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## WHY SDI IS NO BARGAINING CHIP

### INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Should the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) be a bargaining chip? Yes, say some policy makers who see SDI, popularly known as Star Wars, as a means of securing deep cuts in Soviet strategic nuclear missiles at the Geneva arms talks. No, say others who view SDI as the atomic age's first hope of preventing nuclear holocaust. As such, they argue, SDI is much too important to global survival to be bargained away in arms talks. Ronald Reagan clearly embraced that position when he stated categorically that the U.S. could not accept restrictions on SDI research as part of an arms agreement with Moscow.<sup>2</sup>

What Moscow thinks of SDI is very clear. It is trying to pressure the U.S. to trade SDI for Soviet, and presumably U.S., offensive weapons cuts. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev told a delegation of visiting U.S. Senators in early September that he would accept "radical reductions" in nuclear weapons if the U.S. were to abandon SDI.

Moscow has escalated its propaganda campaign against SDI in preparation for the Reagan-Gorbachev summit. Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze used the platform of the 40th U.N. General

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1. This is the thirteenth in a series of Heritage Backgrounders on Strategic Defense. A complete list appears at the end of this study.

2. "President's News Conference on Foreign and Domestic Issues," The New York Times, September 18, 1985, p. B6.

Assembly to unveil a catchy "Star Peace" proposal of international cooperation in space in obvious juxtaposition to the U.S. "Star Wars" program. But there is no linkage between this Soviet proposal for international cooperation, properly dealt with in the U.N. Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and strategic defense research.

Many of those Americans who urge the White House to take up Gorbachev on his offer do so by invoking the increasingly discredited concepts on which U.S. arms control and strategic nuclear deterrence policy has been based since the mid-1960s. They believe that stability between the two superpowers depends on each's ability to annihilate the other with nuclear weapons.<sup>3</sup> Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, they also continue to claim that mutual assured destruction (MAD) will pave the way for arms reductions.

SDI, on the other hand, is based on the rapid technological advances of the past decade and on the changed and more threatening global strategic environment resulting from Moscow's enormous nuclear buildup. Rather than ignoring these developments, the Reagan Administration is responding to them by proposing research, testing, and development of a strategic defense system. Instead of being a "chip" to be tendered, SDI should be viewed as a "lever" to elicit results at the Geneva talks. Advances in strategic defense could become the centerpiece of a promising new U.S.-Soviet arms control arrangement. By employing SDI as a lever at Geneva, the U.S. enlists technology in support of arms control.

The U.S. strategic defense effort--SDI or Star Wars--would be a vast improvement over efforts to attain an arms accord by the old model, which has failed to restrain the expansion of nuclear arsenals. To the contrary, SDI offers the promise of a new model for an arms accord that could lead to genuine arms control and reductions. SDI thus should not be abandoned at the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting or at the Geneva arms talks for two reasons: first, strategic defense holds the only current possibility for eventually moving away from a strategic relationship based upon the threat of mutual societal and, perhaps, global destruction; and second, no conceivable Soviet offer of offensive weapons reductions could enhance either strategic stability or U.S. security enough to justify giving up or delaying the potential of SDI.

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3. See, for instance, Thomas K. Longstreth, et al., The Impact of U.S. and Soviet Ballistic Defense Programs on the ABM Treaty (Washington, D.C.: The National Campaign to Save the ABM Treaty, 1985).

## BEGINNINGS OF THE BARGAINING CHIP CONCEPT

After avoiding concrete reduction proposals for years at the Geneva talks and in earlier negotiations with the Nixon, Ford, and Carter Administrations, Moscow recently began hinting that some cuts were possible. This April, Gorbachev vaguely alluded to possible offensive force reductions in excess of 25 percent. Since then, various Soviet officials have mentioned that such reductions could involve warheads as well as missile launchers. Soviet officials also have indicated that they may accept basic SDI-related research as long as development and testing of these technologies were proscribed.

