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Author(s): Paul C. Warnke

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APES ON A TREADMILL

by Paul C. Warnke

Recent articles in FOREIGN POLICY argue that critics of our defense spending overstate its impact and misapprehend its driving impulse. Philip Odeen insists that our military investment has never been a better buy. Albert Wohlstetter questions the very existence of a strategic arms "race" between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Wohlstetter's position, as I understand it, is that these two rivals accumulate nuclear arms each at its own pace, a pace that is for each affected by a complex series of considerations. In decrying the notion of a race, Wohlstetter asserts that the metaphor is inapposite because the paces don't match. There can be no race, he argues, "between parties moving in quite different directions." He cannot, of course, mean that the United States is backing up while the Soviet Union presses on. Both continue to amass nuclear weapons in quantities and varieties inexplicable on any military basis. The "race" analogy is not destroyed by the fact that the "runners" may move at times at different speeds. Marathons fit the tag as well as sprints. More damaging to the figure of speech, perhaps, is the fact that a true race needs a finish line.

The articles to which Mr. Warnke refers appeared in FOREIGN POLICY 15 *and* 16, *under the general title, "Is There a Strategic Arms Race?" by Albert Wohlstetter. In addition, in continuing our emphasis on this difficult but crucial question, recent articles have included: "Flexible* MADness?*" by Herbert Scoville, Jr.* (FOREIGN POLICY 14); *"In Defense of the Defense Budget," by Philip Odeen* (FOREIGN POLICY 16); *"The Strategic Balance Between Hope and Skepticism," by Paul H. Nitze, and "*SALT*: A New Concept," by David Aaron* (FOREIGN POLICY 17); *and comments on Wohlstetter's articles by Morton H. Halperin and Jeremy J. Stone, Joseph Alsop, and Paul H. Nitze* (FOREIGN POLICY 16). *We will conclude this extended debate in our Summer issue with some additional comments and a response from Wohlstetter.—The Editors.*

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What troubles me, however, is not the question whether the metaphors in vogue are too simplistic. In exhausting detail, Wohlstetter documents the intricacy of strategic arms competition. Not discussed is the key question whether what we are doing in this field is necessary or even desirable.

The Soviets have, in the past, at times surprised us by building more nuclear weapons than we anticipated. But their hot pursuit has, in the estimation of informed observers, never overcome our initial lead. As expressed by Secretary Kissinger in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on September 19: "I think there is common agreement that at no time in the postwar period has the Soviet Union had a strategic superiority over the United States in any significant category." The failure to secure effective limitation would mean, he warned, that "the probable outcome of each succeeding round of competition is the restoration of a strategic equilibrium, but at increasingly higher levels of forces." Perhaps, then, we are not racing together toward Armageddon. Maybe the continued expenditure of billions for quantitative additions and qualitative improvements does not bring doomsday any closer. Instead, it may be that we are jogging in tandem on a treadmill to nowhere.

"We face a single military threat, not a hostile world."

Critics of our defense planning may use questionable metaphors. But the important national security questions they raise can't be solved by contests in semantics. The issue remains whether we are spending for defense about the right amount of money for about the right force structure. Everything is not necessarily happening for the best in the best of all possible worlds. Philip Odeen's article contends: "The best case for the defense budget is that a good case has not been made against it." The burden of proof, I would

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suggest, is on the proponent of a proposition and the best case *against* the defense budget is, accordingly, that an adequate case has not been made *for* it. A Panglossian approach to Pentagon spending is unwarranted, particularly under present circumstances. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has noted in its conferences on inflation that very little else of the Federal budget involves discretionary outlays. According to OMB calculations, for the 1975 fiscal year the defense area takes up $57.1 billion out of a total available for discretionary spending of $92.2 billion. Indeed, OMB calculates the planned discretionary nondefense outlays exclusive of personnel costs as only $15.1 billion. The rationale for devoting this lion's share of Federal disposable income to military arms and manpower should be an extraordinarily persuasive one. The U.S. Congress and the American public should insist on knowing if such rationale exists.

It may be that there is nothing we can do to cut down on the amount of our resources that we devote to our national defense. Perhaps we must continue to spend these steadily increasing billions in order to preserve our freedom. The interesting exchanges that have appeared here recently leave me, however, unconvinced. I think we are spending too much on military arms and manpower and that to continue to do so worsens our economic position and jeopardizes our true national security.

