

# JOTTINGS

## The "Freeze" and April Fool's Day

Dear Lucy,

The papers and other media have carried quite a lot of publicity recently about the "Freeze," and they're not talking about winter weather; rather about a Nuclear Freeze Resolution lots of people seem to want Congress to approve. I read that when you add up the nuclear explosive capability of the United States and the U.S.S.R., the supply of TNT already exceeds three pounds for every man, woman and child on the planet.

While talking about this to my friend and neighbor the other day, he told me he was opposed to the Nuclear Freeze Resolution. I said I was surprised and quoted the above figures, asking whether he didn't think this was enough without spending more money to increase the already ridiculously high quantity of destructive power.

Well, as usual, he had several reasons to support his position. Some I hadn't heard before. I thought you'd be interested in knowing how he reached his decisions.

First, he said that the resolution is only that; a resolution. It is not a law, it is not binding on the United States, the President, or the Department of Defense. It is a classic example of a political "Motherhood" statement. And it certainly isn't binding on Russia or any other nation with nuclear capacity, such as France, Britain, China, India, Israel or, probably, Pakistan. He agreed it would be nice if there were peace and good will among men, but I had to agree with him that there's very little of that in the world today.

He pointed out that the language of the resolution before

Congress urges that the United States and the U.S.S.R. to "freeze" their nuclear weapons at present levels and cease all further nuclear weapon development and expenditures. And then he told me something else I didn't know. According to him (and he's in a position to know), the deliverable equivalent destructive power of nuclear warheads which the United States has in its arsenal today in only just over one-third of what we had in the 1960s.

Surprised again, I wondered why all this money has been spent on nuclear weapons and yet we end up today with less deliverable equivalent explosive tonnage than we had ten or fifteen years ago. The answer, he said, was accuracy!

We no longer have to wipe out metropolitan Moscow to "get Andropov." Now we can put a much smaller bomb right on his desk. He told me he had heard of circles of accuracy with radii of only 100 yards! And that's where the money has been going: to develop accurate delivery systems and much smaller nuclear weapons.

That seems to me to be a good thing and not something I want to "freeze." On the other hand, Russia is still far behind us in this type of development, but is making progress. If we had a "freeze" today, the Soviets would be stuck with their present systems, and if there were a nuclear war, they would be forced to wipe out a lot of northern Virginia, all of Washington, D.C., and some of southern Maryland to "get the Pentagon."

From this viewpoint, he said, it would be foolish to have a "freeze," even presuming such a Congressional resolution

were any more than a lot of political hot air.

Grim as the prospect is, it would be "better" if there were no "freeze," and the accuracy of nuclear weapons systems continued to improve. If these systems of both the United States and Russia are refined while the size of the warheads continues to become smaller, widespread destruction could conceivably be minimized.

An incidental "spin-off" or derivative benefit from the development of accuracy is that **conventional** warheads can now be delivered more accurately over much greater distances. This is the trend, and in certain military situations, this is the preferable option from the **military** point of view and this is not a trend I want to discourage.

In any event, I thought you'd be interested.

Spring is coming, the sap is rising, and soon you'll see coeds picketing at the gates of the Pentagon and good-looking bare-legged blondes holding up signs that read "Please Freeze!" Television newscasters love spring... I often wonder if some of those I see on the "tube" aren't hired actors, setting things up for the evening news.

Congress loves spring, too, and you can bet whatever is done in those hallowed halls will be self-serving and, at best, foolish. Here's a suggestion: fly the flag on April 1 for the "freeze" and for Congress. Remember? It's April Fool's Day!

Love,  
Oliver