

here. Even against this higher than expected threat, and even without a Nike-X defense of Minuteman, our proposed strategic missile and bomber forces could still inflict 40 percent or more fatalities on the Soviet population throughout the time period involved.

More extreme threats are highly unlikely. In any event, the changes we are now proposing in our strategic offensive forces would make it dangerous and expensive for the Soviet Union to move in the direction of more extreme threats to our assured destruction capability. If we assume, as I believe we should, that the Soviets would want to reduce the vulnerability of their own offensive forces against the possibility of a first strike by our very accurate forces in the fiscal year 1972-73 period, they must further disperse and harden their strategic missiles, which is exactly what they appear to be doing now. To do so is expensive and for the same budget outlay results in reduced missile payloads. Not to do so would leave the Soviet force highly vulnerable. Thus we can, in planning our forces, foreclose any seemingly "easy" and "cheap" paths to their achievement of a satisfactory assured destruction capability and a satisfactory damage limiting capability at the same time.

We of course, cannot preclude the possibility that the Soviet Union may increase its strategic forces budget at some time in the future. That is why we are now undertaking a very comprehensive study of a new strategic missile system. And that is why we are not precluding the possible future construction of new Poseidon submarines or the defense of our presently deployed Minuteman silos with Nike-X. While I believe we should place ourselves in a position to move forward promptly on all of these options if later that should become necessary, we need not commit ourselves to them now.

CAPABILITIES OF THE PROPOSED FORCES FOR DAMAGE LIMITATION

The principal issue in this area of the strategic forces program concerns the deployment of an ABM defense system, i.e., Nike-X. There are three somewhat overlapping but distinct major purposes for which we might want to deploy such a system at this time:

- To protect our cities (and their population and industry) against a Soviet missile attack.

- To protect our cities against a Red Chinese missile attack in the mid-1970's.

- To help protect our land-based strategic offensive forces (i.e., Minuteman) against a Soviet missile attack.

After studying the subject exhaustively, and after hearing the views of our principal military and civilian advisors, we concluded that we should not initiate an ABM deployment at this time for any of these purposes. We believe that:

- The Soviet Union would be forced to react to a U.S. ABM deployment by increasing its offensive nuclear force still further with the result that the risk of a Soviet nuclear attack on the United States would not be further decreased; and the damage to the United States from a Soviet nuclear attack in the event deterrence failed, would not be reduced in any meaningful sense.

As I noted earlier, the foundation of our security is the deterrence of a Soviet nuclear attack. We believe such an attack can be prevented if it is understood by the Soviets that we possess strategic nuclear