Two Fallacies

There are, as I see it, two major fallacies that drive our expenditures for defense to their present giddy heights. The first is the fiction that protection of our interests implies a global military mission requiring that we maintain the capability to deal with a congeries of contingencies throughout the world. We face a single military threat, not a hostile world. Our force posture should be optimized to deter Soviet resort to force, not to pose a delusive military solution to political or economic situations that may give us concern.

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The second fallacy is that, regardless of any practical military utility, a failure by the United States to maintain a cosmetic military "superiority" will cause us political disadvantage, the loss of bargaining position in arms limitations negotiations, and the sacrifice of the confidence of our allies. The proposition that we must maintain a lead across the spectrum of strategic and conventional forces is a formula for endless escalation in defense costs. To conclude that we must overcome every Soviet lead despite its lack of military meaning is to accept the rule of illogic. That kind of lead will have political significance only if we act as if it matters. In combination these dubious assumptions have led us to an almost reverential preoccupation with weaponry.

Perpetuation of these fallacies will push our defense budget even higher over the next few years. The present congressional approach—squeezing a few billion out of Administration requests but not cancelling any major programs—will not arrest this trend. What is required instead is a re-evaluation of the role of American military power in today's world. Also needed is an approach to arms limitations that will cut through the complexities of the search for strategic nuclear equivalence under the disparate circumstances of Soviet and American concerns and given the asymmetries in nuclear armament. What should be tried instead is to evoke a process of matching restraint, either in advance of formal agreement, or appreciably below the limits set by negotiated accords. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy broke the atmospheric testing impasse by announcing a unilateral American moratorium and calling for reciprocal action from the other side. The present strategic balance is sufficiently stable to permit us to explore fully this proven approach to arms control.

For fiscal 1975, the Congress finally agreed on an appropriations bill of $82.6 billion. This was about $4.5 billion below the amount requested by the Administration. In addition, $5 billion in defense

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spending was provided in other appropriations bills covering military construction and foreign military assistance. Immediately, Pentagon sources complained that because of inflation the total, a new high in absolute dollars, would be short—allegedly by $11 billion—of the amount required to sustain the current program. A failure to obtain this amount through supplementals would, these sources warned, require the reconsideration, reduction, or elimination of major programs. I hope that this is true; that hard times will compel a realistic look at our defense budget where hard experience has failed.

Our defense programs remain today linked to no coherent foreign policy that shows when and how our armed forces should be used. They are, instead, consistent with a world in which American interests can be advanced only through the possession of a versatile military capability which will allow the application of our force on a worldwide basis. This is neither today's world nor one in which we should want to live. In a world where only force counted, the Soviet Union and we would be consigned to a superpower condominium, a duopoly in which each probed cautiously to the limits of its sphere of influence. The only restraint would be the fear of impinging upon the other's vital interests. The concerns of the rest of mankind, their hopes, their miseries, would be of no moment. If such a world could be created, I think few Americans would find it congenial. If such a world is to be prevented, our preoccupation with military power as a political tool needs to be faced and overcome.

Too often in the past 20 years we have behaved as if our ability helpfully to influence world events required military force. In my opinion, basic American objectives usually have been understandable and even commendable. But the military means employed to seek these objectives have frustrated our aims and set a sorry precedent. Today, in the context of the oil crisis and feared resource shortages, there are reports of special forces to be trained for rapid deployment to

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protect American supplies. An article by Drew Middleton in *The New York Times* of October 25, 1974, discussed the formation of ranger battalions as reflecting "the growing conviction in the Defense Department that the forces must be prepared as much for swift intervention across the world as for a major war against the Soviet Union in Europe." Some commentators have suggested that renewed denial of Middle East oil, or even retention of current price levels, should be treated as tantamount to military action requiring a direct American military response. Coming from another country, such suggestions might strike us as a shocking reversion to imperialism. Coming from us, they are unlikely to strike others as more savory. As those who have the most in hand, and thus the most to lose, I question the wisdom of our espousing an international doctrine that a country may take what it thinks it needs when normal trade relations are deemed inadequate. I question too whether this is either a sound example to set for the Soviet Union or a safe principle to espouse to the "have not" nations. Imperial conquest is obviously beyond the reach of this latter group. But the possibility of terrorist blackmail, when the makings of nuclear weapons will become increasingly available, are chilling indeed.

I won't presume to contest Wohlstetter's awesome scholarship. But the myths that he alleges are no necessary part of the case for a more modest conception of the American military role. We may well have underestimated the ultimate deployments of Soviet nuclear weapons systems. It may well be that we have also underestimated our own willingness to proceed with redundant quantities and unneeded improvements and the effect this has had in keeping Soviet programs going. The solemn jog on the treadmill has continued with one contestant apparently running harder but never quite catching up.

