

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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January 18, 1977

National Security Decision Memorandum 345

TO: The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense  
The Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency

SUBJECT: U. S. Anti-Satellite Capabilities

The President is concerned about the increasing use by the USSR of space-based assets for direct support of their military forces. This trend, which can be expected to continue and which is typified by the Soviet use of ocean surveillance satellites to provide real-time targeting data for long-range anti-ship missiles, is substantially increasing the effectiveness of Soviet forces. It represents a direct military threat to the combat forces of the United States. In light of these developments, the President has reassessed U. S. policy regarding acquisition of an anti-satellite capability and has decided that the Soviets should not be allowed an exclusive sanctuary in space for critical military supporting satellites.

Policy with Respect to U. S. Anti-Satellite Capability

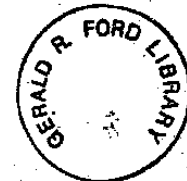
The President wishes to emphasize that the United States will continue to stress international treaty obligations in space, including free use of outer space and non-interference with national technical means. However, to counter the direct military threat posed by certain Soviet space assets not covered by the terms of current treaty obligations, as well as to protect against higher level conflict situations in which the Soviets might abrogate current agreements, the President has decided that the United States should acquire a non-nuclear anti-satellite capability which could selectively nullify certain militarily important Soviet space systems, should that become necessary. In order to be able to use such an anti-satellite capability in a reversible, less provocative way at lower crisis thresholds, as well as to accomplish more permanent kill in high level crises and conflicts, means for both electronic nullification and physical destruction should be pursued.

**DECLASSIFIED**  
E.O. 12958 Sec. 3.6

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Classified by: Brent Scowcroft

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TOP SECRET/XGDS-5(B)-2

2

U. S. Anti-Satellite Capability

The President directs that the Secretary of Defense take immediate steps toward the acquisition of non-nuclear anti-satellite capability, including means for electronic nullification as well as physical destruction.

An anti-satellite interceptor should be acquired on an expedited basis. It should be capable of destroying low altitude satellites and of nullifying a small number (6-10) of important Soviet military satellites within a period of one week.

A separate capability to electronically nullify critical Soviet military satellites at all altitudes up to synchronous should also be acquired on an urgent basis.

In order to avoid stimulating Soviet actions to counter electronically U. S. high altitude COMINT and ELINT collectors, the "fact of" a U. S. electronic anti-satellite capability should be classified and special compartmented security procedures should be used to protect the confidentiality of the existence and detailed characteristics of the program. Special procedures should also be established to review and authorize tests of electronic techniques. The "fact of" a U. S. low altitude anti-satellite interceptor should be treated as unclassified and normal security procedures applied to the program details.

Arms Control Initiatives

The President further directs the Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency to identify and assess arms control initiatives that would complement development of a limited anti-satellite capability in an overall policy toward military space activities by:

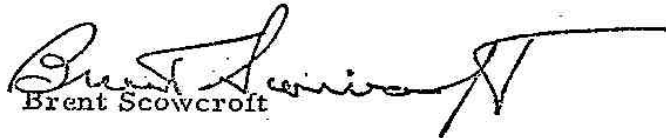
1. Restricting development of high altitude anti-satellite interceptor capabilities,
2. Raising the crisis threshold for use of an anti-satellite.
3. Clarifying acts which constitute interference with space systems.

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3

This effort should be coordinated with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, and the Director of Central Intelligence. It should not delay the acquisition actions called for in this memorandum.

  
Brent Scowcroft

cc: The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff  
The Director of Central Intelligence

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