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WEAPONS AND THE ARMS RACE

I would like to take this opportunity to explain my position on strategic nuclear weapons and the arms race. Whatever "detente" meant, the term is now one that is outdated. At the present time, when the Senate was scheduled to be debating the SALT II Treaty, it is instead trying to relieve the crisis to farmers because of the grain embargo. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan demonstrated graphically that the Soviets have never given up the use of force to obtain their objectives. Any hopes that we had of ending the cold war have certainly diminished.

For thirty-five years, ever since World War II ended, we have been engaged in a cold war with the Russians. Our military vocabulary used to contain such things as tanks, planes, guns, jeeps, but now we speak of nuclear deterrant, ICBMs, MIRVs, the MX and many other sophisticated weapons.

The origins of this change are not obscure. When World War II ended, we all thought that there would be peace, for the United Nations offered hope of international cooperation.

Moreover, we seemed to be quite secure with the advantage of the Atomic Bomb. This complacency quickly disappeared when the Soviets exploded their first device. The arms race was on.

Since that time we have witnessed a continual escalation in arms by both sides. Like a high stakes poker game, one side bets and the other calls; one side raises and the other calls and raises again. It has come to the point that the stakes are now so high that neither side could really win the game.

These weapons systems, containing the application of the most advanced technology and theoretical science, present a bizarre paradox. On the one hand, it is only by having such weapons that we can defend ourselves. On the other hand, the potency of our weapons poses such a threat to our adversaries that we feel threatened by their fear.

Let me briefly outline the major developments that have occurred in arms technology in the past twenty years. In the early 1960s, the United States invented the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, the ICBM. These ICBMs were armed with a single warhead designed to explode above ground or on impact. The ICBM was at once a defensive weapon to the United States and an offensive weapon as perceived by the Soviet Union. United States policy planners used the ICBM as a warning against Soviet

aggression against our allies. This was called the policy of "Massive Retaliation." In other words, if the Soviet Union were to attack any of our allies, or to threaten our security anywhere in the world, the United States was committed to a massive launch of ICBMs against the Soviet Union. The Russians were "deterred" from any conventional attack since that attack would be suicide. This strategy worked--for a while.

Since the initial deployment of American ICBMs, the concept of "Nuclear Deterrence" has undergone profound changes. The ICBM was also the first major step in the commencement of the nuclear arms race.

What was Russia's response to deployment of the American ICBM? No doubt they were deterred from acts of aggression they otherwise would have undertaken. They also regarded the ICBMs as a threat to their national security. Our weapons directly threatened them--we could deliver awesome nuclear devices to their cities in minutes. At the press of a button, the Soviet Union could be conquered by an American first strike. The Russians were ^{not} all that upset about the theory of massive retaliation, for they decided to give us nothing to retaliate against--but they were very concerned about an American first strike.

At this stage, the Russians responded in two ways to the problem of an adequate national defense. First, they developed

their own ICBM. The Russians reasoned that if the United States were so bold as to attack the Soviet Union that the return ICBM volley from Russia would be able to destroy many American cities. This "second strike" capability, the capacity to launch a retaliatory strike, is what brought the Russians a temporary sense of security. It also neutralized the American doctrine of massive retaliation.

At this point, the threat of massive retaliation to a conventional Soviet attack became less believable. Earlier, if the Soviets were to have launched a land war, they would have been destroyed. Now, if America retaliated to their aggression, America would suffer unbearably. In this way, new weapons developments were needed to keep the Russians from beginning conventional wars of aggression.

The initial reaction in the United States to the Soviet second-strike capability was to develop a defensive system, the Anti-Ballistic Missile System, or ABM. The ABM would be used to shoot down incoming Russian missiles. Not surprisingly, the Russians were likewise planning to develop an ABM system.

The problems with deploying an ABM system were great. Technically, for both sides, they were expensive and unreliable. It is one thing to loft missiles across the sea to land somewhere near large cities. It is quite another thing to fire missiles

from the ground to intercept these speeding missiles in mid-air. This technology was far from perfect in the 1960s and remains far from perfect today. The clay pigeons are just too fast for our guns.

Yet the ABM posed an even more serious problem than tremendous cost and doubtful effectiveness. If the ABM system were ever successful--if it could knock incoming missiles out of the air--it would cancel any vulnerability for aggressor nations. In other words, the second strike capability ended. Rockets fired back at the aggressor would be ineffective against a working ABM system. And because ABM technology was--and remains--in its infancy, no nation could be sure that its own ABM system would remain forever superior to its adversary's.

It was in Russia's interest to have the United States suspend its ABM program--stop it completely. Likewise, the United States wanted very badly to keep the Russians from being able to disregard the possibility of an American nuclear attack. And, for these reasons, Russians and Americans in 1972 agreed for all practical purposes never to deploy an ABM system.

The cancellation of the ABM, however, did nothing to remove the American fear of a Soviet first strike. Recall

that the essential element of our defense posture is the certainty of our retaliation against force--the survivability of our retaliatory forces. As the Russians began to deploy more and more missiles in reaction to identical American activity, the American leadership began to fear a "successful" Russian first strike that would neutralize or disarm the American retaliatory capability. In other words, if the Russians could knock out enough of our missiles on the first volley, we would have nothing left to throw back at them. And if the Russians could do it--they would. This was the price we paid for abandoning the ABM.

There were several options then open to American planners. They could not defend against the Russian ICBM with ABMs according to the treaty. Instead, the concept of the strategic "Triad" was refined and popularized. There are three components to America's nuclear weapons system.

1. Land based ICBMs.
2. Air carried nuclear bombs on B-52s.
3. Nuclear missiles launched from submarines.

It is the ICBM that is the most vulnerable to Russian attack. In the early 1970s the two other legs of the Triad, especially the submarine program, were strengthened.

