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# Nuclear Strike Risk

WASHINGTON—In a private letter to President Ford, two conscientious congressmen have raised some urgent questions about "counterforce."

This is a term that global strategists use to describe a nuclear blitz attack that would destroy another nation's nuclear forces and wipe out its capability to counterattack.

The concern pair, Rep. Bob Carr, D-Mich., and Rep. Tom Downey, D-N.Y., both members of the powerful House Armed Services Committee, fear the President's nuclear policies could lead the Soviets some day to strike the U.S. with a "counterforce" blow.

The congressmen cite the U.S. emphasis on achieving a counterforce capability rather than on finding a diplomatic solution. The real problem they plead, is to prevent any country from developing a first-strike ability to destroy another's retaliatory forces.

"Matching the Soviets would do nothing to decrease their ability to strike us first," Carr and Downey wrote the President. "Counterforce, first-strike capability can be used only to commit aggression, not to deter it. Only hope is to prevent the Soviets from developing it, and this can only be done through SALT.

Prohibition . . . "There is no verifiable way to prohibit its construction. But tests are verifiable and thus prohibitable."

The prevailing wisdom is that the two superpowers, each equipped with enough nuclear power to devastate the other, would be compelled to live together in peace. Atomic scientist Robert Oppenheimer once illustrated the theory with the analogy of two scorpions in a bottle.

Both scorpions possess stingers that could kill the other. But each scorpion is aware that the venom is slow acting. Thus the victim, before dying, would deal an equally lethal retaliatory blow against the aggressor.

Carr and Downey contend that counterforce would change this. If the scorpions should ever develop counter-

force stingers with quick-acting, paralyzing venom, either scorpion could kill the other without suffering retaliation.

The key to counterforce, they say, would be deadly accurate, submarine-launched, multiple-warhead missiles. If this should be coupled with a major breakthrough in anti-submarine warfare, the nation possessing such missiles would have an unassailable counterforce.

What worries the congressional pair is that both superpowers are rushing pellmell toward counterforce while their diplomacy is dragging. "We believe," the congressmen wrote President Ford bluntly, "your national security advisors are misleading you."

They liken the current situation to when the late President Lyndon Johnson's advisors misled him during the Vietnam War.

Footnote: President Ford hasn't had a chance to respond to the Congressmen's letter. A Pentagon nuclear strategy expert, however, told us the counterforce concern was "fuzzy" and somewhat theoretical. "Basically," he said, "the question comes down to what constitutes a credible deterrence."

Soviet Microwaves—We broke the story on May 10, 1972 that the Soviet Union was beaming microwaves into the U.S. embassy in Moscow. This has now developed into a major health controversy.

We have been asked how the microwaves pick up conversation. Our sources explain that a screen of microwaves is beamed into a room. When the microwaves strike metal, they bounce back. The Soviet monitors register any microwave disturbances caused by conversation.

These disturbances can be "decoded," thus revealing what was said inside the room. Because the Soviet monitoring equipment isn't as sensitive as American equipment, more powerful microwaves are used. This has caused the health hazard.