

Moscow Must Be Laughing

By ROBERT G. HALFORD

FOLLOWING Mr. Diefenbaker's recent statement of Government policy relative to the air defence of Canada, many Canadian newspapers published reports to the effect that USAF officials were jubilant over the selection of "their" missile—the Bomarc—as Canada's prime air defence weapon, and the assumed decision to scrap the Avro Arrow.

We would hazard a guess that there was even more jubilation among Russian air force officials, though it may be that their incredulity would keep them from attaching any significance to the reports of Mr. Diefenbaker's statement.

Not Too Late: Fortunately, though the Prime Minister's actions and statements indicate that he is leaning strongly towards abandoning the Arrow, final action has been deferred until next March. This gives some time to convince the Government that it would be utter folly . . . and in effect no air defence at all . . . to depend entirely on missiles, however good, for the air defence of this country.

The Prime Minister states that the "preponderance of expert opinion is that by the 1960's manned aircraft, however outstanding, will be less effective in meeting the threat than previously expected." It is not known who comprises this expert opinion, but obviously they are a different group than the one to which Mr. Diefenbaker's own Defence Minister has access.

Mr. Pearkes, almost from the day he took office, in public speeches has been constantly reiterating the continuing need for manned aircraft. As recently as July, the Defence Minister told the Commons estimates committee that he was convinced Canada would need a manned interceptor for the foreseeable future. Relative to the Bomarc, he is on record as telling the committee that . . . "the Bomarc will not replace the manned interceptor; it is supplementary. . ."

Poor But Alive: Admittedly, the cost of the Arrow will be considerable and will probably eventually lead to an increase in taxes. We intend no joke in this instance, when we say that you can't take it with you. It is a fact of life of our times that we need defence systems, and these defence systems are inevitably costly.

It is similarly a fact of life, repeated many times by many people, but evidently without effect, that every dollar spent abroad on weapons, stays abroad; while every dollar spent in Canada stays here, and 65 per cent of it finds its way back to the Government in taxes.

In short, the proposed elimination of the manned fighter from Canadian air defence plans makes no sense whatsoever, either military or economic.

It is significant that both the U.S. and Russia are continuing unabated the production and development of complete families of manned aircraft, including interceptors as well as bombers. Even Britain, which has gone further than any

other power in the direction of complete reliance on missiles for air defence, sees a need for at least one more manned interceptor.

Backbone of Defence: Gen Orval Cook, USAF (Rtd.), president of the Aircraft Industries Association of America, has this to say: ". . . I think I reflect leading military thought when I say that manned airplanes are going to be the backbone of the combat forces for many years to come. I belong to a school which believes we can *never* entirely substitute electronic wizardry for human judgment, the ability to change plans and the capability to appraise target selections when things go awry."

Lest Gen. Cook's remarks be discounted because of his position as spokesman for the U.S. aircraft industry, it should be pointed out that this industry holds 75% of all the prime and production contracts that have been let for missiles by the U.S. government.

Let it be clearly understood that there is here no intended suggestion of criticism of the Bomarc as an anti-aircraft missile. It is probably as good as or better than anything else currently available. But it was never intended to be an *only* means of defence. Even its developers, the Boeing Airplane Co., see it as a supplementary air defence weapon, not a substitute.

Comparatively Speaking: The "super" Bomarc (a development of the present model, and the one that Canada will be getting in 1961) is expected to have an altitude capability of 100,000 ft. and a speed similar to that of the production Arrow. Range will be 400 miles, far short of that of the Arrow.

It would appear that altitude is the only performance category in which Bomarc can with assurance be said to excel the Arrow. At the same time, it must be remembered that the Arrow is an air-to-air missile launching platform. Its weapons could with ease make up the altitude differential.

The Arrow is a flexible multi-target weapon, capable of being used again and again. Bomarc is a one-shot weapon; it is gone forever, whether it hits or misses. Once launched, it cannot differentiate friend from foe.

The Arrow even has an anti-ICBM potential. An anti-ICBM missile launched from 60,000 ft. at Mach 1.5 requires only one-third as much thrust as the ground launched missile, to carry out the same task.

Better Investment: If, for economic reasons, it is necessary for Canada to choose between these weapons . . . and we emphasize again that there is really no choice, because the two weapons are not intended to be competitive . . . then the nod should go to the one that can give us "more bang for a buck", i.e., the Arrow.

To vest Canada's air defence in two close-in, one-shot, fixed, concrete missile emplacements is a reversion to the Maginot Line concept.