Since July 9, the Senate has been officially debating ratification of the second phase of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty and a vote is not expected until Thanksgiving. SALT II was signed by the United States and the Soviet Union in Vienna—after seven years and 300 meetings between the two superpowers.

At that time, Jimmy Carter hailed the treaty as "vital to peace in our time." The USSR said it was designed "to establish a stable, safe, and reasonable" arms control agreement. The world was told that a new war had been driven into the coffin of the spectre of nuclear holocaust.

But the terms of the treaty dispute, for anything other than an arms-control element, isnoDB. To make any sense of the treaty, one must understand that the vast majority of the text is devoted to the technical details of the arms-control regime, and that there is nothing about superpower relations or world order that does not depend on the implementation of these technical details.

This means that the treaty is not a "nuclear agreement" in any meaningful sense. Rather, it is a "technical agreement" that takes care to make no reference to the terms or conditions of any other agreement.

The HYPOCRISY OF SALT

Just look at the terms of the Treaty. Each side is permitted to build a total of 2,500 weapons systems capable of carrying multiple warheads, each with a separate target. To top it off, each side gets to build 400 mobile multie warheads, each with a separate target. The US total of 12,000 and doubling the Soviet total to 8,000 seems scandalous.

Even the specific limits can hardly be described as advancing disarmament. Moreover, the large number of multiple warheads, each with a separate target, means that the treaty will not only fail to prevent war, but will actually accelerate it.

Furthermore, 1,500 of these systems are allowed to have more than one war- head, each with a separate target. So, to top it off, each side gets to build 400 mobile multiple warheads, each with a separate target. The US total of 12,000 and doubling the Soviet total to 8,000 seems scandalous.

The treaty welcomes refugees from Cuba, Vietnam and Nicaragua (where pro-Communist governments have taken over), and the existing Chinese and Russian minorities in these countries are not allowed to return.

The treaty also touches on the issue of the treatment of political refugees. The US and USSR are not required to accept any political refugees.

WANT PEACE? FORGET SALT ???

The initial stage of the SALT debate is over, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was a forum for the Pentagon and its pet academics to hammer out the treaty. In November, the Senate will decide whether the treaty has been ratified. The Soviet Union has proposed that the treaty be supported SALT-III if the US moves to double defense spending over the next few years.

Henry Kissinger, who negotiated SALT, recently visited China and discussed the future of the treaty. He has also proposed that the United States relax its sanctions against the Soviet Union. The US government has reversed its own position, stating that it will support SALT-II if the US moves to double defense spending over the next few years.

The Senate's warlike approach to a Treaty that has been praised by the Pentagon and the military establishment is not surprising. It just underscores the growing threat of military intervention around the world.

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