

Army Officers Push for Nike X

By Drew Pearson

Certain Army officers are going over the head of their civilian commander-in-chief in the White House to their friend Rep. L.

Mendel Rivers (D-S.C.), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee to reverse President Johnson on the Nike X

The Nike X is a \$20-billion plan to knock out intercontinental missiles traveling at 18,000 miles an hour.

So far, no defense against these missiles, which can travel from Moscow to Washington in about 19 minutes, has been developed. We have such missiles, so does the Soviet Union, and both countries figure that if we ever push the button, that's it.

Secretary of Defense McNamara has said that we have the missile capability to knock out all of the Soviet Union's cities six times over, and that the U.S.S.R. has the capability of knocking out ours. Recently he has also said that after such a surprise missile attack, the United States would still be able to retaliate.

All this has been well pub-

licized. What has not been publicized is the fact that Gen. Austin Betts, chief of Army research, has completed a staggering 23-volume report on a new way to knock down ICBMs hurtling through space at 18,000 miles an hour. The new defense, using a computer brain and radar guidance, he calls the Nike X

It would supplement the present Nike defenses around major American cities, built to defend against airplane, not missile attack.

The National Security Council has pronounced the plan feasible, but the President has ruled against action now. With a huge military budget necessary as a result of the Vietnam war, he felt the Nike X could wait.

Furthermore, it is not at all certain that after spending the \$20 billion the Nike X will actually work.

So some of the generals are going over his head.

