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SALT III EMERGING OUT OF SALT II

While the Senate nitpicks SALT II, Senator George McGovern has begun to shape the form of SALT III.

On November 1, Senator McGovern secured the unanimous consent of the Foreign Relations Committee to the declaration on page 2, which declaration is almost certain to be attached by the full Senate, to the resolution of ratification of SALT II. He observed that he would vote for the SALT II treaty only if it were.

To appreciate its significance, one should know that the Administration has no clear and agreed idea what to do in SALT III. Much of its sophisticated opinion is so traumatized by the difficulties of SALT II, that it is prepared to give up on efforts to secure substantial reductions, or even comprehensive agreements, in SALT III. The SALT II treaty itself is vague on the subject of what to do next (see box, page 3). The real weakness in the Administration's case for SALT II, from the perspective of doves, has always rested on uncertainty of what would follow.

Senator McGovern's success in securing the approval of his resolution rested on five observations, none of which will be foreign to readers of our FAS editorials and testimony.

1). He perceived early that both those for, and those critical of, the SALT II treaty were, for diverse reasons, declaring their support for "real" arms control and hence could be counted upon to support a resolution urging still more progress next time, (PIR, 9/79).

2). He recognized that the SALT II treaty could be used as a baseline for such agreement, and that proportionate reductions of those ceilings and sub-ceilings would represent an attractive disarmament method hard to argue against, (PIR, 1/79).

3). He recognized that it was not only doves, but also hawks, who had a special antipathy toward MIRV—because MIRV had threatened Minuteman; hence the alliance between hawks and doves could be

extended beyond percentage annual reductions to urging special efforts to control MIRVs, (PIR, 3/79).

4). He recognized that the most constructive thing which the Senate Foreign Relations Committee could do, was not to make minor adjustments to the SALT II treaty—which was a *fait accompli*—but to constructively influence SALT III, without which influence SALT III might achieve little, (PIR, 9/79).

5). And he understood that, with ratification in doubt, "left" criticism of the treaty—fully justified by its inadequacies—would give him the political leverage to secure his resolution, (PIR, 2/79).

We commend the Senator for his skillful legislative work and for getting this all together.

The effect has been, in particular, to require the Administration to seek deep cuts in general and, in particular, to focus on the method of percentage annual reductions (PAR), applied to the various limits of SALT II: 2250, 1320, 1200, 820, and 308. (The Air Force, among others, is now studying this matter in exhaustive classified detail).

The declaration also requires the Administration to make a major effort to control the problems which MIRV has caused. And it should deter the Administration and the Soviets from using SALT III as a forum only for isolated arms control agreements of a narrow technical kind.

True these declarations are not binding; no Senate can bind a future one, which is why the declaration ends only by saying that it is the "conviction" of the Senate that future consent should be withheld from treaties not complying substantively with the declaration. But the resolution does give substance to, and formalize, an existing attitude in the Congress—hence it must be respected in the negotiations, at peril to ratification of any subsequent agreement. We hope it will help those in the Administration who want to make a major effort to turn the arms race around. □

Reviewed and Approved by the FAS Council

FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE APPROVES SALT II BY 9-6

While approving SALT II, and in addition to passing the resolution discussed above, the Foreign Relations Committee, in its Committee Report explicitly rejected the view that SALT II could be justified simply as "a step forward in a process" and recommended that the Senate play an important advisory role in establishing goals and guidelines for SALT III by establishing

standards for the future. Nothing could be closer to what FAS newsletters have preached.

The Committee Report noted also that the purpose of the McGovern-Chafee declaration was to translate a consensus in favor of mutual arms reductions into a constructive set of guidelines for the next phase of the negotiations. □

SALT HEARINGS PROVIDED DRAMA — BUT LITTLE ACTION

Virtually each day since October 15, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has been putting on a show reminiscent of the Perils of Pauline. About 30 members of the press, 50 spectators, and 30 representatives of the Administration, watch the Committee members convene to mark up the SALT II Treaty. The members attend with unprecedented regularity, and offer amendments.

The amendments are categorized: Category 1 amendments involve such matters as need not be communicated to the Russians, e.g., instructions about SALT III; Category 2 amendments are those that instruct the President to advise the Russians of some matter, unilaterally, without requiring a Soviet response; Category 3 amendments are the so-called "killer" amendments that reopen negotiations to the extent of requiring Soviet acceptance.

