

Excerpts From Testimony on Antimissile

System Before Senate Panel

Following are excerpts from a transcript of testimony in Washington yesterday before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Safeguard antimissile system, as recorded by The New York Times. The testimony included statements by Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird and Deputy Secretary David Packard and questions by Senator Stuart Symington, Democrat of Missouri, to which responses were made by Mr. Laird, Mr. Packard and Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Laird Statement

The Safeguard system, or the modified antiballistic-missile system which President Nixon announced last week, is designed to contribute toward peace. It is not an escalation of the arms race. It is not a stumbling block in the arms limitation talks. Safeguard is a building block for peace.

The original Sentinel plan could have been interpreted as a first step towards the construction of a heavy system for the defense of our cities. Indeed, it could have been used for that purpose. The Safeguard system, both in fact and in appearance, is a protection for our retaliatory forces. It is an essential safeguard for the United States interests against the nature of the threat we face from the Soviet Union and from Red China.

The potential threat from the Soviet Union lies in the growing missile force which could destroy a portion of our deterrent, or destroy a portion of our retaliatory force. We cannot stop a massive Soviet attack on our cities. Technically, we just don't have the know-how. We must rely on our deterrents to insure that a nu-

clear attack doesn't start in the first place.

This system truly protects people by protecting our deterrent force which maintains the peace in the world today.

The Soviet Union today is building at a rapid rate the kinds of weapons which could be used to erode our essential deterrent force. And as recently as December, they went forward with further installation of large ICBM's within the Soviet Union.

Sees Threat From China

Communist China is another potential threat to us. It cannot threaten our retaliatory weapons system for many years, but by the mid-nineteen-seventies China could pose a threat to our people and to our property.

The Government of Communist China is devoting an astonishing portion of its national resources to the development of nuclear weapons, particularly the ICBM's, the intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The Safeguard ABM system proposed by President Nixon is carefully designed to meet these threats adequately, without overreacting. Continuing research and development without any initial deployment would leave us only with no option to provide defense for our deterrent on the schedule that might be required by the Soviet threat if we do not reach an agreement with the Soviets on limiting strategic forces.

Our obviously thin protection of cities and added protection of our deterrent forces will require no reaction at all from the Soviet Union, providing the Soviet Union has a responsible deterrent nuclear war policy, as we in the United States do.

The Safeguard system is not a stumbling block to arms limiting talks with the Soviet Union. On the contrary, under the type of deployment we have chosen, this meas-

ured deployment, the Soviet Union is given an added incentive to negotiate a meaningful agreement on limitation both of offensive and defensive weapons.

First, the modified ABM program would show the Soviets that we are quite serious about protecting our deterrent forces, about assuring all enemies that they cannot achieve an effective, low-risk first strike against the United States.

Second, it would show the Soviets that we are preparing so that we will not be in a position for a low-risk attack on them, and that it is worthwhile to negotiate limits on strategic arms.

Effect on Arms Talks

Under the proposed Safeguard program, even the first two installations will not be operating before 1973. This gives ample time for the two countries to negotiate agreements on these and on other weapons. Thus, the modified ABM opens the door wider to a mutual arms control.

The public Soviet reaction to the President's announcement a week ago is encouraging, however. The Soviet press indicates that the Soviet Government currently views the modified ABM as announced by the President as a purely defensive weapon.

The system we are proposing is the best kind of people protection because it strengthens our ability to deter nuclear war. To the extent that it does that, it can truly be called a building block for peace.

In defending citizens, cities, our minimum objective must be to intercept all incoming warheads. If one gets through, the city and most of its people are destroyed. But in the case of the Minuteman missiles and our alert bombers, we do not have to preserve every one of them. We must preserve only a certain minimum essential number, enough to guarantee

immense destruction in the aggressor's own country.

This the Safeguard antimissile system has the capability to provide, both for the immediate threat and for whatever threat emerges in the decade of the nineteen-seventies.

In providing a safeguard for our retaliatory forces under the program we have recommended, we provide ourselves with the option of protecting our people against the Communist Chinese ICBM threat, should it materialize.

The new ABM system as

modified is a building block for peace because it meets the following, I believe, Mr. Chairman, very important requirements.

First, it clearly rejects a provocative expansion into a heavy defense of our cities against Soviet attack.

Two, it offers more protection as needed to our deterrent force.

Three, it provides protection as needed of the entire country from a small attack, such as an accidental launch or the Chinese ICBM threat through the next decade.

