

(rough Draft of a Letter Which Udall and Stevens Might Send to Gibbons).

Dear Jack:

The Administration has proposed that the United States build the MX missile and deploy it in the so-called "racetrack mode" in Utah and Nevada. Although the case for a new strategic missile is fairly well understood, the missile basing system remains controversial, and the trade-offs involved remain unclear. In view of the critical importance of MX to the future military security of the United States, the enormous size of the proposed budget, and the tremendous impact which MX deployment may have on the regions where such deployment takes place, Congress as a whole ought to have the best obtainable information and analysis about MX basing. There would be particular value in an assessment which, while drawing upon whatever military and intelligence information is pertinent, would be independent of the Defense Department and the Administration.

We therefore request that OTA prepare and submit to the Board as soon as possible a plan for an assessment of how the MX missile might be based. If this plan indicates that the time and money required for a study are not excessive, we expect to request that the Board approve the initiation of such an assessment.

The study would describe and evaluate the Administration proposal, selected alternatives which the Defense Department has studied, and additional possibilities which seem worthy of consideration. Various types of multiple protective structure (MPS) systems, ~~xxx~~ alternatives to MPS, and alternatives to land-basing should be addressed.

Specifically, OTA's evaluation should address the suitability of each basing concept in terms of such issues as technical risk, survivability (including detectability and hardness), reliability, the time required for deployment, etc. To the extent necessary to evaluate basing systems, the study should also address the projected Soviet threat, and possible Soviet responses to an MX system.

In order to clarify the trade-offs that must be made in choosing a basing system, the study should address basing proposals in the following contexts:

(1) the peacetime strategic balance, in which U.S. strategic forces should preserve and enhance stability and security; (2) likely future efforts to negotiate arms control treaties, in which U.S. strategic forces should make such negotiations easier rather than more difficult; (3) a severe crisis or limited war, in which U.S. strategic forces should enhance our ability to manage the crisis and to terminate it on acceptable terms; and (4) a major war, in which U.S. strategic forces should make an enemy regret that he had refused to be deterred.

To the extent necessary for a comparison of basing systems, the study should evaluate the environmental impact of construction and peacetime operation of the various alternatives. The effect which the choice of basing system might have on the effects of war on the civilian population and economy should also be addressed.

The final topic of the study should be an estimate of the cost of the Administration proposal and of any alternatives that appear worthy of serious consideration. We request that you explore the possibility of a

cooperative effort between OTA and the Congressional Budget Office, in which CBO would apply their expertise concerning the budgetary impact of choices Congress might make. If such CBO cooperation appears to be likely, it should be reflected in the assessment plan submitted to the Board.

We do not expect, or desire, that OTA attempt to reach conclusions about whether the Administration proposals, or particular alternatives, should be adopted. The completed assessment should present a clear analysis of the options available to Congress regarding MX basing, an explanation of why these particular options are worthy of consideration, and a statement of the major advantages and disadvantages of each option. It is desirable that a preliminary draft of the assessment be ready in early 1981.

While OTA should draw upon appropriate classified data regarding both U.S. capabilities and the Soviet threat, the report should contain at least a summary that is unclassified.