

C.I.A. SAID TO DOUBT PENTAGON'S VIEW ON MISSILE THREAT

Senate G.O.P. Sources Say
Agency Thinks Soviet Silos
Are for Existing Arms

PROTECTIVE STEP SEEN

Moscow Is Believed to Be
'Hardening' Installations
for Its SS-11's
MAY 26 1971

By JOHN W. FINNEY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 25 —

Senate Republican sources reported today that the Central Intelligence Agency concluded that at least two-thirds of the large new silo holes recently detected in the Soviet Union were intended for the relatively small SS-11 intercontinental missile and not for a large new weapon as the Defense Department has suggested.

This assessment casts a different light on Moscow's strategic intentions at a crucial time in the negotiations with the Soviet Union to achieve some limitation on defensive and offensive strategic weapons.

It now appears to some arms control specialists that the Soviet Union, rather than seeking to achieve a first-strike capability against the United States with large new missiles, is following the American course of trying to protect its missiles against attack with "hardened" silos.

60 New Silos Detected

Some 60 large new missile silos in the Soviet Union have been detected in recent months by means of reconnaissance satellites. The C.I.A. was said to have concluded that at least two-thirds were intended for the SS-11 intercontinental missile, which is comparable to the Minuteman ICBM of the United States.

Some non-Governmental sources with access to Central Intelligence Agency information said that all but 15 of the new holes were situated in existing SS-11 missile fields.

The Senate Republican sources said they had been informed of the C.I.A. assessment by non-Governmental arms control experts who earlier had been briefed by the intelligence agency. These sources declined to be identified by name.

The Defense Department declined today to comment on the reported C.I.A. assessment because, as a department spokesman put it, "We would not have any comment on a speculative report like that."

But the spokesman said the department still held to the interpretation that the Soviet Union was deploying a modified version of its large SS-9 intercontinental missile or an

Continued on Page 4, Column 3

Continued From Page 1, Col. 1

entirely new missile system.

Much of the concern and speculation over the intended purpose for the new silos has sprung from their unusual size.

According to data obtained by the satellites, the holes were larger than those that had previously been dug for the SS-9, a large intercontinental missile that Defense Department officials have suggested the Soviet Union may be deploying as a "first strike" weapon against the United States's Minuteman force. This in turn gave rise to official speculation that the Soviet Union was planning to deploy an improved version of the SS-9 or perhaps an even larger, more powerful weapon.

Senator Henry M. Jackson, who first disclosed the detection of the new silo holes on a national television program March 7, said at the time that "the Russians are now in the process of deploying a new generation, an advanced generation of offensive systems." The Washington Democrat, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, described the development as "ominous indeed."

The Defense Department took a somewhat more cautious interpretation, saying that it had detected new ICBM construction but was not sure what the Soviet Union's intentions were.

But in a television appearance on March 10, Melvin R. Laird, the Secretary of Defense, said that the silo construction "confirms the fact that the Soviet Union is going forward with construction of a large missile system."

"We cannot tell at this time whether it is a modified version of the SS-9 . . . or whether it is an entirely new missile system," he said.

Secretary Gives Warning

Then, in a speech April 22 before the American Newspaper Publishers Association, Mr. Laird said the United States had fresh intelligence information "confirming the sobering fact that the Soviet Union is involved in a new—and apparently extensive—ICBM construction program."

He warned that if this Soviet missile build-up continued, the Defense Department might find it necessary to seek a supplementary appropriation for more strategic weapons.

Last week, Administration officials were reported to have said that the Soviet Union was pressing ahead with its new missile program so rapidly that test firings of an improved SS-9 or an entirely new and larger missile were expected by this summer.

On the basis of new intelligence information, the C.I.A. was said today to have concluded that the larger holes could be explained not by a Soviet move to a larger missile but by an engineering step intended to protect the existing Soviet missile force.

According to the intelligence agency's analysis, the larger holes can be explained as an effort to "harden the silos, by emplacement of a concrete shell around them, to protect the weapons against the blast effects of a nuclear explosion. The larger hole is required to accommodate the concrete liners, according to the C.I.A. analysis."

Old Missile Fields Utilized

It was said that the first evidence that the Soviet Union might be "hardening" its missile sites rather than developing a new missile system appeared in the fact that the new holes were detected primarily in existing SS-11 missile fields.

If the Soviet Union was deploying a new weapon, it presumably would not situate the new missile emplacements among older missiles, according to the C.I.A. view.

The conclusive piece of evidence was said to have been received early last week when reconnaissance satellite pictures were received showing silo liners arriving at the missile holes. The photographs were said to have indicated that the liners at neither the SS-11 nor the SS-9 sites were big enough to accommodate larger missiles, and those at the SS-9 sites did not seem intended for weapons of altered design.

The United States started hardening its Minuteman silos some years ago as it saw the Soviet Union expanding its ICBM forces, and then began "superhardening" them as the Soviet Union began deploying the SS-9 missile.

Some arms control specialists now maintain that the Soviet Union now is turning to hardening its SS-11 and SS-9 missiles as it sees the United States deploying multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles, or multiple warheads, known as MIRV's, which potentially could acquire the accuracy to strike precisely at Soviet missile sites.

This was a point made today before the Senate Appropriations Committee by Dr. Herbert Scoville Jr., a former official of the C.I.A. and the

Disarmament and Arms Control Agency, now chairman of the Strategic Weapons Committee of the Federation of American Scientists.

A hardening of the Soviet missile sites, he observed "would not contribute to a first-strike capability and, if anything, would be an indication that a first strike was not a critical Soviet policy objective."

If it now turns out that the Soviet Union is only hardening the SS-9 and SS-11 missile silos, he said, "We must ask ourselves how many times we are going to allow the 'weaponers' to come before the Congress and the people shouting 'missile gap,' when in reality they are only creating another 'credibility gap.'"