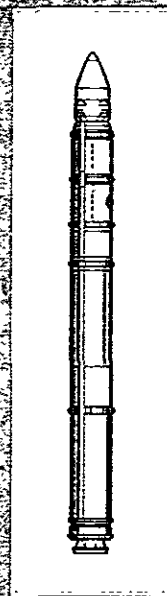


PART III

**ARMS CONTROL,
SOVIET OBJECTIVES, AND
FORCE PLANNING,
1968-83**



The emergence of détente and the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT-I) in 1972 did not prevent or slow the substantial modernization and general expansion of Soviet armed forces that began with Khrushchev's fall from power in 1964 and continued for over two decades. This meant first building Soviet strategic forces up to SALT limits and then an extensive "force modernization" program. The more modern Soviet ICBMs were mostly MIRVed and had improved accuracy and greater range than the single RV missiles they replaced. The Soviets thus significantly improved the flexibility and effectiveness of their strategic missile forces while remaining within SALT restrictions. Soviet strategic naval forces also expanded up to the SALT limits, through the continued construction of Yankee-class SSBNs, supplemented from 1972, and later supplanted by the newer Delta-series boats. The Soviets continued to place less emphasis on their heavy bomber force, which was actually reduced in this period, although they began to deploy a new medium bomber, the Tu-22M Backfire in the mid-1970s.

This apparent dualism in Soviet policy—arms control and détente on the one hand, force modernization and expansion on the other—reinvigorated the debate over Soviet strategic intentions and figured prominently in military policy NIEs written in this period.

**Part III:
Arms Control, Soviet Objectives,
and Force Planning, 1968-83**

The broader reasons for the USSR's energetic buildup of its forces for intercontinental attack are neither complex nor obscure. . . . The force is an attribute of power, an instrument to support policy, and a deterrent to the US.

NIE 11-8-72

Soviet Strategic Objectives and Force Planning

The question of the objectives that underlay Soviet strategic force planning occupied the intelligence community from the moment the Soviets acquired long-range offensive weapons. In general, the debate over the sources of Soviet nuclear strategy hinged on the relationship between Soviet actions and policy, Marxism-Leninism, and Soviet strategic doctrine. Although analysts in the intelligence community agreed that Soviet global ambitions were, at bottom, hegemonic in character, they were uncertain how the Soviets might meet the demands of their largely ideologically inspired quest for world dominion.

The central problem facing strategic forces analysts was the question of strategic supremacy: how far would the Soviets go in building up their strategic nuclear forces, what means would they use, and what would they be willing to sacrifice to achieve some kind of superiority over the United States? That achieving qualitative and quantitative superiority in military forces was a good idea was more than self-evident to Soviet military planners—it was a central tenet of their strategic doctrine.¹ Difficulties arose when Western analysts tried to determine how closely the Soviets would seek to approach the *ideal* of strategic supremacy in their military programs. Would they seek across-the-board military supremacy, or would they focus on building up, say, their ground forces and settle for strategic nuclear forces adequate for deterrence? Did the Soviets believe that numerical superiority could be used to counterbalance the West's undoubted technological superiority? Or would they seriously enter into direct technological competition with the West, attempting to match US strategic forces system for system? Finally, and most important, if the Soviets once achieved a margin of superiority, how would they use it? Were they committed to peaceful competition with the West, or were Soviet strategic programs nothing more than a buildup for war?

¹ See Scott and Scott, *passim*.

The emergence of détente and the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT-I) in 1972 did not prevent or slow the substantial modernization and general expansion of Soviet armed forces that began with Khrushchev's fall from power in 1964 and continued for over two decades. This meant first building Soviet strategic forces up to SALT limits and then an extensive "force modernization" program. The more modern Soviet ICBMs were mostly MIRVed and had improved accuracy and greater range than the single RV missiles they replaced. The Soviets thus significantly improved the flexibility and effectiveness of their strategic missile forces while remaining within SALT restrictions. Soviet strategic naval forces also expanded up to the SALT limits, through the continued construction of Yankee-class SSBNs, supplemented from 1972, and later supplanted by the newer Delta-series boats. The Soviets continued to place less emphasis on their heavy bomber force, which was actually reduced in this period, although they began to deploy a new medium bomber, the Tu-22M Backfire in the mid-1970s.

This apparent dualism in Soviet policy—arms control and détente on the one hand, force modernization and expansion on the other—reinvigorated the debate over Soviet strategic intentions and figured prominently in military policy NIEs written in this period.

~~SECRET~~

DISCUSSION

I. THE LINKS BETWEEN MILITARY AND FOREIGN POLICIES

1. There are important elements of continuity underlying Soviet concepts of military power and its uses. These derive primarily from geopolitical considerations, but are influenced by ideology as well. Certain broad aims of Soviet military policy can thus be described today in much the same way as a decade or more ago: (a) security of the homeland and of the world communist "center"; (b) protection of the "gains of socialism" and more specifically maintenance of loyal communist regimes in Eastern Europe; (c) fostering awareness everywhere of Soviet military strength and readiness so as to support a strong foreign policy aimed at expanding Soviet influence.

2. These constants notwithstanding, Soviet military policy has changed over the years in many of its aspects. The factors that have most visibly influenced these changes in recent years are the USSR's perception of its own power vis-à-vis the other major states of

the world, its estimate of the source and nature of the external threat, and the influence of science and technology on Russian forces and on the forces of potential enemies. The present mix among strategic offensive, defensive, and the various elements of general purpose forces is, for example, a far cry from that which prevailed during Stalin's time, when the emphasis was on massive conventional forces. This change, in the broadest sense, reflects changes in the nature of the threat and in the impact of technology. It also reflects in part certain changes in the approach of Soviet leaders since Stalin's departure. There continues to be a personal element in Soviet military decision making but this now appears less important than it once was; the calculations of risk and gain made by the present regime contrast markedly with the impulsive quality of some of Khrushchev's decisions.

3. Not only have developments in other parts of the world caused Russian assessments to change, but many of the mechanisms and circumstances within the USSR which help

~~SECRET~~

5

~~SECRET~~

to shape policy have also altered. The relationship between political, economic, and military interests (and among the proponents of these interests) has changed. Progress (or lack of progress) in disarmament negotiations has become an increasingly important consideration; and the formulation of tactics and strategy has become more complex as the USSR has begun fully to play the role of a superpower.

4. In trying to achieve its aims, the present Soviet leadership, like its predecessors, has been intensely concerned with the international balance of power—in Soviet terms, “the relation of forces”. In the Russian tradition, military power bulks large in the conduct of foreign policy. This is true not in the sense that the Soviets are irresistibly drawn to the actual use of force to achieve foreign policy objectives although on occasion they have taken that course—but rather in the sense that they believe in the implied threat of its use as a way of affecting the attitudes and decisions of other states. In giving major weight to military power as a determinant of the conduct of states, the Soviet leaders do not measure such power entirely by the numbers, i.e., of missiles or divisions. They also judge it in the context of more general considerations: they attach great importance to underlying social-economic forces, to the degree of internal unity or division to be found within adversary states, and to the capacities of opposing leaders and their will to confront risks.

5. The Soviets have clearly become more confident than ever before regarding the “relation of forces” between the USSR and the US. They have achieved what they evidently regard as rough strategic equality with the US, and their acceptance of strategic arms limitation talks (SALT) has been based at least partly on the desire to have the US

formally recognize this equality. Moreover, they have ample reason to regard their general position in the world as greatly improved since the low point of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. Although they face persistent internal problems, particularly in the economic sphere, their posture and policy abroad have led to a betterment in their relations with a variety of non-communist governments. Inter alia, they have largely repaired the damage to their interests posed by crises in the Middle East in 1967 and in Eastern Europe in 1968. And the Soviets perceive that the world influence of the US has declined, that its alliances have been under strain, and that it has been faced with considerable internal discord—involving sharp clashes over external policies.

6. The Soviets do not now regard NATO as an imminent military threat, and they see opportunities to pursue a more forward diplomacy of their own in Western Europe. In view of the changing relationship between the US and Western Europe, and of persistent West European desires for détente, the Soviets now see themselves in a good position to promote long-standing objectives in Europe: recognition of the status quo in Eastern Europe and in Germany, the achievement of greater leverage in Western Europe, and eventually, a withering of Atlantic ties and the withdrawal of US forces.

7. While some of the USSR's concerns in Europe have eased during the past decade, the problem of China has grown; the Soviet leadership now seems to regard the rivalry with China as having become as intense as the rivalry with the US or more so. In addition to the requirement the Soviets see for keeping pace with the US and its ongoing strategic program, they must give appropriate weight to China's potential. In the nearer term they must take account of the emerging Chinese peripheral strategic capabilities—medium bombers, medium-range ballistic mis-

~~SECRET~~

-SECRET-

siles, and intermediate-range ballistic missiles—which they regard as directed primarily against them. The Soviets also must guard against further Chinese attempts to build political influence, even in Eastern Europe. Moreover, Moscow continues to face the threat of being outflanked politically on the left by the Communist Chinese, particularly in the underdeveloped world.

8. The Soviets' own increasing involvement in the Third World has been paralleled by a growing capability to undertake new activity there. Soviet military forces which can operate effectively in distant areas have developed as a part of the strengthening of their overall military posture. But such forces, together with the continuing emphasis which Moscow gives to its military assistance programs, support the enlargement of the USSR's international role.²

9. The Soviets are clearly aware that their moves to expand and strengthen their influence outside the communist camp will not always go smoothly. Their détente efforts in Western Europe could over time have adverse effects on their position in Eastern Europe. They have been obliged to assume larger commitments and to accept some increase in military risks in order to preserve their prestige and influence in parts of the underdeveloped world, notably in the Middle East and South Asia. They have also found in many places that nationalism and parochial self-interest are more vigorous forces than they had supposed and not easy ones to harness. In other places they have been disappointed by the ineptness or instability of regimes they have supported. In a number of cases the extension of aid has proven more expensive and less useful to Soviet aims than Moscow

had anticipated. For reasons such as these, the Soviets recognize that the contest for international primacy has become increasingly complicated and less amenable to simple projections of power.

10. Despite this, there is much confidence in the Soviet attitude, and on two principal counts. First, the Soviets probably feel that they are free of any immediate threat to their national security. The immediacy of the threat posed by NATO is seen as having diminished; the Chinese threat is seen as potentially grave but not immediately so. Secondly, by achieving equal status with the US in strategic terms, the Soviets believe they have earned at last an equal voice in world affairs. "There is not a single question of any importance", Foreign Minister Gromyko told the Soviet Party Congress last April, "which could at present be solved without the Soviet Union or against its will".

II. SOME INTERNAL FACTORS BEARING ON MILITARY POLICY AND PROGRAMS

A. Economic Considerations

11. Resource constraints upon the development of Soviet military forces and programs are relative, not absolute, and decisions on expenditures probably derive as much from bureaucratic processes and pressures as from carefully thought out political and economic decisions. For the most part, physical capacity does not constitute a constraint; the plant capacity of Soviet industry existing or under construction is adequate to support high levels of output of land armaments, aircraft, warships, and missiles. Moreover, given the great size of the Soviet economy, an expansion of physical capacity could be undertaken relatively easily; even low growth rates increase available resources considerably. Thus the USSR would not be *obliged*, for purely eco-

² See Annex I, NIE 11-10-71, "The Uses of Soviet Military Power In Distant Areas", dated 15 December 1971, SECRET.

-SECRET-

7

~~SECRET~~

conomic reasons, to forego military programs its leaders see as essential.

12. On the other hand, the increasing technical complexity of the military forces, together with the growth of military research, development, test and evaluation (R&D),³ plus civilian space programs, has produced a rapid increase in requirements for highly trained technicians and managers and the most advanced equipment and materials. The military's first claim on these scarce resources has contributed to the difficulties that the Soviets have experienced in increasing material incentives for the labor force. It has also contributed to the problems of introducing new technology into the civilian economy and, to some extent, to the resulting decline in the productivity of new investment. The interest of the Soviet leaders in SALT is in part a consequence of a desire to limit the economic cost of further expanding and strengthening the military establishment. Consequently, the perennial problem of resource allocation is a major issue in deliberation on Soviet national policy and is likely to remain so in the years ahead. But the same, of course, can be said of the US. To be sure, economic resources in the USSR are more limited than in the US, but political and social controls are such that the Soviet leadership enjoys relatively great freedom of action in deciding how to allocate them.

B. Political and Military Influences on Decision-Making

13. Certain distinctive features of the Soviet system affect the way in which decisions on military policy are made. The decision-making power over a very broad range of matters is reserved to a small collective in the top political leadership. The principle of close and relatively detailed Party supervision

³ When the term military R&D is used in this estimate, it does not include civilian space expenditures.

of military affairs is well established. The military, in turn, have become deeply involved in the Party system.

14. The Soviet military do not, by any means, constitute a separate political element and they do not view the country's future in terms which are basically at odds with the concepts of the Party. But they do constitute an interest group which must contend with other bureaucratic interests. The present political leaders, unlike Khrushchev, have preferred to avoid direct conflict with the military in the area of the latter's professional competence. In the case of military programs, the members of the Politburo appear to call on the military to formulate requirements and recommendations. While they have machinery for screening and evaluating such recommendations, they appear, in practice, to be heavily dependent on the technical judgments of their military advisers.

15. The military leadership is not, of course, always of one mind. There is ample evidence of rivalries in the past; these became acute, for example, when Khrushchev was trying to build up the Strategic Rocket Forces at the expense of the general purpose forces, but they have been evident on other issues as well. Such differences, though now muted, almost certainly continue. Yet the combined arms tradition is strong, and since the time of Khrushchev, the military appear to have been successful in working out their internal differences and presenting a united front. Part of the reason, perhaps, is that under the collective leadership the total military expenditures have increased each year, which has made the competition for resources among the various military contenders less keen than if expenditures were constant or diminishing.

16. Despite the institutional power of the military, and of the scientific establishment, defense industry, and other groups involved in defense planning, the political leadership—

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

i.e., the Politburo—clearly has the final say. Beyond their role in determining overall political-military policy, Politburo members on occasion project themselves into quite narrow and specific matters. For the most part, however, they must operate within the context of these other forces, and not only take them into account, but often—perhaps for lack of effectively formulated alternatives—approve what they advise. The growing complexity of the decisions to be made, and the impossibility of acquiring independently all the information needed to make them, impose this limitation on the leadership.

17. One consequence of the whole process seems to be a tendency toward the conservative—toward trying to cover all risks, toward working deliberately along established lines, toward pressing for consensus to avoid strong opposition, toward minimizing the chances of error or waste. In many areas of weapons development and procurement, solutions seem to be devised more by building on proven approaches than by vigorously pushing the state of the art. And to some extent the process makes it more difficult to shift resources from one major military program to another, or to change the size and overall disposition of military forces.

III. ISSUES OF POLICY: OPTIONS AND PROBABLE CHOICES

A. What Kind of Strategic Competition With the United States?

18. Probably the single most important issue of military policy now facing the Russians is their future strategic relationship with the US. As Moscow clearly realizes, the US for years to come will be the only nation with the capability to inflict such damage on the USSR as to challenge its existence. But, in Moscow's view, the character of the problem is no longer the same as it was; the Soviets

have finally caught up strategically and the options they can now consider cover a considerably wider range than before.⁴ The broad alternate lines of action now available to them can nonetheless be indicated simply: to pursue the competition with the US intensively across a wide spectrum with a view to achieving some kind of superiority, or to find means of narrowing the realm of competition with a view to maintaining something close to rough parity.

19. Yet, for the Soviet leaders, each of these broad choices involves various complexities. There is no easy way to define, in practical terms, what the most appropriate means is to assure continuation of rough parity, or even to specify confidently which weapons and forces on the one side offset which weapons and forces on the other. Such determinations will quickly encounter questions of geographic-strategic asymmetry and will become increasingly difficult as technology changes and new programs are introduced. Thus there is ample room for differences within the Soviet leadership and between leaders and advisers on many particular questions, as well as on more general issues, and in these circumstances the tendency in Moscow will probably be to build in a "safety factor" when they make their calculations.

20. A further problem centers on the provisions Moscow feels it must make—at least over the longer term—to cope with the Chinese nuclear threat. Deployment of certain types of strategic weapons against China may appear to increase, or indeed actually increase, Soviet capabilities against the US—and thus risk escalating the US-Soviet competition.

⁴For discussions of the earlier decisions and programs that brought the Soviets to rough parity see Section I of NIE 11-3-71, "Soviet Strategic Defenses", dated 25 February 1971, TOP SECRET, and Sections I and IX of NIE 11-8-71, "Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Attack", dated 21 October 1971, TOP SECRET.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

This seems sure to become a more difficult problem over time as the Chinese develop increased strategic capabilities.

21. Beyond these considerations, there are undoubtedly some in Moscow urging that the USSR maintain the momentum that has brought it to rough parity. The Soviet leadership would no doubt be attracted by the notion that some margin of advantage—or at least the appearance of some margin—could be established without precipitating a new competitive cycle. And they might reason that such a margin, in addition to its possible military benefits, could be useful in political-psychological ways to enhance the USSR's international position.

22. There are, on the other hand, a number of important factors which would deter Soviet leaders, in a quest for advantage, from plunging ahead with programs and deployments so extensive as to upset the strategic balance. They have shown themselves to be sensitive to the high costs of such efforts, and they apparently recognize that major new endeavors on their part would produce a new element of uncertainty in the arms race and risk triggering vigorous US counterefforts long before Moscow's objective could be reached.

23. The policy course the Soviets have chosen, at least for the immediate future, is to attempt to stabilize some aspects of the strategic relationship with the US through negotiations. The above considerations will probably lead the Soviets to recognize a need to set some outer bounds on further deployment activities, lest these activities lead to US charges of bad faith and possible breakdown of the talks. But there will almost certainly be strong countervailing pressures in the USSR to maintain enough deployment to achieve the goals involved in their ongoing programs, as well as to keep up bargaining pressure on the US and to hedge against the

failure of the negotiations. Moreover, the Soviets will continue to be hard bargainers. Despite their apparent desire for accommodation, the Soviets have emphasized in SALT that they will not accept any agreement that in their view, would compromise their concept of equal security.

24. During the more than two years of SALT they have laid greatest stress on limiting antiballistic missile (ABM) deployment—presumably because of concern that major US deployments would be destabilizing to their disadvantage, and probably also out of a desire to avoid the heavy new expenditures that any large-scale ABM deployment on their side would entail. However, they realize that any agreement would have to provide for some interim limitations on the further deployment of strategic offensive weapons. They appear to believe that a formal ABM agreement and an interim freeze on some strategic offensive weapons, on terms they can accept, are within reach. They have committed themselves, in the context of such a first-stage agreement, to follow-on negotiations on comprehensive limits for strategic offensive weapons.

25. The Soviets have strong incentives to continue the strategic dialogue as a means of exercising influence over US strategic decisions and keeping the competition in bounds. They would probably see political disadvantage in permitting SALT to fail. Perhaps more importantly, they would see the end of SALT not only as removing a useful means of restraint on full-scale arms competition, but also as possibly compelling them to return to such competition. They recognize that an escalating arms race could be to their disadvantage—beyond the matter of its very high costs, they would see a danger that they could fall behind the US and thus again be in an apparent, if not actual, position of strategic inferiority.

26. A complete breakdown in the SALT talks seems highly unlikely; a possibility

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

worthy of more serious consideration would be a continuation of the talks over an extended period of time with little progress toward agreement on comprehensive limitations. If such a situation of stalemate developed in the negotiations, the Soviets would presumably make such selective additions to their forces as they judged necessary; they might hope, in the process, to achieve some margin of advantage without triggering a spiralling competition.

27. The Soviets realize, of course, that what they are contemplating in continuing serious negotiations in SALT is not a matter of ending strategic competition between the two countries, but rather narrowing its focus. There is one important area where intense competition will continue no matter what the outcome of the talks—that of military R&D. Neither side has shown strong interest in limiting such R&D, because of uncertainties about monitoring the qualitative improvements which might result and also because neither side wants to forego the possible advantages which might be involved.

28. Moscow has, for several years, been increasing expenditures and efforts on R&D for military and space purposes; apparently it intends to go on doing so. The Soviet leaders are known to have great respect for US prowess in R&D; presumably they will maintain their own high priority as insurance that they won't again fall far behind in some important strategic regard.

29. Even given such sustained efforts in R&D, the resource savings realized by the Soviets in a state of "stabilized parity" as compared with wide-range competition would permit them, over time, to consider various trade offs. A shift of funds could be made to provide additional or more modern conventional arms for Soviet military forces in Eurasia—and/or for forces to be used in

areas more distant from the USSR. A shift of some funds and facilities from strategic military production to the civilian sector would also be possible.

B. Reshaping Forces Facing Europe and China? ⁵

30. With respect to their military policy for Eurasia, the most recent and pressing Soviet concern has to do with the threat—present and potential—from China, and with the size and scope of Soviet military deployments required by that threat. A second issue which may be drawing Soviet attention is whether the size and character of the Soviet forces deployed in the West against NATO will continue to make sense in terms of Moscow's reading of the situation there and in terms of the détente policies it is now pursuing in Europe. Moscow's view of this latter issue will be conditioned by the requirement it sees for military deployments sufficient to assure control over Eastern Europe, as well as its need to sustain a strong Warsaw Pact posture *relative* to that of NATO.

Maintenance of Forces or Reductions in Europe?

31. From Moscow's standpoint, there now seems to be a certain loss of force in the argument that Soviet objectives in Europe require the maintenance of troop strength at present levels. Deployments remain large: there are now, for instance, some 27 Soviet and 31 East European divisions in East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, opposite

⁵ Dr. Ray S. Cline, the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, Maj. Gen. Phillip B. Davidson, Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, and Maj. Gen. George J. Keegan, Jr., the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, disagree with some of the views expressed in this section (paragraphs 30-41). Their position is set forth at the end of the section on pages 14-15.

~~SECRET~~

11

28. SNIE 11-4-73 *Soviet Strategic Arms Programs and Detente:
What Are They Up To?*

~~TOP SECRET~~

1

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
CIA HISTORICAL-REVIEW PROGRAM

SC VIET STRATEGIC ARMS PROGRAMS
AND DETENTE: WHAT ARE THEY UP TO?

NOTE

On 9 July 1973, Soviet authorities signed to press an editorial in the CPSU journal *KOMMUNIST* that may well rank as the most optimistic assessment of the prospects for US-Soviet relations printed in the USSR in the last decade. The editorial reiterates that peaceful coexistence does not mean "a weakening of the class struggle in the international arena" but actually promotes such Soviet interests as the "national liberation movement" and the fight against "bourgeois ideology." It struck a new note, however, in asserting that US-Soviet relations have passed a historic and fundamental turning point for the better, that "considerable obstacles" already exist to prevent a reversion to Cold War relations, and that political detente involves military detente in "organic" combination.

On the same day, the Soviets conducted [] flight test of a true MIRV system on board the SS-X-17 ICBM.

The purpose of this paper is to attempt to understand the intentions and motivations behind Soviet policy evidenced by recent events: on the one hand, the foreign policy apparently aimed at a far-reaching detente with the US and its allies; and, on the other hand, the vigorous pursuit of weapons development programs that portend substantial improvements in Soviet strategic capability.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TCS 889081-73~~

PRÉCIS

In the months since the strategic arms accords were signed in May 1972, the Soviet government has increasingly stressed its commitment to a policy of detente with the US and the West. Certainly a number of Soviet political interests ride on this policy, Brezhnev's own prestige is heavily tied to it, and its collapse would be very unsettling to Soviet leaders. At the same time, the Soviets have been conducting a vigorous and wide-ranging program of strategic weapons development clearly aimed at a major modernization of their strategic forces.

This Estimate assesses the relationship between these two strains of Soviet policy. Its principal judgments are:

- Current Soviet development programs for ICBM force modernization were well underway in May 1972 and do not appear to have been altered by the Interim Agreement. The Soviets do not feel they are constrained from proceeding with extensive modernization of their deployed ICBM force.
- However, the Soviets have undertaken activities that raise serious questions for the US about the verifiability of the Interim Agreement and about Soviet willingness to respect US unilateral declarations. These activities include: possible development of the SS-X-16 as a mobile ICBM; continuation of concealment practices for this development; and construction of new large silos, beyond the numerical limit established by the Interim Agreement, which are probably intended as launch control facilities yet whose purpose cannot now be verified. The activities in question, although they certainly originated in normal Soviet planning, imply *de facto* tests of US resolve on the rules of SALT compliance. Whether these tests are intentional and how determined they prove to be must await evidence on Soviet responses to whatever protests the US makes.

~~TOP SECRET~~

3

- We doubt that the leadership has made a determination either to settle for strategic parity with the US or to strike out for superiority. The former would require abandonment of aspirations too firmly lodged in the Soviet system and pressed by Soviet military institutions to be entirely suppressed; the latter would require more optimism about a declining US vitality and more faith in Soviet prowess than the leaders could confidently hold.
- We believe the Soviet leadership is currently pursuing a strategic policy it regards as simultaneously prudent and opportunistic, aimed at assuring no less than the continued maintenance of comprehensive equality with the US while at the same time seeking the attainment of some degree of strategic advantage if US behavior permits. The Soviets probably believe that unilateral restraints imposed on the US by its internal problems and skillful Soviet diplomacy offer some prospect that a military advantage can be acquired. To this end, they can be expected to exploit opportunities permitted them under the terms of SALT. At the same time, since they cannot be fully confident of such an outcome even as they probe its possibilities, they are probably also disposed to explore in SALT the terms on which stabilization of the strategic competition could be achieved.
- It is quite likely that the Soviet leaders see no basic contradiction between their detente and arms policies. Indeed they have publicly said as much on numerous occasions. Even if they do recognize a potential for conflict, they are probably uncertain about how far the US is prepared to insist on linking the two, and hence are probably inclined to test what the traffic will bear.
- This view of the Soviets' stance implies that they cannot be persuaded to moderate their current weapons programs except on two conditions: (1) they are persuaded that the unrestrained progress of those programs will provoke US reactions that jeopardize both their opportunistic and their minimum or prudential objectives; and (2) at the same time, they can conclude that, if their programs are restrained, reciprocal restraints will be placed on US strategic programs sufficient to assure attainment of Soviet prudential objectives.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TCS 889081-73~~

— The question is whether they will come to the view that they cannot have both substantially improving strategic capabilities and continuing benefits of detente—simultaneously and indefinitely. The US is unlikely to obtain answers without further direct exploration and negotiation. The US will not get the Soviets to respond to specific concerns on SALT compliance without frankly stating them. And we have estimated above that they are not likely to curb new programs unless they are persuaded both that US reactions to such programs would jeopardize their minimum objectives and that Soviet restraint would be reciprocated. But precisely what price, in terms of strategic limitations, the Soviets will prove willing to pay for detente remains to be tested.¹

¹ The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, believes this Estimate stops short of answering the original question, "What are the Soviets up to?" The available evidence suggests a strong Soviet commitment to achieving both numerical and qualitative strategic superiority over the US. They probably view detente as a tactic to that end. Whatever its other advantages, the Soviets need detente to bring about a slowdown in US technology. They need to gain access to US guidance and computer technology, to buy time to redress their current technology imbalance and to exploit what they consider to be a favorable opportunity to attain a technological lead during the next 10 to 15 years. The Soviets are no doubt aware of the impact detente is already having on NATO and US defense outlays and in gaining easier access to US technology. Accordingly they must view detente as a principal means of forestalling US advances in defense technology while enhancing their own relative power position.

~~TOP SECRET~~

5

THE ESTIMATE

THE WEAPONS PROGRAMS

The Programs of Concern in Brief

1. The Soviet Union is engaged in a broad effort to augment and modernize its strategic forces. Among other things, it has commenced deployment of a new SLBM, the SS-N-8, and is developing a modification of the SS-N-6 carrying multiple reentry vehicles. It is continuing R&D activity on ABM interceptors and radars. The source of principal concern to the US at present, however, is the Soviet ICBM development effort.²

2. Since March 1972, the Soviets have commenced flight testing on four new ICBM designs of varying class and characteristics, and even more advanced systems may be in early stages of development. The effort easily matches and may prove to exceed that

² Soviet strategic forces will be discussed in considerably greater detail in the forthcoming NIE 11-8-73, "Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Attack," scheduled for completion in October. They are considered here to the extent necessary for purposes of analyzing Soviet strategic policy and detente.

displayed in the mid-1960s when the SS-9, SS-X-10 (later cancelled), SS-11, and SS-13 ICBMs were under development. Although the four new ICBM designs, the SS-X-16, SS-X-17, SS-X-18, and the SS-X-19 [] have evolutionary ties to previous Soviet designs, they represent a very extensive modernization effort. They are evidently intended for a generation of new or highly modified silos; one may be intended for mobile deployment. All demonstrate efforts to improve guidance techniques. The SS-X-17, SS-X-18, and SS-X-19 have demonstrated a MIRV capability. The SS-X-16 has displayed post-boost vehicle (PBV) activity that makes its association with MIRV probable. All four new Soviet ICBM designs can be traced back at least to the 1966-1968 period, prior to the commencement of SALT. About the same time, or shortly after, work on currently emerging MIRV bus/PBV designs probably began.

