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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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June 6, 1978

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Presidential Directive / NSC- 39

TO: The Vice President
 The Secretary of State
 The Secretary of Defense
 The Director, Office of Management
 and Budget
 The Director, Arms Control and
 Disarmament Agency
 The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
 The Director of Central Intelligence
 The Administrator, National Aeronautics
 and Space Administration
 The Director, Office of Science and
 Technology Policy

SUBJECT: Instructions to the US Delegation to the
 ASAT Talks with the Soviets Commencing
 on June 8 in Helsinki (U)

The objective of the upcoming ASAT talks with the Soviets is to express our interest in reaching a comprehensive agreement to limit ASAT capabilities and use (except for electronic countermeasures), to explore possibilities for some initial steps in the ASAT area (described below), and to gauge Soviet interests and reactions.

After making clear that the US is not making formal proposals, the Delegation should state to the Soviets that we are interested in exploring the possibilities for (1) dealing with physical attacks on satellites possibly by treating them as hostile acts, (2) pledging not to conduct such attacks, (3) placing an indefinite moratorium on high-altitude ASAT tests with a one-year right of withdrawal, and (4) placing a six-month moratorium on low-altitude tests while we explore the possibilities for an agreement that will guarantee no significant asymmetries in overall ASAT capabilities.

If the Soviets are interested in coming to an immediate agreement on any of these ideas, the Delegation should report to Washington for further instructions.

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Classified by: [redacted] 7-11-94
under provisions of E.O. 12958
by D. Van Tassel, National Security Council

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In discussing our interest in a comprehensive proposal and our unwillingness to accept a significant asymmetry in ASAT capability, the Delegation may explore with the Soviets the possibility of finding a verifiable means for effectively eliminating their current orbital interceptor capability.

The Delegation should make clear to the Soviets that we intend to seek an ASAT capability as soon as possible unless they are willing to take positive actions to preclude such a move on our part.

Finally, the Delegation should minimize discussions of the space shuttle and under no circumstances allow it to be characterized as an ASAT system.


Zbigniew Brzezinski