MEMORANDUM FOR JAY KEYWORTH
FROM: MIKE HAVEN
SUBJECT: President's Strategic Defense Initiative

Although you and I have spoken about this before, events during the past five days cause me sufficient concern to recommend you and Cap Weinberger meet very soon to discuss the direction of the President's program. This could take place anytime during the last two weeks of next month; and could serve to allow you a report on the China trip as well, and not just Star Wars.

I saw Glenn Kent again Monday. Regardless of his earlier diatribes against anyone even hinting deterrence was an incorrect policy (and love for exact definitions), I will categorically state that Glenn is the only person of relatively senior stature who:

1. Has internalized the President's goal of assured survival (as a people) to be the real end-game to be sought.

2. Has begun to develop an analytical framework to show...
   a. there is an existence theorem which demonstrates such an objective might be obtainable,
   b. the critical path, with its critical parameters; and the degree with which they can be mixed-and-matched to maintain that path.

3. Realizes that falling off this explicit objective removes our high-ground moral underpinnings -- our most resilient argument.

4. Understands that continued Administration talk that...
   a. "...the President's goal is a nice vision but an unobtainable one...";
   b. "...what we really need is early deployment opportunities to defend our ICBMs..."

not only undermines the President's competence and make his objective appear rather specious --- but provides the greatest openings for detractors to tear him apart before he has developed either the technology or policy with which to defend himself.
I would also point out that Glenn's deterrence argument and ours -- as best I can judge -- are now one and the same. His two-tiered deterrent of denying the enemy his objectives, and retaliating against him if he transgresses, is exactly that which we have come to accept as the perennial basis of stability regardless of any eventual defensive posture. I found that further conversation with Glenn permits a three-tier definition as well.

- Deny enemy's objectives
- Assure one's own survival
- Retaliate against transgression

(Equally acceptable to Kent since assuring survival should be considered a major subset of the denying the aggressor's objectives.)

Bottom line: First, while I believe Glenn will continue to be extremely sensitive to fine nuances concerning the acceptability and definitions of deterrence, there is in fact NO difference between our two positions. Second, Glenn Kent is precisely in line with our concerns over SDI objectives and strategy. Third, he is the absolute past master at creating the simplified analytical framework which defines a critical path, and a logical argument can convince either a Congressman from Kansas -- or a Senator from Georgia.

Action Item: I believe you and Glenn Kent should talk again. (Suggest prior to meeting with Weinberger.)

I continue to get more and more pessimistic reports that General Abrahamson's management style is headed for disaster. His "non-confrontational consensus" is getting him taken to the cleaners program-wise; causing him to take the path of least resistance & thereby depart from (our understanding of) the President's objectives; and resulting in great confusion on the Hill as to just what the Administration's policy really is. I'm getting this from both Congressional and Senate staffers, DoD Legislative Liaison staff, LASL, LLL, Sandia, six major contractors, and at least a dozen small independent companies who've simply been unable to get him off the dime. I hesitate to say that the most telling criticism comes from various members of his own staff: "He just won't make a decision."

As you and I have discussed, NSSD-119 was specifically written to provide almost Czar-like powers to the SDIO. In fact it was only because we had been able to institutionalize these powers that we supported Abe's choice as the Star Czar. Since then almost every prerogative we built in has been either abdicated or specifically given away to the established DoD bureaucracy. As a result, the services are now apparently going to do with the money as they desire (before, as it's programmed through the DRB process; and after, when it "sifts" down through the chain-of-command.) Not only does this result in loss of program control
but the highly centralized, streamlined procurement process necessary for rapid development is now apparently going to be spread out all to hell and gone.

In Abe's defense, he is very concerned that the services must feel they have part-and-parcel responsibility for the SDI, or we'll wind up with another F-20 on our hands. We agree. There is, however, a yawning gulf between making this a participatory team effort with strong leadership -- and taking a democratic vote as to what-when-where-how everytime you want to go "over the top" out of the trenches. As a result, the Army's rather strident attitude is not only a portent of things to come, but could very well spell the end of the program itself.

There is tremendous pressure for a do-it-now defense. The High Frontier types are agitating against a backdrop of panic rather than a quiet shift in policy. The big contractors smell big bucks. The Army sees it as the only way to save their investment of a decade (and regain control of the situation.) The Army in particular has therefore pulled out all the stops to make sure none of their money is touched. Given a rather meager SDI budget to begin with ("brain-damage level" as Yonas put it), if the Army is not wrung-out and forced through a national priority strainer, there is no SDI budget -- just Army $$$ and a few Air Force satellites. However, the worst problem may very well emerge from the confused signals coming out of Kle's shop.

