Scientific Advice in the State Department

A new approach to the Department's science office is needed if science is to be properly related to policy.

Eugene B. Skolnikoff

The apparent inability of the Department of State to fill the vacancy in the Department's chief science advisory post—that of Director of International Scientific and Technological Affairs—brings to the fore once again the question of what kinds of scientific advice the Department needs in the formulation of foreign policy (*1*). The position has been unfilled since Ragnar Rollefson returned to the University of Wisconsin in September of 1964, though strenuous efforts, so far unsuccessful, have been made to recruit a replacement.

Even if a new man is found, the uneven performance of the science office since its resurrection in 1958 in response to the Sputnik crisis (Secretary Dulles had allowed an earlier version of the office, established in 1950, to atrophy) raises doubts as to the real value of the existing scientific advisory apparatus in the Department of State. The performance has been good primarily in low-priority areas, while the most important functions have all too often gone unfulfilled, or have been performed on an *ad hoc* basis by individuals and institutions from outside the Department.

The most important function of the science adviser can be summed up simply, if academically, as ensuring that the relevant scientific and technological aspects of central issues of foreign policy are integrated in policy deliberations. For an astonishing range of policy concerns these aspects are of critical importance to the choices facing the policy maker. And for those foreign policy issues of the greatest interest, these technical aspects are not simply background facts to be provided by an "expert." Instead, representing them effectively in the policy process requires good scientific judgment, involves estimates of future developments in both science and technology, and, most important, demands a thorough appreciation of the ways in which the technological alternatives may depend on and interact with the political alternatives. Moreover, science and technology are also available to the policy maker as new instruments of policy—instruments that can be used appropriately only when there is adequate understanding of their special characteristics and of the relationship between those characteristics and policy objectives.

As far as the position and influence of the Department of State within the government is concerned, the quality of its scientific advice determines, in a myriad ways, the Department's ability to keep itself free of domination by the more technical agencies of government. The Secretary of State's role as chief foreign policy adviser to the President will, in fact, be increasingly in jeopardy if the Department under him continues to be deficient in effective technical-political competence while the issues with which it must deal involve ever more sophisticated scientific and technological elements.

The current relevance of the facts or expectations of science and technology to many foreign policy issues is not entirely without precedent. Quite a few foreign policy concerns in the past were heavily conditioned by technical considerations: fishery matters, treaties on the use of common water resources, international agreements on weights and measures, and others.

However, gradually since 1900, and explosively since World War II, there has been a change in degree of dependence that is tantamount to a change in kind. Now, not only are many of the central issues of foreign policy—those that affect the fundamental international position and security of the nation—intimately tied to scientific and technological variables, but whole new areas of policy concern based on science and technology have arisen that demand the time and attention of senior policy officials.

National Security Issues

This new dependence of foreign policy issues on science and technology is illustrated well in issues relating to national security. The fantastically increased technical sophistication of armaments and related hardware developments means that questions of relative power, of the limitations and uses of power, of future power relationships, of agreements to control or reduce military power—all have to be considered in the light of known technological facts and, more critically, of uncertain scientific and technological estimates. Whole generations of general war weapons systems have been developed and discarded because of obsolescence without ever having been used in actual warfare. The measure of a nation's total military power—the measure of its ability to support its major international commitments—must now be based on highly complex estimates of a great variety of technical factors, such as the kinds of weapons the nation has, their effectiveness against various defensive systems which are also changing rapidly, the ability to command and control the weapons during attack, and the likely developments, immediate and long-range, in both offensive and defensive armaments. Possibilities of "breakthroughs" achieved here or by potential enemies that might have enormous impact on the effectiveness of a force must be guarded against. Yet breakthroughs cannot be anticipated in detail, simply because their parameters are unknown in advance. As John Herz has said (*2*), "the new weapons developments seem to affect the system of international relations in novel fashion: where formerly innovations,

The author is associate professor of political science at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge; from 1958 to 1963 he was a member of the staff of the Special Assistant to the President for Science and Technology.

even radical ones, would permit the emergence of more or less stable new systems of some durability, the dynamic of the present is such as to foreclose any kind of stability."

