

ABM: Mad Momentum To Taste the Ashes

By STEVE SOLOMON
Collegian Staff Writer

THE DISTURBING reality of a future Chinese nuclear arsenal, the specter of confrontation within the next 10 years, may pressure the development of an American anti-ballistic missile system which outstrips both in cost and coverage the present \$6 billion Sentinel system recently put in a state of limbo by the Defense Department.

Legislators, and civilian skeptics in the Department of Defense, can no longer scoff at former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's prognosis of a modest Chinese nuclear striking force by the mid-seventies. Indeed, the Chinese are reportedly ready to test their first ICBM, one of the few remaining hurdles to be cleared before they can legitimately be classified as a nuclear power. The work is proceeding at a good pace, and is expected to be completed by the end of the year.



SOLOMON

JOINING THE atomic fraternity was just a matter of time, of course, but a China capable of launching a nuclear attack on American cities will be harsh reality, indeed. No longer does the United States possess a lead-time factor which would enable it to postpone any further a decision on the merits of an ABM system. Now extensive a deployment, if we should so commit ourselves.

Thus the "major weapons system" review, ordered last week by Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird and to be carried out by the Pentagon and the Defense Department, takes on crucial significance. At stake is the ABM itself, countless billions of dollars, and an almost certain spiral in the arms race if the project is cleared.

THIS IS CLEARLY one case, however, in which money — no matter how much — will not buy the United States a dime's worth of security. If the ABM system was sound, if it incontrovertibly provided the United States with a nuclear antidote, cost would be a relatively small issue.

"Let me make it very clear," former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara wrote in his book, The Essence of Security, "that the \$40 billion (his estimate of the ABM cost) is not the issue. If we could build and deploy a genuinely impenetrable shield... we would be willing to spend... any reasonable multiple of that amount..."

BUT THE HANG-UP is the system's penetrability. Overlooked by many is the action-reaction phenomenon: any defensive missile system can easily be defeated by the enemy's launching of more offensive warheads, or dummy warheads, than there are defensive missiles to intercept them. Thus, the development of a heavy American ABM system would only stimulate the Soviets to increase their offensive potential to a level that would cancel out our defensive advantage. Billions of dollars would bring us only a higher, more dangerous parity of arms.

A light ABM deployment would make little sense, either if directed at a future Chinese threat. For how are the Soviets to be placated? In preparing for the worst possible contingency, as has been the guideline for American defense plans, they must assume the missiles to be directed toward them, toward an unacceptable shift in the balance of power. They must then take the obvious action — heavier offensive potential. And this is just what the United States has done in regard to the light Russian ABM system surrounding Moscow, called the Galosh system.

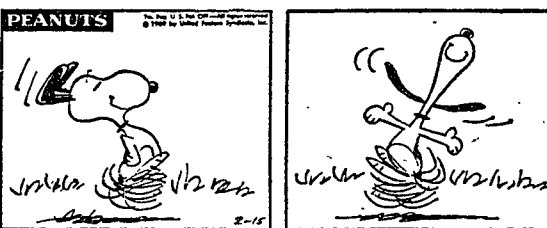
A FURTHER danger would be psychological. "There is a kind of mad momentum intrinsic to the development of all new nuclear weaponry," McNamara wrote. "If a weapons system works and works well, there is strong pressure from many directions to procure and deploy the weapon out of all proportion to the prudent level required." Light deployment, then, carries its own inherent characteristics toward escalation, and a resultant spiral in both the arms race and defense expenditures.

To be sure, it was McNamara who launched the light Sentinel system, but it wasn't without some doubt and reservations. "Our greatest deterrent against such a strike (nuclear) is not a massive, costly and highly penetrable ABM shield," he wrote, "but rather a fully credible, offensive, assured-destruction capability."

IN OTHER WORDS, make the consequences of a counterattack too unacceptable, too obnoxious to the enemy. Guarantee him that he will taste the ashes of his own action, and then the anti-ballistic missile system will be superfluous.



"It is my duty, Commander Bucher, to inform you that what you say can be used against US!"



Letters to the Editor

Prof Supports Blacks

TO THE EDITOR: It was reported in the Collegian that the Chairman of the University Senate has characterized open forums such as the one recently conducted by the Douglass Association as a waste of time. In the same speech he faulted the Association for setting up communications barriers. Dimly, my mind grasps that there is a contradiction between these two statements.

