

The original documents are located in Box D26, folder ““Why a Missile Defense?”, 1969” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Statement by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich., Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives.

WHY A MISSILE DEFENSE?

Whether or not to deploy the Safeguard Anti-Ballistic Missile System has become a national issue. This is reflected in letters I have received.

There apparently is considerable confusion about the issue. I therefore would like to make some points which may clarify the situation.

1. The Institute for Strategic Studies in London, England, an independent and admittedly authoritative agency that keeps an account of the military capabilities of all nations, recently reported that by mid-1969 Russia would overtake the United States in intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and achieve equal status in strategic power.

2. The Soviet Union has already deployed an ABM system which largely protects Moscow and its surrounding area.

3. The Soviet Union is continuing the deployment of very large ICBMs (the SS-9) which are capable of destroying our 1,000 Minuteman ICBMs despite their location in "hardened" sites.

4. The Soviet Union is substantially increasing the size of its submarine-launched ballistic missile force.

5. The Soviet Union is developing anti-submarine measures which are a threat to our 656-missile Polaris deterrent force.

6. The Soviet Union has developed a semi-orbital nuclear weapons system (FOBS), which threatens to rain nuclear destruction down on us from outer space.

7. Since the Soviet Union apparently will surpass the United States in numbers of ICBMs by the middle of this year or at least attain equal status, the American people are faced with a fresh decision on how best to avoid nuclear war or how best to survive a nuclear holocaust should it occur.

8. Former Defense Secretary McNamara responded to Soviet deployment of an ABM system by scheduling an increase in U.S. offensive missile forces. There was no public outcry in the United States.

9. Former Defense Secretary McNamara initially opposed U.S. deployment of an ABM system because he believed a go-ahead on ABM would cause the Soviet Union to expand its offensive nuclear power. The Soviet Union greatly increased its offensive nuclear power in any case.

10. In the April 1969 issue of Foreign Affairs, Dr. D. G. Brennan, dean of U.S. arms control experts, states that U.S. funds committed to increase our offensive missile forces might better be used to increase our

defenses. Dr. Brennan argues that an American ballistic missile defense system such as President Nixon has proposed obviously reduces the Soviet threat to our national security. At the same time, he asserts, by concentrating on a missile defense system instead of expanding our nuclear offensive capability we "reduce both the extent to which the Soviets might gain by attacking us, and the extent to which we are intensely motivated to deter the attack."

11. The chief argument made against President Nixon's Safeguard ABM System or BMD (ballistic missile defense) is that it makes the U.S. appear provocative and endangers the possibility of arms control talks and a possible meaningful arms limitation. The facts indicate that the opposite is true.

12. After the Johnson-McNamara decision to deploy the Sentinel ABM system was announced in September 1967, some of our allies and neutral friends attacked the decision on the grounds it threatened approval of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty. The Soviet Union declared that prospects for the nonproliferation treaty were not damaged by the U.S. ABM decision, and this proved accurate.

13. On Feb. 9, 1967, Soviet Premier Kosygin was asked at a press conference in London, England: "Do you believe it is possible to agree on a moratorium on the (deployment) of an anti-missile defense system (then being discussed in the United States) and if possible on what condition?" Kosygin replied in part: "I believe that defensive systems, which prevent attack, are not the cause of the arms race, but constitute a factor preventing the death of people. Some argue like this: What is cheaper, to have offensive weapons which can destroy towns and whole states or to have defensive weapons which can prevent this destruction? At present the theory is current somewhere that the system which is cheaper should be developed. Such so-called theoreticians argue as to the cost of killing a man -- \$500,000 or \$100,000. Maybe an anti-missile system is more expensive than an offensive system, but it is designed not to kill people but to preserve human lives. I understand that I do not reply to the question I was asked, but you can draw yourselves the appropriate conclusions." And in comment on that Kosygin statement, Dr. Brennan says: "Indeed, one can."

14. Dr. Brennan asserts in his "Foreign Affairs" article that "the attitude exemplified by the Kosygin quotation is very widely held in the Soviet Union."

15. Four days after former President Johnson announced a decision to ring major American cities with ABM installations, the Soviet Union proposed U.S.-Soviet arms control talks.

16. Dr. Brennan declares in the highly respected publication, "Foreign Affairs:" "The primary objectives of arms control have often been stated to be reduction of the likelihood of war or mitigation of its consequences if it occurs. It seems to me highly probable that deployment of missile defenses will contribute to both of these objectives, while abstaining

from defenses will likely contribute to neither. If the deployments (of missile defenses) are managed with at least modest intelligence on both sides, there need not be an arms race nor appreciably higher expenditures."

17. To rule out any kind of missile defense is to assume that nuclear war is so unthinkable and therefore impossible that the United States need not concern itself about either Russian or Red Chinese nuclear capabilities...or to assume that the United States must forever concern itself with nuclear offensive superiority relative to the Soviet Union. The latter is a dubious position because of the tremendously powerful and accurate Soviet SS-9 missile and the fact that the Soviets already have deployed a defense against our missiles.

18. The United States has already proposed reductions in strategic offensive forces, but the Soviet Union has consistently opposed inspection as a guarantee of compliance.

19. Deployment of a U.S. missile defense might reduce the need for such inspection and thus hasten an actual reduction in offensive missile forces.

20. Critics say the Safeguard system would not be reliable and might not work in event of nuclear war, but all tests of the component parts of the system indicate it should work as planned.

21. The Safeguard system would employ Spartan and Sprint ABMs. The Spartans would be used to break up high density raids while the Sprint would operate on an one-on-one basis. Only those enemy warheads coming within a very limited area would have to be considered for attack. Low altitude intercepts by Sprint would allow the U.S. to take full advantage of the separation of real warheads from chaff and decoys by the atmosphere. Since the Sprint warheads can be of relatively low yield, radar blackout problems are minimized.

22. As Freeman Dyson of the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study points out, what is certain is that a missile defense system saves those targets which are not attacked. An offense generally is based on the theory that if a target cannot be destroyed with 95 per cent probability, it is better not to attack it. As a result, says Dyson, the attacker "passes over" certain targets and "the defense works independently of whether it does well in the technical sense."

23. In the case of our Minuteman missiles, Dyson notes, there are a thousand targets. He comments, "A good defense of the Minuteman force would be one in which, say, 500 of these survived and it doesn't matter which 500. So you can concentrate your defenses on particular places, you can allow a wide margin of uncertainty in the effectiveness of the defense and you will still have a good defense of your military force."

24. The best that we can expect from a missile defense is that the number of people who would be killed in a nuclear war would be tens of millions on each side instead of hundreds of millions.

25. But the possibility of even that outcome should be a sufficient deterrent, Dyson declares. President Nixon's objective is to deter nuclear war, to use the Safeguard System as a weapon for peace.

26. The choice currently is whether to put our money into offensive or defensive nuclear weapons, not whether the United States should engage in unilateral disarmament.

The Safeguard System is estimated to cost \$6 to \$7 billion over a period of years. Roughly \$800 million would be spent on the system during fiscal 1970, as compared with the \$1.8 billion requested by President Johnson for the Sentinel ring-around-the-cities system. There are those who contend all funds programmed for missile defense should be spent on social needs. I believe both our national security and our social needs must be met within a balanced framework of fiscal responsibility. The needs of domestic social programs must be balanced against the threat of enemy missile attack.

I support President Nixon's Safeguard System because I believe it is a deterrent to nuclear war. I believe it will facilitate an arms control agreement between the U.S. and the Soviet Union and that failure to deploy at least a limited missile defense would be to take an unacceptable gamble with the national security of the United States.

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