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ABM System

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Mr. DIRKSEN. We have eminent scientists from all over the country. Has the Senator heard from them?

Mr. CLARK. Yes.

Mr. DIRKSEN. The Senator mentioned only five.

Mr. President, I yield 3 minutes to the Senator from Washington [Mr. Jackson].

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I thought I had the floor.

Mr. DIRKSEN. Mr. President, I withdraw that request.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I would like to speak at this time. I would like to yield to the distinguished acting chairman of the committee handling the bill, but I have been waiting patiently, and I would like to make a few remarks on the pending business.

It has been brought out by the distinguished minority leader that war is wasteful. It certainly is, and the Department of Defense is and has been wasteful down through the years, in wartime and in peacetime.

Today we have 535,000 men in South Vietnam, not including the 40,000 in Thailand, the 40,000 with the Seventh Fleet, another 40,000 in the Philippines, 40,000 in Japan, 50,000 in Korea, 20,000 to 25,000 in Guam. We are engaged in a war which we cannot win militarily unless we want to double the 535,000 we have fighting there now, and redouble that number; unless we want to spend, not $30 billion annually, but $40 billion, and perhaps $120 billion.

Waste—there is plenty of it. And just this past week, this Chamber gave its final approval to what it had initiated—a $6 billion cut in Federal expenditures.

What do we expect? Do we expect the President to take the responsibility? Do we want to shake him he responsibility which is ours to make the cuts in the budget?

What are we afraid of? What is wrong with cutting approximately $2 billion from the enormous sum for research and development sought by the Department of Defense—not in this bill, but in a measure that will be before us? What is wrong with cutting out the fast-deployment logistic ships—not in this bill, but when that bill is before us? Last year every Member of this body voted against those ships, because they were wanted eventually for what? To be stationed in all the oceans and seas of the world, with Marinos, helicopters, and logistics materials aboard. For what purpose? To be ready for trouble instantly, in any part of the world. Why? Because too many people in this Government think we are the world's policeman—we are not.

Then we ought to cut such things as the space program, far more than has been done up to this time. And foreign aid, more than the $600 million which the House has cut. Troops in Europe? It cost this Nation $2.7 billion to maintain approximately 600,000 troops and dependents in Europe. So Senators want to cut expenditures? Let us call back 4 of the 6 divisions. We can do it if we want. It is our responsibility to face up to these matters all the time. But we avoid them. We dodge them. We toss everything in the lap of the President.

Usually the Department of Defense just has to ask for what it wants, and we will have and spend the money. This year, for the first time, we have questioned the Department of Defense on various subjects which were brought to our attention, and that time was long overdue.

Of course there is waste in that department. There has been. I suppose there always will be, not only in war, but in time of peace, as well. I think it is up to this institution to fulfill its responsibilities, to check, to recheck, and not to be taken in by what the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the Secretary of Defense, or all of them down there, say they must have, because we never can satisfy them.

Now, getting back to the pending business:

The announcement that the executive branch had decided to deploy an antiballistic missile system was made by Secretary McNamara on Monday, September 18, 1967. At that time he warned:

There is a kind of mad momentum intrinsic to the development of all new nuclear weaponry. If the weapon system works—and works well—there is a strong pressure from many parts of the government to deploy the weapon out of all proportion to the prudent level required.

The danger in deploying this relatively light and reliable Chinese-oriented ABM system is going to be that pressures will develop to expand it into a heavy Soviet-oriented ABM system.

His answer to that was clear and direct. He said:

We must resist that temptation firmly not because we can for a moment relax our vigilance against a possible Soviet first strike—but precisely because our greatest deterrent against such a strike is not a massive, costly, but highly penetrable ABM shield, but rather a fully credible offensive capability.

The arguments raised against the pending Cooper-Hart amendment manifest clearly, I believe, the "developing pressure" leading to the pernicious "mad momentum" of which Secretary McNamara spoke. The system is no longer Chinese-oriented. The system now has definite capabilities against a Soviet-oriented attack. How will the system sold to Congress in the first place? Senators know the answer, and they know what has developed since. The system is thus no longer a thing. It is the beginning of a $50 billion system—a $50 billion system that even today the Defense Department admits will not work. This is a $50 billion system that will be obsolete before it is even completed.

