

FOR THE PRESS:

December 6, 1966

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara today made the following statement at the LBJ Ranch:

The President and I have been discussing general nuclear war forces of the United States, the objectives of those forces and the latest intelligence estimates on the intercontinental ballistic missile forces of the Soviet Union.

Our objectives for our strategic nuclear forces are unchanged:

1. To deter a deliberate nuclear attack upon the United States and its allies by maintaining a clear and convincing capability to inflict unacceptable damage on an attacker, even if that attacker were to strike first, and
2. To limit damage to our population and industry if such a war should come.

The deterrent portion of our power is called our "assured destruction" force and the offensive and defensive measures which would reduce the weight of an enemy attack are called "damage limiting" forces.

National intelligence estimates are one of several factors examined as we determine the type and mix of our strategic forces.

In my annual posture statement to Congress last February, I emphasized that our estimates of Soviet strength in the years immediately ahead were much more certain than our long-range estimates. Specifically, I said:

"In order to assess the capabilities of our general nuclear war forces over the next several years, we must take into account the size and character of the forces the Soviets are likely to have during the same period. While we have reasonably high confidence in our estimates for the near future, our estimates for the latter part of this decade and the early part of the next are subject to great uncertainties. As I pointed out in past appearances before this Committee, such projections are, at best, only informed estimates, particularly since they deal with a period beyond production and deployment lead-times of the weapon systems involved."

(MORE)

I went on to point out that we had planned our offensive forces of missiles and bombers to hedge against several contingencies, including possibilities that:

1. A Soviet ballistic missile defense might be "greater than expected" by the intelligence community.

2. The Soviets might embark upon any one of several possible build-ups, including variations in their targeting doctrine, variations in the technological sophistication of their systems and variations in the speed of their production of both unprotected missiles and missiles in hard silos.

I told Congress that: "We had given special attention this year to an analysis of Soviet threats over and above those projected in the latest intelligence estimates. We have done so because an Assured Destruction capability is the vital first objective which must be met in full by our strategic nuclear forces under all foreseeable circumstances and regardless of the costs or difficulties involved."

I added that after giving this special attention to an analysis of Soviet threats beyond those projected in the intelligence estimates, we had decided to accelerate the development of the Poseidon Missile, to move ahead on new penetration aids and to produce and deploy the Minuteman III.

We have said repeatedly in the past that the United States has 3 to 4 times as many intercontinental ballistic missiles as the Soviet Union.

That is still true today.

Our short-range intelligence estimates of the size of the Soviet ICBM force have been extremely accurate. Evidence indicates that the Soviet ICBM strength today is just what our intelligence people a year ago had predicted it would be.

We also believe that the 1965 intelligence estimates of the ICBM force which the Soviet Union will have in mid-1967 will be accurate. Our latest information confirms those earlier estimates.

Additionally, we now have evidence indicating that we were wise to plan our own ICBM program on the assumption that national intelligence estimates for the future might be low and that, despite the lack of solid proof earlier, the Soviets might decide to step up the pace of their own program beyond their past procurement rates.

(MORE)

3.

This appears to be happening. Evidence now suggests that the Soviets in mid-1968 will have more ICBM's than we predicted for that time period by intelligence estimates in 1965. But we had more than anticipated this development in our planning. This new intelligence estimate, therefore, has no basic impact on our offensive strategic force requirements.

It is vital that these three major points are clearly understood by the American public:

1. Even if the new intelligence estimate for mid-1968 proves accurate, the United States, without taking any actions beyond those already planned, will continue to have a substantial quantitative and qualitative superiority over the Soviet Union in ICBM's at that time.

2. The United States has as many ICBM's today as the latest national intelligence estimate gives the Soviet Union several years hence.

3. Our strategic offensive forces have today and will continue to have in the future the capability of absorbing a deliberate first strike and retaliating with sufficient strength to inflict unacceptable damage upon the aggressor or any combination of aggressors.

E N D

TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE 7 December 1966
TO: Legislative Counsel		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING 7001	
REMARKS: <i>J.O.N.</i> <i>file: Liaison briefings</i> <i>90/1 - McNamara / 1 CBM</i>		
FROM: Joseph C. Goodwin		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	EXTENSION

FORM NO. 241
1 FEB 55

REPLACES FORM 36-8
WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

STAT