

# NEWS BUREAU OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS RELEASE

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## PEACE, NATIONAL SECURITY, AND THE SALT AGREEMENTS

Since World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union combined have produced nearly \$20 trillion in gross national product--approximately \$15 trillion in the United States and more than \$4 trillion in the Soviet Union. Of this amount, more than \$2 trillion has been spent on defense (approximately \$1.3 trillion by the United States, and an estimated \$1 trillion by the Soviet Union).

If the two societies continue to grow as projected to the end of the century, and if both continue to spend the same proportion of GNP on defense, the two countries together, by the year 2,000 A.D., could spend another \$5 trillion or more to maintain national security.

In both countries there are other pressing needs for capital, and both countries have long recognized a mutual advantage in first stabilizing the level of spending and ultimately moving to the stage where both countries can safely scale it down.

When President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev signed the SALT agreements in Moscow, May 26, 1972, the first stage was completed. Agreement was reached to limit ABMs to very low levels, including a

commitment not to build a nationwide ABM defense or the base for such a defense. Both sides thus forego a defense against retaliation, and, in effect, have agreed to maintain mutual deterrence.

Agreement was also reached to stabilize the level of strategic offensive missiles for five years, giving both sides an opportunity to proceed to the second stage of negotiations in which further limitations and controls will be pursued.

The freeze on strategic offensive missiles leaves the Soviet Union with more missile launchers and the United States with more warheads and bombers. (See Missile Balance Sheet below.) A great many factors were balanced off on both sides, but the most important consideration -- probably the factor that made the Interim Agreement feasible -- is the recognition (given concrete form in the ABM Treaty) that with any conceivable or current or future deployment of nuclear weapons, neither side can expect to attack the other without receiving a retaliatory strike that would destroy the attacker as a modern nation-state. Out of this fact grows the assurance of national security for both sides. This, in turn, now makes it possible to negotiate additional mutual limitations -- hopefully including reductions of forces on both sides.

However, if the United States were to make unilaterally a substantial reduction in strategic strength, the other side might lose incentive to continue at the bargaining table. Similarly, if either side were somehow able to make a substantial jump in its strategic forces, we can only anticipate that the other side would undertake to redress the balance.

President Nixon said in his Foreign Policy Report of February 1971 that any Soviet attempt to obtain a large advantage "would spark an arms race which would, in the end, prove pointless." The President added that "both sides would almost surely commit the necessary resources to maintain a balance."

The Interim Agreement limits for up to five years the numbers of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) for the Soviet Union and the United States. Some might argue that the Soviet Union gained an advantage because it is permitted larger total numbers of ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers, and modern ballistic missile submarines.

However, it is also argued that the United States gained an advantage because no current U.S. offensive arms program is limited whereas limitations are placed the three most active Soviet programs. Furthermore, although the Soviet Union will have more missile launchers, the United States has a considerable lead in numbers of warheads and intercontinental bombers, and in qualitative factors -- including weapon dependability and general weapons sophistication -- which are not limited by the agreements.

The central fact is that both sides find advantages in the limitations. We have reached levels where neither side can start a nuclear war without triggering its own destruction. There are simply too many launchers, too many warheads that would survive a surprise attack.

More importantly, both sides can benefit enormously from additional strategic arms limitations. An important process has, however, been started. Both the United States and the USSR are investing in this process, and we expect will want to preserve the investment and build

upon it. It is not a question of "winning" or "losing". Both sides -- and the world -- gain from what has been achieved without compromising the basic security interests of any nation.

### Economics

The long-range effect of the arms race on the economics of the United States and the Soviet Union is difficult to gauge precisely, but it is obviously enormous. The United States is currently spending about eight percent of GNP on defense -- approximately \$80 billion in FY 1972. The Soviet Union is spending in the range of 11-14 percent of GNP -- some \$45-60 billion in 1972, depending on the method of evaluating the cost. As noted above, if both countries were to continue to spend at these levels of GNP to the end of the century, the aggregate defense costs for the United States and the Soviet Union combined might total more than \$5 trillion.

Both countries find defense spending a substantial burden on the economy, but the effect probably is more serious in the Soviet Union, because the high level of defense spending is believed to reduce substantially the available growth capital badly needed for expansion of the Soviet economy.

Efforts to compare the Soviet defense burden with that of the United States are difficult because neither the costs nor the distribution of GNP in the two countries are comparable. What is clear is that given the economic resources of the Soviet Union and its relatively lower level of economic development, the arms race places a comparatively greater burden upon the Soviet economy than on the U.S. economy. Therefore, in economic terms the Soviet Union has even greater reason than the United States

to develop meaningful weapons controls through negotiation.

The SALT agreements are an important step toward achievement of the kinds of controls that over time can substantially reduce expenditures on both sides, although the goal has not been reached in the initial stage. The agreements signed in Moscow do, however, provide the foundation for negotiations which will, hopefully, lead to important cuts in the level of defense spending on both sides.

