

# Legislation to require an environmental impact statement for the proposed strategic target system (STARS)

Senator Daniel K. Akaka Papers

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STATEMENT OF THE  
HONORABLE DANIEL K. AKAKA  
UNITED STATES SENATE

OCTOBER 26, 1990

LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
FOR THE PROPOSED STRATEGIC TARGET SYSTEM (STARS)

Mr. President, on September 27 and October 12, I contacted Defense Secretary Dick Cheney to request his support on an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Strategic Target Systems program, commonly referred to as STARS.

As part of the Strategic Defense Initiative, the U.S. Army Strategic Defense Command is proposing to conduct a series of launches aimed at improving anti-missile technology. The launches would originate from the Kauai Test Facility passing over the northern point of Niihau--a populated island in the Hawaiian chain--and land near the Kwajalein Atoll.

I have asked for an Environmental Impact Statement. A less rigorous Environmental Assessment determined that STARS had "no significant impact" on the surrounding communities. The assessment was inadequate. The potentially devastating effect the proposed program could have on the people and the pristine environment on Kauai and Niihau certainly warrants a detailed EIS.

Mr. President, no matter how well-intentioned the military may be, accidents do occur. We cannot predict when and where misfortune may strike, but we can evaluate a situation and ensure that the potential for a disaster is minimized.

There is no imminent threat facing our nation that requires us to rush forward with this strategic defense program. The magnitude of the STARS program and its effects on our fragile ecosystem cannot be taken lightly.

That is why, Mr. President, I am today introducing legislation which will require the Defense Department to conduct an EIS before proceeding with the STARS program. At this time, I recognize that the possibility of this legislation passing before adjournment is slim. However, I feel that introducing this bill will send a clear message to the Defense Department of the grave concerns held by the people of Hawaii, as well as put it on notice that we intend to pursue this matter further.

Mr. President, I kindly ask that the text of my bill follow this statement. Thank you.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of quorum.

sent a letter to

Yesterday I (called on) Secretary of Defense Cheney to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement before the Army proceeds with its STARS missile program on Kauai.

We must have a comprehensive review of the program's effects on the Garden Island, ~~because the STARS program poses a real threat to Kauai. The recently completed Environmental Assessment fails to address such obvious issues, like the potential hazards from in-flight missile failures,~~

~~In light of such omissions,~~ I am seeking an Environmental Impact Statement to <sup>investigate</sup> ~~safeguard Kauai from~~ the affects of larger missile launches.

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