

1-24-1974

Congressional Record 'Giant Patriot', Minuteman II Operational Base Launch

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches

Recommended Citation

Mansfield, Mike 1903-2001, "Congressional Record 'Giant Patriot', Minuteman II Operational Base Launch" (1974). *Mike Mansfield Speeches*. 1154.

https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches/1154

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Mike Mansfield Papers at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mike Mansfield Speeches by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

Montana and routed over northern Idaho and the State of Oregon into the Pacific. Assuming 100 percent efficiency, there would be no fallout in Montana and the falling debris would be encountered over national forest lands in northern Idaho.

The Minuteman II missile system is one of the more sophisticated and successful weapon systems in our program. It is my understanding that the testing at Vandenberg has been highly successful. The risk involved is likely to be negligible, but it is a matter of sincere concern to many. Should a missile misfire at the launching site, the immediate damage would, of course, be tremendous. Also, there is considerable apprehension on the part of our neighboring States of Idaho and Oregon should the flight pattern or operation of the missile malfunction.

The safety question is not the only area of concern. Primarily I question whether the appropriation of \$26.9 million is necessary at a time when the Nation is faced with an unusual number of budget requests of competing priority. Information available to me indicates that the Minuteman II system is a highly successful and sophisticated one and the testing at Vandenberg supports this premise.

At a time when we are endeavoring to bring about international peace, the inland testing of such missiles seems to be entirely unnecessary. While the administration has not said so in so many words, I get the distinct impression that one of the compelling reasons for these tests is the flexing of our muscles in the ongoing debate on international arms control. The use of this weapons system in our international negotiations is untimely and unnecessary in my estimation.

The announcement has generated some concern in my State through the newspapers, radio and television and a number of letters from individual constituents. The outcry has not been tremendous, but it is sincere and has come from many different walks of life—businessmen, ranchers, farmers, legislators, and even military personnel.

The Department has had the authority to proceed, but I strongly urge Congress to take a stand in opposition through the appropriation process, to further consideration of any testing from operational bases within the continental United States. I do not believe that it is necessary and it would be an unwise expenditure of Federal funds.

I ask unanimous consent that an editorial in the *Montana Standard of Butte* under date of January 10, 1974, be printed in the RECORD.

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

BETTER REASON NEEDED FOR MISSILE TESTS

We wonder if the Cascade County commissioners would favor ICBM tests if the missiles were being fired over, instead of from, Great Falls.

We wonder if Missoula would object to the tests if the Minuteman missiles were to fly over Butte instead of the Garden City.

We wonder if Dick Shoup would support the tests if he were still mayor over there in Missoula.

Mostly, though, we just wonder if the tests are necessary. If it's determined that they are necessary, and we can get a guarantee from the secretary of defense himself (say at the risk of his job) that no injuries or property damage will result, then go ahead. However . . .

The Pentagon wants to shoot a few missiles downrange from an operational base—Malmstrom—to impress the Soviets, we're told. (It would be in the spirit of détente if the Russian ambassador would send a note to the Pentagon assuring us that they're already impressed with our capabilities and that no shot is needed. Of course, it would be in the spirit of détente not to want to impress the Soviets with a nuclear missile in the first place, so maybe the spirit really isn't there.)

The Minuteman missiles to be fired, we understand, are soon to be replaced by advanced models. Why test an obsolete weapons system, especially at a cost of close to \$30 million? Why weren't they tested before they became obsolete?

And, if the Pentagon is so sure the firings can be carried off successfully, where is the need to test?

Rep. Shoup may be right about the relative absence of danger involved in the proposed tests, but that isn't the same as saying the tests are needed.

We hope Gov. Judge and Sen. Mansfield get some good reasons from the defense people before they give their approval to the shots.

"GIANT PATRIOT"—MINUTEMAN II OPERATIONAL BASE LAUNCH

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, during the congressional recess the Department of the Air Force announced that they were proceeding with their plans to conduct demonstration launches of the Minuteman II missile system during the winter, 1974-75. The program is designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the deterrent represented by Minuteman II. In the past, Minuteman missile testing has been conducted at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. To date no tests have been held at the operational bases located throughout the Nation.

The Minuteman II missile complex is deployed at three locations—Wing I at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana and the other two wings at Ellsworth and Whiteman Air Force Bases. Wing I has been selected for the initial operational launches under this proposed testing program. The testing of these missile sites in my State gives pause to consider several aspects of the program including what effect there will be in the immediate area and what potential hazards exist in the western part of Montana and our neighboring States. These launches, as I understand it, will be launched from