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## THE HARD FACTS THE NUCLEAR FREEZE IGNORES

### INTRODUCTION

The outcome of the November 2 referendums on a nuclear freeze clearly demonstrates that the concept of a freeze has struck a responsive chord with a sizable portion of the U.S. electorate. What the results proclaim is that many Americans (indeed certainly most of those who voted against the freeze propositions) hope for the day when the production and deployment of nuclear weapons will end. On the other hand, public opinion surveys of the past two decades reveal that the American public consistently has opposed any nuclear arms agreement, or unilateral undertaking by the United States, which would leave the U.S. in a position of relative inferiority or which would rely upon self-enforced observance by the Soviets.

It is impossible on a ballot resolution to capture all the nuances and qualifers of a voter's full view--hopes and fears--on the nuclear freeze. Rather, the voter is faced with a black-white choice, being either "for" or "against" a halt in nuclear weapons production and deployment. Under these limited circumstances, many voters chose to utilize the vehicle of the freeze resolutions to express their general hopes for a reduction of the nuclear spectre which hangs over the world.

Among those supporting the nuclear freeze, however, also are individuals and groups who have sought to make a nuclear freeze the official public policy of the United States. Most of these demonstrate little understanding of the hard facts concerning a nuclear freeze, a public policy which, if implemented, could have dangerous implications for U.S. security. And it is such hard facts that discredit simplistic, sloganizing approaches to a nuclear freeze.

In California, voters authorized their governor to prepare and transmit a written communication to the President and other federal officials urging that "the Government of the United States propose to the Government of the Soviet Union that both countries agree to immediately halt the testing, production and further deployment of all nuclear weapons, missiles and delivery systems in a way that can be checked and verified by both sides."<sup>1</sup> In Michigan, a majority of citizens voted to urge the U.S. government to immediately propose a "Mutual Nuclear Weapons Freeze" to the Soviet government and to urge Congress to transfer the funds resulting from cancelled defense programs to "civilian use."<sup>2</sup> And in New Jersey, citizens voted to urge the Government to "immediately agree to a mutual, verifiable halt" on the further testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and to "apply the money saved to human needs and tax reduction."<sup>3</sup> Other states which passed nuclear freeze resolutions included Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Oregon, Montana, and North Dakota.<sup>4</sup>

The success of these state initiatives was due to a number of factors, including extremely efficient organizing by state and local freeze activists, the considerable publicity given to the freeze campaign by the press, and the absence of many anti-freeze organizations at the state and local level to counter pro-freeze arguments. However, one of the key selling points of the freeze movement, as a whole, has been the simplicity and apparent straightforwardness of the nuclear freeze proposals themselves.

Most of the discussion of the nuclear freeze has amounted to an exchange of slogans. Seldom has the public been given sufficient information to analyze the assumptions that lie behind the nuclear freeze proposals. Taken individually, these assumptions are readily subject to challenge.

There are essentially six assumptions which underlie the various freeze proposals. The first assumption--a moral one--is that nuclear deterrence is itself immoral. In as much as this assumption rests on an understanding of a deterrence doctrine (Mutual Assured Destruction) which is already being revised substantially and since the assumption, when carried to its ultimate conclusion, would lead to a position of unilateral nuclear disarmament, it is subject to challenge.

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<sup>1</sup> "California Bilateral Nuclear Weapons Freeze Initiative," (Californians For A Bilateral Nuclear Weapons Freeze, [1982]).

<sup>2</sup> "The Michigan Initiative November 2, 1982," ([Michigan Nuclear Weapons Freeze, 1982]).

<sup>3</sup> "It's on the Ballot! The FREEZE Because Nobody Wants A Nuclear War," (N.J. Campaign for Nuclear Weapons Freeze, [1982]).

<sup>4</sup> For extremely useful accounts of the ongoing state freeze campaigns, see the 1982 issues of Patrick B. McGuigan's Initiative And Referendum Report (Washington, D.C.: Free Congress Foundation)

A second philosophical assumption is that the superpowers are engaged in a world-endangering arms race. This assumption ignores the reality that it has been the Soviet Union which has been "racing" during the past decade, while the United States, until recently, has been cutting back on its efforts. The third assumption is that both sides have reached a point of nuclear overkill. This assumption greatly distorts reality.

A fourth assumption is that a rough balance of nuclear weapons exists on both sides. Actually, the Soviet Union possesses a definite margin of superiority in strategic and theater nuclear forces. A fifth assumption is that a freeze would be readily verifiable. Yet verifying a freeze would be highly difficult, if not impossible. The final assumption is that a nuclear freeze would actually facilitate arms reductions. This rests on the overly optimistic appraisal which freeze adherents have made about the state of the nuclear balance. Given the strategic imbalance in the Soviet Union's favor which currently exists, a freeze would actually hinder real arms reductions, since the Soviets would be unlikely to trade away their superiority in strategic systems for inferior U.S. systems.

