

November 9, 1983

STRATEGIC DEFENSE: AVOIDING ANNIHILATION

INTRODUCTION

How can the U.S. protect itself from nuclear attack? Mutual deterrence based on a superpower balance in offensive nuclear capability is one means, and for years the U.S. has bet its future on this potentially unstable and disastrous scheme. It depends on the morally questionable practice of deliberately leaving the American people unprotected from a Soviet attack, and it ignores the fact that the Soviet Union is investing heavily in defenses to protect itself from U.S. nuclear retaliation.

There is another way of protecting the U.S.--it is called strategic defense. It is more moral than deterrence based on retaliation and more certain to deter nuclear war, for it does not use civilian lives as hostages in the hope that this would deter attack. Strategic defense instead creates a shield that actually protects Americans from incoming Soviet missiles and bombers. For those rightly horrified by the devastation of nuclear holocaust, it offers a means of preventing nuclear attack, while keeping the nation secure.

After years of neglecting it, Washington now is taking a hard look at strategic defense. It was at the core of President Reagan's March 23, 1983, speech endorsing space based ballistic missile defense. It has been endorsed by two study teams of prominent scientists and strategists in recent reports to the White House.¹

¹ The Defense Technologies Study Team, chaired by James C. Fletcher, former head of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the Future Security Strategy Study, headed by Fred S. Hoffman, director of a think tank called Pan Heuristics. See Clarence A. Robinson, Jr., "Panel Urges Defense Technology Advocacy," Aviation Week and Space Technology, October 17, 1983, pp. 16-18.

The high risk that a U.S.-Soviet conflict will escalate to all-out nuclear war, Soviet paranoia about security matters, and the massive continuing Soviet buildup in nuclear warfighting capability make it extremely imprudent for the U.S. to let its security rely solely on an increasingly lopsided "balance" of strategic offensive capability, as is current U.S. policy. Strategic defense is imperative--the only solution to the moral dilemma posed by nuclear deterrence, a matter of grave concern to the U.S. Roman Catholic bishops and others.

Critics of current strategic defense proposals use aging arguments that were voiced in the late 1960s during the heated debate over deployment of anti-ballistic missile (ABM) systems for population defense. Their principal contention is that successful defense against anything greater than a small-scale nuclear attack is impossible. In the age of nuclear missiles, it is argued, the advantage inherently belongs to the offense. This might have sounded true 15 years ago; it is very dubious today.

The Administration's space weapons study group of leading technical experts (the Fletcher Commission) has concluded that effective space based ballistic missile defense (BMD) using a variety of technologies, including directed energy weapons (DEWs), can be deployed at an affordable cost.² The technology for more traditional ground based defense against ballistic missiles and defense against low flying bombers and cruise missiles also has advanced considerably since the days of Nike-Hercules, Sprint, and Spartan. With a comprehensive set of strategic defense programs, including multiple layers of ballistic missile defenses, air defenses, and civil defense measures, assured survival against even a massive Soviet nuclear attack now seems achievable.

In addition to technical criticism, arms control considerations also are used by opponents of strategic defense, who contend that it is destabilizing (that is, makes war more likely). This argument, too, collapses under scrutiny. Indeed, the critics' view that deterrence must be based on population vulnerability is a major reason for today's dangerous strategic imbalance and the lack of a timely U.S. response.

Since deployment of robust strategic defenses will take some time, the U.S. must continue in the short run to rely for deterrence on offensive nuclear weapons, which must be made more survivable. But strategic defense rightfully concerns Congress, the Administration, and the American people, for it offers, at last, protection from nuclear attack that does not threaten the lives of one hundred million Americans. It fulfills a government's primary responsibility--to protect its citizens.

² Ibid.

WHAT IS STRATEGIC DEFENSE?

The goal of strategic defense is to increase the prospects of survival of the U.S. homeland against even large-scale nuclear attack.³ It involves limiting the possibility of damage to key national assets: the U.S. population, government institutions, residential and commercial property, industry, farmland, transportation systems, and so on. Damage limitation can be accomplished in two ways: (1) by destroying enemy nuclear forces (intercontinental ballistic missiles, ICBMs; submarine launched ballistic missiles, SLBMs; bombers) before they are launched; and (2) by defending against these weapons after they have been launched.