In theory, the mark-up hearings have the Committee staff as main witnesses; in fact, the Administration observers and witnesses, 40 strong, play that role—led by Senate Counsel, Lloyd Cutler, and ACDA negotiator, Ralph Earle. They live, as one of their assistants put it, "day to day" waiting to see if a Category 3 "killer" will get through. In the end, none had.

The Administration lined up a firm collection of 8 of the 15 Senators to oppose such amendments. They are: Frank Church, Claiborne Pell, George McGovern, Jacob Javits, Charles Percy, Paul Sarbanes, Edmund Muskie, and Joseph Biden. Thus, the "perils" of a Category 3 amendment were, in the end, unreal.

On the other hand, the opposition to the treaty is practicing for the floor debate. Senator Baker is openly running for President against the treaty. Senator Lugar is his campaign manager, and votes his proxy on the Committee. Senator Helms' aide advised FAS that he has 50 amendments ready for the floor, and that he believes the treaty is "dead in the water".

Military Opponent Becomes Staffer!

Recently Senator Helms complained that the Administration was dominating the hearings, and that no opposition was there to balance the debate. In effect, he wanted an anti-Administration view at the table. He suggested General Edward Rowny, former SALT negotiator who opposes the treaty, although General Rowny had been heard as a witness at great length.

Senator Javits noted that Senator Helms could hire Rowny as an aide and have him sitting on the podium as an advisor. By the time the smoke cleared, Senator Church, and ranking Republican Senator Javits had invited General Rowny to be the minority counsel consultant to the committee, and sat him at the witness table. There he discourses lengthily, and often, somewhat, irrelevantly.

In honor of his presence, Senator Hayakawa asked for a revote on several close "killer" amendments. The theory is that General Rowny might add something that would change a vote. In practice, it is just stalling. Senator Hayakawa read a related statement suggesting that the treaty supporters were really consigning the treaty to defeat by not letting the opponents amend it with the "killer" amendments. He offered this as an analogy to Woodrow Wilson instructing his supporters to oppose the Treaty of Versailles rather than let it be amended.

"SHRINK SALT II"

"I do not think in SALT III we have to reinvent the wheel. We can start off with the proposition that this is a basic treaty that can be continued. It can be continued with amendments.

"I believe what we ought to do as a priority item in SALT III is to try and shrink the SALT II limits, not only the overall aggregate ceiling of strategic nuclear weapons but also the various subceilings on the subcategories."

Paul C. Warnke

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In fact, when Senator Lugar was asked whether he would support the treaty if an amendment he offered was accepted by the Committee, he declined to do so saying the treaty had many problems, and even opponents were obligated to try to fix them.

The Administration will be trying to line up about 53 firm votes to turn back all such amendments on the floor or the Senate. There may then result a Mexican stand-off, with the Administration able to prevent the treaty being amended (by majority vote), but unable, perhaps, to secure the two-thirds vote necessary to ratify the treaty. If so, the Administration will probably then buy the votes necessary to approve the Treaty by accepting a few so-called "killer" amendments—after checking with the Soviets, of course, to ensure that the particular category III amendments can be accepted, in turn, by the Russians. Not every "killer-amendment" does in fact, kill. And so the Treaty will likely pass, if slightly changed.

The Russians have about three observers at the hearing room, but they must be quite confused. At a Soviet annual reception for the 62nd anniversary of the Revolution—attended exclusively by newsmen and SALT activists—the Ambassador complains to a Senate aide that he cannot understand what is happening in the Senate. In Moscow, similarly, a Soviet analyst is quoted as saying that Washington SALT events cannot be put in a "Marxist perspective" but resemble random Boolean motion. The attendance at the reception seems to reflect the significance of SALT for U.S.-Soviet relations; the Russians really have no other constituency here for detente. (Nov. 26). □

TEXT OF THE McGOVERN-CHAFEE SALT III DECLARATION

"(1) expresses its disappointment that strategic arms limitations talks between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (hereafter in this declaration referred to as the 'Parties') have failed to achieve an agreement providing for major reductions of, and more significant qualitative limitations on, strategic nuclear forces;

"(2) endorses the agreement of the Parties under the Joint Statement of Principles and Basic Guidelines for Subsequent Negotiations on the Limitation of Strategic Arms (hereinafter in this declaration referred to as the 'Joint Statement'), signed on June 18, 1979, to pursue, through further negotiations for an agreement on further measures for the limitation and reduction of strategic arms, the objectives of significant and substantial reductions in the numbers of strategic offensive arms and qualitative limitations on such arms, and affirms that the attainment of such objectives would strengthen strategic stability, maintain international peace, and enhance the national security of the United States;