In short, the nuclear freeze offers a false answer to the very real problems of nuclear weapons.

#### THE NUCLEAR FREEZE PROPOSALS: SOME BASIC TEXTS

Randall Forsberg, the executive director of the Massachusetts-based Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies began circulating a draft nuclear freeze proposal in 1980.<sup>5</sup> This proposal became a basic text for the various state and local freeze petitions pushed in late 1981 by the newly-formed National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign Clearinghouse.<sup>6</sup> A representative text of this original freeze proposal states:

To improve national and international security, the United States and the Soviet Union should stop the nuclear arms race. Specifically, they should adopt a mutual freeze on the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and of missiles and new aircraft

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<sup>5</sup> The paper was entitled "Call to Halt the Nuclear Arms Race." For information on IDDS and Randall Forsberg, a former peace researcher at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, see the "glossary" entry for the Institute in The War Called Peace: The Soviet Peace Offensive (Alexandria, Virginia: Western Goals, 1982), p. 162; and the description of the Institute in the so-called Anne Zill Report--"A Review of the Activities of 53 Organizations Concerned With Foreign Affairs, War and Peace, Human and Civil Liberties," 22 February 1982, copy of a typescript document, p. [36]. This report has also been reprinted in The War Called Peace.

<sup>6</sup> For information on the Clearinghouse, see the "glossary" entry in The War Called Peace, 167-168; and the Zill Report, p. [53].



designed primarily to deliver nuclear weapons. This is an essential, verifiable first step toward lessening the risk of nuclear war and reducing the nuclear arsenals.<sup>7</sup>

In Spring 1982, the Congress became involved in the nuclear freeze campaign. In the Senate, Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts and Mark Hatfield of Oregon co-sponsored a joint resolution calling for a nuclear freeze.<sup>8</sup> This resolution recommended:

1. As an immediate strategic arms control objective, the United States and the Soviet Union should:

(a) pursue a complete halt to the nuclear arms race;

(b) decide when and how to achieve a mutual and verifiable freeze on the testing, production, and further deployment of nuclear warheads, missiles, and other delivery systems; and

(c) give special attention to destabilizing weapons whose deployment would make such a freeze more difficult to achieve.

2. Proceeding from this freeze, the United States and the Soviet Union should pursue major, mutual and verifiable reductions in nuclear warheads, missiles, and other delivery systems, through annual percentages or equally effective means, in a manner that enhances stability.<sup>9</sup>

In June 1982, a House joint resolution supporting a nuclear freeze was introduced by Congressmen Clement Zablocki of Wisconsin and Jonathan Bingham of New York, among others.<sup>10</sup> The House resolution carried the Kennedy-Hatfield resolution a bit further by tying the freeze proposal to the unratified SALT II Treaty and the new START negotiations. The resolution recommended, in part:

That the United States and the Soviet Union should immediately begin the strategic arms reduction talks (START) and those talks should have the following objectives:

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<sup>7</sup> "Petition To the Congressional Delegation of the State of Maryland For a Mutual US-Soviet Halt to the Nuclear Arms Race," The Maryland Campaign For A Nuclear Weapons Freeze, n.d.; reproduced in The Nuclear Freeze: A Study Guide for Churches Prepared by the Institute on Religion and Democracy (Washington, D.C.: The Institute on Religion and Democracy, 1982), p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> S.J. Res. 163, March 10, 1982.

<sup>9</sup> S.J. Res. 163, The Congressional Record, March 10, 1982; reproduced in The Nuclear Freeze: A Study Guide, p. 12. A counter-proposal, Senate Joint Resolution 177, was submitted on March 30, 1982, by Senators Henry Jackson of Washington and John Warner of Virginia.

<sup>10</sup> H.J. Res. 521, June 23, 1982.

(1) Pursuing a complete halt to the nuclear arms race.

(2) Deciding when and how to achieve a mutual verifiable freeze on the testing, production, and further deployment of nuclear warheads, missiles, and other delivery systems.

(3) Giving special attention to destabilizing weapons whose deployment would make such a freeze more difficult to achieve.

(4) Proceeding from this mutual and verifiable freeze, pursuing substantial, equitable, and verifiable reductions through numerical ceilings, annual percentages, or any other equally effective and verifiable means of strengthening strategic stability.

(5) Preserving present limitations and controls on current nuclear weapons and nuclear delivery systems.

(6) Incorporating ongoing negotiations in Geneva on land-based intermediate-range nuclear missiles into the START negotiations.

