

# U.S. Argues Nuclear Parity Issue

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Whether you agree with Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, you cannot escape the conclusion that he is a remarkable man. He is the first Secretary of Defense in history who has really run the Defense Department. Previous Secretaries merely took orders from the generals and admirals, but McNamara tells them what to do. They do not tell him.

There are differences of opinion and many arguments, but this is a wholesale situation.

Right now a very significant argument is taking place inside the Pentagon between McNamara and the generals and the admirals with Secretary of State Rusk supporting the military. It pertains to the all-important question of whether the United States shall maintain missile superiority over the Soviet Union.

At present, the U.S. missile program aims for a total of 1700 Intercontinental ballistic missiles. They are able to hurtle the Atlantic in less than 30 minutes and could knock out all Russian cities and then some. It's estimated that the United States now has a superiority of about 3 to 1 over the Soviet Union. And Secretary McNamara argues that this is all we need. When we reach the total of 1700 mis-

siles he is in favor of leveling off.

However, U.S. spy satellites have recently photographed more than 300 new construction sites for Russian intercontinental missiles. Previously, the Soviet Union had 300 missile sites in operation, and if 300 new sites are being built, this would make a total of 600. Even so, the Russians will still be 1 to 3 behind the United States.

## U.S.S.R. Parity With U.S.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff are inclined to view this Russian increase with alarm. But McNamara argues inside the Cabinet that, if the United States wants world peace, it has to permit the Russians to come up to parity with us. As long as the Soviet Union is below parity, there will be nervousness and a chip-on-the-shoulder attitude in the Kremlin. People who are weak make up for it by bold talk and irresponsible actions.

After World War I, for instance, Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes negotiated a treaty whereby the United States and England settled their naval rivalry by agreeing on battleship parity. Prior to this, American and British navies had been rivals for 100 years for supremacy of the high seas, dating back to the war of 1812. With the Washington Naval Treaty of 1921 agreeing on parity, that rivalry ended.

Subsequently battleships became out of date and were scrapped, and it's not beyond the realm of possibility that, with technology moving as fast as it is today, missiles also may be scrapped.

The Joint Chiefs argue that the United States is safe as long as we have enough missiles so Russia will not be tempted to jump the gun and knock us out first. As of now, we have sufficient missiles to retaliate. But we would not have enough to retaliate, the Joint Chiefs argue, if both countries had missile parity.

McNamara, however, points to the tremendous strength of our Polaris submarines, constantly alert off the European coast. Hiding under water, they can fire on Soviet cities at a moment's notice. While it's true that Russia has about 150 submarines that could hit American cities from offshore, the Soviet strength is nowhere near as great as ours.

Finally, the Secretary of Defense relies upon the fact that Russian people have made tremendous economic gains in recent years, understand the gruesomeness of war better than perhaps any other people in the world, having suffered 20 million casualties in the last war.

The debate is continuing. Secretary of State Rusk, a hawk compared to McNamara, has sided with the military.

Note—Space scientists have developed an anti-missile mis-

sile which they believe could shoot down enemy missiles in space before they re-enter the atmosphere. This would reduce the risk to the population below from the explosion and radiation resulting from the interception. The new missile must be tested, of course, before the Defense Department can be sure of its effectiveness.

## Surplus Trucks

Surplus dealers and truck manufacturers are eyeing the Pentagon for a decision as to what will happen to more than 2000 5-ton trucks, costing about \$20,000 apiece, which may either be dumped on the market—or repaired.

The trucks are six-axle troop and cargo carriers built by White, Mack, Studebaker, and International—excellent trucks but now in need of overhauling and repairs.

Surplus dealers are licking their chops with anticipation, because the trucks are real bargains. Truck manufacturers would prefer to have them sold as surplus because this would mean orders for new trucks.

The Army Quartermaster is usually inclined not to worry much about repairs. It's too easy to get more funds okayed by Rep. Mendel Rivers (D-S.C.), chairman of the Armed Services Committee, now junketing abroad, who is happy to authorize all the funds the Pentagon wants.