Ballot Initiative #3: Verifiable Nuclear Arms Freeze

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

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Ballot initiative #3

Verifiable nuclear arms freeze

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Ballot initiative #3

Verifiable nuclear arms freeze

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The third ballot initiative to be decided by South Dakota voters in the November election is a resolution to determine support or opposition for a verifiable nuclear arms freeze between the United States and the Soviet Union.

A "yes" vote on this ballot initiative registers support from South Dakota for a verifiable nuclear arms freeze between the United States and the Soviet Union. A "no" vote signifies opposition to registering support from South Dakota for a verifiable nuclear arms freeze.

Specific provisions of the initiative

The verifiable nuclear freeze resolution contains a preamble and three sections:

AN ACT to require the Governor to notify the federal government that the people of South Dakota mandate a verifiable nuclear arms freeze.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA:

That prior to January 15, 1985, the Governor of South Dakota shall inform the President of the United States and the members of the South Dakota Congressional Delegation that the people of South Dakota mandate the following:

A. that the United States enter into an agreement with the Soviet Union that neither country will build, test, or put in place any more nuclear warheads; missiles, planes, submarines, or any other launchers designed to fire nuclear warheads;

B. that the United States faithfully observe this agreement after it is signed, and that the United States closely monitor the Soviet Union to insure that it, too, is faithfully observing this agreement;

C. and that the United States and the Soviet Union should then begin to reduce the number of their nuclear weapons in an orderly and balanced way, and to involve other nuclear nations in such reductions.

What does this initiative do?

The initiative says "the people of South Dakota mandate a verifiable nuclear arms freeze." The term "mandate" often means to command or to order that something be done. However, in this case "mandate" means to report voter preferences only.

The United States Constitution states that it is the power and responsibility of the Congress and the President to provide for the common defense of the people. As a result, governments and voters from individual states have no authority or legal power to resolve the nuclear arms dilemma. The only power available to voters is the ability to publicly register sentiment and/or elect political leaders who may be able to solve the dilemma.

If passed, this proposal would require the Governor to inform the President and our South Dakota Congressional Delegation of the vote and the provisions of the initiative before January 15, 1985. If defeated, no action would be required.

However, in either case, the results will be reported by the media. The Congressional delegation and the White House will likely be aware of the initiative results as soon as they are tallied and reported.

While passage of the amendment will not legally tie the hands of Congress or the President, if a number of states overwhelmingly pass or defeat similar resolutions, defense and budgetary votes in Congress may be affected and/or the President may be persuaded to adjust or reaffirm the nuclear arms negotiation strategy of our nation.

Are other states voting on nuclear arms freeze?

Presently, South Dakota is the only state that will vote on a nuclear freeze resolution this coming November 6th.

In November 1982, there were 9 states, the District of Columbia, and 29 cities and counties with nuclear freeze resolutions on their ballots. The proposals passed in 8 states, Washington D.C., and in 27 cities and counties. The approving states included North Dakota, Montana, California, Oregon, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Rhode Island,
and Michigan. The measures were defeated in Arizona and two counties. An additional state, Wisconsin, approved the referendum prior to the general election.

What is verification?

There is disagreement among the analysts on what "adequate" verification means. Some suggest that the size of modern nuclear missiles is such that they may be easily disguised and hidden from satellites. If so, perhaps on-site inspection and selected off-site inspection by a neutral party is required.

Others suggest that a combination of satellite inspection and intelligence sources is adequate for verification.

Verification procedures are not defined in the ballot measure. Voting yes or no in November may depend on individual beliefs about what "adequate" verification is and whether it will exist.

Is nuclear parity a valid issue?

The U.S. can negotiate from (1) a position of nuclear superiority, (2) nuclear parity, or (3) nuclear inferiority. Voting yes or no on this initiative may depend upon individual beliefs about where the U.S. is now and where we ought to be when we enter a nuclear freeze.

In addition, there are those who believe that nuclear parity is irrelevant. They argue that the consequences of the East and West being able to annihilate the world 10 times over is the same as 40 times over and that more weapons only increase the chances that they will be used.

Voter access to strategical information is limited

While South Dakota voters may be able to study our defense system and assess the strategy of our leaders, we have only limited access to intelligence data on defense capabilities and the strategy of the Soviet Union. As a result, some have debated whether or not the voters in general have "adequate" information to appraise the nuclear freeze issue.

In the final analysis, some people believe that a nuclear arms freeze agreement can be successful and that an attempt to negotiate should be made. In contrast, others believe that an agreement can not be successfully implemented or that negotiations should not be made at the present time. There are risks associated with both options.

