P.S. to the NEWS
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THE COST ARGUMENT AND SALT II

The argument by some that the rejection of SALT II will result in an arms race which will be beyond the financial capabilities of the United States cannot be sustained. Cost is a phony argument when applied to strategic weapons, which make up the smallest part of the defense budget.

The "cost" argument is brought forth by the same deceptive persons who destroyed 550 Minuteman missiles. When our country built and deployed our 550 Minuteman III missiles, we did not get a single additional missile because the Defense Department scrapped one Minuteman I or II for every Minuteman III we built.

We were told that it was "cost-effective" to put the Minuteman III missiles in the same silos used by the Minuteman Is and IIs. But digging holes with modern earth-moving equipment would not have cost more than $1 million per missile, complete with launch tube and hole, as compared with the $800,000 we paid to "modify" each existing Minuteman I and II launch tube and fit a Minuteman III into it.

We invested at least two and a half billion dollars in the cost of the 550 Minuteman IIIs. But because we used the Minuteman I and II holes, we did not add a single ICBM to our missile force, and the overall total remained constant at 1,054.

Thus, for a puny $110 million more, we could have increased our missile force by 50 percent! Such an addition would have been vastly more valuable than adding extra warheads to a constant number of missiles; such an addition would have kept our Minuteman missile force invulnerable well into the 1980s.

It cannot be argued that this 50 percent addition to our ICBM force was prohibited by SALT I. The Minuteman IIIs were ready for deployment in 1970, two years before SALT I imposed a freeze on digging new holes; and it was widely known that the Soviets were rapidly digging holes during that same period.

After SALT I prohibited digging new holes, our missile force could have been

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increased either by making the Minuteman IIIs as mobile missiles, or by transferring the Minuteman Is and IIs to mobile launching pads. There was absolutely no prohibition in SALT I on mobile missile launchers, and it can be assumed that the Soviets were making full use of this loophole.

The Central Intelligence Agency says that the Soviets have been spending 11 to 12 percent of the Soviet gross national product on defense for the last decade. Other sources, including the Defense Intelligence Agency, estimate the level at 14 to 17 percent or even higher. The United States now spends less than five percent of our gross national product on defense.

Senators Henry Jackson, Sam Nunn, and John Tower, in a recent letter to the President, said that "the Soviet Union has been outspending the United States by 2:1 during the past decade." Even Soviet research and development is now running at least 175 percent of our figure.

According to a study prepared for the U.S. Air Force, the Soviets have spent about $100 billion more than we have on weapons procurement and construction just since 1973. Since that figure is hard to grasp in dollars, let's express it in terms of the hardware we would have today if we had spent an extra $100 billion.

We would have the entire B-1 program; the baseline MX program (missiles and shelters); all of the currently programmed Trident submarines together with their advanced missiles; the 7,000 XM-1 tanks we are now planning to order, together with a matching number of infantry fighting vehicles and the formerly-planned AMSTs (Advanced Short Take-Off Transport Planes) to provide them with intra-theater mobility. In addition, we would still have enough funds left over to buy all of the F-14s, F-15s, F-16s, F-18s, and A-10s now planned for Air Force and Navy tactical air modernization.

Can we do it? The United States is blessed with a gross national product twice that of the Soviet Union. Anything the U.S.S.R. can do, we can do twice as much of, or twice as fast. It will be far less costly to reject SALT II and rebuild our nuclear deterrent than to ratify a Treaty which prevents us from building the strategic weapons we need to defend America.

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