

A lone workman walked the wind swept
ground leading to the electronic
heart of the ABM complex,
the Missile Site Control Building.
Its slanted turret, with four faces,
will house radar eyes to record
enemy missiles from any direction.
But the building is like an iceberg:
Only the top shows since most of
the heavily reinforced structure is
under North Dakota's soil.

Buildup in North Dakota's missileland

Staff Photos by Richard Olsenius

In massive structures of concrete and steel, the nation's first Safeguard anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system is taking shape under the windy prairies of northeastern North Dakota.

The controversial ABM, which was narrowly approved by the Senate after a heated battle, is designed to protect the Minuteman missiles which have been lying under North Dakota's soil since the mid-1960s.

Four main sites are being constructed in Cavalier and Pembina Counties, near the towns of Langdon and Walthalla. Construction started in the spring of 1970. Some work continued last winter. The major construction season began last spring and is just concluding.

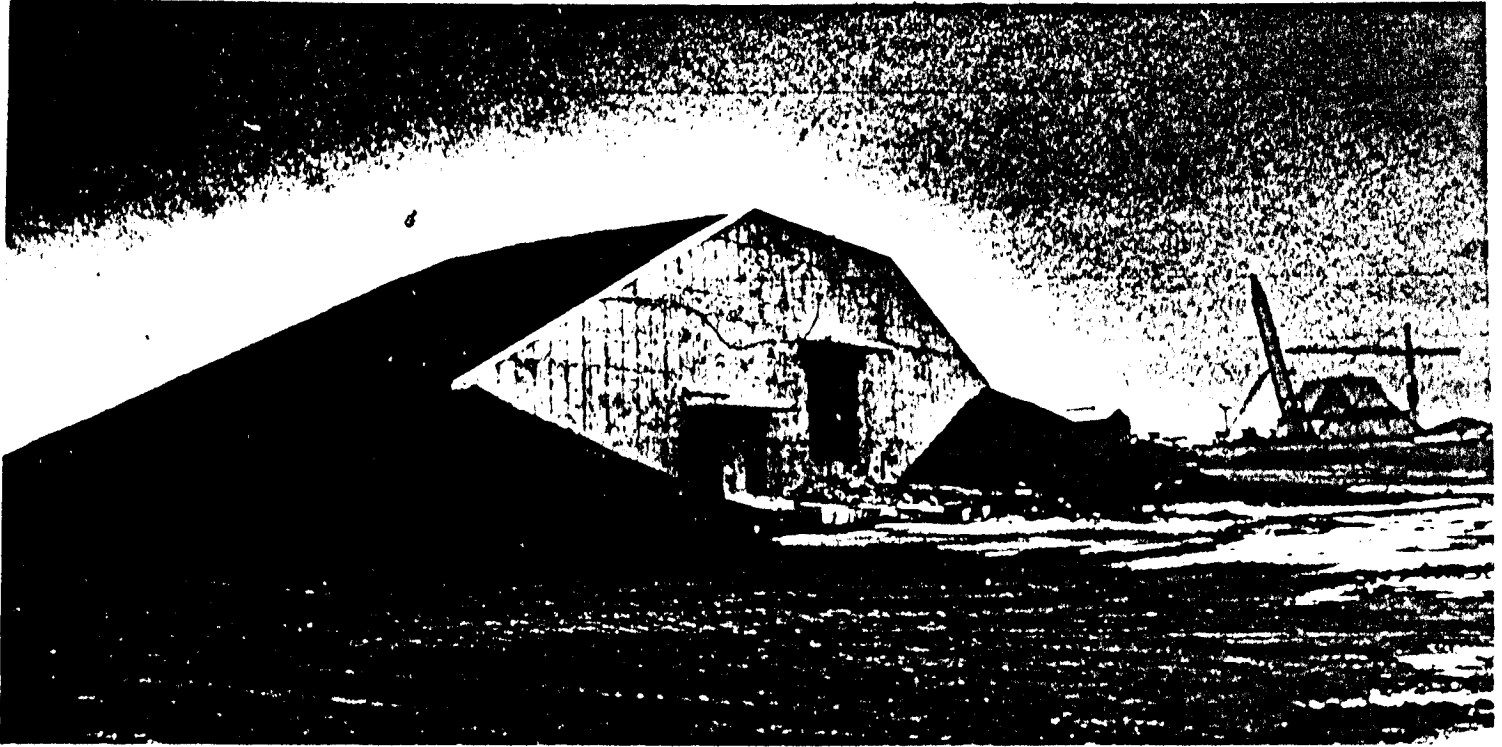
Facilities being constructed are a Perimeter Acquisition Radar complex, which would first detect any incoming missiles; a Missile Site Radar complex, which includes Spartan and Sprint missiles and which would take over the tracking of incoming missiles from the PAR and launch an attack, and two Sprint missile launching sites separate from the MSR site.

