P.S. to the NEWS
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RELEASE: APRIL 4, 1980

SIGNALS OF STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS

"U.S. Warns Soviets With B-52 Flights" proclaimed a headline last month over a wire service story telling that the Carter Administration had sent "a calculated warning to the Soviet Union" by flying four separate missions of B-52 bombers from Guam to the Arabian Sea to track Soviet ships.

It is incomprehensible that the Carter Administration could think that the Soviets would feel "warned" by a flight of our 20-year-old B-52s -- planes which are about as old as the pilots who fly them. The headline should have read, "Carter Administration Tries to Impress U.S. Voters With B-52 Flights" because the flights were actually designed for political campaign-year consumption.

As a signal of strength to the Soviets, the B-52 missions rank with Carter's call for the draft registration of women, or as it is now known in Washington, his call for "coeds at the Khyber Pass." The Soviets are no more apt to be scared by 20-year-old planes than by female troops.

The way to send a signal of strength to he Soviets is so simple that it cries out to be implemented. Build the B-1 bomber which Carter cancelled shortly after he took office! Reassemble the manufacturing team and go into production at once!

The State Department is currently putting out the line that we can't build the B-1 because SALT II won't let us. To which our response should be, "In case you hadn't heard, SALT II wasn't ratified. It was never brought up for a vote because, admittedly, the Administration didn't have the votes to pass it."

The State Department is trying to act as though SALT II is in effect anyway. But State is not up on its reading of the U.S. Constitution. A treaty isn't effective unless and until ratified by two-thirds of the Senators present and voting.

One of the most lopsided, humiliating inequalities in SALT II is the fact that it requires us to include in the count of strategic weapons all our B-52s, including

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those which lack crews and parts and are in the aircraft "boneyard" in Arizona, as well as any B-1s which may be built, but it does not require the Soviets to count their new supersonic Backfire bombers.

The report on SALT II issued by the Senate Armed Services Committee was scathing in its denunciation of this inequity. It said that "even the most modest intelligence estimates of the Soviet supersonic Backfore bomber attribute to it the capability to strike targets in the United States without refueling on missions similar to those planned for the U.S. B-52 strategic bombers."

The Committee predicted that the failure to include the Soviet Backfire bomber under the treaty's ceilings "will enable the Soviets to continue deployment at the present rate -- with the result that as the treaty draws to an end in 1985, it is estimated that the 375 to 400 [new] Backfire bombers the Soviets will deploy will greatly exceed the number of operational U.S. B-52s."

The Soviet Backfire and the U.S. B-52 are a generation apart. The Backfire is a supersonic aircraft while the B-52 is subsonic. The Soviet Backfire is designed for use in the next war, while the B-52 was designed for use in the last war.

One of the most revealing parts of the Senate report is its revelation of <u>why</u> the Carter Administration did not insist on the Soviets' including the Backfire bomber in the treaty count. The Carter Administration gave in on this point early in the SALT II negotiations on the argument that U.S. acquiescence in the Soviet position was "inevitable" and would be more "embarrassing" later. In other words, surrender now rather than later.

The Carter Administration tried to cover up the SALT II disparities about bombers by getting an "assurance" from Brezhnev. According to the Armed Services Committee report, this assurance "promises not to give the Backfire capabilities the U.S. knows the Backfire already has." The Committee concluded that the so-called assurance was not only "false" but "deceptive toward the American public."

We are so fortunate that the U.S. Senate rejected SALT II. There is no excuse for not building the B-1 at the same production rate as the Soviet Backfire bomber.

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