We Are Not the World's Policeman

The fallacy of an American global military mission, failure to perform which would

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mean the loss of world stability, has been with us for a long time. In a simpler era, it appeared in the concept of a Pax Americana with the United States as world policeman. Its most ludicrous form was voiced by President Nixon in explaining his refusal to end our participation in the conflict in Indochina. Precipitate withdrawal would mean, he maintained, an end to our role as "peace-keeper" in the Asian world.

Realistic recognition that we need not and cannot be the world's policeman is now quite general. But this discredited notion still has major impact on our defense policy. Our armed forces still are tailored for use in wars of all varieties in any and all places.

The former Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Zumwalt, was wont to support Navy demands for the biggest share of the Pentagon budget on the ground that the Navy was needed to "project increments of American power" on a worldwide basis. Roy Ash, Director of OMB, informed the Senate Budget Committee this year that further reductions in the military budget would upset the balance of power throughout the world and hence jeopardize our national security. And Secretary of Defense Schlesinger, in a television documentary on "Peace and the Pentagon," predicted that if we were to "drop the torch," there would be no one to pick it up. I hope that he is right. Self-selected torch carriers aren't much use in fire prevention.

Contemporary experience should indicate that most of the world wants none of our military intervention. The local conflicts that continue to trouble the international community certainly cannot be ameliorated by American firepower. Détente is based on the wholesome realization by the United States and the Soviet Union that their direct military involvement in local conflicts would create unacceptable risks. There is still some dangerous posturing on both sides. But sensitive diplomacy has begun to come into its own.

No one can look with much pride at the

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American performance in the Cyprus crisis of last summer. Our recalcitrance in decrying the coup sparked by the Greek colonels against President Makarios was equaled by our sluggishness in condemning the Turkish intervention. But we can at least be grateful that not even ceremonial use was made of our military forces. At a minimum, such a gesture would have challenged the Soviet Union to choose its side and thus escalate the crisis. The side against which the American power was arrayed would, moreover, be unlikely to respond to subsequent U.S. diplomatic efforts for an equitable result.

The last decade and a half has done much to teach us that the injection of American firepower into a local conflict is rarely compatible with our foreign policy interests. At a minimum, it will exponentially increase the devastation. A matching imprudence on the part of the other military superpower could engulf the world. Our obligations toward Israel or others do not require that we maintain in our force structure elements designed for a global intervention capability. For the most part, investment in such forces will buy us nothing but trouble.

At least equally clear is the unwisdom of maintaining men and materiel especially adapted for counterinsurgency operations. Intervention by the United States in an internal dispute is both unwise and un-American. Nothing in our traditions, in our international agreements, or in the United Nations Charter obligates us to take a stand for a foreign government challenged by a significant segment of its own people. Our own internal situation is not so parlous or our world position so precarious that we are threatened when an alien people opts for a form of governmental organization that we find distasteful. Some continuing investment for counterinsurgency purposes is still identifiable in the defense budget. Much more is submerged in the overall size and structure. Both our financial position and our national security will be the better for its eradication.

Perhaps the starting point is to abandon

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the fractional numbers game as a purported basis for force planning. In the early days of the Nixon Administration, much was made of the fact that we had moved from a "two and a half wars" planning assumption because Sino-Soviet rivalry would prevent them from waging war against us concurrently. The Soviet Union was seen, sensibly, as the one plausible military threat. But instead of preparing for one war at a time, we were told that we would be prepared to take on one and a half wars.

A half a war would, by definition, be a war against a minor military power, not the Soviet Union. Such a foeman is indeed not worthy of our steel. The one-half war contingency is an unwarranted residuum of the abandoned role of world policeman. No minor power is going to attack us. For us to attack one of them should be unthinkable.

Short of a major war, American military forces may be required for participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations, for the evacuation of American citizens caught in local hostilities, and to give meaning to our commitment to Israel's survival. But none of these contingencies require the amassing of a separate half-war capability. To the extent that any of them may involve confrontation with the Soviet Union, it is our basic one-war capability that is relevant.

When a whole war dropped from our defense planning base in 1969, it had little effect on our force structure. But dropping the half war from our force planning could yield significant savings. It should end expensive preparations for the myriad contingencies where our military force should never be committed.