In addition, the nature of the ICBM changed. Until the late 1960s, each missile carried only a single warhead. As both American and Russian ICBMs became more accurate, the ICBMs in silos became vulnerable and the importance of each surviving missile increased. If the Americans could not guarantee the survivability of a high proportion of ICBMs, then each surviving missile had to be more powerful. The United States then began to fit the ICBMs not with only a single warhead but with many more--two, three, five. These multiple warheads are called Multiple Re-entry Vehicles--MRVs. MRVs are thrown off the incoming missile and scatter--like the blast of a shotgun. MRVs were swiftly replaced in the American arsenal by MIRVs, Multiple Independently Targeted Re-entry Vehicles. Instead of scattering warheads in a somewhat predictable but by no means accurate pattern, MIRVs can be guided to their targets with accuracy today to within 600 feet, about 200 yards, or 0.1 mile.

It has not taken long for the Russians to follow in these awesome footsteps. Today, both nations possess MIRVed ICBMs.

The paradox of nuclear weapons that I pointed out in the beginning remains. It is by having MIRVed ICBMs that we can be certain the Russians will not attack us. If the Russians try to knock out all of our ICBMs, the ones they miss will be powerful

enough to retaliate. In the technically impossible event that the surviving ones failed to operate, our submarines and air-carried weapons are still enough to deter this first strike. If the Russians make nuclear war in Europe, either the use of American/NATO battlefield nuclear weapons or some kind of strategic nuclear attack against the Soviet Union would be inevitable.

So these weapons are, in one sense, keeping us at peace. But unfortunately, the situation never quite stabilizes. The President has recently proposed a \$50 billion project to make our ICBMs even less vulnerable to guarantee survival in case of a Russian first strike. This \$50 billion project is called the MX, and it has two parts.

First, it replaces our ICBMs with new improved missiles.

Second, it removes the ICBMs from fixed launch pads protected in underground silos, where they are vulnerable to direct hits, and makes them mobile. They are ferried around on tracks from one launch pad to another. In this way we will have a lot more empty launch pads than the Russians have MIRVs; more targets than they have ammunition. So the Russians can never really be certain of knocking out all, or even a substantial number of our ICBMs. (Never, that is, until the next step in the arms race.)

As one analyst has pointed out, "the MX system, once operational, would be theoretically able to destroy a very high percentage of Soviet ICBMs in their silos. Indeed, the threat to the Soviets would be greater than theirs to us, in that a higher proportion of their strategic power is concentrated in ICBMs-- some 70 percent of their strategic warheads and over 80 percent of their strategic megatonnage, whereas for the United States, the figures are about a quarter of the warheads and 40 percent of the yield."

There is currently a great debate going on in the Congress and in the western part of the United States as to how and where to base the MX.

The current Pentagon plan is to use MX missiles on mobile launchers in horizontal shelters. The missiles would be transported from shelter to shelter on a road system, and the USSR would never know which shelter they were in.

There is a faction which believes that a vertical launch system would be better. That would mean the missiles would still be mobile, but would have to be moved from the vertical silos and then transported to another silo.

The states under consideration are presently Utah, Nevada, or possibly part of California. There has been considerable opposition from these states for a variety of reasons. Some residents fear they would become a sponge to soak up a nuclear attack. They argue that missiles do not make good neighbors.

Others have serious concerns about the environmental and societal impacts that building and maintaining such an enormous system will have on their states. These are essentially desert areas with a fragile ecological balance of water and other resources, and residents are afraid the MX deployment will destroy the livability of the state.

For some time, I was afraid that the Administration was just giving lip service to the MX and did not really intend to deploy it. In our hearings in the Armed Services Committee on military authorization and on SALT II, I made special efforts to pin down a commitment by the Administration and by my colleagues on the Committee that they would really support this program.

I now feel that the Pentagon, the Administration, and the responsible members of Congress strongly favor the MX program. I am hopeful that we can resolve the remaining problems in this session of the Congress and get on with solving our ICBM vulnerability problem.

The most important development in our nuclear deterrent force has been the advent of the Air Launched Cruise Missile. I have backed this program from the start. This small, pilotless aircraft with a nuclear warhead can be launched from our aircraft flying outside the effective range of Soviet air defenses. It then drops down to just above the tree tops and sets out toward its target at nearly the speed of sound. Its guidance system has already been programmed to guide it to its target, and it constantly updates its position as it goes along.

The Cruise Missile is needed because the aging B-52s might be unable to penetrate Soviet defenses. I have been aware of the need of a new aircraft for a long time. And anyone who looks carefully at my record on the proposed B-1 bomber will see that I have consistently supported it. I have always voted for authorizations and appropriations for a new manned bomber and was opposed to the President's cancellation of the B-1 program. Since the B-52s would certainly have difficulty penetrating the Warsaw Pact air defenses, I hope that the Cruise Missile will give us a weapon that will be effective until we develop a manned bomber.

Having fought in two American wars, I know first hand the need for a strong defense. It seems to be human nature to

pick on weaklings, and this applies to nations as well as to people. Football coaches tell us that the best offense is a strong defense. They are right. So long as we have devastating weapons that are not vulnerable to Soviet counter-weapons, they are unlikely to attack us.

Being on the Armed Services Committee in the Senate gives me a good position from which to monitor our defenses. Although there are many programs in our nation that are essential, none of these programs will be operational unless we survive as a free country. The best way to do this is by maintaining a strong defense, and you can count on me to support a strong defense posture. My record on this issue speaks for itself, and I am proud of it. I have been consistently on the side of a strong defense throughout my tenure in the Senate, and I will continue to vote to strengthen our military forces.