

Missile Base Sites Criticized

WASHINGTON — The Air Force says its policy of locating intercontinental ballistic missile sites near air bases doesn't increase the danger of enemy thermonuclear attacks on nearby cities.

The Air Force made the statement yesterday in reply to Dr. James E. McDonald of the University of Arizona, who denounced building ICBM launching sites near major population centers.

McDonald said this creates prime targets for enemy attacks and fallout from nuclear detonations would endanger the population of nearby cities.

"It is our firm belief that the dispersal of the launch sites 20 to 40 miles from the main support base will not materially increase the potential of any one location as a target," an Air Force spokesman said.

Referring to suggestions that launching sites be located far from populated regions, the spokesman said several factors, including money, are involved.

"It must be noted," he said, "that the construction of completely new, self-sufficient missile facilities in such areas as isolated sections of the Rocky Mountains would not be feasible in terms of initial costs, time of construction, high costs of support facilities and other factors."

Fallout Real Basis Of Complaint

The Air Force avoids the main issue—radioactive fallout—in its reply, Dr. James E. McDonald, senior physicist at the University of Arizona Institute of Atmospheric Physics, said today.

"The overwhelming important point to note in reading the Air Force statement in reply to my charges of neglect of civilian safety is that it does not mention one single word—fallout," McDonald said.

"Fallout is by far the greatest killer of a nuclear bomb. The Air Force must surely realize that these ICBM sites will draw up to 20 or more times as many enemy bombs as the original SAC bases would.

"And the Air Force must surely realize that under commonly occurring wind conditions lethal dosages of fallout can drift very much farther downwind than the 40 mile 'safe' limit in which it today expressed firm belief.

"In fact, they must know that it is entirely possible for these new ICBM sites to receive megatonage of enemy fire whose fallout will be lethal for 200 or more miles downwind.

"These are the points that the public must insist the Air Force answer."