IeS@ to the NEWS

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PRESIDENTIAL PRESS CONFERENCES

It is time we recognize that presidential press conferences are merely television spectaculars that sometimes mislead instead of in form the public. During the last press conference, President Ford made several misleading statements, and reporters let him get by with them without asking the obvious and relevant follow-up questions.

President Ford three times said or implied that his Vladivostok agreement put a limitation on MIRVs. This is not true. The agreement limited the number of missiles that can carry MIRVs, but it did not limit the number of MIRVs. There is nothing in the agreement to pre vent the Soviets from deploying 25,000 MIRVs if they want to, and they have the capability to do that.

The reporters asked good questions about the tremendous Soviet superiority in missile throw-weight. President Ford brushed them off by saying four times that the United States can increase.our throw weight if **we want** to. Someone should have said, "But Mr. President, you should **know** that it is impossible for us to increase our throw weight by an significant amount so long as we are bound by the SALT Agreements of 1972, which limit us to an increase of only 15 percent in the size of missile launchers. We cannot match the Soviets in throw-weight within that 15 percent limit because we do not have the new pop-up cold-launch technique that enables the Soviets to increase their throw-weight by 300 to 500 percent."

One reporter asked the excellent question: "Are you satisfied that the Soviets are carrying out the spirit arid the letter of the

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of the 1972 [SALT] Agreements?" President Ford blandly answered that "We know of no violations." He didn't say who he meant by "We," but it apparently does not include our military or intelligence authori ties because Admiral Elmo Zumwalt said recently, "I'm satisfied [the Soviets] are cheating, and I believe most intelligence specialists believe they're cheating."

We were led to believe by the Ford Administration that the So viets made some kind of concession in agreeing not to count the forward-based planes that we have in Europe. This was no concession at all because even Dr. Kissinger admitted that they "are not suitable for a significant attack on the Soviet Union." Someone should have asked President Ford about the Soviet_ weapons we agreed not to count including the Soviet medium bombers (of which they have 800 capable o.f attacking the United States by refueling in Cuba), or the Soviet IRR."!s and :tvIRBMs (of which they have at least 800 targeted on Western Europe-,. which has·no ABM defenses), or the Soviet reloads {of.which we have none).

Finally, when Pres dent Ford bragged about limiting the number of missiles that can be MIRVed to 1,320, why didn't some reporter ask him: "But Mr. President, isn't it true that the Soviets would have to MIRV only 500 of their giant missiles to achieve the capability to knock out our Minuteman missile force?"

Ynfortunately, the record of presidential press conferences fol lowing Soviet agreements, such as Yalta, Moscow SALT, and Vladivostok, shows that the American public is not given the truth and the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

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