

# U.S. Told Missiles Can Survive Surprise

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Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara told Congress yesterday that United States missile strength could absorb a surprise Soviet attack and still effectively destroy the Soviet Union and Red China simultaneously.

McNamara delivered a detailed statement of American power and future thinking before a House Armed Services subcommittee that is concerned about the switch from manned bombers to missiles.

Other Pentagon officials testified before another subcommittee opening hearings on the base closing program which first revealed plans to retire more than half the strategic bomber fleet in the next few years.

## Primary Weapon

The Secretary said missiles are and will be the Nation's primary weapon to deter or retaliate against attack, in part because they have a better chance than planes to survive surprise attack.

He added that manned bombers will continue to play a supplemental role—by making a potential enemy split his defense resources—and will remain "indefinitely" in the national arsenal. He insisted that the planned fleet of 465 bombers, including 210 new B-11s will adequately perform this mission.

Development of a "new, advanced" bomber "does not appear to be warranted at this time," said McNamara. But he added that development of components needed in a new plane will continue in case unforeseen Soviet developments require a new plane.

## Defends Missiles

He rejected as having "absolutely no substance" the argument that missiles are less efficient or reliable than manned bombers and that the Nation should not depend on them too heavily.

McNamara also reported

that while it is "virtually impossible" to provide anything approaching complete protection for the civilian population against a massive Soviet attack, it does appear "technically feasible" to provide substantial protection against any missiles Red China might launch during the 1970s.

McNamara said Pentagon analysis gives this picture of American missile strength:

If the Soviet Union struck with "their entire available missile force" in a well coordinated surprise attack, "a very large proportion of our

alert forces would still survive."

One-fifth of the surviving missiles could destroy one-half of the Soviet Union's industry and one-third of its population.

A "considerably smaller number" of missiles could cause greater destruction in China, he said. This could be done without use of a single bomber.