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NEWS RELEASE BY SENATOR JOHN STENNIS
CHAIRMAN, PREPAREDNESS INVESTIGATING SUBCOMMITTEE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 1964

Senator John Stennis (D. -Miss.), Chairman of the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, announced today that he had directed the Subcommittee staff to update and review the current information and data relating to the reliability and dependability of the nation's long-range strategic missiles as soon as possible. The announcement followed the recent statement by Senator Barry Goldwater (R. - Ariz.), regarding missile dependability and Secretary McNamara's response thereto.

"The recent public controversy about the dependability of our ICBM force," Senator Stennis said, "requires that the Subcommittee bring up to date its information on this all-important matter. Under present defense planning our future deterrence and retaliatory striking power will be based largely upon long-range strategic missiles. Therefore, the nation's survival may depend upon their ability to survive and penetrate to their assigned targets."

The Mississippi lawmaker emphasized that the American people are entitled to all the facts about the matter that security considerations will permit. He pointed out, however, that much of the information about the strategic missile force was highly sensitive and could not be disclosed without aiding our potential enemies. For this reason, he said, "the Subcommittee

- 2 -

will have to handle the matter with extreme care and circumspection."

The Subcommittee, under Stennis' chairmanship, has maintained a continuing interest in and surveillance over the U.S. ballistic missile programs since early 1961. In 1961 and 1962 the Subcommittee held extensive closed hearings on strategic weapons and weapon delivery systems. In addition, many aspects of missile survivability and reliability were examined by the Subcommittee in 1963 during its consideration of the military implications of the nuclear test ban treaty. In view of this, Chairman Stennis pointed out, the primary purpose of the inquiry will be to update the information already possessed by the investigating group.

He said that the Subcommittee's future course of action with respect to the matter would be determined after completion and consideration of the staff study.