

Ted Blasts ABM in Senate

Opposition Gains Vote

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) denounced the Safeguard Antiballistic missile system today as a folly. At the same time another senator joined the opposition.

A vote is scheduled tomorrow.

Kennedy, a longtime foe of the ABM system proposed by President Nixon to protect U.S. offensive missile sites, made the statement in his first Senate speech since his July 18 auto accident.

Kennedy said on the eve of a crucial Senate vote on the controversial issue that both the United States and Russia soon may have enough warheads with enough accuracy to wipe out each other's underground missile silos, regardless of defenses.

Arms Race

The Kennedy speech came as Sen. Mike Gravel (D-Alaska) formally added his opposition — already counted on by ABM foes — to the Safeguard.

Kennedy joined Gravel in urging the Senate to support legislation to bar ABM deployment for a year.

Kennedy said it would be "a clear signal that the United States, far and away the world's most powerful nation, was seeking to slow and eventually stop the otherwise perpetual motion of the arms race."

He said it would be "folly to spend billions constructing an ineffective defense around missiles which may themselves soon be obsolete."

The Margin

ABM opponents said Gravel's vote gave them 50 votes — one short of the total needed to assure victory. But a leading ABM supporter, Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash.) predicted the Safeguard would be approved by a 51-49 vote.

The White House said President Nixon was doing no eleventh hour, background campaigning for the ABM from his retreat at Camp David, Md.

Asked if this meant Nixon

—Turn to Page 11, Col. 1

—From Page 1

felt he had made his case for the Safeguard, press secretary Ronald Ziegler said:

"The indications of support from the people and Congress indicates that the case has been well made and accepted."

Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield, an ABM foe, said even if the Safeguard is approved the margin will be so narrow that "we will win in the long run" because he said it would show that the Senate now intends to carefully scrutinize all military projects before approving them.

Gravel announced his opposition to the ABM in his first Senate speech, saying he decided to vote against deployment because of doubt it could perform its mission of protecting American offensive missile sites.

Vote Tomorrow

"Any new weapon in the mid-70s that can destroy a few radars will turn Safeguard into billions of dollars of junk," Gravel said.

The vote on the issue, which has bogged down the Senate for weeks, is set for late tomorrow afternoon.

Sens. Clinton Anderson (D-N.M.) and John Williams (R-Del.), could hold the key to the outcome. They have declined to say how they will vote.

Gravel outlined alternatives to the ABM as a means of maintaining a U.S. deterrent, including superhardening the sites of Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missiles, building more

or mobile Minutemen, and building a new sea-based force.

"Unfortunately," he said, "the administration has not presented the Congress with a serious analysis of all the possible alternatives," most of which he said could be built faster than an ABM.

'Unfortunate'

In addition, he said, "none of the other alternatives is as complicated and as dependable as the ABM option."

Gravel noted that the ABM fight is very close and said "it would be unfortunate indeed if a major national security program were approved by a margin of one or two votes.

"This close contest in the Senate cries out for alternatives that can muster broader support," he said, echoing the words of other senators who have appealed, unsuccessfully so far, for a compromise that would win wide Senate backing.