For the arms control side of the national security coin, there are, in addition to decisions on the technical-military questions, other judgments to be made—about the design and performance of feasible inspection and verification systems; about the possibility of clandestine weapon developments and their significance if undetected; about whether the results of permissible research and development will negate the benefits of an arms control agreement; and so forth.

Policy making in the areas of military affairs and arms control must have fully integrated within it the technological and scientific competence that makes possible sound judgments on questions like these. Such integration implies, among other characteristics, the ability to ask for the *relevant* technical information (relevant, that is, to the political choices); the ability to understand the uncertainty inherent in judgments of future scientific and technological advances, or even of new applications of existing technology; and the ability to see clearly the reciprocal dependence of technical and political variables.

Naturally, for issues in the national security area, the Department of State relies heavily on other departments and agencies of government—in particular the Department of Defense—for technical inputs in its policy deliberations. For the great majority of issues it faces, that is the most efficient and practical procedure. However, complete dependence on outside technical information in effect means that on important issues the Department is at the mercy of the technical judgments of others in situations in which the technical judgments may dictate or greatly influence the political choices. And these technical judgments—since they are usually estimates of untried systems or of future developments, and thus are inherently uncertain—are being made by agencies with their own policy prejudices and with parochial, or at least different, perspectives on American foreign policy objectives.

For example, in the mid-1950's, the U.S. Government's desire to deploy some missiles in Europe to counter the growing Soviet medium-range-missile threat, plus the internal competition between the various elements of the U.S. military services which were seeking strategic nuclear roles, led to excessive evaluations by the services of the effectiveness in a European environment of American intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBM's). It is somewhat of an oversimplification of a complex issue to say that the State Department took the evaluations at face value. Yet, though the Department had doubts on other grounds, they did not seriously question the inflated technical-military estimates and did agree to the deployment of IRBM weapons systems in Europe which did not enhance, and may have temporarily decreased, the security of America and Europe.

Several years later, in a somewhat similar situation, the State Department, unable to question, on a technical basis, Air Force judgments about the effectiveness and feasibility of the Skybolt airborne missile weapons system then under development, went along with a plan to provide the weapons for English bombers. The plan was doomed to failure almost from its inception on technical and cost grounds. When the failure came, in late 1962, and was formally communicated to the British at the Nassau meeting between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Macmillan, the political costs to both countries and to NATO were severe (*3*).

The debate on nuclear test ban policy, particularly in the last years of the Eisenhower administration, offers another example. The great emphasis placed on details of the technical capabilities of a detection and inspection system to protect against clandestine nuclear testing came to obscure the fundamental political nature of the issue. At all times the heart of the issue was the question of the balance of risks—the risk of continued testing versus the risk of unilateral evasion of the treaty. This is a question heavily conditioned by the technical situation but by no means wholly determined by it. Yet the Department of State, which had to look to the President's Special Assistant for Science and Technology and to the Atomic Energy Commission and Department of Defense for technical judgments, found itself unable to put the technical disagreements into proper focus. Each new technical concept for evasion put forward by the agencies opposed to the ban appeared as a major problem, and the Department was unable to evaluate the practical feasibility of the concepts, or their importance in the basic political equation (*4*).

It would be folly to say that, for these and other national security issues, a science adviser in the Department of State, with a necessarily small scientific staff, could on his own provide the necessary technical analyses and be able to place all technical inputs in the proper perspective. But a science adviser serving as a focal point for challenging agency positions, evaluating contradictory information, maintaining substantive contact with scientists and engineers at all levels in other agencies, obtaining independent studies, and—most important—presenting the technical variables as functions of the political choices and implications, could vastly improve the Department's ability to formulate its independent recommendations to the President. It is worth noting that the creation, in 1961, of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, with one of its major bureaus concerned entirely with the scientific and technological aspects of arms control, has sharply improved the situation in this policy area at least.