Having correctly rejected the option of a preemptive strategic nuclear strike, the U.S. can limit damage to itself, using offensive weapons only, by attacking Soviet post-first strike forces (those remaining after a Soviet first strike). The U.S. capability to destroy Soviet offensive nuclear weapons is severely limited today in part because most U.S. ICBMs--the major counterforce weapons in the U.S. strategic arsenal--would be destroyed in a Soviet first strike. Deployment of the Trident II submarine launched ballistic missile (SLBM) and deployment of U.S. ICBMs in a survivable basing mode would enhance somewhat U.S. capability to limit U.S. damage through destruction of Soviet reserve offensive forces. Nevertheless, in light of America's second strike nuclear policy, the major burden of damage limitation for the U.S. must rest with strategic defense, which has four major components:

- 1) strategic and tactical warning of Soviet attack;⁴
- 2) defense against ballistic missiles, using space based and ground based weapons systems firing directed energy laser and particle beams, nuclear missiles, high velocity impact rockets, or other traditional defensive weapons;
- 3) defense against enemy bombers and low-flying cruise missiles, using surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and manned interceptors armed with both guns and air-to-air missiles (AAMs); and

³ There are other good reasons for deploying strategic defenses: to protect the U.S. against small-scale nuclear attacks from minor nuclear powers, such as the People's Republic of China, to prevent accidental nuclear war, to defend U.S. strategic forces against a Soviet first strike, or to complicate Soviet war planning. The heart of the current debate over strategic defense, however, is: can and should the U.S. defend itself against a large-scale Soviet nuclear attack?

⁴ For strategic warning (warning of impending attack before it is launched) the U.S. relies on intelligence about general Soviet military and civilian mobilization activity gathered from a variety of sources. For tactical warning (warning of an attack in progress) the U.S. relies primarily on early warning Defense Support Program (DSP) satellites equipped with infrared sensors to detect rocket firings and some ground-based radars to detect SLBM launches.

- 4) civil defense through blast shelters, fallout shelters, city evacuation, and industrial hardening and dispersal.⁵

STRATEGIC DEFENSE IN U.S. DEFENSE POLICY

The U.S. has not always been defenseless against nuclear attack. During the 1950s and early 1960s, the joint U.S. and Canadian North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) Command maintained a vast air defense system of 2,612 interceptors, 180 surface-to-air missile batteries, and about 600 radars, all that was needed to successfully defend U.S. cities against Soviet bombers--the only Soviet strategic nuclear threat at the time.⁶ During the 1960s the U.S. seriously contemplated deployment of a nationwide ABM system and investigated technology for a space based defense system.⁷ Civil defense spending reached its peak in 1962--\$500 million (1977 dollars)--for evacuation planning, shelter identification, and the stockpiling of survival kits.⁸

With the deployment of large numbers of Soviet ICBMs after the mid-1960s, nationwide anti-ballistic missile (ABM) protection was abandoned by the U.S. government because of the widespread belief that successful ballistic missile defense of the entire nation was technically infeasible and destabilizing. Opponents of ABM held the view, commonly accepted by critics of strategic defense today, that the essence of deterrence is mutual assured destruction (MAD)--the capability of each side to destroy the other side as a viable society. Although the U.S. government has never accepted MAD as the basis for U.S. nuclear weapons targeting or war planning,⁹ MAD has been used by civilian strategists and

⁵ For an overview of strategic defense components and a comparison between U.S. and Soviet efforts, see John M. Collins, U.S.-Soviet Military Balance: 1960-1980 (New York: McGraw Hill, Inc., 1980), pp. 154-175.

⁶ For a discussion of U.S. air defenses, past and present, see U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee Hearing on Continental Air Defenses, July 22, 1981; Collins, op. cit., and "NORAD--A Study in Evolution," International Defense Review, vol. 3 (1974), pp. 15-19.

⁷ The first U.S. ABM system involved Nike-Zeus interceptors (tested 1959-1962) and mechanically manipulated radars. This was superseded by the Nike-X system which used high-speed, short-range missiles for point defense and phased array (electronically scanning) radars. Spartan missiles, for intercepting Soviet warheads outside the atmosphere--an essential requirement for city defense--were added later to the system, which as the Sentinel program was proposed for deployment at 17 sites for "thin area" defense of the U.S. homeland against small-scale nuclear attacks. See John Collins, United States and Soviet City Defense (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), pp. 73-82.

