

Missile forces

Last year I told this committee that:

The U.S. response to a Soviet deployment of an ABM defense would be the incorporation of appropriate penetration aids in our strategic missiles. Against area defense interceptors, penetration aids can be provided for U.S. missiles (so that an assured destruction capability is maintained) at a cost to us of less than 10 percent of the cost of an ABM defense to the Soviets. The leadtime for the Soviets to mount an ABM defense is greater than the time for us to produce and deploy penetration aids, provided we take timely action to develop them and can move forward promptly to produce them, and this we are doing. The decision actually to deploy new penetration aids can be made later this year. If the Soviets did attempt a large ABM defense we would still be able to produce and install the necessary penetration aids before the Soviets could achieve an extensive deployment.

* * * against a combined Soviet expanded strategic missile/ABM threat, the most efficient alternative available to us would be to develop Poseidon (with the new penetration aids) and retrofit it into Polaris boats. To hedge against the possibility of such a threat, we now propose to accelerate the development of the Poseidon missile (which was initiated last year). The timing of a decision to produce and deploy the missile would depend upon how this threat actually evolved.

This is essentially the program we now propose to pursue.

Minuteman. Last year we had planned a Minuteman force which would ultimately have consisted of a mix of 1,000 Minuteman II's and Minuteman III's with all the Minuteman I's phased out. Now, in order to increase the capability of this force against a possible strong Soviet ABM defense, we propose to increase the proportion of Minuteman III's in the force and equip them with a new improved third stage which will increase the payload of each missile. This increased payload will enable the Minuteman III to carry more penetration aids to counter an ABM defense. The total cost of this program is estimated at \$400 million, but it will cost the Soviet Union many times more in ABM defenses if they try to offset it.

We also propose to step up the schedule for reequipping the Minuteman II's with an improved reentry vehicle and to procure penetration aid packages for all Minuteman II and III missiles. Engineering development was started on these penetration aid packages last year. The total cost of this program is estimated at \$315 million, of which \$100 million was provided through fiscal year 1967, \$125 million is required in fiscal year 1968, and another \$90 million in subsequent years.

Eventually, it will probably become necessary to replace the earliest Minuteman II missiles because of their age. At that time we could add more Minuteman III's if that should appear desirable. Meanwhile, I believe we should initiate the development of a new improved reentry vehicle for the Minuteman III, and funds for this purpose have been included in the budget request.

Polaris-Poseidon. By the end of the current fiscal year, 39 of the planned 41-ship Polaris force will have become operational. The last two Polaris submarines will be deployed by September 1967.

I also believe it would be prudent at this time to commit the Poseidon missile to production and deployment. In order to hold to a minimum the number of submarines which would have to be withdrawn from the operational fleet, we propose to spread the Poseidon retrofit program over a period of years on a schedule tied to the regular overhaul cycle.