

RAHALL *Report*

BY CONGRESSMAN NICK RAHALL

THE DEBATE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS

IN RECENT WEEKS, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE HEARD A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE CURRENT UNBRIDLED AND CONTINUOUS NUCLEAR WEAPONS BUILDUP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION, AND HAVE COME TO REALIZE MORE THAN EVER THAT NUCLEAR WAR COULD DEVASTATE OUR COUNTRY AND ENTIRE PLANET.

THERE ARE SOME 50,000 NUCLEAR WARHEADS IN THE WORLD. THEY ARE A PIT IN WHICH THE WHOLE WORLD CAN FALL -- A NEMESIS OF ALL HUMAN INTENTIONS, ACTIONS AND HOPES -- CULMINATING IN AN ABSOLUTE AND ETERNAL DARKNESS IN WHICH NO NATION, NO SOCIETY, NO IDEOLOGY, NO CIVILIZATION WILL REMAIN.

WITH THIS IN MIND, I HAVE RECENTLY JOINED WITH A NUMBER OF MY COLLEAGUES IN THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES AIMED AT A REJUVENATION OF ARMS CONTROL THROUGH THE PLACING OF A MUTUAL U.S. - SOVIET "FREEZE" ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING AND DEPLOYMENT UNTIL TRUE REDUCTIONS OF THOSE SYSTEM CAN BEGIN.

FURTHERMORE, I AM INVOLVED IN AN EFFORT THAT CARRIES THE INTENT OF THE NUCLEAR FREEZE RESOLUTION ONE STEP FURTHER BY CALLING FOR A 50 PERCENT REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS SYSTEMS PRESENTLY DEPLOYED.

THIS PROPOSAL DOES NOT SUGGEST A POLICY OF UNILATERAL DISARMAMENT BY THE UNITED STATES NOR DOES IT HAMPER OR PREVENT ANY SYSTEM THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS PROPOSED IN HIS STRATEGIC MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. THE SOVIET UNION WOULD HAVE TO IMPLEMENT REDUCTIONS IN ITS NUCLEAR ARSENAL, AS WELL AS AGREE TO ON-SITE INSPECTION AND VERIFICATION OF DISMANTLED SYSTEMS. EACH NATION, HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE TO MAKE MORE DELIBERATE DECISIONS WITH RESPECT TO WHICH ARMS THEY CHOOSE TO RETIRE, AND THE U.S. WOULD HAVE TO MAKE CAREFULLY, LONG-RANGE DECISIONS WITH RESPECT TO WEAPONS SYSTEMS WE SELECT TO GUARANTEE U.S. AND ALLIED SECURITY IN THE 1980'S AND BEYOND.

I BELIEVE THAT THESE BI-PARTISAN PROPOSALS ARE REALISTIC FIRST STEPS TOWARDS MEETING BOTH OUR NATION'S SECURITY NEEDS AND REVERSING THE POSSIBLE MARCH TO A NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES AND SOVIET UNION HAVE BEEN CAUGHT IN OVER THE LAST 30 YEARS.