In his U.N. speech, Shevardnadze said that the Soviet delegation had brought far-reaching proposals for "radical reductions of nuclear weapons" to the Geneva negotiations. There has been much speculation that the Soviet foreign minister may propose a reduction of around 50 percent in offensive nuclear weapons in return for U.S. acceptance of significant restraints in its SDI program.<sup>4</sup>

During his meeting with President Reagan at the White House on September 27, Shevardnadze delivered the outlines of a new Soviet arms proposal. The new Soviet proposal apparently calls for cuts in nuclear arsenals up to 50 percent and cessation of important work on the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative.

As a result of Moscow's apparent readiness to make concessions, the bargaining chip appeal of the SDI has grown--particularly in Western Europe. Even West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl has not been immune to its appeal and has suggested that a trade-off deal might help break the deadlock at Geneva.<sup>5</sup> Similar attitudes of European leaders about SDI's role in the Geneva talks prompted a stern warning by Lord Carrington, NATO's Secretary General, not to be tempted by Soviet tactics. And in the jockeying for public relations gains as the Reagan-Gorbachev summit of mid-November nears, the bargaining chip approach has gained considerable support even within the Administration.<sup>6</sup> The Department of State, for instance, is trying to persuade the White House to make concessions on SDI development to reach an accommodation with Moscow.

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4. Whether the cuts would be in warheads or launchers has never been clarified.

5. Bernt Conrad, "Chancellor Appreciates Soviet Position at Geneva Round of Talks," Die Welt, August 20, 1985, pp. 1, 10. At the CDU Party Convention in Essen earlier this year, Kohl speculated that deep offensive arms reductions might even render SDI unnecessary.

6. Don Oberdorfer and David Hoffman, "'Star Wars' Eyed as Bargaining Chip," The Washington Post, September 15, 1985, p. A1/16.



## U.S. STRATEGIC POLICY AND ARMS CONTROL

Arms control, if it is to be a useful adjunct of national security policy, must be compatible with and support the overall goals of U.S. strategic policy. The principal objective of U.S. policy has been to deter Soviet aggression by maintaining sufficient military capabilities and a stable nuclear balance. To accomplish this, the U.S. must deny the Soviets any plausible nuclear attack options that might tempt them. Furthermore, U.S. capabilities must deter the Soviets even in tense, high-stakes crises to assure that the U.S. can attain its foreign policy objectives. Finally, the U.S. must be able to prevent Moscow from employing nuclear threats to intimidate and blackmail the U.S. and its allies.

An effective nuclear deterrent requires that U.S. forces be both survivable and flexible to afford the President a range of responses to an attack that is commensurate with its scope. In addition, command, control, communications, and intelligence assets (C<sup>3</sup>I) must be survivable enough to provide positive control over U.S. nuclear forces during a protracted nuclear conflict. Since U.S. nuclear forces underpin U.S. commitments to defend its allies, they also must be flexible and robust enough to support NATO's doctrine of graduated response to various types of Soviet attack.

During the 1970s, U.S. military capabilities deteriorated so much that it was doubtful that these objectives could be met. At the same time, such Soviet technological advances as deployment of multiple warheads technically known as multiple independent reentry vehicles (MIRVs) and more accurate warheads, along with the unremitting Soviet military buildup, eroded U.S. ability to maintain a stable deterrence relationship with Moscow based solely on offensive nuclear forces.

In response to the growing strategic instabilities, President Reagan challenged the U.S. scientific community to explore defense against nuclear missiles<sup>7</sup> as a means of reducing U.S. exclusive reliance on offensive weapons to deter attack. The ultimate objective of this endeavor, said Reagan, is "the eventual elimination of all nuclear arms...."

