

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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A 46 WX

ADVANCE FOR 6:30 P.M. EST TODAY

510: MISSILE GAP

(ADVANCE) WASHINGTON, MARCH 25 (AP)—THE "MISSILE GAP" CAME BOUNCING BACK INTO THE NEWS TODAY ON A SENATOR'S STATEMENT THAT IT WAS CREATED AND DESTROYED BY THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

A CABINET MEMBER AGREED, IN EFFECT, AND SAID THOSE WHO TALKED OF SUCH A GAP IN 1960 DID SO IN GOOD FAITH.

IN THE 1960 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, DEMOCRATS CHARGED THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION HAD PERMITTED SOVIET RUSSIA TO OPEN A WIDE GAP IN NUCLEAR MISSILE STRENGTH.

LAST YEAR, AFTER PRESIDENT KENNEDY TOOK OFFICE, THE "MISSILE GAP" APPARENTLY VANISHED AND THIS BROUGHT REPUBLICAN COUNTER-CHARGES THAT DEMOCRATS DELIBERATELY MISREPRESENTED FACTS AND CREATED THE "MISSILE GAP" OUT OF WHOLE CLOTH FOR POLITICAL ENDS.

A PUBLISHED VOLUME OF HEARINGS BY THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE INCLUDED TESTIMONY BY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT S. MCNAMARA. HE WAS EXPLAINING WHY HE NOW BELIEVES THE UNITED STATES CAN COPE WITH NUCLEAR ATTACK BY RUSSIA. THIS INCLUDED ESTIMATES OF RUSSIAN LONG-RANGE STRATEGIC POWER.

SEN. STUART SYMINGTON, D-MO., WHO IN 1960 WAS AMONG DEMOCRATS WHO CONTENDED THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION HAD PERMITTED A GAP TO DEVELOP, USED MCNAMARA'S REMARKS AS AN OCCASION TO PRESENT A SORT OF TIMETABLE ON THE DOWNWARD REVISION OF ESTIMATES ON SOVIET STRENGTH.

SYMINGTON SAID THAT "IN 1958 AND 1959 WE WERE GIVEN AN ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF ICBMS THE RUSSIANS WOULD HAVE IN FISCAL YEAR 1961; "IN FEBRUARY, 1960 THE THEN SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ANNOUNCED THAT IN THE FUTURE FIGURES WOULD BE BASED ON ESTIMATES OF INTENT INSTEAD OF CAPABILITY. IN FEBRUARY, THE ESTIMATE WAS CUT 66 PER CENT, SAID SYMINGTON. THEN, SYMINGTON SAID, THE TIMETABLE RAN LIKE THIS:

IN AUGUST 1960, THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE OF SOVIET MISSILE STRENGTH WAS REDUCED FOUR PER CENT; IN JUNE 1961 IT WAS REDUCED AGAIN "SO THAT IT WAS ONLY 15 PER CENT OF WHAT IT HAD BEEN ESTIMATED AS BUT A FEW MONTHS BEFORE."

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IN SEPTEMBER 1961—"ALL OF THIS UNDER THE PREVIOUS MANAGEMENT OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AND THE 24 ADVISORY GROUPS" -- IT DROPPED AGAIN BY 96.5 PER CENT FROM THE ESTIMATE MADE 19 MONTHS BEFORE.