

# Transcript of Joint News Conference by President

Special to The New York Times

**JOHNSON CITY, Tex., Nov. 10—** Following is the official transcript of today's news conference at the LBJ Ranch involving the President, Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara and Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

## JOHNSON STATEMENT

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I asked Secretary McNamara and General Wheeler to come here today.

General Wheeler had gone to South Vietnam with Secretary McNamara, but did not come with him the other day. I wanted to review with them together some developments in South Vietnam that they observed when they were there, some plans that we must make for the next year in connection with our Defense Department budget, and matters that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of Defense normally discuss with the President.

Mr. Christian tells me that you would like to meet with Secretary McNamara. He will be available for questions as will General Wheeler.

After you finish with them and they are on their way back, I will be glad to meet with you and discuss other matters that may interest you.

## McNAMARA STATEMENT

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. As the President mentioned, General Wheeler and I have discussed with him this morning our operations in Vietnam and the outlook for the defense program and the defense budget in fiscal 1968.

General Wheeler will comment upon our report on Vietnam, and I will spend a few minutes before asking our questions reviewing certain of the aspects of our defense budget discussions.

This was the third of these discussions. We had our first with the President last Friday, our second on Saturday, and the third today. We, of course, are not prepared to make a statement on the total funds to be requested, nor even to review in any detail specific details of that budget.

But we did cover four aspects of it this morning.

First, we discussed the antiballistic missile systems, the action the Soviet Union is taking to initiate deployment of such a system, the developments of the United States antiballistic missile system, starting with the Nike-Zeus several years ago, and a much more advanced system which we have under development today, and on which we have spent over half a billion dollars a year in the last several years.

We considered the possible deployment of such systems, both against the Chinese Communist nuclear threat and against the Soviet offensive systems as well. We concluded that it is much too early to make a decision for deployment against the Chinese threat and we have not arrived at a decision on any other deployment. We will continue our discussions on this subject in the weeks to come.

## The Poseidon Missile

Secondly, we discussed the possible production of the Poseidon missile. You may recall that this is a new missile for deployment at sea, the development of which we initiated as part of the fiscal 1967 budget as an insurance program. We estimated at the time this program was presented last year that it would require almost \$2-billion to develop, and several additional billions to deploy.

We recommended, and I believe will recommend to the Congress, a proposal to

listic missile system? A. Yes, I believe there is considerable evidence that they are.

Q. Is it an effective system, sir? A. I think you would have to ask them.

Q. I mean, sir, do we believe that it is? .

A. It is very difficult, of course, for us to appraise the effectiveness of their system. I think it is important that we assume it is effective and, of course, that will be the assumption on which we base the development and deployment of our own intercontinental ballistic missiles.

## 2. Supplementary Funds

Q. Mr. Secretary, I know you said you can't go into detail with respect to the supplemental, but is there any indication now as to whether it would be larger or smaller than your earlier indications?

A. No. We have not completed our review of it. The Joint Chiefs are still reviewing certain aspects of the program. They have not completed their recommendations to me, nor have I to the President. So I am not in any position to even approximate the total amount of funds to be requested of the Congress. But I think it is quite clear, as the President said last Saturday and as I am reporting to you now, that we will have such a supplement.

## 3. Soviet Deployment

Q. Mr. Secretary, when did the Russians start deploying this system?

A. I would rather not try to approximate the date. I will simply indicate to you what we have said heretofore, that they have started such deployment and we must assume, as I have reported to the Congress previously, that they will do so, that they will deploy an effective system.

I think that is the only safe assumption that we can make in planning our own strategic force. That has been the assumption we made as foundation for the fiscal 1967 budget and it will be the same assumption that we will apply to the 1968 program.

## 4. Nike-X System

Q. Mr. Secretary, how about our own — it is the Nike-X, isn't it?

A. Yes. We have the Nike-X system under development at the present time. On that system we have spent over a half-million dollars a year for several years. We believe it to be a very advanced system of antiballistic missile defense.

As I mentioned earlier, we discussed today the possible deployment of that system in relation to both the Chinese Communist nuclear developments and those elsewhere in the world.

Q. What do you mean by deployment? A. Production and location of units in the United States.

## 5. Chinese Threat

Q. How long do you think it would be before you could fully deploy it?

A. Any deployment of such a system would take place over several years. One point I would like to stress to you is that the length of time required to deploy such a system is less than the length of time required for the Chinese Communists to develop nuclear weapons that conceivably could threaten this nation. Therefore, it is not timely to at this time make a decision to deploy such a system to defend against the Chinese Communist threat.

Q. Does Red China have a nuclear



**ASSESSES RESULTS OF ELECTION: President Johnson yesterday. He said he was not altogether unhappy.**

calls for the four months of August through November of between 37,000 and 50,000, and represents, therefore, a very substantial cut.

The current outlook for the draft for the next four months, which is our planning period, is to call in about 81,000 men, this for the months of December, January, February and March. For December, we have a call of 12,000, for January we have just announced the call at 27,000, and for the remaining two months we have not yet established the specific allocation by month. In total, they will add to December and January an amount sufficient to bring the four-month total to about 81,000 men. That compares with the total for the four months of August, September, October and November, of about 162,000, a very substantial reduction.

## 8. Soviet Capacity

Q. Mr. Secretary, just one more question, if you please, on the ballistic missile system. A. Surely.

Q. In layman's language, does this mean that the Russians now have the capacity to knock down American ballistic missiles but we do not?

A. Certainly not. There is absolutely no question about our capability of penetrating the Soviet defenses with both our missiles and aircraft. There has been no question about that at any time during the past 15 years and there

an Army of seriously defeated force.

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