Four, it offers the Soviet Union added incentive for productive arms control, and,

Five, it provides the protection needed for the safety and the security of our country. It provides, however, only that protection that is needed.

Mr. Chairman, in summary, I want to say that my technical advisers are convinced, and they have convinced me, that this limited antiballistic missile system for defense is feasible.

Packard Statement

I think the members of the committee will recall that in 1967 the Chinese ICBM threat seemed imminent; the tests seemed im-



GETTING A FRIENDLY HEARING: Defense officials before the Senate Armed Services Committee yesterday. From left, Margaret Chase Smith, Maine Republican; John Stennis, Mississippi Democrat, committee chair-

man; and Stuart Symington, Missouri Democrat, face Melvin R. Laird, at center of witness table. Mr. Laird is flanked by Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, left, and his deputy, David R. Packard.

Associated Press

minent and predictions were that the Chinese would have ICBM's deployed a few years off.

At that time it was expected that the ICBM effort of the Soviet Union would level off. It was anticipated that there would continue to be adequate warning for our U.S. bombers. This was a very important part of our retaliatory capability over the past decade and it was anticipated this would continue to be strong second-strike capability for us.

We have gone back and looked carefully at the available data and analyzed the situation as it is today.

The Chinese ICBM is delayed. It's still expected. As you know, they have proceeded with their thermonuclear warhead development; they have tested warheads, tested warheads of a size that would be a very serious threat to us.

Their missile test abilities have continued to expand. They have not yet tested a prototype of a missile which could be used for intercontinental purposes thus far.

The Soviet ICBM's deployment and development is continuing. Likewise the

Soviet Polaris-type submarine is proceeding much more rapidly than was predicted in 1967. Also, the Soviets have orbited a fractional orbital bombardment system and we anticipate that they will be in a position to deploy such a system in the near future, if, indeed, they have not done so already.

Build-Ups Continue

Going back to 1965, we see that the deployment of our Minutemen force was continuing to build up and did indeed build up to about the present level so that we had late in '65 and from that time on a total land-launched missile capability in the range of 1,000 missiles.

At that time the Soviets had a much smaller land-based missile force. It consisted of some soft sites and some miscellaneous types of missiles, but along about that time they began to build up very rapidly their land-launched missile capability.

They began to build it up in two phases. They built up a capability of large missiles, but they also built it up much more rapidly in the small missiles.

Today the total Soviet land-launched missile capability in terms of numbers is very close to the level we have here in the United States. They are continuing their deployment.

These [large] missiles have the capability of carrying a warhead of substantial size, some 25 megatons. They have an accuracy which, combined with the size of the warhead, make them a very dangerous weapon in terms of attacking the Minutemen sites of our missile force.

Furthermore, the Soviets are proceeding with some work utilizing multiple warheads from these large missiles and this work again indicates that these missiles, together with their multiple warheads, could be a very effective and dangerous force against our own land-based missile capability.

Submarine Forces

The Soviet in 1967 had a few submarines which looked as though they were being deployed to launch missiles. Since that time they have proceeded with the deployment of submarine capability very similar to the type we have. From the data we have it is very likely that, somewhere in the range of '71 to '74, they will have a missile capability from submarine launch platforms comparable

to the capability we have in the United States.

We did consider a number of alternatives that might be recommended in response to this threat. One of the responses we considered is a possibility of further build-up of our submarine-launched missiles. We considered the possibility of a further build-up of our land-launched missiles.

Either one of these responses would have been clearly an arms race, the kind of thing we want to avoid if we can possibly do so.

We considered the question of whether we could or not protect our retaliatory capability with an antiballistic-missile system because it would certainly be the most desirable course if both the United States and the Soviet Union could stabilize their retaliatory capability at a reasonable level and avoid a further build-up in strategic forces.

Analysis brought us to the conclusion that the Soviet Union has the capability of being able to destroy substantially all of our land-based Minutemen capability in hardened silos if they chose to do so.

This, then, simply says that the only way we have to protect a substantial portion, an appreciable portion, of our Minutemen capability, if indeed the Soviets make this move, is to use an active defense.

Questions and Answers

SYMINGTON: From comments of Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard on television March 16, it appeared apparent that the urgency of moving ahead with an ABM deployment is because of a possible emerging Chinese ICBM capability. But the fact that the initial deployment will be in the defense of Minuteman sites would indicate that primary concern is about the development of a Soviet counterforce capability. Which is it?