Both the MSR and PAR complexes will include all the facilities of a small Army post—administration buildings, shops, barracks, family housing, chapels and community centers.

That estimate, however, doesn't include the costs of procuring and installing the highly sophisticated and costly weapon system equipment, including large capacity, high speed computers.

The installations are scheduled to be in operation in 1974.

The controversial nuclear explosion under the surface of Amchitka Island last month by the Atomic Energy Commission was a test of the Spartan's nuclear warhead. It was determined to have the explosive power of about 5 million tons of TNT. According to the construction drawings, there will be 30 Spartans in the North Dakota system. ▶



The nuclear warhead handling building is partially earth-covered. Its "hardened" walls, to protect against nuclear attack, will house

megaton and kiloton-strength weapons before they are placed on the missiles.



Sprint missiles will be stored in these underground silos, from which they will be launched. An estimated 80 Sprint missiles will rest in tubes in five silos.



In the Missile Site Control Building, Gary, Washburn County, N.D., checked over plans for the structure described by the Army as, in some respects, the "last of its kind ever to be built" ▶

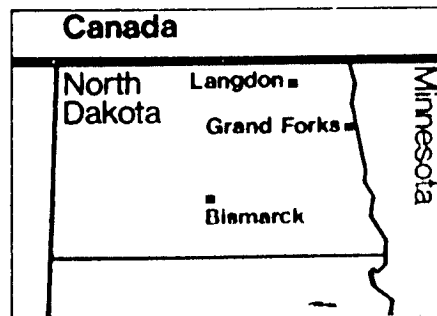
NORTH DAKOTA'S MISSILELAND



Four floors, with intermediate mezzanines, are under construction at the Missile Site Radar Building. Construction will take about 48,000 cubic yards of concrete and about 5,500 tons of reinforcing steel for the structure to withstand "great pressures."



Sparks flew as a welder closed seams on thick steel plating.



ABM sites are located near Langdon, N.D. ▶



It looks rugged. It's water immune to the grill braced internally. The works against. And it comes model because the

Watch shown 3

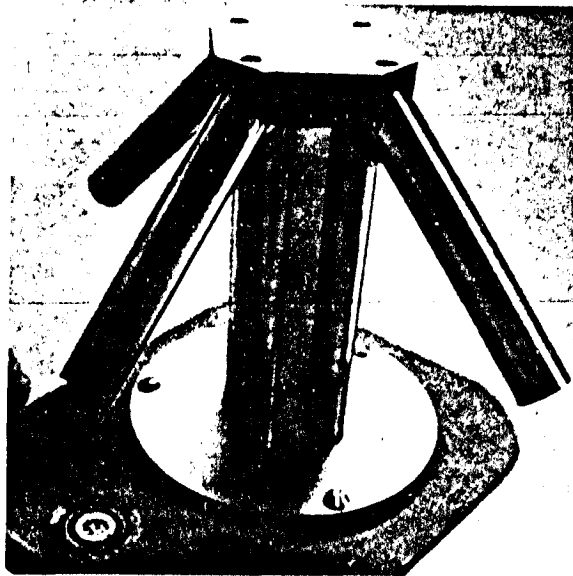
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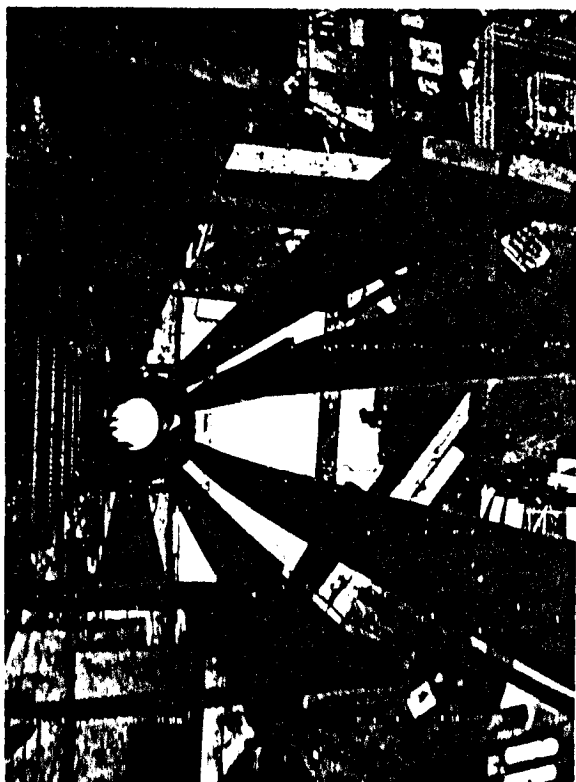
Images for the two of a construction lounge.

