

Cuba Confrontation Cited

Joint Chiefs See ABM As a Crisis Deterrent

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The United States must build a missile defense to keep the kind of strategic edge that won the Cuban missile crisis, the Joint Chiefs of

Staff argue in a still secret position paper.

This view conflicts with that of Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, who favors foregoing an ABM (anti-ballistic-missile) system and relying on offensive missiles for "deterrence"—the strategy of making nuclear war so unthinkable that it will not occur.

"Deterrence is a combination of forces in being and state of mind," the Chiefs state. "Should the Soviets come to believe that their ballistic missile defense, coupled with a nuclear attack on the United States, would limit damage to the Soviet Union to a level acceptable to them — whatever that level is—our forces would no longer deter, and the first principle of our security policy is gone."

The Chiefs agree with McNamara that the ability to destroy an attacker with offensive missiles is basic to deterrence. But they argue that the opposite is also true—that deterrence decreases in proportion to how much the enemy figures it could blunt a retaliatory attack. The blunting ABM system therefore cannot be separated out in figuring deterrent value, they maintain.

U.S. nuclear superiority has been so overwhelming up to

See CHIEFS, A6, Col. 1