ES. to **the NEWS**

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THE NEUTRON WEAPON

President Carter's decision not to build the neutron weapon is another victory for Brezhnev and another insult to our allies who had counted on it. Carter has severely handicapped NATO in its current negotiations with Russia over troop parity between East and West. Like the B-1 bomber, the neutron "bomb" is another case of our abandoning a U.S. weapon uniquely suited to defend against Soviet aggression, without getting any concession from the Russians in return.

The neutron weapon could be NATO's defense against the greatly superior troops and tanks of the Soviet bloc. The Warsaw Pact nations outnumber NATO in manpower 955,000 to 670,000, in main battle tanks 20,500 to 7,000, in artillery pieces 10,000 to 2,700, and even in tactical aircraft 2,800 to 2,000.

In addition, the Soviets have 700 intermediate- and medium-range ballistic missiles against which Western Europe has no defense. The target coverage of the new Soviet SS-20 IRBM includes all of Western Europe. NATO has no IRBMs or MRBMs.

So what keeps the Soviet bloc from overrunning Western Europe? Since World War II the answer has been the U.S. nuclear umbrella, that is, the great superiority in strategic weapons which the United States enjoyed over the Soviet Union, and its implicit threat that any attack on our allies would trigger a nuclear launch from America.

But SALT I, signed in 1972, proclaimed to the world the new Soviet numbers' superiority in the ratio of 3-to-2 in both intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched missiles. The NATO nations can no longer rely on the old concepts of massive retaliation, or on the brave words that President John F. Kennedy spoke to cheering Germans in West Berlin in 1963: "We will risk our cities to save your cities."

Western military experts have concluded that Soviet military strategy in Europe involves multiple massed tank thrusts, impressive firepower, and the element of

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surprise. They forecast that the Soviets could overrun NATO defenses before any adequate Western mobilization could take place, probably within two days.

So what can our NATO friends do as they contemplate the possibility of an attack by the Soviet bloc's 20,500 modern, heavily anned main battle tanks? Present defen sive strategy calls for the possible use of the 7,000 tactical nuclear weapons which the United States built and stored in Western Europe. This is the one weapon of which the West has more numbers than the East. Tactical nuclear weapons are small in yield, very limited in range, and designed for battlefield use.

But there is a powerful deterrent to the use of tactical battlefield nukes. Their use would destroy the very countries they are trying to defend. In the heavily populated countries of Western Europe, the price of using them would be too high.

The neutron weapon is the innovative solution to NATO's problem of self-defense because it will stop the invaders without destroying the defending cities. It is peculiarly suited to defend NATO's heavily populated areas against the superiority of the Warsaw Pact's tanks and troops.

The neutron weapon is an enhanced-radiation, reduced-blast weapon that derives its destructive power not from heat and blast like most thermonuclear weapons, but from intense (though limited and short-lived) bursts of lethal radiation. It would be especially useful when fitted to the short-range missiles and tactical nuclear artillery pieces which are a major part of Central Europe's present defense against Soviet tanks.

Where the battle is near a metropolitan center, the neutron weapon has an almost unique advantage. It makes it possible, with intense bursts of radiatiqn, to counterattack effectively against aggressive troops while minimizing collateral damage. It would be especially effective against a blitzkrieg-type frontal attack by the Soviet bloc on NATO positions in West Germany.

The neutron weapon has caused much political and emotional fallout because it kills people while restricting property damage. But the alternatives are to use tactical nuclear weapons which destroy both people and property, or to surrender on demand.

Our allies are still hoping Carter wfll change his mind.

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