

Joint Chiefs Challenge Stand on Anti-Missiles

U.S. Still Sees Hope For an Agreement Averting Arms Race

By Murrey Marder
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The United States emphasized yesterday that there is still hope for Soviet-American agreement to limit an antiballistic missile race.

A new comment on the possibility for an accord was issued, in part, to counter reports from Moscow that tended to doom in advance the prospects for any agreement.

The Johnson Administration is engaged in what it regards as a critical two-way struggle to hold open the chance for what President Johnson last week called "a watershed" decision in East-West arms competition.

In effect, the Administration has one wary eye on Moscow, and the other on Capitol Hill. In Congress there are signs of rising pressure on the Administration to insist on deploying a multi-billion-dollar missile defense system whether the Russians expand their system or not — and double

See ABM, A18, Col. 1

Contend White House Underestimates Size Of Russian System

By George C. Wilson
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The Joint Chiefs of Staff contend Russia's missile defense is much bigger than the Johnson Administration has described to the public, it was learned yesterday.

The military chiefs, in a position paper not yet made public and perhaps destined to be kept secret, argue that Russian missile defenses cover many areas besides Moscow.

This puts the Chiefs at odds with both the White House
See CHIEFS, A18, Col. 2

Next Page

ABM—From A1

insistence if the Russians say no to an accord.

Officially, the Administration is not committed to deploy its own ABM system even if the Russian answer is negative.

Nevertheless, many political analysts believe that President Johnson and other officials have left the Administration in such a public posture that if the Soviet response is no, the political pressure on Capitol Hill to proceed with an American system will be irresistible.

Discussed in Russia

State Department Press Officer Robert J. McCloskey said yesterday that President Johnson's proposal for averting an arms race was discussed in Moscow Saturday.

That was one of the topics raised in a lengthy talk between U.S. Ambassador Llewellyn E. Thompson and Premier Alexei N. Kosygin, McCloskey told newsmen.

"It is assumed there will be further contacts with the Soviets on this matter," said McCloskey.

"These continuing contacts reflect interest on both sides in exploring the possibilities of arriving at an understanding on strategic missile problems."

Guarded Position

According to other sources, the Soviet position in the Kosygin-Thompson talks was an exceedingly guarded one that avoided any commitment. Administration analysts say that

it is an unsurprising posture for the Russians to take in this stage of preliminary talks. The Thompson talk was the first substantive one in Moscow on this topic. Previously, the subject was discussed here with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin and Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Deputy Under Secretary of State Foy D. Kohler.

According to informed sources, Kosygin, in his talk with Thompson, took a position that was close to his cool response given in London on Feb. 10. He said then that "defensive" weapons systems were justified and that "offensive" worldweapons are the cause of world tension.

In view of the historic Russian emphasis on defense, and the fact that the United States has boasted of its 3 to 1, or 4 to 1, strategic missile superiority over the Soviet Union, analysts here note, it is axiomatic to find super-caution from the Russians on this topic, whatever their intentions. Even if these probig talks make any progress, American sources believe, it may be months before that is discernible.

The political difficulty for the Johnson Administration, meantime, is to acquire time on Capitol Hill for prolonged diplomatic probing. One sign of storm clouds was the publication this week of a Republican National Committee report on missiles. The legend on the cover summed up the problem that faces the Administration: "IS LBJ RIGHT? Network; U.S. Refuses to Keep Pace."

CHIEFS—From AI

and Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara. The Johnson Administration line is that Russia's deployed missile defense is now limited to the Moscow area.

Secretary McNamara, in the public version of his posture statement, said "it now appears" the Soviets are placing Galosh anti-missiles around Moscow. "They are also deploying another type of defensive system elsewhere in the Soviet Union," he said. "But the weight of the evidence at this time suggests that this system is not intended primarily for anti-ballistic-missile defense."

Intelligence officials have been telling Congress in closed session that McNamara was referring to a defense against U.S. high altitude bombers. Another theory is that this Soviet defense is against slow, air-breathing missiles which resemble robot airplanes.

Reject Both Theories

The military Chiefs reject both these theories. They maintain that this defense across the northeastern part of Russia, known as the Tallinn system, must be for missiles. They reason Russia knows U.S. bomber strategy is based on flying bombers in low—not at high altitude.

Also, the Chiefs argue, the Tallinn system is stretched across the corridor—or "tube"—as the military now calls it—which U.S. missiles must travel to hit Russia.

Yet another reason for believing Tallinn is a missile defense, the Chiefs said, is that U.S. offensive striking power is based primarily on ICBMs and Polaris missiles.

The U.S. bomber force consists of B-52s and B-58s. These bombers would penetrate Russia while zooming in low to escape radar detection. The F-111 bomber, soon to be added to the inventory, also would fly in low. Same goes for the advanced bomber the USAF has in the planning

stage.

Buttress Argument

While the current U.S. bomber force and its planned tactics buttress the Chiefs' argument about Tallinn, the B-52 and B-58 were designed as high altitude bombers. So was the B-70, which was canceled by Secretary McNamara in 1961. (The B-52s and B-58s have since been strengthened so they can withstand the buffeting of low level flying.)

This raises the possibility that the Soviets, in fact, did build Tallinn against high altitude bombers and have not changed the air defense hardware to fit new U.S. strategy. The lag between blueprint and hardware is often about 10 years.

One theory is that Tallinn was built specifically to protect Russia from the B-70—a bomber which would fly in at about 80,000 feet—and high-flying U-2 type spy planes. How well the Tallinn system could be adapted to defend against missiles, if it indeed is primarily a bomber defense, is part of the current anti-ballistic-missile debate here.

The Chiefs are inclined to over-estimate a threat since their job is providing maximum security.

Sen. Albert Gore (D-Tenn.) said recently that Russia has missile defenses in place in Moscow and 26 other areas.

The extent and effectiveness of Russia's ABM system are other key questions as the Congress ponders whether it can safely forego putting a similar defense around the U.S. The Johnson Administration is now trying to negotiate some kind of ABM freeze with Russia as part of an arms control agreement.

Secretary McNamara argues that offensive missiles will always be ahead of the defense, so spending billions to install an ABM system would be a waste of money. He estimates the U.S. anti-missile system, known as Nike X, would cost \$40 billion ultimately.