

# Missile Ring Futile, Says McNamara

**Billions Would Buy No Real Security, Secretary Warns**

By George C. Wilson  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Spending billions now to put a missile defense around the United States would not buy any real security, Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara said yesterday.

Even if both sides built anti-missile defenses, he said, at least 30 million Americans and 120 million Russians would die in a nuclear exchange set off by a Soviet attack.

McNamara sounded this theme in trying to convince Congress the U.S. still has time to deliberate further about building the Nike X defense at a cost of \$40 billion. He estimated such a defense would cost Russia \$25 billion.

## Not a Justification

Russian deployment of a limited anti-missile system and Chinese nuclear missile progress—including the probability of testing an ICBM this year—are not enough to justify Nike X production and deployment, he said.

In a judgment that some military leaders challenge, McNamara said Soviet nuclear strategy is based on absorbing a first strike and then hitting back with surviving missiles and bombers.

This is the same strategy the United States has claimed for itself. The basic idea is to build up such fearsome offensive forces that no enemy would dare strike first.

This deterrence value decreases, McNamara said, whenever the defense catches up with the offense. Then a nation might decide it could afford to risk a war since its defenses would limit the damage.

"Any attempt" such as a Nike X defense "on our part to reduce damage to ourselves

would put pressure" on the Russians "to strive for an offsetting improvement in their deterrent forces" McNamara said.

This relationship is why the U.S. is responding to Russian deployment of an anti-missile defense by improving its missile offense, he said.

"It is this interaction between our strategic forces programs and those of the Soviet Union which leads us to believe that there is a mutuality of interests in limiting the deployment of anti-ballistic-missile (ABM) defense systems . . . All we would accomplish by deploying ABM systems against one another would be to increase greatly our respective defense expenditures without any gain in real security for either side."

In a 209-page "posture" statement put out yesterday for consumption abroad as **See McNAMARA, A7, Col. 1**

well as in this country, McNamara then proceeded to document his argument with many hitherto secret figures.

The statement was a sanitized version of testimony McNamara has been presenting since Monday to a closed, joint session of the Senate Armed Services and Defense Appropriations Committee, which will consider the Administration's \$74.1-billion defense budget.

One problem that McNamara did not deal with is what the U.S. could offer Russia in exchange for Soviet agreement not to proceed further on an anti-missile system. Many military and diplomatic officials contend Russia is determined to close the present strategic gap with the U.S. by building both a missile defense and a better offense.

McNamara said these were the nuclear strategic forces the U.S. and Russia had as of Oct. 1:

	U.S.	Russia
ICBMs	934	340
Submarine missiles	512	130
Intercontinental bombers	680	155

The comparison above does not count the 750 medium-

range missiles Russia has targeted on Europe nor does it include older-type submarine-launched Russian missiles which can be shot down by modern fighters. Medium bombers, like the Soviet Blinder now in production—are not counted, either.

## 115 Added in Year

The estimate of 340 Soviet ICBMs compares with the secret estimate of 225 made this time last year. The difference between the two estimates indicates the Soviets have added 115 ICBM launchers in one year, a faster rate than had been predicted by some officials.

McNamara said the U.S. "even by the early 1970s" will still have "a significant lead" over the Soviets in the number of ICBMs and submarine missiles "and a very substantial superiority in combat effectiveness."

## Payloads Important

He stressed that the important figure now was not the number of missiles but the payloads they carry. This is a reference to the U.S. switching to multiple warheads in its Minuteman ICBM and Posei-



**ROBERT S. McNAMARA**  
... talks on missile defense

don submarine-launched missile under development. "The missile is simply the delivery vehicle," he said.

As for bombers, he said the U.S. will stay ahead of Russia "as far as we can see. There is still no evidence that the Soviets intend to deploy a new heavy bomber in the late 1960s."

The Air Force counter to this forecast is that the Soviets

are working on a wide number of bomber prototypes, any one of which might be put in production.

#### Judgment Disputed

In another judgment disputed by many military intelligence officers, McNamara said the Soviet anti-missile defenses limited to the area around Moscow.

The Soviets "are also deploying another type of defensive system elsewhere in the Soviet Union," he said, "but the weight of the evidence at this time suggests that this system is not intended primarily for anti-ballistic-missile defense." The primary purpose — although McNamara did not say it—is presumably to defend against bombers.

The hard-line assessment is that Russia is deploying ABMs to cover all the corridors that U.S. missiles would have to travel to hit Soviet targets. One such estimate is that Russia has about 15,000 anti-missiles deployed, some of them in hard-to-destroy sites.

Despite McNamara's view that the ABM defense is limited to Moscow, he did say U.S. forces must be planned on the assumption the Soviet missile defense will be put around major cities "by the early 1970s."

It would cost Russia \$20 billion to \$25 billion to build a full-scale missile defense, McNamara estimated.

#### No Basic Change

As for the threat from China, the Defense Secretary said "there has been no basic change" in the estimate that Peking will not pose a nuclear threat to the U.S. "before the mid-1970s." He did provide what is believed to be the first public, official confirmation of the firing by China of a nuclear-armed missile in its October test.

He said China will have to do a lot more testing to achieve an operational medium or intermediate range missile. He added that "recent evidence" indicates China "may conduct either a space or a long-range ballistic missile launching before the end of 1967." He said it was "unlikely" China could deploy "a significant number" of ICBMs before "the mid-1970s."

#### Doubts Effectiveness

Even then, McNamara doubted those ICBMs would have "great reliability, speed of response or substantial protection against attack" such as that provided by putting them in concrete silos.

Even if China decided to

build long-range bombers rather than missiles to carry its nuclear bombs, the Defense Secretary estimated it would take "a decade or more" to obtain a meaningful force.

Thus having dismissed China as an immediate threat dictating a go-ahead on a Nike X defense, McNamara deprecated the value to Russia of building a full-scale anti-ballistic-missile system.

#### Could Kill 86 Million

Even after Russia built an ABM system at a cost of \$25 billion, McNamara said, U.S. missiles could fly through it and kill 86 million people in 1972. His figures assume the U.S. would fire its missiles only after Russia attacked, without being hindered by a U.S. Nike X defense.

If the U.S. built a Nike X defense to protect its cities, he estimated it would end up costing \$40 billion over 10 years. He said a light defense—consisting of long-range Spartan and a few short-range Sprint anti-missiles—would cost \$18.8 billion to produce and install and \$380 million a year to operate. A heavier defense would cost twice that amount.

McNamara estimated the following fatalities in an all-out nuclear war if Russia struck first but did not markedly improve the penetration ability of its missiles:

	U.S. dead (millions)	Soviet dead (millions)
Without Nike X	120	120
Thin Nike X	40	120
Thick Nike X	30	120

The above figures assume the Soviets have an ABM system. But McNamara said if the U.S. deployed a \$40-billion ABM system and the Soviets responded by improving their offensive forces, 120 million people on each side would die if Russia attacked first.

#### Casts Grave Doubts

Since the Soviets have the technical knowhow to counter our defense by building a better offense, McNamara said, this "casts such grave doubts on the advisability of our deploying the Nike X system for the protection of our cities."

President Johnson, in his Fiscal 1968 budget, requested \$421 million to continue research and testing on Nike X. Another \$375 million would be spent to start its production if there appears no way to reach an arms control agreement with Russia. Current Pentagon plans call for the anti-missile defense to protect missile bases rather than cities.