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SEC. 2. The United States should promptly approve the SALT II agreement provided adequate verification capabilities are maintained.<sup>11</sup>

What becomes evident from a reading of each of these nuclear freeze proposals is the essential simplicity of their wording. Each statement suggests that a freeze on nuclear weapons is verifiable and that a freeze will somehow enhance the United States' chances of working out arms reductions with the Soviet Union. The complexities of arms control distressingly are dismissed or ignored.

#### THE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE FREEZE

Support for a freeze ultimately must rest on the assumptions made about the nature of nuclear weapons, the state of the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance and the efficacy of a nuclear freeze as

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<sup>11</sup> "H.J. Res. 521 Calling for a mutual and verifiable freeze on and reductions in nuclear weapons and for the approval of the SALT II agreement." June 23, 1982, 97th Congress, 2D Session; slip copy of the resolution, pp. 2-3. The Zablocki-Bingham nuclear freeze resolution was narrowly defeated on the floor of the House on August 5, 1982, when, on a vote of 204-202, the Members voted to accept the wording of a substitute, pro-Reagan Administration position resolution (H.J. Res. 538) submitted by Congressmen William Broomfield of Michigan, William Carney of New York and Samuel Stratten of New York. See Pat Towell, "House Narrowly Rejects a Nuclear Freeze," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, August 7, 1982, pp. 1883-1886.

an arms control measure. Proponents of the nuclear freeze rest their case on a variety of moral and philosophical assumptions or practical and technical assumptions.

Assumption #1: Nuclear Deterrence Is Immoral

Some influential American churchmen have attracted to the freeze movement many people who otherwise would not have committed themselves to a disarmament campaign. These church leaders not only see the use of nuclear weapons as immoral but believe that threatening to use them is immoral. They thus feel that nuclear disarmament is the only answer to a serious moral dilemma. Since the sponsors of the nuclear freeze campaign claim that a freeze will halt the arms race and spur arms reduction agreements, these churchmen happily support the nuclear freeze as a necessary first step to total nuclear disarmament.<sup>12</sup>

In 1968, U.S. Catholic Bishops publicly began reappraising war with an "entirely new attitude" in light of nuclear weapons. Eight years later, in the document To Live in Christ Jesus, the American bishops directly challenged the morality of nuclear deterrence. They began by questioning the morality of nuclear war: "[M]odern warfare, both in its technology and in its execution, is so savage that one must ask whether war as it is actually waged today can be morally justified." The bishops proceeded to limit the right of self-defense: "The right of legitimate defense is not a moral justification for unleashing every form of destruction. For example, acts of war deliberately directed against innocent noncombatants are gravely wrong, and no one may participate in such an act."

And finally, the statement by the bishops prohibited deterrence based on a threat to civil populations: "As possessors of a vast nuclear arsenal, we must also be aware that not only is it wrong to attack civilian populations but it is also wrong to threaten to attack them as part of a strategy of deterrence."<sup>13</sup> John Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia, acting as official spokesman for the U.S. Catholic Conference, went even further in his condemnation of nuclear deterrence in 1979. Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee regarding the ratification of the SALT II Treaty, Cardinal Krol said: "The moral judgment of this statement is that not only the use of strategic nuclear weapons, but also the declared intent to use them involved in our

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<sup>12</sup> This does not mean that the majority of the people who support a nuclear freeze necessarily favor total nuclear disarmament, even though many of the freeze campaign's leaders clearly do.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Michael Novak, "Arms & the Church," Commentary, March 1982, p. 38. For a slightly longer quotation from the third passage, see James A. Hickey, Archbishop of Washington, "Nuclear Weapons, Moral Questions: A Pastoral Call to Peacemaking," Archdiocese of Washington, June 3, 1982, copy of a typescript document, p. 5.

deterrence policy is wrong. This explains the Catholic dissatisfaction with nuclear deterrence and the urgency of the Catholic demand that the nuclear arms race be reversed."<sup>14</sup>

Other denominations in the U.S. also have moved in this direction during the past year or so. In November 1981, at an international meeting on nuclear disarmament sponsored by the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam, the Rev. William Sloan Coffin of New York's Riverside Church, a veteran of radical movements, asserted: "Christians have to say that it is a sin not only to use, not only to threaten to use, but merely to build a nuclear weapon."<sup>15</sup> He was undoubtedly voicing the sentiments of many leaders of the United Presbyterian Church--a denomination which had taken "overwhelming votes" against nuclear weapons earlier in the year.<sup>16</sup> And in December, the leaders of the American Baptist Churches (one of the nation's Baptist umbrella groups) endorsed a resolution which says in part: "The presence of nuclear weapons, and the willingness to use them, is a direct affront to our Christian beliefs and commitment."<sup>17</sup>

Just how representative these views are of American Christianity is open to question. The Catholic Church, for example, has not renounced the just war doctrine. As Terence Cardinal Cooke of New York, who, as Military Vicar, provides for the pastoral care of American Catholics in military service, wrote in a letter to Catholic chaplains on December 7, 1981:

The Church has traditionally taught and continues to teach that a government has both the right and the duty to protect its people against unjust aggression. This means that it is legitimate to develop and maintain weapons systems to try to prevent war by "deterring" another nation from attacking....[A]s long as our nation is sincerely trying to work with other nations to find a better way, the Church considers the strategy of nuclear deterrence morally tolerable....

