

News from Senator

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATEMENT OF SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE THE STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE

PRESIDENT'S FUNDING REQUEST

RECENTLY A NUMBER OF SENATORS HAVE WRITTEN A LETTER TO THE CHAIRMAN AND RANKING MEMBER OF THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST FOR FY87 FUNDING OF THE STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE, SDI. THIS MORNING, I WANT TO COMMENT BRIEFLY ON THE POINTS MADE IN THAT LETTER AND ON THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST.

LET ME MAKE CLEAR AT THE OUTSET: I SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST; AND I DISAGREE WITH MANY OF THE ASSERTIONS OF THE LETTER. LET ME TELL YOU WHY.

SDI NOT BUDGET BUSTER

THE LETTER SUGGESTS THAT THE SDI PROGRAM IS A BUDGET BUSTER. \$4.7 BILLION -- THE PRESIDENT'S FY87 REQUEST FOR SDI -- IS A LOT OF MONEY, EVEN IN THESE TIMES OF INFLATED BUDGETS. BUT LET'S KEEP THAT FIGURE IN PERSPECTIVE. THE SDI REQUEST REPRESENTS ONLY A TINY FRACTION -- 1.5 PERCENT, TO BE EXACT -- OF THE ENTIRE DEFENSE BUDGET. OBVIOUSLY, IF THERE IS MONEY TO BE SAVED ON SDI, WE SHOULD SAVE IT. BUT LET'S NOT KID OURSELVES THAT WE CAN MAKE ANY MAJOR SAVINGS JUST BY SLASHING OUR SPENDING IN THIS VITAL AREA. IF WE NEED TO CUT THE DEFENSE BUDGET BY A HALF PERCENT -- AND THAT'S WHAT THE LETTER SUGGESTS -- LET'S FIND THAT HALF PERCENT SOMEWHERE OTHER THAN IN THE MOST ADVANCED, PROMISING SECTION OF THE DEFENSE BUDGET.

PROGRAM GROWTH REFLECTS RESEARCH NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

THE LETTER ALSO INDICATES THAT THE SDI PROGRAM IS GROWING TOO FAST TO BE MANAGEABLE. AND, INDEED, IN ISOLATION, THE PROJECTED PERCENTAGE SPENDING INCREASE OVER LAST YEAR DOES SOUND LARGE. BUT IT IS NOT INCONSISTENT, HISTORICALLY, WITH SPENDING INCREASES FOR OTHER PROGRAMS IN THE R&D STAGE, ESPECIALLY PROGRAMS BEING DEVELOPED AT THE

CUTTING EDGE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES. FUNDING INCREASES IN COMPARABLE PERIODS FOR THE MANHATTAN PROJECT AND THE APOLLO PROJECT, FOR EXAMPLE, WERE GREATER THAN FOR SDI. MORE RECENTLY, THE TRIDENT II PROGRAM -- A PROGRAM STRONGLY BACKED BY SOME OF THE LETTER'S SIGNERS -- INCREASED BY 150 PERCENT FROM FY81 TO FY82 AND BY ANOTHER 300 PERCENT FROM FY83 TO FY84. IN THE FY87 BUDGET ITSELF, ANOTHER PROGRAM WHICH MANY OF THOSE WHO SIGNED THIS LETTER HAVE PUSHED VIGOROUSLY -- THE SMALL ICBM PROGRAM -- WILL BE INCREASED BY 167 PERCENT.

IN FACT, THE IMPLIED ASSERTION IN THE LETTER THAT ALL PROGRAMS SHOULD GROW IN EXACT PROPORTION TO THE OVERALL BUDGET INCREASE IS ABSURD ON ITS FACE. I DOUBT THAT ANY SINGLE SIGNER OF THE LETTER REALLY BELIEVES THAT. SOME PROGRAMS ARE NEW, GOOD AND DEVELOPING ONES. THEY DESERVE INCREASED FUNDING. THAT'S WHAT AN IMPROVED FORCE POSTURE, EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT AND EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS, AND A STRONGER AMERICA ARE ALL ABOUT. SOME PROGRAMS -- THE OLDER, LESS EFFECTIVE ONES -- THEY DESERVE TO BE STRAIGHT-LINED OR CUT BACK.