Whether Ballot Initiative 3 contributes to or hinders the nuclear arms negotiation process is a value judgment that South Dakota voters will make on November 6th.

Additional defense and military facts

A basic understanding of our defense resources and military facts is helpful in making informed conclusions and voter decisions on the nuclear freeze issue.

Why do we have a military?

Four fundamental reasons for a military include preservation of U.S. sovereignty, protection of the life and liberty of U.S. citizens, protection of the "general welfare" of U.S. citizens, and enhancement of global security and stability.

What are the priority missions?

The priorities of our military are enumerated in various government documents. These include defense of the homeland, defense of our allies (NATO, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and other selected Pacific and Asian neighbors), defense of our access to resources (Mideast and Africa), and extension of deterrence against communism (Central and South America).

With present concerns over the size of federal budget deficits, both major political parties have been looking for ways to reduce defense expenditures. The President's Grace Commission recently recommended defense management moves that would save nearly $100 billion over 3 years. These recommendations included standardizing replacement parts, streamlining procurement processes, shifting to multi-year contracts, having private operators operate commissaries, and closing some military bases.

In addition, the development of any new weapons system commits the government to long-term expenditures. The development of B-1 bombers, land-based missile systems, and space defense can require 10 to 20 years. Some technologies may become obsolete or not practical in combat trials even before they can be widely adopted.

The budget questions center around the following: How much nuclear defense spending provides for "adequate defense"? Are our allies paying their fair share? Should current taxpayers pay for current defense expenditures or should
How much do we spend on defense?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1945</th>
<th>1955</th>
<th>1965</th>
<th>1975</th>
<th>1984</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual dollars (bil.)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>237e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of the federal budget (%)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Gross National Product (%)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.7e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*e = preliminary estimate
Source: Various U.S. budgets and historical statistics

How much will future taxpayers pay for current defense expenditures through deficit spending? The answers involve value judgments made by Congress and the President.

How is the defense budget allocated?

The Conventional Forces are designed to deter, defend, and retaliate against attacks by utilizing mostly manpower and conventional weapons. The conventional forces include ground, air, naval, rapid deployment, and reserve forces.

How do we compare with the USSR?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated 1982 status</th>
<th>NATO</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Warsaw Pact</th>
<th>USSR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (mil)</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military spending (bil)</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of GNP (%)</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic nuclear warheads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All nuclear warheads</td>
<td>9,975</td>
<td></td>
<td>7,226</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military manpower (mil)</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack submarines</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major warships</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combat aircraft</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>7,200</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>6,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanks and heavy artillery</td>
<td>46,000</td>
<td>18,500</td>
<td>87,000</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that numbers do not portray technical obsolescence or differences in characteristics of the various nuclear warheads. From various defense sources as compiled and published by the League of Women Voters in "Dollars for defense," 1983. Corroborated by additional media sources.

Are there vulnerabilities in our strategic defense?

Presently, 50% of our nuclear warheads are based on submarines, 28% are on bombers, and 22% are land-based missiles.

Defense analysts suggest that the submarines are the most survivable and least vulnerable to Soviet attack. However, there are more command communication control problems with coordination of submarine attacks.

Improved USSR defense has increased the risk that bombers would be destroyed before they reach their targets. So, air-based technology development has concentrated on attaching cruise missiles to bombers and on stealth bombers that can "hide" from radar.

The League of Women Voters and other media sources indicate that most analysts believe that USSR multiple-warhead technology makes the U.S. land-based ICBMs vulnerable. Recently, some analysts have suggested that 90% of our land-based ICBMs would likely be wiped out before we could retaliate to a first strike by the USSR.

The administration has contended that the land-based ICBMs are necessary to keep the USSR from focusing on the weapons (B-52s and B-1s). Strategic forces account for 10% of the defense budget.

Support Services include intelligence and communication, research and development, general supply and procurement activities, training and medical services, and management of resources not allocated to the conventional or strategic forces. Support services account for 44% of the defense budget.
other two legs of our nuclear triad—air and sea based missiles. Therefore, improvement is needed to reduce the vulnerability of the land-based ICBMs to a first strike.

Several proposals have included hardening the present missile silos, moving the missiles among various sites, building missile silos in a dense pack, and a space defense system.

Critics claim that the remaining 80% of our missiles in the triad are a sufficient deterrent. They claim that the land-based missile system improvement proposals are too costly and that the system would still be vulnerable after improvement.

In the final analysis, the decisions by South Dakota voters on whether the timing is right for a nuclear freeze may be influenced by our understanding of (1) the costs and vulnerabilities of our present nuclear defense system, (2) the present proposals on "improving" our nuclear defense, and (3) the beliefs about how we compare to the Soviet military.