

Speedup In Missile Program May Cost Up To \$42 Billion

By ELTON C. FAY
AP Military Affairs Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect John F. Kennedy has said he wants to speed up the missile program, expand forces for fighting conventional war, improve air defense, do more about protection against rocket-firing submarines.

If the incoming administration makes these and other changes in the nation's military program it will cost money—perhaps more than the budgeted defense program submitted by the outgoing Eisenhower administration. But Kennedy also has expressed belief that billions can be saved by administrative improvements and curtailing service competition.

Beyond these programs which can be controlled by Kennedy and his defense secretary-designate, Robert S. McNamara, are other potential factors which can be decided by national policy making alone.

Shifts in the international situation can influence profoundly Kennedy's national defense policies. He comes into office as new tensions mount in Southeast Asia, as relations with Cuba worsen, as the future trend of NATO defensive strength is considered, as pressures increase for resumption of nuclear weapons tests.

Any one of many world problems can dictate the size, kind and deployment of U.S. forces.

An argument reiterated during the presidential campaign was that the United States had lost prestige militarily as well as politically. Democratic critics aimed particularly at the missile category. In answering a series of questions by the publication "Missiles and Rockets," Kennedy said during the campaign that he would send to Congress several specific requests, among them proposals to "accelerate our Polaris, Minuteman and other strategic missile programs."

In the same statement, Kennedy said competition between the armed forces must be minimized, that "our competitors lie on the other side of the Iron Curtain."

It happens that the sharpest competition among the services at the moment concerns the very weapons mentioned by Kennedy—the Navy's Polaris missile-atomic submarine system, on the one hand, and the Minuteman and other strategic missile programs of the Air Force.

For years, the Air Force had been keeping its eye on and directing sharp words at the Navy's aircraft carrier force, that "other air force." It was still concentrating on the competition of naval airplanes and carriers when suddenly it became aware of the Polaris weapon system, by now a reality with the first rocket boats on station.

Overseas continental target areas which can be hit with missiles fired from submerged submarines also can be attacked with the long range strategic missiles of the Air Force. So now Air Force spokesmen are hammering hard on the idea of precision attack on military targets instead of attacks on enemy population centers designed to inflict broad, general damage. Precision attack and a "counter-force" of missiles primarily aimed to destroy enemy military power has become the new Air Force position.

Available to Kennedy will be the policy followed by the present administration: a mixture of strategic weapons launched from distant or intermediate ranges, from protected sites and from submerged submarines, by plane-carried nuclear bombs as well as missiles.

But there undoubtedly has been duplication in the development programs of the services. Missiles closely similar in range and load-carrying capability have been developed independently not only by the Navy and Air Force but by the Army.

There are problems other than these strategic concepts facing Kennedy and McNamara. The budget, for one, Kennedy has said "defense spending must be based on the security needs of the na-

tion, not the pre-determined confines of a budget." This statement is not unprecedented. It has come from all administrations of peacetime years. Always it has been countered by the argument that the shape of the military is of necessity patterned to that of the budget.

One of the first things that Kennedy may have to do is tackle the question of service dependents overseas.

The Eisenhower administration, seeking to arrest the dollar drain, decided that the number of families of servicemen living abroad should be halved. Angry objec-

tions came swiftly. It was contended morale was threatened, that military personnel might leave service by the thousands. The outgoing administration retreated a little, softened some of the measure. The new administration will be under pressure to void the whole dependents-return order.

The dependents' question is only a facet of the bigger problem of reducing the dollar-gold outflow.

If the situation does not improve, conceivably could influence the size of forces which can be continued in the NATO organization and elsewhere overseas.

Output Cut Is Apparent Failure

EUGENE (AP)—The price of index grade fir plywood dropped to \$60 today and the industry's voluntary production cutback plan was called an apparent failure.

Crow's Lumber Price Index, Portland, said the price tumble started Friday was down to \$60 from the previous \$68 today.

This is the lowest since the end of World War II, although it fell to the same level last August.

Industry sources said that competition will be the word now, and some producers were talking about selling at less than \$60 if necessary to make sales.

Efforts to keep prices up by restricting production ended last week, the Wall Street Journal reported today. Prices fell in two

quick steps to \$60 from \$68 a thousand square feet for the standard quarter inch thick index grade.

United States Plywood Co., according to the Journal, started the slide by going from \$68 to \$64 Simpson Timber Co., Seattle, soon began taking some orders at \$60 and the trend was established.

Output of the Weyerhaeuser Co., according to George Weyerhaeuser, vice president, has been "substantially curtailed," but he added, "the price change has thrown it wide open now. We are going to sell orders at a competitive price and operate plants according to the order flow we can generate."

Major producers blamed smaller producers for failure to hold the price line. Many large units of the industry have been operating on a reduced-shift or a four-day-week basis for some months in an attempt to hold the \$68 price.

But, sources said today, not enough of the industry adhered to the voluntary cutback. Anti-trust laws prevent anything but a voluntary program.

What will happen next is a question. Many millmen say that the industry cannot turn a profit at \$60 and that the next step might be to close up entirely.

The price of plywood got into politics, too.

The executive committee of the

Lane County Democratic Central Committee wired Sens. Wayne Morse and Maurice Neuberger, asking for "early action by appropriate departments of the Kennedy administration."

George Balgger, county chairman, said a survey showed that the "economic situation of the lumber industry is rapidly approaching a crisis."

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Memorial Asks Medical Care

SALEM (AP) — A state Senate joint memorial calling for federal medical care for the aged under Social Security was introduced Monday by state Sen. Vernon Cook, D-Gresham.

Cook said he was joined as principal sponsor by Rep. Ed Benedict, D-Portland.

The memorial says it is presently impossible for millions of persons in the United States to obtain adequate medical aid because of the high cost of medical and hospital care.

It calls medicare under Social Security "the most feasible, democratic and dignified method for assuring medical and hospital care to our elder citizens."

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