Space and Atomic Energy

Outside the field of national security are many areas of major foreign policy concern in which science and technology now figure prominently. The most obvious are those in which the advances of science and technology have created entirely new subjects for the foreign-policy-maker to deal with. Space and the peaceful uses of atomic energy are the most prominent, and provide vivid examples of ways in which science and technology can be, and have been, used for political purposes.

Viewing science and technology as instruments of foreign policy is not new. In a sense, the Lewis and Clark expedition was an attempt to use a scientific expedition to assert this country's interest in the virgin lands to the west. Today, science and technology offer the policy maker many opportunities. They provide him with political instruments for reaching elements in other populations, for enhancing the nation's prestige and influence, for bypassing political obstacles, and for directly attacking specific sources of tension. Such political use, however, must be tempered with knowledge of the special characteristics and needs of science and technology and with understanding of the dangers to long-range national objectives of diversion of scientific and technological resources for short-term political purposes. The current debate in the scientific community about the size of the space program and the emphasis it should receive is, in effect, a debate over whether the foreign policy objectives the space program is designed to serve warrant the costs (disputed) of diverting such a large portion of the nation's scientific and technological resources into this one program.

The debate has many elements, but whatever opinion one holds about the scale of resources to be devoted to the space and peaceful atomic energy programs, it is clear that these fields are applications of science and technology that are peculiarly relevant to a nation's foreign policy interests. They require massive investment of resources; they require advanced scientific and technological competence; they are dramatic and symbolic of the age; and they are related to military capability in fact, and beyond fact in the public's view. In short, the space and peaceful atomic energy programs are highly visible and have come to represent a nation's competence and capability, whatever the actual achievements of the programs. Thus, they are obvious instruments of foreign policy, especially in an age when surrogate demonstrations of power must serve instead of the real thing.

Both the Soviet Union and the United States have recognized the foreign policy importance of these fields, though unfortunately this country had to be shown the significance of space spectaculars. It could be argued that an astute science adviser in the State Department would have realized the political significance of being the first nation to orbit an earth satellite, but one could hardly have expected any one person in the Washington atmosphere of 1955–1957 to have influenced government programs appreciably in the direction of greater expenditure on space exploration. However, once the relevance of space to foreign policy interest had been accepted, a science adviser at State should have had a major role to play in the policy decisions concerning the space program. In fact, the State Department has generally had little to say, as compared with NASA and the Atomic Energy Commission, about the development, or even the international use, of the space and atomic energy programs.

Aside from the broad relationship of space and atomic energy to foreign policy objectives, the detailed development and direction of the programs themselves involve innumerable interactions with U.S. foreign relations. Obviously the desire for international cooperation and the need for international operations calls for a continuous blending of technical and foreign policy factors. Reactor agreements with other nations, policy on safeguards, establishment of overseas tracking stations, bilateral cooperative space research programs—these and other programs and policies all mean that the AEC and NASA must have extensive foreign-program staffs and must have close relations with State for guidance and help.

Most of the interactions between the technical agencies and the State Department on such subjects are relatively simple and straightforward; the difficulty of relating technical factors to policy objectives is minimal. But for some questions—in particular those that relate to significant shifts or modifications in the program objectives of NASA or the AEC—the difficulty may be great because of the near-monopoly of technical information enjoyed by the operating agencies.

An illuminating illustration of this problem is the early history of the steps taken within this government which led to the U.S.–U.S.S.R. space cooperation agreements. In 1961, as a follow-up to President Kennedy's inaugural address, a draft of a series of projects on which it was thought cooperation with the Soviet Union might be possible was prepared under the leadership of the President's Special Assistant for Science and Technology, Jerome B. Wiesner. The State Department participated only marginally in the work, by its own choice. Though the ideas developed were shelved that year because of the coolness of the Vienna conference between Khrushchev and Kennedy, they were revived in 1962 when Khrushchev included in his congratulatory telegram on the Glenn orbital flight an offer for space cooperation. President Kennedy asked that the space projects be staffed through the relevant government agencies so that proposals could be developed for presentation to the Soviet Union (*5*). NASA thereupon prepared specific suggestions, from draft proposals of the original study plus some other ideas they had developed in the interim, for interagency discussion.

