

Statement on Star Wars

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The Congress is at present considering a massive expansion of the Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars Program). It seems likely that large amounts of money will soon be made available for scientific research under the Program. University-based scientists are already being invited to apply for funding under this program.

We believe that the Star Wars Program is technically dubious and politically unwise. Anti-ballistic missile defense of sufficient reliability to defend the population of the United States against a Soviet first strike is not technically feasible in the foreseeable future. A system of more limited capability will only serve to escalate the arms race by encouraging the development of both additional offensive overkill and an all-out competition in anti-ballistic missile weapons. The Program will make arms-control negotiation even more difficult than it is at present. The Program is a step toward precisely the type of weapons and strategy most likely to trigger a nuclear holocaust.

For these reasons, we believe that the Star Wars Program represents, not an advance towards genuine security, but rather a major step backwards. Accordingly, as working scientists, we will not apply for or accept support from the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization, which funds Star Wars research. We encourage other scientists and technical personnel to join us in this refusal. We hope, together, to persuade the public and the Congress not to support this deeply misguided, dangerous, and enormously expensive program.

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