

## Debating SALT

To the Editors: Re: "Dealing With the Soviet Union," by Paul Nitze (*Worldview*, March). In the opening question, which was mine, I quoted Congressman Bob Carr of Michigan and Tom Downey of New York as saying that his statements made on the "Today" TV show about the U.S.-Soviet strategic forces balance were among the "most distorted, misleading, and intellectually dishonest we have ever seen." His answer to my question, I think, was another example of intellectual dishonesty.

I mentioned in laying the groundwork for my question the article in the October issue of *Scientific American*, "A New Strategy for Military Spending" by Philip Morrison and Paul F. Walker, in which it is argued that the United States can increase its national security by decreasing the military budget by 40 per cent.

I then proceeded to say, as you quote me:

"One Poseidon submarine carries sixteen missiles, each of them MIRVed ten times. That's 160 warheads that are independently targetable, and they are on the magnitude of two or three times the Hiroshima bomb. That means that you can put ten on Moscow, five on Leningrad, and so forth. I make a rough calculation that you can kill at least 20 million people with one Poseidon. Now do you think that a first strike could knock out our entire deterrent, including all the submarine force, and do you think that the Soviet Union would seriously contemplate a first strike if so much as one Poseidon submarine were prepared to retaliate?"

In his reply Nitze said:

"The argument is commonly made that two hundred Poseidon warheads are enough for deterrence. But suppose you have two hundred submarine-based warheads. What the *Scientific American* article implies is that you have two submarines each with one hundred warheads. Now if one is in port being overhauled, you have only one at sea. Supposing that that submarine disappears and you believe the Soviets have sunk it with conventional weapons. What is it that you propose the U.S. should do? Should we try promptly to put to sea

this other submarine we have left? If we do, it is very vulnerable and the Russians can probably take it out before we can do so. Is that adequate deterrence? With that kind of disposition there is no sensible and prudent thing you can advise the president to do. This point in the *Scientific American* article is really pure nonsense."

This is a complete misrepresentation of the position of Morrison and Walker, and also of my own position. The authors, after a thirteen-page analysis of possible military contingencies that might face the U.S., conclude in regard to the nuclear cuts they propose:

"The charts on the preceding two pages summarize the reductions in land, sea and air forces that we suggest could be made step by step over a period of years and that would leave the U.S. with a prudent military structure, prepared for any eventuality short of an all-out irrational nuclear attack. Against such an attack there can be no preparation and no defense for any nation, and the attacking power is as doomed as the one attacked. The major reductions would be in nuclear strategic forces; the proposal is to eliminate all long-range strategic bombers, to reduce to 100 the number of land-based Minuteman ICBMs, to reduce the number of missile-launching submarines from 41 to 31 and gradually to reduce the number of missiles and warheads carried on each."

My own position would be that we could safely go down even further than Morrison and Walker suggest, but I certainly would not be willing to go down to two Poseidons for precisely the reason given by Nitze. The deterrent must remain invulnerable, and there seems every assurance under the Morrison-Walker proposal that it would. I don't believe a single serious nuclear analyst could be found who would argue that anytime in the foreseeable future an antisubmarine attack could knock out our entire undersea force within a few minutes.

Someday I hope we will be able to get down to zero nuclear weapons, but before that can happen we must build  
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# WORLDVIEW

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## Correspondence (from p. 2)

global institutions that can assure security for all nations—and that is going to take some time.

I hope in the coming SALT debate Nitze and his colleagues in the Committee on the Present Danger will discontinue this practice of setting up phony straw men that they can demolish with such relish.

Richard Hudson

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*Mr. Hudson is executive director of the Center for War/Peace Studies.*

To the Editors: Mr. Nitze's response to the question "How do we citizens make judgments as to whether you are right or whether they [Retired General Shoup and Admiral Eugene LaRocque] are right?" unfortunately offered little in the way of guidance concerning the current debate over approval of the impending SALT II treaty. His answer, like so many others, spoke more to the issue of whether it is possible to ascertain the veracity of accurate statistics and facts. He does clearly define one of the key issues that must be wrestled with in his current SALT II treaty debate—"What do you believe our policy toward the Soviet Union should be?"

