

MX plan to explode in controversy?

Brass blasts stationary MX

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's top military officer said Monday that Pres. Reagan's proposed buildup of strategic forces was approved over his objections.

But Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger insisted the Reagan administration will not reconsider its recommendation to build 100 B-1 bombers nor resurrect a now-abandoned plan to shuttle long-range MX missiles among desert shelters in the West.

The split between the Pentagon's top civilian and military leaders was aired as the Senate Armed Services Committee opened hearings on the six-year, \$180.3 billion strategic modernization program announced by Reagan last Friday.

Air Force Gen. David Jones, chairer of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified that the mobile basing plan was dropped over his objections in favor of an interim program to put about three dozen MX weapons in strengthened underground silos now occupied by Titan and Minuteman missiles.

Jones said "I remain to be convinced" that the missiles can be made to withstand a Soviet attack by any means other than the so-called "shell game" of multiple bases that the Carter administration had advanced.

Jones said he personally places greater importance on the B-1 program, which he favors, than the MX.

'Some say that (the MX) is just a stop-gap . . . All right, but it's an awfully big gap and it's very vital to stop it.'

Senate committee chairer John Tower, R-Texas, a strong proponent of the shell-game MX, said he hoped the committee will get a new look when the administration makes a decision in 1984 as to how to deploy the 100 new missiles permanently.

Weinberger dashed that hope, saying: "As far as the president . . . the administration . . . and I are concerned, we have made a flat recommendation that the (multiple shelter) system . . . no longer be considered or that it be reopened. That's a firm, final decision."

Reagan's decision to go ahead with the B-1 after Carter shelved it in 1977 in favor of developing a radar-evading Stealth bomber, evoked little controversy at the Senate hearing.

But Tower drew support from Sens. John Warner, R-Va., and Henry M. Jackson, D-Wash., for a mobile MX missile system. With a stationary silo system, Jackson said, "We have given the Soviets a better target to shoot at."

However, Republican Sen. Barry Goldwater, whose home state of Arizona is the likely host for the first 18 silo-based MX missiles, supported the administration plan. "I never thought the Russians were so stupid they couldn't figure out the shell game in a matter of hours."

But Weinberger said he was referring then to a permanent basing system, not the interim one the administration now is pushing while it studies whether to eventually place the missiles aboard aircraft, in deep underground caverns and mountainsides or to protect them with a network of defensive missiles.

He said the Titan silos would be reinforced to withstand up to 5,000 pounds per square inch of blast pressure, almost 10 times what Carter proposed for new shelters in the Nevada and Utah deserts.

"Some say that is just a stop-gap," the defense secretary said. "All right, but it's an awfully big gap and it's very vital to stop it."

Weinberger said the administration will provide Congress with a detailed breakdown of the \$180.3 billion package "within the next week or so."

But he said spending on the MX would be \$16 billion to \$17 billion less during the next six years than Carter's multiple shelter plan would have cost.

Diverse locals question policy

By RON HUNT
Of the Emerald

Pres. Reagan's MX proposal is being blasted from both ends of the political spectrum.

"Attacked from the right as not enough, attacked from the left as not necessary . . . It's almost a no-win decision for Reagan," says William Baugh, University political science professor.

And Reagan certainly hasn't won local support for his proposal.

"I don't think it should be deployed at all. I think it's an example of paranoia," says Richard Brown, history department head.

Reagan proposed a \$180 billion program Friday that includes deployment of 100 MX missiles in existing silos, production of 100 B1 bombers and development of the radar-elusive Stealth bomber.

The massive program also includes upgrading command, control and communications systems, developing the Trident II nuclear missile for submarine deployment, and pursuing extensive antiballistic missile research.

"It's kind of a defense smorgasbord — a little something for everyone," Baugh says.

But the smorgasbord isn't making too many people happy.

'Attacked from the the right as not enough, attacked from the left as unnecessary . . . It's almost a no-win decision for Reagan.'

"I would certainly hope that the powers that be would not limit their nuclear strategy to one-upmanship," and would instead concentrate on negotiation, says law school dean Derrick Bell.

"Any of this is of major concern for those interested in the rule of law. A commitment to law and reason would be destroyed with even a light (nuclear) strike."

"What the MX system signifies — the willingness of the United States to attack first with nuclear weapons — is totally immoral according to all Christian traditions regarding warfare," says Ted Grimsrud, coordinator of Christians for Peace and Justice.

"I believe the decision to go ahead with it should be strongly and actively opposed."

"Reagan's decision is a waste of money," says Steve Kramer, Survival Center director.

"With the budget problems facing the United States right now, I think it's ridiculous. Their use in national security is questionable."

But "it's a better decision than spreading the thing (the MX) all over the West," Kramer says, referring to the rejected proposals to deploy the MX in multiple hidden shelters in Nevada and Utah.

"We're appalled by it (Reagan's decision) and we're very concerned that this is a step closer to nuclear war," says Dorothy Granada, a representative of First Step, a local organization confronting "the clear and present threat of nuclear weapons."

"It puts the United States closer to making an offensive war," Granada says.

Despite the condemnations, Baugh says "there are very few hard and fast answers."

"The soundest part of Reagan's plan is improving command control. The weakest part is the B1, which is purely a stop-gap aircraft before Stealth. I think there'll be a push in Congress to ditch the B1."

"Dubious" is how Baugh describes Reagan's options for basing and defending the MX. If the missiles are placed in deep underground shelters, how would they dig themselves out in the case of attack? If the missiles are placed aboard aircraft, the cost would be enormous. And using antiballistic missiles to defend the MX was prohibited with SALT I, Baugh says.



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