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BUILDING THE ABM

Many people thought that the anti-ballistic missile system (ABM) was killed off at least ten years ago. It has been a non-issue since Nixon and Kissinger gave away our right to build it in the SALT I Anti-ABM Treaty in 1972.

But, like Mark Twain's death, those reports were greatly exaggerated. The ABM was revived in the Republican Platform adopted in Detroit last month, and could be restored to full health if a pro-ABM Congress is elected in November.

The Platform calls for "vigorous research and development of an effective anti-ballistic missile system, such as is already at hand in the Soviet Union, as well as more modern ABM technologies." With that sentence, the Platform not only demands that the United States have an ABM, but admits that the Soviets already have one.

The ABM is not a weapon of war. It is a weapon of peace. It is not designed to kill people; its purpose is to prevent people from being killed. The ABM is the best and only way to defend our Minuteman missiles against being destroyed in their silos.

The mission of the ABM has been accurately described as "hitting a bullet with a bullet in a blizzard." It is actually even more difficult than that because real warheads must be sorted out from concealment in clouds of decoys, and then destroyed within seconds.

Yet American technological genius was equal to that challenge, and U.S. scientists perfected our anti-ballistic missile system during the 1960s. Our government planned to install enough batteries of ABMs to protect all our population centers as well as our ICBMs from enemy missiles.

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During the two years of the SALT I negotiations in 1970 and 1971, all the components of our ABM system were tested. The accuracy and reliability of the intercepts greatly exceeded expectations.

This applied both to our ABM endoatmospheric defensive missile, the Sprint, which intercepts the enemy missile after it reenters the earth's atmosphere, and to our ABM exoatmospheric defensive missile, the Spartan, which intercepts the enemy missile while it is still in outer space, near the end of its midcourse.

Our radar systems demonstrated their capability of reliably detecting and tracking enemy missiles. Just as important, the anticipated difficulties in distinguishing between real warheads and decoys were met and overcome.

Since ABMs are purely defensive, they cannot threaten any other country. If the Soviet Union objects to our ABMs, this would be an indication that it plans to attack us with what our ABMs could shoot down.

The chief reason the Soviets were so eager for the SALT I Treaty was their desire to stop our ABM deployment. Henry Kissinger, the architect of SALT I, testified that "what drove these (SALT) negotiations for the first year was their desire to limit our ABM deployment. ... In the ABM field we had the more dynamic program which is being arrested."

It would appear to be a logical deduction that the Soviets would simply not be interested in blocking a U.S. program that would not be effective. Rather, if they did not expect it to be effective, they would be happy to see us waste a few billion dollars on a worthless program.

Now that the Soviets have attained nuclear superiority over us, the need to build an ABM system to protect America is greater than ever. Nothing would prevent a Soviet nuclear attack so effectively as knowing in advance that we have an effective weapon against war which will prevent their missiles from hitting their targets.

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Our government is talking about moving some 500 if our ICBMs from present ~~xxxxxxxx~~ midwest sites to Rocky Mountain locations. This will not give us any protection against enemy ICBMs, since Russian missiles can target Colorado just as easily as North Dakota, and the mountains would be no defense against the tremendous power and ~~x~~ increased ~~xxxx~~ accuracy of the Soviet missiles.

The SALT I Anti-ABM Treaty is probably the most immoral action our government ever took because it surrendered our people's right of self-defense against incoming missiles. ~~xx~~ The Treaty should be renounced so that we can begin deployment of the ABM missile to defend our people and our weapons.

The Treaty's terms allow renunciation if a nation's "supreme interests" are jeopardized. What could be a more supreme interest than saving the lives of the American people~~N~~?

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