⁸ "Only half the spaces were ever marked or stocked with the simplest survival kits." Ibid., p. 89.

⁹ For an historical review of U.S. strategic doctrine and targeting policy, see Aaron L. Friedberg, "A History of U.S. Strategic 'Doctrine'--1945 to 1980," Journal of Strategic Studies, vol. 3 (December 1980), pp. 37-71.

the Congress as the standard for structuring U.S. strategic nuclear force deployments and served to justify a U.S. policy of population vulnerability.

Research and development, nevertheless, continued on ABM systems for the less demanding role of protecting U.S. strategic nuclear forces from a potential Soviet first strike, as even according to MAD, deterrence requires survivable nuclear forces to retaliate after an aggressor's first strike. In 1969, Congress approved funding for two sites of the proposed 12-site Safeguard system for defense of U.S. strategic forces.¹⁰ The 1972 ABM Treaty, amended in 1974, however, restricted deployment of ABM interceptors to 100 at one site and banned space based ABM interceptors, thus preventing the U.S. by international treaty from defending either its citizens or strategic forces against Soviet missile attack.

U.S. support of the ABM Treaty was officially linked to an expected follow-on agreement, which was to prevent the Soviets from deploying ICBMs capable of threatening U.S. strategic retaliatory forces.¹¹ The U.S., however, failed to win Soviet approval of such an agreement, and after 1975, the Soviet Union deployed large numbers of multiple warhead ICBMs not prohibited by SALT I or SALT II, which have put U.S. ICBMs at extreme risk and added substantially to Soviet megatonnage. Instead of proceeding with deployment of ABM interceptors to protect its ICBMs, the U.S. cut back on ABM research and development, virtually phased out its air defenses, and reduced civil defense to an organization without a serious national program.¹²

During the late 1970s, interest in strategic defense revived somewhat when the Carter Administration, concerned about the growing Soviet nuclear warfighting capability, turned again to the need to limit damage to the United States. Presidential Directive-41, signed in 1978, recognized civil defense as an element in the strategic balance that could enhance deterrence and stability, an idea endorsed by Congress in a 1980 amendment

¹⁰ Safeguard used the basic components of Sentinel: high acceleration, nuclear missiles for intercepting Soviet warheads in the atmosphere (Sprint), nuclear missiles for intercepting Soviet missiles outside the atmosphere (Spartan), Perimeter Acquisition Radars (PARs) for warhead detection and tracking, Missile Site Radars (MSRs) for battle management, and data processing computers.

¹¹ U.S. Unilateral Statement A of the ABM Treaty states: "If an agreement providing for more complete strategic offensive arms limitations were not achieved within five years, U.S. supreme interests could be jeopardized. Should that occur, it would constitute a basis for withdrawal from the ABM Treaty."

¹² In 1981 NORAD had 307 interceptor aircraft, no SAMs, only 111 functioning radars, and the capability only to protect the sovereignty of U.S. airspace in peacetime. Continental Air Defense, p. 25. See also "Neglect of Bomber, Missile Defense Hit," Aviation Week and Space Technology, August 20, 1979, p. 64. The civil defense budget between 1969 and 1979 was \$100 million (1977 dollars) a year.

The Soviet strategic defense capability is considerable and growing. Moscow deploys 2,600 interceptors, 11,000 surface-to-air missile launchers, and 3,000 air defense radars for air defense. This force is being upgraded with more effective interceptors with look-down/shoot-down radars and missiles, the more capable SA-10 surface-to-air missile (SAM), and airborne warning and control (AWAC) aircraft for defense against low flying U.S. cruise missiles.¹⁹

The Soviet Union is spending \$2.5 billion (ten times the U.S. level) a year on civil defense measures, such as evacuation planning and training, stockpiling of food, medical supplies, and other necessities, construction and maintenance of blast shelters, and protection for industrial equipment.²⁰ A 1978 Central Intelligence Agency study concluded that, with a few days warning to allow evacuation, Soviet casualties in a large-scale nuclear war could be held to 50 million. With a week's preparation, Soviet civil defense could reduce casualties to levels suffered by the USSR in World War II.²¹ The U.S., on the other hand, with virtually no civil defense program would suffer more than 100 million casualties regardless of warning.