I don't know if the chairman of the Senate was present at the forum; he deplores so deeply, but I, for one, found it an extremely useful opportunity to learn something about the Douglass Association first hand rather than through the press, in committee meetings, or at cocktail parties.

I came away impressed with the integrity of purpose on the part of its spokesman and with a greater understanding of its ends and its means. It was regrettable that so few faculty members could find the time to attend — and that the Collegian of the following day gave so little prominence to Mr. Collins' speech.

Robert Scholten
Professor of Geology

the day, but it took some time, to get it here.

The Freddie Hubbard concert was late because Hubbard, like many jazz musicians, was not punctual. The Club goes to great lengths to remedy this problem, often even sending a man to New York to drive with the band and be sure they are on time. The Jazz Club could have saved money by cancelling our contract but we felt it would have been unfair to the audience. The implication that Hubbard's musicians could have unpacked their instruments more quickly if the Rap-In had not been announced is too absurd to merit a reply.

The "leaders" of the Jazz Club often put in 20 or 30 hours a week trying to make our concert program a success. We beg those who would like to help to come to one of our monthly meetings rather than engage in irresponsible criticism.

The Executive Board
Penn State Jazz Club

Supports Campus ROTC

TO THE EDITOR: I am forced to be skeptical of the comical editorial to be read in the Feb. 4 issue of The Daily Collegian. The author of this article proves himself to be both ignorant and pompous. He presumes to state the doom of ROTC on the basis of a so-called philosophy which he does not even bother to state so that we might judge it ourselves.

He complains that ROTC is a worthless discipline, but is speaking from a convenient position of gross ignorance and inexperience. I am in ROTC and can make no such statement from a position of honesty. Our courses in leadership and tactics, which he decries, are in fact solid, good, and satisfying. I hope that what he objects to is not leadership, for that quality is in considerable demand in all fields.

The entire university would probably be in trouble if we were to condemn courses and curricula out of hand. For example the physical education department offers courses in bait casting, fly tying, scuba diving, etc., which on the surface of ignorance seem to offer but slight value.

The College of Human Development offers a course in etiquette that seems on first sight to be non-academic, but which is in fact basic for many fields such as diplomacy. If one were to join the choir, then one might also wear a uniform for credit. Personally I consider the Army course in pedagogy to be considerably better than Speech 200, and who is to be the judge of what a person may or may not study academically?

The article complained bitterly that a professor of military science should be revered as though he were a professor. I won't argue status, but I don't recall having ever accorded reverence to any professor, and any that seek reverence have an inflated picture of themselves. I prefer to worship God.

I bear no grudge that everyone is entitled to his own opinion as does the author of this sorry article, but I do object to seeing them put in print with no reasonable standard of knowledge, evidence, or even of taste. No man likes to be addressed as "cannon fodder," and the intelligent reader will find little more than sentiment in that work.

Edward Reede
8th-History

Thanks to Cooper

TO THE EDITOR: I would like to commend Doug Cooper for his courage and perseverance in expressing his point of view at the Jerry Ruben rally Thursday. I would also like to thank the Students for a Democratic Society for sponsoring Ruben. He was very entertaining.

Victor Lapuma
2nd-Business Administration

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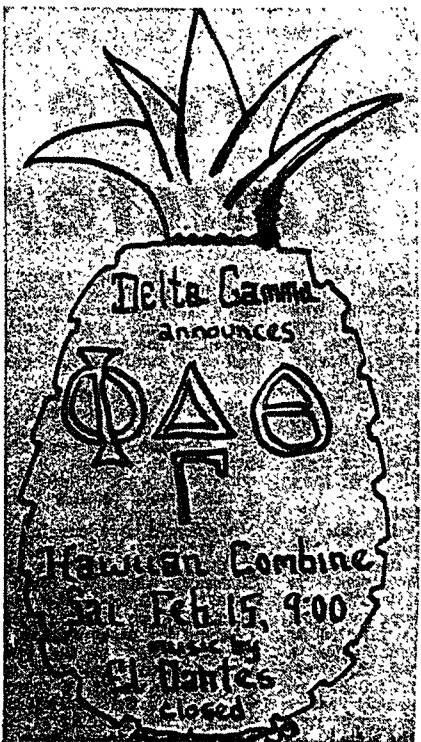
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