Both the United States and the USSR could well continue to spend at approximately current levels while negotiating additional limitations, with the funds devoted chiefly to qualitative improvements. One of our goals will be to avoid this.

#### Missile Balance Sheet

ICBM launchers: Current strength: U.S. 1,054; USSR 1,618. The United States has no new ICBM construction program underway; the Soviet Union has been building new ICBMs. Without the agreement, if recent construction rates were continued for five years, the United States would still have 1,054 ICBMs and the Soviet Union, which has been building at a rate of up to 250 a year, could have more than 2,800 land-based ICBMs. Under SALT both sides are frozen at current levels.

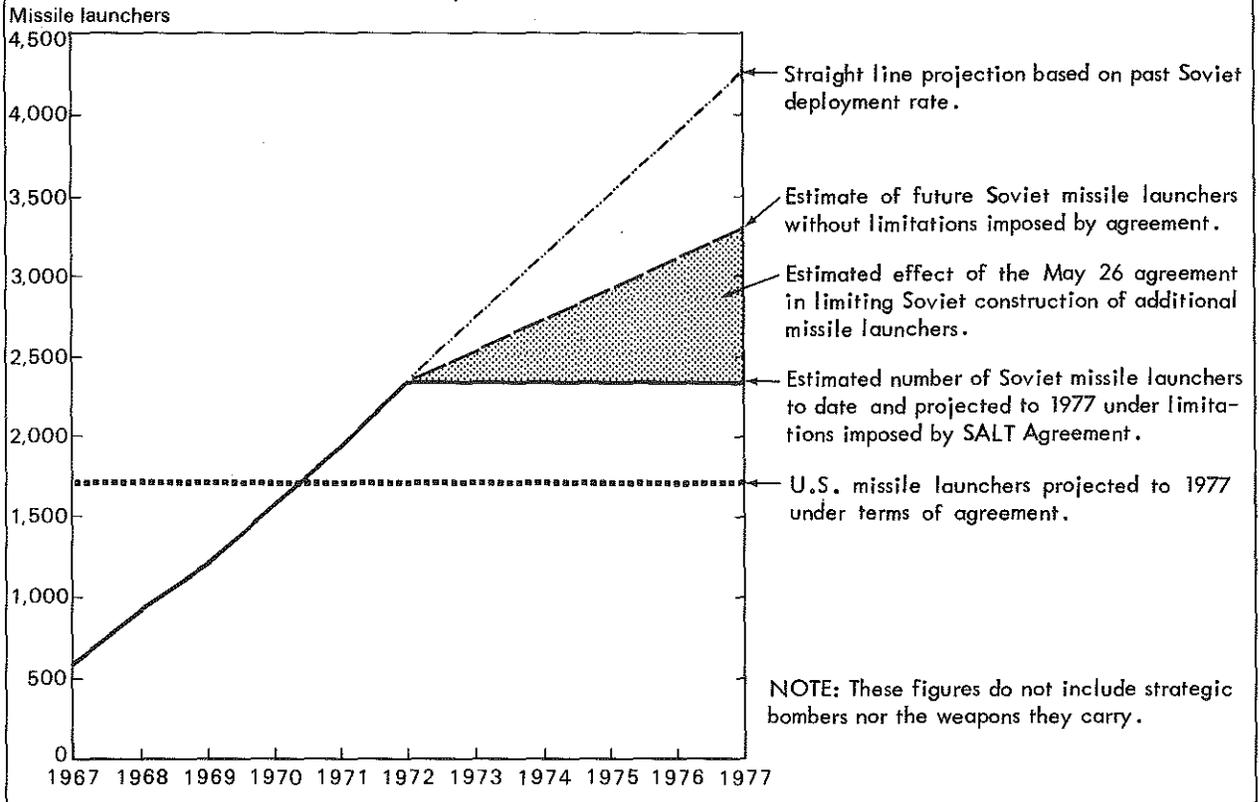
SLBM launchers: The United States currently has 656 Polaris and Poseidon missile launchers; the Soviet Union has approximately 650-700 SLBMs. The United States has no missile submarines under construction; the Soviet Union has an on-going program of some eight new submarines a year. Without SALT, in five years the United States missile-launching submarines would not have increased, while the Soviet total could have risen to 80 or 90. With SALT, the United States has the right to increase to up to 44 submarines. The Soviet Union may add modern ballistic missile submarines up to the number

of 62 operational, but only provided that they retire 209 older land-based missiles and 30 older SLBM launchers. This would leave the USSR with no more than 950 modern SLBM launchers.