"(3) urges and requests the President, at the earliest possible moment during the SALT III negotiations, on the basis of mutuality, to pursue continuous year-by-year reductions in the ceilings and subceilings under the Treaty so as to take advantage of the Treaty already negotiated and to begin a sustainable and effective process of reductions in strategic arms which promotes strategic equivalence and strategic stability;

"(4) intends the phrase 'ceilings and subceilings under the Treaty', as used in paragraph (3) of this declaration, to mean—

"(A) the aggregate number of strategic offensive arms permitted to each Party under Article III of the Treaty;

"(B) the number of fixed heavy intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launchers permitted under paragraphs 3 and 7

of Article IV of the Treaty; and

"(C) the number of such arms permitted under each limitation of Article V of the Treaty;

"(5) urges that the President, in seeking an agreement on reductions in such arms, make exceptional efforts to reduce the number of ICBMs equipped with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs);

"(6) urges the President, during SALT III negotiations, to seek further agreement on qualitative limitations on strategic offensive arms for the purposes of promoting strategic stability and strategic equivalence and of assuring the survivability of strategic nuclear forces, including—

"(A) restrictions on the development, testing, and deployment of new types of strategic offensive arms;

"(B) restrictions on the modernization of such arms which were developed, tested, or deployed on the date of entry into force of the Treaty;

"(C) restrictions on and reductions in the number of reentry vehicles with which ICBMs, submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and Air-to-surface ballistic missiles (ASBMs) may be flight-tested or deployed; and

"(D) restrictions on potentially destabilizing advances in technology relating to strategic nuclear weapons;

"(7) emphasizes that any qualitative or quantitative reductions or restrictions called for under this declaration should be adequately verifiable by national technical means or by additional cooperative measures which contribute to the effectiveness of verification of compliance with the Treaty by national technical means, as provided by the Joint Statement;

"(8) supports the undertaking by the Parties in Article XIV of the Treaty to begin promptly negotiations to achieve agreement as soon as possible, and concludes that the Parties should also seek to give effect well in advance of 1985 to new agreements or to amendments to the Treaty, as provided in Article XVIII of the Treaty, which are consistent with this declaration;

"(9) requests the President, not later than December 31, 1981, to prepare and transmit to the Senate a report on the progress achieved during SALT III negotiations; and

"(10) expresses its intention to keep the progress achieved in SALT III negotiations under continuous review and expresses its conviction that the Senate should not advise and consent to the ratification of any SALT III Treaty which does not comply substantially with this declaration". □

UNITED STATES - SOVIET UNION AGREED PRINCIPLES FOR SALT III

1). Significant and substantial reductions in the numbers of strategic offensive arms;

2). Qualitative limitations on strategic offensive arms, including restrictions on the development, testing, and deployment of new types of strategic offensive arms and on the modernization of existing strategic offensive arms;

3). Resolution of the issues included in the Protocol of the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms in the context of the negotiations relating to the implementation of the principles and objectives set out herein.

McGOVERN ON SALT III

From the October 31 Congressional Record in which Senator McGovern explained his resolution:

The use of SALT as an arms race management device rather than as an arms reduction device has become a major obstacle preventing achievement of the very goals SALT was created to secure. The first goal was to limit and reduce weapons. The second goal was to improve United States-Soviet relations.

Neither of these goals has been achieved. By the expiration of SALT II, both sides will have more than tripled their arsenals of nuclear warheads over the pre-SALT period. SALT has been largely irrelevant to the major strategic developments of this era, namely MIRV's and first-strike accuracy refinements.

This failure to limit arms and reduce substantially the threat to our security has created new political insecurities on both sides since the Soviet Union and the United States can each comply with the SALT treaty provisions while simultaneously increasing the threat directed against the other side. This insecurity and uncertainty about the other side's true intentions make substantially reductions more difficult to achieve, thus fueling new doubts and fears and raising the level of tension and suspicion.

The result of this vicious cycle is that we are ending up with both a SALT treaty and arms escalation. And we are ending up with SALT without detente. It is clear to me that the SALT process is not working. We cannot afford to seek new cosmetic agreements just for the sake of keeping the SALT process alive when the process is no longer effective—and may even have become counterproductive.

