3/24/86

TRIDENT-2: Ultimate Threat to Security

Dear Draper Workers:

Are people at Draper generally aware of these facts about the Trident-2 (D-5) missile, which you have under contract from the Navy: A single Trident-2 submarine, carrying 24 D-5 missiles, each with 8 warheads, will be capable of hitting 192 separate targets. Each warhead will have an explosive force of 475 kilotons (about 34 Hiroshimas). This explosive punch, together with the D-5's extreme accuracy (C.E.P. 350 ft.) make it a silo-buster par excellence.

Twenty (20) Trident subs are now on order from the Navy. But only seven of these boats, firing simultaneously, could take out all 1,398 of the Soviet's hardened missile silos simultaneously. And with a flight time of only 10-15 minutes (firing from near shore with a flattened trajectory), this weapon is capable of a disarming first strike - and will be so perceived by the Soviets. Placed in a "use them or lose them" situation, the Soviets may be tempted to launch their own pre-emptive first strike. Or they may feel forced to resort to "launch-on-warning" technology, placing nuclear war on a hair-trigger. The chance of global holocaust will take a quantum leap forward.

Undermining People's Real Security

The Trident will be the most expensive weapon system the U.S. has ever built. Estimates of total cost (including submarines, missiles, retrofitting, and shore facilities) range from $85.3 billion (Robert Aldrich, former Lockheed missile designer, who quit his job in 1973) to $103.5 billion (Robert "Stan" Norris, "Counterforce at Sea," Arms Control Today, Sept. '85). Such massive drafts on the public treasury will seal the fate of the nation's poor for the foreseeable future. They will condemn millions to continued homelessness (now estimated at more than a million nationwide); hunger (20 million Americans chronically underfed); and joblessness (the much-touted job-creation benefit of weapons contracts provides employment for only a relative few skilled in high technology.)

Such distorted budget priorities stand as a moral indictment against a nation which once dedicated itself to freedom and equality. Further, they undermine the true national security of the nation, which depends on a healthy peace-time economy which serves everyone's needs and benefits all people of every class, race, and color. (Even defense workers are not well served by these weapons contracts, which are unpredictable and can be terminated without compensation to those layed off.)

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