The Church does not require, nor have the Popes of the nuclear age or the Second Vatican Council recommended, unilateral disarmament.<sup>18</sup>

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- <sup>14</sup> Quoted in Novak, op. cit., p. 39. This view rests on the Catholic teaching regarding "intention"--that to mean to perform an evil act is itself immoral.
- <sup>15</sup> Quoted in "Church groups intensify arms race opposition," National Christian Reporter, December 11, 1981; reproduced in The Nuclear Freeze: A Study Guide, p. 27.
- <sup>16</sup> See Charles Austin, "2 Major Protestant Churches Call for an End to Arms Race," The New York Times, December 18, 1981; reproduced in Ibid., p. 26.
- <sup>17</sup> Quoted in Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Quoted in Novak, "Arms & the Church," p. 40.



What is ignored in most of the clergy's anti-nuclear pronouncements is the most important question of all: what policy is most likely to actually prevent the outbreak of war--either nuclear or conventional? The question that goes to the heart of the matter is whether nuclear deterrence has served and is continuing to serve to prevent war. The fact is that nuclear deterrence has been the principal factor in preventing the outbreak of war between the United States and the Soviet Union in the years since the end of the Second World War. In contrast to this period, the first four decades of the twentieth century witnessed two world wars which killed millions of people and devastated whole regions of the globe.

It should also be understood that the belief of certain Catholic Bishops and other clergymen that nuclear deterrence is immoral is predicated upon their understanding deterrence in light of the now-dated American strategic doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). This doctrine was widely understood to posit that deterrence would be maintained if both sides possessed a capability to "destroy an aggressor as a viable society even after a well-planned and executed surprise attack" on their strategic forces. In effect, mutual assured destruction envisioned that a significant portion of the population and industry of each side was to be held hostage to a nuclear fate in order to prevent nuclear war. MAD was first publicly enunciated in 1965, during the Johnson Administration, by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara.

Yet even at the peak of MAD, strategic planning still was predicated upon targeting sizable numbers of nuclear weapons against solely military targets. In the mid-1970s, as Soviet strategic capabilities grew alarmingly, the United States gradually began moving away from its primary reliance upon Mutual Assured Destruction toward the increased and selective targeting of Soviet strategic military targets. This was to avoid a situation where the destruction of Russian cities would be the only option available to a U.S. President in the event of a Soviet surprise attack. In fact, the Reagan Administration's present strategic weapons program is designed to ensure that options other than city-busting can be used realistically to deter a Soviet attack.

Are the advocates of a nuclear freeze against deterrence? It is hard to tell. But who could argue seriously that the U.S. can afford to renounce nuclear deterrence? Deterrence rests implicitly on the believability of a country's threat to use force to defend itself. For the United States to renounce the possible use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances would inevitably encourage the Soviet Union to take even more risks internationally. Ironically, this would increase international tension and the danger of war.

It may be appropriate for Cardinal Krol to assert that there are "other means of resistance" to Soviet military power than U.S. nuclear arms, or for Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle,



when asked about the "danger of the whole world being in a slave labor camp," to reply that we should trust in God.<sup>19</sup> But it is similarly appropriate to ask if that is a basis on which national leaders can make public policy? It would be dangerous to peace and freedom if America's leaders, pledged to provide for the common defense of all its people, adopted a policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament, which is what the moral assumption of the pro-freeze clergymen really requires.

### Assumption #2: A Nuclear Arms Race Endangers World Survival

One of the major philosophical assumptions of leaders of the freeze movement is the belief that the United States and the Soviet Union are busily engaged in a nuclear arms race that increases the planet's chances of destruction. "[T]here is an urgency, a terrible urgency, that if we do not get a freeze soon, there will indeed be a whole new generation of weapons that will make nuclear war all the more likely," claims Randy Kehler, National Coordinator of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign.<sup>20</sup> "Many believe we face an accelerating arms race and a possible drift toward destruction," declares Archbishop James Hickey of Washington.<sup>21</sup> Proclaims the American Lutheran Church: Our concern is over "the increasing sense of insecurity and peril to which our world is being led by escalation in nuclear weaponry. We see that our nation is locked with the Soviet Union in an arms race which both countries find almost impossible to stop."<sup>22</sup>

