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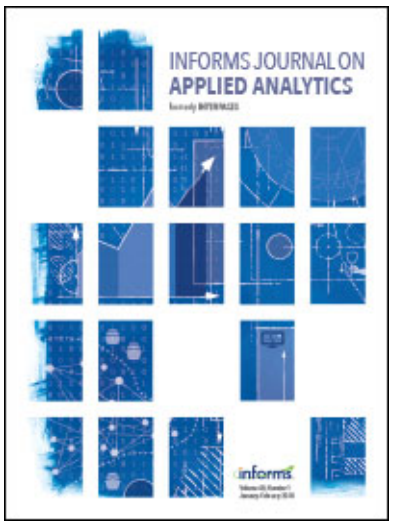

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Letter to the Editor

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

The following news article from a fairly deep (underground) publication recently came across our desks, and we thought the readers of your journal might have missed it:

The Optimization Cold War began heating up last year when a Soviet mathematician named L.G. Khachian developed an algorithm theoretically capable of solving linear programming problems in polynomial time. The State Department and the CIA were extremely concerned that this development might upset the traditional balance of power in the optimization cold war.

The attitude in Washington can be summed up by the phrase "Detente is Dead." There is no longer any chance that the Simplex Algorithm Limitation Treaty (SALT III) will be ratified by this session of Congress (it called for both nations to refrain from the implementation of more sophisticated algorithms).

The treaty was to place a ceiling of 1200 iterations on any use of the Simplex Algorithm. In addition, the US was to agree not to proceed with the design of a new fleet of cutting planes, and the Soviets were to refrain from branching and bounding all over the map. Both sides were expressly prohibited from conducting any unconstrained testing in optimization. The ultimate goal of the treaty was to set the stage for complete disarmament in optimization; only enumeration would be used to solve mathematical programming problems. Whether this is now an impossible dream remains to be seen.

To help restore the balance of power in the newly expanded optimization cold war, the nation will pursue new algorithm development more vigorously.

As a patriotic gesture, we would be happy to correspond with any algorists having novel approaches to this subject and to produce (mail) at the mere hint of a request (accompanied by a quarter) our own answer, entitled "Think Globally, Act Locally," which converges in constant time (No. of iterations ≤ 1).

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