If SALT II were the end of the road, I could not in good conscience support it. I must first be assured that genuine reductions will be the goal of any future SALT negotiations and that a realistic method exists to achieve them. It is a commonsense observation that SALT II must be passed before SALT III is possible. But for those of us sincerely interested in arms reductions, there can be no SALT II without a clearly visible outline for SALT III. My vote depends on it.

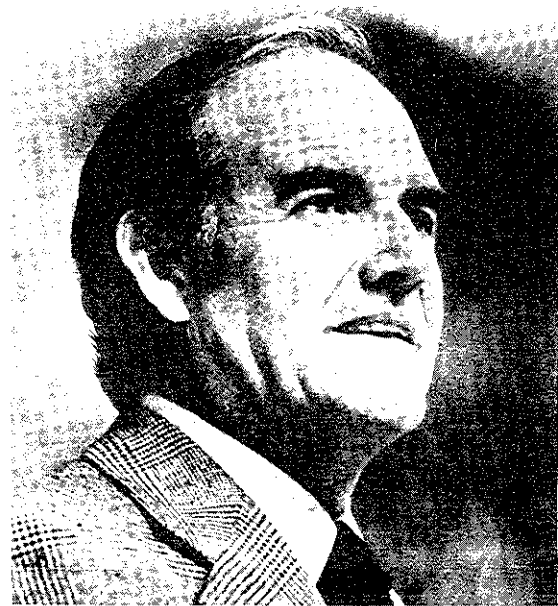
The most important step the Senate can take to protect our security is to change the direction of the arms escalator by demanding that SALT do more to protect our security. The declaration on SALT III which Senator Chafee and I are proposing today is an attempt to shift the arms race into reverse.

A consensus has emerged in the SALT debate in favor of mutual and equitable deep cuts in weaponry. The agreement of military and civilian witnesses, public and private, treaty opponents and supporters, Republicans and Democrats in favor of reductions may be the most noteworthy outcome of the debate.

Now our challenge is to translate this bipartisan consensus on arms reductions into a concrete and effective strategy for achieving deep cuts in SALT III.

We need a dramatic new strategy for several reasons. First, major reductions will elude us if SALT continues on a business as usual basis. The unstable relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, the gallop of weapons technology and the inherently escalatory impact of the SALT bargaining and ratification processes tend to prevent true arms limitations. We must chart a new course.

Second, we need a new strategy because the experience of congressional action in SALT I proves that merely calling for



Senator George McGovern

reductions in the abstract is not enough. In the SALT I resolution, Congress adopted, under Senator Cranston's sponsorship, an amendment which urged the President—

To seek at the earliest practicable moment Strategic Arms Reductions Talks . . . in order to bring about agreements for mutual decreases in the production and development of weapons of mass destruction.

We cannot afford simply to repeat this call for reductions without proposing either a strategy or any hint of a sanction.

Third, we need a strategy because there are ominous suggestions within the administration that it does not accept the consensus formed in the Senate for reductions. The fashionable argument at the moment is that arms control has failed because negotiations have focused too much on reductions and too little on minor stabilizing agreements which could better manage the nuclear arms race. But arms control has failed, not because the reductions were too big, but because they were too little and too late. SALT is in trouble on all sides of the political spectrum not because negotiators focused too little on arms race management, but because they focused too much attention on it while neglecting the goal of reductions. We need to send a tough message to the administration that we regard genuine arms reductions as the centerpiece of any future agreement. There is nothing inherently contradictory about arms reductions and qualitative limitations to improve strategic stability.

Fourth, a realistic strategy will help us probe the intentions of the Soviet Union. Thus far, the record is unclear. On the one hand, the Soviets did make actual reductions in SALT II. Their reductions will not be militarily significant, but they are politically significant. On the other hand, the Soviets rejected any significant lowering of the Vladivostok ceilings. We have to make every reasonable effort to achieve equitable reductions through negotiations with the Soviet Union. Any SALT III strategy must take into account the fact that an arms reduction agreement must satisfy two parties. The SALT III debate will become pointless if it is reduced to a rhetorical attempt to disarm the Soviet Union just as any Soviet attempt to use SALT to unilaterally disarm the United States would fail. □

SALT NEEDS A THEME

Executive Branch agencies are beginning to work on options for SALT III; the letter below urges them to consider setting long range goals and constructing a framework akin to that used in the Mideast Crisis. This would put the SALT process in some perspective, and provide it with some "theme". Such a course would help SALT II, as well as SALT III, by showing that SALT had promise and direction.

