

Assuring mutual destruction

attempt would be provocative, destabilizing, and hence exceedingly dangerous.

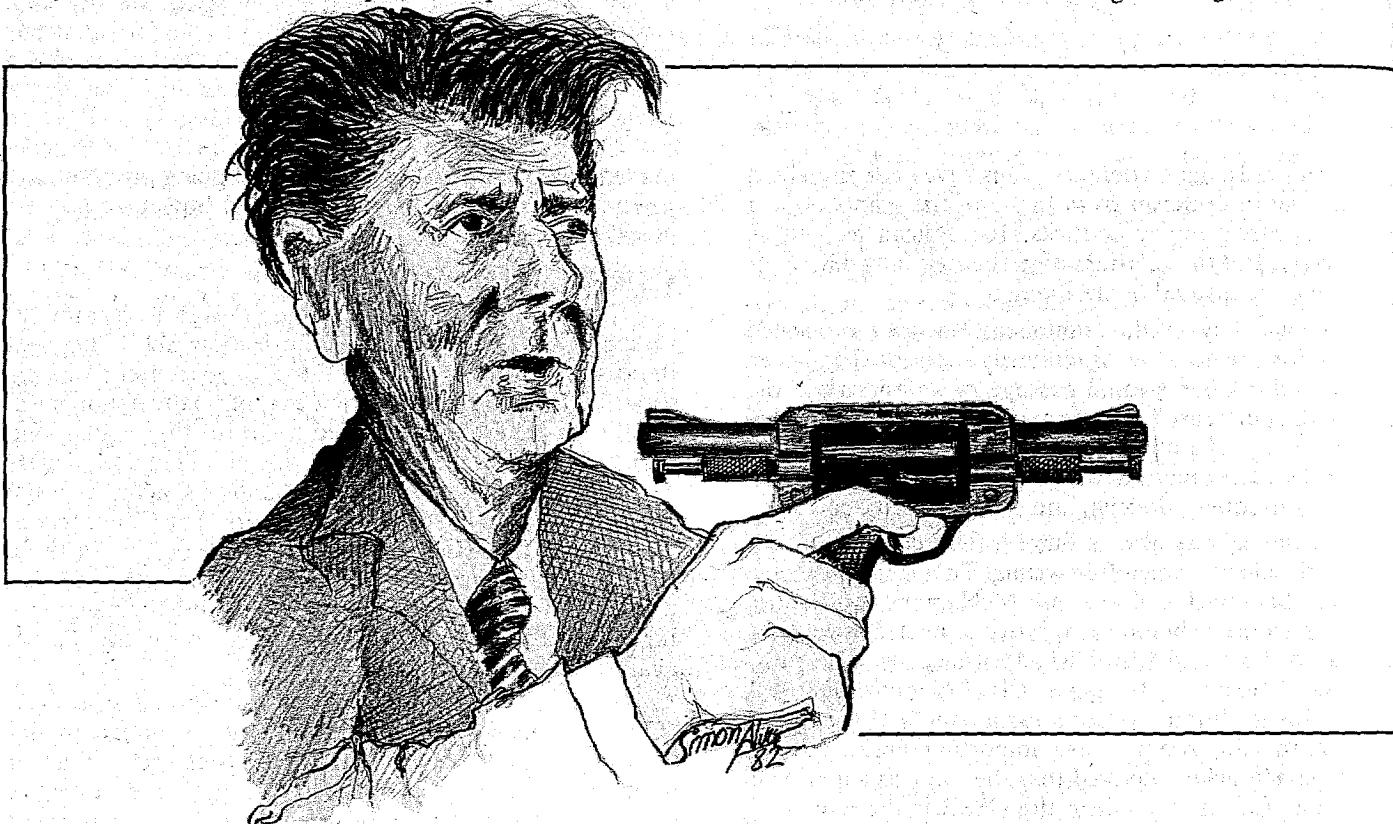
Reagan administration members have charted a new, perhaps perilous course. They have asserted that MAD is avoidable (disregarding the fact that most experts continue to view their scientific arguments with marked skepticism), and that arms agreements predicated on MAD (such as SALT I and II) ought to be set aside. The President and his Defense Secretary have both supported the promulgation of "nuclear utilization theories" (NUTS). This is why so many authorities now feel compelled to speak out. Scien-

soil of Moscow's Caribbean ally in 1962, but Moscow informed she may not even count French and British missiles as forces warranting a response.

The search for superiority is not immoral. Moscow would of course do the same, if it thought it could be achieved. But to chart a provocative, destabilizing course in the face of expert counsel that the sought-after holy grail is a mirage suggests ideology rather than pragmatism, stubbornness rather than reason.

The USSR may be able to threaten America's land-based missile silos, as Washington long has threatened

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tific consternation centres on the fact that government nuclear war survival analyses tend to be extraordinarily superficial: the analyses do not consider the full spectrum of immediate and short-term nuclear casualty-inducing agents; they ignore long-term casualty-inducing effects.

Unless the Reagan administration is forced — by Congress, or by the near-unanimous critique from the professional community — to return to acceptance of MAD, there can be no arms control of substance.

New negotiating position

There are, of course, today no arms control negotiations of substance. America's position demands that Moscow relegate itself to second-class status. In the strategic arena bombers and cruise missiles, areas of marked US advantage, are to be ignored in any talks; reductions are to focus on missiles only, and in particular on land-based rockets (on which, as previously noted, Moscow is disproportionately dependent). As concerns "theatre" nuclear weapons, America is to be allowed to station medium-range missiles in Europe, from where they can strike Soviet command and control centres with little or no warning, but Soviet contemplation of analagous deployment patterns in Cuba (or Nicaragua) is impermissible. America could demand the withdrawal of missiles from the

Moscow's (although both threats are theoretical, since the required accuracy assumptions derive from the peacetime calibration of gyros and accelerometers, to counter gravitational and atmospheric phenomena affecting test trajectories, phenomena that differ from those of wartime flight paths — and satellite data cannot fully compensate). The important point is that Moscow has no on-going program that threatens the core of America's retaliatory capabilities. Washington, on the other hand, has now set in motion a procurement program that appears to aim a dagger at Soviet force survival prospects. Even if the dagger proves blunt, it threatens to make Soviet fingers near the button rather more jittery than in the past. If the critical chorus is right, then there is reason for concern.

In Europe worries that Washington's course is both ill-advised and dangerous, have nurtured a continent-wide European Nuclear Disarmament movement. Britain's respected *The Guardian* newspaper has now suggested it may be time to leave NATO. This is unprecedented. America's friends want a strong America, as NATO's solid backbone. But NATO solidarity is predicated on the assumption that it is a defensive alliance, defending western interests. The growing fear that Washington has switched into offensive gear, in pursuit of unilateral ambitions, is sapping cohesion and undermining support. □