OSD Policy was dragged kicking and screaming into this affair in the first place. Once in it, however, they had to make the President's defense idea fit into present policy. In this context, and regardless of outward signs, it is absolutely crucial to understand that OSD Policy has neither changed its present policy strategy, nor has it exhibited the faintest pretext of examining any possible FUTURE changes in policy strategy.

At the same time, the working meaning of "Deterrence" has degraded over the years to a much less resilient condition than Glenn Kent's classical definition. It is now to the point that both confident denial of enemy objectives and the believability of our retaliation may be considered debatable. Deterrence has come to mean "...he can't be confident that he can destroy all our retaliatory forces." (A twelve-word condensation of the Scowcroft Report.) In this context, we narrow down all enemy objectives "that matter" to attack of our counterforce weapons alone; we further base it on enemy uncertainty, not our confidence; and deliberate civilian exposure to Mutual Assured Destruction is still the bedrock upon which stability is based.

To the best of my knowledge, OSD-Policy has not seriously addressed any objective other than the maintenance of both the policy -- and means -- of Assured Destruction. And improving the prospect of Assured Destruction has now (inappropriately) become synonymous...
with "improving Deterrence." What I believe to be the President's larger objective -- moving toward a condition wherein drastic disarmament can occur -- is not being considered at all. It has, in fact, been summarily rejected to my face as "...unrealistic, therefore let's not waste our time on that subject."

If such a disarmament condition is considered so unrealistic as to not even be a subject of discussion --- and a perfect system is admittedly unlikely (against all possible threats) --- then a Soviet First Strike will (by definition) always result in sufficient damage to utterly destroy the United States. Since in Policy's mind, our retaliatory potential must always be commensurate with damage received, their stated objective to "...improve Deterrence," should always be read as "improve Assured Destruction."

One can only improve assured destruction by guaranteeing that there will be a maximum number of retaliatory weapons, i.e., surviving weapons on each side. And that these retaliatory weapons are able to get through to their targets -- cities.

In implementing strategic defenses -- according to this logic -- one should obviously protect our retaliatory forces, and not our socio-economic assets. We have come full circle.

Policy therefore supports hard-site defense development. And since the United States is apparently in the beginning stages of unilateral offensive disarmament, they embrace early deployment options and egg them on. For a number of reasons (not the least of which are its early availability and non-utility for anything other than hard-site defense) the Army system has begun to take center stage. And like the baby cuckoo. It will starve its nest-mates to death in order to grow.

Neither are Abrahamson's people allowed to talk long-term strategy. Once again this has been unilaterally abdicated to someone else -- Policy. This may be just as well since there is absolutely no understanding of the larger Presidential issues. I spent the Better part of yesterday afternoon in rather heated debate with the staff over this issue.

We are losing the argument on the Hill before we even start. We simply will not tell anyone WHY we are doing this. WHAT are our goals? WHERE is the logic path that says it may be do-able? Abe's staff insists that:

* They are not allowed to address the major issues,
* That the Hill wouldn't understand it anyway. What the Hill fears is the (Soviet) technological Pandora's box -- the unknown unknowns -- which our actions release.
* The real argument has to be that by opening our technology box of unk-unk's, we can keep their's shut forever.
So they talk about the future of complex gadgets and not the future of national direction. An OSD Legislative Liaison staffer pulled me aside yesterday and said: "We've got to get a simple straight forward briefing together -- I've never seen such a continued disorganized presentation of technical whizzbang without any larger frame of what it's all supposed to mean." No wonder we're getting clobbered.

Needless to say, Congressional staffers, in particular Grahamn, Albrech, & Bott of the SASC, are voicing concern over what's being presented as well. "The Senators don't care about the technology," says Graham, "they figure we can create just about anything eventually. What they really want to know what you're going to do with it. Lay out where the President would go with it. Show them how it fits into the larger picture. Show them why it matters."

"No, no," says Abe's staff. "We've got to show them that our gadgets can defeat their gadgets." "Besides, Abe doesn't feel comfortable with policy discussions."

Now admittedly we're going to have to break some eggs to make this omelet. We're going to have to "'fess up," as Kisinger has done, that our past & present way of doing business simply is not progressing toward a stable convergence. This idea is an anathema to OSD Policy because it endangers present doctrine. (But even the old dogs who put the doctrine together originally are beginning to shift.)