In the relatively short term, the U.S. might be able to develop ground-based interceptors to protect vital U.S. and allied military assets, such as airfields, command posts, and logistics. Protection

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7. As a stop-gap measure, he also initiated a limited strategic modernization program which, however, has run into serious difficulties owing to congressional opposition to the full deployment of the MX "Peacekeeper" missile and other cuts.

of U.S. retaliatory forces could thus fulfill the traditional U.S. security objective--to deny the Soviet Union any reasonable expectation of fighting and winning a nuclear war. Defenses against shorter-range Soviet nuclear missiles could greatly enhance NATO's ability to resist Soviet aggression without having to resort to nuclear escalation early on.

In the longer term, the more exotic technologies under study could intercept attacking Soviet missiles and warheads during the early phases of their flight.<sup>8</sup> Systems based on these technologies hold out the prospect of successfully defending population centers and the infrastructure against missile attacks. Such defenses could allow the world to escape at last the fragile and morally suspect Mutual Assured Destruction doctrine that holds innocent people hostage to the hope that their leaders are rational and will not engage in a nuclear conflict.

#### SOVIET OBJECTIVES AT GENEVA

Moscow's chief objectives at Geneva are to get the U.S. to agree to limit its SDI and Anti-Satellite (ASAT) programs and to restrain strategic offensive modernization. The Soviets clearly fear that superior technological capabilities will allow the U.S. to make rapid progress in strategic defense. The utility of the Kremlin's massive investment in offensive nuclear missiles targeted at the U.S. is directly threatened by the development of U.S. defensive systems. Strategic defense thus threatens to undermine Moscow's offensive "damage limitation" strategy that has driven its strategic nuclear build-up, explains the acquisition of a first-strike capability against U.S. missiles, and accounts for its refusal to reduce the size of its SS-18 and SS-19 force. Moscow also fears that SDI research will generate important technological breakthroughs with spin-offs for conventional defenses. A qualitative jump in NATO conventional capabilities would erode the enormous advantages in this category of weapons currently enjoyed by Moscow.

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8. Brian Green, "Strategic Defense: The Technology That Makes It Possible," Heritage Foundation Background No. 375, August 1984. John A. Adam and Mark A. Fischetti, "Star Wars; SDI: The Grand Experiment," IEEE Spectrum, September 1985, pp. 34-64.

It has also been a longstanding Soviet goal to create divisiveness between the West Europeans and the U.S.<sup>9</sup> Having failed in its attempt last year to scare Europe's NATO members into refusing to accept U.S. Pershing and cruise missiles, Moscow sees SDI as a new opportunity to revive its propaganda offensive aimed at Western Europe. The Kremlin depicts the U.S. as the real obstacle to progress on arms control so eagerly awaited by the West Europeans as a means of achieving political detente.

#### ARMS CONTROL LIMITS ON STRATEGIC DEFENSE: AN ASSESSMENT

At the Geneva talks, the Soviets have adopted an extreme position, calling for a complete ban on ballistic missile defenses, including scientific research, development, and deployment, in return for unspecified Soviet reductions in offensive arms.<sup>10</sup> These proposed limitations would be far more stringent than those imposed by the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which permit research and a great deal of development.<sup>11</sup>

##### Research Ban

Moscow wants to ban SDI research. The U.S. should reject this. First, such a ban cannot be verified. Much research takes place in laboratories, where it cannot be detected by satellites or other so-called "national technical means." The science and technologies being investigated by researchers also are not specific to strategic defense. Commercial research on high-powered laser technologies, for

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9. Manfred R. Hamm, "Protecting U.S. Interests at the Geneva Umbrella Talks," Heritage Foundation Backgrounders No. 401, January 4, 1985, and "The Umbrella Talks?" The Washington Quarterly, Spring 1985, pp. 133-146; the debate over NATO INF deployment in Europe offers a good case study of the way Moscow seeks to exploit the arms control process to sow discord among the NATO allies. Paul H. Nitze, "The Objectives of Arms Control," Current Policy No. 677, U.S. Department of State, March 28, 1985.