The Soviet Union is conducting vigorous research and development on ABM technology and is upgrading the Galosh ABM system around Moscow with new phased array radars and missiles manufactured on mass production assembly lines, which give the Soviet Union the capability to quickly deploy a nationwide ABM system.²² A number of these upgrades violate the 1972 ABM Treaty.²³

¹⁹ Clarence A. Robinson, Jr., "Emphasis Grows on Nuclear Defense," Aviation Week and Space Technology, March 8, 1982, p. 36.

²⁰ W. Dale Nelson, "Soviet's Budget for Civil Defense Set at \$2.5 Billion," Philadelphia Inquirer, March 18, 1982, p. 6. Some civil defense critics dispute this figure as far too high. See, for example, Les Aspin, "Soviet Civil Defense: Myth and Reality," Arms Control Today, September 1976. If true, however, this merely shows that, as the 1957 Gaither Committee and other study groups have concluded, "no other practicable addition to our defense, regardless of cost, can offer so much of a return (survivability) under as wide variety of conditions (as civil defense)." Quoted in Collins, United States and Soviet Civil Defense, pp. 88-89.

²¹ Director of Central Intelligence, Soviet Civil Defense (NI78-10003), July 1978, p. 4.

²² The Soviets are deploying a two-tiered BMD system to modernize their Galosh ABM complex with the SH-04 (Spartan-like) exoatmospheric interceptor, the SH-08 endoatmospheric interceptor, and ABM-X-3 mobile, phased array radars. See "Soviets Test Defense Missile Reload," Aviation Week and Space Technology, March 8, 1982, p. 27; Berman and Baker, op. cit., p. 149; and Walter Pincus, "Soviets Believed to Have Problems with New Typhoon Missile," Washington Post, January 18, 1982, p. 15.

²³ In particular, the Soviets have tested SAMs in an ABM mode for upgrading air defenses for BMD missions, developed and tested mobile radars and missile launchers, deployed battle management radars for a nationwide ABM

The Soviet Union is the only country with an operational anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon. According to the U.S. Defense Department, it could deploy a prototype orbiting laser ASAT battle station within the next six years providing valuable operational experience for a large-scale space based BMD system which could be deployed by the mid-1990s.²⁴

The Soviet Union seems bent on acquiring the capability to limit nuclear war damage to what it considers tolerable levels, which would give the Soviet Union a war winning capability.²⁵ Two options are available to the U.S. for offsetting Soviet strategic defense deployments and hedging against a possible Soviet ABM breakout: (1) a massive buildup of offensive weapons to defeat Soviet strategic defense; or (2) a more balanced deployment of strategic defenses and modernized offensive weapons to ensure continued deterrence and vastly improved survivability of the U.S. in a nuclear war.

Option (1) would undermine U.S. efforts to achieve deep reductions in nuclear weapons through arms control--a highly desirable objective despite Soviet resistance. Option (2), on the other hand, could make offensive nuclear arms control easier by channeling the Soviet arms buildup into the area of defense forces, and it would have the following other advantages.

2. Strategic defense would reduce the inherent uncertainty of deterrence through retaliation.

Much can and should be done to enhance U.S. capability to limit nuclear war. Even so, it is possible that a U.S.-Soviet conflict could escalate to a massive nuclear exchange with large-scale destruction in the United States. This makes deterrence through offensive power uncertain because in an extreme crisis Soviet leaders might be tempted to launch unlimited nuclear attacks against U.S. nuclear forces in the hope that U.S. leaders would choose surrender rather than risk national suicide. True, Soviet leaders cannot be sure that the U.S. would not retaliate. But doubts about U.S. retaliation undermine its deterrent value.

system, and tested rapid reload missile launchers--all in violation of the ABM Treaty. See Manfred Hamm, "Soviet SALT Cheating: The New Evidence," Heritage Foundation Executive Memorandum No. 31, August 5, 1983; "Soviets Test Defense Missile Reload," *op. cit.*, and Senator Steven Symms (R-Idaho), "Soviet Violations of ABM Treaty," Congressional Record, April 14, 1983, pp. S4625-S4627.

²⁴ Craig Covault, "Soviet Antisatellite Treaty Raises Verification Issue," Aviation Week and Space Technology, August 29, 1983, p. 20.