The metaphor of a "race" to depict U.S. and Soviet defense policies has been used by the peace movement for more than thirty years. It is a metaphor whose applicability, never strong, has declined appreciably over the past decade. What the world witnessed during the 1970s was a continuing Soviet strategic military buildup at a time when the United States dramatically had slowed its own defense efforts. Since 1971, the United States has deployed just three new or significantly upgraded strategic missiles.<sup>23</sup> In this same period, the Soviet Union has deployed at least nineteen.<sup>24</sup> In terms of the "race," the United States

<sup>19</sup> The quotation from Cardinal Krol comes from ibid., p. 41; and the quotation concerning Archbishop Hunthausen comes from James V. Schall, "Ecclesiastical Wars Over Peace," National Review, June 25, 1982, p. 760.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in an interview with Randy Kehler by editor Stephen Maikowski of Transition (Institute for World Order). "On the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign," Transition, Vol. 5 (May 1982), p. [2]. Before heading the national freeze campaign organization, Kehler had been in charge of the successful grass roots freeze campaign in western Massachusetts. Anne Zill Report, p. [53].

<sup>21</sup> Archbishop James Hickey, "Nuclear Weapons, Moral Questions," p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in "Lutherans Ask Nuclear Ban," The New York Times, September 12, 1982, p. 27.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. missiles: (ICBMs) Minuteman III with the NS-20 guidance and Mk-12A warhead; (SLBMs) Trident C-4; and (Cruise Missiles) ALCM/AGM-86B.

<sup>24</sup> USSR missiles" (ICBMs) SS-11 Mod 3, SS-13 Improved Version, SS-17 and SS-17 Mod 1, SS-18, SS-18 Mod 1, SS-18 Mod 2, SS-18 Mod 3, SS-19, SS-19 Improved Version and SS-19 Mod 1; (SLBMs) SS-N-6 Mod 2, SS-N-6 Mod 3, SS-N-8, SS-N-17, SS-N-18, SS-N-18 Mod 2, SS-N-18 Mod 3, and SS-NX-20.

stopped running. The question avoided by the freeze advocates is: Why then didn't the Soviet Union stop or at least slow down?

Little complaint was heard from the peace groups in the late 1970s when the Soviet Union's strategic forces raced ahead of the United States in vitally important areas. Strangely, these groups and other nuclear freeze proponents only became distressed by military growth when it became apparent that the Reagan Administration was not going to allow America's security position to be jeopardized by letting the Soviets retain their strategic edge.

In regard to the matter of whether the "arms race" is leading the world ever closer to war, two points need to be made. One is that, as far as arms control is concerned, the technological improvements made in nuclear weapons systems over the past several decades have led the U.S. even further away from the dangers of accidental nuclear war. Because of the increased accuracy available in Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and the move to multiple warheads on each missile, the average yields of nuclear warheads have dropped considerably. Gone are the days when both sides possessed many hundreds of multi-megaton warheads aboard ballistic missiles that guaranteed extensive collateral damage of civilian areas even when launched against military targets. While American ICBM warhead yields have dropped significantly, nonetheless, Soviet warhead yields have tended to remain high. For instance, the warheads on the Soviet SS-18 and SS-18 Mod 2 single-warhead ICBMs are estimated at 24 and 20 megatons, respectively. Similarly, the warheads on their smaller, single warhead SS-17 Mod 1 and SS-19 Mod 1 ICBMs are estimated to be 3.6 and 4.3 megatons, respectively. In contrast to this, the United States' operational single-warhead ICBMs have yields of 1.2 megatons (Minuteman II) and 9 megatons (the fifty-two Titan II missiles that are planned for deactivation starting in 1983).

Modern strategic systems possess many more safeguards to accidental launch than did older systems. They employ greater redundancy in safety features such as permissive action links (PAL) which allow launch of the weapons or arming of the warheads only under positive control. Nuclear weapons systems are less vulnerable to destruction in an enemy surprise attack than were their counterparts twenty-five years ago, and thus are less likely to tempt the other side into delivering a preemptive nuclear strike in an attempt to knock them out.

The other point is that the danger of nuclear war is not substantially increased by an attempt by one side to maintain or regain a nuclear balance with the other. But the danger could be increased by nuclear instability, where one side retains a discernible advantage over the other. If the United States were to concede a measurable strategic advantage to the Soviet Union, such as by agreeing to a nuclear freeze under the present circumstances, this could well lead to a permanent strategic instability favoring the Soviet Union, which would make conflict more likely.

### Assumption #3: Overkill

Another assertion that is repeatedly heard from the freeze proponents is that the United States and the Soviet Union have long since reached a position of nuclear overkill. It thus is argued that the procurement of new nuclear weapons is unnecessary and the fact that one side may have more weapons than the other is irrelevant.

The term overkill is an emotional label that avoids serious discussion. It focuses attention, and defines the context of debate, in terms of a totally misleading concept. There is no certain overkill capability when taking into account some of the scenarios that must be considered when the security of the United States is at issue.

