

U.S. Hopes To Bypass Missile Need

Editor's Note: Recent decisions on what weapons the United States should build have been clouded by differences with our allies or among the military services. Military analyst Ray Cromley set out to discover the strategic thinking behind the decisions to shelve Skybolt and postpone action on the Nike Zeus anti-missile system and the RS70 reconnaissance-strike plane. What he found is told in an important three-part series which begins here.

By COL. RAY CROMLEY
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WASHINGTON (NEA) — President Kennedy and Defense Secretary McNamara have decided to take the calculated risk that we are so far ahead in intercontinental ballistic missiles, that the Communists won't dare start an all-out nuclear war in the next 10 years.

They are gambling, too, that within that decade Nikita Khrushchev will not have an adequate anti-missile defense operating nor an effective way to knock out Polaris submarines.

This is the reasoning behind the Defense Department decision to shelve the Skybolt and to postpone decisions on building the big RS70 intercontinental plane and the Nike Zeus anti-ICBM system, as learned in two weeks of interviews with key military men, diplomats and scientists from the Defense and State Departments and private defense industry.

The U.S. defense planners are committed to the further gamble that within the 10-year period U.S. scientists will make the major breakthroughs necessary to leapfrog to intercontinental weapons and equipment concepts which will plug the defense-offense loopholes for many years to follow.

Behind these gambles are a number of factors. The White House has ordered something cut from the growing defense budget to accommodate a tax reduction. McNamara wants to spend as much as possible on conventional warfare. Ranking Pentagon scientists believe Nike Zeus, Skybolt and the RS70, as today conceived, will be obsolete "too quickly."

Key Pentagon planners now believe the decision to build an anti-ICBM system should be put off for three years, that some new way should be evolved to do the Skybolt job and some new system to do the RS70 reconnaissance-strike task.

The scientists consider it likely that the research, development, construction and full employment of such new systems would not be completed in less than 10 years.

If this gamble proves wrong and there is an all-out nuclear war within the next 10 years, the United States will find itself with major loopholes in its defense and offense.

Loophole 1—We'll be naked for 10 years against any ICBMs the Russians fire.

Loophole 2—We'll have only a limited ability to lob ballistic missiles into the Soviet Union from a wide variety of unexpected angles and directions.

With a perfected Skybolt, intercontinental bombers could fire these missiles from a range of heights and from any direction unexpectedly. The system thus



NIKE ZEUS — Second best or better than nothing?

would force the Russians to build their defense to cover all directions and a wide variety of possible trajectories.

In contrast, the Minuteman, Titan and Atlas missiles would be fired from fixed bases. These missiles would approach target on fixed trajectories which the Russians could calculate in advance.

Through Polaris subs do not operate from fixed sites and trajectories therefore cannot be precisely known, the limited number of areas feasible for operating Polaris submarines against Russia does limit surprise in missile direction and arc. Therefore, eliminating Skybolt makes it possible for the Russians to have a simpler and more effective system of anti-missile defenses.

Loophole 3—We will have a limited and ineffective reconnaissance-strike ability a few years from now. In major war, this would be a very serious matter.

Once the first exchange of ICBMs was completed, some way would be needed to assess what targets had been destroyed, to find what major targets remained—and hit them fast. Lacking this ability is rather like fighting a war blindfolded. This is the mission intended for the RS70.

Skybolt, Nike Zeus and the RS70 all have technical problems.

With Skybolt, it's the problem of how you fire a ballistic missile at a precise target 1,000 miles away from a moving airplane which may not be flying smoothly and whose precise location and altitude you may not have at the exact second you are firing the missile.

With Nike Zeus it's the problem of developing a radar that would not be fooled by a flock of sophisticated Soviet electronic decoys and a command and control system that would not be knocked out either by the Nike Zeus missile itself or by a high-expanding enemy ICBM.

