



# The Freeze and After

by Mark Solomon

On November 2, millions of US citizens had the opportunity to vote on a military and foreign policy matter, an event without parallel in our history. And vote they did — for the Nuclear Freeze. In Massachusetts, Montana, New Jersey, Michigan, California, Oregon, North Dakota, and Rhode Island, the electorate voted for a moratorium on the arms race, joining the people of Wisconsin who had voted for it in the September primary. Voters in the District of Columbia, Chicago, Philadelphia, Denver, New Haven, and 25 other cities and counties also supported the Freeze on local ballots. In the year leading up to the elections, 275 city governments, 12 state legislatures, and 446 New England town meetings had adopted resolutions similar to the November 2 referenda. Despite the furious red-baiting campaign by the Reagan Administration, the electorate has sent an unmistakable message to Washington to end the arms race.

In its early phases, the Freeze movement seeks to reduce tensions between the US and the USSR, halt the deployment of first-strike weapons, maintain parity and trust between the two major powers, set the stage for significant reductions in stockpiles, stop the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries, strengthen the American economy by making more funds available for civilian production, and increase national security by lessening the chances of nuclear war.

There is a growing appreciation within the Freeze movement that while it must continue to focus on the "single issue" of the Freeze, its public education and organizing can and must embrace concern for the economic and social consequences of the arms race. Senator Kennedy's call for support of the Freeze at the 1982 convention of the Steelworkers' Union was greeted by a thunderous, standing ovation. The heavy burden of the escalating military budget upon the economy is making a strong impression upon working people mired in the worst depression in more than 40 years. The need to build a political majority for peace requires that the Freeze campaign and the entire peace movement expand beyond their predominantly white middle-class constituencies and vigorously relate to the working-class majority.

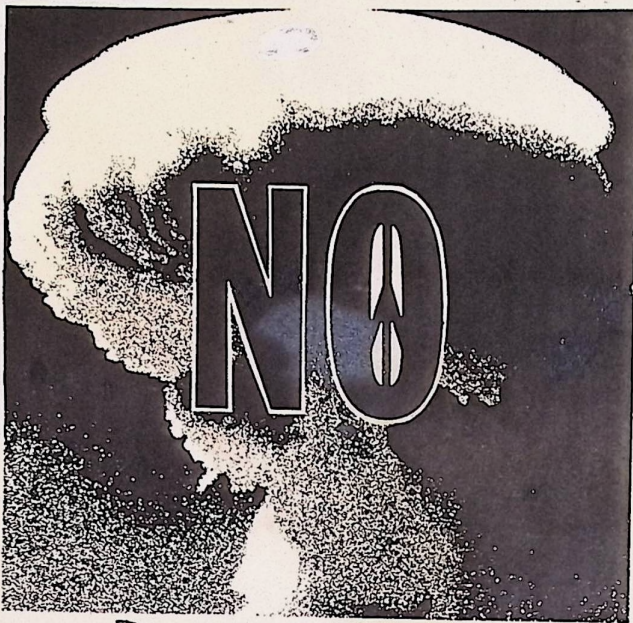
There is also a growing understanding that the economic, political, and psychological weight of the arms

race falls heaviest on Black and other minority communities in a number of ways. The high technology bias of the military industries is particularly injurious to those who have been systematically denied opportunities for education and employment. The Reagan Administration's claims of welfare and human service "abuse" create an atmosphere that promotes racist attacks against those who have been in greatest need of such services; those attacks are designed in large measure to justify social service cuts in order to increase spending on new weapons. The snarling, abusive atmosphere of the cold war is fueled by racist arrogance and the resurgence of groups like the KKK and the Nazi party that thrive on a combination of jingoism, anti-communism, and racism. Thus, the need to point out the linkage between peace and social justice is more striking than ever.

Underscoring the need for such a broad movement is the Reagan Administration's irrational response to the Freeze campaign proposals. Instead of seriously addressing himself to the concerns and desires of the American people, the President went on national TV on November 22, 1982 to shill for the MX missile. In an implied criticism of the Freeze as well as of the Catholic Bishops and millions of others who have lately challenged the morality of weapons of mass destruction, Ronald Reagan anointed the MX "the Peacekeeper" and talked of needing this first-strike weapon "to prevent war."

One major problem the movement now faces is to give clarity to the Freeze concept and make a decisive link between the military buildup and the economy. When one considers that more than half of the 200 House members who voted for the last Freeze resolution also voted for increased military spending, it becomes obvious that the total picture is not being made clear to the American people or to politicians and policy-makers. And while the Freeze vote on November 2 cannot be underestimated in its importance, clearly the economy was foremost in the minds of the voters. It behooves the Freeze movement to address the question of military spending if it is to garner the forces necessary to reverse the present arms build-up and actually implement a freeze.

