

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 30, 1985

Dear Bud:

For more than two years now, you and I have been in complete agreement on SDI. Because of this shared perspective, I must therefore tell you of my extreme concern over the draft NSDD: Presenting the Strategic Defense Initiative. Bud, if we implement this directive, it would effectively destroy the SDI's sense of urgency, its place as a centerpiece for a new deterrence, and the President's vision of change.

I believe the Administration has already come to remarkable closure within itself, as has the country. And the opportunity offered by an inevitable change has provided us an increasingly strong position in Europe. As Manfred Woerner commented to me just weeks ago, "...we may disagree about some things. But one thing can never be argued: the nuclear era will never be the same again."

But with this NSDD, that message just isn't there. It fails to provide a clear statement of objective, a sense of the logic that leads to it, and any sense of Presidential confidence that we can get there. Rather, the reader is presented with reams of consensus policy saying all things to all people. Once again we're left with an ambiguity as to what SDI is really all about and whether it's real or just a pipe dream. It's hardly the clear message that is finally being accepted by our allies.

In addition to confounding the objectives, which Paul Nitze so clearly stated, the draft NSDD obscures the SDI's sense of urgency and feasibility. Key-point statements like "Research will last for some years," and "We do not know how the research will turn out," transmit a sense of very uncertain commitment that both critics and Congress alike have already begun to use in carving up the program.

Bud, there is little doubt about whether we can do it. Our challenge is to do it efficiently within Nitze's criteria of survivability and cost-effectiveness. I would have expected an NSDD to state this quickly and move on, not dwell for the better part of a page

laying down qualifier after qualifier. Similarly, there are some technologies that provide "flesh to the bones" and can be discussed in light of the options open to us. We cannot possibly hide behind statements like "It's too early...to speculate on the kinds of defensive systems... and with what capabilities..."

Such a lack of confidence and resolve has already invited responses like "Well then you won't mind a \$1.9 billion cut in 1986 until you can give us a better idea of what we might expect."

Finally, I would suggest that if we'd had controls on our senior officials like those suggested in the last paragraphs of the NSDD -- wherein nothing could be said without effectively clearing it through the "interagency process" -- there never would have been a March 23rd, or a Goddard speech two years later -- or a Paul Nitze phased strategy. And while you and I have never disagreed on the prime goal -- change -- the interagency process would guarantee that such change would only come about ever so slowly -- if at all.

Bud, I believe that senior Administration Officers should always be credited with, and expected to exercise, good judgement and leadership. I would therefore strongly recommend that this NSDD not be forwarded. The National Security Council itself should continue to be our senior coordinating body within a policy outline already established by the SDI White Paper. Without some freedom of action, and the responsibility that goes with it, I believe Administration leadership would be effectively muted, and the President ill-served.

Very truly yours,



G. A. Keyworth
Science Advisor to the President