

Capitol Punishment . . . By Art Buchwald

Is Your City Worth Saving?

THE JOINT CHIEFS of Staff have just made a proposal to protect 50 U.S. cities from missile attack,

by defending them with the costly Nike X anti-missile system. The Pentagon said the cities were selected on the basis of size, but it turned out

that many cities were, in fact, smaller than those left off the list (i.e. Charleston, S.C., population 76,000 and home of L. Mendel Rivers, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, would be protected; San Diego, population 1 million, would not).

When Senators and Congressmen from unprotected cities heard about the list they hit the Capitol dome, and some of them haven't come down yet. It's obvious that the Joint Chiefs' anti-missile plan in its present form will never get through.

There must be a fairer way of selecting the cities that will get missile protection as against those that will have to be sacrificed in a nuclear war, and I've been giving it a lot of thought lately.

HERE ARE SOME of the ideas I'm running up the

flagpole, to see which ones the Joint Chiefs of Staff will salute.

The first thing would be to select 25 cities that have Democratic Administrations, and 25 cities with Republican Administrations. In that way, after World War III, the United States could preserve the two-party system.

The next thing would be to select cities that are in good shape financially. It has to be assumed that after an all-out missile attack the country will have some economic problems, and there is no reason it should be burdened with additional financial difficulties from urban areas.

The cost of making 50 cities bomb proof, according to the Pentagon, is in the neighborhood of \$20 billion, which is quite expensive; and there may be some resistance from those taxpayers whose towns are not in the protected areas. But this is shortsighted, because it is economically unfeasible to save everybody, and those citizens whose cities cannot be protected will at least expire with the knowledge that their taxes kept so many of their fellow Americans alive.

There also may be people who live out in the country and suburban areas who might feel they have as much right to survive an atomic attack as the city

folks, but here again they're taking the small view.

AS AN INDUSTRIAL Nation we need the cities for commerce, advertising, television and mass transportation. Except for farmers, there's no one worth saving in the countryside. Besides, city people are so much better dressed than people who live out of town that if one must make a choice in time of war you have to go with the clothes-conscious city folk every time.

So the question boils down to which cities do you save? It could be left up to Billy Graham, Cardinal Spellman or Bob Hope.

But if they couldn't agree, I think the best solution would be to hold a "Miss Anti-Missile Contest" on television.

Each city would send its most beautiful girl to Atlantic City and she would be judged according to beauty, intelligence and talent.

The jury would select 50 girls as "Miss Anti-Missiles" and the cities they came from would be spared.

Another suggestion has been to give the Nike X to any city with a professional football team, on the theory that people are going to need something to take their minds off the inconveniences caused by another world war.

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