The crucial question raised by SALT today is whether the President should raise or lower expectations for its progress. The FAS position, as evinced in a number of Council approved editorials, and in its historical tradition, is to press for making SALT real and significant—hence to raise expectations from the present degree of achievement of SALT. As this month's editorial indicates, the Senate is also adopting this view.

November 8, 1979

My Dear Mr. President:

The trouble with the SALT process is that it has no theme. It gives the appearance of being the result of ad hoc haggling, and worse, fails to achieve enough.

To put the SALT talks back on a sustainable track, you must set far-reaching—but understandable and concrete—goals for SALT. Then you must outline simple processes for achieving those goals. Once all concerned can see where SALT is headed and why, criticism of its ongoing accomplishments will decline.

Recently, the Foreign Relations Committee passed, unanimously, the McGovern-Chafee SALT III resolution. It indicates directions upon which both hawks and doves can agree. First, the resolution called for using your SALT II treaty ceilings and subceilings as a baseline for reductions, and then reducing these limits year-by-year in a continuous and sustainable fashion, as might be done most easily by percentage reduction each year. Second, the resolution called for exceptional efforts to secure reductions in multiple independently guided reentry vehicles (MIRV).

Remembering how you solved the Mideast confrontation, and building on this important indication of sentiment, why not look to a far-reaching "Framework for SALT to the year 2000". As with your Mideast solution, the Framework would not imply that all problems could now be solved, or even understood clearly. But it would show where disarmament was supposed to be going, catch public attention, and resurrect popular support for the SALT process. Most important, it would give the negotiators a structure within which to work. Today, with the exception of your remark that "zero-nuclear" weapons should be the goal, the negotiators themselves have no clear idea what it is they are attempting to achieve.

Why not develop such a structure by building on the Foreign Relations Committee bill and espousing its two themes:

- 1) **THEME ONE: *Diminishing the Threat to our Society (Disarmament)***. Here you might look toward reducing overall aggregates of U.S. and Soviet strategic forces by half during the 1980s, and by half again during the 1990s. This could be achieved by a 7% annual reduction of strategic delivery vehicles (bombers, ICBMs and sub-launched missiles) applied year-by-year to each of the ceilings and subceilings of your SALT II treaty.

If these reductions occurred, each side would have about 575 strategic delivery vehicles in the year 2000—a fully adequate deterrent if deployed in a survivable fashion with bombers, land-based missiles and submarines. Incidentally, the concrete use of your SALT II agreement as a baseline will help build support for SALT II ratification; people sense that the SALT II treaty is of little value except as a baseline for disarmament, but they are unsure that either of the two sides actually plan to move to meaningful disarmament.

Now in order to help them be deployed in a survivable manner, you need also to limit the threat to our forces.

- 2) **THEME TWO: *Diminishing the Threat to our Forces (Stability)***. While a variety of minor arms control agreements can usefully be reached under this category, you should call for the complete elimination of multiple warheads on U.S. and Soviet missiles. You should set, as a goal, the elimination of land-based missile MIRV in the 1980s, and the elimination of sea-based missile MIRV in the 1990s.

Instability Caused By MIRV

It is land-based MIRV that threatens to make our land-based Minuteman missiles vulnerable—with one Soviet missile being able to destroy several of ours, and vice versa. It is MIRV that threatens to provide so many warheads that exotic barrage attacks on air space or water might threaten located airplanes and submarines. And, unfortunately, even sharp reductions of MIRV are not really enough—elimination is required. Only a few hundred Soviet SS-18s could threaten to destroy all of our land-based missiles just as could our projected MX missile do the reverse.

Fortunately, it will not be until the nineties that sea-based MIRV is accurate enough to be troublesome in this way; with the success in eliminating land-based MIRV in the 1980s, your plan would be just in time to work on sea-based MIRV in the 1990s. Especially important, if you could secure agreement to eliminate MIRV, the MX missile project could be abandoned in time, its use having been simply to help persuade the Soviet Union to give up *its* MIRVed land-based missile force. In effect, the U.S. would trade 550 Minuteman III missiles and 200 projected MX missiles for about the same number of Soviet MIRVed missiles. They could be reduced at 50-70 per year.

Can it be done? Politically, no one knows since the Soviet Union, with an ailing Brezhnev, will soon be under new leadership. But, technically, it does not require the dismantlement of launchers or silos now armed with MIRV; they need only be modified so that they are not of a size and kind that has previously been tested with a MIRVed missile according to our present verification techniques.

