

LAIRD WOULD KILL PACTS IF CONGRESS BARRED ARMS FUND

Wants 10-Year Program to
Retain Lead With New
Bomber and Submarine

COST PUT AT 25-BILLION
JUN 21 1972

Senate Testimony Appears
at Variance With Views of
Rogers and Kissinger
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WASHINGTON, June 20—Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird said today that he would recommend the scrapping of the strategic arms limitation agreements if Congress failed to support the Administration's proposals to modernize the offensive strategic forces of the United States.

Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Mr. Laird said if Congress balked at the new offensive programs—estimated to cost about \$25-billion over the next decade—he would propose that the United States proceed with the deployment of defensive antiballistic missiles at 12 sites.

Such deployment would mean the abrogation of the treaty just concluded with the Russians. It allows each side only two such sites.

Asked About Statement

Mr. Laird, who has taken the hardest public position of any Administration spokesman on the "linkage" of the arms agreements and the need for additional spending, seemed irritated when asked by several Senators whether he stood by a statement he made to reporters on June 6 that he could not support the strategic arms agreements without the modernization program.

"I support the statement I made," Mr. Laird said in answer to a question by Senator Stuart Symington, Democrat of Missouri. "I have not changed my opinion since June 6."

Senator Henry M. Jackson, Democrat of Washington, who is a critic of the accords, asked Mr. Laird what he would do if Congress did not approve the new offensive systems, primarily a new supersonic heavy bomber, the B-1, and a longer-range submarine, the Trident.

Warns of 'Great Mistake'

Mr. Laird, going a step beyond his earlier statement, said that if Congress committed that "great mistake" he would have to recommend going ahead with the 12-site defensive missile program, thereby killing the treaty.

At this point in the questioning, Mr. Laird left the impression that he was speaking personally and not necessarily for the Administration or for President Nixon.

Secretary of State William P. Rogers and Henry A. Kissinger, Mr. Nixon's adviser on national security, have sought in their comments in recent days to avoid a direct linkage between the approval of the accords and the increased spending. Yesterday, Mr. Rogers told the Foreign Relations Committee that he believed reports had exaggerated the significance of what Mr. Laird said on June 6.

Mr. Laird's statements, while alarming such Senators as J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, have reassured others who fear the arms limitation accords, which give the Russians a numerical advantage in both land-based and submarine-launched missiles, might lead to a sense of euphoria to the detriment of American security.

His forceful presentations

Continued on Page 12, Column 4

Continued From Page 1, Col. 8

have also appeared to be necessary to maintain the support of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who have also argued for continued modernization.

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also testified before the Armed Services Committee today, and gave measured support for the accords, so long as "we press forward vigorously" with programs "designed to protect against a degradation in national security posture."

Specifically, Admiral Moorer said the Joint Chiefs wanted three "assurances" to maintain the United States deterrent in case the follow-up negotiations with the Russians failed to produce a comprehensive treaty, with or consequent resurgence in tensions.

These "assurances" were the following:

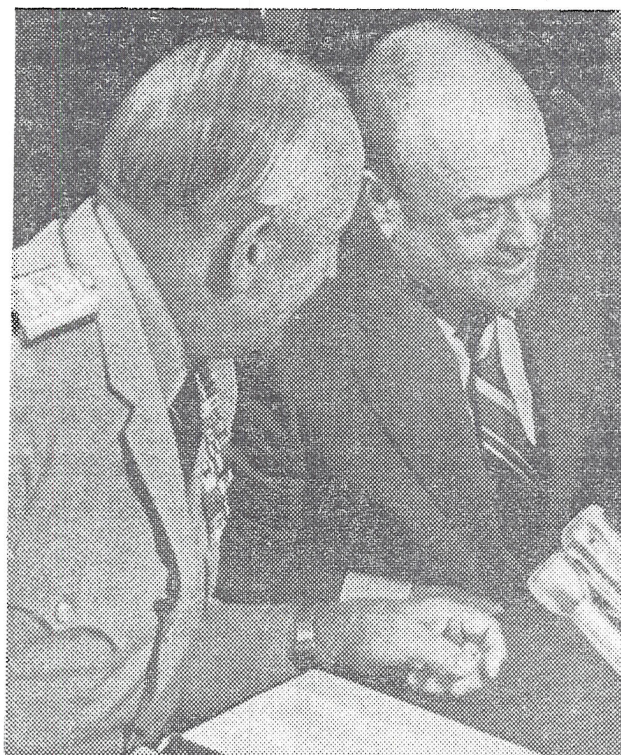
¶Improvement in United States intelligence capabilities and operations to verify Soviet compliance with the arms agreements.

¶A program to "maximize" strategic programs allowed by the agreements and to plan for radio deployment of missiles barred by the accord if the agreements are abrogated.

¶A "vigorous research and development program" to continue testing new weapons and to modernize current systems.

"It is the conviction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that these programs are essential in order not to jeopardize the future security of the United States," Admiral Moorer said.

On the whole, he said, the



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Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird, right, and Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff.

chiefs support the arms limitation accords because they check the Soviet expansion program before it can outdistance the United States by too wide a margin in land-based and submarine-launched missiles.

By 1977, when the five-year interim offensive agreement ends, the chiefs estimate a Soviet edge of 2,499 to 2,167 in delivery vehicles. But this is preferable, he said, to a projected 1977 ratio of 3 to 2 in the Soviet Union's favor without an accord.

The Armed Services Committee does not have formal jurisdiction over the arms agreements; that is the purview of the Foreign Relations Committee, which today heard closed-door testimony from Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence, who provided information on how the United States can verify that the Russians are living up to the terms of the agreements. Primarily this is to be done by photographic and electronic satel-

lites and by monitoring stations around the Soviet Union.

The Foreign Relations Committee will hear Laird and Admiral Moorer tomorrow.

Partly because of Mr. Laird's pressure, the House Armed Services Committee last week approved without cuts the \$1.3-billion additional request for the strategic weapons systems. The Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, John C. Stennis, said today that he hoped to report out the request by next week.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is expected to approve the strategic arms accords at the end of next week, before Congress recesses on June 30 for the Democratic national convention. It will return on July

18 for about another month, before recessing for the Republican convention.

The Senate must ratify the treaty by a two-thirds vote. The five-year interim agreement placing limits on land-based and submarine-launched offensive missiles requires a majority vote of both houses.