Illusion of Omniscience

About 20 years ago, the English historian D. W. Brogan wrote of the "Illusion of American Omnipotence." This illusion has been largely dispelled by events. There persists in some quarters, however, an illusion of American omniscience. Neither we nor any other outsiders are wise enough to de-

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cide for another people the course to which their aspirations should lead them. The continuing penumbra of the illusion that somehow we know best can only blur a sound perception of our true foreign policy interests.

Only this illusion of omniscience can explain our persistence in covert operations intended to influence events in other countries. There may be little in the defense budget for the funding of these clandestine activities. But the Chief of Central Intelligence, William Colby, informed an open meeting last September that such operations were still in progress, including some in South America. He defended retention of this capability as giving us an "option between diplomatic protest and sending in the Marines." Surely our economic and political influence in the world community can do more to fill that gap than illegal paramilitary operations in another country. And there is usually the commendable option of doing nothing at all.

The sorry history of Vietnam shows also that clandestine activities by CIA operatives may precede the Marines only briefly. As with counterinsurgency, secret actions to subvert the political choice of other people are a nasty bit of international busybodyism. They make us hostage to the faction that we aid. They earn the lasting hostility of those whom we oppose—and who may win out despite us. There is little chance that the world community believes our efforts to undermine the Allende government were, as maintained by President Ford, "in the best interests of the people in Chile." Instead, they are apt to see American dirty tricks in many situations where none have been played.

An American President should now be wise enough and confident enough not to hear in his mind's ear the cry: "Who lost China?" Today's electorate should be sophisticated enough to understand that no foreign country is ours to win or lose. And many Americans are bold enough to doubt that there would be greater stability and less misery in Asia today if the Kuomintang still reigned and profiteered in Peking.

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An expansive approach to world power is a heady attraction for any American President. The Commander-in-Chief syndrome will affect even the least vainglorious of men. The free hand that has been given to the executive in foreign affairs makes it much more fun than dealing with a balky Congress in the domestic arena. It's easier to screw up the economy in Chile than to square it away in the United States.

"We're Number One"

We cannot, for obvious reasons, forfeit a major position in world affairs. And we must continue to rely on the executive as our principal spokesman internationally. But the retention of a strong world role and the maintenance of an effective defense posture will require that the President and his chief foreign affairs advisers begin to talk more sense to the Congress and to the people. Vaunting rhetoric about our peacekeeping role, our worldwide commitments, the morale of our allies, control of the seas, and our indispensable leadership of the free world now awakens as much derision as respect.

The theory that we must be prepared for a wide variety of military contingencies has major impact on the size and style of our conventional forces. But it also infects thinking about nuclear weapons. If we and the Soviet Union may become engaged in limited nuclear war, where the stake is less than national survival, then scenarios can be devised which call for an elaboration of our nuclear arsenal. Surgical nuclear strikes against missiles and other military targets become conceivable and a counterforce capability thus becomes a security requirement. If limited nuclear war for limited objectives is regarded as plausible, then the design of "mini-nukes" to minimize the mess can be argued as desirable. If, instead, nuclear arms must serve only to prevent any use of Soviet nuclear weapons against us or those whose security is integral to ours, then this role can be filled at more modest cost.

The proposition that we must remain

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ahead of the Soviet Union in most if not all perceivable elements of military power is the second fallacy that inflates defense spending. It impacts particularly on the field of strategic arms. If the controlling criterion for world prestige is to proclaim that militarily "We're Number One," then effective agreement on control of strategic arms is hardly possible, and the Vladivostok undertaking will be used to justify rather than to limit modernization of nuclear forces.

As its only living superpower model, our words and our actions are admirably calculated to inspire the Soviet Union to spend its substance on military manpower and weaponry. Ex-President Nixon asserted repeatedly that he could not negotiate effectively if he went to the bargaining table with the Soviet Union as the world's second strongest military power. There is every reason to feel that we have persuaded the Soviets on this score and that they too will not negotiate from a position of military inferiority. If we insist on remaining Number One, because there are incalculable risks in being Number Two, then the Soviets have the wherewithal to escape that subordinate position. They will continue to struggle to catch up by exploiting the quantitative and qualitative permissiveness of the Vladivostok agreement. We will be told that we dare not allow them to do so.

Schlesinger, in criticizing the efforts by Congress to cut the fiscal 1975 Pentagon budget, noted Ford's comments that "the United States must remain the premier power." And, he continued, "the American people will have to pay the costs." The result of this approach may not be an arms race, but I think it will do until one comes along.

