

TUCSON DAILY CITIZEN

# AF Charged With Neglect In Selecting Missile Sites

By JOHN RIDDICK

The Air Force is selecting its missile bases without regard to lethal fallout dangers to millions of civilians, a University of Arizona scientist said today.

Millions of Americans lie in the path of prevailing winds that could be expected to carry a radioactive death 200 miles away in the event of nuclear missile war, Dr. James McDonald, senior physicist in the UA Institute of Atmospheric Physics, said.

"There is urgent need for the Air Force to change its policies," McDonald added. "The Air Force is needlessly increasing the risk of death from radioactive fallout for millions of civilians."

The present policy of the Air Force is to save money and time by putting the 11 intercontinental ballistic missile bases already selected at the site of existing air bases, McDonald said.

But this policy, however reasonable from these standpoints, does not consider the fallout problem—which is the greatest killing force in nuclear bombs.

The millions of people in Los Angeles, for example, are downwind 140 miles from Vandenberg AFB on the Pacific ocean.

And in putting another ICBM base at Offutt AFB in Nebraska, a target has been created to draw radioactive firepower which would be poured down the prevailing winds on the thousands of people in Lincoln, Omaha, Council Bluffs and Des Moines to the east.

Prevailing winds in general are from West to East.

Most of the American intercontinental ballistic missiles are being placed in "hardened" silos underground for greater protection. In order to destroy them, a 5 megaton H-bomb would have to strike the ground within 1.1 miles. This is what it would take to produce the necessary blast pressure of 100 pounds per square inch, McDonald said.

This means that an enemy could be expected to aim perhaps 15 to 20 missiles at any target to overcome his mathematical chances of missing.

Air nuclear bursts carry their destructive effect in blast and thermal radiation. But a ground impact also scoops up millions of tons of dirt on which the radioactivity would be carried back to earth.

"This is a matter of the danger

of local fallout rather than the comparatively slow drip of peacetime test fission products," McDonald said.

The Rand Corp. in a study for the Air Force estimates that a 10 megaton surface burst would lay an invisible film of contaminated dust downwind over 10,000 square miles with a fatal 36-hour dose of radiation.

McDonald estimates that the fatal dose of radiation could be expected to cover a strip 50 miles wide for 200 miles downwind.

Vandenberg was originally selected as a missile training base and then made a site for offensive weapons as well.

"Los Angeles residents have good reason to demand the launchers be converted to merely very costly training aids," McDonald said.

All of the 11 bases have been placed in the West. Two have been well chosen from the fallout standpoint—Mountain Home, Idaho and Rapid City, S.D.

On the other hand, the inhabitants of Spokane have two missile bases upwind within fallout range—Fairchild and Larson.

And so does Kansas City—Forbes AFB 60 miles away and another missile base 140 miles upwind. Atlas launchers are reportedly on all sides of Cheyenne.

McDonald said that he has studied the West from the viewpoint of how much space is available in which only cities of less than 25,000 persons lie downwind from possible missile sites.

There are 74,000 square miles of such comparatively vacant land in Arizona, 82,000 in Nevada and 90,000 in Montana.

In the meantime, McDonald suggests that the federal government build bomb shelters for the folks in Mountain Home, Idaho.

Letters which have gone from McDonald to Air Force officials in recent months and which referred to Tucson as a potential ICBM base have brought little more information than the view that the city is already a high priority target as a SAC base anyhow, the scientist said.

## Bureau Of Reclamation To Report On Damsite

At Tucson's request the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation will do a study of the effect a dam at Charleston would have on the flow of San Pedro River floodwaters to a proposed dam at Buttes.

Mayor Don Hummel said yesterday he had received word from the office of Sen. Carl Hayden (D-Ariz) that the Interior Department had agreed to the study.

Action was begun about a month ago when Hummel discovered a study had been done on the proposed Buttes dam without consideration of waters that might be taken upstream—for use in Tucson—at a proposed dam at Charleston

near Hayden, about 80 miles northeast of Tucson.

Buttes is on the Gila, downstream from the interesection with the San Pedro. The government made a study to see how much water might be trapped by a dam at Buttes, for use in the San Carlos water project.