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The Russians Expect Arms Control to Fail

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Lenin, the revered mentor of all good Communists once said: "Treaties are like pie crusts made to be broken." He was responding to complaints that the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk which he had negotiated during World War I with the Central Powers was detrimental to Russian interests e.g. it set up an independent Ukraine. He made these words come true as soon as Germany was beaten and in 1918 he repudiated the treaty. The Soviets then signed new treaties delineating the boundaries of the USSR with the Baltic States Finland Rumania Czechoslovakia Germany and Poland. As soon as the Kremlin felt strong enough to break those treaties, all were broken and all or part of those countries annexed to the Soviet Union.

These broken agreements are but a sampler of the Soviet view of treaties as "pie crusts." One recent example is the Soviet scrapping of the Montreux Convention concerning the passage of warships through the Dardanelles. That convention denies passage through those strategic straits for the aircraft carriers of all nations. This was fine for the Russians in 1936 when they had no aircraft carriers; it prevented naval power of the Western countries from entering the Black Sea. But in the early 1970s when the USSR had acquired aircraft carriers they broke the treaty. They correctly judged that the other signatories would lack the will to enforce the treaty and now regularly pass carriers through the Dardanelles.

Against this continuing background of Soviet cynicism about treaties it is astonishing to see the United States Government and a highly vocal segment of public opinion so determined to trust the future of America to the signature of Leninist Soviet leaders in arms control treaties. Following suit Western businessmen and financial institutions enter into agreements with the Soviets as if the old maxim "a deal is a deal" carries weight with the Marxist-Leninists with whom they bargain.

The arms control enthusiasts not only choose to ignore the ample historical evidence of Soviet cynicism about treaties they blind themselves to the ominous current evidence from the massive Soviet arms buildup that the Kremlin considers SALT agreements as "pie crusts." It is quite clear from U.S. intelligence that the Soviets are preparing a "breakout" capability in strategic nuclear armaments. In the missile field — despite U.S. insistence that mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) are contrary to the principles of SALT I — the Soviets have developed and are deploying them. Furthermore, they are counting on the

Soviets have developed a mobile three-stage solid fueled ICBM, the SS-16. But they are deploying it minus one stage which makes it a less-than-intercontinental range missile. Intelligence experts expect the Soviets to field about 1,000 such missiles over the next several years. When this deployment is complete the Soviets will have the capability to increase their already ominous advantage over us in ICBMs to over two to one (2,600-plus Soviet missiles to the U.S. 1,054) by the relatively simple means of strapping on the third stage.

In the strategic bomber field the Soviets have an even more easily executed "breakout" capability. The Soviet equivalent of the B-1, the Backfire has been in production for several years and is replacing older strategic bombers in the Soviet Long Range Aviation units. There is absolutely no disagreement

among U.S. intelligence agencies that the Backfire has the capability to drop nuclear bombs on the United States. But the Soviets enormously assisted by U.S. arms control enthusiasts have apparently managed to get our arms controllers to exclude this supersonic aircraft from the SALT numbers game on the grounds that Moscow does not intend to use the Backfire against the U.S. (Meanwhile the aging subsonic U.S. B-52s are counted.)

Best guesses about how many Soviet Backfire bombers will be deployed range between 500 and 700. Their status as threats to the United States depends only on the orders to their crews. Their effectiveness could be essential. They can reach most targets in the United States without refueling. Thus the Backfire represents an almost instant breakout capability which would give the Soviets numerical superiority in intercontinental nuclear bombers. Worse yet the Soviet bombers would have easy-going against feeble U.S. air defenses while U.S. bombers would be confronted by massive Soviet air defenses.

There is more to the story of Moscow's preparations for the breaking of the SALT "pie crust" but suffice it to say that with their new mobile missiles and new strategic bombers the Soviets will be able to scrap the SALT treaties five years from now and do so to their enormous strategic advantage.

Given the cancellation stretch-out and neglect of our own strategic capabilities by those who prefer to ignore the lessons of the past and the realities of the present we may in five years find ourselves unable to reenter the competition fast enough to prevent overwhelming Soviet superiority. When and if the SALT "pie crust" is broken it may be too dangerous for the United States to do more than acquiesce.