The contention that, whatever the practical military utility, we will incur political disadvantages unless we maintain a lead across the spectrum of strategic and conventional forces, is both a recipe for endless escalation of defense costs and a self-fulfilling prophesy. Kissinger told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in its hearings on dé-

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tente that whether or not one superpower has true nuclear superiority, "the appearance of inferiority—whatever its actual significance—can have serious political consequences." To a degree, this is true. Our strategic nuclear forces must not only be strong enough. They must be known to be strong enough to deter the Soviet Union from using its strategic nuclear forces against us or our allies. But a lead in numbers or size that can be seen to be insignificant will have political consequences only if the other side concedes them a meaning they would otherwise lack. Where we can see that a Soviet military development is not significant, it's sheer conceit to fear that our allies will believe otherwise.

A look at today's key issues shows clearly how few of them can be affected helpfully by superior military strength. We couldn't ignore the Soviet Union as an international power in the many years when we dwarfed its strategic nuclear forces. Today both countries know, and the rest of the world knows too, that we dare not fight one another. The respective strategic nuclear forces serve only as offsets, not as exploitable resources. They are not translatable into sound political currency. Elsewhere in the world, the United Kingdom is no easier in its economic situation because it has Polaris submarines. India's "nonmilitary" nuclear test brought no relief from its grievous problems.

We are militarily the most powerful nation the world has known. But the oil-producing countries are notably unimpressed. Oblique hints of application of military power to win our way on petroleum pricing have been met with mockery. Any effort to translate these threats into action could serve only to drive the Arab states to the dubious protection of the Soviet Union. It would destabilize, as no CIA activity could, the conservative, American-oriented governments of Iran and Saudi Arabia. A marine division or two might overwhelm a Middle-East oil country. But this, like Macbeth's bloody event, would not "trammel up the conse-

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quence, and catch with his surcease success." Instead, we would face an indefinite occupation and protection of vulnerable production facilities in terrain not unfamiliar with guerrilla activity. Here, as in the other major world problems, use of our military force is not a sensible option.

Our deep interest in Israel's security presents, of course, a special case. There need be no question of our ability and readiness to respond to Israel's military needs in the event of attack. But no combination of local enemies could threaten Israel's survival as gravely as a Soviet-U.S. military confrontation in that area. And no military aid could contribute as much to regional security as their joint commitment to an equitable solution.

Overestimation of the practical utility and the political potency of our armed forces adds up to a defense budget that consumes over 60 per cent of disposable Federal income. It ensures the further build-up of strategic arms inventories at exorbitant cost and, because further qualitative changes are more apt to lessen than to improve deterrence, with an actual threat to national security.

Can We Afford to Negotiate?

In trying to end this irrational arms competition, total reliance is now placed on negotiations looking toward formal agreements. Bilateral talks are being held on control of nuclear arms and multinational discussions are being held on reduction of the opposing forces in Europe. But the ongoing process seems to aggravate the problem. The history of the SALT negotiations shows the process of formal agreement on nuclear arms control to be complex, prolonged, and uncertain of eventual success. The accomplishments to date have yielded few if any real dividends. The limitation imposed on anti-ballistic missile systems in SALT I, and further tightened at the Moscow summit last June, should at least have brought about tacit mutual restraint in the further accumulation of offensive strategic weapons. With no defen-

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sive missiles to overcome, a fraction of the existing strategic forces on either side is adequate to wreak devastation on the other's society, and initiation of nuclear war thus means national suicide.

But, in defiance of the dread logic, both the Soviet Union and the United States have continued to move ahead. No major offensive weapons program has been canceled. We have proceeded with our MIRVing of the Poseidon fleet and our Minuteman missiles. The Soviet Union has continued to test its own MIRVs and to develop a new family of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The mindless build-up has continued while the negotiators wrestled with the difficulties of designing formal controls for two nuclear arsenals that developed on different lines. The tentative agreement outlined at the Vladivostok conference would provide a tent big enough to accommodate just about everything each side now has or contemplates.

Moreover, while the negotiators fumble for formulas and the summiters pursue their loftier processes the existence of the negotiations and the agreements already reached are used to justify new nuclear weapons programs. The Vladivostock understanding is defended as the best that can now be achieved. It could well be a significant step forward toward effective nuclear arms control, but not if, as suggested in President Ford's post-Summit press conference, the Vladivostok ceilings must also be treated as a floor for U.S. strategic forces. When the floor meets the ceiling, little living room remains.