3. Soviet interest in developing MIRVs and many other aspects of the new development programs were clearly portended at the time of the SAL accords and were generally antici-

~~TOP SECRET~~~~TCS 889081-73~~

pated in our earlier estimates. Moreover, the Soviets have repeatedly made clear in SALT that they intended to proceed with modernization of their forces as permitted under the SALT accords. However, the overall scope of the activities we observe, and notably the number of individual programs under way at the same time, suggest a remarkably ambitious and concurrent effort.

4. In addition to such activities, other Soviet activities have been observed which at a minimum raise disturbing questions about Soviet willingness to cooperate in meeting US verification requirements under SALT. The most serious of these is construction of a silo adjacent to the launch control facilities at each of eight existing SS-11 groups—all of them started since the signing of the SALT agreements in May 1972. There are a number of reasons for believing that these structures are intended to house improved and harder ICBM launch control facilities. But unless features are observed which would preclude installing a missile in them, national technical means of verification will not be able conclusively to rule out their possible use as ICBM launchers.

5. Another question arises at the Plesetsk test range where the Soviets are flight testing the solid-propellant SS-X-16. Tenting cover associated with this program [

] This missile appears to be under development for deployment both in silos and as a mobile ICBM, perhaps using partially deactivated ICBM launch facilities for logistic and handling support.

6. The new construction at Derazhnyia and Pervomaysk, and the Plesetsk developments, although they certainly originated in normal Soviet planning, imply *de facto* tests of US resolve on the rules of SALT compliance.

Whether these tests are intentional and how determined they prove to be must await evidence on Soviet responses to whatever protests the US makes.³

7. The scope of the Soviet ICBM development programs raises questions about what kind of deployment they portend, how far they will go, and what impact they will ultimately have on the US-Soviet strategic relationship. If a launch capability for the new silo-like structures cannot be conclusively ruled out, and the Soviets continue to emplace them, the viability of the 1972 Interim Agreement might come into question. If the Soviets deploy the SS-X-16 as a mobile missile, the strong US unilateral declaration of May 1972 that such a step would violate the intent of the Interim Agreement could come into play. Should mobile ICBMs employ deactivated ICBM launch and support facilities, the intent of the Protocol to the Interim Agreement as seen by the US would clearly be violated. Continued use of tenting at Plesetsk, if challenged by the US, would suggest an insufficiently accommodating Soviet attitude toward SALT compliance and verification.

Possible Motivations and Forces Behind the ICBM Programs

8. The primary motivation driving Soviet strategic programs has been a desire to achieve a force of sufficient overall size and impressiveness to underwrite Soviet *international political objectives*. Soviet policymakers repeatedly assert the view that their military posture is a crucial element of Soviet status as a great power and vital to shaping a favorable "correlation of forces" in the world.

³The question of SALT ambiguities is discussed in more detail in the Annex.

~~TOP SECRET~~

7

9. Within this broad context, certain operational characteristics are derived from Soviet *military doctrine*. Since the early 1960s, the Soviet military has articulated a view of strategic requirements that links deterrence with the ability actually to wage strategic war to the point of some form of victory. In addition to surviving attack and retaliating against urban-industrial targets, strategic forces, according to Soviet military writings, must be able to attack the enemy's strategic weapons, including hardened targets. The survivability requirement serves as a rationale for a large ICBM force of increased hardness as well as mobile ICBMs. The military requirement for hard-target counterforce capability has provided a rationale for the pursuit of higher throw-weight, MIRV, and increased accuracy for all or part of the modernized ICBM force. A MIRV capability, to which payload and guidance improvements contributed, was also dictated by the need to penetrate possible US ABM defenses of military or urban targets.

10. Another motivation for the new designs is found in the *imperatives of technology*. Technical advances, making the most of the developing state of the art, would lead to new guidance techniques, increased throw-weights, and MIRVs. The natural desire of missile designers to improve their product would have been supported by military and political decisionmakers, who felt impelled to do as much as possible to improve Soviet capabilities.

11. These early decisions on the follow-on programs were probably influenced by very important *institutional interests* in the Soviet defense establishment. The Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces, the premier service, certainly had an interest in moving beyond existing systems. The three major missile design entities presumably pressed the opportunity to engage themselves in follow-on programs. Apparently the Soviet pattern of partly competitive designs

from different design entities was repeated in the new programs.

12. Soviet determination to carry these programs forward was probably also reinforced by Soviet *perceptions of US weapons activity*. In the near term, they could observe MIRVing and accuracy improvement for Minuteman and Poseidon and arming of US bombers with SRAM; in the more distant future, the prospect of Trident and the B-1. Soviet publications generally depict US strategic programs as dynamic, purposeful, and threatening. The Soviets certainly also recognize the political hurdles these programs must surmount in Congress, and use various means of encouraging opposition to them. The Soviets have, however, seen US programs proceed despite vigorous opposition in Congress, and they would therefore consider it imprudent to assume that major US force improvement plans will not, in the end, be acted upon. Thus, the Soviet military probably has had as a part of its case for current programs that they are a prudent investment against US force improvements.

13. Finally, although the new ICBM development programs were well under way by the time SALT began in 1969, and ABM proved to be the main concern of the USSR during SALT ONE, the Soviets probably now see some utility in their new ICBM programs as possible *sources of leverage* on the US.

14. Top-level Soviet decisions on proceeding into a vigorous R&D test program preceded the culmination of SALT ONE and the May 1972 Summit. [

] new ICBM flight tests commenced in March 1972. If the Moscow Summit and its SALT agreements influenced or deflected the impending test programs, this is not discernible. Brezhnev firmly asserted the Soviet intent to press vigorously on R&D and permissible force modernization. There is

~~TOP SECRET~~~~TCS 889081-73~~

evidence that the top leaders were very concerned to obtain assurances that one of the future ICBMs could be deployed within the constraint of a 10-15 percent increase in the size of silos for small ICBMs.

Where Do the Soviets Go From Here?

15. The Soviets certainly appear determined to press their current ICBM test programs forward to the point where they could deploy any or all models with MIRVs. It is difficult to project with confidence the kind of deployed force that will emerge from these programs, although possible force variants can be conjectured. What is clear is that the Soviets intend the present development effort to yield a major modernization of their deployed forces. There is evidence that the Soviets are now planning to produce more of some types of new missiles than required purely for R&D testing.]

16. The Soviets have in SALT often spoken of mutuality of deterrence, but they have not accepted a concept of parity in numbers of intercontinental delivery vehicles. They refer to a more general idea of "equal security" with the US as an objective. But Moscow has not regarded "equal security" as dictating equality in numbers. On the contrary, "equal security" has been the basis of Soviet demands for larger numbers of Soviet intercontinental delivery vehicles, for example, as compensation for forward based systems. Qualitatively, they no doubt consider that it requires the attainment of technological equality with the US, which, in the most immediate terms, means the freedom to develop and deploy

MIRVs. More broadly, they speak of the need to insure against unexpected technological breakthroughs by the US.

17. In addition, they have been factoring requirements for peripheral attack, particularly against China, into operational deployments of central strategic forces, notably by deploying some SS-11s so as to include full coverage of China. They have suggested at SALT that peripheral attack requirements should be gauged in estimating overall Soviet force requirements, but they have not indicated how these requirements are to be reconciled with an equitable US-Soviet balance.

18. The experience of SALT ONE probably heightened the Soviet appreciation of the leverage their programs could have on negotiations. The Soviets had dynamic programs for the deployment of new launchers at the time, while the US did not. Soviet leaders may well perceive the qualitative momentum of present efforts as imposing negotiating pressure on the US similar to that generated by their continuing ICBM and SLBM deployments during most of SALT ONE.

19. Since the US Government also intends to press force modernization programs allowed under SALT, the need to hedge against US force improvements probably continues to be a strong motivation behind current Soviet weapons development. Soviet leaders no doubt believe that the Soviet effort to match the US qualitatively is shooting at a moving target and that laxity on the Soviet part may concede future advantages to the US.

20. Finally, Soviet political and military leaders, or at least some of them, probably believe that a combination of vigorous weapons development, a skillful detente diplomacy, and a good measure of luck in the form of

~~TOP SECRET~~

9

US laxity, could at some point deliver them a meaningful strategic advantage. They would see greater strength as improving their foreign policy positions and at least marginally improving war outcomes for them if deterrence failed. Beyond this, how they might gauge such an advantage in operational terms is not obvious since the kind of superiority that the US once had over the USSR would hardly appear feasible to them in the foreseeable future. But they could persuade themselves of the value of a credible threat to Minuteman even if other components of the US Triad remain highly survivable.

21. As noted earlier, Soviet military writings of the last 10 years reflect a clear concern for war-fighting capabilities, including counterforce capabilities. Some of these writings have rejected the notion that the destructiveness of nuclear weapons renders strategic war "unwinnable" and thereby posit, in principle, that strategic superiority is essential. While the broad outlines of military doctrine are subject to top-level political approval, it is not clear to what extent individual Politburo members accept all the precepts of that doctrine, particularly as it bears on the "winnability" of nuclear war. The Soviet positions at SALT suggest that, with regard to retaliation, the Soviet leadership accept the view that both the US and USSR possess more than enough nuclear weapons to bring about a world-wide catastrophe, that the side attacked first would retain a retaliatory force that would make a war between the US and the USSR disastrous for both. However, while the political leaders refer with apparent sincerity to the futility of nuclear war, they accept the idea of maximizing the effectiveness of the force they would use if deterrence fails. Accordingly, there has been a substantial Soviet investment in developments and

deployments that can best be explained as an effort to enhance their strategic capabilities, including counterforce missions.

22. The Soviet regime faces new conditions bearing on strategic choices. The missile build-up of the 1960s has attained for the USSR recognized status as an equal of the US in the strategic arms field. China has come to be a major and permanent strategic military problem for Soviet planners. The current stage of the SALT process requires a closer dialogue between Soviet military and political leaders on military and political goals. SALT tends to give the "action-reaction" phenomenon in the arms competition more substance than it had in the past by placing the arms decisions of both sides in a negotiating context. The ABM Treaty requires a reappraisal of Soviet strategic doctrine in which extensive active defense was seen as a necessary part of a viable war-fighting posture.

23. In deciding on and implementing strategic force policy, Soviet leaders face a multitude of specific choices. Diverse pressures bear upon them, particularly pressures from military claimants and weapons producers. But it is difficult to imagine these choices being made without a general rationale concerning the kind of strategic relationship with the US they desire. The range of policy directions open to the Soviets could be stated as: (a) acceptance of strategic parity with the US on the basis of explicit SALT undertakings and some element of self-restraint, with the result that the strategic weapons competition substantially subsides; or (b) a quest for strategic superiority, in which they try to use SALT to restrain US programs while Soviet weapons programs drive inexorably forward.

~~TOP SECRET~~~~TCS 889081-73~~

24. The trouble with posing Soviet policy choice as one between parity and superiority, however, is that it dichotomizes too starkly what is for the Soviet leadership a much more complex and conditional predicament. Positing strategic superiority as both a desire and an expectation requires the Soviets to be overly optimistic about the decline of the US's military vitality and about their own technological prowess. Although the vigor and extent of Soviet weapons efforts conjure up the image of a single-minded quest for superiority, we do not believe they should as yet be construed to mean that. Present Soviet efforts to develop improved ICBMs can so far be held consistent with the goal of narrowing the technological gap between US and Soviet capabilities. Soviet diplomacy and SALT policy avow, indeed, an aim no more ambitious than "equal security."

25. On the other hand, positing parity as a Soviet strategic goal requires discounting power aspirations that are firmly lodged in the Soviet system as a whole and pressed by its various military institutions. The burden of historical and ideological tradition makes it very difficult for some Soviet political and military leaders to accept the notion that an area of competition so vital to their security as the strategic military competition with the US can be set aside by agreement. This is especially so insofar as the terms of agreement, dictated by current nuclear realities, require explicit and indefinite acceptance of a condition of military vulnerability for their society. Several clandestine reports allege that Soviet political and military leaders see SALT and detente as devices for buying time—one mentions a 10-15 year breathing space—during which the Soviets and their allies can build political, economic, and military power for future tests of strength. In context, these

views probably reflect an admixture of genuine belief and policy justification, but some Soviets are no doubt disposed to accept the idea of a long-term breathing spell as a rationale for detente. Those who are may see some prospect for the USSR's acquiring strategic advantage over the time period covering the life-cycle of newly appearing weapons systems.

26. We doubt that the Soviet leadership has firmly settled on either of the courses described above. Rather, we believe it is currently pursuing a strategic policy it regards as simultaneously prudent and opportunistic, aimed at assuring no less than the continued maintenance of comprehensive equality with the US while at the same time seeking the attainment of some degree of strategic advantage if US behavior permits. The Soviets probably believe that unilateral restraints imposed on the US by its internal problems and skillful Soviet diplomacy offer some prospect that a military advantage can be acquired—an advantage which could have political usefulness for the Soviets in normal diplomacy and possible crises. To this end, they can be expected to exploit opportunities permitted them under the terms of SALT. At the same time, since they cannot be fully confident of such an outcome even as they probe its possibilities, they are probably also disposed to explore in SALT the terms on which stabilization of the strategic competition could be achieved.

27. The logic of this prudential-opportunistic mix fits well with Soviet external conditions, i.e., uncertainty about the vigor of US military competitiveness, and also with the institutional and doctrinal forces pressing from within. It appears fully consistent with Soviet foreign policy behavior and with their

~~TOP SECRET~~

11

compartment at SALT. It implies that the Soviets cannot be persuaded to moderate their current weapons programs except on two conditions:

(a) They are persuaded that the unrestrained progress of those programs will provoke US reactions that jeopardize both their opportunistic and their minimum or prudential objectives;

(b) At the same time, they can conclude that, if their programs are restrained, reciprocal restraints will be placed on US strategic programs sufficient to assure attainment of Soviet prudential objectives.

SOVIET DETENTE POLICY AND STRATEGIC POWER

28. It is quite likely that the Soviet leaders see no basic contradiction between their detente and arms policies. Indeed they have publicly said as much on numerous occasions. Even if they do recognize a potential for conflict, they are probably uncertain about how far the US is prepared to insist on linking the two, and hence are probably inclined to test what the traffic will bear.

29. The question can then be raised of what price the Soviets would be willing to pay in the coin of strategic activities and power aspirations to keep up the considerable momentum of political detente, if the issue confronted them in these terms. There can be little doubt that the Soviet leadership has a considerable interest and investment in that momentum. Brezhnev can and probably has argued persuasively to his colleagues that there is at present no truly viable alternative to his detente policy on the political level.

30. The continuity of that policy is most pronounced in its European dimension, where

the mid-1960s found the Soviets groping for a more activist diplomacy that would serve the multiple goals of consolidating Soviet hegemony in East Europe; responding to the new assertiveness of West European states while attenuating their incentives to achieve political, economic, and military unity; and fostering the decline of US presence and influence in Western Europe.

31. Documentary evidence as well as the historical sequence of events indicates that the flare up of Sino-Soviet hostilities in 1969 plus the subsequent Peking-Washington moves toward rapprochement added an urgent new dimension to Soviet imperatives toward detente. In the face of these events, the Soviets drew the natural conclusion that their adopted course of striving for a long-term military and political containment of China could not work successfully if Peking's relations with the West and with Japan were markedly better than Moscow's.

32. Finally, of course, there is the substantial economic interest that the Soviets have in the momentum of detente. They certainly hope and some Soviet leaders surely expect that political detente will bring economic rewards in terms of access to advanced Western technology and capital investment for the exploitation of energy and raw material resources and the modernization of Soviet industry.

33. For a variety of reasons, bearing essentially on the willingness and ability of the West to provide such benefits and on the ability of the Soviet economic system to absorb and exploit them effectively, there may be a considerable gap between the results achieved and Soviet expectations about them. But this is not to deny the political strength of the latter in current Soviet calculations.

~~TOP SECRET~~~~TCS 889081-73~~

34. The economic burden of defense does not compel the Soviets to seek force limiting agreements, even though the defense sector consumes a large share of some high-value resources. In fact, the Soviets can probably sustain a steady, gradual increase in military spending. Nevertheless, the economic and political benefits of detente at the very least offer a fairly relaxed environment in which conflicting military and civilian priorities can be reconciled and minimize the prospect that military spending will have to be sharply increased.

35. In sum, the Soviet interest and investment in political detente is considerable. And the personal investment of key leaders, notably Brezhnev, is great. He and the regime generally would be severely discomfited by the collapse of detente. The Soviet regime sees detente with the US and its allies as a fundamentally competitive relationship. Moreover, as Soviet treatment of domestic dissidents and East-West human contacts makes clear, the Soviet conception of detente excludes the

close social and cultural relations that the West regards as a normal part of international life. Nevertheless, the Soviet leadership proclaims and evidently believes that political detente can be a useful and long-term proposition. But the question is whether they will come to the view that they cannot have both substantially improving strategic capabilities and continuing benefits of detente—simultaneously and indefinitely.

36. The US is unlikely to obtain answers without further direct exploration and negotiation. The US will not get the Soviets to respond to specific concerns on SALT compliance without frankly stating them. And we have estimated above that they are not likely to curb new programs unless they are persuaded both that US reactions to such programs would jeopardize their minimum objectives and that Soviet restraint would be reciprocated. But precisely what price, in terms of strategic limitations, the Soviets will prove willing to pay for detente remains to be tested.

Arms Control and Qualitative Competition

With the signature and ratification of the ABM Treaty and the 1972 Interim Agreement on the Limitation of Strategic Arms (usually referred to as SALT-I, or, less frequently, as the Interim Agreement) the focus of strategic forces NIEs now shifted to consideration of what options the Soviets might pursue within the framework of those agreements, as well as what might happen in the event of abrogation or failure of the strategic arms limitation agreements. SALT-I, as well as the still hypothetical SALT-II, emerged as the means by which the Soviets would shape their own perception of the strategic environment and thereby make their own judgments concerning further efforts to expand the size and capabilities of their own strategic forces. As in the military policy NIEs (the 11-4s) produced in this period, the strategic forces Estimates struggled to achieve a balance between a realistic appraisal of Soviet intentions and the growing, and increasingly obvious, efforts to modernize and improve Soviet strategic strike capabilities. These most notably included improved ICBM accuracy, the development of the first Soviet MIRVs (on the SS-18 and SS-19), and the appearance of the first of the Delta-series SSBNs, armed with improved, longer range SLBMs.

~~TOP SECRET~~

1

**APPROVED FOR RELEASE
CIA HISTORICAL-REVIEW PROGRAM**

SOVIET FORCES FOR INTERCONTINENTAL ATTACK

SCOPE NOTE

This NIE assesses the strengths and capabilities of Soviet forces for intercontinental attack, discusses questions of policy with respect to those forces, and estimates their size and composition over the next several years.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. PRESENT STATUS OF SOVIET FORCES FOR INTERCONTINENTAL ATTACK

General

A. An estimate on Soviet forces for intercontinental attack is subject to some special difficulties this year. For one thing, the strategic arms limitation (SAL) agreements concluded in May have profound implications both political and military. They create a new milieu, and affect both the choices open to the Soviets and the way in which they will be exercised. In addition, the Soviet forces for intercontinental attack are in a kind of interim phase technically, and there is much uncertainty about the characteristics of new systems being developed. The issues involved are taken up in depth in the body of the paper,

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TS 190620~~

but only some can be resolved on present evidence. This summary sets forth (1) essential facts about present Soviet forces for intercontinental attack (2) considerations bearing on Soviet policy choices and (3) some likely changes in the characteristics of these forces. It concludes with a brief description of the illustrative future forces contained in the body of the paper and brief comments on the likely future shape of Soviet forces.

B. In the course of the past decade, the Soviets have engaged in a vigorous and costly buildup of the various elements of their forces for intercontinental attack. As a result of this effort, the Soviets had operational on 1 October 1972 an estimated 1,527 ICBM launchers, including 120 SS-11 launchers at Derazhnya and Pervomaysk which, though possibly intended for use against European targets, are nevertheless capable of reaching the US, 516 submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launchers, and 195 heavy bombers and tankers.

C. The large-scale deployment programs for ICBMs which began in the 1960s have now run their course, but the construction of new types of silos and certain activity at the test ranges indicate that Soviet ICBM programs are entering a new phase characterized by emphasis on qualitative improvements. The new silos are found at the Tyuratam missile test center and at several missile complexes. Two basic sizes are involved—one large and one small. The new silos probably will be harder to disable than existing silos. There is evidence which suggests that silos at operational ICBM complexes will be converted to the new configurations.

D. It appears that two new liquid-propellant missile systems are under development at Tyuratam which are to be used both in new silos and in reconstructed silos. [

] The smaller missile is in the SS-11 class, and we think it will be deployed in reconstructed SS-11 silos. It may also be deployed in 60 new small silos at Derazhnya and Pervomaysk, but there is evidence that these silos will house the SS-11 Mod 3, at least initially. The larger missile is in the SS-9 class; the available evidence suggests that it could be either the size of the SS-9 or somewhat larger. We expect this missile to be de-

~~TOP SECRET~~

3

ployed in the 25 new large silos located at SS-9 complexes and in reconstructed SS-9 silos. In addition, flight tests have begun at the Plesetsk missile test center on a solid-propellant missile which could be entirely new or a highly modified SS-13.

E. Twenty-seven Y-class submarines, each equipped with 16 launch tubes, are currently operational, and an additional 4 are fitting out or conducting sea trials prior to entering service. The Soviets have launched a modified Y-class submarine which differs from all previous units of that class. This submarine, which has been designated the D-class, is longer than the Y-class and has 12 launch tubes rather than 16. We believe that it will carry the SS-NX-8 missile, which has a much greater range than the SS-N-6 missile carried by Y-class submarines.

F. The Soviet force of intercontinental bombers and tankers consists of 110 Bears, 70 of which carry air-to-surface missiles, and 85 Bisons, including 50 tankers. The first units of a new strategic bomber—the Backfire—could become operational by late 1973. All but the Air Force continue to believe that it is best suited for use against Europe and Asia. The Air Force believes that it is suitable for a variety of missions including intercontinental attack.

The Principal Types of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles

G. The SS-11 Mod 1, by far the most numerous of Soviet ICBMs, is estimated to have a circular error probable (CEP) at intercontinental range of [] There is disagreement about its yield,¹ but whichever view is correct, the missile is still suitable only for attacking soft targets. In 1969, testing began on two new versions of the SS-11, both apparently developed to help penetrate antiballistic missile defenses. Testing on one version ceased in December 1970 and the program has almost certainly been terminated. The other version, now called the Mod 3, has three re-entry vehicles (RVs) which are not independently targetable. There is disagreement about the yield of this weapon as well,² but again it is clearly suitable only for attacking soft

¹ See paragraph 24.

² See paragraph 27.

~~TOP SECRET~~~~TS 190620~~

targets. Testing of the Mod 3 continues, and deployment is likely to begin later this year.

H. The SS-9 exists in four variants: Mod 1, which carries an RV weighing about 9,500 pounds; Mod 2, whose RV weighs about 13,500 pounds; Mod 3, which has been tested both as a depressed trajectory ICBM (DICBM) and as a fractional orbit bombardment system (FOBS); and Mod 4, which carries 3 RVs.

I. There is general agreement that the SS-9 was developed to provide better accuracy and a larger payload than the older SS-7, presumably for use against hard targets—e.g., the US Minuteman system. The Mod 1, carrying a warhead estimated to have a yield [] appears reasonably well adapted for this purpose. In 1965, however, the Soviets began to test the Mod 2, which, with its heavier payload, is estimated to have a yield of []. The Mod 2 actually reached operational status before the Mod 1, and we estimate that [] of all operationally deployed SS-9s are Mod 2s. But the Mod 2 has never actually demonstrated enough range to reach any Minuteman complex. We believe that its demonstrated range could be increased sufficiently to cover all of them by using up more of the available propellant, removing telemetry packages, etc. It remains curious, however, that the Mod 2, alone among the ICBMs except the SS-13, has never been tested to what we would presume to be its intended operational range.

J. The accuracy of the SS-9 must be deduced []

[] In the Intelligence Community, opinions as to the CEP of the SS-9 Mod 1 and Mod 2 under flight test conditions range from a low of 0.4 nm to a high of 0.7 nm; all are agreed that under operational conditions the CEP would be degraded somewhat. The significance of these differences is considerable, but the Soviets would in any event have to deploy several times the present number of SS-9 Mod 1s and Mod 2s, with their present capabilities, before achieving a force that would pose a serious threat to the Minuteman force as a whole.*

* See paragraph 13 for a discussion of the differing views on accuracy and paragraph 14 for a discussion of the effect of differences in accuracy and yield.

~~TOP SECRET~~

5

K. As to the SS-9 Mod 3, it would not have sufficient accuracy in either the DICBM or FOBS mode to attack hard targets effectively; its apparent function is to attack soft strategic targets, negating or delaying detection by the US Ballistic Missile Early Warning System. (New US warning systems give promise of reducing or eliminating this advantage.) The Mod 3 appears to have limited capability as a FOBS. It may be deployed in very small numbers; future deployment, if any, will probably also be limited.

L. The Soviets have also developed the SS-9 Mod 4, which carries three RVs. [

] For several years, there has been controversy within the Intelligence Community about whether the three RVs could be targeted independently and there is still some disagreement on this point. Some agencies believe that the Mod 4 is and will remain a multiple re-entry vehicle (MRV) for use against soft targets; others believe that the Mod 4 could have represented either an MRV or a multiple-independently targetable re-entry vehicle (MIRV) with limited targeting flexibility but that the development program has been terminated; still others think it was intended to be a MIRV and also believe that the development program has been terminated.⁴ There is also disagreement about the probability that the Mod 4 has been deployed, but all agree that if now deployed, it is as an MRV and in small numbers.

II. SOVIET POLICY AND FUTURE PROGRAMS

M. The broader reasons for the USSR's energetic buildup of its forces for intercontinental attack are neither complex nor obscure. In the early 1960s the Soviet leaders, politically and ideologically hostile to the US, and thinking and behaving as rulers of a great power, recognized that in this particular respect their military forces were conspicuously inferior to those of their most dangerous rival, the US. Consequently, they set themselves to rectify the imbalance—to achieve at a minimum a relation of rough parity. Parity in this sense cannot be objectively measured; it is essentially a state of mind. The evidence available, including Soviet statements at the SAL talks, indicates that the Soviet leaders think that they have now generally achieved this position.

⁴ See paragraph 19.

~~TOP SECRET~~~~TS 190620~~

N. Many aspects of the present force structure are also susceptible to simple and probably correct explanation. The Soviets built a large number of ICBMs in order to match—and then to surpass—the number of US ICBMs, and also to increase the probability that many would survive an initial US attack. They built missile-launching submarines which are highly survivable when deployed, and they retained a manned bomber force as yet another option. The intercontinental attack force is obviously capable of being used in war, but there is no reason to believe that the Soviet leaders intend deliberately to make nuclear war. The force is an attribute of power, an instrument to support policy, and a deterrent to the US.

O. Decisions about military policy and programs are probably centered on two key elements—the military and military-industrial authorities who formulate new programs, and the top political leaders. The latter have the final say, but they must operate in a context of other forces and take them into account. Decision-making appears to involve clusters of advisory and executive bodies which are likely, at times, to be in competition with one another. Bureaucratic pressures, conflicts, and constraints may be heavy on occasion. We think it unlikely that observed Soviet programs are the product of a carefully thought out strategic plan or rationale which is undeviatingly executed. It is probably fair to say that the Soviet system gives considerable weight to military claims and interests, and that it is characterized by an inertia which favors large established bureaucratic interests in general and tends to work against sharp changes in direction.

