P.S. to the NEWS
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ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THE SOVIETS?

The biggest handicap the Carter Administration has in selling the American people on a new arms treaty with the Soviet Union is the intuitive and justified belief that the Soviets are not to be trusted. So Administration SALT sellers are arguing strenuously that SALT is not based on trust in the Soviet Union to keep its agreements, but is based on each nation's own self-interest.

But that begs the question. In order to accept this line of argument, you must be willing to accept Administration spokesmen's definition of what is in the Soviet Union's self-interest. In other words, instead of relying on the Soviets' good faith, we are asked to rely on the clairvoyance of the Carter Administration's assessment of what the Soviets will think in future circumstances.

Thus Paul Warnke, the Carter Administration's chief SALT-seller, confidently assures us: "I am quite sure that no Soviet planner in his right mind would assume that the United States would leave its missiles to be destroyed once we had assured proof of a Soviet attack."

In this amazing statement, Mr. Warnke is undertaking to assure the American people that he knows (1) that Soviet planners are in their right mind, (2) what Soviet planners will think in the future, and (3) how Soviet planners will predict the U.S. President's decision about pushing the nuclear button in response to an attack. None of these assurances is valid.

The American people themselves don't know whether the U.S. President will push the nuclear button in retaliation or not, so how in the world could the Soviets know? Furthermore, it's not what the U.S. President will actually do that matters in Soviet decision-making, but what the Kremlin leaders think he will do.

How do we know that the Kremlin bosses will be men in their right mind? Or, if they are, how do we know whether their judgment will be either accurate or in their own self-interest?

(more)

When the Japanese warlords attacked Pearl Harbor, were they in their right mind? If so, did they act in their own best interest? They guessed they would be able to destroy our Navy at Pearl Harbor and that we could not retaliate. It took a million American casualties to prove that their judgment about U.S. retaliation was totally wrong.

Was Hitler in his right mind when he declared war on the United States? Did he act in his own self-interest? It is obvious he failed to anticipate that the United States would make Germany and not Japan its number-one enemy.

The Russians have an extensive civil defense system with underground shelters for most of their urban population. There is plenty of evidence that they calculate that a nuclear war with the United States would cost them only a small fraction of our casualties, much less than they suffered in World War II.

We have no effective civil defense system. The Russians have anti-missile systems at Moscow and Leningrad; we have none.

The theory of the SALT treaties is that the Soviets won't attack us because they think that, if they do, we will strike back and kill millions of Russians. In other words, SALT is based on leaving Americans like sitting ducks in the face of any attack, while we threaten to kill millions of Russians. Our weapons are all designed to kill people. None is designed to keep Americans alive.

The only intelligent way to plan the future is to have an alternate plan if our Number One plan fails. Those who want to rely on the SALT II treaty have no alternate plan. If their Number One plan doesn't work, they will wring their hands and say, "Too bad that 100 million Americans had to die. We thought nuclear war was unthinkable."

We need an alternate plan just in case (1) the Soviet leaders don't act in their own self-interest, or (2) they misjudge how Americans will retaliate. A greatly expanded civil defense program is the alternate plan we need. American lives are worth saving regardless of the cost. The life you save may be your own.

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