Were I putting a point-by-point discussion together, my points would be:

- **OUR PRESENT PATH -- DETERRENCE THROUGH OFFENSIVE STAND-OFF -- IS UNDERGOING INEVITABLE EROSION, RESULTING IN PROLIFERATION**
  - Offensive deterrence is based now almost solely upon assured retaliation
  - Technology will continue to increase the possibility of preemption, and erode any attempt to maintain a retaliatory capability
    - Technology, like history, cannot ever be actually stopped
  - The possibility of preemption, or the perception of its possibility -- by either side -- will invariably negate any attempts at meaningful arms control
    - Proliferation becomes most militarily straight-forward (if not only) option to avoid crippling first-strike
OFFENSIVE STAND-OFF PROVIDES CONTINUALLY FEWER OPTIONS, AND IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY UNSTABLE

- Retaliatory force structure has (or soon will) succumb to increased ICBM/SLEBM forces and their reduced timelines

- Preemptive potential makes any attempt at limiting, or shutting down war once initiated, very unlikely

  -- National Command Authority and its communications will become increasingly brittle

  --- Irrevocable offensive decisions have already had to become split-second

- Makes no provision for third world or irrational acts

NEED TO REESTABLISH STABLE, RESILIENT, USABLE FORCE POSTURE

- Compatible with Three-Tiered Deterrence

  -- Deny enemy's objectives
  -- Assure self-survival
  -- Retaliate against transgression

- Compatible with stable balance of power

  -- National Sovereignty maintained

  --- Realistic offensive means to pursue national objectives
  --- Realistic defensive means to insure national security

  -- Preemptive capability denied

- Compatible with wild-card events

  -- Prevent unnecessary national catastrophe

  --- Without resort to irrevocable offensive decisions

  -- Make appropriate retaliation usable

  --- Without undue risk of immediate & uncontrollable escalation

- Compatible with and encourage drastic nuclear weapons reductions

  -- Preemptive capability denied
  -- Specified retaliatory capability retained
  -- Effects of cheating/third world entry mitigated
  -- Effective power-projection through other means

  --- That is, Conventional Technology
THERE IS A STABLE PATH (EXISTENCE THEOREM) TO SHIFT IN POSTURE

- Specifies sensitivity ranges
  -- "Acceptable" survival levels
  -- Offensive capabilities
    --- Including "attack price" extracted from basing
  -- Defensive capabilities
    --- Including defense suppression price extracted
    --- Civil Defense Postures

Arms Control capabilities/limitations etc.

THERE IS THEREFORE:

- A Reason to depart from present posture
- A rational Alternative to that posture
- A stable Path to that alternative
- A flexible set of Guideposts along that path

Of course, what I've described is, in fact, the POLICY story directed by the President in NSSD-119. There is, however, no disciplined approach to long-term policy formulation underway. Neither does there appear to be any real ongoing thought process in any recognizable form -- other than in informal CSIS, Brookings, etc., exchanges of the Colin Grays vs the Dick Garwins. The problem boils down to leadership. There is no one in charge.

[Ed. Note: It was during the Senate hearings this spring on SDI that several Senators were overheard to remark the "...Colin Gray's testimony laid out a pretty good rational set of goals and program objectives -- but that isn't what the Administrations is apparently doing."]
Policy, not technology, will determine whether the President's idea dies on the vine -- in a very embarrassing manner -- this spring. Single-headed leadership, not abdication to some hoped-for (but highly nebulous) "consensus" from Ikle's policy shop (worse yet, State and ACDA) is what Congress absolutely must see. A clear path, not gadgets.

Any meeting with Weinberger must, in fairness to Cap, lay out this shortcoming in carefully chosen words of one syllable. One can always try to say it's lack White House support/leadership that's put Cap in this position. And it may be so. But the President put Cap in charge and the buck stops there. He's got a big problem. He needs to know that the central leadership and authority clearly spelled out by Presidential order has turned to mush. He needs to know we can't use technical razzle-dazzle to get out of this fix. He has to be told he's got to get at most two or three of his closest friends/advisors together, somewhere, anywhere (before he gets another Commission rammed down his throat.)

They need to hammer out a simple long-term policy strategy that he can understand and articulate. He really has none now, is not getting any from either Abe or Ikle, and is not likely to get any in the future. He then needs to mandate his understanding of clear top-line strategy for Ikle to flesh-out and cross-pollenate with Adelman's people. I'm convinced now that Abe and his staff can't do it, Ikle's staff won't do it, and the NSC doesn't know what to do. It has to come top down again, and Weinberger himself is now literally the only option.