What is the level of damage the Polaris force alone could inflict on the Soviet Union in retaliation at this time? How much will that increase as Polaris missiles are replaced with Poseidons? Is there any reason to believe that our Poseidon force will be vulnerable to pre-emptive attack during the early nineteen-seventies? If not, need we be too much concerned even if our Minuteman force should be vulnerable?

With the addition of Shram

and Scud missiles to the already heavy armory of weapons that can be carried by our strategic bombers, wouldn't the latter along with the Polaris and Poseidons have the capability of inflicting unacceptable damage on the Soviet Union during the nineteen-seventies without the Minuteman?

LAIRD: First he raises the question about the capability of the Soviet Union to move ahead with a third generation ICBM.

I first would like to make it clear that this third-generation we do not think has been deployed operationally at the present time, and I made it very clear in my statement that I had no evidence of deployment. However, we do have very good evidence of testing.

They are, however, going ahead with a continuing deployment of the SS-9. This is as recent as December that we have firm and solid information that the Soviet Union is continuing with the deployment of this large missile—a missile with the capability to carry a warhead of from 25 to 25 megatons.

Missile's Capability

This means that they can change the warhead on an SS-9. It has the capability of carrying a large payload. It has the capability of being able to carry more than one nuclear warhead. It has the capability of carrying four or five nuclear warheads—whether they are independently targeted or not.

The second point. It had to do with FOBS—the fractional orbiting bombardment system. Now I cannot assure this committee that the experiments that have been carried on by the Soviet Union at this time and the fractional orbiting bombardment systems that have actually been deployed and actually been launched do carry nuclear weapons. But it is very important that we here in the United States not assume that they do not carry nuclear weapons.

We in the United States, if we are going to maintain the peace through the next decade, must not make that kind of an assumption because this would be dangerous, I believe, as far as maintaining our deterrence.

The third point had to do with the Polaris submarine deployment.

We have very conclusive evidence that the Soviet Union not only has the capability but the important difference is that they are going forward with the deployment. Capa-

bility is one thing. But deployment is an entirely different thing. And they have not only the capability month, but they are actually going forward with one, a going forward with the deployment of seven a year.

MR. PACKARD: Mr. Chairman, this question stated that on television on March 16 it appeared that the urgency of moving ahead with the ABM deployment is because of the possible emerging Chinese ICBM threat. The fact that the initial deployments will be in defense of Minuteman sites would indicate the primary concern now is about the development of the Soviet counterforce capability.

It was thought at one point in the studies that possibly the Chinese threat was a serious matter. I went back and looked at the data, and the Chinese threat is not much further along today than it was three years ago. I looked again at the data on the emerging Soviet threat and I came to the conclusion that the deployment which we are now recommending is the appropriate one in response to the best interpretation I can now give to the facts.

LAIRD: The next question deals with the level of damage which the Polaris force alone could inflict on the Soviet Union in retaliation at this time.

Well, at this time, Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Polaris force could render great damage upon the population centers of the Soviet Union at the present time.

Amount of Damage

The next question is, how much will the increase will this increase this damage capability as the Polaris missiles are replaced with Poseidons. As far as population centers are concerned, of course, this is a very great damage that could be rendered to the Soviet Union with the Poseidon or with the

present Polaris system.

The next question is, is there any reason to believe that our Poseidon force will be vulnerable to pre-emptive attack during the early nineteen-seventies? If this particular question is limited to the period through 1972, I would say I believe that our force will remain very free from attack. If you go beyond the time period, I would have to seriously question that.

Question No. 3 has to do with the addition of Shram, Scud missiles to the already heavy bomber armory of weapons that can be carried in our strategic bombers. I'd like to ask Secretary Packard to comment on that question.

PACKARD: Well, it seems to me that we do have a very capable retaliatory force with the present Polaris submarines and it's going to be improved with the Poseidon missile.

As I looked at this problem, I concluded that, even though this is a strong and capable force now, there are some things which the Soviets might do which would make it less reliable within four or five years hence and when we are given the responsibility of providing for the defense of the country, I would very much prefer to recommend a broader selection of capabilities to provide that defense rather than to rely on one only, even though that one might be a fairly good one.

WHEELER: I'd like to make men and one is to emphasize only two points, Mr. Chairman. What Secretary Laird said about the dangers to the submarines.

Secondly, that from the military point of view, the more offensive weapons systems that are available to us the greater the defense problem becomes for the enemy.

I think it would be wise to have some and a sizable fraction of each of these three systems available to us in the event we had to retaliate against a Soviet attack.