It was only at this juncture that the State Department came into the picture in any major way, yet, to all intents and purposes, by then the Department's real choices had been preempted by NASA. Possibilities for cooperation could, in principle, range from minor efforts involving exchange of data to major efforts of joint space exploration; at each point of the curve of possibilities the political costs and payoffs would be different. NASA's technical judgment of the feasibility and desirability of certain classes of projects was inevitably affected by its own objectives, its concepts of what would contribute most to American foreign policy, and its preferences with regard to international cooperation. After weighing the alternatives in this way, NASA came to the high-level interagency discussion with a list of projects that excluded, for "technical" reasons, any large-scale cooperative projects.

The State Department, with no means of arriving at an independent technical judgment, thus had no significant choice to make and no rejoinder to NASA's argument that larger-scale projects were technically unfeasible or unwise. NASA, through its technical appraisals, which were certainly conditioned, even if unconsciously, by nontechnical as well as technical considerations, was determining the boundary conditions within which the State Department had to exercise political choice. In this case NASA was ensuring that U.S.–Soviet cooperation in space would be minor, involving little political risk but offering correspondingly little chance for political gain. The State Department should have been in a position to challenge those boundary conditions, not in a large interagency meeting but in the privacy of its own offices, where the political implications of a wider range of technical alternatives could have been examined. To effectively challenge the position of other agencies, State would have required, and now requires, a science adviser in the Department, able to formulate the right technical and political questions, able to obtain the necessary technical judgments, and able to analyze the political alternatives in terms of their technical and other parameters.

Other Responsibilities

One could give many examples of the relevance of science and technology to important areas of foreign policy concern, and of situations of the kind in which a science adviser could play an important role. Areas such as foreign economic assistance, bilateral relationships, national influence and prestige, and affairs of international organizations all have major technical elements that influence, and are influenced by, the underlying political aspects. In all such areas a strong science office in the Department could play a major role, by assuring adequate consideration of technical matters in the policy-making process, by recognizing opportunities for capitalizing on science and technology to advance a political objective, and by reducing the Department of State's reliance on the technical-political judgments of the operating agencies of government.

The great increase, in recent years, in the international scientific and technological activities of all branches of the U.S. Government, which often have major impact on other governments or societies, has emphasized a new requirement: the need for the Department of State to be able to monitor and guide overseas technical activities effectively. If the Department is not able to do this, it will be allowing other agencies of government to carry out independent policies and programs of direct relevance to this country's broad foreign policy interests.

The State Department has also come to have a small but important share of the government's responsibility for strengthening and advancing science. The international activities and organizations of science, always important, have multiplied to an astonishing degree in the postwar world. These international activities are essential to development in fields of science that cannot be investigated within the arbitrary boundaries of states, or in fields that require cooperative attack; they are also essential to the independent exchange of ideas and information that is necessary in any field of science. The Department of State has anything but a minor role to play in facilitating these international activities, in keeping them free of extraneous political problems, and in helping American scientists achieve the objectives of these activities. The science office in the Department recognizes this responsibility for strengthening and protecting the international activities of scientists, and since 1960 the performance of the office and of the Department as a whole has been excellent in this area.

However, the Department's relationship to science and technology should go beyond the strengthening and protecting of international scientific activities. Technological developments sponsored by the government in the fields of defense, space, and atomic energy all have impact on foreign policy; in many cases their importance to foreign policy is a major determinant of the scale of government support they receive. But developments in these fields can take many directions; alternative technical choices must be faced. And developments in other fields—for example, health, transport, agriculture—can have uses for, or can influence, the conduct of foreign policy. Moreover, many technical possibilities of value to foreign policy objectives may be feasible but remain unexplored because of lack of an advocate, or lack of funds and direction. Should development of a direct-broadcast satellite be accorded high priority? Should federal funds be used for developing new seed strains that will thrive in the Andes? Should the nation be spending more R & D resources to develop limited-war weapons? Should seismology be given major new support? These are all questions with direct bearing on the nation's foreign relations.