IT IS THAT KIND OF PRIORITY SETTING THAT IS CENTRAL TO THE WHOLE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET PROCESS AND THE WHOLE EXECUTIVE BRANCH MANAGEMENT EFFORT. IT'S WHAT WE EXTOL AND WHAT WE INSIST UPON IN SPEECHES ON THE FLOOR OF THE SENATE EVERY DAY. IT'S WHAT THE PRESIDENT'S DEFENSE BUDGET ATTEMPTS TO PROVIDE.

EVIDENCE INDICATES GOOD PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

NOR IS THERE ANY CREDIBLE EVIDENCE, CONTRARY TO THE ASSERTIONS OF THE LETTER, THAT THE SDI PROGRAM IS BEING ILL-MANAGED OR BEING PUSHED FASTER THAN THE TECHNOLOGIES WILL TAKE IT. FOR LAST FISCAL YEAR, SDI FUNDS FUNDS WERE 98% OBLIGATED, WITH A 72% EXPENDITURE RATE -- BETTER FIGURES THAN FOR ARMY OR AIR FORCE R&D AS A WHOLE.

FOR THAT YEAR OUR APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE CONCLUDED, AND I QUOTE: "THE SDI PROGRAM IS EXPERIENCING A STABLE AND MANAGEABLE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE. OBLIGATION RATES ARE ABOVE AVERAGE FOR MILITARY R&D [THAT MEANS THE MONEY IS BEING SPENT PROMPTLY FOR THE THINGS IT WAS INTENDED TO BE SPENT FOR] ...THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO DATE THAT THE RAPIDLY EXPANDING SDI EFFORT HAS BEEN OVERFUNDED."

FLETCHER PANEL SUPPORTS INCREASED SPENDING

THE LETTER CITES APPROVINGLY THE PRESCRIPTION OF THE FLETCHER PANEL -- THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE, INDEPENDENT GROUP TO LOOK AT THE SDI EFFORT -- THAT THERE SHOULD BE A "VIGOROUS SDI EFFORT WITHIN A CONTROLLED BUDGET." I AGREE WITH THAT, AND THE PRESIDENT DOES, TOO. THE LETTER SEEMS TO SUGGEST THAT THE FLETCHER PANEL, THEREFORE, HAS RECOMMENDED CUTS IN THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST.

THE OPPOSITE, IN FACT, IS TRUE. DUE TO PAST CUTS ALREADY MADE HERE IN CONGRESS, SDI HAS BEEN FUNDED AT LEVELS SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW THE LEVELS RECOMMENDED BY THE FLETCHER

PANEL. AND, IF WE ACCEPT THE LEVELS SUGGESTED IN THIS NEW LETTER, WE WILL END UP 33% BEHIND THE FUNDING SCHEDULE THE FLETCHER GROUP RECOMMENDED.

SUGGESTED FUNDING LEVEL DISRUPTIVE AND INEFFICIENT AND WHAT ABOUT THE FIGURE THAT THE SIGNERS HAVE SUGGESTED FOR SDI FOR FY87 -- 3 BILLION DOLLARS? THAT, TOO, SOUNDS LIKE A LOT OF MONEY. BUT ONCE AGAIN LET'S LOOK AT THE CONTEXT. IF THE SDI PROGRAM IS TO MOVE FORWARD IN A MINIMALLY EFFICIENT WAY -- IF IT IS JUST TO GO FORWARD ON THE CONTRACTS ALREADY SIGNED UNDER THE CONGRESSIONALLY APPROVED FY86 LEVEL -- THAT WOULD COST \$4.1 BILLION IN FY87. NO NEW INITIATIVES; NO NEW RESEARCH PROGRAMS; NO NEW OPPORTUNITIES -- JUST A CONTINUATION OF THE ALREADY PLANNED AND CONTRACTED FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORT. THAT IS \$4.1 BILLION.

