

## Threshold test ban: cosmetic pact

The word "cosmetic" comes from the Greek, meaning skilled in adornment. That's a good descrip-tion of the threshold test ban treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States. The treaty — or more precisely two treaties, one on underground weapons tests and a second on so-called "peaceful nu-clear explosions" (PNE's) — had its genesis in Watergate. In 1974 President Nixon was under fire, and needed a quick and easy treaty with the Soviet Union in order to en-

hance his image as a peacemaker.

The result was the 1974 threshold test ban treaty, banning underground nuclear tests above 150 kilotons. This ceiling is equivalent to 150,000 tons of TNT, 10 times the size of the Hiroshima explosion. Underground tests are used for weapons development; tests up to 150 kilotons permit development of nuclear weapons of considerable size. Under the guise of "arms control," the treaty gives the military establishments of both nations diplomatic immunity to seek bigger and better weapons of mass destruc-

The threshold treaty was signed by both sides, but the Nixon and Ford Administrations did not submit it to the Senate for ratification. Meanwhile, the two governments slowly negotiated a pact linking "peaceful nuclear explosions" to the 150-kiloton threshold. Now the Senate must decide whether to ratify a double treaty which permits both kinds of nuclear tests to continue below a level of 10 Hiroshimas. Moreover, the PNE accord would allow a series of linked nuclear detonations totaling 1,500,000 tons of

TNT equivalent! The private groups and individuals which constitute the arms con-trol and disarmament community are opposed to the threshold treaty. They see it as a setback to their efforts to bring the suicidal arms race

under control. They present a solid front, urging the Administration to reopen negotiations with the USSR in order to achieve a total ban on

underground nuclear tests. The Administration makes much of the fact that the PNE treaty provides for on-site inspection for the first time. But the complex procedure for inviting "designated per-sonnel" to a specific place at a cho-sen time resembles in no way the kind of mobile inspection that experts talked about 15 years ago. This carefully stage-managed version of

inspection would not be a good pre-

cedent for serious disarmament

treaties. Nor would it even be

ban on underground tests. instruments are capable of ing most seismic events as earthquakes or explosions.

In the Limited Test Ban To 1963, the super-powers p themselves to seek an end b clear tests. In the 1968 Proliferation Treaty, they themselves to seek nuclea mament. With the thresho

smell like something that it Gottlieb is a correspondent for In In Interest, a press service of the

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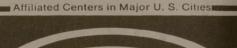
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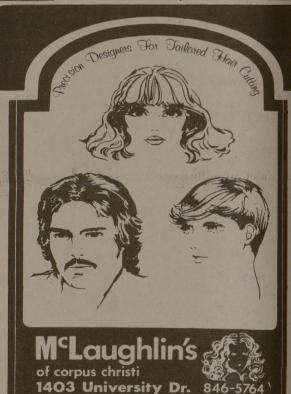
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# Jimmy Carter's secret is zero base budgeting

WASHINGTON — Last week, there was a fascinating example of e gap between campaign rhetoric and governmental reality. It inolves the somewhat forbidding opic of "zero-base budgeting."

Zero base budgeting is a management technique that was developed

eight years ago in private industry, at Texas Instruments. The technique vas carried by its inventor, Peter A. Pyhrr, to the state of Georgia and applied by the state government during the four years Jimmy Carter

vas governor.
As defined by Allen Schnick, a management specialist in the Congressional Research Service, zeropase budgeting or ZBB is "a procedure for examining the entire budget, not just the funds requested above the current level of spending.



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It thus differs from (normal) incremental budgeting in which review is concentrated on proposed increases while the 'base' is given little atten-ion. The term 'zero-base budgeting' indicates that a government's budget should be rejustified from scratch each year or two, with the same standards applied to old and new

HAPPY HOUR

2 • 7 7 DAYS A WEEK

Carter, in his presidential cam-paign, has promised dozens of audi-ences that zero-base budgeting will be instituted in Washington "by David S. executive order the day I become President." He has publicized ZBB, along with his promised but undefined "total reorganization" of the executive branch of government, as the principal tools for cutting down "the wasteful, bloated, overlapping inefficient" federal bureaucracy.

Over half the Senate and more

than 100 members of the House have cosponsored legislation applying the principle of ZBB to the budget. The Senate Government Operations Committee recently approved a bill sponsored by Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D-Me.), requiring virtually all existing programs of the federal government to undergo zero-base review prior to a decision on whether they should be continued. The bill sets up a systematic schedule of program reauthorization between 1979

The "sunset legislation," based on laws passed in Colorado and other states, has also been heavily publicized by politicians this year as an answer to the public's rising impatience with ineffective, costly and duplicative government programs.

Given all the political attention to this topic, it was somewhat surpris-ing to walk into a hearing on ZBB at the House Budget Committee one morning last week and find no other reporters present. Nor was this a unique situation. Reading the transcript of the hearing which Muskie conducted on his bill last spring, you find him lamenting the fact that only one reporter, John Averill of the Los Angeles Times, was present during key testimony from Dr. Alice Rivlin, head of the Congressional Budget

What this reflects is the tendency - which all of us in the press have been guilty of—to publicize a slogan or proposal without giving comparable attention to its substance. Particularly is that the case when that slogan is announced in circus-size headlines of a presidential campaign, while its substance is slowly being explored in the fine print of a congressional hearing.

This journalistic habit of leaping first and looking afterward is itself a major contributor to the public dis illusionment with political promises.

Too many proposals have been acclaimed in the press and and then revealed to be hasty, ill-considered and exaggerated. ZBB may well be one of them, judging from the

largely ignored testimony.

Last week, the four principal witnesses before Chairman Brock

Adams' (D-Wash.) House Budget Committee hearings were highly regarded professionals in the area of government program evaluation. All of them have spent most of their working lives in pursuit of greater productivity and effectiveness in government. And all expressed strong cautions about a precipitous plunge into the world of ZBB and "sunset laws," even while reaffirming the need for more effective

evaluation of government spending. Schnick, the Library of Congress expert, noted, for example, that "the few studies of ZBB in operation have suggested that it does not signifi-cantly affect the efficient allocation of a government's financial resources, that the content of the budget is not necessarily different after ZBB than

Paul H. O'Neill, the deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget, said ZBB and the "sunset legislation" establishing it "may lead to a paperwork process that is mind-boggling even by Washington standards."

Phillip S. Hughes, assistant comptroller general in the General Accounting Office, the congressional watchdog agency, cautioned that experience with "sunset laws" and ZBB is "very limited" and warned of the "danger . . . that it be regarded as some magical black

"A good many more people are writing books telling you how to do it than are actually doing it effec-William Gorham, the president of

think tank and evaluator of government programs, said that the review program envisioned by the Muskie bill would vastly overstrain "the capacities or potential capacities" of the executive branch and Congress and inevitably "undermine the credibility of the act.

Similar warnings came during Senate hearings from: Roy Ash, the Nixon administration budget chief; James T. Lynn, the current budget director; Alice Rivlin of the Congressional Budget Office and a dozen others who would not be considered soft on wasteful government spending by anyone.

As Peter Pyhrr, the inventor of ZBB, said, "Some of Sen. Muskie's words at the time of the introduction of this legislation are most appropriate to such a massive change as I think zero-base budgeting would

What Muskie said was: "In too many cases, we in Congress have satisfied ourselves with the rhetoric of legislation, leaving the hard work of implementation .

To which one could add: In too many cases, the press has satisfied itself with publicizing a program instead of examining both the pitfalls and potential of a program. Let's hope that's not going to be case

again.
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