U.S. Seeks to Arm Subs With 2000 Warheads

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U.S. war strategy now calls for having almost 2000 multiple nuclear warheads available to fire from the ocean depths by Polaris-type submarines.

This was revealed yesterday in the unclassified version of budget testimony by Navy Secretary Paul H. Nitze before the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

He said the Navy over the next few years will arm its 10 oldest nuclear - submarines with the A-3 version of the Polaris missile and put the new Poseidon missiles on the other 31 subs in the fleet.

Each Carries 16

Both the later versions of the A-3 and the Poseidon under development carry multiple warheads, each of which can be guided to a different target.

A Polaris-type submarine carries 16 missiles. Multiplying the 16 missiles times the 41 subs in the fleet gives a total of 656 launch vehicles. And since each launch vehicle can carry three H-bombs under the multiple warhead technique now envisioned, this makes a possible total of 1968 warheads.

This reliance on Polaris and Poseidon missiles in the U.S. strategic force signifies the confidence the Pentegon has in the invulnerability of submarines.

The land-based force of U.S. nuclear-tipped missiles has been set at 54 Titan and 1000 Minuteman ICBMs. Some of the Minutemen also will have multiple warheads.

Revamping A-Subs

Nitze said yesterday that "over half of programmed U.S. ballistic missile re-entry vehicles" in the U.S. "national deterrence forces will be sea-based."

The cost of revamping each Polaris submarine so it can carry the Poseidon missile has been estimated at about $60 million. This means the Pentagon plans to spend almost $2 billion on the conversion program alone.

In another portion of his testimony, Nitze reaffirmed his supprt for the controversial General Dynamics F-111B (TFX) swing-wing airplane.

He said the combination of the F-111B, the Hughes Phoenix air-to-air missile and the electronics which guide it offer the best system for protecting the Navy fleet in the 1970s.

General Dynamics is building nine, instead of the originally planned five, F-111Bs for the test program. The Navy is asking Congress for money to buy 20 F-111Bs in fiscal 1968.