

**The White House
Washington**

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**National Security Decision
Directive Number 85**

March 25, 1983

Eliminating the Threat From Ballistic Missiles

It is my policy to take every opportunity to reduce world tensions and enhance stability. Our efforts to achieve significant reductions in strategic offensive forces and to eliminate LRINT land based missiles are one approach to that aim. However, it is my long range goal to go beyond this. I would like to decrease our reliance on the threat of retaliation by offensive nuclear weapons and to increase the contribution of defensive systems to our security and that of our allies. To begin to move us toward that goal, I have concluded that we should explore the possibility of using defensive capabilities to counter the threat posed by nuclear ballistic missiles.

I direct the development of an intensive effort to define a long term research and development program aimed at an ultimate goal of eliminating the threat posed by nuclear ballistic missiles. These actions will be carried out in a manner consistent with our obligations under the ABM Treaty and recognizing the need for close consultations with our allies.

In order to provide the necessary basis for this effort, I further direct a study be completed on a priority basis to assess the role that ballistic missile defense could play in future security strategy of the United States and our allies. Among other items, the study will provide guidance necessary to develop research and development funding commitments for the FY85 Departmental budgets and the accompanying Five-Year Defense Program (FYDP).

The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs is assigned the responsibility to formulate detailed instructions for implementing this BMDO including organization, assignment of responsibilities, and completion dates.

28 March 1983

Memorandum for: Secretaries of the Military Departments
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Under Secretaries of Defense
Assistant Secretaries of Defense
General Counsel
Assistants to the Secretary of Defense
Director, Program Analysis and Evaluation
Directors of Defense Agencies

Subject: Organization of Defensive Technologies Executive Committee

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Action Memorandum

This memorandum establishes a Defensive Technologies Executive Committee, whose purpose will be to address the management of all issues raised by the President's March 23rd speech related to defensive technologies for protection against nuclear attack.

The Committee will be chaired by Paul Thayer, and its membership will include the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Under Secretaries of Defense; the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller); and the Director, Program Analysis and Evaluation.

Many of the relevant issues will be in the scientific and technical fields. Therefore, I expect to be frequently calling upon the Defense Science Board and other appropriate elements of the Department to support the work of the Defensive Technologies Executive Committee.

I will meet frequently with the Executive Committee and with Paul Thayer so as to keep in close touch with our progress.

Major General Donald Lamberson will serve as Executive Secretary to the Committee and will be contacting Committee members directly about the organizational meeting, which will be held as soon as conveniently possible.

We will also shortly make suggestions to the NSC to comply with the provisions of NSDD 85.

I cannot overemphasize the high priority the President and I assign to this whole project.