P. Looking to the future, we have little basis in evidence for estimating the content of specific decisions on strategic policy or on particular weapon programs. Soviet strategic policy will of course be affected by the specific provisions of the SAL agreements, and by the manner in which these agreements alter or appear to alter the strategic, political, and economic conditions and opportunities confronting the USSR. Decisions about future forces will also be influenced by Soviet perceptions of the US strategic threat, and by what weapons they are able to develop and the feasibility of procuring and deploying them.

Q. It seems clear that the Soviet leaders intend to maintain at a minimum such forces as will continue to give them a sense of equal security with the US. The general attitudes and policies of the USSR

~~TOP SECRET~~

7

being what they are, it might seem obvious to infer that they will strive to exceed that minimum and to achieve marked superiority over the US in strategic weaponry. We do not doubt that they would like to attain such a position, but the question is whether they consider it a feasible objective, particularly in the light of the arms limitation agreements. They might think it feasible to seek a strategic posture that, while falling short of marked superiority, makes clear that the Soviets have advantages over the US in certain specific areas. Whether or not such advantages are significant militarily, they would help to dramatize the strategic power of the Soviet Union.

R. But even if the Soviet intention is to go no further than maintenance of "equal security", their arms programs are bound to be vigorous and demanding. This is in part because Soviet leaders must have an eye not only to what forces the US has at present, but also to what it can have, or may have, in future years even within the framework of arms control agreements. In this respect, they are likely to be cautious—to overestimate rather than underestimate the US threat. Moreover, the weapons competition nowadays is largely a technological race; the USSR is impelled to press forward its research and development (R&D) lest it be left behind. Soviet weapon programs also tend to attain a momentum of their own; the immense apparatus of organizations, installations, personnel, vested interests, and so on, tends to proceed in its endeavors unless checked by some decisive political authority.

S. In some respects, these tendencies will be reinforced now that the SAL agreements have been concluded. For military and political reasons, the Soviet leaders will wish at least to keep pace with the US. Also the leadership has a personal and political stake in insuring that the USSR suffers no real or apparent erosion of its relative position. It will want to maintain a strong bargaining position for the follow-on negotiations, and to develop new options in the event that future talks break down.

T. On the other hand, there are constraints upon Soviet arms programs beyond those imposed by the terms of the SAL agreements. The most obvious is economic: resources are not unbounded; the civilian economy demands its share; one weapon competes with another for allocations; and intercontinental attack forces compete with strategic

~~TOP SECRET~~~~TS-190620~~

defense and general purpose forces. The various bureaucracies with interests in one or another area compete partly with rational argument and partly in sheer political infighting. Soviet leaders must also consider how far they may wish to press their own programs lest they provoke countervailing programs in the US. And they must assess not only the present and future US threat, but also that from China, and elsewhere.

U. In the context of arms control, other pressures for moderation will be at work. The SAL agreements have been hailed in the USSR as a successful manifestation of the current Soviet policy of détente; consequently there will be incentives to avoid actions which, though not actually violating the agreements, might jeopardize them. Many of the top political leaders, and most notably Brezhnev, have identified themselves personally with the accords, and would have much to lose politically if they came unstuck. Similarly, various groups in the USSR now have a stake in the agreements, as a consequence of a long and difficult process of negotiation which undoubtedly required a delicate balancing of individual interests. Any step which might constitute a threat to the agreements would probably disturb this balance.

V. While the foregoing considerations probably govern the nature of Soviet decisions as to future weapon programs, they provide us with little or no basis on which to estimate what these programs will be and, in particular, their features in detail. We have never had solid evidence on these matters, and there is no reason to expect that we shall have such evidence in the future. Moreover, as the past 10 years have shown, technological advance can produce vigorous action and reaction between military programs of the USSR and the US.

W. Yet the possibilities are not unlimited, certainly in the next five years or so. For one thing, intercontinental weapon systems are of such complexity that their development, testing, and deployment take a long time. We can therefore estimate with much confidence that the kinds of weapon systems deployed by the Soviets during the next two years or so will be those already in operation or in the late stages of development. Even in the period from two to five years from now the force will be composed largely of existing kinds of delivery vehicles, but it could change substantially by the end of the period of this Estimate.

~~TOP SECRET~~

9

X. As a result of the SAL accords, the main questions about the future of Soviet forces for intercontinental attack center more than ever on the pace and scope of technological change. Also as a consequence of the accords, and of the opportunities and risks they present, future strategic programming decisions will probably be even more directly influenced than in the past by the Soviet leadership's sense of stability or change in its strategic relationship with the US. To be sure, as China moves closer to establishing a credible nuclear force, the need to counter Chinese capabilities will also affect Soviet plans. For many years to come, however, Soviet planning of strategic offensive weapons is likely to be concerned primarily with the US arsenal, in terms both of the strategic threat it poses and the diplomatic and political leverage it affords.

Y. The next few years should see significant qualitative improvements in Soviet forces for intercontinental attack, as the USSR pushes ahead with its R&D and exercises options open to it under the SAL accords. The most important of these improvements are likely to be in accuracy of missiles, in MIRVs for them, and in survivability.

1. *Accuracy.*⁵ We have for some time thought that the Soviets would incorporate greater accuracy in follow-on missile systems, and we now have some positive indications of this intent. The Soviets appear to be moving toward less blunt RVs for their missiles. Such RVs pass through the atmosphere more quickly, and are thus less subject to deflection while in the atmosphere. Improvements in the components of present Soviet guidance systems and a continuation of the recent trend to less blunt RVs could result in CEPs as low as about 0.25 nm for ICBMs. The Soviets could achieve significantly smaller CEPs but this would require, in addition, wholly new techniques of guidance. It is too early to tell what methods of guidance are being employed in the new ICBMs described earlier [

]
⁵Lt. Gen. Samuel C. Phillips, the Director, National Security Agency, and Maj. Gen. George J. Keegan, Jr., the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, believes this Estimate overstates the improvements in ICBM accuracies the Soviets might achieve during the period of this Estimate. For their views, see footnotes to paragraphs 54, 57, and 58 in Section I.

~~TOP SECRET~~~~TS 190620~~

2. *MIRVs.* We continue to believe that the Soviets will develop MIRVs, including some with the yields and accuracies necessary to attack hard targets. We estimate that it would take at least two years of flight testing to develop a MIRV system, and at least an additional year if wholly new techniques of guidance, designed to achieve very high accuracies, were also involved.

3. *Survivability.* The USSR's concern about the survivability of its forces will surely continue strong as the US deploys increasingly large numbers of independently targetable RVs. In addition to the employment of active defenses, survivability can be achieved through hardness and mobility. The new silos under construction promise to be considerably harder than present types, and so do reconstructed SS-9 and SS-11 silos. The Soviets could also deploy mobile ICBMs, an option not actually barred by the SALT accords; we continue to think this unlikely, the more so because of the unilateral US statement opposing this development.⁶ We do expect the Soviets to replace their older ICBMs with SLBMs as permitted by the agreements, in part to achieve greater survivability.

Z. We have little evidence concerning the qualitative improvements to be incorporated in the three new ICBMs. We are fairly confident that the new large missile will carry a heavier payload than the SS-9, and the new small liquid-propellant missile a heavier payload than the SS-11. Although there is as yet no evidence on the point, we believe that one or more of these missiles will carry MIRVs, in due course if not at first, and that all will incorporate at least some improvements in accuracy. More definitive judgments on these missiles cannot be made until more data become available.

AA. As to ballistic missile submarines, in two years or so the Soviets will have as many launchers on their Y- and D-class submarines as the US has in the Polaris force, and these launchers will constitute a substantial portion of Soviet forces for intercontinental attack. We expect the current SSBN production program to continue for some time, with most if not all future units consisting of the 12-tube D-class carrying the SS-NX-8. There is no direct evidence of another new class of ballistic missile submarines, but we believe that one will appear in the next five

⁶ Maj. Gen. George J. Keegan, Jr., the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, does not agree with this judgment. For his views, see his footnote to paragraph 49 in Section I.

~~TOP SECRET~~

11

years or so. A new construction hall is being built at the Severodvinsk shipyard, which may be for a new class. A new submarine with more launch tubes than the D-class would permit the Soviets to come closer to the combination of 62 modern ballistic missile submarines and 950 launchers allowed by the SAL agreements.

BB. We have judged for the past several years that as their ICBM and SLBM forces grew, the Soviets would come to rely less and less on their intercontinental bombers. Those missile forces have now reached significant proportions, but there has been no phase-out or appreciable attrition of the heavy bombers and tankers in Long Range Aviation for several years, or any significant reduction in their training activity. Thus, it appears that current Soviet leaders believe that the advantages afforded by an intercontinental bomber force, for the present at least, are worth the cost of retaining one. If they persist in this view, they must decide whether to put their rapidly aging aircraft through more difficult and costly rehabilitation programs than in the past, or, alternatively, to go for a new heavy bomber which would give them greater capabilities for intercontinental attack than their present force does.

CC. It is evident that there are many uncertainties regarding the future makeup of Soviet forces for intercontinental attack. In order to depict a range of possible developments, we present in Section V of this Estimate five illustrative forces representing different levels of effort by the Soviets and different degrees or rates of technological advance within the constraints of the interim agreement on strategic offensive weapons.⁷ Three of them postulate that the Soviets do *not* introduce new and highly accurate guidance systems for their missiles within the period of this Estimate. Force 3 represents about the most the Soviets could achieve under this postulate; it assumes that new missile systems reach initial operational capability in the minimum possible time. Force 2 illustrates what could happen if some difficulties and delays were encountered during development. Force 1 postulates, in addition, less ambitious technological goals than those of Forces 3 and 2. Two other forces postulate that the Soviets *do* introduce new and highly

⁷Vice Adm. Vincent P. de Poix, the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and Maj. Gen. William E. Potts, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, are in fundamental disagreement with several aspects of Section V. For their views see their footnotes throughout that Section.

~~TOP SECRET~~~~TS 190620~~

accurate guidance systems for their missiles, providing accuracies of the order of 0.15 nm CEP. Force 4 postulates the introduction of such accuracies and other improvements later in the decade. Force 5 constitutes a limiting case, and, in a sense, an artificial one, illustrating what the Soviets could theoretically achieve under the interim agreement if they have highly ambitious programs already well under way and encounter no significant setbacks or delays.⁸

DD. On the whole, we think the Soviets will probably head into the next round of SAL talks with something like the goals of Force 3. They probably will be forced to settle for some slippages and delays of the sort illustrated on an across-the-board basis in Force 2. The outcome would then be something between Force 3 and Force 2. We wish to emphasize, however, that these and the other models are strictly illustrative, and not to be regarded as confident estimates. As one moves beyond the next two years or so, all projections become increasingly uncertain; beyond five years they are highly speculative.

⁸Maj. Gen. George J. Keegan, Jr., the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, believes that Forces 2-5 overstate the missile accuracies the Soviets could achieve in the time periods reflected in those models. For his reasons, see his footnote to paragraph 54 in Section I.

~~TOP SECRET~~

1

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
CIA HISTORICAL-REVIEW PROGRAM

SOVIET FORCES FOR INTERCONTINENTAL ATTACK

KEY JUDGMENTS

The Soviets are now well into a broad range of programs to augment, modernize, and improve their forces for intercontinental attack.¹ This round of programs—which follows hard on a large-scale, sustained deployment effort that left the USSR considerably ahead of the US in numbers of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launchers and in process of taking the lead in submarine launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launchers—was conceived long before the Interim Agreement was signed in May 1972, and most of the programs involved were already evident or foreseeable at that time. Nevertheless, they represent a breadth and concurrency of effort which is unprecedented, particularly in the field of ICBM development. Questions thus arise

¹This Estimate is concerned with the major elements of Soviet strategic attack forces specifically intended for intercontinental attack—ICBMs, certain SLBMs, and heavy bombers. The present size and composition of these forces are summarized in paragraphs 3 (and accompanying table), 49 and 58 of the Estimate. Other Estimates, e.g., NIE 11-10-73, "Soviet Military Posture and Policies in the Third World," and the NIE 11-13 and 11-14 series dealing with Warsaw Pact forces for operations in Eurasia, discuss other forces with some strategic and tactical intercontinental capabilities.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TCS 889086-73~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

concerning Soviet willingness to accept additional limitations on their intercontinental attack forces and the potential effect on the strategic balance if such limitations are not imposed.

The Soviets are presently testing four new ICBMs—one as a follow-on to the SS-13 and probably also as a mobile missile, one as a follow-on to the SS-9, and two as replacements for the SS-11. All four incorporate new guidance and reentry systems, and two of them a new launch technique.² Three have been tested with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs), though two of these three have also been tested with single RVs. The other employs a post-boost vehicle (PBV) which could be used to dispense MIRVs, but all tests to date have been with a single reentry vehicle (RV). If testing proceeds smoothly, all could be ready to begin deployment as early as 1975 or soon thereafter.

Meanwhile, the Soviets have begun introducing a new version of the widely deployed SS-11, with three non-independently targetable reentry vehicles (MRVs), at three complexes in eastern Siberia and two in the Ukraine. At the latter complexes, existing SS-11 silos are now being converted, either for the SS-11 variant or for one of the follow-on missiles. Conversion of existing SS-9 silos to accommodate the SS-9 follow-on has also begun at one complex.

Production of the 12-tube D-class submarine, with its 4,200 nm missile, is continuing apace, with construction of a stretched version large enough to carry 16-18 tubes now under way. In addition, the Soviets are well along with the development of a longer range (1,600 nm) missile with MRVs for the widely deployed Y-class submarine and are preparing to test a follow-on to the larger missile carried by the D-class.

The new swing-wing strategic bomber we call Backfire is being introduced into Long Range Aviation (LRA). All Agencies but *Army* and *Air Force* believe it best suited for peripheral missions,

² The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, believes that the new missile systems now under test which use the cold launch technique will be likely to have a refire capability. See his footnote to paragraph 48 of the Estimate for further discussion.

~~TOP SECRET~~~~CS 889086-7S~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

3

and *CIA* and *Navy* believe it is primarily intended for this role. *Army* and *Air Force* believe that Backfire is suitable for a variety of missions including intercontinental attack, but that it would be prudent to await additional evidence before making a judgment on its primary role.

The present Soviet activity doubtless reflects in part internal bureaucratic and technological drives and the concerns of a country which still sees itself in a dynamic strategic competition with the US and also has concerns about China and other potential foes. However, the present Soviet effort involves more than can readily be explained as merely trying to keep up with the competition.

On the one hand:

- The Soviets have long indicated a need to catch up in MIRVs and other aspects of technology if they are to continue to be accepted as strategic equals of the US. They appear genuinely concerned about such US programs as Trident, B-1, and SRAM.
- Increased concern for survivability is reflected in development of harder silos and launch control facilities for the new Soviet ICBMs and probably figured in the apparent Soviet interest in land mobile ICBMs, in the desire to expand the SLBM force, and in introduction of the long-range missile for the D-class submarine.
- The Soviet emphasis on MIRVs and the apparent interest in greater targeting flexibility for ICBMs probably reflect an expectation of a growing requirement to plan for various contingencies, increasingly involving China and perhaps other peripheral targets as well as the US.
- In this connection, analysis completed within the last year indicates that though all Soviet ICBMs can be directed against the US, over 300 standard SS-11 silos—roughly the last third of the force to be deployed—were specifically oriented so as also to provide full coverage of China or more extensive coverage of other peripheral areas. The broad targeting flexibility of the SS-11 which makes this possible has been further ex-

~~TOP SECRET~~~~TCS-889086-73~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

tended with the new SS-11 variant now being deployed—and presumably also with the new ICBMs.

On the other hand, Soviet actions almost certainly reflect a hope that vigorous pursuit of their opportunities under the Interim Agreement and any subsequent accords that may be achieved will enable them to improve their relative position vis-à-vis the US. Though they have probably not decided whether they could get away with it, their objectives probably include an opportunistic desire to press ahead and achieve a margin of superiority if they can. Thus:

- The MIRVing of the large SS-9 follow-on, the SS-X-18, and evident Soviet interest in greater accuracy for ICBMs almost certainly reflects a desire for improved ability to strike at US strategic forces—a factor long stressed in Soviet strategic doctrine.
- The Soviets must recognize that extensive MIRVing of their ICBMs would threaten to leave the US behind in independently targetable weapons, as well as in delivery vehicles.
- Each of the new ICBMs has substantially more throw weight than the missile it is evidently designed to replace. Deployment of the new systems in large numbers would thus provide the USSR with an even greater advantage in missile throw weight than now exists.

In sum, the Soviets have been laying the groundwork for very substantial improvements in already large and formidable intercontinental attack forces. This process is not yet irreversible, and the Soviets may prove willing to accept some curbs on it within the broader context of their détente policy. Nevertheless, they have shown little disposition to exercise voluntary restraint.

How far the Soviets will go in carrying out current programs will depend in the first instance on the outcome of SALT II and, in particular, on how successful the US is in persuading them that they cannot have both substantially improving strategic capabilities and the benefits of détente, simultaneously and indefinitely; that unrestrained pursuit of present programs will provoke offsetting US

~~TOP SECRET~~~~TCS 889086-73~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

5

reactions which could jeopardize their competitive position; and that restraint on their part would be reciprocated.³

In absence of a new agreement constraining the Soviet strategic buildup, the Soviets will presumably continue most of the broad array of programs now under way. Moreover, they are continuing to expand their large research and development facilities. Early development is probably already under way for new or improved follow-ons for the new missile systems now in flight test.

Our examination of various ways in which such a buildup might proceed leads us to believe that under no foreseeable circumstances in the next 10 years are the Soviets likely to develop the ability to reduce damage to themselves to acceptable levels by a first strike against US strategic forces. The Soviets would have to calculate that the US would be able to make a devastating reply to any Soviet surprise attack.

Except with a minimal effort, however, the Soviets, if unconstrained, are likely by the early 1980s to surpass programmed US forces in numbers of missile RVs and increase their considerable superiority in missile throw weight, while retaining their advantage in numbers of delivery vehicles. These static measures of strategic power would convey an image of a margin of Soviet superiority to those who ascribe high significance to these measures.

In addition, the Soviet strategic forces now being developed—whatever their specific makeup—will probably have better counterforce capabilities than the present ones. How much better will probably remain a matter of considerable uncertainty.

— Unless Soviet ICBMs obtain better accuracies than [] they would have to assign more than one weapon to each target to disable a large portion of the US ICBM forces.

³ See SNIE 11-4-73: "Soviet Strategic Arms Programs and Détente: What Are They Up To?" dated 10 September 1973, TOP SECRET, ALL SOURCE, for a further discussion of Soviet strategic policies and programs in the present context of SALT negotiations and détente.

~~TOP SECRET~~~~TC5 889886-73~~

- However, we will probably be unable to determine the accuracies of the new Soviet ICBMs with confidence. And we will probably remain uncertain about both the feasibility of attacking targets with more than one weapon, which involves some technical problems, and about Soviet willingness to rely on this tactic.
- All in all, the strategic relationship over the next decade is likely to be much more sensitive to uncertainties like these than to more readily measurable factors such as launcher or weapon numbers. More than ever, the strategic, and especially the political impact of the Soviet buildup will probably depend a great deal on how it is perceived abroad, in the US and elsewhere.

~~Top Secret~~

SUMMARY

THE USSR'S CURRENT STRATEGIC SITUATION

1. The Soviets are pressing ahead with a broad range of programs for the near-term deployment of much improved offensive systems for intercontinental conflict. In addition they are gradually improving their deployed strategic defenses, and are vigorously pursuing the development of advanced technology applicable to strategic forces.

— *In offensive forces*, they are focusing on improving the accuracy, flexibility, and survivability of their ICBMs and SLBMs and on MIRVing their ICBMs. Four new ICBMs, three with MIRV payloads, are being flight tested. A mobile version of one of the missiles probably is being developed. Hardened launch control centers are being constructed at missile complexes, and a standby airborne command post for the Strategic Rocket Forces probably now is operational. New classes of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines with long-range missile systems continue under construction, and a new multipurpose bomber is starting to be de-

ployed. Additional ICBMs and SLBMs are in the preflight stages of research and development.

— *In defensive forces*, the Soviets are improving the capability of forces already deployed and are developing new systems. Older fighter-interceptors and surface-to-air missile systems are being phased out gradually as improved equipment is introduced. Current research and development activity includes programs for antisubmarine warfare, an antiballistic missile system which can be deployed much more rapidly than the one now operational, an endoatmospheric ballistic missile interceptor, and the application of lasers to strategic defense.

2. These developments follow a series of large-scale deployment programs over the past ten years which have provided the Soviets with a reliable deterrent and have brought about world recognition of the USSR's status as a superpower roughly on a par with the US. Through these earlier programs, the USSR has largely eliminated previous US quantitative advantages in strategic offensive forces.

6

~~TCS 866093-74/1~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

In terms of commonly used static measures of strategic offensive forces, the USSR now leads the US in numbers of ICBM and SLBM launchers and has a large lead in missile throw weight. The US retains a large lead in total missile and bomber weapons, owing in part to the MIRVing of its ICBMs and SLBMs.

] In defensive forces, the USSR retains large numbers of SAM launchers and interceptor aircraft, whereas comparable US forces are small and declining. For a summary view of quantitative trends over the past ten years, see Figure 1.

3. We believe that the Soviets view their strategic forces in 1974 as a credible deterrent and a powerful buttress to their international position, with a considerable potential for improvement under the terms of the Interim Agreement. They see the present US-Soviet strategic situation as one of mutual deterrence, in which either side would retain a massive retaliatory capability even if the other struck first. They are aware, however, that the US has a large numerical advantage in deliverable warheads and bombs, a significant lead in many technologies applicable to strategic forces, and an impressive capability to improve its forces further in the future. They believe that the better Soviet forces are prepared to fight nuclear war successfully, the more effective their deterrent will be. Thus, while having ample reason for satisfaction with their progress to date, the Soviet leaders see a need for continued efforts to improve their strategic forces.

4. The Soviet leaders must be uncertain about future US strategic arms decisions. On the one hand, they perceive powerful economic and political forces acting to constrain the US. On the other, they observe significant US force improvements currently under way

and in prospect, and they display an abiding respect for the political and technological ability of the US to respond to strategic challenge. In the face of these uncertainties, the Soviets seem convinced for now that their current force improvement programs are important to their security and their political image, and that simultaneous pursuit of detente provides a way of enhancing the economic and technological strength of the USSR. They evidently see no contradiction between these elements of their policy.²

FACTORS INFLUENCING SOVIET STRATEGIC POLICY

5. Decisions already made, and programs already in progress, impart a strong underlying momentum to the present Soviet force modernization efforts. The Soviets, however, will need to make new decisions at various stages with respect to the future—including decisions about the pace and ultimate size of ongoing programs and about the deployment of systems which have not yet reached the late stages of research and development. These decisions will be affected by a variety of factors which shape Soviet strategic policy. Among these are detente and SALT, economic and bureaucratic influences, Soviet threat perceptions, Soviet military doctrine, and the influence of US strategic policies.

6. We believe the Soviet leaders are united in the conviction that powerful strategic forces are essential to deter nuclear war, to wage nuclear war effectively should deterrence fail, and to project an image of national power. Beyond that, they appear united in the belief that strategic power is at once the

² See paragraph 15 for the view of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy, and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force.

~~Top Secret~~

enabler and guarantor of detente. Detente itself is viewed as the optimum present atmosphere for maximizing the power, security, and economic strength of the USSR, and as a way of setting prudent limits on strategic rivalry while allowing for greater Soviet foreign policy maneuver. There is little evidence that the leadership finds the present burden of defense spending unacceptable, or that the USSR would forgo, for purely economic reasons, military programs the leaders consider important. Both detente and SALT have received general support from the Soviet military, probably in part because of strong personal ties between Brezhnev and Minister of Defense Grechko, and also because detente has thus far gone hand in hand with ambitious military programs.

7. At present, the Soviets probably do not expect detente or SALT to face them with pressures sufficient to alter their near-term deployment plans in any major way. They will continue to explore the extent to which SALT can be used to limit US programs while minimizing limitations on their own. It is not likely that they will agree to meaningful limits on their forces unless they are persuaded that these will be matched by reciprocal constraints on the US and that failure to reach agreement will lead to major new US arms initiatives. We do not know whether they would moderate their strategic arms programs if they came to the view that they cannot continue to have both substantially improving strategic capabilities and detente.

8. The Soviets must see the strategic threat to the USSR as dynamic and constantly improving. In forecasting its future, they probably make generous assumptions about US capabilities and determination. Moreover, expressed Soviet concerns about US forward-based systems, the forces of US allies, and the emerging strategic capabilities of China

suggest that Soviet planners do not separate peripheral and intercontinental threats to the extent that US strategy does. They have both military and political concerns about US nuclear strike forces based on European and Asian territory and on carriers, about French and British SLBMs and other strategic nuclear delivery forces, and about the likelihood that China's present limited nuclear deterrent will be expanded to include potential threats to Moscow and other cities west of the Urals. This general outlook tends to weigh Soviet strategic power—including both medium range and intercontinental systems—against the combined power of all potential enemies. It tends to drive Soviet interests toward large and flexible forces, not governed solely by the US-Soviet balance.

9. Traditional Soviet military doctrine calls for superior military forces capable of waging and winning a nuclear war should deterrence fail. The relevance and nature of superiority and victory in a nuclear era, however, remain ill defined and probably contested. Elements of the doctrine which actively influence Soviet force posture decisions are probably those calling for forces to be employed in preemptive attack—if the Soviet leaders obtain convincing strategic warning—or in retaliatory attack after an enemy strike. Soviet doctrine makes it clear that, whether employed preemptively or in retaliation, a principal objective of Soviet strategic strikes would be to destroy the enemy's means of waging war. Thus, counterforce capabilities have high priority in Soviet military thinking.

10. US adoption earlier this year of a policy providing for a wide range of options for the use of nuclear forces—including selective, relatively small-scale employment options—will compel the Soviet leaders to consider the implications of limited intercontinental conflict. Thus far, the Soviets have generally re-

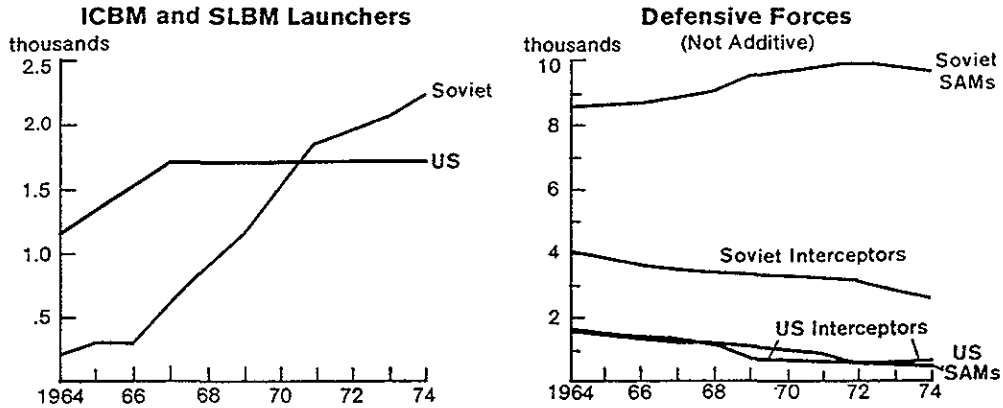
8

~~TCS 889093-74/1~~~~Top Secret~~

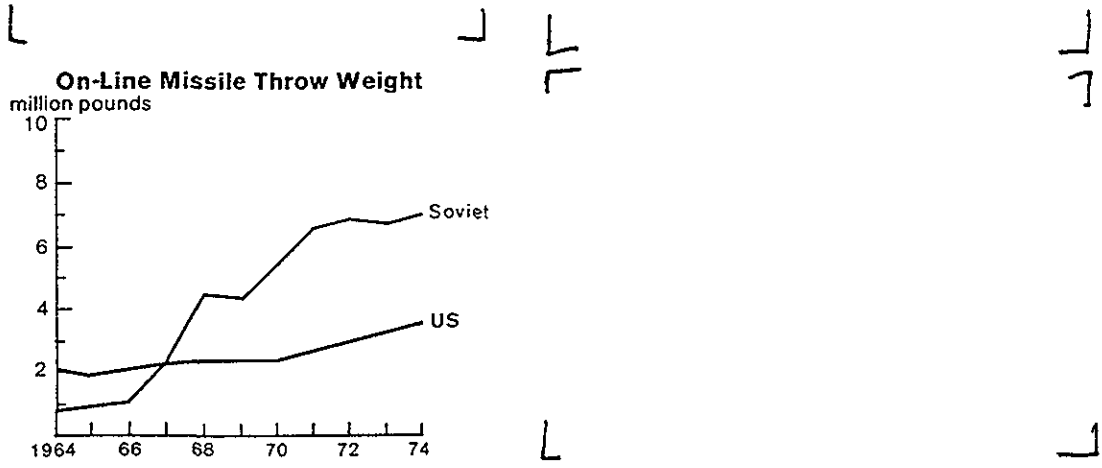
~~Top Secret~~

Figure 1

Historical Trends in Selected Aspects of Strategic Forces



Handwritten marks: L-shaped corner brackets and vertical tick marks.



