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March 24, 1969

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

ABM: The Focus of the Proposal

As the Senate begins its evaluation, the features of President Nixon's new proposal for the ABM system ought to be seen in proper focus. It was evident from the press conference on March 14, for example, that the President's basic decision changed the earlier concept of the ABM system. Last year the ABM was billed as affording protection primarily to the cities against a Chinese attack and only incidentally, as safeguarding emplaced ICBM missile-sites in rural areas. This year the President proposes to shift the emphasis of protection 180 degrees, from the cities to the rural ICBM-sites. This change was explicit in the President's press conference and it was clear in the presentation to the Congressional leaders at the White House prior to the press conference.

Since then, other briefings have been provided to amplify the President's decision. These subsequent statements by the officials of the Defense Department seem to me to be confusing the emphasis which the President had set forth in his new approach.

President Nixon's proposal was to limit the actual deployment of the ABM system at this point to missile farms in Montana and North Dakota. Indeed, it was evident that he was hopeful that negotiations with the Soviet Union might make even the completion of this limited deployment unnecessary. The President specifically reserved until a later review any decision for elaboration of the proposed system beyond

the initial two-site installation. The President put off, until this future review, any extension of the system--whether to provide for a "thin" coverage against Chinese attacks or to counter an accidental missile firing from abroad which might destroy one or more cities. Insofar as protection of people against a massive Soviet first-strike, that was rejected outright by President Nixon as it had been rejected by the previous Administration.

Such was the emphasis given by the President in his new approach. Defense Department interpretations have tended to obfuscate, it seems to me, the restraint which characterized the President's decision. These subsequent statements leave the strong impression that the two-site installations are just the beginning of a vast program to convert the entire nation into a missile Maginot. It is as if future reviews of the international situation which the President has stressed he would make prior to any further elaboration of the system will be nothing more than some sort of charade for the benefit of those who have had grave concern about the entire enterprise from the outset.

As a courtesy to the President, I have endeavored to keep an open mind on the new approach. The Senate knows that I have opposed the original ABM proposal in the past, not only during the first few days of the Nixon Administration, but also throughout the closing years of the Johnson Administration. For me, there is not now and there has never been any partisanship in this issue. As I have opposed the Sentinel program during two administrations of different political leadership, it has been opposed in the same fashion by other Members on both sides of the aisle.

In this connection, I would refer to the leadership of the distinguished Senator from Kentucky (Mr. Cooper) and the contributions of other Republican Senators.

To infer partisanship where none exists does a disservice to the Senate and to the country. Before judgment on this issue is taken, all Senators will insist, as I will insist, upon the most thorough discussion. We are deciding here not for a day but for years and, perhaps, decades. Who doubts that Senators will not form their conclusions on the basis of understanding and conviction rather than on the basis of party considerations? Members of the Senate would be well advised to put aside talk of partisanship. There is no partisanship and I would hope and expect that there will be no pettiness with respect to this critical issue.

It would be my hope, too, that subordinates in the Administration will not read into the President's decision their own preconceptions and predilections. The President has made clear that he has not gone beyond a fixed point of decision and he will not go beyond it without subsequent review of the shifting nature of security needs. His subordinates in the Defense Department--whether political or bureaucratic--ought to be the first to hear and heed him. When he says that he will decide not now but in the future, whether the situation at that time justifies curtailment, expansion or any other modification of the initial deployment, he should be taken at his word.

It should be borne in mind, too, that we are in a most difficult period in Viet Nam and at home. We are in a time of growing financial stress among the tax-squeezed, inflation-pressed people of this nation.

It is of the utmost importance that there not be lost any opportunity to bring under control the immense and growing cost of armaments to this nation. Negotiations with the Soviet Union, which the President has made clear he intends to pursue, might conceivably act to curb those costs.

Frankly, I do not know whether agreements can be achieved with our principal rival in this wasteful military competition. I do not believe, however, that it enhances the prospects for agreement when non-elected officials of this government play one-upmanship with limited Presidential decisions. Nor does it strengthen the prospects for agreement if the rationale which is set forth in order to justify deployment of the ABM gives the appearance of a missile system in search of a mission. That has been the effect of the flailing efforts to push this system through the Congress over the past several years. The country has been saturated with a propaganda that has not only puzzled our own people but which may well have exposed the nation to international ridicule. First, it was urged that the Sentinel system be adopted on the grounds that it would protect Americans against the Russians. Then, when it was transparent that nothing could protect the people of the nation against massive Soviet attack, the system was labeled a defense of the inhabitants of the cities--a thin defense--against the irrational Chinese. Finally, it was termed a defense against both the Russians and the Chinese and even against accidental missile firings. Indeed, is it any wonder that there are grave doubts, now, as to whether an ABM system can protect this nation against anyone?

