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THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SECURITY INFORMATION

3 OCT 1984

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Authority: ED 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: SEP 17 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: How to Defend the Strategic Defense Initiative
During the Next Two Months (U)

We know of three reports on SDI that might attract some attention this month:

- Office of Technology Assessment has a study in draft (we have not yet seen a copy). Given the predilections of the authors, we must expect that it will be hostile to SDI.
- Union of Concerned Scientists has another report, timed for release just before the elections.
- The House Science and Technology Committee has a draft study which can't be released till finished or requested by a member. This study may offer a more balanced assessment of SDI.

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Depending on how the media reacts to these reports, they might go almost unnoticed or provide a news peg for criticism of the President's defense initiative. We should explore opportunities for preemptive, more positive updates on SDI assessments. One possibility would be a (friendly) hearing later this month, during the recess, to defuse the OTA and UCS reports and provide some positive information.

European views on SDI are in flux, but seem to be moving towards a more favorable position. Senior people in the German MOD have recently expressed more sympathetic views (and Manfred Woerner, of course, stopped making any critical observations). I have corresponded with Franz Joseph Strauss, who once spoke up against SDI, and I believe he now sees the merits of the Initiative. In the UK, some Defense experts have now spoken up in favor of SDI, but in the MOD and Foreign Office, there clearly is opposition. As to the French, I invited senior officials (Blysee and MOD) to visit us the end of October for private discussions and an update of SDI. And, as you know, General Abrahamson has briefed NATO audiences extensively.

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Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
Date: 17 SEP 2010 Authority: EO 13526 + 5 UK 1992
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330-86-0047, ↑ (Oct-Nov) 84, lx 21

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Beyond this, it is important to clear up some misconceptions about SDI among the Europeans (and for that matter, in the US).

- (1) Total defense vs. partial defense: Even though a fully effective defense is a desirable ultimate goal (and would require complementary air defenses), the difficulty of achieving the ultimate goal is not an argument against SDI. Partial defenses can contribute a great deal to making an enemy attack far more difficult, hence help deterrence. Partial defenses might also be able to handle an accidental enemy missile launch-- to which we now have no answer.
- (2) Tactical defenses in Europe could well become possible before intercontinental defenses can be deployed. Hence, the Europeans should not fear being left out. Indeed, they may gain some protection (and hence greater deterrence stability) before the US.
- (3) We want to plan for arms control developments supportive of SDI: an agreement to curb offensive arms will make it easier for both sides to have effective defenses. At the very end of the road, when offenses would have been practically eliminated, one might even envisage sharing information on defensive technology. But at this time it is unrealistic--and opens us to ridicule-- to talk about giving the Soviets SDI technology.
Tab A has farther points on this.

Fred
Fred C. Ikle

Attachment

Concurrence:

Dir(SDIO) - LTC Abrahamson (See attached note)

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