Handwritten marks: L-shaped corner brackets and vertical tick marks.

~~SECRET~~

~~TCS 889093-74/1~~

9
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

jected the possibility that either the US or the USSR would be able to exercise restraint once nuclear weapons had been employed. They consider that theater nuclear war could quickly escalate to intercontinental conflict. Soviet statements and doctrine reflect the view that if nuclear weapons were employed against Soviet territory, the response would be unlimited retaliation. There is, however, circumstantial evidence of Soviet planning for limited use of nuclear weapons in a Central European war, and it is conceivable that such use might eventually be embraced in Soviet planning for intercontinental attack. Considering Soviet doctrinal aversion to limited nuclear conflict, however, we believe it unlikely that the Soviets will adopt limited-use concepts at the intercontinental level during the 1970s, although the capabilities of Soviet forces to adjust to such a possibility are likely to improve steadily.

THE QUESTION OF SOVIET STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

11. During the long years when the USSR trailed far behind the US in strategic power, the Soviet leaders could readily agree that the country needed more and better strategic weapons. The present strategic situation, however, presents a mixed picture from the Soviet point of view. In these circumstances, while the Soviet leaders clearly agree on both the broad outlines of detente policy and the high value of strategic power, it is reasonable to suppose that they differ on priorities. They may differ as to whether restraint in future Soviet military programs is required in pursuit of detente goals, though there is little to suggest such differences today. As the need to make new strategic policy decisions arises, more clear-cut divergences among the Soviet leadership may become evident.

12. For the short term, we believe that the Soviet leadership has forged a working consensus which includes a commitment to move forward with major force improvement programs. The Soviets may well justify these programs as necessary to meet present and future deterrent and war-fighting requirements, to reduce or overcome the US lead in strategic weapon technology, and to hedge against uncertainties about US behavior and arms limitation prospects. But these programs also raise the question of whether the Soviet objective is some form of militarily or politically useful strategic superiority.

13. We doubt that Moscow has firmly settled on either acceptance of parity or a decision to seek *clear-cut* strategic superiority, in part because these concepts are difficult to relate to the practical choices of policy on weapons systems, budgets, and negotiating tactics. Rather, we believe Moscow is pursuing a strategic policy which is simultaneously prudent and opportunistic, aimed at assuring no less than the continued maintenance of comprehensive equality with the US, while at the same time seeking to attain some degree of strategic advantage if US behavior permits.

14. Unless the future sees dramatic changes in either Soviet or US strategic policy, it is likely that this pragmatic opportunism will continue to characterize Soviet strategic behavior. Underlying it, however, are attitudes of deep-seated fear as to the capabilities and intentions of the US and other nations, coupled with ambition and optimism that the process of history will allow the global balance of forces to swing in the Soviets' favor. Ideological attitudes, as well as an entrenched body of strategic doctrine, make it difficult for the Soviets to embrace concepts of long-term strategic stability that take into account US security interests as well as their own.

~~Top Secret~~

15. The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy, and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believe that the Soviet leaders foresee a decisive shift of the strategic balance in their favor, and view the superiority they hope to achieve as an umbrella under which to pursue their conflict goals throughout the world with a decreasing risk of interference ("counter-revolution") from the United States.

PRESENT FORCES FOR INTERCONTINENTAL ATTACK AND PROSPECTS FOR THEIR IMPROVEMENT

A. INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE FORCES

Status of Deployed Forces

16. As of 1 November 1974 the Soviets had a total of 1,607 ICBM launchers deployed. This number includes 1,399 operational launchers for five different systems and 174 launchers under construction, modernization, or conversion. It also includes 34 soft SS-7 launchers which are now considered nonoperational. Not included are 18 SS-9 launchers at Tyuratam that are probably part of the operational force.

The New Missiles

17. The Soviets are continuing to test four new missiles which incorporate major improvements over currently deployed systems:

- The SS-X-16 is a small, solid-propellant missile probably being developed both as a silo-based replacement for the SS-13 and as a mobile ICBM. It has about double the throw weight of the SS-13. The SS-X-16 is the only one of the new ICBMs which has not been tested with

MIRVs, but it appears capable of employing MIRVs in the future.

- The SS-X-17 is a medium-sized liquid-propellant missile with more than double the throw weight of the most capable SS-11 modification. It is being developed as a replacement for the SS-11. Although the SS-X-17 was tested initially with a single warhead, all recent tests have been with MIRVs.

- The SS-X-19 is another medium-sized liquid-propellant missile with even greater throw weight than the SS-X-17. The SS-X-19, called the "main missile" by Soviet leaders, is also being developed as a replacement for the SS-11. The SS-X-19 has been tested only with MIRVs.

- The SS-X-18 is a large, liquid-propellant ICBM with slightly greater throw weight than the SS-9, the missile it is being developed to replace. The SS-X-18 is being tested in both MIRV and single-warhead versions.

18. The continued testing of each of the four new Soviet ICBMs and the silo construction programs for them indicate that one or more versions of all of them will be deployed. Deployment of the MIRVed SS-X-19 and the single-RV version of the SS-X-18 could begin by the end of this year. Deployment of the SS-X-16 in silos, the MIRVed SS-X-17, and the MIRVed version of the SS-X-18 could begin in 1975. A mobile version of the SS-X-16 could be ready for deployment a year or two later. See Figure 2 for characteristics of these and other Soviet ICBMs.

19. Deployment of the new missiles will give the Soviets a large increase in the number of warheads available in their ICBM force. The combination of relatively high-yield war-

The A-Team/B-Team Experiment and Its Aftermath

By the early 1970s, concern that strategic forces Estimates were understating the magnitude of the Soviet "threat" was becoming widespread, at least in part because of the debate over Soviet counterforce capabilities (for example, the SS-9 and Soviet MIRVs). President Ford and his DCI, George Bush, thus were receptive to a suggestion from the PFIAB that the NIEs might be "improved" by an attempt at competitive analysis. The upshot was the so-called A-Team/B-Team Experiment.

There were in fact three A-Team/B-Team trials, two on technical issues and one on Soviet strategic objectives.² In the latter, an analytical team (A-Team) assembled under the NIO for Strategic Programs (NIO/SP), worked in parallel with a group of Soviet specialists critical of CIA from government and academic circles (B-Team). As planned, the A-Team would follow established NIE procedures while the B-Team would make its best substantive case for a more pessimistic viewpoint. For this purpose they were granted extensive access to the relevant intelligence data. The two teams would then meet to compare and review their respective positions, followed by briefings of NFIB and the PFIAB. The final results would be compared by an independent panel, which would make recommendations based on its conclusions.

In fact, the two teams chose very different methodologies. The A-Team report persisted in the general formula established in previous NIEs, but, in its final form, gave prominence to dissenting opinions from within the intelligence community. The B-Team abandoned the formula agreed upon for the experiment, in favor of a detailed critique of the assumptions and methodologies that underlay strategic forces NIEs produced over the previous decade or so. Discussion focused on the role played by ideology, strategic doctrine, and national character in determining Soviet nuclear policy. In the end, the A-Team report on Soviet objectives was incorporated into NIE 11-3/8-76, along with a memorandum from DCI George Bush that denied any major influence from the B-Team report.

Shortly after the completion of the parallel drafts, the incumbent President, Gerald R. Ford, was voted out of office. The new President, Jimmy Carter, had no commitment to the experiment and declined to pursue it further. Finally, President Carter rejected the experiment in its entirety.

The A-Team/B-Team experiment thus was never brought to its intended conclusion. In a kind of last bow, DCI Bush commissioned NIE 11-4-77 as

² The technical issues discussed were ICBM accuracy and strategic air defense. The reports have not been reproduced here.

an effort to ventilate the conceptual differences that divided the intelligence community. As indicated in Bush's accompanying memorandum, this Estimate was intended to help the reader understand the argument, rather than to resolve it. For the first time the "Key Judgments" presented, not conclusions, but questions: Do the Soviet leaders base policy on the belief that the USSR *will* continue to make progress toward a position of world dominance over the next 10 years? Do the Soviets believe that the risks of an aggressive policy are substantially less than in the past? To the point of being acceptable to "prudent yet ambitious men?"³ Outlining the points of agreement and disagreement, 11-4-77 summarized the conflicting arguments as hinging on whether the Soviets perceived that the "crisis of capitalism" was at hand and the global correlation of forces shifting in their favor, or whether their new-found strategic parity had simply made them more confident in pursuit of their policy of pragmatic opportunism.⁴

The next year's NIE 11-4-78 noted that, if the Soviets' military position had improved, they still lacked confidence in their superiority over NATO while Soviet military policy continued to be influenced by "a deeply ingrained tendency to overinsure against perceived foreign threats and to overcompensate for technological deficiencies."⁵ The Estimate concluded with a description of a Soviet leadership preoccupied with domestic problems and—with the aging Soviet Premier, Leonid Brezhnev, in ill health—working under the looming shadow of a succession crisis.⁶

Adding to this uncertainty was the gradual erosion of the process of arms limitation and control. The interim agreement limiting strategic offensive forces expired in 1977. A supplemental agreement was signed at Vladivostok in 1974, but unresolved substantive issues stalled negotiations on the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT-II), which dragged on through 1978. Meanwhile, in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, domestic pressures in the United States were mounting against the treaty, so that, by the time it came before the Senate, sufficient opposition had been mustered to prevent its ratification. Both sides ultimately pledged to abide by the terms of SALT-II, but Soviet strategic forces analysis was left to deal with an arms control environment that was becoming increasingly nebulous.

Issued in March 1980, the 1979 strategic forces Estimate was the first to be prepared following the failure of the Senate to ratify SALT-II. Although the

³ NIE 11-4-77 *Soviet Strategic Objectives*, 12 January 1977; p. 1.

⁴ NIE 11-4-77, p. 3.

⁵ NIE 11-4-78 *Soviet Goals and Expectations in the Global Power Arena*, 9 May 1978, p. vii.

⁶ NIE 11-4-78, pp. ix-xii.

limitations imposed by the temporary protocol remained in effect through 1985, this Estimate had to consider the possibility that the Soviets would abandon the arms control process as a whole and resume the unrestrained expansion of at least their strategic offensive forces—and possibly their strategic defensive forces as well, despite the still-valid ABM Treaty.

In this situation, the controversy over Soviet strategic objectives once again came to the fore. The continued inability to resolve this issue brought a total disaffection of the military intelligence services from the summary judgments presented in NIE 11-3/8-79 (actually issued in March 1980). The DCI, Adm. Stansfield Turner, played a major role in drafting this portion of the NIE.

To prevent a repetition of the military's disassociation from 11-3/8-79, the following year's NIE 11-3/8-80 (issued in December 1980) contained two sets of "Key Judgments." The first, ascribed to the Director of Central Intelligence, was an expansion upon the summary judgments contained in the previous year's NIE. The second, which differed substantially in style and presentation, was coordinated among the member agencies of the intelligence community.

32. NIE 11-3/8-76 Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Conflict
Through the Mid-1980s

~~SECRET/NOFORN~~

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

**APPROVED FOR RELEASE
CIA HISTORICAL-REVIEW PROGRAM**

MEMORANDUM FOR: Recipients of National Intelligence Estimate
11-3/8-76, "Soviet Forces for Intercontinental
Conflict Through the Mid-1980s"

FROM George Bush

1. The attached National Intelligence Estimate is the official appraisal of the Director of Central Intelligence. This Estimate, including its italicized statements of differing views by members of The National Foreign Intelligence Board, was drafted and coordinated by professional intelligence officers of the US Intelligence Community and was approved by me with the advice of the Board.

2. The judgments arrived at in this Estimate were made after all parties to the Estimate had the benefit of alternative views from the various elements of the Community and from panels of experts from outside government on a few selected subjects. The assembling of the panels of outside experts, and the consideration of their views, was agreed upon by me and the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board as an experiment, the purpose of which was to determine whether those known for their more somber views of Soviet capabilities and objectives could present the evidence in a sufficiently convincing way to alter the analytical judgments that otherwise would have been presented in the attached document. The views of these experts did have some effect. But to the extent that this Estimate presents a starker appreciation of Soviet strategic capabilities and objectives, it is but the latest in a series of estimates that have done so as evidence has accumulated on the continuing persistence and vigor of Soviet programs in the strategic offensive and defensive fields.

~~SECRET/NOFORN~~

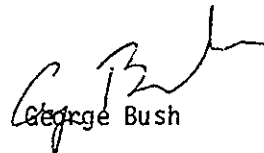
Classified	019305
Declassify on:	
Authority:	
Exempt from automatic	
downgrading and	
declassification:	
1. In	
2. On	
3. On	
4. On	
5. On	

~~SECRET/NOFORN~~

3. The experiment in competitive analysis that was begun with this Estimate has not been completed, and any final judgment on its utility cannot be rendered. Nevertheless, there is a negative aspect that is already clear and which concerns me deeply; namely, the selective leaks regarding the details of the process and, worse, the substantive conclusions developed by the "Team B" panel that was concerned with Soviet strategic objectives. Inspired by these selective leaks, allegations have appeared in the press that the judgments appearing in this official Estimate were shaped by pressure from the "Team B."

4. There is no truth to such allegations. The judgments in the attached Estimate are the best that can be made on the basis of the analysis of the available evidence.

5. Although these leaks may appear to discredit what I continue to regard as a worthwhile experiment, they have not diminished the integrity of the Estimate itself, nor the integrity of the Intelligence Community.


George Bush

Attachment

2

~~SECRET/NOFORN~~

~~Top Secret~~

**APPROVED FOR RELEASE
CIA HISTORICAL-REVIEW PROGRAM**

KEY JUDGMENTS

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOVIET PROGRAMS

In offensive forces for intercontinental conflict, the Soviets are continuing their long-term effort to acquire more powerful, flexible, and survivable weapon systems.

- New intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) are being deployed at a moderate pace. About 200 now are operational, most of them with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs), and there will probably be more than 900 in 1980. These missiles have better accuracy, greater throw weight, and more survivable silos than their predecessors. Deployment of a land-mobile ICBM is apparently still deferred.
- Several units of a new version of the Soviets' latest class of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) have been launched. They will probably carry the first Soviet submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) to be equipped with MIRVs. A new, large ballistic missile submarine may be under construction. If so, it could be operational by about 1980.
- Improvements in ICBMs and SLBMs will not stop with the current missiles. The Soviets are developing a number of new and modified ICBMs and SLBMs. [These systems will incorporate qualitative improvements, probably including still better accuracy.
- The Backfire bomber continues to be deployed. There are uncertainties and differences of view within the Intelligence Community about the extent of the Backfire's capability for intercontinental operations and about Soviet intentions to employ it in this role. We have additional evidence this year pointing to Soviet development of a new long-range bomber and a new aerial tanker.

~~FCI 869121-76/1~~

1

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

The Soviets are also pressing ahead with efforts to improve their strategic defenses.

- Large new radars under construction in the northwestern USSR will improve and extend Soviet ballistic missile early warning capabilities when they become operational in about 1979. There are uncertainties and differences of view in the Intelligence Community about whether these radars will also be given capabilities to direct and manage antiballistic missile (ABM) defenses. The Soviets continue their research and development on ABM systems.
- A number of programs are aimed at remedying the critical deficiencies in Soviet defenses against low-altitude air attack. The Soviets have been deploying data-handling systems and are introducing an improved fighter into strategic air defense forces. New air defense radars, a new low-altitude surface-to-air missile (SAM) system, and a new fighter with better low-altitude intercept capabilities are under development and could be operational by about 1980.
- Soviet forces for antisubmarine warfare (ASW) are improving but are not now an effective counter to US SSBNs. The Soviets continue to investigate both acoustic and nonacoustic techniques in an effort to solve their fundamental problem of detecting and tracking SSBNs at sea.
- The Soviets have this year demonstrated a capability to attack satellites at low to medium altitudes in a more timely manner.
- Soviet civil defense preparations are steadily improving. This program is more extensive and better developed than we had previously understood. The Soviets also continue to harden facilities associated with strategic forces.
- The Soviets are conducting research and development which could lead to directed-energy weapons having important applications in strategic defense. *The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believes that this effort includes a large and well-funded program to develop a charged-particle-beam weapon.*

SOVIET OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTATIONS

The growth of Soviet capabilities for intercontinental conflict over the past decade has provided the USSR with a powerful deterrent and

2

~~TCS 889121-76/1~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

has contributed to its recognition as a superpower equal to the US. An assessment of the perceptions and objectives underlying present Soviet programs is a matter of interpretation and considerable uncertainty. Much that we observe can be attributed to a combination of defensive prudence, superpower competitiveness, worst-case assumptions about US capabilities, a military doctrine which stresses war-fighting capabilities, and a variety of internal political and institutional factors. But the continuing persistence and vigor of Soviet programs give rise to the question of whether the Soviet leaders now hold as an operative, practical objective the achievement of clear strategic superiority over the US during the period of this Estimate.

The Soviets' belief in the eventual supremacy of their system is strong. They see their forces for intercontinental conflict as contributing to their ultimate goal of achieving a dominant position over the West, particularly the United States, in terms of political, economic, social, and military strength. Having come this far in strategic arms competition with the US, the Soviets may be optimistic about their long-term prospects in this competition. But they cannot be certain about future US behavior or about their own future strategic capabilities relative to those of the US. They have seen US technology and industry mobilized to great effect in the past and are concerned about current US force modernization programs. Thus, they probably cannot today set practical policy objectives in terms of some specific relationship between their intercontinental capabilities and those of the US, to be achieved in a specific period of time.

We do not believe that the Soviet leaders presently count on a combination of actions by the USSR and lack of action by the US which would give them, in the next 10 years, a capability for intercontinental conflict so effective that the USSR could devastate the US while preventing the US from devastating the USSR. Soviet expectations, however, clearly reach well beyond a capability that merely continues to be sufficient to deter an all-out attack.

In our view, the Soviets are striving to achieve war-fighting and war-survival capabilities which would leave the USSR in a better position than the US if war occurred. The Soviets also aim for intercontinental forces which have visible and therefore politically useful advantages over the US. They hope that their capabilities for intercontinental conflict will give them more latitude than they have had in the past for the vigorous pursuit of foreign policy objectives, and that these capabilities will discourage the US and others from using force or the threat of force to influence Soviet actions.

3

~~TCS 689191 76/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

The Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, agrees with the statement above on the ultimate Soviet goal but believes the Soviet leaders have more modest expectations for their strategic programs. He would emphasize that the Soviet leaders

- know that the US need not concede the USSR any meaningful strategic advantage and do not expect the US to do so, whatever their assessment of present US resolve might be; and*
- do not entertain, as a practical objective in the foreseeable future, the achievement of what could reasonably be characterized as a "war-winning" or "war-survival" posture.*

Rather, in his view, Soviet strategic weapon programs are pragmatic in nature and are guided by more proximate foreign policy goals. He sees the Soviets undertaking vigorous strategic force improvements with a view to achieving incremental advantages where possible but, above all, to avoid falling behind the US in a strategic environment increasingly characterized by qualitative competition—and thus losing the position of rough equivalence with the US which they have achieved in recent years through great effort. Moreover, he believes it unlikely that the Soviet leaders anticipate any improvement in the USSR's strategic situation vis-a-vis the US over the next 10 years which would substantially influence their behavior—especially their inclination for risk taking—during periods of crisis or confrontation with the West.

The Defense Intelligence Agency, the Energy Research and Development Administration, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy, and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believe that the Soviets do, in fact, see as attainable their objective of achieving the capability to wage an intercontinental nuclear war, should such a war occur, and survive it with resources sufficient to dominate the postwar period. Further, these agencies believe that this objective serves as a practical guideline for Soviet strategic force development even though the Soviets have not necessarily set a specific date for its achievement. In their view:

- Soviet programs for improving forces for intercontinental conflict (including those for strategic hardening and civil defense), their extensive research on advanced weapons technology, and their resource allocation priorities are in keeping with this objective and illustrate its practical effect.*

4

~~TCS 899121-76/1~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

- In combination with other military and nonmilitary developments, the buildup of intercontinental nuclear capabilities is integral to a programed Soviet effort to achieve the ultimate goal of a dominant position in the world.
- While it cannot be said with confidence when the Soviets believe they will achieve this goal, they expect to move closer to it over the next 10 years and, as a result, to be able increasingly to deter US initiatives and to inhibit US opposition to Soviet initiatives.

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, further believes that this Estimate understates, as have previous NIEs, the Soviet drive for strategic superiority. The lines of Soviet strategic policy, objectives, and doctrines enunciated in a large body of authoritative literature are viewed within the context of differing US perceptions and aspirations rather than in the larger context of Soviet history, ideology, and military investment.

The Soviets have made great strides toward achieving general military superiority over all perceived constellations of enemies and for attaining a war-winning capability at all levels of conflict. War survival and civil defense efforts to date have already placed the US in a position of serious strategic disadvantage by neutralizing much of its capability to destroy or damage effectively those elements of the Soviet leadership, command, military, and urban-industrial structure required for maintaining a credible deterrent balance. A realistic calculation of nuclear fatality exchange ratios in a war today would probably show the USSR emerging with considerably more than a twenty-to-one advantage.

There now is a substantial basis for judging that the Soviets' negotiations at SALT and their detente, economic, and arms-control diplomacy have thus far been exploited by them for strategic advantage: by slowing down US defense investment and by permitting easy access to high US technology. The net effect of improved Soviet and East European access to loans, goods, and services from many Western countries is that inefficient sectors of the Soviet economy are in effect being subsidized, thus encouraging uninterrupted investment in strategic forces. A degree of hostage control is being acquired over elements of the West European banking structure by Moscow and its East European allies—in the form of extensive loans (now approaching allowable limits for many banks)—which has serious economic warfare implications. Additionally, the extraordinary advances being made by the Soviets in ASW and high-energy particle-beam technology could

5

~~TCS 889121-70/1~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

place the Free World's offensive ballistic missile capability at serious risk well before the terminal date of this Estimate.

While the present NIE is much improved over some of its predecessor documents, it falls far short of grasping the essential realities of Soviet conflict purpose and evolving capability, the latter clearly constituting the most extensive peacetime war preparations in recorded history—a situation not unlike that of the mid-1930s, when the entire Free World failed to appreciate the true nature of Nazi Germany's readily discernible preparations for war and conflict. The dissenting judgments of the past five years regarding Soviet defense expenditures, Soviet strategic objectives and policy, ICBM refire capability, predictions in 1973 that some 10 to 15 major new or modified offensive ballistic missile systems were under development, Soviet war-survival and civil-defense measures, Backfire bomber capability, and directed-energy weapons development have often served as the principal means of alerting the national leadership to trends which now are clearly evidenced. Failure now to anticipate the implications of such trends will impact adversely on lead times essential for the alteration of policy and redirection of technology programs.

Such lead-time impacts are illustrated dramatically in judgments of the late 1960s and 1970 which implied that Soviet goals entailed no more than strategic parity and did not involve commitment to a major civil defense program. The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believes that the former was the basis for US arms control policy in 1969, while the latter influenced the ABM Treaty of 1972. He is concerned that the present perceptions of Soviet goals and evolving capability provide an inadequate basis for the pursuit of further negotiations at SALT or the reformulation of national defense and foreign security policy. At issue is whether present intelligence perceptions provide an adequate basis for averting global conflict in the decades ahead.

TRENDS IN FORCES AND CAPABILITIES

Varying degrees of uncertainty characterize our estimates of Soviet strategic programs and of the quantity and quality of Soviet forces. Forecasts for the next few years can be made with relatively high confidence on the basis of direct evidence. For the period of primary concern—five to 10 years hence—estimates of system characteristics and force composition must be based on very limited evidence and indirect considerations. In this connection, it should be noted that uncertainties about the quality of strategic weapons and forces—at

6

~~TCS 009121-70/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

present and particularly for the future—are in some areas large enough to affect judgments about important aspects of the strategic balance.

Our forecast for the next 10 years assumes that the ABM Treaty remains in effect and that US forces will evolve as currently programed. We employ commonly used measures of force capability but cannot take full account of operational factors which would affect the actual outcome of an intercontinental conflict. Examples of such factors are the efficiency and vulnerability of US and Soviet command and control systems, and the effectiveness of US air attacks and Soviet air defenses in an electronic warfare environment.

Offensive Capabilities

The bulk of Soviet intercontinental striking power will remain in ICBM forces. The striking power and survivability of SLBM forces will continue to grow. A relatively small intercontinental bomber force will be retained to complement the ballistic missile forces.

- In the early 1980s, the number of Soviet missile reentry vehicles (RVs) will probably approximate and possibly exceed that of the US. The large Soviet advantage in missile throw weight will be much greater than it is today, and the Soviet advantage in total equivalent megatonnage (EMT) will be somewhat greater. Soviet ICBMs will pose an increased threat to US missile silos; this threat could become a major one in the next year or so if Soviet ICBM capabilities are at the more threatening but highly unlikely extremes of our range of uncertainty. Soviet silo-based ICBMs, however, will not be very much more vulnerable than at present. Despite the probability that the US will continue to have more varied offensive forces with a larger total number of weapons, increasing Soviet missile throw weight and numbers of RVs, and the increased threat to US silo-based ICBMs, will add to perceptions of Soviet strategic power.
- After the early 1980s, the raw power of Soviet offensive forces will continue to increase. Soviet ICBMs will pose a major threat to US missile silos, although the Soviets themselves would remain uncertain about the results of countersilo attacks. If US forces develop as now programed and Soviet forces continue to develop along present lines, some of the earlier Soviet gains in relative offensive capabilities will be eroded. With the deployment of new US systems, Soviet forces would be likely to fall behind in numbers of missile RVs and farther behind in total weapons. In any event, the chances that the Soviets could

7

~~TCS 889121-76/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

achieve a large lead in missile RVs would be reduced. Their advantage in total EMT would be likely to drop back to about today's level, but their advantage in missile throw weight would remain very large. The Soviets could judge that their own silo-based missile forces had become very vulnerable.

In the next few years, SLBMs will become a larger percentage of the total Soviet ICBM and SLBM force, thus increasing the proportion of launchers which can achieve better survivability through mobility. Although the Soviets have evidently deferred deployment of a land-mobile ICBM, they will probably continue R&D on such systems and might deploy one to counter a perceived danger to their silo-based ICBMs. A land-mobile intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) now about to be deployed will be difficult for US intelligence to distinguish from a similar land-mobile ICBM and might be convertible to an ICBM fairly rapidly.

The Soviets could at any time increase the threat to US bombers on alert by deploying SSBNs close to US coastlines to reduce the potential warning times available to bomber bases. In deciding whether to rely on SLBMs for this purpose, the Soviets would have to consider US ASW capabilities, US options to reduce the vulnerability of existing bombers, and the US B-1 program. We believe the Soviets would conclude that, throughout the next 10 years, most US alert bombers would survive a surprise SLBM attack.

We believe the Soviets have no compelling military reasons to deploy long-range cruise missile systems in the present strategic environment. They evidently believe the US has a technological advantage in such systems, but if they cannot prevent US deployment through SALT, they may follow suit. They could modify any one of several existing air- and sea-launched cruise missiles for long-range use or could develop large, new ones for deployment by the end of the 1970s. Small, long-range cruise missiles accurate enough to destroy hard targets probably could not be flight-tested before the early to mid-1980s.

Soviet intercontinental striking power would be increased if Backfire bombers were employed against the US. The Backfire is well suited to operations against land and sea targets on the Eurasian periphery using a variety of flight profiles, and it has some capability for operations against the US on high-altitude subsonic profiles. *The Defense Intelligence Agency, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, estimate that the Backfire has significant capabilities for operations against the US without air-to-*

8

~~TCS 889121-76/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

air refueling. The Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of State estimate that it has marginal capabilities against the US under the same conditions. With air-to-air refueling, the Backfire would have considerably increased capability for intercontinental operations, even in the case of the lowest performance estimate. In addition, the Backfire could be modified in various ways to improve its range.

