

SENATOR PAUL E. TSONGAS

Floor Statement - An Amendment to the Department of Defense  
Appropriations Bill, S. 2039

November 4, 1983

Mr. President, I wish to quote from the report of the Committee on Appropriations: "The Committee is hopeful that the findings of the Fletcher Commission will provide the basis for a national consensus on directed energy weapons research and development." I join the Committee in hoping for a national consensus, for a national consensus is necessary before we embark on a program of this magnitude and significance.

I also agree with the Committee's concern that the Administration should not reprogram funds from existing programs to accelerated R&D and demonstration of new strategic defense technologies until there is a more thorough review of these new programs.

However, the Committee's concerns appear to be focused on the obligation of funds for short-wave laser space weapons and the effects of the acceleration of advanced technologies R&D on existing programs. I am concerned with broader policy issues raised by the Fletcher and Hoffman reports.

The amendment I send to the desk requires a comprehensive Presidential report to Congress on the new multi-layered strategic defense systems recently recommended to the Administration by a senior interagency group of the National Security Council. Recently, we have read in the press and trade magazines that this group, supported by Secretary Weinberger and Mr. Clark, has urged the President to embark on an accelerated, advanced technology program, in order to develop and deploy elaborate BMD systems within 15-20 years. These recommendations are based on two parallel reports

submitted by the Defense Technology Study Team (headed by James C. Fletcher) and the Future Security Strategy Study (headed by Fred C. Hoffman). Both reports are classified. We only know those facts which were leaked to the press.

Some have interpreted the Fletcher report as a blueprint for speedy action to develop an arsenal of high technology space weapons. Others have read it as a call for further study. In order for Congress to make decisions with regard to these new weapons, we need to be fully aware of the rationale for such systems and their implications.

The report to Congress, mandated by my amendment, is necessary so that Congress will be able to make an informed and deliberate decision regarding our priority defense programs, in their proper strategic context.

We are told that the R&D programs advocated alone would cost up to \$27 billion over the next five years, whereas the total program cost through deployment could exceed \$200 billion.

Mr. President, this is a program of unprecedented dimensions, which could mean a fundamental shift in our military strategic posture, and may have far-reaching arms control and space-policy implications. We have existing treaties, such as the Limited Test Ban Treaty, the Outer Space Treaty, and the ABM Treaty, which could be jeopardized if we embark on the programs outlined in the Fletcher Report.



The Committee report and bill language express concern about the hasty adoption of this blueprint and already requires a report requiring clarification of some specific programs examined by the Fletcher Commission (Defensive Technologies Study Team) report. The Committee is hopeful that a national consensus on the Fletcher Commission proposals can be achieved. Mr. President, I fully concur with this committee concern.

However, I believe we need to look further and deeper into the issues raised by the newly proposed strategic defense program, recommended by the interagency group to the President. What we lack, specifically, Mr. President, are the policy and budget implications of this strategic defense program. Only with a full understanding of all the national security implications of this program can the Congress proceed with confidence and certainty.

A number of vital issues would be clarified by this Presidential report to Congress in order to develop a national consensus in this area. More specifically:

- 1) What are the impacts of the proposed BMD programs on present and prospective arms control agreements? Would existing treaties such as the Outer Space Treaty and the ABM treaty, be jeopardized if we adopt the space-based BMD option? At what point would the proposed R&D program be perceived as coming into conflict with the provisions of these agreements? Arms control negotiations could be perceived as futile, if our defense posture is to be substantially changed. In the 1960's, the US moved to deploy Multiple

Independently-targeted Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs) in response to a perceived Soviet ABM effort. What would be the impact of accelerated American research on BMD on current efforts to achieve Soviet agreement to limitations on offensive strategic forces such as the build-down proposal?

- 2) What would the most likely Soviet response be? Some believe that the arms race could accelerate and further drain our resources, while others argue that a multi-tiered array of defensive weapons in space could lead the Soviets to attempt a preemptive first strike or develop cheaper and more effective countermeasures. Current Soviet efforts on ballistic missile defense are well developed and could easily be accelerated. It would be unrealistic for American planners to assume that we will be able to develop an advanced BMD capability while the Soviets stand still. Far more likely is superpower competition to develop the first operational BMD system. This would be a highly volatile strategic context with grave implications for our existing deterrence posture and our ability to penetrate Soviet defenses.
- 3) How would the new defense programs impact the viability of NATO and other western nuclear deterrent forces? Even a limited Soviet BMD deployment could effectively negate the nuclear deterrent of our British and French allies. The global repercussions of a shift in our strategic policy should be explored and assessed, and our NATO allies should be consulted before any such major change is adopted.



- 4) What are the projected costs of the advanced-technology programs proposed, from R&D through deployment stages? The price tags on the technology smorgasbord are estimated to range from \$18 to \$27 billion over five years for R&D alone, and to be in the order of \$200 billion through the deployment phase. It is necessary for Congress to examine spending plans matched to specific programs in order to assess their relative cost-effectiveness.
- 5) What impacts may be expected on the defense budget and federal budget? While we face escalating costs and huge deficits, would the new BMD programs further inflate the defense budget -- which at present exceeds a quarter of our federal budget? The allocation of our national technical and manpower resources, as well as dollar figures, must be weighed carefully. Press reports suggest that just BMD research costs from 1985 to 1989 may range from \$18 billion to \$27 billion. This lower figure is in excess of the cost to fully equip an entire aircraft carrier battle group. The \$26 billion R&D program recommended by Secretary Weinberger surpasses the entire cost of the B-1B program. Such massive expenditures have tremendous implication for our ability to fund other conventional and strategic military programs as well as our ability to provide the scientists and engineers needed in the civilian sector.

Upon receipt of this report, Congress should be able to at least begin a reasoned and detailed debate on these new weapons systems, and on the fundamental change in U.S. strategic deterrent policy which they entail.