The Department of State should not be an idle bystander as the nation's technological objectives are established. At times, rare times, it has participated effectively—notably in reinvigorating seismology because of its relevance to the detection of nuclear explosions—but often its views are unheard or, at best, general. Of course, the Department cannot seriously attempt to play an active role in these matters if it lacks internal competence or the ability to command competence from other agencies or from sources outside the government, so that it can understand the technical possibilities and alternatives and present its views intelligently in policy debate.

New Imperatives for Foreign Policy

Beyond the need for integrating scientific and technological elements in policy making is another aspect of these issues which has been only touched on above but which is of at least equal importance. That is the need to estimate the future, to examine the ways in which international relations and perhaps the international political system will be altered as science and technology continue their explosive advance, and to explore the likely changes in what constitutes the "national interest." This is not primarily a matter of predicting future developments in detail and guessing what their effects will be. That is a difficult enterprise and one likely to be highly imprecise. Rather, what is required is some sense of the trends in science and technology and estimates of the future impact of those trends on international relations and, in turn, on current policies and objectives.

For example, what is the meaning today and for the future of concepts of control of territory and populations? Have the revolutions in communications and transport made it impossible to prevent the entry of "subversive" ideas into a formerly closed society? Were the breaking away of the European satellites from the Soviet Union and the evolution of the Soviet Union itself inevitable because of modern technology? Can the same developments be expected in the case of China, and, if so, what are the implications for China policy today?

And what are the implications of what might be called global technology? Increasingly, new technology has effects and applications which are global in scale, requiring international agreement and a willingness to accept international control. Is technology going to cause nations, willingly or unwillingly, to give up traditional notions of sovereignty and freedom of national action? What international preparations should be made now for future technological developments that will tend to have these effects?

Or take another example. It is quite clear that the revolution in weapons systems has changed the meaning of warfare between major powers and has contributed to the present stalemate or balance. Are future developments likely to be stabilizing or destabilizing to the system? Are there implications here that call for tacit or formal agreements designed to retard the development of technology likely to be destabilizing? The test ban was, in effect, an agreement to slow down developments in a certain direction. The 1963 U.N. resolution banning deployment of weapons of mass destruction in outer space similarly impedes developments considered to be destabilizing (*6*). Should this fundamental and controversial idea of inhibiting certain avenues of technological development by international agreement be examined more carefully as other possible weapons developments loom ahead?

These and other ideas need airing within and outside the government, but the Department of State must have the sophisticated competence to raise and explore these ideas on its own initiative; they are not the sole responsibility of others.

The Science Office

These, then, are the major reasons why the Department of State should have a science office and a science adviser. The task is large and extremely difficult. It is too big for one man, or for one small office, to do in its entirety. And it would be useless to attempt to create a large scientific staff in the Department, simply because it would be impossible to build a large staff having the scientific and political competence required. But that does not mean that the most important parts of the science advisory task cannot be achieved.

Selectivity must inevitably be one of the key characteristics of a State Department science office. It is, and has been, all too easy for the office to get bogged down in innumerable issues that could have been handled by others or that do not deserve the attention they receive. A science adviser must select his primary targets, and if these are to concern war and peace and the implications of future scientific developments, his background should include relevant experience. Involvement and interest in armaments, atomic energy, disarmament, and space are prerequisites.

Of course, a science adviser, whatever his background and backup, cannot represent all fields. Thus, he must have the means to tap the nongovernment scientific community when this is required, as the President's science adviser has, and must have a staff that is able to work with the technical agencies and knows how to extract the relevant information from them. Realistically, in the great majority of cases the normal procedure would be to get the needed technical information from the pertinent agency. But where the issues are central, or where innovation is required, an independent means of forming technical judgments and of working on a basis of equal competence with other agencies is essential.

The science adviser's immediate staff represents only part of his State Department resources. He also has the far-flung science attachés, now numbering more than 20, to assist him in his task of keeping informed on important issues and helping in the policy-making process. Unfortunately, though the attachés are mainly high-caliber scientists, at only a few posts have they been able to establish the relationships within their own embassy or with the State Department in Washington that provide the political-scientific advice required. As science reporters the attachés have been superb, but their major function should be the same as that of the science adviser himself: integrating scientific elements into the foreign policy process. It is encouraging to note that recent directives from the science office and recent selections of attachés indicate a trend in this direction (*7*).