We believe it is likely that Backfires will continue to be assigned to theater and naval missions and—with the exception of DIA, ERDA, Army, and Air Force—we believe it is correspondingly unlikely that they will be assigned to intercontinental missions. If the Soviets decided to assign any substantial number of Backfires to missions against the US, they almost certainly would upgrade the performance of the aircraft or deploy a force of compatible new tankers for their support. *The Defense Intelligence Agency, the Energy Research and Development Administration, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believe the available evidence on Backfire employment indicates only that peripheral and naval attack are its current primary missions. Since the Soviets could use the Backfire's intercontinental capabilities at their initiative, these agencies believe that the Backfire clearly poses a threat to the US, even without the deployment of a compatible tanker force or the upgrading of the aircraft's performance. The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, further believes that a portion of the Backfire force will have missions against the contiguous US.*

Defensive Capabilities

The Soviets are continuing to improve their ballistic missile detection and tracking systems to close gaps in existing coverage, to make warning information more precise, and to provide additional warning time. We believe that two large phased-array radars now under construction in the northern USSR will be used for ballistic missile warning. Radars such as these, however, could also be given the capability for ABM battle management—that is, to provide tracking and prediction data to support ABM defenses. *The Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of State, basing their judgment on analysis of the individual characteristics, locations, and orientation of these two radars and on the status of the Soviet ABM research and development program, believe that both radars are intended only for ballistic missile early warning. The Defense Intelligence Agency, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, however, believe*

9

FCS 869121-76/1

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

the available evidence regarding these radars does not permit a confident judgment about whether they may also be intended for ABM battle management. Concern about the possible use of the large phased-array radars for ABM battle management would increase if the Soviets started to construct more such radars in locations appropriate for ABM support and if the Soviets pursued ABM research and development vigorously. The Department of State believes that the extent to which construction of additional such radars would be cause for concern would also depend on the assessment at the time of the likelihood of Soviet abrogation of the ABM Treaty. This assessment, in turn, would depend in large part on the extent to which the circumstances which led the Soviets to negotiate this treaty—and thus avoid an ABM competition with the US—had changed. The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believes the two radars alone might be able to support significant deployment of ABM defenses in the western and central USSR.

An ABM system which the Soviets have been developing since 1967 is more rapidly deployable than the current system at Moscow. The pace of flight testing has been slow over the past two years, but recently the interceptor missile was fired against a live target for the first time. With this interceptor, the system appears to have at best a limited capability. Recent construction at the test range suggests development of a high-acceleration interceptor, which could greatly enhance the system's capability. If development proceeds vigorously, the system could be ready for deployment in one to three years or so, depending on whether it includes the high-acceleration interceptor. This ABM research and development activity probably is a hedge against uncertainties about the future strategic situation. We believe it is highly unlikely that the Soviets now plan to deploy ABM defenses beyond Moscow.

The USSR will probably not have significantly better defenses against low-altitude air attack before 1980. For the period beyond that time, we estimate that:

- For defense against low-altitude bombers, improvements in Soviet air defenses will have the potential for overcoming many existing technical deficiencies by the mid-1980s. It might be possible for the Soviets to overcome these deficiencies somewhat earlier with a very high level of effort. If Soviet deployments are at the rates we think probable, bomber penetration of Soviet defenses would be considerably more difficult in the mid-1980s than it would be today.

10

~~TCS 889121-70/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

- For defense against short-range attack missiles (SRAMs) in flight, one Soviet SAM system now under development might have some capability. While there are uncertainties about the characteristics of this system, we believe that, if it has any capability against SRAMs, engagements would be at short ranges with low reliability. We believe that the Soviets will not have an effective defense against the SRAM by the mid-1980s.
- For defense against low-altitude cruise missiles in flight, current Soviet low-altitude SAMs and future air defense systems would have some capabilities. Their effectiveness will depend on their specific characteristics, their numbers, and their deployment patterns. We are uncertain about the degree of protection that could be achieved against low-altitude cruise missiles in the mid-1980s, but we believe it would be low. *The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believes, however, that the Soviet SAM system under development might have capabilities permitting deployment to provide some limited terminal defense against cruise missiles for approximately half the estimated target groupings in the USSR in the mid-1980s.*

The combination of US air attack forces will continue to be more difficult to defend against than any one of its elements alone. The air defense problems which the Soviets now face would be complicated even further by US deployment of advanced bombers and cruise missiles. US penetration tactics and the degradation of defenses by ballistic missile strikes would continue to weigh heavily against the overall effectiveness of Soviet air defenses. We cannot, however, assess the full effects of these and other operational factors.

Recent developments point to modest but steady improvement in Soviet ASW systems and continued growth in their numbers. The future effectiveness of Soviet defenses against SSBNs on patrol will depend in large part on how successful the Soviets are in detecting and tracking SSBNs at sea. Improved US SSBNs and greatly expanded SSBN operating areas will further compound the Soviet problem. From our understanding of the technologies involved and of the R&D programs in the US and the USSR, we believe that the Soviets have little potential for overcoming SSBN detection and tracking problems in broad ocean areas. This judgment must be qualified, however, because of gaps in our knowledge of some technical aspects of potential sensor developments. On the basis of evidence now available, we believe that Soviet capabilities against SSBNs in confined waters will improve during the period of this Estimate, but that Soviet ASW capabilities

~~Top Secret~~

will fall short of being able to prevent most US SSBNs on station from launching their missiles.

Soviet civil defense preparations could have a significant impact on both Soviet and US assessments of the likely outcome of a nuclear conflict. The Soviets probably believe that civil defense measures contribute to giving the USSR a chance to survive as a national entity and to be in a better position than the US after a nuclear exchange. The priorities of the Soviet program evidently are: first, to assure the continuity of government by protecting the leadership; second, to provide for the continuity of important economic functions and the protection of essential workers; and, last, to protect the nonessential part of the population.

There are gaps in our knowledge of the civil defense program. Our tentative judgment is that, under optimum conditions which included an adequate period of warning and evacuation, Soviet civil defenses would assure survival of a large percentage of the leadership, reduce urban casualties to a small percentage, and give the Soviets a good chance of sustaining the population with essential supplies. With minimal warning, some key leaders would probably survive, but the urban population would suffer high casualties and the chances of adequately supplying survivors would be poor. The Soviets probably do not have a highly optimistic view about the effectiveness of their present civil defenses. Even under the most favorable conditions, they probably would expect a breakdown of the economy and, under the worst conditions, catastrophic human casualties as well.

Our evidence of Soviet civil defense preparation indicates a continuing, steady program rather than a crash effort. Because of the gaps in our knowledge, however, we cannot make a confident estimate of its pace and future effectiveness.

The Department of State believes that the Soviet civil defense program is seen by the Soviet leadership primarily as a prudent hedge against the possibility of attack by a nuclear-armed adversary. The Department believes that these Soviet civil defense efforts will not materially increase Soviet willingness to risk a nuclear exchange and will not undermine the deterrent value of US strategic attack forces. It further believes that, at the present time, the scope of the civil defense program does not indicate Soviet strategic objectives beyond maintenance of rough equivalence with the US.

The Defense Intelligence Agency, the Energy Research and Development Administration, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, the Director of Naval Intelligence,

12

~~TCS 889121-76/1~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

Department of the Navy, and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believe that the impact of Soviet war-survival efforts upon the US-USSR strategic balance is greater than can be inferred from the foregoing discussion of the Soviet civil defense program. In their view, the Soviets see their civil and passive defense program as an essential element in the achievement of the capability to wage intercontinental nuclear war, should one occur, and survive with resources sufficient to dominate the postwar period. These agencies believe that this program will have a definite and increasing impact on US-USSR strategic balance assessments in the years ahead. Further, they believe the Soviets will attempt to enhance their influence, particularly in the Third World and Europe, by capitalizing on real and perceived improvements in their war-waging capabilities. The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, further believes that the strategic balance already has been altered in a major way by civil defense and other measures the Soviets have carried out thus far.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Some of the Soviets' present programs reflect concerns that US programs would affect their own strategic position adversely. Examples are ICBM silo hardening and the deployment of long-range SLBMs. We are uncertain about the implications of others. The mobile IRBM and ICBM programs, for example, would enable the Soviets to place more of their missiles on launchers less vulnerable to attack. By their continuing efforts to improve ABM technology, the Soviets could put themselves in a position to deploy additional ABM defenses if the ABM Treaty were abrogated. Such programs probably represent Soviet hedges against future US threats as well as deterrents to US withdrawal from strategic arms limitation agreements. They could also represent efforts to give the Soviet leaders the future option to break out of such limitations if they concluded that the situation warranted.

A SALT TWO agreement based on the Vladivostok accord would confront the Soviets with difficult choices and trade-offs between new and existing systems within an aggregate ceiling on delivery vehicles. It would limit the more extreme possibilities for growth in Soviet missile throw weight and number of missile RVs. In the absence of a SALT TWO agreement, the Soviets would probably increase their intercontinental delivery forces moderately; it is possible that they would increase them considerably. They would not, however, expect quantitative competition alone to alter the strategic balance significantly. They have evidently come to recognize that the strategic environment in the

13

~~TCS 459121-76/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

1980s will be most significantly affected by the quality of the forces deployed by the two sides. Their progress in this area will be largely independent of SALT TWO.

Soviet R&D programs are consistent with a desire both to avoid slipping behind the US and to gain the lead in the technology of strategic offensive and defensive forces, particularly if US programs falter. We continue to examine closely Soviet R&D programs and prospects for major advances that might seriously erode US deterrent capabilities. We give particular attention to R&D applicable to directed-energy weapons for use in air and missile defense and to the detection and tracking of US ballistic missile submarines. The Soviets are working actively in both fields, and there are gaps in our knowledge of this work. The available evidence, together with our appreciation of the physical, engineering, and operational hurdles which must be overcome, leads us to rate as small the chances that the Soviets can sharply alter the strategic balance through such technological advances in the next 10 years. But Soviet efforts in these fields merit very close watching.

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believes that the Soviets are significantly ahead of the West in the technologies applicable to particle-beam-weapons research, and that the Soviets could be operating a prototype charged-particle-beam system by 1985.

PROSPECTS FOR THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

The long time period of this Estimate and the gaps in our understanding and information about aspects of Soviet capabilities require that judgments about the future strategic environment be made with varying degrees of certainty. We conclude that:

- The strength of Soviet offensive forces for intercontinental attack will continue to increase. It may be at its greatest relative to US programmed forces in the early 1980s. In subsequent years, some of the earlier Soviet gains will be eroded, assuming that US forces develop as now programmed and Soviet forces continue to develop along present lines.
- Soviet ICBMs will pose an increasing threat to US missile silos, but Soviet forces will almost certainly remain unable to prevent most US alert bombers and SLBMs at sea from being launched. Soviet defenses will almost certainly remain penetrable by missile and bomber weapons.

14

~~TCS 899121-76/1~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

- Soviet forces will be able to inflict massive damage on the US in either initial or retaliatory attacks. It is extremely unlikely that Soviet forces will be able to prevent massive damage to the USSR from initial or retaliatory US attacks.
- There are critical uncertainties, however, about the degree to which the Soviets in the 1980s would be able to reduce human casualties and limit damage to those functions and facilities which the leadership would consider essential to the survival of their society.

~~FCIS 889121-70/1~~

15
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

SUMMARY ESTIMATE

I. SOVIET POLICY FOR INTERCONTINENTAL FORCES

1. The Soviets are continuing to press forward with a broad and vigorous program for improving their capabilities for intercontinental conflict. Soviet programs during the past decade have enabled the USSR to surpass the US in a growing number of quantitative measures, although the United States has maintained many qualitative advantages in such capabilities (see Figure 1). Current Soviet programs include:

- In offensive forces, the deployment of a new generation of ICBMs with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs), greater throw weight, better accuracy, and more survivable silos; the production of a third version of the D-class SSBN, probably to carry a new MIRVed missile; the development of additional new or modified ICBM and SLBM systems; the development of a new, large SSBN, a new heavy bomber, and possibly an aerial tanker; and continued deployment of the Backfire bomber, the range and missions of which remain controversial.
- In defensive forces, continuing expansion of Soviet capabilities for obtaining early warning of missile attack; improvement in capabilities against air attack, especially low-altitude attack; continuing search for ASW capabilities to counter the US SSBN force; improvement of civil defense capabilities and other passive defense measures; and further developmental work on ABM systems and an antisatellite system.

There are more uncertainties and differences of view this year about the Soviet perceptions and objectives which underlie these developments than there were last year.

A. Factors Influencing Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Conflict

The Utility of Forces

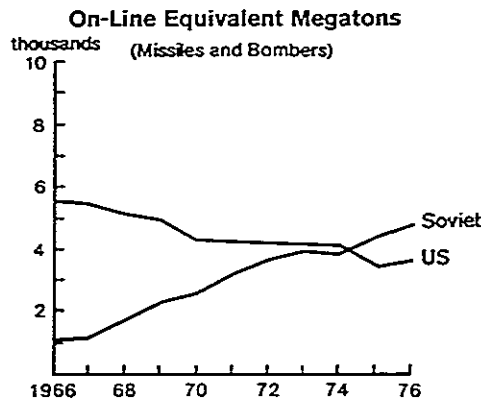
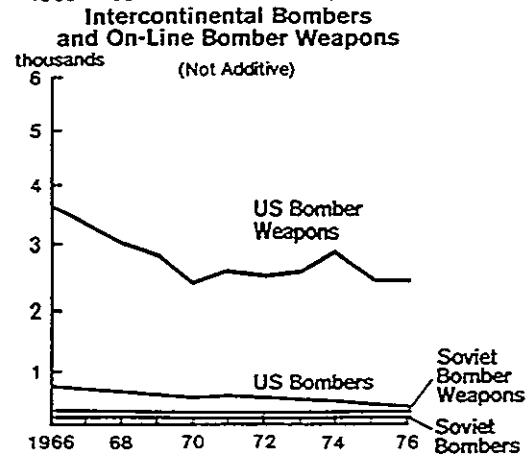
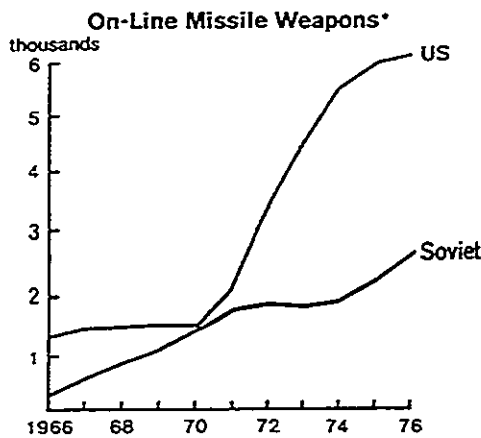
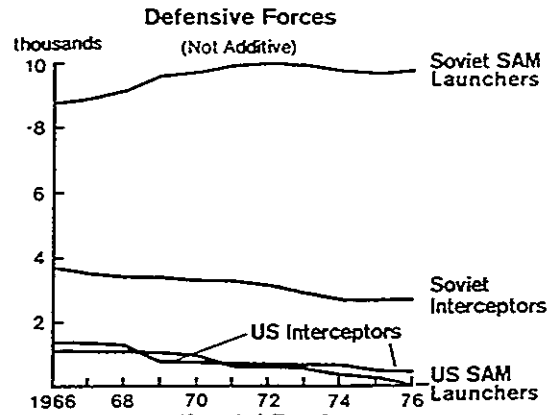
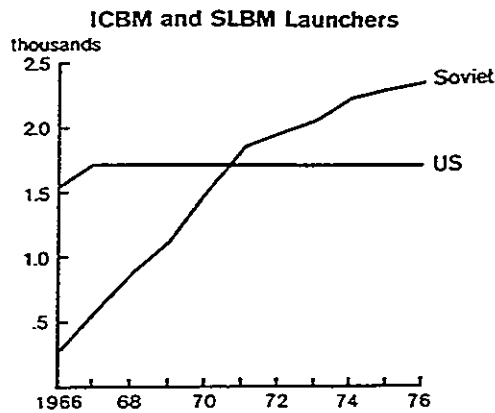
2. Soviet forces for intercontinental conflict have political as well as military utility. The Soviets see these forces, along with other military capabilities, as serving their long-term aim of achieving a dominant position over the West. At present, they believe that the growth of their capabilities for intercontinental conflict, along with political, economic, and other military developments, have helped create a new "correlation of forces" in the world that is more favorable to the USSR. ("Correlation of forces" is a frequently used Soviet term roughly synonymous with "balance of power," but more broadly construed to encompass political, social, and economic as well as military elements.) In the Soviet view, the present correlation requires Western policymakers to accord the USSR the status of a superpower equal to the US, and to give greater consideration to the USSR now than in the past when dealing with various world situations. In a confrontation, the Soviets expect their strategic power to enhance the prospect of favorable outcomes, while reducing the likelihood of nuclear war. They would, however, expect the resolution of a local crisis or conflict to rest as well on factors other than the strategic weapons balance, such as the comparative strengths and dispositions of general purpose forces.¹

¹ Under the conditions of local crisis or conflict described above, the readiness of US theater forces and of reserves based in the contiguous United States becomes increasingly important. Since the mid-1960s, the Soviets have carried out a major expansion and renovation of their theater forces. Overall, the changes of the past decade have not only expanded the size of Soviet forces but have also made them more balanced and operationally flexible, with improved capabilities for both nuclear and nonnuclear warfare. See NIE 11-14-75 for a detailed discussion of the momentum of the Soviet drive to maintain superiority of theater forces in Europe.

~~Top Secret~~

Figure 1

Historical Trends in Selected Aspects of Strategic Forces



* Excludes ICBM silo launchers under construction or conversion and SLBM launchers on SSBNs undergoing sea trials, conversion, or shipyard overhaul. Missile payloads composed of MRVs (which are not independently targetable) are counted as one RV.

~~SECRET~~

~~Top Secret~~

3. *The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believes that heavy-handed Soviet support for clients in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Angola since the attainment of strategic superiority attests to the Soviets' growing confidence and to the political leverage which they seek from their forces for intercontinental conflict. He further believes that the sizable asymmetry of the current strategic nuclear relationship between the US and the USSR resulting from the combination of strategic offensive and defensive forces being developed and deployed by the Soviets, along with massive war-survival preparations, should allow the Soviets a growing ability to coerce at all levels of confrontation—short of and including nuclear.*

4. The available open and classified Soviet literature indicates that the Soviets are committed to improving their capabilities for waging nuclear war. This commitment reflects a leadership consensus on the need to assure the survival of the Soviet Union in case of such a war and a military doctrine which holds that a nuclear war could be won. Although the Soviet leaders apparently accept mutual deterrence as a present reality in East-West relations, the US concept of mutual assured destruction has never been doctrinally accepted in the USSR. The Soviets do not see the present correlation of forces as desirable or lasting, or as a condition which would preclude major confrontations between the US and the USSR.

5. Soviet military doctrine calls for capabilities to fight, survive, and win a nuclear war. In the Soviet view, war-fighting capabilities constitute the best deterrent. Thus, Soviet doctrine emphasizes counterforce capabilities and the necessity to destroy an enemy's war-making ability, and also stresses active and passive defense measures to limit damage to the Soviet homeland. The extent of Soviet active and passive defense efforts contrasts sharply with that of the US.

Perceptions of the US

6. Both open and clandestinely acquired Soviet writings reflect high respect for the economic, technical, and industrial prowess of the United States. Although the Soviets continue to believe that problems in the West represent another phase in the steady retreat of capitalism, Soviet commentators have viewed the recent US recession as essentially cyclical rather than the beginning of a final crisis of

capitalism. The Soviets probably assume that US strength and resiliency will permit continued improvement in US strategic capabilities.

7. Some trends in US policies over the past year or so probably fueled Soviet hopes that the US was weakening in its resolve to remain a vigorous strategic and political competitor. The Soviets probably saw events in Angola, for example, as an indication of US reluctance to confront Soviet influence more directly in some parts of the world. This perception may have made the Soviets feel bolder about involvement in areas of low risk to themselves or of marginal concern to the US. On the other hand, in the atmosphere of cooler relations between the superpowers following the war in Angola and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the Soviets have witnessed a closer dialogue between the US and its allies, a greater willingness by Congress to vote for defense funding, and a more assertive US attitude against further expansion of Soviet influence. These developments are probably perceived by Soviet leaders as elements of a stiffened US policy toward the USSR. Since the US election, key Soviet leaders have indicated that they expect no important shift in US defense policy under the new administration. They have expressed guarded optimism about the future of detente and SALT. *The Defense Intelligence Agency, the Energy Research and Development Administration, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy, and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believe that this paragraph overstates Soviet concern about US willingness to adopt a more assertive attitude toward the USSR's efforts to enhance its influence.*

Attitudes Toward Detente and SALT

8. Detente for the Soviets provides for limited spheres of cooperation and relaxation of tensions within a larger context of continued competition. In its broadest aspect, detente is looked upon as a framework for nurturing changes favorable to Soviet interests, while avoiding direct challenges to the US and its allies that would provoke them into concerted and effective counteraction. For the USSR, detente affords opportunities to reduce Western competitiveness, to constrain US strategic programs, to improve the Soviet economic base, and to acquire militarily

~~Top Secret~~

useful Western technologies. At the same time, a highly competitive relationship with the US is assumed, with recurring gains and losses for both sides.

9. The Soviet leaders value SALT for a variety of reasons. The process itself confirms and continually publicizes the USSR as the strategic and political equal of the US, and it has a prominent place in Soviet detente policy. It provides a forum for constraining US strategic arms programs and for influencing US strategic goals and perceptions of the USSR. The ABM Treaty averted a competition in ABM deployment at a time when the Soviets viewed the US as having major advantages in ABM technologies. Implicit in the more recent Vladivostok understanding is Moscow's judgment that the USSR can compete successfully with the US during the next decade in a situation in which the aggregate ceiling on ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers, and limited types of bombers is equal on both sides. The Soviets foresee a vigorous qualitative strategic arms competition with the US in which they will continue to strive to maintain and enhance their relative position.

10. The Soviets' interest in negotiating a SALT TWO treaty has undoubtedly been sustained by ongoing US strategic programs and by concern over the forthcoming expiration of the Interim Agreement on Offensive Arms and mutual review of the ABM Treaty. Even during the period of uncertainty prior to the US elections, the Soviets reaffirmed their interest in securing such an agreement and showed a willingness to move ahead on the technical issues being discussed in Geneva. More recently, Brezhnev has stressed the importance to the USSR of concluding a SALT TWO agreement based on the Vladivostok accord.

11. *The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believes that the Soviets view SALT as a means through which they can achieve a superior strategic position over the US. He would note that, shortly after the signing of the SALT ONE agreement, the Soviets began unambiguous testing of four new ICBM systems, at least three of which are now being deployed. He would note further that today the Soviets are engaged in a number of development programs for both offensive and defensive strategic weapons which superficially would not be SAL-accountable but which have inherent capabilities*

to make them so. For example, he believes the SS-X-20 could be fired with a lighter payload to ranges of up to nearly 8,300 km (4,500 nm). In defensive weaponry, he believes the SA-5 long-range SAM may already have been covertly modified to give it an ABM capability.

12. *In a related area, he notes that, while signing the ABM Treaty—which in effect agreed to keeping the populations of both the USSR and the US hostage to the nuclear threat by leaving them undefended—the Soviets had previously initiated a massive civilian and industrial sheltering program, which has since been accelerated. Thus, he believes that the Soviets viewed their passive defense program as retaining the protective benefits which widespread ABM deployment might have provided, while inducing the US to end its own ABM deployment. Consequently, he considers the ABM Treaty to have been intended by the Soviets as a diplomatic deception.*

13. *In sum, the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believes that SALT ONE has had little, if any, constraining impact on programs designed to give the Soviets strategic superiority over the US. Moreover, he believes that the Soviets have programs underway designed to circumvent any strategic arms agreement or treaty which they might agree to sign.*

Economic Considerations

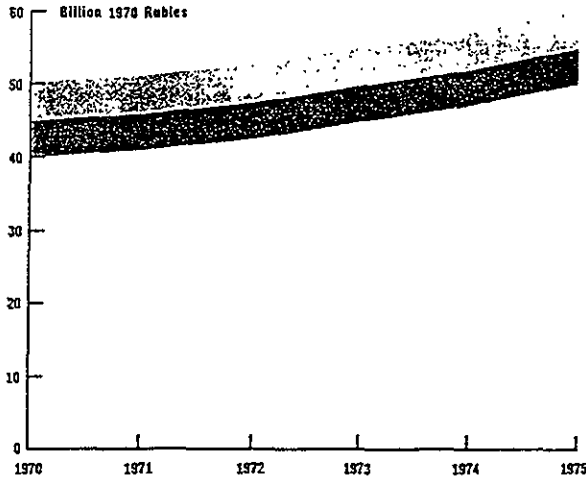
14. *New evidence and analysis of Soviet defense expenditures indicate that we have underestimated the proportion of GNP the Soviets have devoted to defense and, therefore, that they have been willing to accept a heavier defense burden than we previously thought to be the case. This analysis also indicates that Soviet defense industries are less efficient than formerly believed. It leads the Central Intelligence Agency to estimate that the overall Soviet defense budget absorbs some 11 to 13 percent of the Soviet GNP, as compared with 6 percent for the US. There has been little change, however, in the share of Soviet GNP taken by defense. (See Figure 2 for a graphic summary of the results of the new analysis.) Expenditures for forces for intercontinental conflict have increased sharply in the past few years, largely because of the deployment of new systems for intercontinental attack. The Defense Intelligence Agency and the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelli-*

~~Top Secret~~

Figure 2

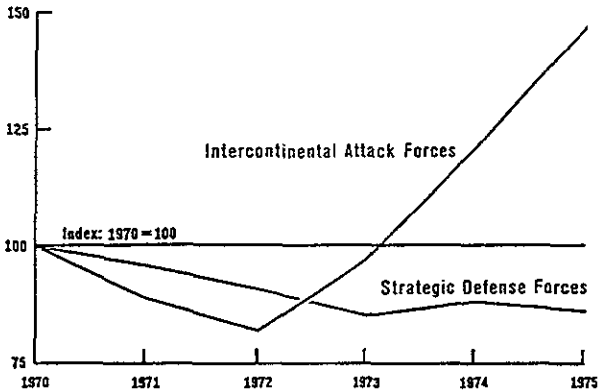
Estimated Soviet Expenditures for Defense, 1970-1975

A. Estimated Total Expenditures



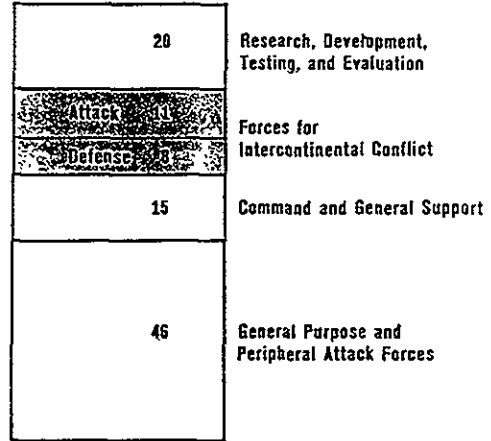
Estimate defined as the Soviets might view their defense effort.
 Estimate defined for comparison with US accounts.

B. Index of Growth of Estimated Total Expenditures for Procurement and Operation of Intercontinental Attack and Strategic Defense Forces (Calculated in 1970 Rubles)



~~SECRET 571402 1076~~

C. Percentage Distribution of Estimated Total Expenditures (Calculated in 1970 Rubles)



The expenditures shown in Charts B and C for forces for intercontinental conflict represent spending on procurement for and operation of these forces, and are derived from our order-of-battle data on deployed forces. Such expenditures accounted for roughly one-fifth of total Soviet defense spending over the 1970-1975 period. Outlays related to forces for intercontinental conflict actually consume a substantially larger share of total Soviet defense outlays, however, for the following reasons:

- Outlays for military research, development, testing, and evaluation (RDT&E)—about 20 percent of total outlays—and for command and general support (C&GS) activities—about 15 percent—clearly impact on forces for intercontinental conflict. CIA believes that the largest share of RDT&E funds is for the development of intercontinental attack and strategic defense systems and that a portion of spending for C&GS certainly is for activities supporting the forces for intercontinental conflict.
- Costs for those naval forces which have an ASW capability are included in the outlays for general-purpose naval forces, although we realize they have in part a mission against SSBNs.
- Expenditures for Backfire aircraft are included with outlays for peripheral attack forces. It should be noted, however, that there are differing views on the capabilities and role of the Backfire (see Chapter II).
- No estimate of the cost of the Soviet civil defense program is available. A community-wide effort currently is underway to develop such an estimate.