Meanwhile, the Reagan Administration has put forward its "disarmament" proposals, called START and "zero option," even while it produces the neutron bomb, cancels the decade-old US-Soviet-British Comprehensive Test Ban negotiations, and adopts a \$1.6 trillion military budget for five years to finance its "Defense



Guidance", which calls for "prevailing" in a "protracted nuclear war." The Freeze movement needs to address the Reagan proposals, which are actually camouflage for deploying first-strike weapons aimed at Soviet cities in western Europe by the end of 1983. The Soviets, heretofore showing great restraint in the face of Reagan's provocations, have let the world know that if these weapons — the Pershing II's in West Germany, and the cruise missiles in Italy, Belgium, Holland, and England — are deployed, a new generation of the arms race will have begun and the Freeze, which the Soviets support, will become an impossible dream.

Administration reaction to the growing movement for a nuclear freeze has been a mixture of fear, surprise, and caution; its response has been blanket rejection and a hysterical resurrection of red-baiting. The Reagan Administration has alleged that a moratorium on weapons testing, production, and deployment would leave the Soviets with an advantage, thus discouraging them from pursuing arms reduction. Senators Kennedy and Hatfield have sharply criticized the Administration's bizarre arithmetic and its cavalier neglect of the fact that the United States maintains a clear lead in deliverable nuclear warheads. A recent report of the Center for Defense Information characterized Reagan's statements about the Soviet "margin of superiority" as dangerous and misleading. An examination of more than one hundred measures of military capabilities revealed that the United States has more strategic weapons and more seaborne and airborne nuclear bombs, and that the United States and NATO have outspent the Soviets and the Warsaw Pact for many years (\$265 billion to \$202 billion in 1982 alone). *New York Times* columnist, Tom Wicker accused

the President of "manipulation and disinformation" when he insists that a freeze now could give the Russians an actual, usable advantage, or that we need more nuclear weapons to keep them from attacking us. Enough is enough, and both sides have enough; a freeze would only maintain the balance."

Freeze activists have become more assertive in denying the charge that the Soviets could not be trusted to uphold their end of a freeze. A recent document put out by the Freeze campaign carefully analyses the problem of verification and asserts "with confidence that a freeze agreement could be made adequately verifiable." It affirms that current satellite technology and a constellation of ship-to-shore based listening posts provide the capacity to virtually carpet the USSR with exhaustive surveillance. It points out that the Soviets have been more and more inclined to work out techniques of cooperative verification in many forms, including seismic installations, restrictions on concealment practices, on-site inspection, and data exchanges. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (from which the US has withdrawn) actually achieved a Soviet concession to allow ten seismic stations — devices to record every Soviet test of nuclear weapons — on Soviet soil. Freeze activists also note that the Soviets will allow greater degrees of on-site inspection if embodied within substantive, comprehensive treaties. The Freeze campaign (cf. "Verification of a Nuclear Weapons Freeze" published by the Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies) also acknowledges that fifteen US-Soviet agreements over the past 21 years have resulted in no Soviet violations. Under SALT I, the United States raised five issues regarding Soviet practices: "In each case that the United States has raised, the activity in question has either ceased or additional information has allayed our (US) concern." (US Department of State, "SALT and American Security: Questions Americans are Asking," November, 1979)

In the late spring of 1982 Soviet President Brezhnev proposed that the US and the USSR agree to a quantitative freeze on their respective strategic armaments and that modernization be limited as much as possible. He also proposed that while the START and Euromissile talks went on, neither side take actions that could lead to upsetting the stability of the strategic situation. Such a freeze, Brezhnev suggested, would check the build-up of nuclear arsenals and would facilitate progress toward the radical limitation and reduction of strategic arms. On the day that Reagan sought public support for the MX, Yuri Andropov, Brezhnev's successor, said "...the two sides should, as the first step on the way to a future agreement, freeze their arsenals and thus create more favorable conditions for the continuation of talks on the mutual reduction of the weapons." At the 1982 UN Special Session on Disarmament, the Soviet Foreign Minister submitted a letter from the Soviet President unilaterally pledging that the Soviet Union would not be the first to use nuclear weapons. Later, in the fall of 1982, the USSR (but not the US) voted with the UN majority in support of several freeze resolutions.

None of these significant steps, which agree at least in part with major elements of the US Freeze concept, have received much attention from the US Freeze movement. The near-silence of peace activists suggests a capitulation in some measure to the idea that Soviet responsiveness to the freeze is a political "kiss of death," a confirmation of sorts of Reagan's charge that the movement is aligned with Soviet interests.