Needless to say, techniques of verification would change during the two decades with new methods being adopted and older ones, perhaps, abandoned; success in verification would be imperative. In addition, success in reducing theatre nuclear forces would be important. Just as your Mideast agreement did not resolve problems of Palestinian autonomy, the SALT framework cannot now solve all problems of European de-

pendence. To repeat, you need not have the solution in hand to all problems to let "your reach exceed your grasp".

In fact, the critical question for your policy is whether to raise or lower expectations for SALT. Should you let SALT wind down into a technical morass devoted, at best, to taking the roughest edges off on-going technological advance? Or should you follow your initial instincts that the survival of the Nation depends upon making a beginning in real reductions?

Mr. President, the greatest danger to this Nation springs from a "war nobody wants", that arises notwithstanding the greatest deterrent forces the world has ever seen, and an abundance of overkill. None of your advisors can look with confidence to our Nation continuing for another 200 years if these weapons remain in place indefinitely. Every year brings new world crises; which Iran will be the one to set Armageddon in motion? We can, in 30 minutes be more desolated, and more abandoned, than even any Cambodia. Nuclear war is your most important problem. To lower expectations for SALT may be to seal the Nation's fate.

It is true that we cannot now see how we will progress from the above goals for the year 2000, to a context in which our Nation could survive an all-out general war. One of your successors will work on relevant plans in the next century.

But you could, with this plan, at least use the next two decades, to return us to the force levels of two decades ago. And if you were willing to devote the energy and precision you devoted to the Mideast crisis, to this most pressing problem of our own, might you not be remembered, most of all, for this?

Most Sincerely,
/s/ Jeremy J. Stone

W.K.H. PANOFSKY URGED 50% CUT IN 10 YEARS

"... I do not consider it feasible or desirable to establish the specific schedule desired by the United States before commencement of negotiations. However, I consider the goal of reducing the totality of SNDVs (Strategic Nuclear Delivery Vehicles) by, perhaps, 50 percent during a period of less than 10 years to be reasonable and negotiable. I recommended that, in the interest of strategic stability, reductions be negotiated not only in the overall aggregates, but also in the subcategories of central strategic systems as now identified in SALT II. I also specifically recommended that the "phasing", that is the schedule of reduction, should not be the same for each of the SALT II categories. Specifically the schedule of reductions for MIRVed land-based ICBMs should be more rapid than that of the overall aggregate."

THE ULTIMATE ABSURDITY

On November 9, at 11:50 a.m., a North American Air Defense Command computer decided that the United States was under attack and began notifying "other commands and agencies" which began taking appropriate action.

The computer was in error, and, fortunately, the error was caught in six minutes before more than a few airplanes were launched—and no missiles.

But it could have been otherwise. For a decade, at least, the Defense Department has been considering "firing on warning" or "firing under attack" procedures in which missiles would be launched if sensors suggested an attack were coming. Indeed, the present policy of the Defense Department is to observe that any attacker would have to take into consideration the possibility that the United States would fire missiles on warning. In fact, this is true. A President could physically fire missiles within the 20 to 30 minutes of warning.

But, up till now, the United States has not devised the options necessary to turn the matter over to computers in a crisis. This possibility is under discussion, however. Under one scheme, advanced by analyst Richard Garwin, the President would have a veto over such firing if he wished to exercise it but, otherwise, the missiles would fire.

The particular episode is a splendid example of the dangers this poses. The computer reached its decision because it was fed a "test tape" in which simulated signals of an incoming attack had been recorded. How many fail safe signals could such an example finesse? Obviously, quite a few.

DOD interest in such launch-on-warning schemes is enhanced by the debate over the vulnerability of Minuteman missiles. In theory, at least, this vulnerability could be eliminated by hooking the missiles up to a computer and saying that they would inevitably fire if triggered by enemy attack. But characterizing enemy attack could be complicated and, as this event shows—misleading.

And at what would the missiles fire? If cities, then nuclear war would clearly be inevitable whether or not the initial attack had existed or had been misdiagnosed. If our missiles were aimed at adversary missiles, it would seem to have no purpose since: a) if attack were, indeed, underway, adversary missiles would be themselves primed to fire-on-warning and; b) if attack had not been underway, escalation would result from our mistake.