²⁵ For the argument that "Soviet layered defenses are likely to prove workable and highly successful" after a Soviet first strike against vulnerable U.S. nuclear forces, see Daniel Goure and Gordon H. McCormick, "Soviet Strategic Defense: The Neglected Dimension of the U.S.-Soviet Balance," Orbis, Spring 1980, pp. 103-127.

States, we would be willing to spend not \$40 billion, but any reasonable multiple of that amount that was necessary. The money itself is not the problem: the penetrability of the proposed shield is the problem.²⁷

Strategic defense, however, need not be absolutely 100 percent effective against an all-out attack to be strategically and politically worthwhile. Strategic defense capable of limiting leakage to a few tens of warheads is technically feasible and affordable. While the casualties resulting from such an attack would be bad, this is far preferable to the more than 100 million who might die if the U.S. were undefended.

Flaw Two is the assumption that the Soviet Union would respond to U.S. strategic defense programs by deploying more offensive weapons (missiles and bombers). Kosta Tsipis, Director of MIT's Program in Science and Technology for International Security, and a persistent critic of new strategic weapons deployments, for example, has said that "the most likely outcome of a U.S. effort to build defense systems for our cities will be an increase in the number and sophistication of Soviet offensive weapons and an intensification of the arms race."²⁸ It is more likely, however, that the Soviet Union would try to match U.S. strategic defense programs with a comparable defense effort.²⁹ Although Soviet leaders have shown a remarkable willingness to sacrifice the economic well-being of their citizens for military power (spending 13 percent of Soviet GNP on defense versus 6.5 percent in the U.S.), even their defense budget is finite. Soviet planners probably would be forced to choose between building even more offensive weapons to try to overcome U.S. defenses and spending more rubles on strategic defense systems. Soviet military doctrine emphasizes the need to destroy U.S. nuclear forces and other important warfighting assets in a surprise first strike, but it stresses even more the need to protect the Soviet motherland with defensive measures. Soviet leaders, therefore, would be unlikely to concede superiority to the U.S. in the critical area of strategic defense.

Flaw Three exaggerates worst case scenarios for strategic defense by falsely assuming that the Soviets would preferentially "go after" the U.S. civilians with their missiles. As far as U.S. experts on Soviet nuclear forces can determine, however, the primary targets of Soviet nuclear forces are U.S. nuclear forces, conventional forces, and defense industries, for these represent

²⁷ Department of State Bulletin, October 9, 1967. Quoted in General Daniel O. Graham, High Frontier: A Strategy for National Survival (New York: Tom Dougherty Associates, Inc. 1983), p. 75.

²⁸ Los Angeles Times, March 30, 1983. Quoted in "Onward and Upward with Space Defense," Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, June/July 1983, p. 6.

²⁹ Strode, op. cit., pp. 125-129.

the greatest threat to the Soviet Union.³⁰ U.S. civilians face grave danger from the collateral effects of large-scale Soviet attacks on U.S. military/industrial targets near cities, but the Soviets would be unlikely to send huge waves of missiles against the U.S. population per se. In short, the Soviet threat against U.S. cities is not insurmountable with strategic defenses.

Flaw Four is the contention that assured survival depends solely on space weapons that are not leakproof. The key to strategic survival, however, would be to deploy multiple layers of missile defense systems: a space based layer to attack Soviet missiles in their vulnerable boost phase; a ground or space based layer to attack Soviet warhead platforms ("buses") in their mid-course phase; and a ground based layer to attack Soviet warheads as they fall through the atmosphere back to earth. Air defenses against Soviet bombers and cruise missiles and civil defense measures would back up ballistic missile defenses. As Soviet missiles and bombers passed through each defense layer, fewer and fewer weapons would survive--making the task of defense easier for each successive defense layer.

Flaw Five argues that the U.S. cannot afford an effective strategic defense. But even McNamara, an avid cost-cutter, recognized that removing the nuclear sword of Damocles hanging over the United States is worth a very high cost.³¹

STRATEGIC DEFENSE IS NOT DESTABILIZING

The most frequently used argument against strategic defense is that it is destabilizing--that it would increase the chances of nuclear war. Critics say that Soviet leaders would feel threatened by U.S. strategic defenses because they would cut off the Soviet Union's effective second strike response to a U.S. first strike, and that the Soviets then might be tempted to attack the U.S. before it fully deployed its strategic defenses. Critics also argue that, if the U.S. were to deploy strategic defenses, U.S. leaders would be more willing to use force to solve U.S. security problems in the belief that the U.S. could fight, win, and survive a nuclear war. Finally, critics argue that deployment of strategic defenses would intensify the arms race, fueling U.S.-Soviet tensions.