~~TCS 880121 76/1~~

20
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

gence, Department of the Army, believe that the percentage of Soviet GNP devoted to defense spending could be somewhat higher.

15. The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, notes that use over the last decade of undervalued ruble prices has led to unrealistically low estimates of Soviet defense spending. He believes that new Soviet pricing data alone do not provide a sufficient basis for revising estimates of the productivity of Soviet defense industry. He rejects the negative notion regarding Soviet defense industries as "less efficient than formerly believed." He also believes that the extent of the economic burden of the Soviet defense effort is greater than reflected, because of its physical dimension and because of the economic growth rate and the paucity of consumer goods. The principal causes of low estimates, in his judgment, have been the costing methodologies used, failure to account for 10 to 15 major ballistic missile systems known to be under development, and inadequate accounting with respect to a significantly large number of imprecisely defined defense-related activities. He believes that more complete exploitation of data available from recent Soviet emigres, coupled with extensive analysis of pertinent overhead photography, could add several percentage points to the estimate of the portion of Soviet GNP devoted to defense spending.

16. We see no evidence that economic considerations would inhibit the Soviets from continuing the present pace and magnitude of their strategic programs or from undertaking increases if these were deemed essential by the leadership. Major military programs have been generously supported, even in periods of economic setback, and the military sector continues to command the best of the USSR's scarce high-quality resources. If a SALT TWO agreement is reached, economy-minded leaders may push for more critical scrutiny of strategic programs. Reduction of expenditures would be unlikely, however, given the momentum of strategic programs, the political perceptions and military doctrine which animate them, institutional influences, and the projected availability of resources from a constantly expanding industrial sector.

Commitment to Research and Development

17. The Soviet leadership fosters a large and efficient base of military R&D as a national defense

asset. As their design and industrial capabilities have grown over the years, the Soviets have made generous allocations for weapons development, as well as for basic scientific research and industrial technology in support of R&D goals, regardless of shortages or difficulties elsewhere in the economy. The steady increase in the number, variety, and sophistication of R&D organizations and programs over the past decade indicates a major commitment to the continuing development of strategic systems in the USSR. In offensive missiles alone, we have evidence that at least 10 new or modified ICBM and SLBM systems are under development. It is unlikely that all of these will be deployed, but development of several more probably will be undertaken during the period of this Estimate.

18. The Soviets' broad base of technology has given them increased flexibility in weapons development, a better basis for evaluating perceived US threats, and a better capability for evolutionary development of weapon systems using proven technology. In their R&D establishment, the Soviets appear to have organizational and technological problems which may impede their efforts to develop and deploy exotic weapon systems. In recent years, however, they have embarked on energetic and well-funded military R&D programs in fields where significant and perhaps novel weapon systems may emerge, such as in the areas of ASW sensors and directed-energy weapons. In these areas, the Soviets have extensive R&D efforts in progress, even though the potential in terms of practical weapons development is not always clear.

B. Present Objectives for Intercontinental Forces

19. There remains the more fundamental question of the USSR's present objectives for its forces for intercontinental conflict. Our understanding of this subject is far from complete. We base our judgments about the Soviet leaders' objectives for intercontinental forces on a combination of Soviet statements and writings, both openly available and clandestinely acquired, on the past and present development and deployment activities which we observe, and on our appreciation of the challenges, opportunities, and constraints which we believe are operating on the Soviet leadership.

~~Top Secret~~

20. In addressing this question, we distinguish between ultimate goals based on pervasive ideological principal and practical objectives which Soviet leaders may expect to achieve in some definable time period. It is a matter of interpretation and considerable uncertainty as to whether the two are becoming one. Much that we observe in their present posture and programs can be attributed to a combination of traditional defensive prudence, military doctrine which stresses war-fighting capabilities, superpower competitiveness, worst-case assumptions about US capabilities, and a variety of internal political and institutional factors. But the continuing persistence and vigor of Soviet strategic programs gives rise to the question of whether the Soviet leaders now hold as an operative, practical objective the achievement of clear strategic superiority over the US within the next decade.

21. Deeply held ideological and doctrinal convictions cause the Soviet leaders to hold as an ultimate goal the attainment of a dominant position over the West—particularly the United States—in terms of political, economic, social, and military strength. The Soviets believe in the eventual supremacy of their system is strong. Having come this far in strategic arms competition with the US, the Soviets may be optimistic about their long-term prospects, but they cannot be certain about future US behavior or about their own future capabilities relative to those of the US. They have high respect for US technological and industrial strength. They have seen it mobilized to great effect in the past and are concerned that current US force modernization programs could affect their own strategic position adversely. Thus, the Soviet leaders probably cannot today set practical policy objectives in terms of some specific and immutable posture for their intercontinental forces to be achieved in a predetermined period of time. Their programs almost certainly are framed and adjusted to hedge against possible future developments.

22. We do not doubt that if they thought they could achieve it, the Soviets would program now to attain capabilities for intercontinental nuclear conflict so effective that the USSR could devastate the US while preventing the US from devastating the USSR. We do not believe, however, that they presently count on a combination of actions by the USSR and lack of actions by the US which would produce such capabilities during the next 10 years. Soviet expecta-

tions, however, clearly reach well beyond a capability for intercontinental conflict that merely continues to be sufficient to deter an all-out attack.

23. In our view, the Soviets are striving to achieve a war-fighting and war-survival posture which would leave the USSR in a better position than the US if war occurred. The Soviets also aim for intercontinental forces which have visible and therefore politically useful advantages over the US. They hope that their capabilities for intercontinental conflict will give them more latitude than they have had in the past for the vigorous pursuit of foreign policy objectives, and that these capabilities will discourage the US and others from using force or the threat of force to influence Soviet actions.

24. *The Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, agrees with the statement above on the ultimate Soviet goal, but believes the Soviet leaders have more modest expectations for their strategic programs. He would emphasize that the Soviet leaders*

— know that the US need not concede the USSR any meaningful strategic advantage and do not expect the US to do so, whatever their assessment of present US resolve might be; and

— do not entertain, as a practical objective in the foreseeable future, the achievement of what could reasonably be characterized as a "war-winning" or "war-survival" posture.

Rather, in his view, Soviet strategic weapon programs are pragmatic in nature and are guided by more proximate foreign policy goals. He sees the Soviets undertaking vigorous strategic force improvements with a view to achieving incremental advantages where possible but, above all, to avoid falling behind the US in a strategic environment increasingly characterized by qualitative competition—and thus losing the position of rough equivalence with the US which they have achieved in recent years through great effort. Moreover, he believes it unlikely that the Soviet leaders anticipate any improvement in the USSR's strategic situation vis-a-vis the US over the next 10 years which would substantially influence their behavior—and especially their inclination for risktaking—during periods of crisis or confrontation with the West.

~~Top Secret~~

25. The Defense Intelligence Agency, the Energy Research and Development Administration, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy, and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believe that the foregoing discussion is in error in that it gives the impression that the Soviets believe that ultimate goals cannot serve as practical policy objectives for future force development because they cannot be achieved in some predetermined time period—for example, the 10-year period of this Estimate. These agencies believe that the Soviets do, in fact, see as attainable their objective of achieving the capability to wage an intercontinental nuclear war, should such a war occur, and survive it with resources sufficient to dominate the postwar period. Further, these agencies believe that this objective serves as a practical guideline for Soviet strategic force development, even though the Soviets have not necessarily set a specific date for its achievement. In their view:

- Soviet programs for improving forces for intercontinental conflict (including those for strategic hardening and civil defense), their extensive research on advanced weapons technology, and their resource allocation priorities are in keeping with this objective, illustrate its practical effect, and are bringing it progressively closer to realization.
- In combination with other military and non-military developments, the buildup of intercontinental nuclear capabilities is integral to a programmed Soviet effort to achieve the ultimate goal of a dominant position in the world.
- While it cannot be said with confidence when the Soviets believe they will achieve this goal, they expect to move closer to it over the next 10 years and, as a result, to be able increasingly to deter US initiatives and to inhibit US opposition to Soviet initiatives.

26. The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, further believes that this Estimate understates, as have previous NIEs, the Soviet drive for strategic superiority. The lines of Soviet strategic policy, objectives, and doctrines enunciated in a large body of authoritative literature are viewed within the context of differing US

perceptions and aspirations rather than in the larger context of Soviet history, ideology, and military investment.

27. The Soviets have made great strides toward achieving general military superiority over all perceived constellations of enemies and for attaining a war-winning capability at all levels of conflict. War surgical and civil defense efforts to date have already placed the US in a position of serious strategic disadvantage by neutralizing much of the US capability to destroy or damage effectively those elements of the Soviet leadership, command, military, and urban-industrial structure required for maintaining a credible deterrent balance. A realistic calculation of nuclear fatality exchange ratios in a war today would probably show the USSR emerging with considerably more than a twenty-to-one advantage.

28. There now is a substantial basis for judging that the Soviets' negotiations at SALT and their detente, economic, and arms-control diplomacy have thus far been exploited by them for strategic advantage: by slowing down US defense investment and by permitting easy access to high US technology. The net effect of improved Soviet and East European access to loans, goods, and services from many Western countries is that inefficient sectors of the Soviet economy are in effect being subsidized, thus encouraging uninterrupted investment in strategic forces. A degree of hostage control is being acquired over elements of the West European banking structure by Moscow and its East European allies—in the form of extensive loans (now approaching allowable limits for many banks)—which has serious economic warfare implications. Additionally, the extraordinary advances being made by the Soviets in ASW and high-energy particle-beam technology could place the Free World's offensive ballistic missile capability at serious risk well before the terminal date of this Estimate.

29. While the present NIE is much improved over some of its predecessor documents, it falls far short of grasping the essential realities of Soviet conflict purpose and evolving capability, the latter clearly constituting the most extensive peacetime war preparations in recorded history—a situation not unlike that of the mid-1930s, when the entire Free World failed to appreciate the true nature of Nazi Germany's readily discernible preparations for war and conflict. The dissenting judgments of the past five years

23

TCS 65912:76/1

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

regarding Soviet defense expenditures, Soviet strategic objectives and policy, ICBM refire capability, predictions in 1973 that some 10 to 15 major new or modified offensive ballistic missile systems were under development, Soviet war-survival and civil-defense measures, Backfire bomber capability, and directed-energy weapons development have often served as the principal means of alerting the national leadership to trends which now are clearly evidenced. Failure now to anticipate the implications of such trends will impact adversely on lead times essential for the alteration of policy and redirection of technology programs.

30. Such lead time impacts are illustrated dramatically in judgments of the late 1960s and 1970 which implied that Soviet goals entailed no more than strategic parity and did not involve commitment to a major civil defense program. The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believes that the former was the basis for US arms control policy in 1969 while the latter influenced the ABM Treaty of 1972. He is concerned that the present perceptions of Soviet goals and evolving capability provide an inadequate basis for the pursuit of further negotiations at SALT or the reformulation of national defense and foreign security policy. At issue is whether present intelligence perceptions provide an adequate basis for averting global conflict in the decades ahead.

II. SOVIET FORCES FOR INTERCONTINENTAL ATTACK

A. Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Forces

Deployed Forces

31. The Soviets had 1,556 ICBM launchers at operational complexes as of 1 November 1976—47 fewer than last year, because of completed deactivations of older launchers. In addition, there are 18 SS-9 launchers at the Tyuratam missile test center which we continue to believe are part of the operational force. Of the total force at operational complexes, 1,340 ICBM launchers were operational, 146 were under construction or conversion, and 70 were in the process of being dismantled under terms of the Interim Agreement. (See Table I for the status of the ICBM force and Figures 3 and 4 for system characteristics; see Volume II for additional details on both.)

The New Missiles

32. All four of the new Soviet ICBMs incorporate major qualitative improvements over the systems they are replacing:

- Three of the four new ICBMs are being deployed with MIRVs. Versions of the new SS-17 and SS-19 carry four and six MIRVs respectively. The SS-18 has been tested with both eight and 10 MIRVs. A single-RV version of the SS-18 has also been deployed. Single-RV versions of the SS-17 and SS-19 are being tested.
- The new systems have more throw weight (i.e., the useful weight which can be delivered to a target) than their predecessors. The SS-17 and SS-19 ICBMs have three to four times the throw weight of the SS-11 missiles which they are replacing.
- The new systems are more accurate than their predecessors. (We refer to accuracy as "circular error probable," or CEP; CEP is expressed as the radius of a circle into which there is a 50-50 chance that the warhead of a missile will fall.) We estimate [

that accuracy will improve somewhat as the Soviets gain experience with the missiles (see Table II).

- The silos for the new ICBMs are several times harder—and thus less vulnerable to attack—than the older silos.

Our estimates of ICBM throw weight, accuracy, yield, and silo hardness are subject to varying degrees of uncertainty. Most important to the attack capabilities of the new missiles is the uncertainty in operational CEPs, which significantly affects judgments concerning the capability of Soviet ICBMs to attack hard targets. The implications of uncertainty about accuracy and yield, as well as improvements in accuracy anticipated in future modifications and new missiles, are discussed in later paragraphs of this section and in Section V.²

² For a full discussion of the methods of arriving at estimates of Soviet ICBM accuracies, and of the uncertainties in those estimates, see Volume III, Annex C.

33. **B-Team Report: *Soviet Strategic Objectives:*
*An Alternative View***

~~Top Secret~~

**APPROVED FOR RELEASE
CIA HISTORICAL-REVIEW PROGRAM**

**SOVIET STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW
REPORT OF TEAM B**

NOTE

This document is one part of an experiment in competitive analysis undertaken by the DCI on behalf of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not represent either coordinated National Intelligence or the views of the Director of Central Intelligence.

~~TCS 689140-70~~

i
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

**APPROVED FOR RELEASE
CIA HISTORICAL-REVIEW PROGRAM**

SUMMARY

Team "B" found that the NIE 11-3/8 series through 1975 has substantially misperceived the motivations behind Soviet strategic programs, and thereby tended consistently to underestimate their intensity, scope, and implicit threat.

This misperception has been due in considerable measure to concentration on the so-called hard data, that is data collected by technical means, and the resultant tendency to interpret these data in a manner reflecting basic U.S. concepts while slighting or misinterpreting the large body of "soft" data concerning Soviet strategic concepts. The failure to take into account or accurately to assess such soft data sources has resulted in the NIEs not addressing themselves systematically to the broader political purposes which underlie and explain Soviet strategic objectives. Since, however, the political context cannot be altogether avoided, the drafters of the NIEs have fallen into the habit of injecting into key judgments of the executive summaries impressionistic assessments based on "mirror-imaging," i.e., the attribution to Soviet decision-makers of such forms of behavior as might be expected from their U.S. counterparts under analogous circumstances. This conceptual flaw is perhaps the single gravest cause of the misunderstanding of Soviet strategic objectives found in past and current NIEs.

A fundamental methodological flaw is the imposition on Soviet strategic thinking of a framework of conflicting dichotomies which may make sense in the U.S. context but does not correspond to either Russian doctrine or Russian practice: for example, war vs. peace, confrontations vs. detente, offense vs. defense, strategic vs. peripheral, nuclear vs. conventional, arms limitations vs. arms buildup, and so on. In Soviet thinking, these are complementary or mutually supporting concepts, and they by no means exclude one another.

One effect of "mirror-imaging" is that the NIEs have ignored the fact that Soviet thinking is Clausewitzian in character, that is, that it conceives in terms of "grand strategy" for which military weapons, strategic ones included, represent only one element in a varied arsenal of means of persuasion and coercion, many of them non-military in nature.

Another effect of "mirror-imaging" has been the tendency to misconstrue the manner in which Soviet leaders perceive the utility of

1

~~TCS 880140 76~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

those strategic weapons (i.e., strategic nuclear forces) to which the NIEs do specifically address themselves. The drafters of NIE 11-3/8 seem to believe that the Soviet leaders view strategic nuclear weapons much as do their U.S. analogues. Since in the United States nuclear war is generally regarded as an act of mutual suicide that can be rational only as a deterrent threat, it is assumed that the USSR looks at the matter in the same way. The primary concern of Soviet leaders is seen to be the securing of an effective deterrent to protect the Soviet Union from U.S. attack and in accord with the Western concept of deterrence. The NIEs focus on the threat of massive nuclear war with the attendant destruction and ignore the political utility of nuclear forces in assuring compliance with Soviet will; they ignore the fact that by eliminating the political credibility of the U.S. strategic deterrent, the Soviets seek to create an environment in which other instruments of their grand strategy, including overwhelming regional dominance in conventional arms, can better be brought to bear; they fail to acknowledge that the Soviets believe that the best way to paralyze U.S. strategic capabilities is by assuring that the outcome of any nuclear exchange will be as favorable to the Soviet Union as possible; and, finally they ignore the possibility that the Russians seriously believe that if, for whatever reason, deterrence were to fail, they could resort to the use of nuclear weapons to fight and win a war. *The NIEs tendency to view deterrence as an alternative to a war-fighting capability rather than as complementary to it, is in the opinion of Team "B", a grave and dangerous flaw in their evaluations of Soviet strategic objectives.*

Other manifestations of "mirror-imaging" are the belief that the Russians are anxious to shift the competition with the United States to other than military arenas so as to be able to transfer more resources to the civilian sector; that they entertain only defensive not offensive plans; that their prudence and concern over U.S. reactions are overriding; that their military programs are essentially a reaction to U.S. programs and not self-generated. The NIEs concede that strategic superiority is something the Soviet Union would not spurn if it were attainable; but they also feel (without providing evidence for this critical conclusion) that Russia's leaders regard such superiority as an unrealistic goal and do not actively pursue it.

Analysis of Soviet past and present behavior, combined with what is known of Soviet political and military doctrines, indicates that these judgments are seriously flawed. The evidence suggests that the Soviet leaders are first and foremost offensively rather than defensively minded. They think not in terms of nuclear stability, mutual assured destruction, or strategic sufficiency, but of an effective nuclear war-

2

~~TCS 559140-7c~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

fighting capability. They believe that the probability of a general nuclear war can be reduced by building up one's own strategic forces, but that it cannot be altogether eliminated, and that therefore one has to be prepared for such a war as if it were unavoidable and be ready to strike first if it appears imminent. There is no evidence that the Soviet leadership is ready, let alone eager, to reduce the military budget in order to raise the country's standard of living. Soviet Russia's habitual caution and sensitivity to U.S. reactions are due less to an inherent prudence than to a realistic assessment of the existing global "correlation of forces;" should this correlation (or the Soviet leaders' perception of it) change in their favor, they could be expected to act with greater confidence and less concern for U.S. sensitivities. In fact, there are disturbing signs that the latter development is already taking place. Recent evidence of a Soviet willingness to take increased risks (e.g., by threatening unilateral military intervention in the Middle East in October 1973, and supporting the Angola adventure) may well represent harbingers of what lies ahead.

Soviet doctrine, confirmed by the actions of its leadership over many decades has emphasized—and continues to emphasize—two important points: the first is unflagging persistence and patience in using the available means favorably to mold all aspects of the correlation of forces (social, psychological, political, economic and military) so as to strengthen themselves and to weaken any prospective challengers to their power; the second is closely to evaluate the evolving correlation of forces and to act in accordance with that evaluation. When the correlation is unfavorable, the Party should act with great caution and confuse the enemy in order to gain time to take actions necessary to reverse trends in the correlation of forces. When the correlation of forces is favorable, the Party is under positive obligation to take those actions necessary to realize and nail down potential gains, lest the correlation of forces subsequently change to a less favorable position. (It is noteworthy that in recent months one of the major themes emphasized in statements by the Soviet leadership to internal audiences urges the "realization" of the advances brought about by the favorable evolution of forces resulting from detente and the positive shift in the military balance.)

We are impressed by the scope and intensity of Soviet military and related programs (e.g., proliferation and hardening of its command, control and communications network and civil defense). The size and nature of the Soviet effort which involves considerable economic and political costs and risks, if long continued in the face of frustrated economic expectations within their own bloc and the possibility that the West may come to perceive the necessity of reversing current trends

~~Top Secret~~

before they become irreversible, lead to the possibility of a relatively short term threat cresting, say, in 1980 to 1983, as well as the more obvious long range threat.

The draft NIE's do not appear to take any such shorter range threat seriously and do not indicate that the threat itself, or its possible timing, have been examined with the care which we believe the subject deserves.

Although in the past two years the NIEs have taken a more realistic view of the Soviet military buildup, and even conceded the possibility that its ultimate objective may well exceed the requirements of deterrence, they still incline to play down the Soviet commitment to a war-winning capability. Three additional factors (beside those mentioned above) may account for this attitude:

1. Political pressures and considerations. On some occasions the drafters of NIE display an evident inclination to minimize the Soviet strategic buildup because of its implications for detente, SALT negotiations, congressional sentiments as well as for certain U.S. forces. This is not to say that any of the judgments which seem to reflect policy support are demonstrably directed judgments: rather they appear to derive mainly from a strong and understandable awareness on the part of the NIE authors of the policy issues at stake.

2. Inter-agency rivalry. Some members of Team "B" feel that the inclination of the NIEs to downplay military threats is in significant measure due to bureaucratic rivalry between the military and civilian intelligence agencies; the latter, being in control of the NIE language, have a reputation for tempering the pessimistic view of military intelligence with more optimistic judgments.

3. The habit of viewing each Soviet weapons' program, or other development, in isolation from the others. The NIEs tend to assess each Soviet development as in and of itself, even when it is evident that the Russians are pursuing a variety of means to attain the same objective. As a result, with each individual development minimized or dismissed as being in itself of no decisive importance, the cumulative effect of the buildup is missed.

Analyses carried out by members of Team "B" (and presented in Part Two of this Report) of NIE treatments of certain key features of the Soviet strategic effort indicate the extent to which faulty method and biases of an institutional nature affect its evaluations. This holds true of the NIE treatment of Soviet strategic offensive forces (ICBMs

4

~~TCS 559140-76~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

and SLBMs); of its views of the alleged economic constraints on Soviet strategic forces; of its assessment of Soviet civil defense and military hardening programs; of its interpretation of the strategic implications of Soviet mobile missiles and the Backfire bomber; of its evaluation of Soviet R&D in the fields of anti-submarine, anti-satellite, and anti-ballistic missile defenses; and of its perception of Soviet non-central nuclear systems. In each instance it was found that through NIE 11-3/8-75, the NIEs have tended (though not in the same degree) to minimize the seriousness and success of the respective Soviet efforts, and (by the injection of *de facto* net assessments) to downgrade the threat which they pose to U.S. security.

In formulating its own estimate of Soviet strategic objectives, Team "B" divided it into two aspects: objectives in the broad, "grand strategic" sense, as they are perceived by the Soviet leadership; and objectives in the more narrow, military sense, as defined by NIE 11-3/8.

As concerns the first, Team "B" agreed that all the evidence points to an undeviating Soviet commitment to what is euphemistically called "the worldwide triumph of socialism" but in fact connotes global Soviet hegemony. Soviet actions give no grounds on which to dismiss this objective as rhetorical exhortation, devoid of operative meaning. The risks consequent to the existence of strategic nuclear weapons have not altered this ultimate objective, although they have influenced the strategy employed to pursue it. "Peaceful coexistence" (better known in the West as *detente*) is a grand strategy adapted to the age of nuclear weapons. It entails a twin thrust: (1) stress on all sorts of political, economic, ideological, and other non-military instrumentalities to penetrate and weaken the "capitalist" zone, while at the same time strengthening Russia's hold on the "socialist" camp; and (2) an intense military buildup in nuclear as well as conventional forces of all sorts, not moderated either by the West's self-imposed restraints or by SALT.

In its relations with the United States, which it views as the central bastion of the enemy camp, the Soviet leadership has had as its main intermediate goals America's isolation from its allies as well as the separation of the OECD nations from the Third World, which, it believes, will severely undermine "capitalism's" political, economic, and ultimately, military might.

With regard to China, while the spectre of a two-front war and intense ideological competition have to an important degree limited the Soviet Union's freedom of action in pursuance of their goals against the West, it has not proved an unlimited or insuperable limitation. Further,

5

TCS 889140-76

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

given current trends in the growth of Soviet military power, the U.S. cannot confidently anticipate that concern with China will deter the USSR from increasingly aggressive policies toward the West.

As concerns the more narrowly defined military strategic objectives, Team "B" feels the USSR *strives for effective strategic superiority in all the branches of the military, nuclear forces included*. For historic reasons, as well as for reasons inherent in the Soviet system, the Soviet leadership places unusual reliance on coercion as a regular instrument of policy at home as well as abroad. It likes to have a great deal of coercive capability at its disposal at all times, and it likes for it to come in a rich mix so that it can be optimally structured for any contingency that may arise. After some apparent division of opinion intermittently in the 1960's, the Soviet leadership seems to have concluded that nuclear war could be fought and won. The scope and vigor of Soviet strategic programs leave little reasonable doubt that Soviet leaders are indeed determined to achieve the maximum possible measure of strategic superiority over the U.S. Their military doctrine is measured not in Western terms of assured destruction but in those of a *war-fighting and war-winning capability*; it also posits a clear and substantial Soviet predominance following a general nuclear conflict. We believe that the Russians place a high priority on the attainment of such a capability and that they may feel that it is within their grasp. If, however, that capability should not prove attainable, they intend to secure so substantial a nuclear war-fighting advantage that, as a last resort, they would *be less deterred than we from initiating the use of nuclear weapons*. In this context, both detente and SALT are seen by Soviet leaders not as cooperative efforts to ensure global peace, but as means more effectively to compete with the United States.

~~TCS 589140-76~~

6
~~Top Secret~~

33. (Continued)

~~Top Secret~~

PART ONE

JUDGMENTS ABOUT SOVIET STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
UNDERLYING NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES
AND THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THESE JUDGMENTS

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

PART ONE

JUDGMENTS ABOUT SOVIET STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
 UNDERLYING NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES
 AND THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THESE JUDGMENTS

1. *Influence of Intelligence Gathering Techniques on the Perception of Soviet Objectives*

The National Intelligence Estimates concerning the USSR are essentially assessments of Soviet military capabilities which, in the main, are based on data gathered by means of highly sophisticated optical and listening devices. Because the Soviet Union remains a uniquely closed society, human contacts, traditionally the principal source of foreign intelligence, play a distinctly subordinate role in the preparation of these documents: not only is such information exceedingly scarce, but it is always suspect of being the product of a deliberate disinformation effort in which the Soviet government engages on a massive scale. Furthermore, information obtained from sensitive human sources often has such limited distribution that it does not play a significant part in the preparation of NIEs. Thus it happens that the hard evidence on which the NIEs are based relates primarily to the adversary's capabilities rather than his intentions, his weapons rather than his ideas, motives, and aspirations.

The particular nature of the intelligence-gathering process exerts an important influence on the manner in which Soviet strategic objectives are assessed in the NIEs: we have here an instance of technology turning from tool into master. Because the hard evidence is so overwhelmingly physical (material) in nature, the tendency of the intelligence community is to focus on questions of *what* rather than *why* or *what for*. Problems of capabilities overshadow those of Soviet purpose. As a consequence, the NIEs either gloss over in silence the question of Soviet strategic objectives, or else treat the matter in a perfunctory manner. Judging by the available evidence, it seems that the intelli-

gence community has spent more effort and produced more literature on each and every Soviet ICBM system than on the whole overriding question of why it is that the USSR develops such a strategic nuclear posture in the first place.