10. Edward L. Rowny, "Arms Talks: Waiting for the Soviet Ship to Come In," The Wall Street Journal, May 24, 1985; earlier reports had quoted Paul Nitze as saying the Soviets had proposed in the second round of negotiations at Geneva mutual reductions of 25 percent in strategic launchers, a counting category that includes missiles and bombers. William Drozdiak, "Arms Talks Are Fruitless in 2nd Round," The Washington Post, July 16, 1985, p. A1.

11. Anonymous, "U.S.-Soviet Arms Accords Are No Bar to Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative," Heritage Foundation Backgrounders No. 421, April 4, 1985, and Paul H. Nitze, "SDI and the ABM Treaty," Current Policy No. 711, U.S. Department of State, May 30, 1985.



example, will continue, regardless of a ban on SDI research. This would have obvious SDI implications, but there would be no way to determine the intended purpose of the research.

Second, past experience teaches that capping research in one weapons technology area merely redirects it to another area. When limits were imposed on the number of ballistic launchers in SALT I and SALT II, the U.S. and the Soviet Union shifted to development of cruise missile technologies.

Third, the Soviets enjoy a considerable lead in certain kinds of SDI technologies<sup>12</sup> and in deployed SDI systems.<sup>13</sup> A research ban would guarantee the Soviet lead.

Fourth, a ban on research would affect U.S. security objectives more adversely than it would the Soviets'. The Soviet offensive buildup, which provides them with some ability to limit damage from a U.S. nuclear retaliatory attack, continues unrestrained by any domestic political pressure. The U.S., on the other hand, cannot build the kind or quantity of offensive forces it needs to deter by offensive means a Soviet attack in Europe (an objective that requires systems such as the MX that can limit damage) or match the Soviet buildup because of serious domestic political constraints. SDI, however, could provide equivalent security by deterring the Soviets defensively rather than offensively.

#### Development/Testing Ban

Moscow recently has tried to draw a distinction between pure research and development/testing, emphasizing a ban on the latter. But such a ban at this point could hardly be in the U.S. interest.

While laboratory tests and simulations can replace some real-life tests, without actual testing of components and systems the program will confront technological uncertainties which, eventually, will become barriers to innovation and selective elimination of the least promising technologies.

Such a ban would also prejudice any future deployment decision by retarding the program's progress and by creating operational uncertainties of such a magnitude that Congress will hesitate to fund deployment.

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12. Paul H. Nitze, "The Soviet SDI Program," Current Policy No. 717, U.S. Department of State, July 1985; Hans Rühle, "Gorbachev's Star Wars," NATO Review, August 1985, pp. 26-31.

13. David B. Rivkin, Jr. and Manfred R. Hamm, "In Strategic Defense, Moscow Is Far Ahead," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder No. 409, February 21, 1985.

Slowing the U.S. program will deny the U.S. the opportunity to exploit its innovative capability and technological lead, thereby allowing Moscow to more easily keep pace with U.S. missile defense efforts.

### Deployment Ban<sup>14</sup>

It is sometimes argued that the U.S. should continue SDI research to hedge against a Soviet defensive breakthrough, but should agree not to deploy ballistic missile defenses. Indeed, President Reagan in his September 17 news conference stated the U.S. intention to try to negotiate with Moscow on BMD deployment before beginning unilaterally. Already in December 1984, he had given that assurance to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher so as to allay Western European concerns and enlist their cooperation. But to agree to a deployment ban at this stage of SDI research would be impractical and undesirable for several reasons.

First, agreeing to a ban when so little is known about the eventual effectiveness of SDI puts the proverbial cart before the horse. Even many of its critics agree strategic defense is a good idea, if effective.

Second, a ban on deployment would be ambiguous and difficult to verify.<sup>15</sup> One of the problems with the 1972 ABM Treaty is that the technologies of ballistic missile defense, air defense, anti-satellite weapons, and anti-tactical ballistic missile defense have converged in capabilities. Distinguishing one from the others on the basis of technical characteristics is becoming increasingly difficult. Thus verification of compliance with an SDI ban would involve the virtually impossible task of determining the intended use of a system. Given Moscow's record of treaty violations, it cannot be relied upon to observe such a pact in any event.