To estimate whether a country has a sufficient number of nuclear weapons, or an excess of them, as freeze proponents claim, what must be determined are the requirements the weapons are to fulfill and the restraints that are placed upon their use by national policy. The nuclear weapons which the United States maintains serve a two-fold purpose: 1) to be sufficient in number and power to deter the Soviet Union from attacking and; 2) in the event that deterrence fails, to be of sufficient remaining number, power and accuracy to destroy enemy military forces that threaten additional damage to the United States or its allies or to engage other enemy targets whose destruction or threatened destruction promises to bring the war to an early termination.

For more than twenty years, the United States has espoused a second strike strategic doctrine.<sup>25</sup> That is, the United States will not launch its nuclear missiles until after it has sustained a nuclear first strike from the other side. This means that in the event of a nuclear war, the U.S. could expect most of its ICBMs, almost half of its ballistic missile submarines and a majority of its intercontinental bombers to be destroyed before its leaders could retaliate. For this reason, the United States needs to maintain more than the minimum number of strategic warheads which the layman would think sufficient to deter the Soviets. To deter a Soviet first strike, the U.S. must be able to field enough weapons to demonstrate to Soviet military planners that it could cause unacceptable levels of damage to the Soviet Union even after sustaining the destruction of many of its strategic weapons in a nuclear surprise attack. That is why the overkill argument has so little validity when applied to U.S. strategic forces.

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<sup>25</sup> This should not be confused with the stated U.S. and NATO deterrent policy of authorizing first use of nuclear weapons in Western Europe in the event that a Warsaw Pact military invasion cannot be contained by conventional means.



Numbers can and do matter, of course. But usually it is the asymmetry of capabilities and not the asymmetry of numbers that concerns strategic planners. That is why, for instance, the Soviet Union's continuing deployment of SS-20 Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles in European Russia so concerns U.S. and NATO military planners--not so much the numbers of SS-20s, though this does play a part, but because of the greatly enhanced capabilities of the missile (each with three independently targetable warheads, plus greater range and vastly increased accuracy over the obsolescent Soviet SS-4s and SS-5s also deployed) and the fact that NATO has nothing yet deployed to counterbalance them.

Assumption #4: A Rough Balance in Strategic Weapons Exists

The assertion that a rough balance in strategic weapons exists on both sides is couched in practical terms by those favoring a nuclear freeze. "The freeze idea is based on the conviction that there is now rough parity between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. in nuclear destructive power," says Congressman Jonathan Bingham, a major co-sponsor of the pro-freeze resolution in the House.<sup>26</sup> "Now is an appropriate time for a freeze because the nuclear military strengths of the U.S. and the Soviet Union are roughly equivalent--in parity...Neither side is behind so neither side has to fear being 'locked in' to an inferior position," proclaims the Peacemaking Project of the United Presbyterian Church.<sup>27</sup>

The terms "rough equivalence" or "rough balance" are so indefinite that they can mean almost anything. Yet most U.S. and Western defense analysts conclude that the Soviet Union has an advantage in most critical categories of strategic weapons.<sup>28</sup> A few comparisons are instructive. The United States has 1,052 ICBM launchers, 520 Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile launchers,

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<sup>26</sup> Testimony by Congressman Jonathan Bingham before the Subcommittee on International Security & Scientific Affairs of the House Foreign Affairs Committee; excerpted in "The Nuclear Freeze Proposal: Pro & Con," Congressional Digest, August-September 1982, p. 214.

<sup>27</sup> "Some Questions Often Asked About the Call to Halt the Nuclear Arms Race," Peacemaking Project of the United Presbyterian Church; reproduced in The Nuclear Freeze: A Study Guide, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> For one analysis of such measure, based entirely on open source material, see Measures And Trends US And USSR Strategic Force Effectiveness - Interim Report for Period May 1977-March 1978 Prepared for Director, Defense Nuclear Agency (Alexandria, Virginia: Santa Fe Corporation, March 1978). This report summarized the situation in this way: "For the general period covered by this report (1960-1982), most of the measures show a shift from a clear US advantage to a Soviet advantage...The only measure of the 41 contained in this report in which the United States will apparently maintain a clear advantage is in (1) numbers of intercontinental bombers and (2) independently targetable Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) warheads." Ibid., p. 1.