Every foreign service officer, moreover, must have a hand in the process of integrating science into policy. He cannot look to the science office at every turn; often the office would lack the information and understanding needed on a particular issue, and the load on the office would be intolerable. A significant number of foreign service offices must have some competence in science as it relates to foreign affairs if they are to be able to understand the relevance of technical aspects of issues, to seek out information, and to ask the right questions. This competence can be acquired through training and experience; a small beginning has been made, on the training side, at the Foreign Service Institute and at educational institutions that traditionally train foreign service officers.

The relations that exist between a science adviser and the senior officers of the Department are of course critical to his ability to have an impact on policy formulation. Little need be said about that beyond noting that it adds one more item to the long list of qualifications required of a candidate, for the science adviser must be able to function effectively against difficult odds in the State Department bureaucracy.

It is sometimes held that the Department does not need its own advisory apparatus but should look to the President's Special Assistant for Science and Technology when it needs help. This was, in fact, the course followed on the nuclear test ban issue. But that is not a feasible alternative for any significant number of issues, if only because the staff in the President's office is too small. More important, the result of such a course would be, again, to turn over major foreign policy responsibilities to another office—in effect what happened on the test ban issue in the late 1950's. The Department must have its own internal technical competence—a science office that can survey the world from the Department's own perspective.

Lastly, need the science adviser be a scientist? If one looks only at the nature of the required "technical" inputs into policy, the answer is, preferably but not necessarily, for those inputs require as much understanding of the political side of an issue as of the technical. With good technical associates, and experience in dealing with technical questions, a nonscientist could provide the bridge. However, he would have to surround himself with individuals with good technical judgment, and this would not be easy.

There are very few nonscientists who would, in fact, qualify, and for other reasons, which have little to do with the substance of issues, a scientist—one with stature in his field—is necessary. One of these other reasons is the fact that the science adviser will often be in the position of second-guessing an agency of government, and the senior officers of the Department must have full confidence in the technical validity of the advice they are receiving. Similarly, his word must carry weight within the Department, and that requires stature, seniority, and some independence of position. In addition, the science adviser will often have to call on members of the scientific community for advice, for special studies, or for short-term assignments. A well-respected name helps enormously (*8*).

Of course, scientific stature will not make any difference whatever unless the science adviser has the basic ability to relate science and technology to foreign policy matters and the force and energy to make his views known and felt within the Department. It isn't all up to him by any means. If the Secretary or the senior officers or the foreign service in general are disinterested or hostile, then the post will be doomed to continued stagnation.

But the function is too important for the post to be allowed to atrophy as it did once before. The right man must be found and the right emphasis given, so that the potential of the science office may perhaps be realized.

References and Notes

1. Although there is a growing body of literature dealing with foreign policy issues that have significant scientific aspects, there is very little that focuses directly on the science advisory function in the foreign policy process. My forthcoming book *Science, Technology and American Foreign Policy* (M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, in press) is an attempt to fill a gap. Other particularly relevant literature includes G. B. Kistiakowsky, *Science* **131**, 1019 (1960); R. Gilpin and C. Wright, Eds., *Scientists and National Policy-Making* (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1964), especially articles by H. Brooks, R. Kreidler, and W. Schilling; C. Haskins, *The Scientific Revolution and World Politics* (Harper & Row, New York, 1964).
2. J. H. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age* (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1962), p. 19.
3. W. W. Kaufmann, *The McNamara Strategy* (Harper & Row, New York, 1964), p. 125.
4. The recently released book by H. K. Jacobson and E. Stein, *Diplomats, Scientists, and Politicians* (Univ. of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1966), presents the most detailed and competent history of the test ban debate in the U.S. Government yet produced. The views on the debate expressed in this paragraph are my own, however.
5. New York *Times* **1962**, 10 (22 Feb. 1962).
6. "U.N. Resolution Against Orbiting of Nuclear Weapons," General Assembly Resolution No. 1884 (XVIII), adopted 17 Oct. 1963.
7. "Functions of Science Attaches," *SCI* [Office of International Scientific and Technological Affairs] *Directive, Department of State,* 2 Mar. 1965.
8. The present acting director, an outstanding regular foreign service officer—Mr. Herman Pollack—has considerably improved the science office's performance even though he is not a scientist and is little known outside the Department. There is a limit to the influence a regular foreign service officer can have in that position, however, for the reasons given; the gains in performance that Mr. Pollack has achieved are in part a measure of past deficiencies and in part a measure of his own unusual competence.

NEWS AND COMMENT

Anti-Missile Missile: Next Entry in the Arms Race?

The anti-ballistic-missile missile (ABM), on which the United States has spent more than $2 billion in research and development funds since 1957, has for several years been waiting just off the stage of political controversy. Recently it may have been given its cue. Michigan's Governor George Romney, appearing on NBC's "Meet the Press" on 13 November as an obvious if undeclared contender for the Republican presidential nomination in 1968, dropped a hint that the ABM may have won a prominent place in Republican campaign oratory for the next 2 years.

Prior to the 1960 election, Romney recalled, the Democrats had charged that lax defense policies of the Republican administration had resulted in a dangerous "missile gap." "Now when Mr. McNamara became Secretary of Defense he dissipated that idea in about 2 months," the governor said. "But he's just confronted us with a problem of equal seriousness in indicating that Russia now has an anti-ballistic-missile system, and we don't have one. This is a development of the greatest importance. Perhaps we have a gap in this respect now, as a result of the mismanagement of the Democratic administrations, that is comparable to the missile gap that proved to be a myth."

Romney's suggestion that political capital will be made of the fact that the administration has yet to decide to produce and deploy a U.S. ABM followed a statement which McNamara made to the press after talking with President Johnson about the next defense budget. It has long been known that the Soviet Union was developing an anti-missile missile, but the U.S. intelligence community has been uncertain and divided about whether the Russians were actually deploying such a missile. McNamara told reporters there is "considerable evidence" that the Soviets are in fact deploying an ABM system.

The Secretary did not elaborate, but the evidence is reported to consist chiefly of some installations around Leningrad and Moscow and enough sign of site clearing and new construction elsewhere to suggest widespread deployment of an anti-missile system. Defense officials generally have believed that Soviet anti-missile defense technology has lagged behind that of the United States.

Romney's reaction to McNamara's disclosure is consistent with the way some members of Congress regard the administration's cautious approach to the question of deploying major new weapons systems. The House Armed Services Committee, chaired by Mendel Rivers of South Carolina, regularly excoriates McNamara for an alleged propensity to ignore the advice of his generals and admirals. In a report last May the committee suggested that McNamara's Pentagon regime is pushing the United States "toward a military position that is sterile in its imaginative content and wholly unrealistic in its application." Among other recommendations going beyond McNamara's budget proposals, the committee proposed that $168 million be appropriated for "preproduction" activities for Nike X, as the U.S. Army's ABM project is known.

Melvin R. Laird of Wisconsin, chairman of the Republican Conference of the House, and other minority members of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee have expressed the belief that, because of present defense policies, the United States may be unable to cope with future enemy threats. These Republicans suspect the administration of being more interested in avoiding an arms race than in the "aggressive pursuit of advanced weapons development, such as the anti-ballistic missile system or the advanced manned strategic aircraft."

Laird and his Republican colleagues were, of course, all too pleased to join the Democrats on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee in urging that Congress give McNamara the $168 million in unasked-for preproduction funds. Congress, as always, did as its committees on defense had recommended. McNamara and the President do not have to spend the extra money, but, if they don't spend it, Romney, Laird, and other Republicans are likely to make the most of the administration's decision to ignore the congressional mandate in the face of the assumed Soviet ABM deployment. The Republicans probably will make much of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's unanimous recommendation for ABM deployment, though it is believed by some in Washington that this unanimity reflects a spirit of *quid pro quo*