Third, banning SDI would reflect continuing U.S. acceptance of the theory and assumptions of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). MAD holds that stable deterrence is achieved when both sides are totally

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14. See footnote 11 for an analysis of what the U.S. may legally deploy within the constraints of the ABM Treaty.

15. Soviet arms delegate Yuli Kvitsinsky alleged in the second round of the Geneva talks that even a ban on "purposeful and directed research" on space weaponry could be verifiable. Celestine Bohlen, "Soviet Negotiator Says 'Star Wars' Ban Verifiable," The Washington Post, July 26, 1985; according to some sources, Moscow simply wanted to prevent testing of U.S. components, such as Talon Gold, a space pointing and tracking system. Leslie H. Gelb, "U.S. Says Soviets Might Accept SDI Research," International Herald Tribune, July 10, 1985, p. 1.



vulnerable to massive retaliatory destruction by the other. The SALT and ABM Treaties assumed that Moscow would end its nuclear buildup if the U.S. had no defenses.

In fact, the SALT I and SALT II treaties, which embodied MAD theories, have had exactly the opposite results from those intended by the U.S. treaty negotiators.<sup>16</sup> The Soviets never accepted MAD, as the development and growth of their nuclear arsenal demonstrates. But if the U.S. abandoned SDI, it would be tantamount to continuing to cling to MAD.

Thus the net result of SALT I and SALT II has been reduced strategic stability and a continuing, more dangerous--and very one-sided--arms race. Destabilizing Soviet arms programs and Soviet violations of SALT I and SALT II have contributed to the tensions that inhibit further negotiation.

But even if the Soviet arms programs and commitment to arms control were above reproach, MAD still would not serve as a viable basis for successful arms control agreements. MAD is based on the ability to impose catastrophic damage. Without that ability, the foundation of MAD crumbles. Yet one of the primary goals of arms control has been (and should be) to reduce damage in the event of war. Quite clearly a strategic regime such as MAD that necessitates maintenance of offenses sufficient to impose massive damage and forbids systems that might lessen destruction is inconsistent with the arms control goal of limiting damage.

Thus, under MAD, offensive nuclear arms cannot be reduced to levels low enough to limit damage significantly because total damage limitation is destabilizing and undesirable. SDI, however, offers the possibility of a strategic relationship based on defensive deterrence plus the eventual elimination of the utility of strategic nuclear weapons. For this reason alone, SDI should not be bargained away.

In any event, there already is a ban on such deployments--the ABM Treaty--and it is being violated by Moscow. Proponents of such an approach have the burden of demonstrating why the U.S. should trade off a potentially positive development (SDI) in return for a ban that Moscow already is violating; especially since, as the past ABM Treaty indicates, U.S. spending on defensive research would be likely to

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16. Compare, for instance, the testimony of Wolfgang Panofsky, a key proponent of SALT with the more sobering assessment of the limits of arms control offered by Fred Charles Ikle, U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Arms Control, International Law and organization, ABM, MIRV, SALT, and the Nuclear Arms Race, Hearings, 91st Congress, 2nd Session, Washington D.C., 1970, and Foreign Affairs, Spring 1985, pp. 810-826, respectively.

decline after treaty approval, while Moscow's would continue at the same or increased rate.

## MOSCOW'S TRADE-OFF OPTIONS AND SDI

SDI should be pursued because of its positive potential. Moscow may make an offer to trade off SDI, but no offer should be allowed to block SDI efforts.

