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Allen-Scott Report

GOP Challenges Missile Policy

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Mr. Allen

Republican congressional leaders have decided to use the coming debate over an antiballistic missile system to challenge administration policy toward Russia.

This strategy was agreed on by GOP Leaders after learning that President Johnson intends to authorize the deployment of a "thin" ABM screen to protect the U. S. against Red China's "first generation" missiles — but not from the Soviet's far more sophisticated late model missiles.

That is the back-stage report given Republican freshmen congressmen by Representative Melvin Laird, R-Wis., chairman of the party's Policy Committee and ranking Republican on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

At a closed-door seminar to outline GOP strategy in advance of tomorrow's opening of the 60th Congress, Laird disclosed:

○ President Johnson vetoed development of a full-scale anti-missile system as proposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and strongly favored by Republican leaders.

○ Johnson's backstage decision to limit the anti-missile defense system to the Chinese threat was based on a policy of seeking new accommodations with the Soviet rather than on the higher cost of a full-scale system.

○ Administration officials now consider Red China rather than Russia the greatest threat to U. S. security.

In reavailing Republican strategy to vigorously challenge the President's still-unannounced decision, Representative Laird warned his colleagues against being taken in by it.

"The 'thin' defense screen is nothing more than a Pacific Coast guard to protect that part of the country against an attack by Red Chinese missiles during the '70s," he declared. "A limited anti-missile system will leave most of the U. S. wide open to a sneak Russian attack. We will be naked to Soviet missiles and satellites with their newly-developed multi-warheads.

"Unless we go ahead with the development of our own full-scale anti-missile defense system, our country will be a ripe target for Russian nuclear blackmail within a few years.

"Don't let anyone kid you that the Russians are not deploying a modern system," warned Laird. "They have been working on full-scale missile defense system since the early '60s."

On the basis of information gathered at White House budget briefings and Defense Department sessions, Laird explained, he is convinced that the President's decision was predicated on two premises now determining relations with the Kremlin, as follows:

○ "Russia would not attack the U. S. directly because of our overwhelming nuclear-missile striking power.

○ "A power alliance between the U. S. and Russia will eventually be worked out."

Contending that both of these premises are unsound and unrealistic, Representative Laird stated that Republican strategy will be to demonstrate that the administration's course is gravely endangering the safety of the nation.

This GOP stand will be documented, Laird stressed, with supporting data from authoritative and other sources.

Also, the Republicans contemplate strongly challenging the President and other administration leaders to make public Central Intelligence reports on Soviet nuclear-missile developments and strategy.

The GOP have compiled a large amount of information from highly reliable sources and purpose to forcefully press the administration on it.

Representative Laird told his Republican colleagues that President Johnson will ask Congress for some \$200 million to start construction of the "thin" anti-missile defense system. This money would include the procurement of Nike-X anti-missile missiles, radar, high-speed comput-

ers and other essential equipment.

The first year cost of a full-scale anti-missile missile defense system, as proposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would be between \$1 billion and \$3 billion.

The veteran GOP legislator also expressed the belief that the President will seek an overall military budget of "about \$7 billion." Laird said the Joint Chiefs asked for \$80 billion.

Current Defense spending is running at \$68.5 billion a year. Last year the administration proposed a \$58.7 billion budget for the Defense Department. Congress voted \$59 billion, including \$100 million to start an antiballistic missile system.

Up to now this money has gone unspent due to White House orders.

from Turk... But the more widely accepted interpretation of the 1962 crisis, and the period that followed, is that on the whole Khrushchev backed down; and that Russia agreed specifically to leave west Berlin alone. In the process, Russia to some extent tacitly accepted a status that implied military inferiority to the United States.

So much for the background. In terms of current developments several things have caused uneasiness in Washington about Russia's exact intentions. Specifically:

(i) **Russia's anti-missile missile system:** The evidence, admitted by Mr. McNamara, that the Russians are building up a highly sophisticated anti-missile defence system (see FOREIGN REPORT, No. 982, 973, 955 and 942 of last year) has shaken a lot of Washington's *cognoscenti*, if it has not made a great impact on the public consciousness. There will be mounting clamour in Congress, especially from the Republicans, for the United States to reply in kind—a step which the Secretary of Defence has been reluctant to take.

(ii) **The cases of Kazan-Komarek and Wortham:** Vladimir Kazan-Komarek is the Czech-born American travel agent who on October 31st was hauled off an Aeroflot plane in Prague during an unscheduled stop between Moscow and Paris. He was charged with crimes against the Czech state, allegedly committed 20 years ago, and is now awaiting trial. (Before catching the plane he rather idiotically sent a jocular postcard to his wife: "From Russia with Love . . . 007".) Wortham is the young Arkansan who was recently given three years in a Russian labour camp after being found guilty of changing dollars into black market roubles, and stealing a cast-iron bear from a Leningrad hotel.

Many officials in Washington feel that Russia is cynically trying to use these two cases as levers to secure the release of **Igor Ivanov**, the top-ranking Russian spy, who is now serving a 20-year sentence in a New Jersey jail. If so, the manoeuvre is proving counter-productive. The Americans are angry over both episodes, and say there is no question of a deal involving Ivanov. Perhaps more seriously, some people are now questioning whether the agreement for a Moscow-New York direct air service (due to start this spring) should be ratified.

(iii) **The Vietnam war:** Vietnam focuses the new American attitude of uneasiness about Russia. It is not merely the scale of Russian military assistance to the North Vietnamese which worries and annoys the Americans; the most significant development is *a subtle shift in some Americans' interpretation of Moscow's motives*. Some top-ranking American diplomats were saying until very recently that Russia wanted the whole affair over and done with; others are now whispering aloud their suspicion that Moscow may be rather "enjoying" the situation in a way that charitable western observers had not supposed. Though outwardly the Administration still looks to Russia to help find a peaceful solution, private suspicions are growing that: (a) Moscow is in no hurry to pull American chestnuts out of the fire, and (b) the Russians may secretly relish both the Americans' discomfiture over the bombings, and the possibility of the United States embarking on a collision course with China. (At the moment, the State Department and the Defence Department are both striving desperately to avert such a clash.)

If a chilly phase in Washington's relations with Russia and eastern Europe does set in again, how will it express itself? There are one or two ominous straws in the wind. The Administration's plans for an expansion in east-west trade—said to be a cherished project of the President—now stands little chance in the new Congress,