) Certainly all of the potential problems and uncertainties in the CSB approach have not been resolved. Some additional very sophisticated technical work will be needed before anyone can assure you that CSB is the best or even a truly survivable mode. All of the relevant expertise of the Defense Department has been directed toward intensive work on the remaining problems, and the nuclear laboratories of the Department of Energy are participating fully. To ensure the technical quality of the work, I have formed a new task force of the Defense Science Board. This panel will be chaired by Professor Charles Townes, who served us so ably last year. Dr. Townes' group will try to answer questions which raise doubts about CSB and will also try to save us from the great damage which would result if a major fault is discovered in CSB after we endorse it.

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LC, CW Papers, box I: CL 706, DOD, Subj: File, 1982, Pres. Memo to

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(f) I appreciate your determination to reach a final decision shortly after I provide you a recommendation, and I fully expect to provide that recommendation by September 15. In no event will the recommendation be made later than November 1.

(f) As directed in NSDD 35, our programs on Ballistic Missile Defense and Deep Underground Basing are continuing. A recommendation on whether deployment of the mothballed Spartan BMD system should be concurrent with CSB deployment will be a part of my recommendation in September. Further recommendations on other BMD systems and on Deep Underground are planned for July 1983.

(f) Until we complete our technical review of Closely Spaced Basing and other possible permanent M-X basing options, we will continue work on the possibility of deployment of M-X in Minuteman silos for the remainder of this fiscal year. In view of the Congressional opposition to the Minuteman silo basing, continuation of this program after October 1 is very problematical. I must also caution that, because of the political impossibility of making the necessary public notifications this summer on an approach which is only a hedge, the IOC would slip into 1987 if we had to return to the Minuteman silo option.

(f) I believe that a personal briefing of Congressional leaders by you, as well as letters from you to the Congress, would be very helpful. We must strongly encourage the House to pass an authorization along the lines of the House Armed Services Committee bill, which permits a 1986 IOC, and then hold that position in conference. Retreat to the provisions of the authorization bill which has already passed the Senate would delay the IOC by one year. I believe we should be prepared to accept a fence around the Fiscal Year 1983 basing funds which would require Congressional review of our final basing program. It is also very important to restore funding for Ballistic Missile Defense, which was cut by more than half by the House Armed Services Committee, to the level proposed in your budget. Otherwise, it will be impossible to maintain the options for deployment of Spartan in 1986 and Sentry in 1988. I have provided Bill Clark a talking paper for your use as well as a draft letter to the Congressional leaders. Needless to say, I am prepared to support this effort fully.

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