

Anti freeze

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conclusion of Soviet superiority under the freeze can be delayed, but not altered.

A project of force levels under the freeze looks just as bleak in the area of land based missiles. The current Soviet ICBM force is dramatically larger than the U.S. force, yet the Soviet advantage is a least partly offset by a wide U.S. lead in submarine based missiles. Under the freeze the U.S. submarine based advantage would disappear as the block retirement of U.S. submarines took effect.

Additionally, the Soviet force is again more modern than the U.S. force. The average U.S. Minuteman III is roughly a decade old, whereas the Soviet SS-18/19 generation of ICBMs have essentially all been deployed in the 1980s. Again it seems likely U.S. forces will be aged and unserviceable long before their Soviet counterparts.

The outlook for bomber forces is much better, as the U.S.S.R. maintains smaller bomber forces than the U.S., and the systems are all about the same age. Yet here too there are problems.

The U.S.S.R. maintains huge air defense forces, forces whose effectiveness against further aged U.S. B-52s will likely increase. The actual ability of the B-52 to get through current Soviet air-defense is unknown, yet we do know that it will decrease with time. Indeed, many critics of the new B-1B bomber argue that even with its supersonic speed, ultra hi-tech electronics, and stealth technology, the B-1B will be unable to penetrate Soviet airspace in the 1990s.

We do know, however, that the U.S. has a far greater proportion of its nuclear forces carried by aircraft, and to whatever degree 1990s advances in air defense impact upon the survivability of bombers, this impact will be felt far more by the U.S. than by the U.S.S.R.

The greatest flaw, however, of the nuclear freeze is that it stops the development of technology. Technology is often held up as the devil driving the arms race. This is only partly true, and is in many cases false. While a freeze on the technology of multiple warheads would have indeed been of benefit in the past, a freeze of the development of

invulnerable nuclear missile submarines would have made the world distinctly less stable. Some of the evolving technology of today indeed also offers the hope of greater stability.

Mobile missiles, invulnerable to enemy attack, yet still able to inflict great damage, would drive nations away from war during a crisis, unlike the highly vulnerable "Use'em or lose'em" land based missiles we have today, which drive nations towards war in time of crisis.

Recent and projected advances in satellite observation and communication threaten no one, and yet they offer the hope of providing a greater level of information about all the world's military forces and activities — thus helping to prevent miscalculation and accidental military use.

In the unlucky event of conflict, such quality information may also help lift the "fog of war" which could turn a military misunderstanding into nuclear Armageddon.

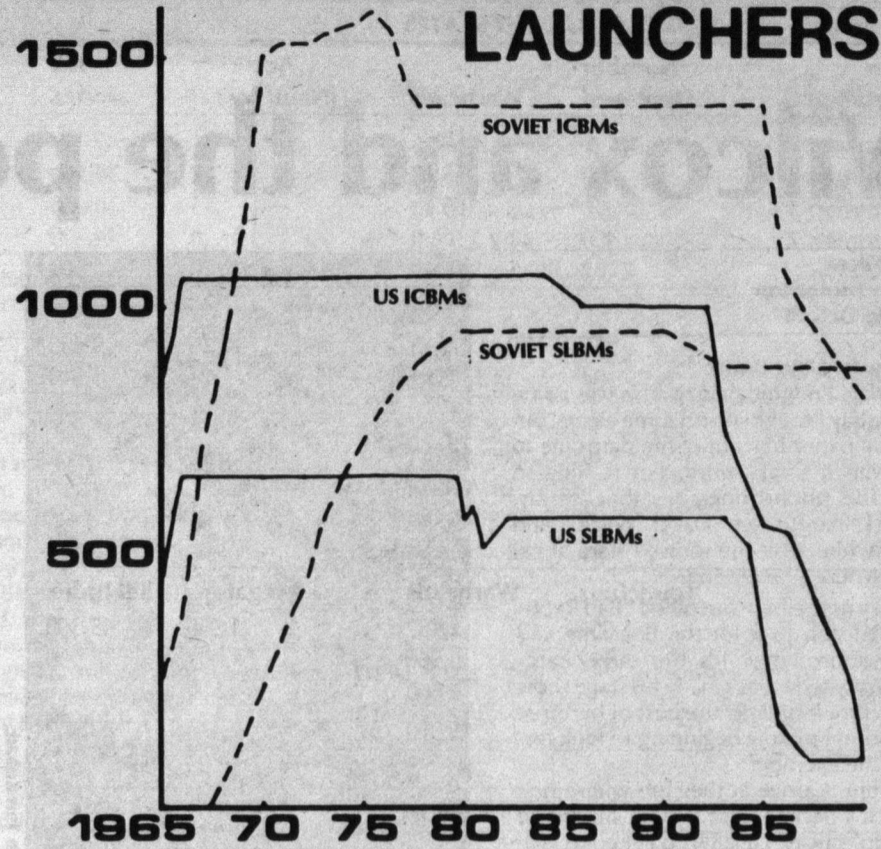
The last flaw of the nuclear freeze is that it assumes we can somehow turn the clock back to the time when there were no nuclear weapons. We can't. We cannot uninvent nuclear weapons. Were conflict to break out in a world without nuclear weapons, the first nation to reacquire them would most certainly use them.

