

*Firing of A.B.M. Warheads over Canada*

system is bad and that the Russians are ignorant, but we cannot assume that they are stupid. For anyone to suggest that the building and perfection of a modern, up-to-date A.B.M. system in the U.S. will not be immediately followed by similar action on the part of the Russians is a grand delusion. As I understand it, in the late 50s and early 60s when the Americans were constructing their Sentinel system, which was designed to defend cities such as Washington, the Russians were constructing a similar system to protect Moscow. There is not the remotest resemblance between the now obsolete system which surrounds Moscow and Washington and what is now proposed by President Nixon. To hold these up as an example, I submit, is not in accordance with either the history or the facts of the present A.B.M. system. It is not, in fact, the same as the A.B.M. systems that were installed in the late 50s and early 60s around Moscow and Washington. As my leader mentioned today, the obsolete system that surrounds Moscow consists of 67 weapons, as compared to what is proposed by President Nixon which has 700 weapons. I suggest that it is perfectly logical and inevitable that the Russians will also endeavour to instal a thin A.B.M. system of 700 or more weapons. For anyone to suggest that this will not bring about a further escalation is nonsense.

● (11:20 p.m.)

There are certain rationalisations put forward by the President of the United States. It should be noted that he seems to have something less than majority opinion on his side on this issue. One of these rationalisations is that the A.B.M. system should be built to protect the United States from rockets the Chinese might fire. There appears to be an animalistic viewpoint held by military men in North America that the Chinese are not people, and that they do not, therefore, think and react like people. It is passing strange that we should need an A.B.M. system to protect North America against Chinese missiles while at the same time being prepared, as Professor Wiesner pointed out, not to build one if the Russians would agree to follow suit. Surely, this lack of logic is evidence of some kind of insanity. If the system is necessary to defend us against Chinese missiles, it would be most embarrassing if the Russians were to agree to negotiate on the basis that they would refrain from building one if we would also refrain from doing so. What would happen to the China argument in that event?

[Mr. Benjamin.]

One has the impression that the military and government mind in the United States maintains this animalistic view that there are Chinese people huddling in caves putting together a rocket made out of nuts, bolts and tin cans with an atomic weapon at the head of it and that as soon as the work is done they will fire it off for two reasons: first, to see whether it works, and, second to hit the United States.

I suspect that when China does develop its intercontinental rocketry the rockets will be aimed in two directions. It is just possible that the U.S.S.R. and the United States might combine their A.B.M. system, and here Canada could play the part of an honest broker. We might arrange for them to meet at the DEW line.

For anyone to suggest there would not be escalation as the result of an A.B.M. system constructed by the United States or by the U.S.S.R. would be to mislead the people of this country. I submit that the reasons put forward by the President of the United States and echoed by the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Cadieux) and the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) in this house tonight are illogical, inadequate, irrelevant.

I call as witnesses a number of people who I do not think can be considered knowledgeable with regard to matters such as this, namely, former Vice-President Hubert Humphrey, Senator Edward Kennedy, Senator Mike Mansfield, Senator McGovern, Professor Wiesner, scientific advisor to the late President Kennedy, and others. There is a list of names as long as your arm of prominent, knowledgeable men with access to the necessary information who have repeatedly stated that in their opinion construction of an A.B.M. system is a continuation of the race to suicide.

As the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather) said earlier this evening, the President of the United States has not got this proposition through Congress as yet and it is a fairly even bet that he may not get it through Congress. It would be most embarrassing for the military minds in the United States, and it would be embarrassing for those in Canada who went along with this proposal, if the United States Congress rejected it, if the representatives of the American people voted against this expenditure of billions of dollars on a system which Professor Wiesner says will be obsolete by the time it is finished.