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TRUTH AND RHETORIC AT THE UN

Leonid Brezhnev tried to upstage Ronald Reagan at the United Nations special disarmament session in New York, but fortunately he didn't get by with it. It is so refreshing to have a U.S. President who is not deceived or intimidated by such tricks and who dares to tell the unpleasant truth.

Brezhnev sent a surrogate, Andrei Gromyko, to read a statement promising that the U.S.S.R. "assumes an obligation not to be the first to use nuclear weapons." Gromyko said that Brezhnev's message was intended to raise the level of trust between the nuclear powers.

It is a measure of the arrogance of the men in the Kremlin that they could use the Brezhnev-Gromyko pair to lecture the United States about "trust." Gromyko is the same Russian who sat in the White House on October 18, 1962 and solemnly assured President John F. Kennedy that the Soviet Union had not put "offensive" nuclear weapons in Cuba.

At that very moment, Kennedy had in his desk drawer the U-2 photographs proving that the Soviet offensive missiles were already in Cuba. And Brezhnev was the co-conspirator with Khrushchev in their plot to put them there.

Speaking before the same audience that Gromyko had addressed the day before, President Reagan said "we need more than mere words, more than empty promises, before we can proceed." Indeed we do. Reagan talked about the Soviet "record of tyranny," the "Soviet-sponsored guerrillas and terrorists," and the "most massive Soviet buildup of military power in history."

Reagan uttered a truism that ought to take the wind out of the sails of the nuclear-freezeniks: that arms agreements bolster peace only when they are kept. So let's look at the Soviet record for keeping treaties.

Back in 1956, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee issued a classic report called "Soviet Political Agreements and Results." The Subcommittee found that the Soviets violated every treaty they ever signed except their treaty with Hitler to invade Poland.

The Senate Internal Security Subcommittee was abolished a few years ago by the liberals, so it's no longer fashionable to quote it. Fortunately, the Heritage Foundation has issued a new tabulation of Russian agreements, and it brings up to date the monotonous list of broken treaties.

The record of Soviet treaty violations amassed by the Heritage Foundation study is particularly important in respect to violations of nuclear treaties. The study says that the Soviets have conducted at least eight underground nuclear tests of more than 150 kilotons in direct violation of the 1974 Threshold Test Ban Treaty. The Soviets have vented radioactive debris from underground tests at least 30 times in violation of the 1973 Limited Test Ban Treaty.

The Soviets have stationed offensive forces in Cuba despite the 1962 Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement. The Soviets have committed six violations of the SALT ABM Treaty and eleven violations of the SALT I Interim Agreement.

In addition, the Soviets have violated the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention governing the use of chemical and biological weapons.

The Heritage Foundation research is corroborated by another study just published called "The Bitter Fruit of SALT: A Record of Soviet Duplicity" written by former CIA official David S. Sullivan and published by the Texas Policy Institute. Sullivan charges bluntly that the Soviets have used arms control treaties to lull the United States into unilaterally reducing its strategic forces.

Sullivan says that he has "documented 14 examples of Soviet negotiating deceptions in SALT I and II and 30 cases of other arms control treaty violations," as well as "47 examples of Soviet treaty violations, disinformation ploys and diplomatic deception ploys." He provides massive evidence that the Soviets have successfully exploited detente and SALT negotiations in order to achieve Soviet strategic superiority over us.

Just as a confirmed alcoholic is not cured by being invited to take one more drink, a confimed treaty-breaker is not cured by being invited to sign one more treaty. It simply is not rational to rely on a treaty with the Soviet Union to ensure peace or security for the United States.