

speech and again attacked past reliance on “deterrence with offensive nuclear weapons,” noting that he has ordered “a comprehensive examining of technologies and other areas dealing with defense in its broadest meaning, in order to evaluate how our and our allies’ security can be guaranteed by such methods.”

The President also emphasized the need to “maintain our basic industries,” through “investments in new machinery and equipment” and “the mastering of new technologies” that will lead to an “increase in standards of living made possible only by productive technology on our farms, in our factories, and in our offices.”

## What’s wrong with the MX commission

by Lonnie Wolfe

Henry Kissinger’s former aide Gen. Brent Scowcroft and his Commission on Strategic Forces, more commonly known as the MX Commission, have produced a series of recommendations aimed at undermining the President’s stated commitment to end the era of Mutually Assured Destruction through the development of defensive anti-missile beam weapons.

According to defense intelligence sources, every member of the commission, with the exception of former Air Force Secretary Thomas Reed, strongly disagreed with the President’s March 23 speech ending the MAD era.

While admitting that the Soviet Union is developing a ballistic missile defense capability, the report states under a section on ballistic missile defense in the portion of the report headed Technological Trends for Strategic Forces: “Substantial progress has been made in the last decade in the development of both endo-atmospheric and exo-atmospheric ABM defenses. However, *applications of our current technology offer no real promise of being able to defend the United States against massive nuclear attack in this century.* [emphasis added]” The report suggests that a limited ABM defense might be used to defend fixed hardened silos, but points out that “even this will be a difficult feat.”

Later, in a section on ballistic missile defense under the heading of Strategic Modernization Programs, the report argues that while research should be conducted within the limits of the 1972 ABM Treaty to avoid a “technological surprise” by the Soviets, “at this time, however, the Commission believes that no ABM technologies appear to combine practicality, survivability, low cost, and technical effectiveness sufficiently to justify proceeding beyond the stage of technology development.”

Since the Commission had access to classified research

on beam weapons technologies of the type that informed the President’s March 23 speech, one can only surmise that it has chosen to use its report to refute the findings of the President himself and his closest advisors on the feasibility of a layered, comprehensive beam weapon defense. Instead, the commissioners go on to recommend that the United States place a higher priority on developing counter-measures to a Soviet ABM system—a statement of strategic lunacy, repeated in a recent interview by Henry Kissinger.

The Commission made the following recommendations:

- First, they recommended that the MX missile be based in existing Minuteman missile silos, hardened to resist attack with existing concrete technologies. As the Commission report admits, the commissioners recognized that this proposal would in no way make MX missiles invulnerable to attack.

By making this admission, the Commission deliberately encouraged a debate on whether a fixed, heavy payload land-based component of the strategic nuclear triad was necessary, since it could not be defended. In public statements analyzing the report, both Kissinger and Scowcroft have argued that the MX is not really a strategic system at all, but some kind of bargaining chip to be placed on the table in arms control talks with the Soviets. In that way, the Scowcroft panel is trying to force all discussion on strategic weapons systems into the MAD-dominated arms control arena.

- Second, the Commission recommends that the U.S. move quickly to develop a small mobile single warhead missile, dubbed the Midgetman. They argue that such a missile would have a high probability of surviving a Soviet attack. Implicit in this recommendation, and supported in direct statements elsewhere, is the advice to move away from heavy launchers and multiple warheads (MIRVs).

Both proposals parallel a recent attack by Henry Kissinger on the President’s missile defense program, in *Newsweek* magazine. One source reports that Kissinger, along with former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, originally pushed the MIRV concept to counter what were thought to be Soviet anti-missile defenses in the 1960s. Those defenses centered on shooting down incoming warheads with a warhead carried by a missile. By placing more warheads on a single missile, Soviet ABM defenses would be overloaded.

This source reports that Kissinger now recognizes, despite public pronouncements to the contrary, that Soviet ABM technologies are designed to shoot down missiles from space using directed energy weapons in the first minutes of flight. It therefore no longer matters how many warheads are carried on a single missile. Instead, Kissinger and Scowcroft want to proliferate launchers to make an effective ABM system more difficult. Hence the Midgetman scheme.

- Finally, the Commission recommends that the administration modify its arms control proposals to count warheads instead of launchers. This proposal was endorsed this month by Soviet leader Yuri Andropov. As with the Midgetman scheme, the hidden purpose behind the recommendation is Kissinger’s new desire to proliferate launchers.