### Offense-for-Defense Trade-off

Moscow has signaled that it may be willing to accept a 25 percent reduction, perhaps even a 50 percent reduction, in offensive strategic forces in exchange for U.S. concessions on SDI. Even though Moscow has failed thus far to put forth concrete proposals, defining the types of weapons to be reduced and the ultimate offensive force mix, even large-scale reductions would not obviate the imperative to explore the potential of strategic defenses because:

- 1) Moscow would retain the ability to destroy too much of the U.S. retaliatory force and command and control structure with its remaining SS-17, SS-18, and SS-19 missiles. Moscow currently has 9,500 strategic nuclear warheads. A 50 percent or 4,750 warhead reduction would still leave the Soviets with an awesome capability and the U.S. totally vulnerable, a long-held Soviet goal.
- 2) Soviet missile accuracies are improving. This means that the new SS-24s, SS-25s, the SS-N-X-23 carried by the Typhoon submarine, and the future SS-26 and SS-27 will have silo-busting abilities thereby threatening the first-strike even if SS-18s and 19s are reduced.
- 3) The last Soviet proposal, made during the 1981-1983 START negotiations, called for reductions from the SALT II level of 2,250 delivery systems to 1,800. No sublimit on warheads was proposed but Soviet negotiators talked of "nuclear charges" which should also include bombs and cruise missiles. If a 50 percent reduction is applied to the SALT II numbers, it would mean a cut to 1,125 launchers, thus leaving the most threatening Soviet ICBMs unaffected. Without further sublimits on delivery systems, a 50 percent cut would not account for the qualitative and operational differences among weapons systems, favor Moscow and result, perhaps, in a highly destabilizing force mix. Furthermore, the throw-weight limitations sought by the U.S. would have to be incorporated in order to ensure reductions in Soviet first-strike weapons.
- 4) Any offense-defense trade-off would obviate the need for a change in Soviet warfighting strategy which calls for disarming

first-strikes against Western military assets to reduce the damage of retaliatory strikes to the Soviet Union. SDI forces Moscow to give up this offensive damage limitation strategy in favor of a defensive strategy that would make radical offensive force reductions in the Soviet interest.

5) It would prevent the West from protecting its population against the nuclear threat and seeking a morally preferable form of deterrence.

6) Past nuclear arms accords have limited only deployed offensive systems but have not addressed the problem of weapons stockpiling. This could be prevented only by establishing production ceilings which, however, are inherently unverifiable. Warhead reductions on deployed systems thus do not protect the U.S. from Soviet stockpiling of reloads that might give it a decisive strategic advantage over the U.S. during wartime. Thus any attenuation of the Soviet counterforce threat resulting from warhead reductions would be transitory.

7) The new generation of Soviet land-based strategic missiles is either road or rail mobile, thus rendering verification of treaty compliance exceedingly difficult.

8) In view of Soviet noncompliance with existing agreements, such deep reductions may not be in the U.S. interest in the absence of SDI because without defenses, the retention of hidden weapons by Moscow would have a much more serious impact on U.S. security at lower levels of warheads than at present higher warhead levels.

#### SS-20/SDI Trade-off

Moscow could try to split NATO and fuel West European opposition to SDI by proposing reductions of its SS-20 intermediate-range missiles targeted against Europe in return for U.S. limitations on SDI. Such a trade-off is militarily and politically dangerous for a number of reasons. Among them:

1) Reductions of the relatively short-range SS-20 missiles would not affect the central U.S.-Soviet strategic balance and the emerging strategic instabilities that SDI seeks to address.

2) It would preserve Moscow's decisive advantage over NATO in theater nuclear weapons.

3) It would perpetuate MAD as the basis of Western security and retain the balance of terror. This would rekindle Western Europe's anti-nuclear and pacifist movements, which could erode the U.S.-European security partnership.



4) It would preclude NATO deployment of those anti-missile defenses that could bolster the ability to use conventional forces to deter a Soviet attack. Presumably, such a trade-off would also ban deployment of European anti-missile defenses since it is inconceivable Moscow would agree to SS-20 reductions while defense against their smaller numbers are erected by NATO. But the critical vulnerability of NATO assets to Soviet nuclear or conventional preemption makes such defense imperative. Thus an SDI-SS-20 trade-off will ultimately weaken NATO's conventional posture.