and 376 strategic bombers (counting both long-range and medium-range aircraft). The Soviet Union, however, has 1,398 ICBM launchers, 989 SLBM launchers, and 835 strategic bombers.<sup>29</sup> That corresponds to a Soviet advantage in numbers of strategic launchers of 1.63 to 1. In regard to missile throwweight--the weight of the warhead compartment and warheads on a missile--United States' ICBMs and SLBMs have an aggregate throwweight of 3,269,000 pounds. The Soviet Union, because of its much larger missiles, has an aggregate throwweight of 12,021,000 pounds.<sup>30</sup> That corresponds to a Soviet throwweight advantage of 3.68 to 1. In regard to warheads (force loadings), the United States has some 9,000. And the Soviet Union, which has been rapidly closing the gap with the U.S. as it moves to add multiple warheads to its submarine-launched ballistic missiles, has some 7,500. That corresponds to a slight U.S. advantage of 1.2 to 1. And finally, in regard to equivalent megatonage--a measure of the destructiveness of nuclear weapons against urban-industrial targets--the United States has 2107 equivalent megatons of explosive power. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, has 8440 equivalent megatons.<sup>31</sup> And that corresponds to a Soviet advantage of 4 to 1.

The ratios for dozens of other strategic measures could be similarly calculated without significantly changing the results. With the exception of a few measures, such as the number of warheads discussed above, the Soviet Union has a discernible advantage across-the-board in strategic forces.

Clearly, if the Soviet Union now possesses an advantage in strategic forces, then the signing of a nuclear freeze agreement would be destabilizing rather than stabilizing, since it would solidify an obvious strategic imbalance.

#### Assumption #5: A Freeze Would Be Verifiable

"In many respects it is a lot easier to verify a freeze which is comprehensive in nature and which stops everything where

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<sup>29</sup> These numbers, and those given in the following sentences (unless otherwise noted), have been compiled from a variety of sources, including: Report Of Secretary Of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger To The Congress On The FY 1983 Budget, FY 1984 Authorization Request And FY 1983-1987 Defense Programs February 8, 1982; Soviet Military Power (Washington, D.C.: The Department of Defense, [October 1981]); and The Military Balance 1981-1982 (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981).

<sup>30</sup> Keith B. Payne, Nuclear Deterrence in U.S.-Soviet Relations (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), Table 7.1, pp. 168-169.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. Payne used the formula  $N*Y^{2/3}$  (N = number of warheads and Y = yield of warheads) to calculate EMT. Other formulas weighted to account for whether the warheads were of greater yield than one megaton or not (since the yields greater than one megaton have lethal areas that exceed the size of most urban-industrial targets) would furnish different figures. See Measures And Trends, p. 52.

it is today...than it is to set a ceiling and allow development of some programs and not others," says Dr. Herbert Scoville, President of the Arms Control Association.<sup>32</sup> "Opponents of a nuclear freeze also claim that a freeze is not a practical idea, because it will be difficult to verify...In fact, a freeze may well be easier to verify than a complex arms reduction agreement," argues Senator Edward Kennedy.<sup>33</sup>

Verification is, at bottom, a subjective process and determining that the other side is complying with an agreement comes down to a political judgment. For example, the SALT I agreements contained specific language that not only directed each party to not interfere with the national technical means of verification of the other but also directed the setting up of a Standing Consultative Commission to adjudicate, among other things, problems with compliance.<sup>34</sup> Despite this formal mechanism, there is ample evidence that the Soviet Union violated the terms of the agreements. But when the U.S. representatives to the Standing Consultative Commission raised each probable violation with their Soviet counterparts, the USSR's representatives simply noted that the Americans were wrong in their accusations. The Americans ultimately let the matter drop.<sup>35</sup> The problem is that as long as a government perceives it to be in its interest to continue to participate in a particular arms control agreement, its tendency will be to convince itself that the other party is complying with the terms of the agreement, whether or not that is really the case.

Since the Soviets long have refused to allow effective monitoring of nuclear weapons testing and deployment by direct observations from its territory (on-site inspection), the only practical way that the United States can attempt to verify the Soviet Union's compliance with a comprehensive nuclear freeze is by the use of its national technical means (NTM), a euphemism for

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<sup>32</sup> Remarks made during a debate on the freeze; quoted in "A Heritage Roundtable: The Nuclear Freeze," The Heritage Lectures 14 (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1982), p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; in "The Nuclear Freeze Proposal," Congressional Digest, p. 206.

<sup>34</sup> See "Interim Agreement on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, 26 May 1972," Articles V and VI; and "Treaty on Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, 26 May 1972," Article XIII.

