

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 23, 1983

Dear Bob:

I appreciate your continued interest and enthusiasm regarding our initiative to develop the technologies that can lead to a capability to defend against ballistic missiles. Since my speech on March 23rd, we have been engaged in an intense effort to determine the approaches that can be pursued to realize this goal. The Fletcher Committee is one of several groups advising the Secretary of Defense on this crucial issue. I intend to review the results of these efforts in early October.

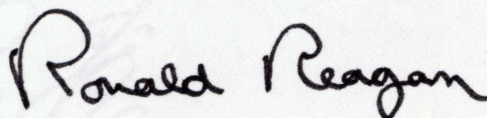
The responsibility for this high priority effort has been assigned to a Senior Interagency Group consisting of representatives from key departments and chaired by the Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Thayer. Scientific and technical experts from industry, academia, and the government have been organized to evaluate alternatives and to provide advice on the technical and policy options that might be pursued. I have asked that the plans be aggressive, but technically responsible. I fully understand and share your desire to provide the American people and our Allies with protection as soon as possible. I know that you appreciate that the technical challenges are immense if the protection we provide is to be effective.

While I have not yet seen the plan that the Secretary of Defense is preparing, I do believe that it will include an aggressive technology effort characterized by technical demonstrations and that it will be deserving of Congressional support. I assure you that the defensive strategy and technical policy to be implemented on this effort will be reviewed by my office, tempered by Congressional advice, and will be in the best interests of all free people.

I am concerned that you feel that there might be a feeling of prejudice against defensive weapons in general, and space lasers in particular, in my Administration. The Department of Defense Space Laser Program Plan was the first attempt to structure a coordinated effort that could lead to development of a Space Laser Weapon. While your support of this plan is recognized and deeply appreciated, the lack of full Congressional support to provide all of the funds requested for this research has caused unnecessary delays.

I hope that you will not prejudge the Defensive Technology Plan, which is just now being completed. I look forward to your joining with me and supporting the Plans and Policy that I will recommend to the Congress and which could ultimately free all mankind from the threat of ballistic missiles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Ronald Reagan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R".

The Honorable Robert Dole
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510