That is another point, however, and I will take it up at another time. I wish to stress now that the system which President Nixon has proposed be built this year is for the protection of a segment of a segment of our deterrent power--350 Minuteman missiles in Montana and North Dakota. That is not a protection against China; it is a protection of a small part of our capacity to retaliate against an attack from the Soviet Union. By the same token, therefore, it is with Russia that disarmament agreements which might make possible the forestalling of the immensely costly placement of the ABM's might have relevance. If, instead what is proposed for this year is to cement in a plan for a mixed system--a polyglot ABM--to protect all of the ICBM deterrent power of the United States, to protect against China, to protect against third parties or to protect against accidental attacks or to protect against whatever, then what sense would it make, as it is obviously contemplated, to talk disarmament with the Russians but not with the Chinese? Do you disarm a defense system against China or against accidental missiles because you have negotiated an arms agreement with the Soviet Union?

What I am suggesting, Mr. President, is that it is at least possible to find a rationale in the association of a two-site ABM installation and negotiations with the Russians on arms limitation. President Nixon linked these two considerations in shifting from the previous ABM concept. I fear, however, that subsequent interpretation by his subordinates is rapidly dismantling the connection. To be sure, there is a certain ritual deference paid to the disarmament aspect of the President's approach but any perusal of the record to date will show that the emphasis has clearly shifted so that the two-site installations appear to be coming into focus as a mere wayside stop along the road to the construction of a great nuclear wall whose costs would be incalculable.

It seems to me, therefore, that we need to know whether the presumption upon which the Defense Department now seems to be acting is valid-- that is, that an open-ended deployment of an area defense system aimed in any and all directions is a foregone conclusion. I thought the President had not decided that point--that he had decided at this time only to deploy ABM's at two sites. I thought the President was trying to keep open an option which would permit him to restrain the costly spread of the system at that point or even to reverse it. The interpretations seem to me, however, to be closing off that option. How are we to explain, otherwise, the effort which is being made by the Defense Department to obtain appropriations from the Senate, for example, to purchase, this year, land for several ABM sites beyond those in Montana and North Dakota? These purchases would have no purpose other than to set in motion an elaboration which President Nixon presumably has not yet decided. What justification can there be for appropriating this year for a need which may not exist next year? Indeed, the Department's request for this money seems to me presumptuous of the intent of both the President and the Congress.

The basic focus of this discussion on the ABM, then, if I may sum up, ought to be on what President Nixon has proposed to begin to do this year: that is, to provide ABM's to protect 350 Minuteman ICBM missiles in Montana and North Dakota while trying to move ahead, at the same time, with the negotiations with/Russians on curbing the armaments-competition. Whether even that limited ABM deployment is justified is another matter. That will have to be considered in the light of the reliability, redundancy and the relevance of any ABM deployment at this time. It will have to be discussed in the light of the immense costs, actual and potential. It will have to be decided, finally, on the basis of the need to balance the requirements

of external security against the requirements for halting the disintegration of the nation's internal security in all of its ramifications.

I shall have more to say on this subject, Mr. President, at a subsequent date.

and war. We owe ourselves, we owe the future, a heavy obligation to try.

ABM: THE FOCUS OF THE PROPOSAL

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, as the Senate begins its evaluation of the ABM system, the features of President Nixon's new proposal for this system ought to be seen in proper focus.

May I say that I make this speech today with due respect to the difficulties which confronted the President of the United States when he thought about a drastic changeover in the configuration of the Safeguard system from what had previously been known as the Sentinel system, which he had inherited from a Democratic administration.

May I say, also, that I appreciated the frankness with which the President of the United States discussed this matter with the joint leadership on the day he also later discussed it with the people of America by means of a TV broadcast, at which time he outlined his views and gave his reasons and opened himself up to questions on the part of the communications media.

At that meeting, when the President told us of the decision, he asked for our reaction. I must admit, in all candor, that the reaction among those present was almost unanimously in support of what he had stated he was going to do. But, with equal candor, I must say that one or two of us expressed our doubts and stated that we had serious questions relative to cost, reliability, alternatives, need, and other factors. He understood perfectly that this was a matter which could be from two, if not more, sides, and he stated that he did not call the leadership down to form a cheerleaders' section to get behind him, but to tell us his views and, in return, to get our reaction.

