

Joint Chiefs Cite Soviet ABM Scope

Contend White House Underestimates Size Of Russian System

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The Joint Chiefs of Staff contend Russia's missile defense is much bigger than the Johnson Administration has described to the public, it was learned yesterday.

The military chiefs, in a position paper not yet made public and perhaps destined to be kept secret, argue that Russian missile defenses cover many areas besides Moscow.

This puts the Chiefs at odds with both the White House

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and Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara. The Johnson Administration line is that Russia's deployed missile defense is now limited to the Moscow area.

Secretary McNamara, in the public version of his posture statement, said "it now appears" the Soviets are placing Galosh anti-missiles around Moscow. "They are also deploying another type of defensive system elsewhere in the Soviet Union," he said, "but the weight of the evidence at this time suggests that this system is not intended primarily for anti-ballistic-missile defense."

Intelligence officials have been telling Congress in closed session that McNamara was referring to a defense against U.S. high altitude bombers. Another theory is that this Soviet defense is against slow, air-breathing missiles which resemble robot airplanes.

Reject Both Theories

The military Chiefs reject both these theories. They maintain that this defense across the northeastern part of Russia, known as the Tallinn system, must be for missiles. They reason Russia knows U.S. bomber strategy is based on flying bombers in low—not at high altitude.

Also, the Chiefs argue, the Tallinn system is stretched across the corridor—or "tube" as the military now calls it—which U.S. missiles must travel to hit Russia.

Yet another reason for believing Tallinn is a missile defense, the Chiefs said, is that U.S. offensive striking power is based primarily on ICBMs and Polaris missiles.

The U.S. bomber force consists of B-52s and B-58s. Those bombers would penetrate Russia while zooming in low to escape radar detection. The F-111 bomber, soon to be added to the inventory, also is being developed for the advanced bomber the USAF has in the planning stage.

Buttress Argument

While the current U.S. bomber force and its planned tactics buttress the Chiefs' argument about Tallinn, the B-52 and B-58 were designed as high altitude bombers. So was the B-70, which was conceded by Secretary McNamara in 1961. (The B-52s and B-58s have since been strengthened so they can withstand the buffeting of low level flying.)

This raises the possibility that the Soviets, in fact, did build Tallinn against high altitude bombers and have not changed the air defense hardware to fit new U.S. strategy. The lag between blueprint and hardware is often about 10 years.

One theory is that Tallinn was built specifically to protect Russia from the B-70—a bomber which would fly in at about 80,000 feet—and high-flying U-2 type spy planes. How well the Tallinn system could be adapted to defend against missiles, if it indeed is primarily a bomber defense, is part of the current anti-ballistic-missile debate here.

The Chiefs are inclined to over-estimate a threat since their job is providing maximum security.

Sen. Albert Gore (D-Tenn.) said recently that Russia has missile defenses in place in Moscow and 26 other areas.

The extent and effectiveness of Russia's ABM system are other key questions as the Congress ponders whether it can safely forego putting a similar defense around the U.S. The Johnson Administration is now trying to negotiate some kind of ABM freeze with Russia as part of an arms control agreement.

Secretary McNamara argues that offensive missiles will always be ahead of the defense, so spending billions to install an ABM system would be a waste of money. He estimates the U.S. anti-missile system, known as Nike X, would cost \$40 billion ultimately.