5) Moscow would presumably continue to insist upon a withdrawal of U.S. intermediate-range missiles; if agreed to, this would give Moscow the only intermediate-range missiles in Europe.

#### Space-based SDI Ban

A ban on space-based SDI, allowing ground-based defenses, would block precisely the area of SDI that offers the best long-term promise for meeting the original objective of arms control "to make nuclear weapons obsolete." A space-based SDI could provide a shield to protect civilians as well as military sites. Further, the net effect of such a ban would be to block advances in those areas where the U.S. is currently moving ahead and leave open those areas where Moscow is technologically competitive.

#### Site Trade-off for MX Ban

The Kremlin might suggest that the ABM Treaty be renegotiated to permit some defenses of military sites in return for a ban on U.S. MX deployment. Although a renegotiation of the ABM Treaty is inevitable, it makes no sense for the U.S. to give up the MX, which is the only weapon it has with potential to counter the Soviet heavy SS-18 and SS-19 ICBMs. The U.S. would gain the right to protect the aging Minutemen ICBMS, which do not have the capability to destroy hardened Soviet ICBM sites. The Minutemen, moreover, are particularly vulnerable to Soviet land-based strategic defenses and can carry no more than three hard target-kill capable warheads. Further, the banning of the MX would affect the U.S. now, while defensive protection would not be possible for several more years.

#### SDI Moratorium Trade-off

Moscow may suggest a moratorium on all or some aspects of SDI either in the context of the need for a "better negotiating climate" or in exchange for some offensive reductions. A moratorium generally is a bad idea. It would halt SDI momentum just at the time when projects probing its potential are underway; and moratoriums almost always redound to Soviet advantage since U.S. congressional and public support for a delayed weapons system tends to wane, and Moscow continues with whatever programs it believes appropriate.

## ASAT Ban Trade-off

Moscow might pursue its ongoing efforts to curb U.S. attempts to respond to Soviet anti-satellite (ASAT) advances by means of a ban on ASAT activities in return for offensive strategic reductions. The same concerns about offensive reductions apply, and most forms of an ASAT ban also would be unverifiable. Most important, the U.S. would observe the restrictions and thereby indirectly give up its SDI program, since certain key SDI technological development programs are essentially the same as those for ASAT.

## CONCLUSION

To use SDI as a bargaining chip will prevent genuine reductions of offensive forces. Lt. Gen. James Abrahamson observed correctly that SDI opens up a whole new regime for leverage in negotiations that will help redefine the relationship between offensive and defensive weapons. Once such a redefinition has been made, Moscow may realize that its strategic objectives are served best by defenses accompanied by real reductions in offensive forces.<sup>17</sup>

Even in the absence of any offensive reductions, a moderately effective SDI could achieve the purported aims of arms controllers more effectively than any Moscow trade-off. A survivable and cost-effective SDI capable of destroying perhaps 50 to 75 percent of incoming warheads would increase the survivability of U.S. retaliatory forces and command and control structures, thus enhancing deterrence. Such a defense also would limit damage roughly in proportion to its effectiveness, since many secondary Soviet targets would survive the attack.

There would be no need to verify these technologically enforced reductions. Thus, in terms of stability, damage limitation, and verification, SDI deployments seem to do the job of arms control more effectively than negotiated agreements. SDI is not a bargaining chip. By using it as such, the U.S. not only would relinquish the principal purpose of strategic defense but would perpetuate the validity of MAD as the guiding doctrine for strategic planning.

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17. As quoted by David Halperin in The Christian Science Monitor, December 4, 1984. For the contribution SDI can make to real arms control, see also Keith B. Payne, Why SDI?, Issues in National Security No. 2 (Fairfax, Virginia: National Institute for Public Policy, 1985), pp. 9-13; Colin S. Gray, "Deterrence, Arms Control, and the Defense Transition," Orbis, Summer 1984, pp. 227-239

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