American weapons — the MX, ICBMs, the Trident sea-launched missiles — would be left to an undetermined future, to be dealt with in a vague and distant "Phase II." Michael Krepon, a former high official of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, concludes that "the Reagan proposals for deep cuts require reductions by two-thirds in Soviet land-based missiles while allowing a net increase in our strategic forces."

Clearly, such an absurd proposal would be unacceptable to the Soviets. Gerard Smith, chief US negotiator for the SALT I talks during the Nixon years, wrote in the *New York Times* (June 29, 1982):

What the Russians fear is that the Eureka proposals would allow the development of new weapons that could only result in a less stable strategic balance...The Eureka proposals would...allow American advances that can only seem unsettling to strategic planners in Moscow. The Russians would be asked to reduce the number of ICBMs, but we would be free to increase the number of warheads per missile, by deploying the MX, aimed at the Soviet Union's reduced ICBM force. It is hard to see how this would lead to a more stable situation, and it seems worth pointing out that SALT II would not have permitted this to happen.

Reagan's proposals were also immediately disputed by former Secretary of State Edmund Muskie, who accused him of: 1) offering a series of ideas that was so transparently unfair as to call into question its seriousness; 2) using manipulative "deep cuts" rhetoric in order to confuse and divert the growing peace movement; and 3) ignoring the simple and immediately available path to mutually acceptable arms control — ratification of the SALT II Treaty — which would prejudice neither the security of the US nor the USSR.

The Soviets have made counter-offers which have been virtually ignored by the media, but were characterized by Reagan on November 22 as "serious" — leaving the false impression that they were made in response to the Administration's "tough line." The *Boston Globe* (September 11, 1982) reported that "the Soviet Union has made a surprisingly forthcoming offer, according to US officials — an offer that would cut Moscow's own missile bomber force by 25 percent and the US arsenal by 10 percent." The Soviet proposal called for a maximum of 1800 missiles and bombers on each side, curbs on giant new missile submarines being developed by the US and the USSR, and extension of "confidence building" measures such as providing advance warning of missile test flights.

Certain inescapable though painful facts about the arms race cannot be forgotten: at this moment of precarious arms balance, parity of nuclear forces is essential to human survival. That fragile situation keeps itchy fingers off the nuclear trigger. Reagan's START proposal makes a mockery of the parity principle and flies in the face of the deep-seated desire in the United States for real arms reduction. Such a jolting destabilization of nuclear forces and a disruption of equivalence would heighten tensions and increase fears of a first strike on one side while making such a suicidal (and genocidal) move more attractive to the other. Of at least equal importance, the START

proposal is both a false promise of "deep cuts" and a smokescreen behind which cruise missiles, MXs, stealth and B1-B bombers, and the whole constellation of first-strike weapons will keep pouring out of the arms factories, increasing the danger of nuclear war.

Matching the President's "deep cuts" charade is his proposal for a "zero option" on medium-range strategic weapons in Europe. The heart of this proposal is that the Soviet Union should unilaterally destroy its approximately 300 medium-range SS-20 missiles with three warheads each, located in European Russia (as well as SS-20s that have been removed to the eastern USSR beyond the range of western Europe). In exchange, Washington would scrap plans to add in 1983 572 Pershing II and cruise missiles to the present NATO arsenal of 986 medium-range strategic weapons which face the Soviet Union. The Soviets, in effect, are being called upon to jettison more than half of their medium-range arsenal in exchange for an American commitment not to emplace a new generation of medium-range lethal weapons. If adopted, NATO would still have 986 medium-range strategic weapons facing the USSR; the Soviets would possess no countervailing force. The "zero option" is another prescription for dangerous destabilization and undermining the nuclear parity as well as a fatuous proposal doomed to failure.

The essential facts are these: 1) for more than 20 years, the US and NATO have had land-based missiles in western Europe aimed at the capitals and major industrial centers of the socialist countries of eastern Europe; 2) these are supplemented by US forward-based missiles in



*"If the Soviets completely and unilaterally disarmed themselves? That's extremely hypothetical, of course, but my gut reaction would be that it doesn't go far enough."*

Such an implicit retreat is injurious to the movement if not self-defeating. It fuels the lies of Reagan and his professional red-baiters, and weakens the morale of anti-war Americans. Psychiatrists and other health workers have pointed out that one of the greatest obstacles to peace activism among the general population is a feeling of ineffectiveness and near-paralysis in confronting the power of the Pentagon and the Administration. The growing strength of the peace movement has done much to dissolve that feeling of political impotence but at this moment, the new cold warriors are depending upon a prospect that seems guaranteed to revive feelings of demoralization — the perception that not only must powerful forces in the United States be convinced to end the arms race, but that Soviet leaders, thousands of miles away behind inaccessible Kremlin walls, must also be convinced. Failure to inform the peace constituency and the public in general about Soviet proposals and the potential of such proposals serves no constructive purpose.

