

He Insists Arms Accord Must Limit All Missiles

By HEDRICK SMITH FEB 26 1971
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WASHINGTON, Feb. 25 — President Nixon insisted today that any strategic-arms agreement with the Soviet Union limit both offensive and defensive missiles. He thus rebuffed a Soviet proposal made last December for defensive limitations first.

"We shall strive for an initial agreement which is as broad and comprehensive as possible," Mr. Nixon said in his State of the World Message to Congress. "It must deal with the interrelationship between offensive and defensive limitations.

"To limit only one side of the offense-defense equation could rechannel the arms competition rather than effectively curtail it," Mr. Nixon said.

The President also warned that if the current pause in Soviet deployment of giant SS-9

missiles turned out to be no more than preparation for a new Soviet arms push, he would have to order new American arms systems.

Several times he asserted that the significance of the Soviet delay was "unclear" or "ambiguous," virtually appealing for the Kremlin to signal that it was intended as a favorable sign for arms control.

But he also expressed worry in public for the first time that the delay might be intended to permit the Soviet Union to install new technical advances, such as multiple warheads, on the missiles. This, Mr. Nixon said, could provide Moscow with "first-strike" capability against American land-based missiles. If so, he warned, "it will be necessary for us to re-

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act appropriately."

Mr. Nixon did not go into specifics but Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird has previously said that the Administration must decide fairly soon whether to accelerate development of the B-1 intercontinental bomber and a new long-range missile to be fired from submarines.

In his message, Mr. Nixon reported that despite the slowdown, the Soviet Union had 1,440 intercontinental missiles and 350 submarine-based missiles, compared with 1,054 American intercontinental missiles and 656 submarine-based missiles.

In more explicit language than he has used previously, the President accepted the "relative equality" of American and Soviet strategic arms systems and asked pointedly whether the Soviet leadership was pre-

pared to stop at "strategic equilibrium."

In keeping with the somber tone of his over-all assessment of American-Soviet relations, Mr. Nixon showed increased caution about prospects for an ultimate agreement on arms control. He described the current deadlock and forecast that progress was possible when the arms talks resume March 15 in Vienna. Last May 8, before the most recent round of talks in Finland, he flatly predicted that there would be an agreement.

Stern Language Used

Mr. Nixon spoke of Soviet-American relations in stern language — some of the sternest in his message — but no more so than he did in his foreign policy address a year ago.

He cautioned Moscow that if it was seeking to establish dominance in the Middle East, this "must and will be resisted" by the United States. But he did not

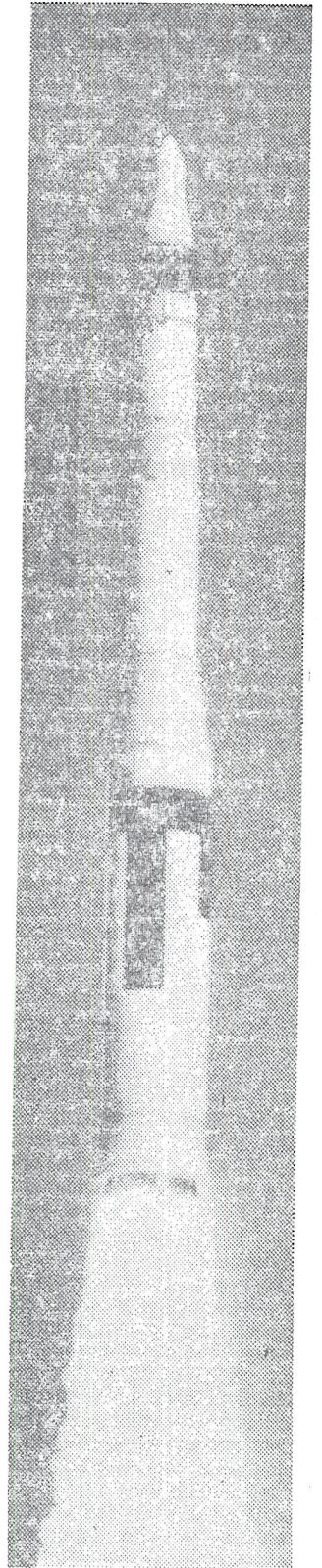
explicitly accuse Moscow of such a goal, as he did last year; nor did he repeat his criticism that the Soviet Union was not helping to arrange a negotiated settlement of the Vietnam war.

In sum, Mr. Nixon's balance sheet of Soviet-American relations was mixed.

On the plus side, he cited the "serious dialogue" on arms control, the start of negotiations on Berlin, ratification of the treaty against the spread of nuclear weapons, and signing of the treaty to prohibit such weapons on seabeds.

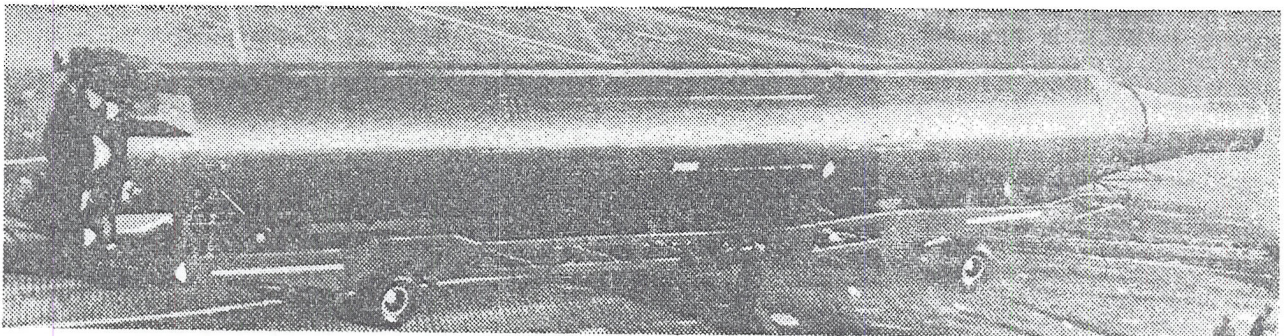
On the negative side, he said that "certain Soviet actions in the Middle East, Berlin and Cuba are not encouraging."

"Taken against a background of intensive and unrestrained anti-American propaganda," he continued, "these actions inevitably suggest that intransigence remains a cardinal feature of the Soviet system."



Associated Press

**Minuteman, key missile
in Safeguard defenses.**



Sovfoto

The Soviet SS-9. The President revealed that the Soviet Union has 1,440 intercontinental missiles to U.S.'s 1,054.