
Defense Report

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The Nuclear Freeze—A Confusing Commitment to Freedom

Over the years since World War II, and particularly since the Soviet Union achieved nuclear weapons parity with the United States, we have heard claims by pacifists that the interests of mankind would best be served by simply acquiescing in the burgeoning spread of international communism. To be sure, they acknowledge, there would be a diminution of individual liberties, but would that not be better than global incineration? In short, they support today Bertrand Russell's "better red than dead" solution of 20-odd years ago.

In yet another iteration of this ambivalence toward freedom comes the nuclear freeze proposal recently seized upon by many seemingly intelligent and loyal Americans and now approved by the House of Representatives. The proposal calls for a mutual and verifiable freeze on nuclear weapons by the United States and the Soviet Union followed by weapons reductions to be achieved within a reasonable, specified time.

Coming at a time when the Soviet Union possesses a clear margin of superiority in nuclear weaponry, this attitude is difficult to understand.

It seems to be curiously an American trait to want to get things done, and done now. Impatience with delay and a penchant for solving problems are characteristics frequently ascribed to us by others. Typifying this attitude is the enjoinder popular with young Army leaders attempting to encourage initiative among juniors: "Do something even if it is wrong."

This is not the time to do something even if it is wrong. And the nuclear freeze is absolutely wrong. How wrong? Nothing says it better than this quote from a recent publication:

The freeze reflects the deeply felt and wholly laudable wish of millions of Americans that something be done to control nuclear weapons. But when taken seriously as a plan, the freeze continually fails on its own terms. It seeks safety, but would jeopardize deterrence; it seeks quick action, but would delay arms control; it seeks real reductions, but removes any leverage we might have to bring them about.

And, for those few still tempted by the siren song of "better red than dead," it should be remembered there is no such thing as half-free or half-slave.