To gloss over Soviet purpose, however, does not mean to be rid of the issue: excluded from the front entrance, it has a way of slipping through the back door. The point is that whether one wants to or not, in assessing the enemy's capabilities one must of necessity make some kind of judgments about his objectives, or else the raw data are of no use. Facts of themselves are mute: they are like the scattered letters of an alphabet that the reader must arrange in sequence according to some system. The difference is only whether one arrives at one's judgments about an adversary's objectives consciously and openly, i.e., spells them out, or unconsciously. As a rule, whenever the latter course is taken, one's judgments tend to be drawn from simplistic "projections" of one's own values and aspirations. For unless we are prepared to acknowledge that our adversary is "different" and unless we are willing to make the mental effort required to understand him on his own terms, we have no choice but to fall back on the only alternate position available, namely the postulate that his basic motivation resembles ours. The result is that well-known phenomenon, "mirror-imaging", the persistent flaw of the NIEs bearing on the USSR, a flaw which may be said to constitute the principal source of their unsatisfactory assessments of Soviet objectives. In other words, the disinclination, in no small part induced by the scientific-technical character of intelligence gathering about the USSR, to face squarely the issue of objectives (which does not lend

9

~~TOP SECRET~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

itself to conventional scientific or technical analysis) encourages the authors of the NIEs to adopt a set of questionable assumptions about Russian intentions. These assumptions, in turn, lead to the formulation of judgments about Soviet intentions which are not supported by the available evidence, and, indeed, sometimes stand in stark contradiction to it. Thus, overemphasis on "hard" data and the failure to draw on other sources of information with the same degree of conviction all too often causes the information supplied by the "hard" data to be misinterpreted. In the opinion of Team "B", the NIEs are filled with unsupported and questionable judgments about what it is that the Soviet government wants and intends. It is this practice, rather than the absence of solid information, that has caused in the past (and in considerable measure does so in the present) recurrent underestimations of the intensity, scope, and implicit threat of the Soviet strategic buildup.

2. Implicit NIE Assumptions and Judgments About Soviet International Behavior

The unspoken assumptions of the U.S. intelligence community (and, one may add, much of the U.S. political, intellectual, and business communities as well) about Soviet international behavior derive from several sources, which can be briefly identified as follows:

a. The U.S. commercial tradition and the business culture which permeates U.S. society; among their components are the beliefs that (1) peace and the pursuit of profit are "normal" whereas war is always an aberration; (2) in relations between parties both should enjoy a share of the profits; and, (3) human nature everywhere is the same, by and large corresponding to the rationalist, utilitarian model devised by Jeremy Bentham and his followers.

b. A democratic tradition which regards social equality as "natural" and elitism of any sort as aberrant.

c. An insular tradition derived from the fact that until two decades ago, when the Russians deployed their first ICBMs, the USA had enjoyed total immunity from a strategic threat to its territory.

These three traditions—commercial, democratic, and insular—have imbued the United States with a unique outlook on the world, an outlook that is shared

by no other nation, least of all by the Russians whose historic background is vastly different. It is a world outlook *sui generis* and yet nevertheless one which deeply colors the intelligence community's perceptions of the motives and aspirations of the USSR.

As one reads the NIEs issued over the past fifteen years, one finds underlying their assessments a whole set of *unspoken assumptions* about Russian national character and goals that in all essential respects corresponds to the idealized image the United States has of itself but bears very little resemblance to anything that actually relates to Soviet Russia.

A. NIE Conception of Soviet Strategy

To begin with, the key word, the adjective "strategic," The Soviet conception of "strategic," is much broader than that covered by NIE 11-3/8. Russia is a continental power not an insular one, and it happens to have the longest external frontier of any country in the world. In contrast to the United States, it has never enjoyed the luxury of isolation, having always been engaged in conflict along its frontier, sometimes suffering devastating invasions, sometimes being the aggressor who absorbed entire countries lying along its borders. For a country with this kind of a historic background it would make little sense to separate any category of military weapons, no matter how destructive, from the rest of the arsenal of the means of persuasion and coercion.* The strategic threat to the homeland (i.e., the ability of an enemy to inflict "unacceptable" human and material losses) is for the Soviet Union nothing new, and the danger presented by strategic nuclear weapons, grave though it may be, does not call for a qualitative departure from the norms of traditional military thinking.

There is also a further factor which militates against the Russians' thinking of strategic weapons in the same way as do the Americans. In the United States, the military are not considered an active factor in the political life of the country, war itself is viewed as abnormal, and the employment of weapons of mass destruction as something entirely outside the norms of policy. The Soviet Union, by contrast, functions as a giant conglomerate in which military, political, and

* It is true, of course, that the Russians have created a separate branch of the armed forces, the Strategic Rocket Forces. This is an administrative device, however, which does not signify that they regard such forces as unique and fundamentally different from the army, navy, or air force.

~~Top Secret~~

TCS 889140-76

~~Top Secret~~

economic institutions—and the instruments appropriate to each of them—are seen as part of a diversified arsenal of power, all administered by the same body of men and all usable for purposes of persuasion and coercion. The distinction between the civilian and the military sectors of society and economy, appropriate to capitalist societies, is not very meaningful in the Soviet environment. *All of which means, that in the USSR military weapons in general, and strategic nuclear weapons in particular, are treated not as unique instruments to be used as a very last resort, but as elements of a whole range of mutually supporting means of persuasion and coercion available to the state in pursuit of its interests.*

The Soviet conception of strategy resembles that which in Western literature is sometimes referred to as "grand strategy": it entails the application of *all* the available resources in the pursuit of national objectives. Soviet military theory is decidedly Clausewitzian in orientation. In Soviet strategic writings, the point is made with monotonous emphasis that military actions are subordinate to politics, and have no function outside of politics. The following passage is a fair example of this kind of argument:

The organic unity of military strategy and policy with the determining role of the latter signifies that military strategy proceeds from policy, is determined by policy, is totally dependent on policy, and accomplishes its specific tasks only within the framework of policy . . .

The distinction between the American and Soviet conceptions of strategic force is well reflected in the criteria which the two sides employ in assessing the power relationship between potential adversaries. The American concept of "strategic balance" concentrates almost exclusively on military forces, whereas the Soviet concept of "correlation of forces" (*sootnosheni sil*) includes in the equation also such non-military factors as political power, economic capacity, social cohesion, morale, and so forth.

By adopting in its estimates of Soviet strategic objectives the narrow American definition of what constitutes strategy and a strategic threat instead of the broad Clausewitzian one, the NIEs 11-3/8 have no choice but to ignore weapons other than nuclear

ones in the Soviet strategic arsenal.* They grossly underemphasize the connections between the political, military, economic, and ideological elements in Soviet foreign policy. By singling out for near exclusive treatment the three components of the Triad, they not only leave out of consideration other nuclear and non-nuclear military means but also a whole range of strategic weapons of a non-military kind which the Soviet leadership sees as available to it in the pursuit of world politics. And yet in Soviet eyes such actions as the interdiction of the Western flow of oil supplies or the disruption of the democratic processes by Communist parties may well be perceived as "strategic" moves equal in importance to the deployment of the latest series of ICBMs.

B. NIE Assumptions and Judgments About Soviet Strategic Objectives

Much the same "mirror-imaging" holds true when we turn from the NIEs' perception of what constitutes a "strategic threat" to their view of Soviet "strategic objectives." Here we find a rather mechanistic projection onto Soviet society of the sentiments and aspirations of a society which sees war as an unmitigated evil and the military as a social overhead to be curtailed whenever possible, a society which conceives the purpose of organized life to be the steady improvement of the citizen's living standards. These views are never spelled out in so many words: nevertheless, they unmistakably underpin the NIEs evaluations of what it is that the Russians aim at.

Much of U.S. analysis of Soviet military programs and actions is based on granting excessive legitimacy to an alleged Russian obsession with national security derived of experience with foreign invasions and interventions.** Soviet Russia's relentless drive to enlarge and improve its military power, its impulsive reaction to any moves that threaten its territory, its overriding concern with obtaining international recog-

* This tendency is aggravated by the compartmentalization of the analysis of enemy capabilities by the intelligence community which originally separated strategic offensive weapons from strategic defensive weapons, and both from theatre tactical capabilities. This compartmentalization persists in various forms up to this day.

** See e.g., General George S. Brown's *United States Military Posture for FY 1977* where the following phrase occurs: "The Soviet historical experience of war, invasion, revolution, foreign intervention and hostility has produced strong anxiety concerning national security." (p. 8)

~~Top Secret~~

nition of its post-world War II conquests—all of this is attributed to historically-induced national insecurities.

This basic assumption, strongly (though indirectly) reflected in the NIEs, has a number of important corollaries:

(1) That Soviet military policy is first and foremost *defensive* in character. This view is explicitly conveyed in NIE 11-4-72 (*Issues and Options in Soviet Military Policy*), one of the few intelligence publications which addresses itself seriously to Soviet strategic objectives in the context of "grand strategy"

"Certain broad aims of Soviet foreign policy can . . . be described today in much the same way as a decade or more ago: (a) *security* of the homeland and of the world communist "center"; (b) *protection* of the "gains of socialism" and more specifically *maintenance* of loyal Communist regimes in eastern Europe; (c) fostering *awareness* everywhere of Soviet military strength and readiness so as to support a strong foreign policy aimed at expanding Soviet *influence*". (p. 5; emphasis supplied).*

The possibility that the Russians may be pursuing not a defensive but an offensive strategy is not entertained in the NIEs: the spread of Soviet "influence" (which can also mean the use of peaceful means) is as far as they are prepared to go in that direction. Apparently, the issue is discounted as not meriting serious thought. In-line with this assumption, the whole immense Soviet buildup of nuclear strategic weapons is seen as serving primarily defensive purposes. A document called Soviet Nuclear Doctrine: Concepts of Intercontinental and Theater War, issued by the Office of Strategic Research in June 1973, flatly asserts that the Russians perceive their nuclear forces as serving essentially defensive aims: "The major effort has been on programs which ensure the ability of strategic forces to absorb a U.S. strike and still return a

* A similar view of Soviet military policy, i.e., as inherently defensive is advanced in NIE 11-3/8-75 Vol. II, Paragraph 40, pp. 10-11, and NIE 11-14-75 (p. 2). The latter, for instance, says: "The USSR considers its military strength in Europe to be fundamental to the *protection* of its national interests, to the *maintenance* of its strategic posture vis-a-vis the West, and to its management of foreign policy" (Emphasis supplied). The National Intelligence Estimates Bearing on the Soviet Navy (e.g., NIE 11-15-74, *Soviet Naval Policy and Programs—Annex*, p. A-4) also tend, on the whole, to see Soviet naval buildups in defensive rather than offensive terms.

devastating blow" (p. 3). Here, too, the possibility of the Russians using their strategic weapons for offensive purposes is ignored. Indeed, the very possibility of nuclear war is rejected, for which reason the NIEs tend to disregard evidence that suggests the Russians view the matter differently.

(2) Consistently with this perception of Soviet defensive objectives, the Soviet Union is seen as being interested primarily in securing an effective deterrence force: "Deterrence is a key objective."* Moreover, deterrence is regarded as an end goal and, as in Western thinking, as something fundamentally different from war-fighting capability and strategic superiority. Proceeding from this premise, the NIEs have notoriously underestimated both the intensity and scope of the Soviet commitment to a strategic nuclear buildup. NIE 11-8-64 (p. 2) went on record as stating that there was no reason to believe that the USSR desired to match the United States in the number of ICBMs. By 1967-68 the NIEs conceded that the Russians might perhaps be aiming at strategic parity with the United States. Only in 1974-75, however, was the possibility of the Russians seeking advantage and superiority over the United States advanced as a serious contingency.**

(3) Once the Soviet Union has attained parity with the United States and assured itself of an effective deterrent, it will not wish to continue the arms race. As they gain strength, the Russians will also acquire self-confidence and therefore cease to feel the need to flex their muscles to impress potential enemies: the acquisition of military might will make the Soviet Union aware that the "contest for international primacy has become increasingly complicated and less amenable to simple projections of power." (NIE 11-4-72, p. 1). The Soviet Union will turn into a stabilizing force in international affairs and shift an increasing share of its resources from the military to the civilian sector ("The Soviet leadership would no doubt prefer to shift some scarce resources . . . to the civilian sector," NIE 11-4-72, p. 1).

(4) Because its preoccupation is with defense, in its military effort the Soviet Union mainly responds to initiatives of its potential rivals, especially the United

* *Soviet Nuclear Doctrine: Concepts of Intercontinental and Theater War*. []

** The NIE record in regard to Soviet strategic objectives is discussed at greater length in the Annex.

~~Top Secret~~

States. Its strategic moves are reactive in character and opportunistic rather than self-generated or long term in conception.

(5) Given the obsession with national security and the fact that its military arsenal serves primarily defensive purposes, the United States can watch without alarm the Soviet effort to attain military parity. The attainment of such parity will provide the Russians with the sense of confidence necessary for them to decelerate the arms buildup.

(6) The Russians would admittedly not be averse to gaining strategic superiority over the United States if they thought this goal feasible. However, until very recently the authors of NIE regarded such an objective to be unrealistic and they did not allow that Soviet leaders could seriously entertain it (e.g., "We believe that the USSR has concluded that the attainment of clear superiority in strategic weapons . . . is not now feasible": NIE 11-72, *Soviet Foreign Policies and the Outlook for Soviet-American Objectives*, p. 2; no evidence supporting this contention is given in this or any other document). Only very recently has the mass of data which suggests that the USSR may not be content with mere parity and mutual deterrence become so compelling as to force the NIE to concede that the Soviet Union could indeed possess more ambitious goals: "the scope and vigor of these [strategic] programs" says NIE 11-3/8-75 (p. 5), "at a time when the USSR has achieved a powerful deterrent as well as recognition as the strategic equal of the U.S., raise the elusive question of whether the Soviet leaders embrace as an objective some form of strategic nuclear superiority over the U.S." This qualified admission, after years of stress on the purely defensive character of Soviet strategic objectives, is gratifying, even though the NIE still tends to disparage the importance of such superiority and, refuses to acknowledge that it can be militarily meaningful. The prevailing tone of the NIE all along has been to view Soviet policy as one of prudent opportunism. The Russians are seen as unwilling to take high risks or to make any moves that might provoke the United States, on whose good will they are believed to place extremely high value.

(7) Soviet military doctrine and the official pronouncements of Soviet leaders which seem to indicate a more aggressive stance, as, for example, when they speak of "socialist" (read: Soviet) world hegemony, need not be taken too seriously. While

some intelligence analysts apparently do attach considerable significance to Soviet doctrinal pronouncements, the consensus reflected in NIEs holds that Soviet doctrine is primarily exhortative in character and possesses little if any operative significance. Its main function is to serve domestic politics, for which reason it represents a kind of Soviet counterpart to U.S. campaign oratory.

It is not difficult to perceive that the picture of Soviet motivations and intentions as implicitly or (less frequently) explicitly drawn in the NIEs is one which in all respects but one—namely, the acknowledgement of an abiding, historically-conditioned and extreme sense of national insecurity—is like that of the United States. The Soviet Union is seen as defensive-minded, concerned with securing merely an effective deterrence, preferring to shift the competition with the United States to other than military arenas so as to be able to transfer resources to the civilian sector, and lacking in any strategic objectives apart from those that are forced upon it by the United States and other potential adversaries. Superiority is something the Russians would not scorn if the United States were to allow them to gain it; but by the very nature of things, it is not an objective they can actively pursue, the more so that strategic superiority in the nuclear age is something of a phantom. The Russians indeed do display opportunistic proclivities but they are above all prudent, cautious, and conservative.

These assumptions permeate the analyses presented in the National Intelligence Estimates and often lead to quite unwarranted assessments. Examples of such procedures are given in Part Two of this Report which indicates how, partly by virtue of "mirror-imaging," and partly as a result of firmly held convictions about what it is the Russians must or ought to want, hard data are interpreted in a manner that closer scrutiny reveals to be at best questionable and at worst palpably unsound.

3. Critique of these assumptions

The point is that these assumptions do not stand up to scrutiny in the light of Soviet history, Soviet doctrine, and Soviet actions.

(1) To begin with, the tendency to view "insecurity" as the motor force propelling Soviet foreign and military policies. Although undoubtedly the desire to protect the homeland is a factor in

~~Top Secret~~

Russian behavior, it does not lead to a defensive posture in the ordinary meaning of the word: the Russians construe their own security in the sense that it can be assured only at the expense of their neighbors. This leads to an essentially aggressive rather than defensive approach to security. And in fact, Russian, and especially Soviet political and military theories are distinctly *offensive* in character: their ideal is the "science of conquest" (*nauka pobezhdat'*) formulated by the 18th Century Russian commander, Field Marshall A. V. Suvorov in a treatise of the same name, which has been a standard text of Imperial as well as Soviet military science.

There are valid reasons why Soviet political and military thinking should be offensive.

A. As a matter of the historical record, it is untrue that Russia has suffered an exceptional number of invasions and interventions: it has probably done more invading itself. The expansion of Russia as a continental empire is without parallel in world history: no country has grown so fast and none has held on so tenaciously to its conquests. It is no accident that Russia alone of all the belligerents has emerged from World War II larger than it had entered it. As concerns the celebrated interventions of the West in the Russian Revolution, most of what is said on this subject is myth pure and simple: suffice it to say that except on rare occasions Western troops did not actively fight the Red Army; that their intervention was a response to Soviet intervention in western politics (the call to class war and the overthrow of the existing governments); and that the net effect of U.S. intervention in the Russian Civil War has been to save Eastern Siberia for Russia from certain Japanese conquest. In other words, the Russian "right" to be obsessively concerned with security is a misconception based on a one-sided reading of history; indeed, if anyone has a right to be obsessed with security it is Russia's neighbors. It is really not surprising that "insecurity" plays a far lesser part in Russian thinking or psychology than is normally attributed to it. The Russian outlook, where politics and military affairs are concerned, has traditionally been confident and aggressive rather than anxious and defensive. Hence there is no reason to assume that the growth of military might will assuage the Russian appetite for expansion: the opposite proposition is far more plausible—the stronger they are and feel, the more likely are they to behave aggressively.

B. There are also internal reasons which push the Soviet leadership toward an offensive stance:

The great importance which Soviet political theory attaches to the sense of forward movement: the lack of any kind of genuine legitimacy on the part of the Soviet government compels it to create its own pseudo-legitimacy which rests on an alleged "mandate of history" and is said to manifest itself in a relentless spread of the "socialist" cause around the globe;

Connected with it, the attitude that in political, military, and ideological contests it is essential always to seize and hold the initiative;

Lack of confidence in the loyalty of the population (a World War II experience), especially where East Europe is concerned, and the fear of massive defections to the enemy in the event of prolonged defensive operations;

The better ability of the regime to exercise control over military commanders (as well as over the civilian population) in pre-planned, offensive operations, than under conditions where the initiative is left to the opponent;

The traumatic experience of the first few months of the Russo-German War of 1941-45, when a sudden Nazi onslaught caused immense Soviet losses in manpower and territory, and almost cost the Russians the war; the experiences of war in the Middle East in 1967 and 1973 have reinforced the belief of Soviet military in the value of decisive offensive action;

The conviction that in the nuclear age the decisive blows will be struck in the first hours of the conflict, and hence he who waits to strike second is almost certain to lose.

(2) There is no evidence either in their theoretical writings or in their actions that Soviet leaders have embraced the U.S. doctrine of mutual assured destruction or any of its corollaries. Neither nuclear stability, nor strategic sufficiency, nor "parity," play any noticeable role in Soviet military thinking. The Russians seem to have come to regard strategic nuclear weapons as weapons of unique capacity whose introduction has indeed profoundly affected military strategy, but which, in the ultimate analysis, are still means of persuasion and coercion and as such to be employed or not employed, as the situation dictates.

14

~~TCS 869146-76~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

They regard nuclear war as feasible and (as indicated below in Parts Two and Three) take many active steps to attain a capability to wage and win such a war. The attainment of nuclear parity with the United States has served only to strengthen their view of the matter. True, Khrushchev in the early 1960s, and for several years thereafter various spokesmen from Soviet institutes, appeared to accept mutual deterrence as a concrete fact in the face of U. S. strategic superiority and the then bleak prospects for the USSR to reverse that situation. These indications of serious internal consideration of Western concepts of nuclear balance disappeared as prospects for meaningful Soviet strategic superiority improved, although Soviet spokesmen continued to suggest to Western audiences that nuclear war could be mutually destructive. In any event there is no evidence that Soviet planners have adopted the essentials of U.S. strategic thinking with its linchpin, the theory of nuclear sufficiency: indeed, all the available evidence points to their deliberate and steadfast rejection of such Western concepts.

(3) There is no reason to assume that the Soviet leadership, like its U.S. counterpart, regards military expenditures as a waste and wishes to reduce the military budget in order to be able to shift resources to the civilian sector. For one, the priority enjoyed by the Soviet military seems unchallengeable. Secondly, the sharp civilian-military duality, basic to our society, does not exist in the USSR; hence, the Soviet military budget is not clearly differentiated from the civilian one. The reduction of Soviet military expenditures by so many billion rubles would not automatically release resources for the civilian population. Finally, it is unwarranted to assume *a priori* that the Soviet leadership is eager significantly to raise its population's living standards. The ability to mobilize the population not only physically but also spiritually is regarded by the Soviet leadership as essential to any successful war effort. Having had ample opportunity to observe post-1945 developments in the West, the Soviet leaders seem to have concluded that a population addicted to the pursuit of consumer goods rapidly loses its sense of patriotism, sinking into a mood of self-indulgence that makes it extremely poor material for national mobilization. There is every reason to believe—on the basis of both the historic record and the very logic of the Soviet system—that the Soviet regime is essentially uninterested in a significant rise of its population's living standards, at any rate in the foreseeable future. Certainly, the

prospect of acquiring additional resources for the civilian sector is for it no inducement for a reduction of the arms buildup.

(4) While the Soviet Union obviously, and for good reasons, keeps a very close watch on U.S. strategic developments, and, when necessary, adopts appropriate defensive countermeasures, there is no evidence that its long-term strategic planning is *primarily* influenced by what the United States or any other power happens to do. The Soviet Union is pursuing its own long term global objectives, doing all that is necessary to safeguard the home base, but without allowing the requirements of defense substantially to alter its offensive objectives. It is striking, for example, how little attention is paid in Soviet military literature (both open and classified) to SALT. In contrast to the United States, where strategic arms limitation is regarded as a central element in the development of the U.S.-USSR strategic balance, in Soviet literature SALT is treated as a minor sideshow without much influence on the overall strategic competition. Attention must also be called to the Soviet Union's response to what it must have perceived as the greatest threat to its security since the end of World War II, namely the conflict with China. Instead of depleting its Warsaw Pact forces to confront the Chinese threat, the Soviet Union proceeded in the 1960's to build up a powerful and substantially new military force on the Far Eastern front, thereby once again demonstrating that it does not intend actions by others to interrupt or deflect its own long term strategic planning.

(5) Since, as we have pointed out, the decisive motive in Soviet political and military thinking is not a defensive but an offensive spirit, the assumption that *growing Soviet strength will cause them to become less aggressive is unwarranted.*

(6) It is certainly true that the Russians have been prudent and generally cautious, and that they have avoided rash military adventures of the kind that had characterized nationalist-revolutionary ("fascist") regimes of the 1930's. As the record indicates, whenever they have been confronted with situations that threatened to lead to U.S.-USSR military confrontations, they preferred to withdraw, even at the price of some humiliation. The reason for this cautious behavior, however, lies not in an innate conservatism, but rather in military inferiority, for which reason one cannot count on it recurring as that inferiority

~~Top Secret~~

disappears. The Russians have a strongly developed sense of power relationships, of the equation of total power between adversaries, which they call the "correlation of forces." They believe that one's means should always match one's objectives, and hence that one should never engage oneself fully (i.e., without retaining a possibility of timely withdrawal) unless there is very high certainty that the correlation of forces is so favorable as to ensure success. (Their theorists claim, with unconcealed scorn, that "bourgeois" leaders habitually underestimate the strength of their opponents, rushing headlong into hopeless "adventures".) Whenever they feel that the correlation of forces is strongly in their favor, their doctrine calls on them to act decisively and with vigor. It may, therefore, be assumed that in proportion as the USSR gains strength and perceives the global "correlation of forces" shifting in its favor, it will act in a manner that in our definition will be less cautious.

(7) The internal pronouncements of Soviet civilian and military leaders concerning national objectives should on no account be dismissed as empty rhetoric. In authoritarian states, the will of individuals takes (by definition) the place of laws, for which reason formal pronouncements of the leader or leaders acquire quite a different significance and fulfill quite different functions from those they have in countries where governments are elected popularly and operate in accord with constitutional mandates. Communist rulers simply cannot say for internal consumption things which are significantly different from what they actually mean, or else they risk disorienting their subjects and disorganizing their administrations. (To the extent that they make contrary statements in private and "off the record" to Westerners, they can be assumed to have the purpose of influencing foreign public opinion.) One must bear in mind that the

decisions of the Soviet leadership, as officially enunciated, are filtered down to the masses by means of a vast and well-organized *agitprop* machinery, and are understood by the population at large to be formal directives. Nowhere can "mirror-imaging" be more deadly than in the treatment of Soviet pronouncements with that cynicism with which we are accustomed to respond to our own electoral rhetoric.

4. Conclusion

If we juxtapose the implicit and explicit assumptions of NIEs about the Soviet mentality and Soviet strategic objectives with what history, the exigencies of the Soviet system, and the pronouncements of Soviet leaders indicate, we are not surprised that *the NIEs consistently underestimate the significance of the Soviet strategic effort*. All Soviet actions in this field tend to be interpreted in the light of a putative sense of insecurity; aggressive intentions are dismissed out of hand. It is our belief that the NIEs' tendency to underestimate the Russian strategic drive stems ultimately from three causes: (1) an unwillingness to contemplate Soviet strategic objectives in terms of the Soviet conception of "strategy" as well as in the light of Soviet history, the structure of Soviet society, and the pronouncements of Soviet leaders; (2) an unconscious (and related) tendency to view the USSR as a country whose basic strategic objectives are limited to an assured defense of the home country, and (3) the resultant tendency to ignore or misinterpret evidence that points to different conclusions. In other words, such misjudgments as have been committed and to some extent continue to be committed are due not so much to the lack of evidence as to *the absence of a realistic overall conception of Soviet motives and intentions, without which the significance of such evidence as exists cannot be properly assessed*.

33. (Continued)

~~Top Secret~~

PART TWO

A CRITIQUE OF NIE INTERPRETATIONS OF CERTAIN
SOVIET STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

[Not Reproduced in This Volume.]

~~TCS 889140 76~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

PART THREE

SOVIET STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To be properly understood, the strategic objectives of the Soviet Union require, in addition to a realistic analysis of strategic nuclear force capabilities, continuous, careful monitoring of Soviet global activities: theoretical pronouncements of Communist leaders must be observed concurrently with Soviet actions in the military, political, and economic spheres in the various regions of the globe; the evidence thus obtained needs to be juxtaposed and synthesized. Such monitoring and synthesizing is not effectively realized at the present time in the U.S. Government, and there exists no document that provides an overview of Soviet "grand strategy". Given the absence of a study of this kind within the U.S. Government, the best that can be done here is to provide an outline of some of the outstanding features of Soviet global strategy, especially as it bears on the United States.

1. *Political Objectives*

The ultimate Soviet objective is (as it has been since October 1917) the worldwide triumph of "socialism", by which is meant the establishment of a system which can be best characterized as a regime of state capitalism administered exclusively by a self-perpetuating elite on the model of the Soviet Communist Party. Soviet leaders still strive for such a new global system, wholly integrated with the Soviet Union and directed from Moscow. Judging by pronouncements of leading Soviet theorists, this ideal continues to remain a long-range objective. However, the realities of an expanding Communist realm have induced the Soviet leaders to accept (at any rate, for the time being) a more limited and flexible formulation in which the USSR remains the authority of last resort and the principal protector but no longer the model which all Communist countries must undeviatingly

emulate. The East Berlin meeting of Communist parties held in June 1976 ratified this formulation; but only time will tell how willing the Soviet elite is to grant non-Soviet Communists a measure of political freedom.

It is adherence to the historic ideal of a worldwide Communist state and the steady growth of military confidence that lends Soviet policies that offensive character which is stressed in Part One of the present Report. Not the fear that "capitalism" will engage in an unprovoked assault against "socialism" but the desire steadily to reduce the "capitalist" realm and still to be able to deal with any possible backlash when it is in its death throes motivates Soviet political behavior.

The emergence of a worldwide "socialist" order is seen by the Soviet leadership as a continuous process, inexorable in nature but not without its pitfalls and temporary reverses. The ultimate triumph of the cause is seen as the result of economic, political and military processes which will bring about a series of convulsions in the structures of the Western world and end in their destruction. Once these conditions occur, Western Communist parties, leading the disaffected elements and backed by Soviet power, are expected to be able to assume control.

