

**Introduction:** “Since you have all read the paper and are now familiar with the ethical issues plaguing the scientific community, let’s look at a couple of cases where these issues coalesced and had a major impact on scientific progress, public spending, and public support of science. In the book, *Science, Money, and Politics*, Daniel Greenberg brings up two cases, which we will be looking at closely today. These are the Strategic Defense Initiative, or SDI, and the Superconducting Supercollider, or SSC. Both are megaprojects which raked in billions of dollars of funding with very little scientific reasoning for doing so. The reasons the projects were able to garner so much financial support intertwines with the ethical issues presented in the paper.”

**SDI:** Your part

- “The SDI was proposed by the Reagan administration. Its chief goal was to produce a nationwide shield to defend against a nuclear strike from the Soviet Union. This proposed shield was to be built using advanced technology, consisting largely of relatively undeveloped ideas and relying heavily on nuclear power. The core of the plan was to produce targeting systems with the ability to destroy an intercontinental ballistic missile... with lasers... from space. Now, if that seems overly fantastic to you, you are not alone: the media propagated the program’s nickname of “Star Wars,” based on the similarities to technology used in the, at the time, recently released film. This, of course, conjures the image of the famous Death Star from the first film, [pause] but in reality it was far more similar to the half-completed, ultimately-destroyed version from the third.”
- “So who do we have to blame for this mess? This boils down to the heavy seclusion of the scientific community from national politics and the relative influence of those who dare cross this border. One particular scientist took this role, and he was not new to the politics of weaponry. Edward Teller was tapped to join Reagan’s White House Science Council. Teller developed close ties to Reagan and had the most influence over the president out of all the members of the Council. Teller decided to use his position to expand the role of the weapons laboratory he co-founded in 1952: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.
- At the time, LLNL was developing the X-ray laser. Teller claimed that this laser would be the key to a missile defense system. The highly classified nature of the project meant that the extraordinary claims boasted by the supporters of the X-ray laser went unchecked.