

SUPPORT OF PACTS IS LINKED BY LAIRD TO NEW ARMS FUND

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Congress Urged to Approve
Modernizing of Strategic
Offensive Weaponry
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SOME FEAR A NEW RACE

Muskie and Mahon Among
Those Who Are Troubled
by the Pentagon Plan

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WASHINGTON, June 6 —

Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird said today that he could not support the recently concluded arms-control agreements with the Soviet Union if Congress refused to proceed with the modernization of the offensive strategic forces proposed by the Nixon Administration.

After an appearance before a closed-door session of the House Armed Services Committee, Mr. Laird told reporters that Congress would jeopardize national security as well as the chances for future arms-control agreements if it did not provide funds for the development of a missile-launching submarine known as Trident and the B-1 strategic bomber.

In answer to a question, he also called for funds for "other programs we have outlined for improving our strategic offensive systems" during the five-year period of the accords.

No Conflict Discerned

The conditions raised by Mr. Laird—and by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as well — for supporting the agreements do not necessarily conflict with the position of President Nixon, who, in his report to Congress on his return from Moscow last week, emphasized that he would "take all necessary steps" to assure that "none will be stronger" than the United States. But there was a marked difference of emphasis in assessing the importance of the agreements.

Mr. Nixon emphasized that "we have begun to check the wasteful and dangerous spiral of nuclear arms." But in two days of testimony before Congressional committees, Mr. Laird has been maintaining that the agreements mean that the United States must proceed with modernization if it is to maintain "a realistic strategic deterrent" during the freeze on offensive weapons.

Qualitative Improvements

From testimony yesterday by Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, before the House Appropriations Committee, it was apparent that the military leaders have misgivings about the numerical superiority in land-based and submarine-launched missiles granted to the Soviet Union under the agreements. In the first official military comment on the accords, however, Admiral Moorer said the Joint Chiefs supported the accords provided the modernization of strategic forces could proceed.

One agreement provided for a number of submarine-launched missiles.

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