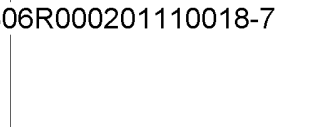


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# Send 'Em a Message

**U.N. Countdown**

The Administration's desire to reduce the Soviet delegations to the United Nations offends some experts in international law, but it hardly offends common sense. Washington and Moscow have always roughly reciprocated their exchange and treatment of diplomats. America's aim, over the next two years, is merely to curb a longstanding anomalous Soviet advantage at the U.N. The order will not seriously interfere with Soviet diplomacy, or espionage.

Unless rescued by U.N. arbiters, the Russians will have to cut the combined U.N. missions of their three voting delegations — the Soviet Union, Byelorussia and the Ukraine — from 275 to 170 by April 1988. But the number of Soviet officials in New York City will remain virtually the same, as staffs arrive for a newly agreed-upon consulate. And the three-in-one Soviet delegation will still be the largest at the United Na-

tions, exceeding the 126 Americans and 116 Chinese.

Thus not a single apartment in the Russians' tower in Riverdale will stand empty. No U.N. committee will lose the separate (but always unanimous) wisdom of Soviet, Byelorussian and Ukrainian delegates. And the total number of Russians on duty throughout the United States will continue substantially to exceed the number of Americans in the Soviet Union.

Is the U.S. obliged to accept suitably sized U.N. delegations? Yes. Does this order offend that obligation? No. Does it leave enough slots for K.G.B. agents posing as U.N. diplomats? You bet. Does the order nonetheless rankle in Moscow? Apparently. Will they get over it? Yes.

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