

~~SECRET~~

696
K/S
Handwritten signature

October 26, 1962

Dear Mr. President:

While I know the tremendous pressure under which you are working, I believe you would like to be informed that today the Air Force has achieved, on schedule as planned nearly three years ago, the initial operational capability with the Minuteman missile. The first three missiles, sited near Kalmstrom Air Force Base, Montana, have had warheads installed and have been assigned targets in the USSR.

Because these three missiles constitute an element of a unitized launch complex of twenty, unusual safety precautions have been taken which necessitate approximately eight hours of preparation before these missiles can be launched. However, in the event of an imminent national emergency, the precautions can be waived and the preparatory actions taken, after which these missiles can be maintained on semi-alert and can be launched within thirty minutes.

We are making urgent efforts to increase this capability, without sacrificing the established safety standards. Every two days an additional three missiles will be added, each such increment having the same launch capability as the first, until mid-November when the entire complex of twenty will be operationally ready. At that time the complex will be placed in its normal alert status, and all twenty missiles will be able to be launched in thirty seconds.

This is, I believe, a most significant occasion, marking the commencement of a three-year steady build-up toward our present goal of 800 Minuteman missiles.

Respectfully,

Eugene M. Zuckert

OFC OF SIG
OSAF FILES
DEPSECDEF
GEN MCHUGH
AFCCB

The President

The White House 01-0.550500 AT

cc: Secretary of Defense

CLASSIFIED
ACQUISITION

~~SECRET~~

10-31

-114
L-114-19-3

REPRODUCED FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MANUSCRIPTS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS