

TESTIMONY OF

Edward F. Snyder

Friends Committee on National Legislation

BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

on

THE FOREIGN POLICY AND ARMS CONTROL IMPLICATIONS
OF THE STRATEGIC WEAPONS PROGRAM

November 9, 1981

I am Edward F. Snyder, Executive Secretary of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, Washington, D.C.

While representatives of our Committee do not purport to speak for all Friends, the members of our General Committee represent most of the Friends Yearly Meetings in the United States. We can say with certainty that there is widespread apprehension among Friends in the United States about the accelerating arms race. Since I have just returned from a conference in Stockholm on the increasing danger of nuclear war in Europe which was called by Swedish Quakers and attended by representatives of eleven countries, I know this view is widely shared among Friends around the world as well.

We believe that the Foreign Relations Committee is performing a vital public service by holding this hearing to examine the foreign policy and arms control aspects of the President's strategic weapons decisions, and in giving representatives of private voluntary organizations this opportunity to comment on them.

As Administration representatives have said, these decisions constitute "the most comprehensive and far reaching such effort in the United States since the Eisenhower Administration." They will "shape our strategic force policy and programs from now to the 21st century."

It is therefore appropriate that members of Congress weigh the impact of these decisions carefully. The President's request for expenditures of \$180 billion over the next six years, for missiles, bombers, submarines, communications systems and civil defense, might prepare the way for significant negotiated arms reductions, as some have claimed. But it might also lead to a catastrophe of unimaginable proportions, as others fear.

We believe that this turning point in American foreign and military policy presents a compelling opportunity for the Senate, the Congress, and the public to step back and re-examine some first principles and the basic assumptions of the arms race.

Twenty-five years ago, when the United States was in the midst of its first nuclear weapons buildup, members of Congress, editorial writers, and many others hoped that increased military forces would "buy us time" and provide a "shield." Behind this shield and with this time, the United States could work to achieve a just and lasting peace, to strengthen international institutions, to improve the mechanism for a peaceful resolution of disputes, and to move toward general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

Time has revealed the futility of that hope. The time that the United States bought has not been used to increase our security but to decrease it. More bombers, more missiles, more submarines, and more warheads have not strengthened peace efforts, but undercut them to the point where a modest arms control agreement approved by generals and admirals in Washington and Moscow failed to be approved by the United States Senate. Today when we hear the phrase "buying time," it is more likely to mean using one weapons system as a stopgap until a more advanced one can be developed.*

We believe that the impetus for an increasingly dangerous arms race is more fundamental than the most recent antagonism or the latest weapons system in the United States or the Soviet Union. We believe it is embedded in the dynamics of deterrence policy itself.

The doctrine of deterring war by preparing for war is accepted almost without question in Washington, Moscow, and most other national capitals. We realize that members of this committee have often expressed their support for it; and yet we ask you to look at it again, and to follow it out to its logical conclusion.

Deterrence strategy is widely credited with avoiding a war between the major powers in the last 35 years. But we ask you to look not only to the past, but to the future as well. It has been said that deterrence is like

* "We plan now to restructure the silos planned for M-X deployment to increase their hardness to nuclear effects and thus buy time until we have selected and implemented the final MX basing scheme."
Defense Secretary Weinberger - November 3.

the man who fell off the 70th floor of a skyscraper. As he passed the 35th floor, he shouted out, "See? I'm doing all right so far!"

As Kenneth Boulding said in his Presidential address to the American Academy for the Advancement of Science last year:

The defense policies of the major powers are now officially based on nuclear deterrence, appropriately described as MAD (mutually assured destruction). There is an extraordinary illusion, even in the scientific community, that deterrence can be stable. It can indeed be stable in the short run, but there must be a positive probability of it failing; otherwise it would cease to deter . . . Civilian populations are no longer defended by their armed forces; they are merely hostages to them.

The aim of deterrence strategy, of course, is to build a U.S. arsenal so formidable, and a public willingness to use it so clear, that no country would dare to go to war with the United States, or to engage in conduct we find unacceptable, because of the destruction which they would suffer from a U.S. response.

Unfortunately, progress toward this goal encourages the Soviet Union and other countries to participate in an arms race which endangers the United States even further. The hope that a stable deterrent might be possible has been dashed by the dynamics of the arms race. Far from strengthening the peace, deterrence undermines the security of all nations involved.

I would like to suggest briefly four ways in which the deterrence strategy of the U.S. decreases its security. The same critique would apply equally well to the policies of the Soviet Union.

(1) Deterrence policy requires citizens to maintain a high level of fear, mistrust, and suspicion toward the nation that has been identified as "enemy."

If it is not a "bomber gap," it is a "missile gap," or a "spending gap," or a "window of vulnerability" that persuades citizens to give the military a substantial part of their income in taxes, in faith that somehow more arms will increase their security. During the last decade U.S. military managers have had more than a trillion dollars to spend. If that has decreased our security to the tune of "unilateral disarmament" as the President has charged, then there must be a kind of waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement in the Department of Defense that even the General Accounting Office has not considered. What is at the root of our increasing national insecurity?

The more we gear up to spend, the more fearful we become. It has been suggested that this fear is healthy and realistic. But fear and suspicion are more than responses to reality; they also change reality. They color all communication between antagonists; so that an offer to negotiate in good faith is viewed as part of some nefarious plot, while aggressive acts re-inforce the feeling that no agreement is possible.

Most destructive is the self-defeating effect which these fears and suspicions have on the efforts of policy makers to reverse the arms race. In this climate, it is almost impossible to satisfy public worries about the verification of treaties.

Constructive criticism of military policy becomes increasingly difficult. Legitimate questions are brushed aside in order to send an unambiguous message of U.S. resolve. Sending the message that we are resolved to use weapons of mass destruction on the people of another country also instills in the body politic a certain moral numbness. The "enemy" must come to be viewed as less than human, so that we are justified in our resolve.

Thus deterrence strategy feeds the fire of the cold war. It teaches permanent hostility and holds out the false promise of permanent restraint. It cannot pave the way for arms reductions, for it builds a wall of fear and suspicion.

(2) Deterrence policy increases the fear and hostility of the adversary nation. Only if convinced of the possibility of military action - even of the use of nuclear weapons - will they be deterred.

Military buildup on one side stimulates a counter buildup on the other. It is truly amazing that the Reagan Administration seems to believe this new U.S. buildup will not stimulate even greater Soviet spending. Do we expect the Soviet Union to accept U.S. superiority and our negotiating terms because of their increased financial burden? This seems a highly unrealistic expectation; the huge number of Soviet casualties in World War II is just one illustration of the lengths to which a nation will go when it feels its security is directly threatened.

Secretary of State Haig told you that there is now "essential equilibrium" and that the U.S. has a "credible deterrent." With this proposed \$180 billion strategic weapons buildup set in motion, I suspect that Messrs. Haig, Rostow, Rowny, and other negotiators will have trouble convincing Soviet negotiators and military officials that the U.S. is not pushing for superiority, that U.S. proposals for reductions are genuine and that U.S. verification proposals are not excessively intrusive. Our "margin of safety" is the Soviets' "margin of unacceptable threat." In such a climate, Soviet hardliners will be able to make an easy case for increased confrontation, while Soviet advocates of reductions will be derided as soft on capitalism.

Indeed, many people, apparently including Secretary Haig, believe that this is precisely what happened after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

After the U.S. successfully deterred Soviet action, Soviet hardliners argued that Russia must embark on a military buildup in order to avoid another such defeat. Under the circumstances, their argument was persuasive. Thus when President Kennedy's advisors counseled policy makers not to gloat after the Soviets "blinked," they spoke more truly than they knew.

Now, the United States is responding to the Soviet buildup in the same way that the Soviet Union responded to the American position in 1962. We are spending hundreds of billions of dollars to avoid being in the position that we placed the Soviets in during the final days of the Cuban missile crisis.

(3) Since each side long ago acquired enough weapons to destroy the other, deterrence policy has come to depend primarily on perceptions and psychology. Each side tries to convince the other that it has the will to use its weapons. Capabilities are hardly relevant except for the "signal" they send.

Huge standing arsenals by themselves do not communicate continuing "resolve." Each year new evidence must be put forward, and new action taken; the U.S. has recently been sending its message via budget figures. In the debate over military spending, the percentage of the increase seems to become more important than the actual projects on which dollars are spent. Valuable steps toward agreement are often sacrificed to the desire for image. I suspect that one of the reasons we hesitate to agree to a pledge of no-first-strike is that we fear it will be seen as a weakened resolve.

Indeed, increasing the military budget out of our finite tax revenues may actually weaken national resolve as military spending comes increasingly into competition with human needs programs in the federal budget. As those who suffer from cuts in social programs become disaffected, the government may seek to strengthen their resolve with threatening images of the adversary; an early example of this is the DOD booklet on Soviet military power, which neglected to balance its presentation with information on U.S. capabilities, and which one official hoped would end up on "every coffee table in America."

Such efforts tend to force perceptions into black and white. Each nation sees itself as peace-loving and the other as aggressive. The United States sees its own efforts to influence countries such as Vietnam, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, as legitimate security measures; in the same way, the Soviet Union sees its actions in Afghanistan or other border countries as legitimate protection of its borders. But each points the finger of blame at the other, and fails to assess the impact of its own actions on the perceptions of its adversaries. (According to a recent ICA study of Soviet perceptions, which bears reading by the U.S. Senate, many Russian elites were genuinely astonished and puzzled at the vehement international protest of their invasion of Afghanistan.)

This whole process stunts constructive efforts to develop a world in which there are peaceful, cooperative relationships among nations.

(4) The continuous increases in military hardware production spurred by past investments in research and development create what might be called a constant crisis of strategy. As weapons with new capabilities emerge, strategic doctrine must be revised to accommodate them and justify their deployment.

The dynamics of deterrence now seem to have spawned a new and even more dangerous doctrine: preparing to fight a nuclear war. The strategic weapons buildup proposed by President Reagan moves firmly in this direction. Just as the need for counterforce weapons and the possibility of a counterforce war has been accepted, so we are on our way to accepting the likelihood of limited nuclear war, either between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, or in other countries. Increasingly accurate weapons push the arms race toward hair-trigger fragility; increasingly diverse "theater" nuclear weapons push it toward lower thresholds of escalation from conventional war.

Europeans sense this implicitly; they know they are likely targets and are visibly, vocally apprehensive. Is it possible for us Americans to put ourselves in their shoes and imagine what it would be like to stand by while Germans, British, Italians or French controlled the destinies of our families and our nation?

ARE THERE FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVES?

If the foregoing analysis has validity, it is essential immediately to initiate a search for alternatives to the ever-escalating arms race, since a catastrophic war is very likely down the road.

It is sobering to note that between 1816 and 1965, arms races between major powers escalated to war 23 out of 28 times, while disputes not preceded by an arms race resulted in war only 3 out of 71 times.

Obviously, it is not possible overnight to move to a wholly new level of thinking about relations among nations, but a start can and must be made. I would suggest that this effort would include:

- a realistic examination of the likelihood of nuclear war and its consequences if we continue on our present course.
- a major effort to understand the history and perceptions of people in other nations and specifically in the U.S.S.R.
- a sophisticated awareness of the arms race and the extent to which it tends to exaggerate fear and mistrust and undermine peace efforts on all sides.
- a willingness to accept the continuing existence of a variety of social and economic systems in the world and to work steadily toward more cooperative relations, especially in seeking solutions to mutual problems. This must necessarily include the working out of acceptable ways to deal with the struggle between the status quo and revolutionary forces in developing countries.
- much greater use of the many resources of the United Nations and other international institutions.

The following modest but specific suggestions might move in this direction:

(1) Since the current international situation could quite reasonably be called irrational, with paranoia lurking just beneath the surface, Senator Claiborne Pell's recent suggestion seems particularly appropriate; attach a psychiatrist or psychologist to the ACDA team preparing the U.S. negotiating position. One should also be included in the negotiating delegation. Historians who can realistically interpret the roots of Soviet attitudes and actions are also essential. The effect of U.S. actions perceived as belligerent or aggressive must be studied in the Soviet context. U.S. policies which encourage a Soviet hard-line response could be disastrous as leadership enters a transition in the U.S.S.R.

This Committee, the Armed Services and Appropriations Committees, and their counterparts in the House also play a major role in deciding policy and educating the American public. You should have your own historians and psychologists who might be viewed as "devil's advocates." They might also help the American people choose rightly in life and death situations by providing needed perspective. When important foreign policy questions are being decided in Congress, they might be asked to produce an "adversary's perceptions impact statement" to increase our awareness of the mutually reinforcing images that our countries send - or a "best-case scenario" to clarify what our specific hopes for the policy are.

(2) The subject of deterrence in the nuclear age is an appropriate subject for study by this Committee and we urge you to undertake it. One of the most thoughtful commentaries on its moral aspects is found in the testimony on SALT II given by Cardinal John Krol on behalf of the U.S. Catholic Conference in September 1979.

(3) Today a bill is expected to be introduced to create a U.S. Academy of Peace, as recommended by a Special Commission appointed by the Congress and the Executive Branch. We hope this Committee will hold hearings on this legislation and support it. The Academy should be endowed with the authority and the funds to delve into fundamentals, to question assumptions and challenge shibboleths, and to develop new techniques for sophisticated conflict resolution among nations.

(4) There are several alternatives to the President's \$180 billion strategic weapons buildup. We urge this Committee to hold a full set of hearings on the nuclear freeze proposal which recommends that the U.S. and the Soviet Union adopt a mutual nuclear freeze on the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and of missiles and new aircraft designed primarily to deliver nuclear weapons.

We also urge the Committee to contact George Kennan, one of our nation's foremost authorities on the Soviet Union, to consider his views and recommendations for an immediate 50% across-the-board reduction in Soviet and American nuclear arms.

Both of these proposals are rational and logical steps in a period of irrational overkill. We will never know whether the Soviet Union will accept them until we make an offer in good faith.

(5) An alternative policy which received considerable attention in the 1960's, and is now surfacing again in a more sophisticated form, is the policy of "independent initiatives" or - as Professor Charles Osgood has dubbed it - "GRIT" (for "Graduated Reciprocated Initiatives for Tension-reduction). We urge the Committee to hold hearings on the possibility of such initiatives. I believe they would have a surprisingly disarming effect on adversaries. Initiatives would communicate, not weakness, but a strong resolve for peace. Instead of sneaking 1,000 missiles out of Europe, as we did last year, for fear of sending the Soviets the wrong message, we could boldly take charge of the message we send. Having carefully studied the dynamics of GRIT, we could present that and other initiatives as part of a new policy

to reduce tension between our two countries. Meanwhile, we should pursue agreements and treaties to consolidate initiatives in legal form as they are reciprocated. Under present policies, real arms control is impossible, because the arms race continues during negotiations. After laboriously setting limits on a particular weapons system, negotiators now look wearily up to find that new developments have "leap-frogged" past their efforts.

(6) Ultimately, I believe the United States and the Soviet Union are more likely to make progress toward peace by recognizing and working together to avoid common dangers and solve mutual problems along with other nations of the world, than by knocking heads together on this most difficult problem of nuclear weaponry.

If we were resolved or resigned to live together on the same planet, we as a nation would be doing much more to promote exchanges by scholars, students, businessmen, laborers and farmers - sharing common experiences and insights. We can initiate joint projects to end our joint peril and the world's peril from pollution, poverty, over-population, hunger, resource depletion and nuclear war. We can positively support sales of U.S. wheat to the U.S.S.R. and sales of Soviet products to Western Europe.

(7) We were pleased to learn that Secretary Haig believes President Reagan might welcome a summit meeting at the proper time and with adequate preparations.

This time last year, several Quaker organizations wrote to President-elect Reagan and President Brezhnev urging that they personally arrange a meeting of their top aides in a quiet residential setting to understand each other's views better so that future decisions on both sides could be made undistorted either by unreasonable hopes or irrational fears.

We still believe that a "timberline" conference of this sort preceding a summit meeting would be beneficial.

(8) We urge this Committee to hold hearings to explore proposals for new "confidence-building measures" and nuclear-free zones as they are now being discussed in the Madrid review conference of the Helsinki Accords and in the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction negotiations in Vienna. There are a variety of constructive measures which might well be implemented if members of this Committee helped to focus outside attention on them.