A remarkable editorial in the staid Boston *Globe* (October 18, 1982) stressed the consequences of neglecting to challenge the pervasive climate of anti-Sovietism. It quoted an address by George Kennan in 1981:

This endless series of distortions and oversimplifications; this systematic dehumanization of the leadership of another great country; this routine exaggeration of Moscow's military capabilities and of the supposed iniquity of its intentions; the daily misrepresentation of the nature and the attitudes of another great people — and a long-suffering people at that, sorely tried by the vicissitudes of this past century; ...this reckless application of the double standard to the judgment of Soviet conduct and our own; this failure to recognize the commonality of many of their problems and ours as we both move inexorably into the modern technological age; and this corresponding tendency to view all aspects of the relationship in terms of a supposed total and irreconcilable conflict of concerns and aims; these, believe me, are not the marks of the maturity and the realism one expects of the diplomacy of a great power.

They are marks of an intellectual primitivism and naivete unpardonable in a great government — yes, even naivete because there is a naivete of cynicism and suspicions, just as there is a naivete of innocence.

To this the *Globe* added: "...the arms control movement must shatter the myths about the Soviet Union that underlie Reagan's defense spending plans. All the technical knowledge of missiles and treaties and medical effects of nuclear blasts, all the new insight that the 'freeze' movement has begun to put into common discourse, will amount to nothing if Americans are not able to achieve a sounder perspective on the Soviets, and on ourselves."

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## PART II

### START, "Zero Option", and the Real Options

While Ronald Reagan's policies have been essentially a continuation of the nuclear superiority, first-strike, and "limited" nuclear war doctrines enunciated by military and political planners in the Carter years, Reagan has added his own distinct vitriol, consigning the ideology that guides Soviet life (and more than one-third of humankind) to the "ash heap of history," and adopting a more clearly stated intention to aggressively roll back socialism as well as the emerging forces for social change in every corner of the world.

Confronted by a population that increasingly sees the danger of nuclear holocaust coming from Washington, the Reagan Administration is making tactical adjustments to relieve the pressure applied by that growing concern. After a delay of 18 months, during which the Administration virtually declared the absence of an arms control policy and lack of interest in such a life-and-death matter, Reagan finally entered in arms reduction talks with the Soviets at Geneva under the acronym START (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks).

Announcing that the SALT II Treaty was "fatally flawed" and even "dead", Reagan and his advisers claimed that START, allegedly unlike SALT II, would accomplish deep cuts in the nuclear stockpiles of both major powers. As the massive June 12th demonstration approached, Reagan, with a flourish, unveiled his START agenda in a speech at Eureka College in Illinois on May 9, 1982. Reagan proposed as a first step, or "Phase I" reduction, that each side decrease the total number of warheads on land and sea to approximately 5000 warheads each — not more than half to be placed on land-based missiles, the rest on submarines. Significantly, more than three-fourths of the Soviet strategic arsenal, but only one-fourth of the US's, is land-based.

The Pentagon has about 10,000 warheads — 2158 on land-based ICBM launchers, about 5000 on 40 nuclear submarines, and roughly 2500 hydrogen nuclear warheads on nearly 600 heavy long-range and medium-range bombers which are untouched by Reagan's "deep cuts" proposal. (Cruise missiles and all forthcoming lethal technology, including the B-1 bomber, are also pointedly excluded from "Phase I" of the proposal.) As the US is already below the proposed ceiling of 2500 land-based warheads, in order to meet Reagan's limits — and still be able to deploy the new land-based MX missile — the Pentagon could simply withdraw a carefully selected minimal number of obsolescent land-based weapons and a relative handful of sea-launched ballistic missiles (which are scheduled for replacement by the new Trident I and Trident II missiles, also excluded from Reagan's reductions.)

The Soviets have approximately 7000 armed nuclear warheads. About 75 to 80 percent are on 1400 land-based launchers; about 2000 are on 62 submarines; only one percent, about 70 to 100 warheads, are located on heavy bombers. For the Soviets to meet the requirements of Reagan's proposal, they would be forced to cut from 2500 to 3000 warheads from their land-based ICBMs — the heart of their strategic arsenal. Overall, the USSR would be obliged to cut 50 to 60 percent of its land-based warheads and an even larger percentage of missiles. At the same time, the disposition of a new generation of