Accordingly, rather than creating a climate in which restraint can be practiced, the existence of the negotiations themselves has been an occasion for acceleration of strategic arms development. Weapons concepts not proscribed by the porous terms of the 1972 interim agreement on control of offensive arms have acquired a hitherto undetected charm. The prospect of a 150-kiloton limitation on underground tests after March of 1976 has precipitated calls for an augmented test program before that date. Recent prog-

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ress at the summit supports, we are told, an augmented Trident program, at close to a billion and a half dollars per unit. The question inescapably arises whether, under our current defense policies, we can afford to negotiate about arms control.

The "bargaining chip" argument can certainly be questioned. Indeed it has been, but

"The Soviets are far more apt to emulate than to capitulate."

unsuccessfully. It can reasonably be maintained that if our strategic nuclear posture is not now strong enough for us to bargain effectively, we should not be bargaining at all. But we are in fact continuing to bargain and to build up redundant strength as we do so. The acquisition of more, and more esoteric, nuclear arms adds exponentially to the difficulty of devising effective formal controls. Our testing and deployment of MIRVs in the early days of SALT is a striking case in point. Now there is talk of mobile missiles to lessen the vulnerability allegedly implicit in the massive MIRV go-ahead permitted by the terms of the November summit meeting.

I would not like to see the SALT talks stop. The process itself should be, for both participants, an educational experience. Acceptance of common concepts on strategic matters is itself a form of progress.

One can even harbor hope that an effective formal agreement may eventually be developed. But if we must accept the insistence that the momentum of our strategic weapons programs must be maintained in order to bargain effectively, the talks have become too expensive a luxury.

A Policy of Restraint

Insofar as formal agreements are concerned, we may have gone as far as we can now go. If so, the verdict on whether the Vladivostok Accord is better or worse than nothing is not yet in. It does set finite though

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lofty limits. It does recognize equivalence. It should be treated as an augury that genuine progress is possible. It should not be allowed to spark further weapons programs that will impede such progress toward effective arms control.

What is needed most urgently now is not a conceptual breakthrough but a decision to take advantage of the stability of the present strategic balance. It's futile to buy things we don't need in the hope that this will make the Soviet Union more amenable. The Soviets are far more apt to emulate than to capitulate. We should, instead, try a policy of restraint, while calling for matching restraint from the Soviet Union.

As a start, we might inform the Soviet Union both privately and publicly that we have placed a moratorium on further MIRVing of our land- and sea-based missiles. We should also announce that a hold has been placed on development of the Trident submarine and the B-1 strategic bomber. We should advise the Soviet Union that this pause will be reviewed in six months in the light of what action the Soviet Union takes during that period.

If the Soviet Union responds by some significant slowing of its own strategic arms build-up, we can at the end of the first six months announce additional moves. We might, for example, scrap some of our older missiles and our more aged B-52 strategic bombers. If reciprocal action is taken by the Soviet Union, such as the elimination of some of its older missile-carrying submarines and a freeze on the development of the new family of ICBMs, other low-risk initiatives are available to us. We can, and should, for example, substantially reduce the numbers of tactical nuclear weapons now deployed in Europe. The number—over 7,000—is many times in excess of that useful in any remotely conceivable contingency. Employment of a fraction of that number would destroy the terrain they purport to protect. A quarter or less would serve as well to bolster the deterrent efficacy of our conventional and

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strategic forces. And the circumstances of their deployment, in many cases, make them vulnerable to capture or sabotage. A sizable cut would improve both our security and the climate for reciprocal Soviet action.

There is, of course, a chance that the Soviet response may be lacking or inadequate. But our present lead in technology and warheads makes it possible for us to take this initiative safely. No advances the other side might make in six months or many more could alter the strategic balance to our detriment.

The chances are good, moreover, that highly advertised restraint on our part will be reciprocated. The Soviet Union, it may be said again, has only one superpower model to follow. To date, the superpower aping has meant the antithesis of restraint. Soviet moves toward antiballistic missile defense were followed by U.S. ABMs and our multiple independently targetable warheads to overcome any defensive system. Soviet MIRVs are now in development. There now are hints that we may build more massive missiles to match Soviet throw-weight.

The "monkey see, monkey do" phenomenon extends beyond the area of strategic arms. Soviet and American ships compete for visibility where both would be hard put to explain the military purpose. Even our clandestine operations in foreign countries are rationalized by President Ford on the ground that "Communist nations spend vastly more money than we do for the same kind of purposes."

It is time, I think, for us to present a worthier model. The strategic arms competition is a logical place to start. The steps we can take in trying to start a process of reciprocal restraint are not drastic. They would create no risk to our national security. We can be first off the treadmill. That's the only victory the arms race has to offer.

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