

Comments to accompany: "Discriminate Deterrence" The Report of the Commission on Integrated Long Range Strategy, chaired by Fred Ikle and Albert Wohlstatter. released 1/12/88

General appraisal: "Discriminate Deterrence" is an excellent account of the strategy that should govern our military posture. It gave limited consideration, as out of its charge, to many other important areas: notably foreign policy, diplomacy, alliance building, international economic and cultural relationships, and arms control. The outcomes of these will, of course, feed back importantly to the implementation of military strategy.

Of course, I firmly endorse the view that arms control must be fully integrated with our strategic policy. Consistent with that, I would place more emphasis than does the report on opportunities to meet certain goals that we share with the Soviet Union in respect to substantial reduction in strategic arms, subject of course to well established principles of verification, enforcement, and leaving each side more secure than it is before.

The report repeatedly insists that the deterrence of war is vastly preferable to fighting it. It may be impossible to stress this sufficiently. In a clear minded way, the report shows how we must build capabilities we would prefer never to have to use; and that capabilities are not very credible unless coupled with the reliable intention to use them when circumstances demand: they cannot be sheer bluff and still deter. Any use of military force has unsavory consequences that most people would prefer not to think about. Obviously, it is the task of our military establishment to be prepared to make that use; and it is the burden of our policy to sustain our military in a state of capable readiness, without their having to fire their weapons in anger.

The most valuable contribution of the report is its pointer to two related themes: 1) lessening our reliance on nuclear weapons -- which we are the most unlikely to use short of central challenges to survival, and 2) recognizing that there are many dangers in the world, and will be more in future, that are not immediately connected with constraining the expansion of the Soviet empire.

Joshua Lederberg

Re my credentials: As many of my colleagues may be puzzled by my membership on this commission, I should mention that I have been an avid student of military and national security affairs since World War II, and especially since the emergence of nuclear weaponry in 1945. From 1958 - 1977, I was actively involved with space technology through participation in the Mars exploration projects, Mariner and Viking. From 1966-1971, my weekly columns for the Washington Post on science, technology and social policy often touched on national security issues. Since 1970 I have been a recurrent adviser to U.S. government agencies, including ACDA, DoD, OSTP, USN, USA, AEC ... At Stanford, same interval, a founding member of the curriculum on arms control and national security, which involved lecture course, seminars, frequent visiting speakers.