 HIGH FRONTIER

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Director

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The Honorable Newton Gingrich  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Newt:

This is another blunt, and I therefore hope confidential, report on High Frontier developments.

Public support for the High Frontier concepts is astonishingly strong. A Finkelstein poll in California showed a 4:1 pro-space-borne defense margin. The Committee on the Present Danger, using a Democrat-oriented pollster, came in with the same results nationwide. I was about to conduct a nationwide poll and expected a lesser margin of popular support on the grounds that California is more "high-tech" than other states. I was wrong. (I will now delay a polling effort for a few months.) One of the amazing facts to emerge from the polls is that there is not a significant difference in support level among Republicans, Democrats and Independents, or among conservatives, moderates and liberals.

I sensed the impact of these polls at a 9 May hearing before the House Armed Services Committee. Democrats seemed very hesitant about attacking the Strategic Defense Initiative. Their interrogation of me was essentially amiable. (A League of Women Voters observer spoke to me afterwards about softening their opposing stance on the issue.)

In light of these indicators, it appears strange that Mondale would throw down the gauntlet, denounce the whole concept, and demand a "Space Freeze." He has, I think, made High Frontier a major issue in the upcoming political campaign. I certainly hope that the Administration attacks rather than hunkers down on the issue, although I suspect there is some counsel to run for cover. The fact is that High Frontier constitutes the best possible riposte to the anti-Administration, anti-defense, anti-Reagan, peacenik political school.

Cap Weinberger's refusal to cut into the Strategic Defense Initiative when he offered a 14 billion cut is most heartening. He seems to have brought his own naysayers to heel. High Frontier (or rather our PAC, American Space Frontier Committee) will be fighting to restore the 23% (\$407 million) cut in SDI recommended by the House.

We'll do this even though I am less than happy about the SDI package. Too much of it is earmarked for research on exotic systems, not enough on near-term solutions. Further, I detect a tendency to shove under the protective SDI tent a lot of R&D that was ongoing for other purposes and is only tangentially related to SDI. For example, about one third of the SDI

budget was presented as a Tactical Intelligence and Reconnaissance Activities (TIRA) package, i.e., as an intelligence expenditure. If there is a good reason for this, I don't perceive it.

These drawbacks can be offset, however, if the SDI manager, General Abrahamson, has sufficient authority to reprogram monies in the program.

On the technological front, the President's initiative has over the past month been subjected to a bombardment of pseudo-scientific argument. Most of this comes from the anti-military lobbies of The Brookings Institution and the Union of Concerned Scientists.

It has become very apparent that these naysayers are putting up a vulnerable strawman and knocking him down. Every "anti" remark, article, book starts out with a phrase such as "to get a perfect defense", "to get a leakproof defense" or "to get a total defense" we'd have to spend half a trillion dollars or it isn't feasible at all. As for me, given that impossible goal, I agree with them. But you don't have to write a book to make that case. There never has been nor will there ever be a perfect defense against anything. What we need is a non-nuclear defense that makes a nuclear attack against the U.S. (or our allies) a forlorn hope and, therefore, constitutes a far better deterrent than the threat of revenge alone.

In this respect, the President's call for a defense that makes nuclear weapons "obsolete" must be recognized as legitimate political hyperbole, not a system requirement. Mr. Weinberger and the President should bear in mind Winston Churchill's admonishment: "The search for perfection can be expressed more succinctly -- paralysis." Naysayers in and out of government are hiding behind the presumed "perfection" requirement.

There is a small band of well-publicized members of the "Science" community in opposition -- Garwin, Tsipis, Sagan, etc. They are hanging presumed cost and technological objections on their Christmas tree of basic ideological opposition. I have on good authority that Richard Garwin, chief spokesman for this group, didn't even read the Union of Concerned Scientists' "anti" report before he proclaimed its virtues in public. When he was challenged by a fellow scientist at Los Alamos who had read it, he began to recant.

High Frontier has a long list of scientists and aeronautical engineers who agree with us in general if not in specific terms. They are not, of course, sought out by the press. (See attachment.)

The Office of Technical Assessment curiously printed one man's anti-High Frontier opinion (Ashton Carter, an ardent and public opponent of strategic defenses on ideological grounds). This paper was portrayed in the press as endorsed by OTA. The way it was publicized, we can scarcely blame the press for assuming it represented the views of OTA, even though their spokesmen piously deny it. A new, full-fledged OTA report on the matter is scheduled for completion after the elections, and I have been invited to participate. In the meantime, OTA has done a disservice to SDI and has made a political point with the Carter paper. Pretty shoddy, in my view.

High Frontier is expending our effort as fast as the money will allow. Bob Dornan remains titular head of our PAC, although he must perforce spend

of great importance to us. Rick Sellers, whom you may remember as ASC's man on the Hill, is directing our PAC activities and our Congressional liaison. Huck Walther assists in this effort with U.S. Defense Committee resources.

Arthur J. Finkelstein and Company are key players in the HF effort now, providing across-the-board advice on political action, public education, and fund-raising.

Peter Hannaford and Co. is now on contract to handle HF public relations efforts. Fran Gemma (Griffin Communications) did an excellent job, but I needed a larger firm to expand this vital effort. She still handles the PR account for the PAC.


Steve Cram Associates is handling our fund-raising activities and is financial chief for HF. We are expanding into telephone and television combinations of public education and fund-raising.

We remain in close alliance with the Conservative Movement organizations, pro-defense groups, and space boosters, all of which make the job of our Field Director, Bob Billings, Jr., a lot easier.

We have set up one formal state subsidiary of High Frontier in California under the able guidance of Senator Ed Davis. We are looking at other states with an eye to the same arrangement.

Enough for this time.

Regards,

  
Daniel O. Graham  
Lt. Gen., USA (Ret.)

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Attachments:

List of experts  
Q&A  
Penn-Shoen poll results  
Testimony to Hill