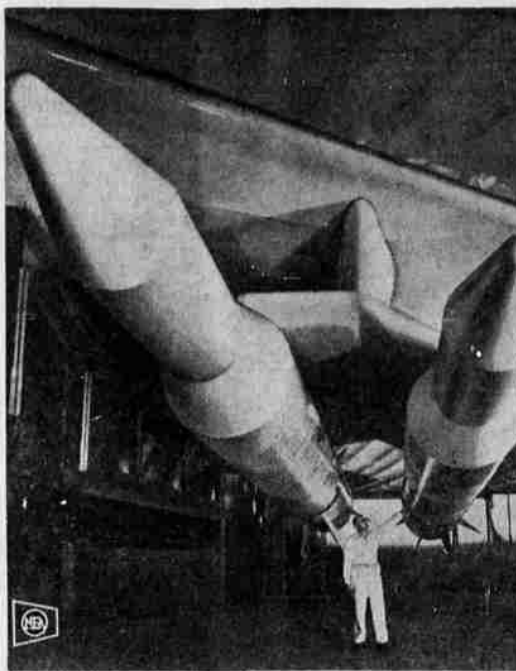
With the RS70, it's the problem of designing a plane with a much

longer range and an electronic sensing and viewing system so designed that crewmen could find targets of opportunity, recognize them, evaluate them and act fast enough to bomb before the plane whizzes too far past the target.

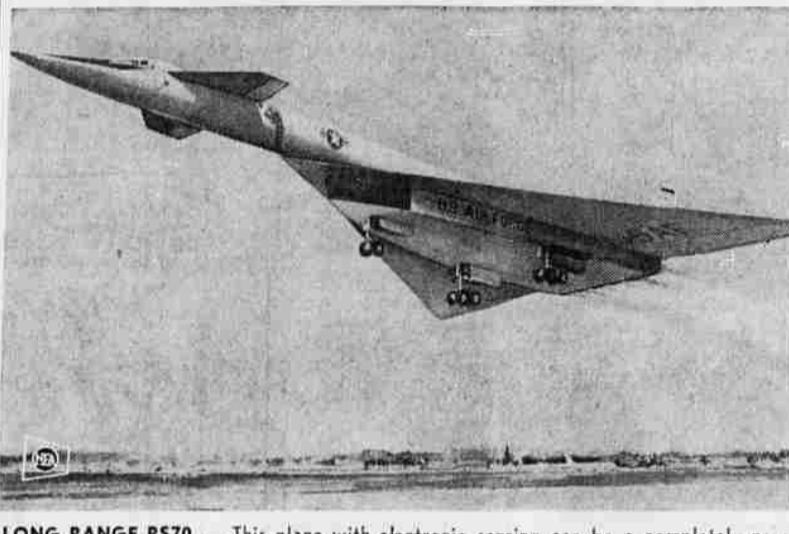
The scientists and military men who spoke for these systems argued that these problems could be solved fairly well, that no weapon is perfect and that the defense-offense loopholes had better be filled with the kind of weapons we could begin building now with today's knowledge.

The men who spoke against the Nike Zeus, Skybolt and the RS70 said they would cost too much as presently conceived, that they wouldn't do a good enough job and that they would be obsolete too soon.

So the decision has been taken to gamble—and continue the research.



SKYBOLT — Is this weapon too tough to be perfect?



LONG RANGE RS70 — This plane with electronic sensing can be a completely new system of defense or possibly a major offensive loophole.

Buildings Started At OSU

Two new buildings—a Radiation Center and an Oceanography Building—are expected to be started this month at Oregon State University, setting the stage for significant future advances in these two important new teaching and research fields.

Bids for the structures were opened this week. Both are expected to be finished in about a year, which will be built on the west edge of the campus.

The \$666,500 Oceanography Building represents another milestone in the rapid growth of OSU ocean studies. Almost no research has been done on the ocean off Oregon before OSU launched its work in 1954. Now, the Oregon State Department of Oceanography is becoming one of America's leaders, Jensen said. Dr. Wayne V. Burt is head of the Oceanography Department.

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Nation Alerted To Fire Hazard

NEW YORK (UPI)—Fires last year took almost 12,000 lives in the United States and caused a loss of over \$1 billion, the National Board of Fire Underwriters said Saturday.

The figures were issued as a warning to the nation to be especially alert to the hazards of fire, especially during the winter months.

"During the wintertime it is the obligation of every man, woman and child to be constantly aware of the dangers of fire and to practice fire prevention at all times," Lewis A. Vincent, general manager of the board said.

Father Damien, who gave his life to the care of lepers in a colony at Molokai, was known as the "Leprosy Priest."



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