At least with today's balance, and, it is hoped, tomorrow's reductions, the initial conflict can be avoided, if only out of fear for the consequences.

The nuclear freeze offers the prospect not of reducing the likelihood of war, but of a world with an increasingly destabilized nuclear balance ruled by leaders with increasingly vulnerable nuclear systems, and acting upon a rapidly decreasing quality of information and nuclear weapons control. In short, the nuclear freeze brings us many steps closer to the Armageddon we must avoid.

by Kenneth Bosman

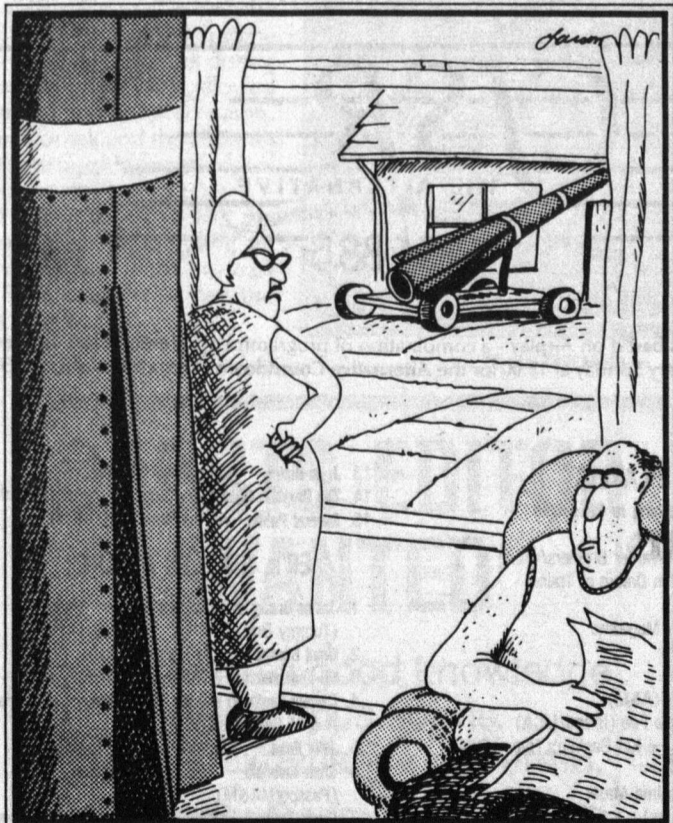
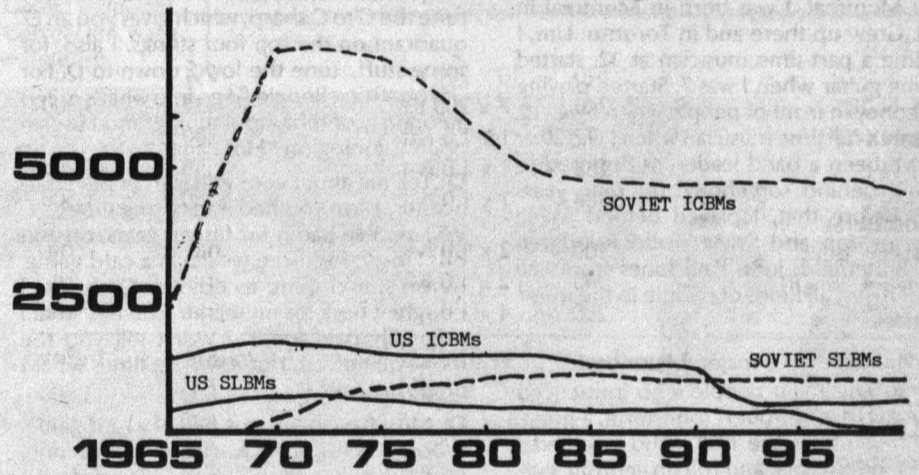
ICBM AND SLBM LAUNCHERS



Source SIPRI yearbooks, 1974, 1982, 1983 (historical unit data)
The Military Balance, IISS, 1969-70, 1983-84 (System characteristics)

ASSUMPTION FOR PROJECTIONS: SSBN lifespan of 30 years
ICBM lifespan of 25 years

MEGATONS



"Wouldn't you know it! Now the Hendersons have the bomb."

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