



By Charles Del Vecchio, The Washington Post
Robert York, left, and J. P. Ruina testify on MIRV.

Expert Calls Minuteman

Obsolescent

Associated Press

A former Pentagon research director testified yesterday that the Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missile is becoming obsolete, and could be outdated in another decade.

"Minuteman is obsolescent — but not yet obsolete," Dr. Herbert York told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Two other scientists agreed that the development of new offensive weaponry is overtaking the land-based missile.

"All of you agree the ABM is an absolutely useless gesture to try to preserve an obsolescent weapon," said Sen. J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), the committee chairman.

York said the increasing accuracy and likely multiple warheads of new offensive missiles would enable an attacker to knock out land-based missiles, even in their hardened sites.

Dr. Gordon J. F. MacDonald of the University of California at Santa Barbara said the effectiveness of land-based missiles could be preserved by an effective antiballistic missile system.

Fulbright questioned whether it is possible to build an ABM that could guard Minuteman sites against a fleet of attacking missiles armed with 10, perhaps 20, warheads apiece. MacDonald said it could be done.

MacDonald, who favors deployment of the Safeguard ABM system, said the development of new components could make it less expensive and more effective.

Dispute Over MIRV

"It may be that such a system exists," York countered, "but we've been looking for it

for 15 years and what we came up with is Safeguard."

The testimony came as the dispute over missile defenses blended into another the issue of testing multiple, independently targeted warheads for offensive missiles.

The committee is considering resolutions seeking a halt in testing of those weapons, called MIRVs.

Critics of the Safeguard deployment plan now before the Senate showed signs of disagreement over the MIRV issue.

Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.), said he would not support any resolution seeking a unilateral U.S. halt in MIRV tests.

Sen. Edward W. Brooke (R-Mass.), chief sponsor of a resolution which seeks a halt in MIRV testing, said he is not advocating a unilateral course,

but one to be followed by both the United States and the Soviet Union.

Brooke, who has been counted an opponent of ABM deployment, said his decision on President Nixon's Safeguard plan could be affected by the course the Administration follows on MIRV test suspension.

York, MacDonald and Dr. J. P. Ruina of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology joined in urging a U.S. effort to reach agreement with the Soviet Union for a halt in MIRV development.

Little Floor Debate

With many Senators in Florida for the launching of Apollo 11, there was little floor debate on the ABM.

The Pentagon said June 13 that the United States is going ahead with the testing of

MIRV warheads for Minuteman and Poseidon missiles.

The MIRV issue has come up repeatedly in the Safeguard debate.

In the Safeguard contest, President Nixon was said to be firmly opposing any compromise.

Republican leaders said their latest count shows at least 50 votes, and possibly 52, lined up for deployment of the system Mr. Nixon seeks to defend U.S. offensive missile installations.

Senate GOP Leader Everett M. Dirksen said of the President:

"He's confident that we have the votes, and so am I."

The next key phase of the Safeguard debate is due today, when the Senate is expected to hold a secret session, with both sides hoping to buttress their arguments.