These arguments are fallacious. In the first place, U.S. deployment of comprehensive strategic defenses would tilt the

³⁰ Joseph D. Douglass, Jr. and Amoretta M. Hoeber, Soviet Strategy for Nuclear War (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1979), pp. 75-88.

³¹ Even a \$250 billion price tag--over twice the estimates of the Defense Technologies Study Team--would amount to only \$10 billion a year for a 25-year program or less than 0.3 percent GNP.

strategic balance in favor of the U.S. only if the Soviet Union did nothing in response. Moscow could ensure strategic balance simply by matching U.S. efforts in the defense area. True, the USSR would lose whatever strategic superiority it now enjoys if the U.S. deployed nationwide defenses. But strategic inferiority to the USSR is an unacceptable and dangerous position for the West. Parity with the Soviet Union is the bare minimal condition for stable deterrence and U.S. security. For rational Soviet leaders, parity based on mutual U.S.-Soviet survivability should be preferable to nuclear war. Indeed, Soviet leaders might welcome U.S. deployment of strategic defense since it would reduce the likelihood, from their perspective, that the U.S. would launch a damage limiting preemptive attack.³²

The charge that U.S. leaders would be more inclined to go to war if the U.S. had an assured survival capability is totally unfounded. The record of U.S. restraint in past East-West crises, even when the U.S. had overwhelming nuclear superiority, bears witness that U.S. leaders are cautious and responsible. In any case, if the Soviets were to match U.S. strategic defense efforts, there would be no advantage in a U.S. attack on the Soviet Union. A nuclear military victory would be impossible for the U.S. or the Soviet Union, and deterrence would be stable.

The charge that U.S. deployment of strategic defenses would fuel the arms race falsely assumes that the Soviets deploy nuclear weapons in direct response to U.S. force deployments. In fact, however, as former Defense Secretary Harold Brown has commented, "When we build, the Soviets build. When we don't build, the Soviets build." For the past twenty years, the Soviet Union has steadily deployed more threatening ICBMs to attack U.S. nuclear forces and more capable strategic defenses to protect itself from U.S. retaliation. Arms control and unilateral U.S. restraint in nuclear weapons deployments in the 1970s have had no discernible limiting effect on the intensity of the Soviet strategic buildup. Indeed, improvements in Soviet strategic capability have been most dramatic since the signing of SALT I in 1972. In addition to deploying a large force of multiple warhead ICBMs capable of destroying U.S. ICBMs in a first strike, the Soviet Union is in the process of acquiring an ABM breakout capability, which would tilt the strategic balance even more in its favor. U.S. deployment of strategic defenses would restore the strategic balance, which could only enhance deterrence of nuclear war.

CONCLUSION

Since the late 1960s, the U.S. has lived with the threat of destruction of its society in a very short time by Soviet nuclear

³² Colin S. Gray, "A New Debate on Ballistic Missile Defense," Survival, March/April 1981, p. 69.

missiles. To prevent this, the U.S. has developed offensive nuclear weapons designed to destroy the Soviet military capability to wage nuclear war successfully. Deterrence has rested ultimately on the fear of nuclear holocaust and the hope that Soviet fears equalled American fears. It is strategically imprudent and morally irresponsible, however, for the U.S. to base deterrence solely on this hope and the capability for retaliation. The U.S. needs strategic defenses to bolster deterrence and to protect the U.S. homeland should deterrence fail.

The deployment of an effective assured survival capability will take at least 15 years, in part because of the further development needed in space based ballistic missile defense weaponry. In the meantime, Congress and the Executive must work to improve the U.S. capability to use nuclear weapons in a limited manner by supporting programs for enhancing the survivability of U.S. command and control systems and offensive forces, especially the ICBM force. It is essential, however, that the U.S. move quickly to devise a comprehensive set of programs for strategic defense of the nation and that Congress begin funding these at required levels.

Many politicians may be tempted to postpone a decision on strategic defense programs because of their cost. On the issue of nuclear war survival, however, there is only one choice. It makes no sense to continue to live under threat of nuclear destruction if survival is possible.

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