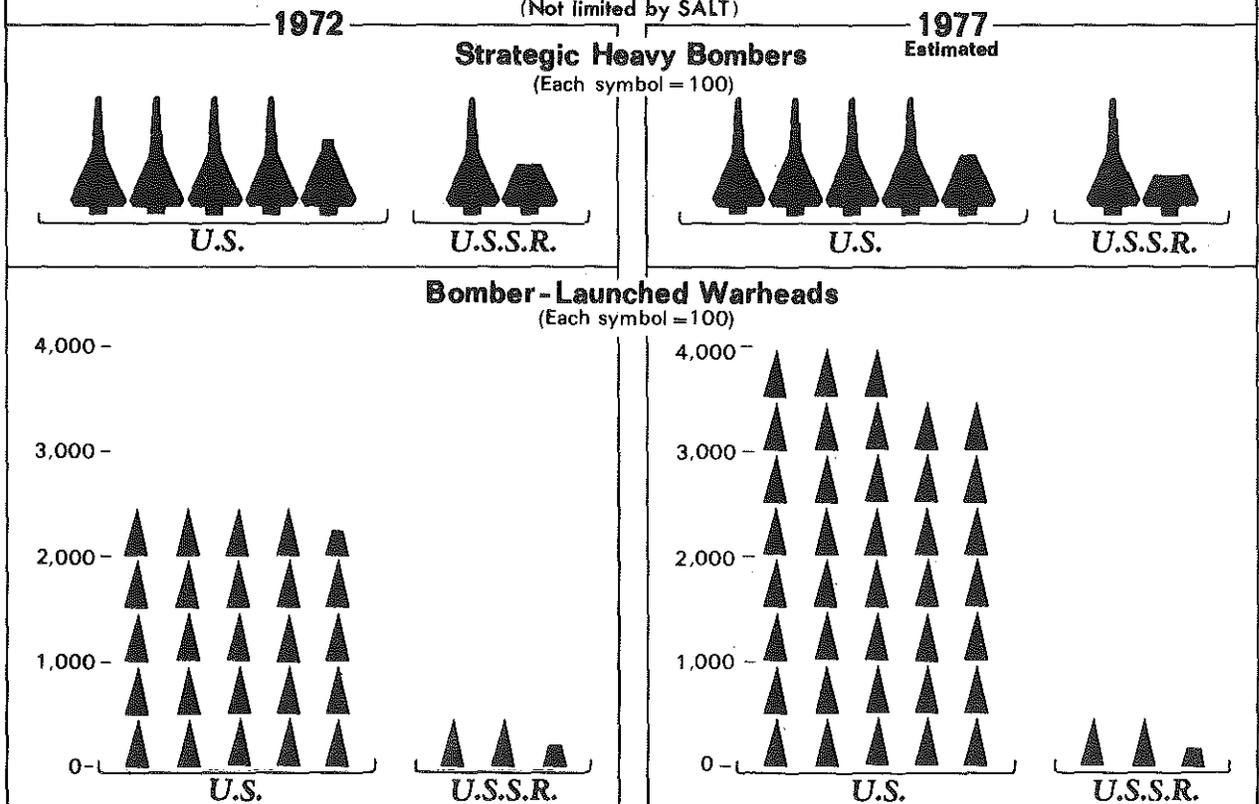
Total ICBMs and SLBMs consistent with the terms of the agreement: United States, 1,710; USSR, 2,419. Warheads: The difference in numbers of missiles is offset by the kinds of warheads they can carry. Currently, with the new MIRV warheads, the U.S. strategic missiles and heavy bombers carry 5,900 nuclear warheads; the Soviet missiles and heavy bombers carry an estimated 2,200 warheads. The Interim Agreement sets no limit on the number of warheads for either side, and both of these figures could rise substantially in five years. The implications of the warhead figures are enormous. They mean that currently, in the event of a surprise nuclear attack, if half of the U.S. strategic capability was wiped out, the United States could still strike more than 2,500 separate targets in the Soviet Union. This reinforces the recognition on both sides that there can be no winner in a nuclear war. The U.S. expects to continue to hold a substantial warhead lead during the Interim Agreement, sufficient to more than compensate for the numerical edge the Soviet Union has in missile launchers. The number of U.S. independently targetable warheads is planned nearly to double in the next five years, and will remain far ahead of the Soviet total.

Megatonnage: The agreement does not limit megatonnage as such. Both sides are free to make warheads as large or as small as they wish. On the average, Soviet Missile warheads are larger than U.S. warheads. It should be noted, however, that the radius of damage does not increase proportionate to the increase in yield. If the explosive power is doubled, the radius of damage increases by approximately one-third. Moreover, accuracy is more important than yield.

