

## SALT II

Remarks by Congressman Les AuCoin  
in the House of Representatives  
July 13, 1979

• Mr. AuCOIN. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity today to express my support for the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, SALT II, now under consideration by the U.S. Senate. I do so on the eve of a visit to my home state of Oregon by Vice President Walter Mondale who will address a forum of concerned citizens in Portland on the importance of ratifying SALT II.

SALT II deserves ratification because it is a hope for peace. It does not trumpet our retreat; it signals our progress on the long road toward a safer world, a world in which the risk of nuclear terror has been curtailed.

At its heart, SALT II is a life and death issue and a bread and butter issue.

The life and death issue requires little explanation. The United States and the Soviet Union possess unthinkable capabilities of mass destruction. Statistics inadequately capture the magnitude of the violence we can unleash.

But perhaps more alarming than the actual weapons themselves are the serious strategies of how to wage nuclear war -- and win. These strategies are possible because military planners enjoy the detachment of sterile environments far from the stench of any battlefield and out of sight of the grotesque rubble mankind and earth would be reduced to in the event of nuclear warfare. SALT II might not be needed if we were simply stockpiling nuclear weapons. What makes it necessary, to secure our collective well being and sanity, is the possibility of a remote control war.

SALT II will not halt the arms race, but it is our only hope to curb it. SALT II will not remove the cloud of terror from overhead, but it is a beginning step, a small one, to get out from under it. Some critics say SALT II doesn't go far enough, but I say that without SALT II we go backwards, which is far worse.

SALT II is fundamentally an economic issue, too. Worldwide, more than \$400 billion of the world's resources were consumed last year by the global arms race.

At a time when we in the United States are trying to balance the federal budget and curb inflation, we need to look skeptically at non-productive expenditures of federal tax dollars -- which is what military spending amounts to. A recent study shows that for each \$1 billion in additional

military spending, 11,600 potential jobs evaporate. The ratio is worse for spending on exotic weapons, where 22,000 potential jobs are sacrificed per \$1 billion expenditure.

Just as Americans don't buy the principle of "peace at any price," they also don't buy the idea of deterrence at any price. Take, for example, the MX missile, which experts predict will cost a minimum of \$30 billion to develop, and compare that to the Fiscal Year 1980 budget for timber reforestation and improvement of \$67.8 million. Even if that amount were doubled, enabling the U.S. Forest Service to come close to meeting the cut recommended by the Resources Planning Act, it would still be just 5 percent of the cost of developing the MX missile. The difference: Money spent on reforestation in a few years would pay dividends in forests for recreation and for harvesting to meet our wood products needs. Money spent on the MX missile would be the equivalent of burying \$30 billion deep in the sod in silent silos we pray will never have to see the light of day.

Simply put, America and the world cannot afford the arms binge we are bent on. We talk of conserving oil, and that is important. But what we really need is a more fundamental conservation of our resources, concentrating them on means that will lift the standard of living of all people, not the curtain of terror.

I submit that SALT II is not evidence of decay in the American will. Rather it is a manifestation of our nation's growing maturity.

SALT II, to work, relies not on unilateral deterrence, but on mutual deterrence, a shared risk-taking by the United States and the Soviet Union.

Mutual deterrence implies rough equivalency in military capability.

For some this concept equals surrender. For me it is the product of careful and sound reasoning, and reflects the sober realization that world stability will only result when the United States and the Soviet Union find a means to end competition through an arms race.

In this context, SALT II is an unmistakable affirmation that nuclear war is unwinnable, that brinkmanship is inhumane and that mankind possesses the capacity to work out disagreements in ways less destructive than warfare.

SALT II, then, should not be loaded with one-sided advantages because that is destabilizing. A one-sided advantage always triggers an urge on the other side to overcome the advantage, and a process is begun that never ends.

It is precisely because we have fundamental differences with the Soviet Union that SALT II is imperative.

We are at a pivotal time in our dealings with the Soviet Union. Moderates are in control. Not long from now they may not be, especially if adventurist elements within the Soviet government are handed the ammunition of U.S. bad faith in defeating SALT II. It is here American leaders have a real opportunity to help shape the future of Soviet leadership and avoid a return to Stalinist thuggery.

But perhaps the greatest benefit for the United States offered by SALT II is an often overlooked one. In all our self-flagellation, Americans forget our own greatness, our own ability to innovate, to compete and to win. Diverting competition between ourselves and the Soviet Union from building more powerful armaments to building a stronger economy works greatly to the advantage of the United States. Herein lies our greatest strength, and the way to a better world for all of us.

We must be careful not to overload SALT II with all our fears or hopes. SALT II will not end all war. It will not remove all conflicts. It will not secure freedom for all. But SALT II is an alternative to suicidal arms competition; it is a step forward, not backward. We have no other options that offer even that much promise.