I, for one, have been somewhat disturbed to witness this "mad momentum" as it has begun building. The pending Cooper-Hart amendment, for example, simply puts off for the coming fiscal year the amount of money requested for real estate purchases and construction costs toward the finished Sentinel ABM system. Four of the five major components for this ABM system have yet to be developed and are being developed. If research and further development and evaluation progresses at the most optimum schedule, this system will not even begin to be fully operational until 1972. So why this amendment at all that Senator Cooper and Senator Hart are saying is: "Let's hold off buying the real estate, let's hold off starting the construction of the finished
system; let’s wait at least until we are a little further along in our research and development.

Congress passed last week, by an overwhelming vote, the Senate-originated tax bill which specified a $6 billion expenditure for new construction over the current year. It is very easy to demand a reduction in Government spending. It is another matter to carry through and make the reduction. That is the Senate’s first opportunity since it finally approved that bill last Friday to demonstrate that it means what it says.

I am aware that in some private conversations it is being said that the administration will not spend this money this coming year anyway. But I fail to see how this argument has any validity against the pending amendment. It was the Senate that first urged an expenditure of $6 billion as the price for a bill. I think it is also the Senate’s responsibility to specify the areas of reduction rather than abdicate this duty to the executive branch. What better place than to make the first specification than to defer the acquisition of real estate that will not be needed in the coming year? What better place to make a reduction in the land and initial building material costs for a system that would be obsolete against the Soviet system on its first day of operation?

It is curious to observe the intrinsic change of the Sentinel system, as reflected in reports and arguments against the pending amendment. The emphasis has shifted from a Chinese-oriented system to a Soviet-oriented system almost overnight. What a coincidence. This change in emphasis occurs with the announcement that the Chinese are not building their ICBM with the speed we had originally estimated. For our initial timetable to deploy an ABM was predicated upon intelligence estimates of Chinese ICBM deployment. The most recent estimates, that development is at least 12 to 18 months behind that which triggered the request for real estate and construction money in this bill. The Cooper-Hart amendment simply takes into account the revised estimate. It simply requests that we apply this new intelligence in formation and delay by 12 months the acquisition of real estate. I think he amendment is so eminently reasonable that this request for real estate and final construction money cannot be justified this year if the Sentinel system is fundamentally Chinese oriented. Much more is needed about our capabilities against a Soviet threat. This change in emphasis has occurred since the bill was reported from committee on June 13, 14, the committee report on the desks of Senators still characterizes this system as Chinese oriented.

That this system is now considered as having deficiencies against a Soviet missile attack is to me incredible. As recently as last February the Director of Research and Development for the Department of Defense testified before the Armed Services Committee that he did not know how to build a system that could protect us against a Russian attack. He also said that, whether Chinese or Soviet oriented, could be postponed 1 year.

Let me quote at this point the testimony of Dr. Foster, Assistant Secretary of Defense for rch and Development for the Department of Defense on February 7, 1968, before the Armed Services Committee with respect to the ABM. He mentioned, in answer to a question from the Armed Services Committee last Friday, that the modified ABM is being developed at a cost of $3 billion to date for research and development of an ABM system; we do not believe that we must start to construct a system simply because the Russians have been building one. But that is totally without merit. This Nation has already responded to intelligence reports that say the Russians may be building an ABM with a vastly increased offensive warhead capability; the so-called MIRV system. To urge that a proper response to a Soviet ABM system is an American ABM system is a self-defeating proposition. It invites only further increased offensive capability on the part of the Soviets. It invites us to get caught up in the “mad momentum” of which Secretary McNamara spoke. I fail to appreciate why we desire to stimulate this greater striking force in the Soviet Union.

This amendment simply defers for one year the request for funds to buy real estate and to start final construction of a system still 80 percent to be developed and one that cannot be operational for at least 4 years. This vote will be but the first straw in the wind in determining whether the Senate desires immunity for military projects leaving the great impact of the $6 billion cut to programs of human resources. It will be the first indication of whether the “mad momentum” has truly set in.

It will be the first chance the Senate will have to exercise its Constitutional responsibility in determining the priorities in the funding of Federal programs.

I strongly urge Senators to consider the value of the advice offered by the Senator from Maine [Mrs. Smith] and the Senator from Missouri [Mr. Symington], two of the best versed members of this body in the field of national security, and to vote with them; and by the distinguished Senator from Kentucky [Mr. Cooper] and the distinguished Senator from Michigan [Mr. Hart] for the pending amendment.

Mr. DIRKSEN, Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Washington (Mr. Jackson).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.