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The ABM site will use the "phased array radar" whose beams are steered electronically instead of through the use of heavy, moving antennas. The radar system uses thousands of small antennas, such as the one above, built into the faces of the radar buildings.



From atop the Missile Site Control Building, a workman descended to the ground below. Only the turret he was working on protrudes above the ground; the remainder of the building is below earth. Also buried will be underground power plants and other support facilities to make each site self-supporting.

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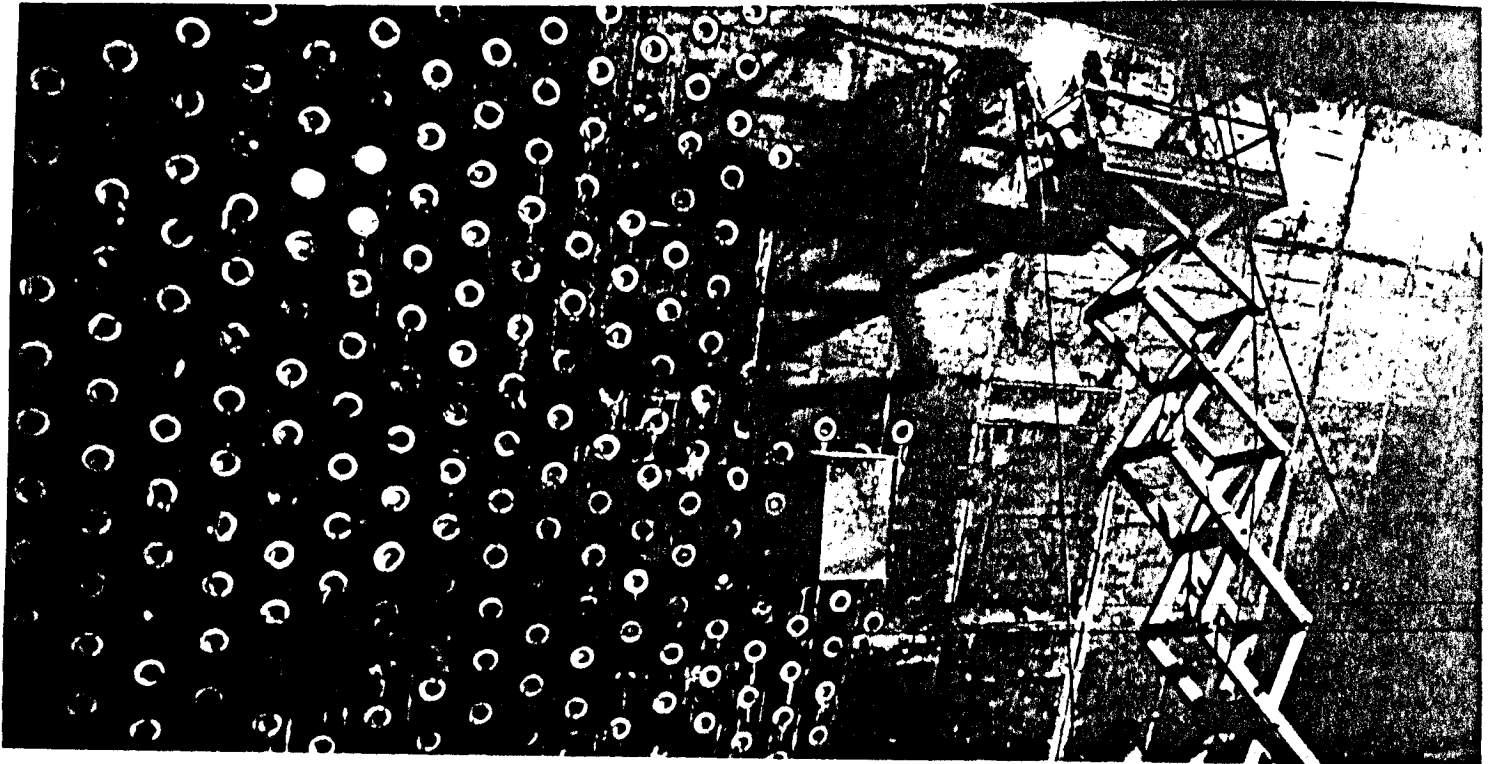
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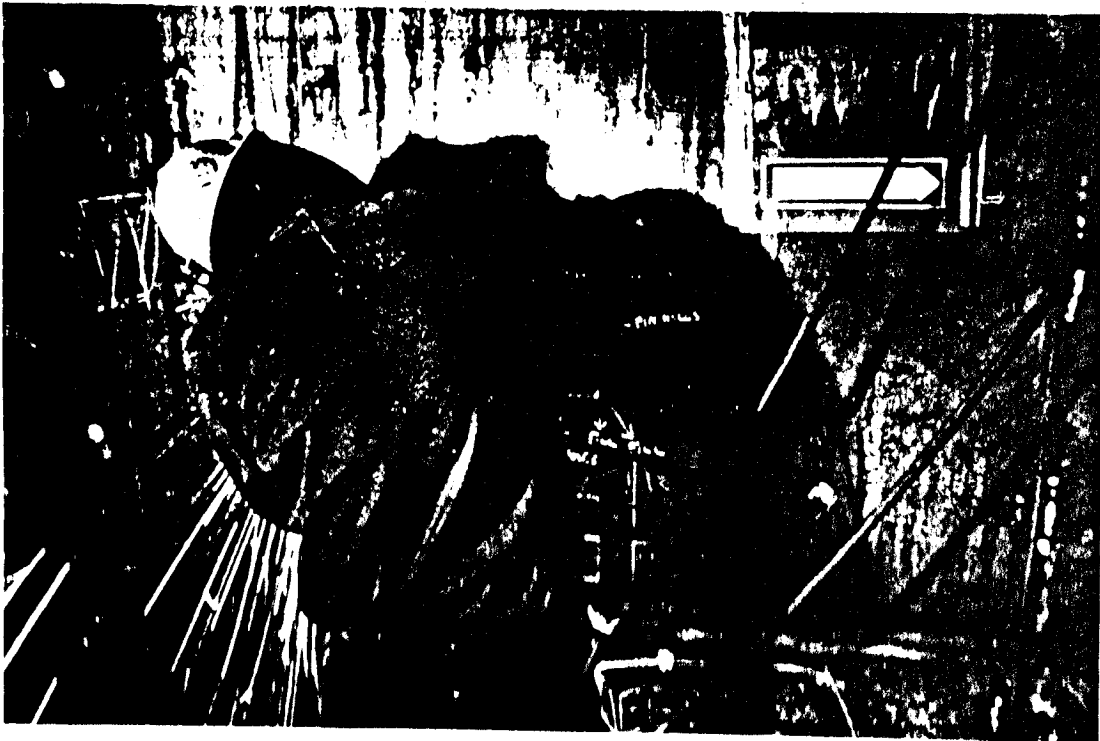
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Inside the radar site, a workman on an elevated platform worked on the turret's steel walls. Radar elements will protrude from

the face of each of the four walls of the turret.



Welding is precise, with inspectors chalking instructions to fill "pin holes" on seams.



Each wall contained missile site has miles of conduit for cables ▶