

(a) Prominent among the bilateral plans under negotiation between the superpowers is the "deep strategic cut" (usually a 50% cut is mentioned) in strategic land-based missiles (ICBMs). One of the first to broach this idea was George Kennan (1981). At that point it was a non-governmental proposal, since Kennan was already retired from the US State Department. He argued that the superpowers had so much "overkill" in land-based ICBMs that they would never miss the excess; and that, since land-based missiles are stationary and therefore more vulnerable to being destroyed in a first strike than submarine-based missiles are, they contribute to strategic instability and possible failure of deterrence, or even a temptation for first strike. One wonders why, then, he did not propose a 100% cut and complete reliance on the sea-based deterrent only; but perhaps that would have been viewed as too "radical."

The "deep cut" or "deep reduction" surfaced later as a governmental proposal, showing that there can be some "trickle-up" of plans from the non-governmental to the governmental level, at least if the proposer is influential enough (preferably a retired diplomat). The public was surprised by the emergence and near-success of this plan at the Reykjavik Summit in October 1986. At that point, the implementation of this plan was aborted because of the US-Soviet disagreement about SDI deployment; but now it is being suggested that it may be put in treaty form at the next superpower summit in Moscow in early 1988.

If this happens, the public would be impressed; but we should remember that the remaining 50% would still constitute substantial "overkill," and very far above the "minimum deterrence" level (defined arbitrarily as 100 missiles per side), even apart from the remaining two legs of the "triad,"