

The transport of Safeguard antiballistic missile components bound for sites in North Dakota has drawn criticism from some residents at a transfer point in Madison, Wisconsin.

US Rep. Les Aspin, D-WI, charged Friday that use of Truax Field in Madison for the shipments is a potentially serious safety hazard for Madison people.

The explosive components are being airlifted by CH 47 Chinook helicopters from Savanna Army Depot in northwestern Illinois to Truax Field at Madison, where they are transported onto a C 141 airplane and flown to Grand Forks Air Force Base, Army and Air Force spokesmen said.

The components are reloaded onto helicopters at the base here and taken to nearby ABM sites in northeastern North Dakota, according to military spokesmen.

Aspin said, "Since the ABM consists of nuclear warhead-tipped missiles, I think we can assume that nuclear weapons are being transferred at Truax Field. I would be very surprised if nuclear material and warheads had not been passing through Truax Field."

However, both Army and Air Force spokesmen refused to discuss whether the transfers involved nuclear materials. Both said it was "National Policy" neither to confirm nor deny the location or transfer of Safeguard nuclear weapons.

"Safety procedures for both crews and population have been maximized and dangers inherent in any military operation are always minimized," said Capt. Pete Sterle, base information officer.

Aspin urged diversion of all such flights from Madison to what he said were innumerable alternative transfer points. One possibility was Scott Air Force Base in largely rural southwestern Illinois.

"It would be a terrible irony if we had a serious accident at Madison as a result of the Pentagon's insistence on setting up one of its most wasteful and frankly most useless projects," Aspin said.

The Racine, Wisconsin congressman, who has been critical of the defense budget over the years as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, called the North Dakota installation a "totally useless weapons system."

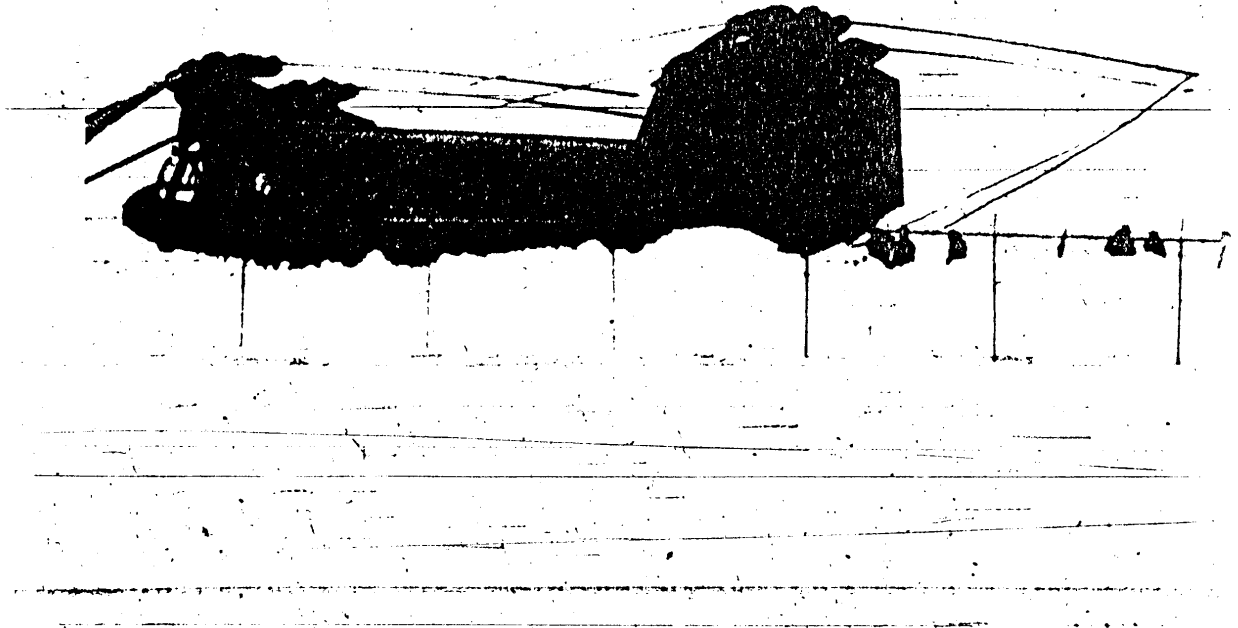
Some Madison residents have complained about helicopter noise near Truax Field, which is populated on three of four sides.

Madison Mayor Paul Soglin said he has had no cooperation from Army officials in his efforts to remove Truax Field from the transfer operation.

Maj. William Swift, an Army spokesman based at an ABM installation center at Nekoma, ND, declined to say how long the transfer of components has been going on but did acknowledge that he has heard about complaints from Madison for "a couple of weeks."

He said it is Pentagon policy for military aircraft to avoid population centers whenever possible.

According to a flight pattern described by an air traffic control specialist for the Federal Aviation Administration at Grand Forks International Airport, the transport flights skirt population centers in Minnesota and North Dakota.



UPI TELEPHOTO

## *Missile components unloaded*

**Safeguard missile components** are pictured being unloaded from CH 47 Chinooks at Truax Field, Madison, Wis. The explosives are being airlifted from an Army depot in Illinois, then transported to

planes to be flown to North Dakota. There have been complaints about the explosives being flown over heavily populated areas.