

SPECIAL ORDER

*Les AuCoin*

FLOOR STATEMENT BY  
CONGRESSMAN LES AuCOIN  
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"SALT II: An Economic Battleground"

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of SALT II and suggest it be examined as a weapon to our advantage in the ongoing economic battle waged between the Soviet Union and the United States.

The economic ramifications of SALT II are as important as the military reasons, and perhaps more transcending.

Since World War II, the Soviet Union and the United States have competed vigorously in all fields. But behind all this was a more fundamental competition -- the struggle of economies. It is this struggle, more than any other, that has brought us to where we stand regarding SALT II.

The Soviet Union, after years of building up its military, has now reached a crossroads. The price of its military ambitions has been abject failure in its domestic economy. The Soviets have been humbled by repeated failures at feeding their own people. Consumer goods are scarce, and generally shoddy. Average Russians appear unwilling to settle for this any longer.

The United States has reached an economic crossroads of a different kind at roughly the same time. Our consumers have ample choices. Our problem is the ability to sustain what we have with fuel shortages, rampant inflation and vigorous world competitors.

Both the Soviet Union and the United States need to buy time to deal with domestic economic issues. Both need to curb military outlays. SALT II buys that time for both countries.

Should the United States see an advantage in this situation? I think it should.

If we seize the opportunity provided by SALT II, and revitalize our domestic economy by licking inflation and promoting a new era of productivity, we will emerge as a more towering figure in the world.

In the final analysis, neither our exotic weapons nor our unmatched bravery on the battlefield conferred leadership on our nation. Our economic prowess did. We are known in the world as modern-day Romans who conquered obstacles with ingenuity, innovation and enterprise. We have not lost those qualities, and therefore have nothing to fear by focusing competition between ourselves and the Soviet Union on a struggle of our economies.

This is ground on which liberals and conservatives can stand in support of SALT II. SALT II does not sound the trumpet of retreat. SALT II moves the competition between two great powers to the economic battlefield, rather than the military battlefield. For that, the lives of people in both countries will be better off.