<sup>35</sup> For the Carter Administration's official report on SALT I compliance, see "SALT One: Compliance SALT Two: Verification," Selected Documents No. 7 (Washington, D.C.: The Department of State, February 1978). For detailed accounts of Soviet SALT I violations, see Jake Garn, "The Suppression of Information Concerning Soviet SALT Violations by the U.S. Government," Policy Review, Summer 1979, pp. 11-32; and a variety of articles and monographs by former CIA analyst David S. Sullivan, including his Soviet SALT Deception (Washington, D.C.: Coalition for Peace Through Strength, December 1979).

satellite photographic and electronic reconnaissance and the use of ground-based radars and receivers stationed outside Soviet territory. Overhead reconnaissance and electronic emissions monitoring, however, cannot tell military planners whether a particular missile sitting in its silo has one or a dozen warheads or whether the missile's guidance accuracy has been dramatically improved through changes in its guidance software. These national technical means of verification also are far from infallible when it comes to detecting hidden missiles or determining whether the clandestine production of small numbers of missiles and warheads is taking place. Notes Charles Burton Marshall: "First it is easier to monitor big things than little, small quantities than large, fixed items than mobile, exterior configurations than interior details, assembled mechanisms than unassembled, long-haul processes than short-term, and outside testing than laboratory procedures."<sup>36</sup>

Some adherents of the nuclear freeze have asserted that the Soviet Union has agreed in principle to on-site inspection in connection with the Comprehensive Test Ban Talks and so would probably allow such inspection for a nuclear freeze agreement. The real question, however, is why freeze proponents have not made on-site inspection for the purposes of verification a requirement of their freeze resolutions, when such inspection is necessary to increase the reliability of any verification attempts?<sup>37</sup> Is it perhaps that enforcing a nuclear freeze using on-site inspection would have to be far more comprehensive and intrusive than that for monitoring a test ban, thus making it far less likely to be agreed to by the highly secretive Soviet leadership.

In short, verification is not certain, whether one is talking about monitoring compliance with a specific arms control treaty or a comprehensive nuclear freeze. Even when verification is crucial to the functioning of an agreement, it will be evaluated in ways that have little to do with the technical aspects of compliance. Inasmuch as a nuclear freeze encompasses the monitoring of every aspect of nuclear weapons testing, development and deployment, it will be even harder to verify than much more limited arms agreements.

#### Assumption #6: A Freeze Will Facilitate Nuclear Arms Reductions

A final assumption is that a nuclear freeze would actually increase the United States' chances of obtaining an agreement with the Soviet Union on reducing the nuclear arsenals of both sides.

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<sup>36</sup> C.B. Marshall, "The Problem of Verification in the SALT"; quoted in Amrom H. Katz, Verification And SALT: The State of the Art and the Art of the State (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1979), p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> It should be noted that even on-site inspection cannot guarantee that a party committed to evading strict compliance with an arms control agreement will be caught in the act.



This argument rests on the assumption the nuclear forces of both sides are essentially equivalent. But the Soviet strategic buildup over the past decade has enabled Moscow to move ahead of the United States in a number of important strategic categories.<sup>38</sup> An agreement imposing a freeze on "the testing, production, and further deployment" of nuclear weapons and warheads legally would bind the United States into a continuing situation of strategic disadvantage.

An analysis of past Soviet negotiating on arms control measures shows that the Soviet Union would be unlikely to give up significant strategic capabilities without a compensating tradeoff by the United States. In 1972, for instance, the USSR agreed to the ABM Treaty limiting development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems to forestall the full deployment of a much more technically advanced U.S. system. Again, in early 1980, the Soviet Union agreed to talks on limiting European-based intermediate-range nuclear forces only after NATO had committed itself to the deployment of new Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles in order to balance the massive Soviet SS-20 missile buildup.

A United States inferior to the USSR would be unable to offer a corresponding quid pro quo in strategic capabilities that would allow the Soviets to accept an arms reduction agreement that really mattered.<sup>39</sup> Thus, a nuclear freeze would not facilitate further arms reduction; in reality it would prevent the completion of significant arms control agreements with the Soviets.

## CONCLUSION

The very simplicity of the nuclear freeze proposals is certainly their great attraction. It is also, perhaps, their greatest weakness. In its various manifestations, the freeze is an attempt to achieve serious arms control without paying its cost--the months and years of patient negotiation over the necessarily complex issues of nuclear weaponry. In this area there is no easy way to achieve meaningful agreements. The call for a freeze also overlooks the history of the Soviet Arms buildup and the record of Moscow's compliance to arms accords. It overlooks the hard, unpleasant facts about the nature of the Soviet Union and the difficulties inherent in securing a verifiable agreement with a fundamentally duplicitous negotiating partner.

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<sup>38</sup> See the discussion on pp. 12-13.

<sup>39</sup> While there is a slight possibility that the Soviet Union would agree to an arms reduction agreement with a United States in an inferior strategic position in order to benefit from a further weakening of U.S. strength, it is obvious that such an agreement would only serve Soviet purposes.



The real danger posed by the freeze is that it offers the American public a dishonest vision of easy arms control. It raises unrealistically high expectations of early success. As such, it undermines the public's understanding and patience for the slow, careful arms negotiating process that necessary for real achievement. Rather than bring peace, the current freeze movement can reap only dangerous disillusion and--what is far worse--strategic instability.

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