In Herbert York's book *Race to Oblivion*, the last chapter entitled "The Ultimate Absurdity" discusses precisely this problem and warns:

"The second of these absurdities is still in an early stage and, for reasons of secrecy, is not yet so widely recognized as the first. It lies in the fact that in the United States the power to decide whether or not doomsday has arrived is in the process of passing from statesmen and politicians to lower-level officers and technicians and, eventually, to machines. Presumably, the same thing is happening in the Soviet Union.

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"The second absurdity—the steady transfer of life-and-death authority from the high levels to low levels, and from human beings to machines—stems from two root causes. One of these is the development and deployment of weapons systems designed in such a way as to require complex decisions to be

made in extremely short times. The other is the sheer size and wide dispersal of our nuclear-weapons arsenal.

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"As we have seen, deployment of MIRV by both sides, coupled with advances in accuracy and reliability, will put a very high premium on the use of the frightful launch-on-warning tactic and may place an even higher premium on a preemptive strike strategy. Under such circumstances, any fixed land-based-missile system must be able to launch its missiles so soon after receipt of warning that high-level human authorities cannot be included in a decision-making process without seriously degrading the system, unless perhaps such authorities have been properly preprogrammed to produce the 'right' decision in the short time that might be available to them. And an identical situation applies to any ABM system. After years of waiting, but only minutes of warning, it must respond at the precisely correct second. In order to have any chance of being effective, it must have a 'hair trigger.' Thus, we seem to be heading for a state of affairs in which the determination of whether or not doomsday has arrived will be made either by an automatic device designed for the purpose or by a preprogrammed President who, whether he knows it or not, will be carrying out orders written years before by some operations analyst.

"Such a situation must be called the ultimate absurdity. It would involve making the ultimate decision in an absurd manner, and it would almost surely be more dangerous and insidious than the situation that would result from the invention and deployment of what others have called the ultimate weapon.

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If we are to avoid oblivion, if we are to reject the ultimate absurdity, then all of us, not just the current 'in' group of experts and technicians, must involve ourselves in creating the policies and making the decisions necessary to do so."

• • •

FAS has been polling its most senior specialists on firing-on-warning, and has found that only a handful have any sympathy for the notion. The FAS Council opposed the notion in its editorial of April, 1979. How seriously the Defense Department is planning to move in this direction is unknown. But one high-ranking DOD source said that, in the decade ahead, the Secretary of Defense would have to defend himself against criticism of inaction by choosing between: a) a new bomber, b) an MX system or, c) a missile firing-on-warning method. With regard to firing on warning, he observed that "this idea is as alive as it as ever been".

Unlike the possibility of a new bomber, MX and the notion of firing-on-warning are closely linked conceptually. Both are solutions to missile vulnerability. If, as many expect, MX failed to be built, a firing-on-warning method might be considered a cheap fix to notions of Minuteman vulnerability. In this case, the idea might be hard to resist of actually working out the firing options, and putting computers in some kind of charge. On the other hand, it is hard to see what politician, subsequently elected President, would be willing to give up his political responsibility in this "ultimate question" to a computer.

In any event, the world glimpsed by the late physicist, Leo Szilard, is coming apace. One of his stories reflected World War III being initiated by a computer red light turning on mistakenly.

The U.S. retaliated before it realized that the red light did not mean the destruction of San Francisco.

Another of his essays reflected the possibility of catalytic war arising from an unknown source. The U.S. inability to determine whether a nuclear weapon was detonated in the region of South Africa, and whose bomb it might be, shows that a world of third power catalytic war possibilities is also moving closer. □

FAS OPPOSED ENERGY COMMITTEE SYNFUELS BILL

In early November, the Senate was faced with two versions of a bill (S932), one produced by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and the other by the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs. FAS opposed the Energy Committee bill which called for \$88 billion in two stages. Virtually all of our energy specialists considered this approach to be: a continuation of subsidization of energy prices; a diversion rather than a solution in its size and prospects; and a potentially inflationary boondoggle.

Significantly, the Council on Economic Development (CED) composed of businessmen, had earlier advised the Banking Committee that it supported synthetic fuels, but considered this method of going about encouraging them to be worse than doing nothing.

