

## Missile Gap Mystery Clears

After much controversy, endless speculation and going on three years of Democratic administration, the great mystery of the "missile gap" stands fully unveiled.

The unveiling confirms what long has been generally accepted as the truth of the matter: There never really was any "missile gap." Yet at the same time it frees presidential candidate John F. Kennedy of the charge, leveled at him by many political opponents, of knowingly dramatizing a myth in order to get elected to office.

These revelations appear in a Harper's magazine article by Allen W. Dulles, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency. The author is without a doubt the best qualified man in America to set the record straight.

The CIA, says Mr. Dulles, was under "great pressure" from the Defense Department to evaluate reports that the Russians had begun a missile buildup. Early figures on Red missile production had to be based on estimates of production and development capabilities over a period in the future, he explains. It was necessary to decide how much of its total military effort the Soviet Union would allocate to missile build-

ing. Then it was necessary to predict whether the Russians would put their "early awkward ICBM's" into quantity production and deploy them or choose a more orderly program.

"The answer, in retrospect," Mr. Dulles writes, "seems to be that they chose the more orderly program." He explains that as soon as this choice became evident it was possible for the CIA safely to revise downward its estimate of Red missile strength.

Mr. Kennedy, when he alleged in his campaign that there was a "missile gap," was basing the assertion on the larger estimate. He was not responsible for the error.

Another episode related by Mr. Dulles suggests, however, that there was an objectionable side to the airing of the "missile gap" estimate. In 1944, Thomas E. Dewey learned that the government apparently had not made best use of its success in cracking Japanese codes before Pearl Harbor. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were concerned that this might become a campaign issue and aid the enemy. In response to a personal appeal from General Marshall to keep patriotic considerations above politics, Mr. Dewey never mentioned our code success in his campaign, Mr. Dulles notes.