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February 6, 1987

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION  
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 258

ANTI-SATELLITE (ASAT) PROGRAM (U)

The Department of Defense has conducted a study, in accordance with NSSD 4-86, on options for future development of U.S. Anti-Satellite Programs. This directive reflects the results of that study and will serve as policy and program guidance on U.S. ASAT Programs. (S)

The study concluded that the existing Miniature Homing Vehicle (MV) ASAT represents the only viable near-term option for the ASAT mission. The program should be restructured to reflect FY 87 Congressional prohibitions of flight testing against an object in space, funding reductions for RDT&E, and deletion of all production funds. Nevertheless, we should continue to press for elimination of the testing moratorium at the earliest opportunity so that the flight test program can be completed and the system enter production as soon as possible. (S)

[REDACTED] (S)

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The restructured program will include the analytical and technology efforts required to support a 1990 or 1991 decision on full-scale development of this option. This effort will be jointly funded by the Air Force and the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization (SDIO). (S)

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The study noted that SDIO is pursuing other applicable technologies and concepts that, while they might be suitable for this mission, would not be available in the required early 1990 time frame or would suffer from operational shortfalls in the context of the ASAT mission. (S)

The study noted the need to seek adequate funding from the Congress and to seek relief from the current Congressional moratorium on testing against an object in space. The Department of Defense and the Air Force should make these requests to Congress on my behalf as soon as possible. (S)

Further study of long-range U.S. ASAT requirements should continue. The Director of Central Intelligence, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and the Secretary of State will support the Secretary of Defense as needed to conduct these studies and implement the ASAT program. The ongoing results of these studies should be reported to me by 30 September 1987. (S)

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