WHAT A \$3 BILLION LEVEL WOULD DO IS FORCE THE JUGGLING OF THE SCHEDULING OF EXISTING CONTRACTS; LEAD TO SHELIVING OF PROMISING AREAS OF R&D; AND CAUSE THE FURTHER DISRUPTION AND DELAY OF A PROGRAM WHICH, UNDER THE CURRENT TIMETABLE, WILL BEGIN TO COME TO FRUITION ONLY IN THE NEXT DECADE. DRASTIC CUTBACKS SUCH AS THIS WILL CREATE INEFFICIENCY, NOT PREVENT IT; AND WILL COST MONEY IN THE LONG RUN, NOT SAVE IT.

SPENDING ON OUR SECURITY IMPERATIVE

I WISH WE DIDN'T HAVE TO SPEND BILLIONS OF DOLLARS ON OUR DEFENSE. BUT WE DO.

I WISH THE RUSSIANS WEREN'T PUSHING AHEAD, FAR MORE AGGRESSIVELY AND MENACINGLY THAN WE ARE, WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOPHISTICATED NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS, BOTH OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE. BUT THEY ARE.

I WISH WE COULD JOIN TOGETHER, WITH THE RUSSIANS AND ALL THE OTHER NATIONS ON EARTH WHO HAVE THE BOMB, TO DEVISE A WAY TO BE SURE IT WILL NEVER BE USED. BUT, SO FAR -- AND IN LARGEST PART DUE TO THE RUSSIANS REFUSAL TO DEAL SERIOUSLY -- WE'VE MADE LITTLE PROGRESS IN THAT AREA.

THAT'S THE REAL WORLD.

WE NEED THE SDI R&D PROGRAM

SDI IS A GOOD PROGRAM, A NEEDED PROGRAM. THAT'S WHY THE RUSSIANS ARE PUSHING AHEAD WITH AN SDI-LIKE PROGRAM, TOO, AND IN SOME AREAS FASTER THAN WE ARE.

SDI HAS ALREADY PAID SUBSTANTIAL DIVIDENDS. IT IS GENERATING NEW TECHNOLOGIES, WHICH WILL NOT ONLY IMPROVE OUR SECURITY AS A NATION BUT, POTENTIALLY, OUR WELL-BEING AND PROSPERITY AS A PEOPLE. IT IS ONE MAJOR REASON THE RUSSIANS RETURNED TO THE GENEVA ARMS CONTROL TALKS, AND IT COULD ONE DAY BE THE "CARROT" WHICH GETS THEM TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY ON REAL ARMS REDUCTIONS.

AND, OF COURSE, IT OFFERS US THE EVENTUAL PROSPECT OF AN END TO THE SOLE RELIANCE ON THE DOCTRINE OF MUTUAL ASSURED DESTRUCTION -- THE MAD DOCTRINE -- UNDER WHICH BOTH WE AND THE RUSSIANS TRY TO INSURE OUR SECURITY BY OPENING OURSELVES TO POTENTIAL DESTRUCTION BY THE OTHER.

SDI DESERVES A CHANCE. THE AMERICAN PUBLIC DESERVES THE CHANCE, TOO, TO SEE IF THERE MIGHT NOT BE A SAFER, MORE SECURE FUTURE. LET'S NOT NIP THIS PROGRAM IN THE BUD OR DISRUPT IT SO BADLY THAT WE HAVE TO PUT OFF A DECISION ON ITS TRUE MERITS UNTIL IT IS DANGEROUSLY LATE.

THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST IS A REASONABLE, PRUDENT REQUEST. I INTEND TO SUPPORT IT. I URGE ALL MY COLLEAGUES TO DO LIKewise.

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