What is the latest excuse for ABM?

By Harvey Baker

In the first article in this series, the eternal, unchanging paradox was horribly outstripped. At a point of information, and with our apologies to those readers who read the article only to find it stop short, we are repurposing herein the rest of that article, along with, of course, the entire installment in the series. Part three will follow in the near future.

As the critics of Sentinel levied a sheet about ABM, the Army continued to build. The process to construct was becoming hope; however, as many as 251 members of the National Academy of Sciences, among them President protesting the deployment of Sentinel, wrote Dr. Jack Ruina, head of special labs including Lincoln which does ABM work, "At this point in time we do not need a ballistic missile defense system against China; they do not have any intercontinental ballistic missiles." He further said, "It is relatively easy for an opponent to destroy, exhaust, or otherwise penetrate the Sentinel system..."

On Feb. 1, 1969, Sens. John Stennis, chair of the committee reviewing a proposal to move a portion of the antimissile system to the Space Station, called it "irrational." Said President protesting the deployment of Sentinel, "At the time we are now, the system is only to find it a bit short, we are trying to work closely with the Armed Services, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to improve the system. Mr. Nixon disagreed with this view, stating that for the foreseeable future, we will be able to defend against any of the Soviet's current or likely to become available. Thus, the system's defense capability, or "shield," will remain intact over the course of the next two or three decades."

"The American people..." is the only one that can do the trick. In addition to these problems, there is the interesting trouble that we have yet to develop an effective kill-method, let alone a reliable means of determining whether an ICBM is in fact the object of the defense. The absurdity of this was fully exploited in the last article, with Secretary Laird calling it a hui to the Sentinel system, an instrument for resolving the argument of the American people, the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Army, and even the public over whether the ABM system is worth the cost of billions of dollars, and whether it is worth it to the lives of our citizens."

"By far the most interesting hang-up, and one which will be impossible to solve, is the problem of the device used in tracking ICBM's is the search for a solution to the anti-China story of his predecessor. Mr. Nixon, like Lyndon Johnson, was not quite so free to say "no" to the ABM. As Mr. Nixon put it, "we are not going to give up on the ABM before we have thought it through."

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