

BY CW NARA DATE 1/15/08

THE WHITE HOUSE

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WASHINGTON

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October 1, 1981

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION  
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 12STRATEGIC FORCES MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

The modernization program outlined by this directive will guide the long-term development of our strategic forces. It will help redress the deteriorated strategic balance with the Soviet Union. The result will be a deterrent that is far more secure and stable than our present nuclear forces. The program will also give us a force that is more resilient to Soviet attempts to negate our progress. This should, in turn, create better incentives for the Soviets to negotiate genuine arms reductions. (U)

It is important to bear in mind that in addition to the strategic forces modernization decided herein, we will also be devoting even greater resources to improving, modernizing, and strengthening our conventional forces, and to research and development, as well as to improving the readiness of our existing forces. (U)

Any financial resources required for the completion of the program directed by this decision must be derived from currently planned and approved Defense budget allocations. Any overruns would have to be absorbed by reprogramming from within the agreed Defense budget ceiling. (U)

The strategic forces modernization program has five mutually reinforcing parts:

- (1) Making our strategic communications and command systems more survivable, so that we can communicate over survivable networks with our nuclear forces, even after an attack. (S)
- (2) Modernizing the strategic bomber force by the addition of two new types of bombers. (S)
- (3) Increasing the accuracy and payload of our submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM), and addition of sea-based cruise missiles (SLCM). (S)
- (4) Improving strategic defenses. (S)
- (5) Deploying a new, larger and more accurate land-based ballistic missile. (S)

1. Strategic Communications.

This is the highest priority element in the program. It would develop command and communications systems for our strategic

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forces that can survive and endure before, during, and after a nuclear attack. We do not have such systems now. ~~(S)~~

2. Bomber Force.

A modernized bomber force will be built and deployed, consisting of B-1s and Advanced Technology Bombers that could penetrate present and future Soviet air defenses. The first squadron of B-1s would become operational in 1986. Deployment of the first squadron of Advanced Technology Bombers would be scheduled for the early 1990's. To help redress the strategic balance in the near term, air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) will also be deployed, beginning in 1982, on the most modern of our present B-52 force. Older B-52s will be retired. ~~(S)~~

3. Submarine Launched Missiles.

The D-5 submarine-launched ballistic missile will be developed and deployed in Trident submarines to obtain greater accuracy, payload and range than the present C-4 missile. The D-5 will become operational no later than 1989, and this delivery date will be advanced if possible. Construction of Trident submarines, on which the D-5 missile is to be deployed, will be continued at the rate of at least one per year. ~~(S)~~

To improve the near-term strategic balance, the submarine-based cruise missile will be deployed on attack submarines. This will enhance the Secure Strategic Reserve by providing a near-term missile with good survivability and accuracy. ~~(S)~~

4. Strategic Defense.

Strategic Defenses will be modernized, including air and space defenses. A vigorous research and development program will be conducted on ballistic missile defense systems. An expanded, cost effective civil defense program will be developed. ~~(S)~~

5. Land Based Missile Deployment.

Development of MX will be completed and sufficient units produced to support 100 operational missiles. All work will be stopped on the Multiple Protective Shelter basing for MX currently being developed. A limited number of MX missiles will be deployed as soon as possible in reconstructed Minuteman III or Titan silos. (All Titan II missiles will be deactivated over the next few years.) The silos would be reconstructed for greater hardness to nuclear attack. ~~(S)~~

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Three options will be pursued to support a long-term basing mode for MX: ballistic missile defense, airmobile basing, and deep underground basing. The R & D programs for these options should allow a choice on long-term basing for the remainder of the 100 MX missiles by 1984. (S)

Ronald Reagan

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Review on October 1, 2001  
Extended by R.V. Allen  
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