The major points made in the letter and some excerpts were:

- 1). There is no need to subsidize a commercial synthetic fuels program if synthetic fuels can be produced at competitive prices and little point in doing so if they cannot.
- 2). The proposed synthetic fuels program could lock us into particular technologies which may be neither efficient nor economic.
- 3). A subsidized synthetic fuels program like that proposed by the Energy Committee would create sweetheart deals in which the business firms participating would have the option of substantial profit without taking substantial risks.
- 4). Government subsidized programs of this kind cannot, by their nature produce the desired results: a true test of the competitiveness of the technology.
- 5). The proposed subsidy program would be detrimental to the economy by competing with other more desirable investments.
- 6). A large-scale synthetic fuels program would put undesirable demands on the environment.
- 7). A subsidized synthetic fuels program would artificially inflate energy consumption and discourage diversification.
- 8). The proposed synthetic fuels program might have to be subsidized long after the liquidation of the Corporation.
- 9). There are other areas where government subsidies could be more cost effective.
- 10). Above all, very few believe that in the long run synthetic fuels would provide more than a fraction of the U.S. energy deficit in this era.

In the final analysis, we think that conservation is vastly preferable over synthetic fuels to reduce the dependence of this country on foreign fuels. Conservation costs average \$10 to \$12

per barrel of oil equivalent, while synfuels cost estimates are generally upwards of \$30. In addition, conservation has *far* fewer technical and environmental problems than synthetic fuels, and it can reduce our immediate dependence on foreign fossil fuels by more than the most ambitious synfuels production programs.

Of course, conservation can only go so far. But research has indicated that it will buy enough time to carry us into the next century with existing traditional fuels. By that time, with careful planning, a diversified energy production program could be put into place. It might include some synthetic fuels, but it should also include such renewable energy sources as wind and solar. To insure that such a program will be put into place, it is important to continue research and demonstrations in these technologies. A large financial commitment to synthetic fuels commercialization will only divert funds from the other technologies and thereby limit the development of a future balanced energy program.

In summation, a commercially viable synthetic fuels industry cannot be created in a synthetic economic context. Violating the basic rules of the free market is more likely to create white elephants than it is to successfully prime the pump of synfuels. Indeed, the government tendency to subsidize energy prices discourages industry from synthetic fuel production because businessmen fear tampering with their own prices.

When the time for synfuels comes, American firms will recognize it and act accordingly. Now is certainly not the time to be wasting scarce capital pursuing the traditional American predilection for high technology solutions designed to permit "consumption as usual" at subsidized costs. On the other hand, it is time for the United States to consider energy in the context of "limits to growth", to move towards conservation, and, above all, to stop subsidizing energy costs, in particular, and tampering with the energy market system in general.

Sincerely,
/s/Frank von Hippel
Chairman

(The letter has the explicit endorsement of the FAS Executive Committee.)

FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE EXPRESSES DISMAY: CALLS FOR SENATE INSTRUCTIONS

... But the most important reason for the Committee's sense of disappointment is the large increase in warheads expected on both sides, despite the modest reduction in the numbers of permitted launchers. Thus, paradoxically, a vast increase in the quantity and destructiveness of each side's strategic power will occur during the period of a Treaty which seeks to limit strategic offensive arms.

"Moreover, though the qualitative constraints in the Treaty are important, particularly from the standpoint of establishing precedents for SALT III, the Committee believes that the Treaty does little to restrain potentially destabilizing technologies or to alleviate the main threats to strategic stability. SALT II has not been able, despite the Administration's efforts, to reduce the Soviet capability to threaten the prompt destruction of most of the U.S. ICBM force. This leaves a potentially less stable situation in the early to mid-1980's, in which the United States may be compelled to undertake major new strategic programs and increased defense expenditures.

"Some witnesses told the Committee that SALT could not be expected to resolve such strategic problems or to make great strides in reducing and controlling the strategic competition. Instead, SALT II was justified as a step forward in a process that must proceed incrementally toward more significant arms control outcomes. But, the Committee is convinced, after extensive consideration of the question, that to be worthwhile, and to preserve the base of support in the United States for arms control process, SALT III must achieve greater progress in reductions and qualitative limits. For that reason, the Committee recommends that the Senate play an important advisory role in establishing goals or guidelines for SALT III. The Executive must understand the depth of the Senate's concern. The Committee believes that the best way in which the Senate can do this is to set forth fundamental goals which should guide the U.S. negotiators in SALT III and which will serve as a standard against which the Senate can evaluate a future SALT II agreement or agreements. The Committee's specific recommendation as to the form and language of such a Senate statement is discussed in the Committee Action section of this report." (From the Committee's Report, November 19, 1979).

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