Mr. Nitze's comments point to the lack of direction provided by the Carter administration as well as its opponents. The SALT II debate seems filled with conflicting notions about the terms describing limitations on strategic weapons and the principles underlying the treaty. A day does not pass without another expert statement explaining the "real" impact the treaty will have on our national security interests and those of our allies. I believe that guidelines are required to ensure that the debate serves to define clearly and explain what SALT II really entails.

To these ends I propose twelve critical questions that should be considered and resolved before SALT II is approved by the Senate:

1. Is SALT II in the strategic long-term interest of the U.S.?
2. Is SALT II in the strategic long-term interest of the allies of the U.S.?
3. What are the true intentions of the USSR in negotiating SALT II?
4. Does SALT II strengthen or weaken the U.S. strategic bargaining posi-

tion with the Soviet Union?

5. What are the real consequences of a rejection of SALT II by the U.S. Senate vs. the imagined consequences?

6. Can SALT II be adequately verified, especially in light of the serious situation in Iran?

7. Should SALT II be "linked" to other U.S.-Soviet issues, i.e., Soviet aggression in key areas of the world?

8. Should SALT II consideration be a time for a total and complete debate and reassessment of U.S. foreign and defense policy, with emphasis on the world position of the United States of America?

9. Have the Soviets used SALT I, Vladivostok, and SALT II simply to advance their world position and deceive the United States?

10. Is the U.S. in a transition period of lessening political influence and military power? And if so, does SALT II aid and abet this decline?

11. Is the USSR gradually moving into a position of military superiority that will be used to the political, diplomatic, and economic detriment of the U.S.?

12. Do U.S. policymakers, senators, and public opinion leaders really understand what this is all about? Do they understand and comprehend that the future security of this nature may well depend, in part, on SALT agreements?

We must all understand that SALT II is of vital importance to the future well-being of the United States. The proponents and opponents of SALT II's

passage and the skeptics who have yet to make a decision on SALT II itself all have strong and, in most instances, reasonable arguments to support their position. The questions listed above must be considered and answered to the benefit of the United States before it is clear that a SALT II agreement makes sense.

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## Hunger in China

To the Editors: Miriam and Ivan London's "Hunger in China: The 'Norm of Truth'" (*Worldview*, March) is an excellent piece and should be read by everyone interested in trying to come to grips with that real China which we Westerners seem to find so elusive.

In speaking out on hunger in China, the Londons have over the years taken a brave and unpopular stand. Increasing evidence seems to be coming out of China itself to validate their main point—that desperate poverty, with its handmaidens of begging, vagrancy, and hunger, have not been entirely eliminated by the "Socialist Transformation." Unlike other China watchers, who seem to have swept away such evidence because it conflicted with well-meaning but pre-imposed ideas of what the Maoist revolution had accomplished, the Londons have actually contributed to our understanding of a quarter of the human race, and should be commended for this.

As someone who thinks of himself as both an admirer of the "Chinese experiment" and a skeptic of the fanciful self-evaluations the People's Republic has been in the habit of releasing, the Londons' work has helped me see China for what (I think!) it is: a poor country that has handled its immense problems better than most other poor countries, but a poor country—with all that this means—nonetheless.

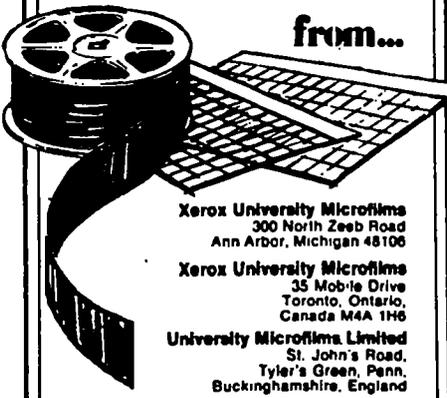
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