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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

#10

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS

Date: 07 Sep 2018 Authority: EO 13526+ S use § 552

Declassify: _____ Deny in Full: _____

Declassify in Part: X

Reason: 3.3(b)(3)(4)(8)

MDR: 18 -M- 1859

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: MX

[REDACTED]

There have been numerous suggestions as to how to base the MX, starting with the several variants of the Carter Multiple Protective System (MPS), otherwise known as the Underground Racetrack.

[REDACTED]

After consideration of the Townes Commission report, we concluded that there was no fully developed ground-based system which could assure survivability. Therefore, we reported to the Congress that our best solution was to put some of the missiles into existing silos, which we would super harden, at the same time beginning a thorough analysis and examination of some other promising options, such as deep underground basing, silos defended by BMD, and the continuous patrol aircraft concept, under which the MX would be deployed on planes flying on a continuous orbit over the ocean.

This approach would give us an early deployment in 1986, which is the date the MX would first begin coming off the production line and would thus add substantially to our deterrent since 40 of the new missiles would be in place, [REDACTED] while we developed the best long-term basing mode with enduring survivability.

OSD 3.3(b)(3)(4)(8)

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330-84-0224. 5x14. MX (max. 40)

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Unfortunately, the Cohen-Nunn Amendment to our 1982 Authorization Bill required us to report the selected permanent mode by July of 1983, and it prohibited us from any interim basing scheme in super hardened silos.

This year, the Senate Committee when they acted on our 1983 Authorization Bill, put further restrictions on interim basing and deferred any MX funding in 1983 until a permanent, survivable basing mode was agreed to by Congress, and they required that we make our decision-recommendation to them by December 1 of this year. By this action, they also cut a billion and a half from the manufacture of the first 9 missiles and \$715 million of the funds required to reconstruct the Minuteman silos.

The House Committee reduced (but did not kill) our request for interim basing by about \$300 million, or approximately one half the amount we requested. The Full Committee did approve construction of the MX Missile.

In direct response to your questions in your latest memorandum to me on the MX:

First, the minimum funding level required to protect the MX production schedule and date of initial operation in 1986 is \$880 million to procure the missiles, plus another \$50 million for spares for testing, and \$565 million for basing in the hardened silos, for a total of about \$1.5 billion, plus \$2.4 billion for the necessary research, development and testing, and another \$300 million for study of the three most promising options. Both the Senate and House Committees eliminated the amounts specifically requested for the continuous patrol aircraft, and the Senate deleted all funds for study of future options plus, as I said above, all funds for the initial procurement of the missile.

Second: Our research and engineering people believe that the most promising option thus far is the so-called Close Spaced Basing, or Dense Pack method under which super hardened vertical shelters would be placed about 2,000 feet apart with a hundred shelters therefore occupying approximately 10 square miles. The theory is that in order to attack such a Dense Pack field of MX missiles, the Soviets would have to put their missiles into such a tightly packed pattern that many would be destroyed on the way in by the phenomena called fratricide. As a result of this theoretical concept it is felt that a much larger number of closely packed MX silos would survive than if the Soviets were able to pick them off one by one. This in turn would require substantial changes in their existing pattern of missile firing.

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I have some difficulty with choosing this proposal now as our final solution because of its highly theoretical basis, and because it is clearly possible for the Soviets to change their firing pattern although it would take them time and cost them a substantial amount. Therefore, I believe my best answer to your second question as to how we describe the most promising deceptive, defensible basing option is that without further study of several options we cannot yet pick out the most promising, although it is fair to tell you that the head of our Research and Engineering, Under Secretary Dick DeLauer, believes the Dense Pack method is the best.

In regard to your third question, we do believe that we can make a reasonable selection and recommendation to you by December of this year, although we would greatly prefer the original timetable of next summer. While it is by no means close, the most promising option, to my mind, involves a greatly improved Ballistic Missile Defense system, probably fired from space, which could prevent incoming Soviet missiles from ever reentering the atmosphere. This is the only option that would prevent inevitable large scale damage that would result from any Soviet missile striking the ground or one of our silos. But scientists tell us it is several years away, at least.

In response to your fourth question, given the short time allowed us by the Congress, we would probably recommend, within that time, two or three different modes of basing, including possibly having some of the interim based missiles remain in place with additional hardening. While none of the currently promising options are "incompatible" with interim silo basing, it is true that if some completely defensible or survivable ground basing system were developed it would, of course, be unnecessary to have the MXs in hardened existing silos. The real problem here is that so far there is no system ready to be deployed as either invulnerable or even highly survivable, given the Soviets' guidance systems and accuracy, and their destructive power.

Another option is, of course, to ask the Committees to appropriate the necessary funding for research, development, and initial procurement for the other missiles, but to "put a fence around it", that is, declare that it should not be spent until a final basing mode is recommended to, and approved by, the Congress.

On balance, I suggest that you continue to urge the interim basing as originally recommended, but accept as a fall-back, a Congressional decision to appropriate "fenced" funds until we have recommended a final solution, and try to get a few more months at least for us to make that determination.

I look forward to discussing this matter with you at your convenience.

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

June 11, 1982

DIRECTOR
PROGRAM ANALYSIS
AND EVALUATION

MEMORANDUM FOR T. K. JONES, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY (STRATEGIC & THEATER
NUCLEAR FORCES

SUBJECT: Memorandum to the President on NSDD 35

(U) Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the package for the President on MX strategy.

(S) The draft memo to the President does a good job of indicating there are, at present, uncertainties regarding CSB survivability. That's a message the President needs to understand. To be consistent with this general tone, I'd suggest changing the last sentence in the second paragraph to read: "Finally, the survivability growth options of deception and Ballistic Missile Defense are intended to assure a high degree of survivability..."

(S) The draft memo, as well as the talker and the Congressional letter, request restoration of BMD funds cut by the HASC. I think we need to prepare the President for two possible questions regarding this request. (1) Why do we need to restore all \$468M of BMD funds when, a month ago as part of the budget reduction drill, the Defense Department offered to decrease BMD funding by \$200M in FY83? (2) Given that the Administration has announced its intent not to violate existing treaties, why do we need to preserve an accelerated BMD deployment option?

(S) Finally, the draft talker and the Congressional letter suggest that a one-year delay in MX IOC will "leave open the window of vulnerability." That seems to imply that our ability to close the "window of vulnerability" is entirely dependent on our deploying one system--MX. Moreover, I don't think it would be productive for the President to initiate another debate over the so-called "window of vulnerability"--how it is defined and whether it exists. I'd suggest deleting all reference to the "window of vulnerability."

David S. C. Chu

DAVID S. C. CHU

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Review on [redacted]~~

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