The President had a most difficult decision to face up to. I give him great credit for being responsible—solely responsible—for the review which he requested on the Sentinel system. I give him credit—great credit—for facing up to his responsibility as President of the United States and arriving at a decision. I have no doubt in my mind that his decision was based on what he considered to be in the best interests of the Nation as a whole.

I did not attend the meetings at which the Secretary of Defense and his advisers—Under Secretary Packard, General Wheeler, and Dr. Foster—appeared before the appropriate committees; but I did read the newspaper accounts with a great deal of interest, and I also happened to be lucky enough to view certain portions of their appearance before the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations.

I want to give Secretary Laird great credit, also, for the way he presented his case, for the vigor he showed in marshaling his facts and in answering the variety of questions which were directed to him from all directions.

But I do think, Mr. President, that this matter should be viewed in proper focus, and I anticipate that the Safeguard anti-ballistic-missile system will be the sub-

ject of thoroughgoing and extended debate in this body.

It was evident from the press conference on March 14, for example, that the President's basic decision changed the earlier concept of the ABM system. Last year the ABM was billed as affording protection primarily to the cities against a Chinese attack and only incidentally as safeguarding emplaced ICBM missile sites in rural areas. This year the President proposes to shift the emphasis of protection 180 degrees, from the cities to the rural ICBM sites. This change was explicit in the President's press conference, and it was clear in the presentation to the congressional leaders at the White House prior to the press conference.

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Such was the emphasis given by the President in his new approach. Defense Department interpretations have tended to obfuscate, it seems to me, the restraint which characterized the President's decision. These subsequent statements leave the strong impression that the two-site installations are just the beginning of a vast program to convert the entire Nation into a missile magnet. It is as if future reviews of the international situation which the President has stressed he would make prior to any further elaboration of the system will be nothing more than some sort of charade for the benefit of those who have had grave concern about the entire enterprise from the outset.

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Frankly, I do not know whether agreements can be achieved with our principal rival in this wasteful military competition. I do not believe, however, that it enhances the prospects for agreement when nonelected officials of this Government play one-upmanship with limited presidential decisions. Nor does it strengthen the prospects for agreement if the rationale which is set forth in order to justify deployment of the ABM gives the appearance of a missile system in search of a mission, to quote the words of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. GORE). That has been the effect of the failing efforts to push this system through the Congress over the past several years. The country has been saturated with a propaganda that has not only puzzled our own people but which may well have exposed the Nation to international ridicule. First, it was urged that the Sentinel system be adopted on the grounds that it would protect Americans against the Russians. Then, when it was transparent that nothing could protect the people of the Nation against massive Soviet attack, the system was

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chase land, this year, for several ABM sites beyond those in Montana and North Dakota?

It is my understanding that last year Congress appropriated \$227.3 million for acquisition of land and construction; that is, brick and mortar items. It is my further understanding that about one-third of that money has been spent. It is my further understanding that the law can well be interpreted so that the remaining two-thirds, or approximately \$150 million, is available and spendable with no restrictions whatsoever because when the appropriation was made it was open ended or "no ended," however one wishes to refer to it. So it may well be that there will be no request for funds this year because of the two-thirds of \$227.3 million appropriated for this fiscal year being available and ready to be spent.

Incidentally, speaking of construction, I wonder what is going to happen to the sites which have been bought in the vicinity of Boston, and very likely, in other parts of the country as well, which because of the change from Sentinel to Safeguard now no longer have the purpose intended for them when the purchase was originally made. These purchases, beyond Montana and North Dakota, would have no purpose other than to set in motion an elaboration which President Nixon presumably has not yet decided. What justification can there be for appropriating or expending moneys available this year for a need which may not exist next year?

Indeed, the Department's request for this money seems to me to be presumptuous of the intent that both the President and the Congress had in mind.

The basic focus of this discussion on the ABM, then, if I may sum up, ought to be on what President Nixon has proposed to begin to do this year: that is, to provide ABM's to protect 350 Minuteman ICBM missiles in Montana and North Dakota while trying to move ahead, at the same time, with negotiations with the Russians on curbing the armaments competition. Whether even that limited ABM deployment is justified is another matter. That will have to be considered in the light of the reliability, redundancy, and the relevance of any ABM deployment at this time. It will have to be discussed in the light of the immense costs, actual and potential. It will have to be decided, finally, on the basis of the need to balance the requirements of external security against the requirements for halting the disintegration of the nation's internal security in all of its ramifications.

I shall have more to say on this subject, Mr. President, at a subsequent date. But at this time, I ask unanimous consent that the transcript of the President's news conference of March 14, published in the New York Times on March 15, 1969, having to do with foreign and domestic affairs, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the transcript was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows: