

Statement by Deputy Press Secretary Speakes on Production of the MX Missile

December 7, 1982

Soviet Defense Minister Ustinov's remarks are a clear effort to influence the American political process. He fails to mention that the Soviet Union has already deployed 308 SS - 18 ICBM's, which are larger and heavier than the MX, and 300 SS - 19 ICBM's, which are roughly equivalent to the MX in size. All are capable of destroying hardened targets in the United States.

The Soviets have failed to mention openly that they already have the first of their next generation of ICBM's in flight testing. This testing began prior to the President's decision on the Peacekeeper. While we have openly explained the purpose and the characteristics of the Peacekeeper, the Soviets have yet to provide any information on the purpose and capabilities of their new missile.

For the Soviets now to cast the MX in the role of another excuse to build more missiles makes no sense when the United States is trying to redress the balance which the Soviet Union has upset.

Note: Deputy Press Secretary Larry M. Speakes read the statement at his daily press briefing in the Briefing Room at the White House.

<http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/120782b.htm>