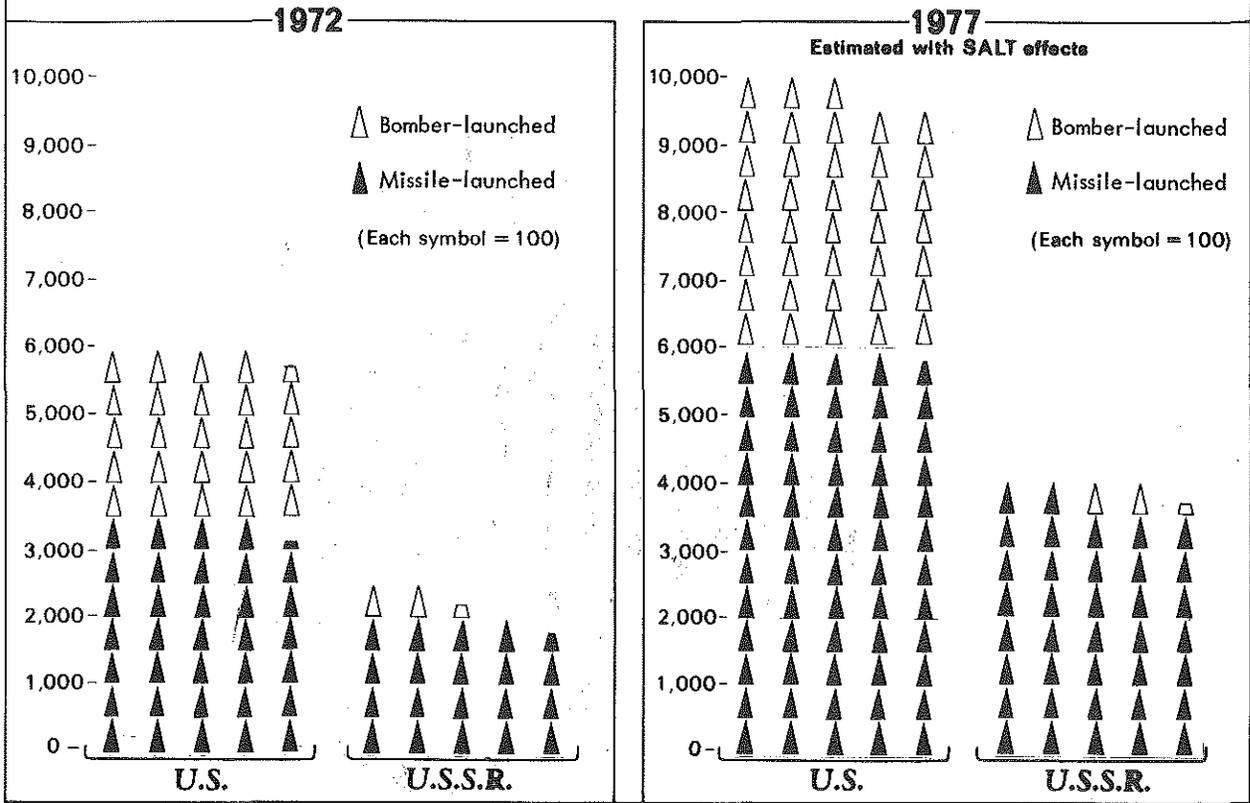
## ICBM/SLBM MISSILE LAUNCHERS



## STRATEGIC HEAVY BOMBERS AND BOMBER-LAUNCHED WARHEADS

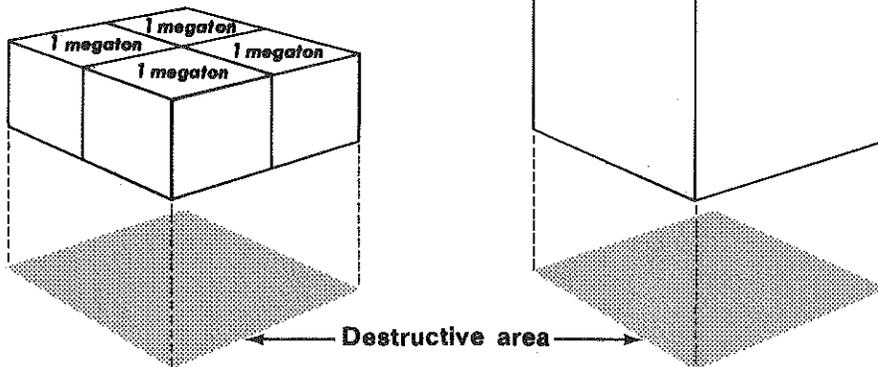


# STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WARHEADS



## COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN TERMS OF DESTRUCTIVE AREA

**FOUR 1-megaton weapons**  
equal approximately  
**ONE 16-megaton weapon**



NOTE: The United States has more, smaller weapons; the Soviet Union has fewer, larger weapons. This gives the U.S.S.R. a lead in megatonnage, but as this chart shows, it is not the total megatonnage that counts. It is the effectiveness — best measured in "equivalent megatonnage." By this measure, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. are roughly comparable.