

Legis For rule SALT



U.S. SENATOR
ROBERT C. BYRD
WEST VIRGINIA

Phone: (202) 224-3904

Statement by U.S. Senate Majority Leader Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.)

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President Carter has requested in a letter to me today that Senate consideration of the SALT II Treaty be delayed.

In view of world events of recent days which have served to cloud the atmosphere for deliberation on the Treaty, I support the President's request not to push for Senate approval now.

Contrary to some suggestions, the President does not have the power to withdraw the Treaty; it can only be returned to the President by order of the Senate.

I continue to believe that the SALT II Treaty should be ratified because it is in the security interests of the United States. We would not be ratifying SALT II as a favor to the Soviet Union; we would be doing so to advance our own national security interests. We would not be ratifying SALT II out of trust in the Soviet Union; we would depend on our own means of verification to determine Soviet compliance with the Treaty.

But, it would not be conducive to the SALT process to bring up the Treaty at this time. The Treaty can stay on the Senate calendar and be brought up at a future date, depending on events.

The people of our nation have shown a commendable spirit of unity and patriotism when confronted by events of recent weeks which defy all logic or all pretense of responsibility.

It is my hope that this spirit of unity will continue to prevail through these difficult days, and that these developments, which cause all of us deep concern, will be dealt with on a bi-partisan basis.
