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.
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