As noted, this historic process is perceived as occurring concurrently (though not necessarily in a synchronized manner) at all levels. Given this view, Communist "grand strategy" requires that a variety of weapons be utilized to stimulate the process of Western decline and to seize such opportunities as may present themselves while it is in progress. Thus, for example, the establishment of close Soviet economic ties with Third World countries or Soviet direct or indirect involvement in these countries can help to

~~Top Secret~~

weaken the links connecting "capitalist" economies with their essential sources of raw materials and cheap labor, and thereby help to accelerate "capitalism's" economic decline. Communist parties operating in the "capitalist" world can help organize disaffected groups of all kinds and with their assistance undermine orderly democratic processes; or else, where they are too weak to undertake such ambitious attempts, they can seek to have their members or sympathizers occupy key positions in the trade unions, government or academic centers so as to be in a position to paralyze industrial economies and democratic institutes at the appropriate time. Violently discontented ethnic groups, such as the Palestinians, can be taken under Soviet wings and encouraged to promote conditions of permanent turmoil over large geographic areas.

In other words, *strategic weapons*—defined as weapons capable of destroying an enemy's capacity to resist—*embrace in the Soviet understanding a greater range of instrumentalities of persuasion and coercion than is commonly dealt with in Western strategic analyses.* The Soviet objective is an international system totally responsive to a Soviet mandate. In such a system an antagonist's military capabilities must be effectively neutralized so that they cannot be used to resist Soviet aspirations. If necessary, ultimately the Soviet Union should be able to destroy those capabilities if the antagonist refuses to acquiesce. But this is not all. *Because the Soviet Union ultimately wishes to destroy not merely its opponents' fighting capacity but their very capacity to function as organized political, social, and economic entities, its strategic arsenal includes a great choice of political, social, and economic weapons beside the obvious military ones.* For this reason, *Soviet strategic objectives cannot be accurately ascertained and appreciated by an examination of the USSR's strategic nuclear or general purpose forces alone. Indeed, even an understanding of these military forces requires an appreciation of the leverage they can provide to attain economic and political objectives.* "Power" in the Soviet strategic understanding is perceived not merely as serving specific objectives (for example, "deterrence"), but as negating the enemy's ability to survive. *The grasp of this fact is fundamental for the understanding of Soviet strategy and Soviet strategic objectives.*

In the dualism "socialist-capitalist" which underpins Soviet thinking much as the dualism "good-evil"

did that of Manicheism, the United States occupies a special place. It is seen by Russia as the "citadel" of the enemy camp, the main redoubt without the final reduction of which the historic struggle cannot be won no matter how many victories are gained on peripheral fronts. By virtue of its immense productive capacity (and the resultant military potential), its wealth, prestige, its example and moral leadership, and—last but not least—its stockpile of strategic nuclear weapons, the United States is perceived as the keystone of the whole system whose demise is a precondition to the attainment of Communism's ultimate goal.

As seen from Moscow, the United States is something of a paradox in that it is at one and the same time both exceedingly strong and exceedingly weak. Its strength derives primarily from its unique productive capacity and the technological leadership which give it the capacity to sustain a military capability of great sophistication, dangerous to Soviet global ambitions. But the United States is also seen as presently lacking in political will and discipline, unable to mobilize its population and resources for a sustained struggle for world leadership, and devoid of clear national objectives. This assessment has led the Soviet Union to develop a particular strategy vis-à-vis the United States which, under the name first of "peaceful coexistence" and then "detente", has dominated its relations with the United States (except when overshadowed by immediate crisis situations as, e.g., Cuba in 1962 and Czechoslovakia in 1968) over the past two decades.

America's strategic nuclear capacity calls for a cautious Soviet external policy, wherever the U.S. enjoys an advantage or may resolutely resist, at any rate until such a time as the Soviet Union will have attained a decisive military edge. Not only do direct military confrontations raise a threat to the Soviet homeland, but they also tend to feed America's anxieties about the Soviet Union and thus to encourage a high level of military preparedness. An intelligent political Soviet posture toward the United States requires the allaying of the latter's fears of a Soviet threat. (Which does not mean, however, that USSR will hesitate to engage in direct confrontation if they deem it essential to achieve important national objectives). Economic relations ought to be utilized so as to create within the American business community influential sources of support for collaboration with the USSR. Cultural and scientific ties ought to be

42

~~TCS 869140-76~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

exploited so as to neutralize anti-Communist sentiments in the intellectual community. Encouragement ought to be extended to those American political groupings and to those office-holders and office-seekers who favor better relations with the Soviet Union. The effect of such a policy of "detente" is expected to be a reduction in the influence of those elements in U.S. society which desire greater military preparedness and military R&D, resulting in a weakening of the United States precisely in that sphere where lies its particular strength. Such a policy, furthermore, may bring the Soviet Union valuable additional benefits. As a result of closer economic and scientific links with the United States, the Soviet Union can expect to acquire capital and technology with which to modernize its economy, and in this manner to improve the quality of its military industries.

Soviet motivations for Strategic Arms Limitation Talks should be seen in the same way: They are means to further unilateral advantages instrumental to the continued shift of the strategic balance and to the realization of political gains from the shifting correlation of forces. SALT and the limitations it produces are seen as means of inhibiting U.S. political and military responses to the changing balance of forces. Agreements inconsistent with these ends or agreements that would restrict Soviet ability to further them are unacceptable. *The perception that there is any tension between Soviet interest in SALT and Soviet strategic programs reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the Soviet approach to SALT*, and of the types of "restrictions" that can be expected from SALT agreements at the present time.

At the same time, however, as provocations of the United States are avoided and economic, cultural, and political contacts with it exploited, nothing must be done that might slacken the global advance against the "capitalist" order of which the same United States is the principal protagonist. It appears that the *intermediate* Soviet strategic objective is to the greatest extent possible to *isolate the United States* from both its allies and the neutral countries of the Third World. This objective can be attained in several ways:

(1) As concerns America's allies: The most important of these are the countries of Western Europe combined in NATO followed by Japan, in the Far East. In respect to these countries, a primary

Soviet objective is to drive a wedge between them and the United States. The separation of Europe from the United States can be attempted by a variety of means: establishing on Europe's eastern frontier a military force of such overwhelming preponderance that resistance to it will appear futile and the continuation of NATO not only pointless but dangerous; making Western Europe increasingly dependent economically on the USSR by incurring heavy debts there, entering with it into all sorts of long-term cooperative arrangements, and supplying an increasing share of Western Europe's energy needs; insisting on the participation of Communist parties in national governments; arousing doubts in Western Europe about the U.S. commitments to its defense; and so forth. This objective undoubtedly enjoys very high priority in Russia's strategic thinking. Severance of Western Europe from the United States would reduce any military threat or opposition from that area as well as deprive the U.S. of its European forward bases, eventually bringing Europe's immense productive capacities within the Soviet orbit, thus making the "socialist" camp equal if not superior to the U.S. in economic (and, by implication, military) productive capacities.

(2) As concerns the Third World: Here the stress is on political and economic measures, backed with military means. The Soviet Union strives to sever the links connecting the Third World with the "capitalist" camp, and especially the United States, by:

(a) supporting those political groupings and bureaucracies which tend to identify themselves with policies of nationalizing private enterprises and which broadly back Soviet international policies;

(b) working to undercut such private economic sectors as exist in the underdeveloped countries, and eliminating the influence of multi-national corporations;

(c) reorienting these economies to the maximum extent possible toward the Soviet Union by means of military assistance programs, economic aid, loans, etc;

(d) building interlocking networks of base, overflight, military and logistic agreements etc. which permit the use of surrogate forces (e.g. North Koreans or Cubans) for the purpose of conducting military operations so as to outflank positions important to the West;

~~Top Secret~~

(e) through the creation of voting blocs of Third World countries in the United Nations and its agencies to isolate the United States from them.

(5) In its relations with China, the Soviet leadership has as its main immediate goal access to Chinese internal political developments with a view to influencing long range Chinese orientation in a direction consistent with its view of "Communist internationalism". To support such an evolution and as a hedge against failure in achieving such a future orientation, they intend to be able to face China with preponderant military force even in the contingency of military confrontation with the U.S., and if possible and necessary, with political and military encirclement.

While seeking to isolate the United States, disintegrate the Western camp, and contain China, the Soviet Union is concurrently striving to maintain and strengthen the grip on its own camp. Three principal policies have been initiated toward that end:

(1) Economic integration through the so-called "complex plan" adopted by Comecon under strong Soviet pressure in 1971 and now in the process of implementation. The "complex plan" is a long-term undertaking which strives to transform the separate "socialist" economies into a single supra-national economic system with an internal "division of labor." Investments, labor, research and development are to be shared in common. Given the Soviet Union's economic preponderance, not to speak of its political and military hegemony within the Communist Bloc, there can be little doubt that if it is ever fully carried out, the "complex plan" will give the USSR decisive control over the other "socialist" economies as well as over those countries which, through Soviet aid, are being drawn within the orbit of Comecon.

(2) Political and military integration, both of which the USSR is pressing on the other "socialist" countries. Examples of such pressures are attempts to amend the constitutions of the "Peoples' Republics" so as to assign the Soviet Union special status in their internal and external relations; hints of the need to bring about a closer political union between the "Peoples' Democracies" and the USSR; the Soviet effort to compel these republics to accept the principle that in case of a war between the USSR and China, they will be obliged to come to the aid of the Soviet Union; and recent decisions (made mainly for military

reasons) to integrate the East European highway and railway networks with those of the Soviet Union.

(3) The enunciation of a doctrine, called the "Brezhnev Doctrine" in the West and "proletarian internationalism" in the Soviet Union, which makes it both a right and a duty of the "socialist camp" to see to it (by military means, if necessary) that no country which had once made the transition from "capitalism" to "socialism" ever slides back and opts out of the "socialist bloc."

At this point, stress must be laid once again (as had been done in the Foreword to this Report) that *we are making no attempt to assess the probability of the Soviet Union attaining its strategic objectives*. There is, in fact, a great deal of evidence that the USSR is running into many difficulties with the implementation of its policies, and that the record of its grand strategy is often spotty. The evidence, however, supports the contention that the above are, indeed, Soviet objectives.

2. Military Objectives

In this global strategy, military power, including strategic nuclear weapons, have a distinct role to play. The Soviet Union, to an extent inconceivable to the average Westerner, relies on force as a standard instrument of policy. It is through force that the Communist regime first came to power, dispersed all opponents of its dictatorship, deprived the peasantry of its land, and established near-total control of the country. It is through military power that it defeated the Nazi attempt to subjugate Russia, and it is through the same means that it subsequently conquered half of Europe and compelled the world to acknowledge it as a "super-power." It is through sheer force that it maintains in the USSR its monopoly on authority and wealth. One may say that power in all its forms, but especially in its military aspect, has been the single most successful instrument of Communist policy, supplanting both ideology and economic planning on which the Soviet regime had originally expected to rely for the spread of its influence.* Thus,

* It is perfectly true, of course, that the use of force as a means of attaining and consolidating political power is not confined to Soviet Russia, being common in other parts of the world as well, including the West. However, what is rather unique to Soviet Russia is that here no serious attempt has been made in the nearly six decades that have elapsed since the coup d'etat of October 1917 to ground political power on a more stable foundation in which law and popular consent would play some significant role.

~~Top Secret~~

the regime has a natural predisposition to look to power, particularly in its most visible and readily applicable modes, as an instrument of policy, whether internal or external. This is the arena where it enjoys some decisive advantages over free societies, in that it can spend money on armaments without worrying about public opinion and mobilize at will its human and material resources. Militarism is deeply ingrained in the Soviet system and plays a central role in the mentality of its elite.

One of the outstanding qualities of Soviet military theory and practice is stress on the need for a great choice of options. This characteristic is to be seen in the broad spectrum of weapons in the arsenal of Soviet "grand strategy" as well as in the variety of military weapons which Russia produces. It would be quite contrary to ingrained habits for the Soviet elite to place reliance on any single weapon, even a weapon as potent as the strategic nuclear one. Its natural inclination is to secure the maximum possible variety of military options for any contingencies that may arise, all based on a real war-fighting capability, and thus both to produce at a high rate a broad range of arms and to accumulate stockpiles of weapons, old and new. This tendency alone militates against the USSR adopting a strategic policy that would place ultimate reliance on a single deterrent or on a "deterrence only" strategic posture. One of the fundamental differences between U.S. and Soviet strategic thought has been the rejection in Soviet doctrine and strategy of such concepts as mutual assured destruction, the underlying logic of which is that if deterrence fails neither side can hope to win a nuclear war. Rather, the main thrust of Soviet doctrine has been that in the event of a failure of deterrence, war-winning and national survival prospects can be improved by having in readiness balanced forces superior to those of the adversary, together with an effective civil defense system.

The USSR can be expected to continue pressing forward with large-scale diverse military programs on a broad front, any one of which might be regarded as containable by the West, but the cumulative effects of which may well be far more significant.

We do know that during Khrushchev's premiership there occurred a debate about the fundamentals of Soviet military doctrine, and in particular about the impact of nuclear weapons on doctrine. Khrushchev himself apparently encouraged a pragmatic examina-

tion of the prevalent Western view that the destructiveness of nuclear weapons had altered the nature of war to the extent that deterrence of war rather than war-fighting capabilities should determine military policy. This view challenged the fundamental Marxist-Leninist tenet drawn from Clausewitz that "war is an extension of politics by other means." Acceptance of the Western deterrence theory would have challenged the basic Marxist-Communist view that the capitalist world in its "death throes" is certain to lash out in war at the Communist camp.

This flirtation with Western concepts of deterrence was born in an era of obvious U.S. strategic superiority over the USSR. Eventually, the debate, which seems to have lasted until at least the mid-1960's, was settled in favor of the adherents of Clausewitz. The notion that strategic nuclear weapons had made general war mutually suicidal came to be denounced as heretical: the new doctrine declared that a nuclear war could be waged and won. The view which prevailed holds that in a general war "victory" will mean the triumph of Soviet military and political control over the world that emerges from the devastating conflict. (Within this framework, limiting civilian damage to the USSR is important not only as an end in itself but in relation to preserving the post-war political-economic power of the Soviet Union: hence, protection of the key cadres is of particular importance.) General nuclear war was still to be avoided if at all possible, which meant that other weapons in the Soviet arsenal—conventional military, political economic, etc.—were preferable instruments to support policy goals, with Soviet strategic nuclear weapons inhibiting Western counteractions.

The key decision adopted sometime in the 1960's seems to have had as one of its consequences the effort to build up all the branches of the military forces—strategic, conventional, naval—to the point where the Soviet Union could both confidently confront any possible hostile coalition raised against it (including a Sino-American alliance) and project its power in any region of the world where suitable opportunities might arise.

Since that time an intensified military effort has been under way designed to provide the Soviet Union with *nuclear as well as conventional superiority both in strategic forces for intercontinental conflict and theater or regional forces*. While hoping to crush the "capitalist" realm by other than military means, the

45

~~TCS 889140-70~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

Soviet Union is nevertheless preparing for a Third World War as if it were unavoidable. The pace of the Soviet armament effort in all fields is staggering; it certainly exceeds any requirement for mutual deterrence. The continuing buildup of the Warsaw Pact forces bears no visible relationship to any plausible NATO threat; it can better be interpreted in terms of intimidation or conquest. The rapid growth of the Soviet Navy also seems to be connected more with the desire to pose a threat than merely to defend the Soviet homeland. Intensive research and/or testing in the fields of Anti-Submarine Warfare, Anti-Ballistic Missiles, Anti-Satellite weapons, as described in Part Two of this report, all point in the same direction. So do the massive Soviet civil defense and hardening programs. And so does the high proportion of the national budget devoted to direct military expenditures. The intensity and scope of the current Soviet military effort in peacetime is without parallel in twentieth century history, its only counterpart being Nazi remilitarization of the 1930's.

Short of war, the utility of an overwhelming military power for Moscow may be described as follows:

(1) It enables the USSR to forestall a United States (and potentially a Chinese or combined U.S.-Chinese) effort to compel the Soviet Union to alter any of its policies under the threat of a nuclear attack;

(2) It accords the Soviet Union "super-power" status which it interprets to mean that no significant decisions can be taken in any part of the world without its participation and consent;

(3) It intimidates smaller powers, especially those located adjacent to the USSR, making them more pliant to Soviet wishes. Judging by their pronouncements, it appears that some highly placed Soviet leaders believe that even the U.S. acceptance of detente ultimately resulted from a recognition of the Soviet capacity to intimidate.

(4) It will in time give the Soviet Union the capacity to project its power to those parts of the world where pro-Soviet forces have an opportunity to seize power but are unable to do so without outside military help;

(5) It is a source of influence on countries which purchase or receive surplus Soviet arms, as well as of hard currency earnings;

(6) It is an instrument by means of which, in the decisive moment in the struggle for world hegemony, the retaliatory power of the United States can be preventively neutralized, or, if necessary, actively broken.

Military power has for the Soviet Union so many uses and it is so essential to its global strategy that the intensity and scope of its military buildup should not be in the least surprising.

3. Conclusion

The principal Soviet strategic objectives in the broadest sense may be defined as follows: Break up the "capitalist" camp by isolating the United States, its backbone, from NATO and the Third World; undermine further the disintegrating "capitalist" realm by promoting and exploiting such economic, political, and social crises as may occur in it over time; solidify the "socialist" camp and Russia's control over it; contain China; and all the time continue building up a military force of such overwhelming might that it can in due time carry out any global missions required of it by Soviet policies.

In the more narrow sense of strategic objectives used by NIE 11-3/8, the scope and vigor of Soviet programs, supported by identifiable doctrinal imperatives, leave little reasonable doubt that Soviet leaders are determined to achieve the maximum attainable measure of strategic superiority over the U.S., a superiority which provides conservative hedges against unpredictable wartime contingencies; which is unrestrained by concepts of "how much is enough?"; and which is measured not in Western assured destruction terms but rather in terms of war-fighting objectives of achieving post-war dominance and limiting damage to the maximum extent possible. We believe that Soviet leaders, supported by internal political factors that assign the highest resource priority to the military, place a high priority on the attainment of a superiority that would deny the U.S. effective retaliatory options against a nuclear attack. Short of that, the Soviets intend to have a substantial enough strategic nuclear-warfighting advantage to be able to bring their local military advantages in both conventional and nuclear forces to bear without fear of a U.S.—initiated escalation.

The question of the extent to which such goals remain mere long term aspirations or have become

~~Top Secret~~

practical and current objectives, as well as the question of timing, inevitably arise. It was pointed out in the Introduction that Team "B" focused on Soviet strategic objectives without trying to evaluate their chances for success, since the latter would require a net assessment which exceeds the scope of this effort. However, the team recognizes the overwhelming gravity of this question. Even without a net assessment, the team believes that it is possible, relying on the evidence available in Soviet pronouncements and in the physical data, to reach some judgments as to how the Russian leaders assess their chances of success.

The breadth and intensity of Soviet military programs, statements by Soviet leaders to internal audiences, available Soviet literature, and the growing confidence of Soviet global behavior, all lead us to

conclude that *in Soviet perceptions the gap between long-term aspirations and short-term objectives is closing*. This probably means that the Soviet leaders believe that their ultimate objectives are closer to realization today than they have ever been before. *Within the ten year period of the National Estimate the Soviets may well expect to achieve a degree of military superiority which would permit a dramatically more aggressive pursuit of their hegemonial objectives*, including direct military challenges to Western vital interests, in the belief that such superior military force can pressure the West to acquiesce or, if not, can be used to win a military contest at any level. The actions taken by the West to develop its political cohesion and military strength will be critical in determining whether, how, and when the Soviets press to such conclusion.

~~TCS 889140-76~~

47
~~Top Secret~~

NIC Master File

~~SECRET~~

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

18 January 1977

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
ON NATIONAL REVIEW PROGRAM

MEMORANDUM FOR: Recipients of NIE 11-4-77, "Soviet Strategic Objectives"

FROM : George Bush

1. The production of NIE 11-3/8-76 has disclosed a wide range of views within the Intelligence Community on the question of Soviet objectives for strategic forces, a question on which very little hard evidence is available. NIE 11-4-77, forwarded herewith, examines the broader question of Soviet strategic objectives overall, and is not intended to supersede NIE 11-3/8. NIE 11-4 uses a presentational technique different from that of 11-3/8. It is intended to help the reader understand the argument, rather than to resolve it.

2. For this reason NIE 11-4-77 is an unusual estimate. It presents two general lines of argument without requiring the NFIB principals to define their positions. Obviously, within these two general positions there are differences of emphasis among the individual agencies, but I believe that to state these would be more likely to hamper the reader's basic understanding of this important issue than to assist it.

George Bush
George Bush

Classified by 005827
Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5A(1),(2),(3)
Automatically declassified on
Date Impossible to Determine

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

SOVIET STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

KEY JUDGMENTS²

A. This Estimate addresses two closely related questions:

- Do the Soviet leaders now base policy—and the programs and activities which flow therefrom—on a belief that the USSR will continue to make substantial gains toward a position of overall dominance in the world? Do they now expect to achieve such a position in the next ten years?
- Have they come to believe—or will they soon—that aggressive actions on their part carry lower risks than earlier, and that these risks have become low enough to be acceptable to prudent yet ambitious men?

B. There is in the Intelligence Community agreement on some matters relevant to these questions and disagreement on others. Among the areas of agreement:

- The aims of Soviet global policy are far-reaching. The Soviet leaders' basic perception of the world still posits a struggle of two great systems, in which theirs will ultimately prevail. This outlook is reinforced by both defensive and expansionist impulses derived from Russia's history and boosted by the remarkable growth of Soviet power and prestige since World War II. Neither in its foreign policy nor its military policy does the USSR aim at long-term equilibrium between the two systems; instead it seeks a continual enhancement of its own power and influence.
- In prosecuting the struggle on multiple fronts, the Soviets see military power as a key instrument which can be used to attain strategic objectives without war.
- The Soviets have never accepted the concept of mutual assured destruction, with its connotation that some finite level of force is sufficient for deterrence, although they recognize mutual deterrence as a present reality that will be very difficult to alter. Moreover, trying to forge ahead of the US and at the same time

² The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force believes the frequent use of such words as fear, anxiety, worry, caution, and concern to describe the state of mind of the Soviet leadership is overdone. He warns the reader that he should not let this excessive use of these words distract from the obvious determination and drive of the Soviet leadership to achieve strategic military superiority.

1
~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

fearful of falling behind it, they are little disposed to adjust their military programs unilaterally so as to foster strategic stability, or to moderate them lest they provoke US program reactions.

- The Soviets aim at advantage in their military forces. They continue to press forward with a broad and vigorous program for improving their military capabilities to support their political objectives.
 - The striking thing about these programs is not that they have accelerated in the last few years but that they have grown at a more or less steady pace for two decades. We expect this growth to continue. Neither the creation of an acknowledged deterrent nor the achievement of acknowledged strategic parity has caused the effort to falter. Soviet military doctrine calls for capabilities to fight, survive, and win a nuclear war.
 - At the same time, the Soviets worry that they may fall behind in the qualitative military competition, and this further reinforces the priority of their research and development effort.
 - In the struggle, they are conscious of weaknesses on their own side, particularly those arising from economic and technological deficiencies and conflict with China. They are working to overcome these weaknesses, but they do not presently expect to remove them in the next decade.
 - On the other hand, beyond their obvious military strength, they credit themselves with other important assets: disciplined policy-making, social cohesion, and perseverance.
- C. Among our major disagreements:
- Some judge that the Soviets are persuaded that the US and the West, despite periodic rebounds, are in a long-term decline that will be reflected in a flagging of political resolve, military efforts, and economic growth. Others think the Soviets hope for this but do not count on it, and indeed may think that US and Western military effort is again on the rise.
 - Some believe that, in improving their military forces, the Soviets pursue the acquisition of a war-winning capability as a realistic objective. Others believe that the Soviets have no realistic expectation of attaining such a capability.

These disagreements lead to conclusions that, while not diametrically opposed, present significant differences of emphasis.

~~SECRET~~

D. One line of argument holds that, in the Soviet view, the global correlation of forces has in the 1970s shifted in the USSR's favor and that this trend is likely to continue. The US and its allies have entered upon a new stage in the "general crisis of capitalism" that will prove irreversible even if there are periodic recoveries. The problems of the Soviet economy and the dispute with China are serious but, on the plane of international competition, not debilitating. In this situation, the Soviets aim to achieve the degree of military superiority over the West needed to permit them to wage, survive as a national entity, and win a conventional or nuclear war. The Soviets see their improvements in survivability and in counterforce capabilities, air defense and ABM development, and broad hardening and civil defense programs in particular, and their improvements in conventional forces in general, as all contributing to this objective. While it is uncertain when the Soviets expect to gain such a decisive strategic superiority, they view this objective as practical and attainable in a programmed fashion. They expect to move closer to this goal over the next ten years. This trend, they believe, will increasingly enable them to deter US initiatives and to inhibit US opposition to Soviet initiatives, thereby advancing the Soviet objective of gaining a position of overall dominance in the world.

E. Another line of argument holds that, in Soviet thinking, the question is much more open. It too perceives an increased Soviet confidence, stemming much more from the achievement of parity in strategic forces than from other, nonmilitary trends. But this analysis holds that the Soviet leaders give greater weight than the preceding argument allows to the handicaps represented by the USSR's economic and technological weaknesses and its conflict with China. It believes that they attribute greater resilience to the capitalist economies and do not discount the recent turnaround in US defense spending as a short-term phenomenon. In this view, Soviet military programing and research is bent upon keeping pace with that of its adversaries as well as seeking margins of advantage wherever feasible. But Moscow does not have a realistic expectation of achieving a war-winning capability, particularly in the next decade. Expecting Soviet foreign policy to be assertive, this analysis nonetheless holds that Moscow's experience with the complexities of the external world does not at this point lead the Soviets to expect a series of advances that, by the mid-1980s, will cumulate into a finally decisive shift in the struggle. In short, this analysis attributes to the Soviets not a programmatic design for military superiority but a more pragmatic effort to achieve advantages where they can, and thus a more patient approach to continuing tough

3

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

competition together with a dedication to high and steady levels of effort in the elements of power. Moscow's calculus of the risks attending forward action may decline, but this has not yet happened and, if it does, the process will be slow and subject to cautious testing.

F. This Estimate is obviously not a net assessment, nor our judgment of the likely outcome in East-West competition. It is a summary of the range of Community perceptions of Soviet objectives and Soviet views of the prospects for significant gains in this competition. We agree on a wide range of Soviet objectives short of decisive military superiority over the West. Our differences are over the Soviet leaders' perception of the feasibility of achieving such superiority. Finally, we agree that Soviet risk-taking abroad in any specific situation will continue to be governed by Moscow's perception of interests and power at the particular time and place.

4

~~SECRET~~

35. NIE 11-4-78 *Soviet Goals and Expectations in the Global Power Arena*

~~SECRET~~

KEY JUDGMENTS

1. Soviet leaders appreciate that military strength is the foundation of the USSR's status as a global superpower, and will remain through the coming decade the key to its prospects in the world arena. They are sensitive to the view of some Westerners that other, nonmilitary factors, particularly international economic ones, may be acquiring a dominant role, and they know that the Soviet Union has little hope in the foreseeable future of becoming truly competitive with the advanced nations of the West in economic, technological, and social-cultural sources of influence and attraction. But they are persuaded by Soviet ideology, Russian history, and by their own life experiences to see political conflict involving the use of force or conducted in its shadow as the motor driving development both within states and in the international system. Their self-interest as well as their beliefs lead them in the conduct of foreign affairs to press global and regional issues of security, in which the weight of their military power can be brought to bear to political advantage.

2. To the extent that comprehensive comparisons are possible, it is clear that the USSR on balance has overcome its past military inferiority in relation to the United States. The Soviets know the USSR still lags in many defense-related technologies. They are envious and apprehensive about the latent technological potential of the US as a military competitor. But they have learned from their long experience of military competition with the United States that powerful domestic political pressures, of a kind to which they are largely immune, reinforce American criteria of military sufficiency, which are different from their own, in inhibiting fuller exploitation by the US of its enormous military potential.

3. The Soviets judge themselves to have a robust equality with the US in central strategic nuclear forces in which numbers and some characteristics, such as missile throw weight, compensate for technological deficiencies in their forces. Most important, the buildup of Soviet forces over the past 15 years has created a situation in which the US could not plausibly attack the USSR without the virtual certainty of massive retaliation.

- v -
~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

4. While the Soviets are aware that the converse is also true, they are conscious of emergent strategic capabilities that could by the early 1980s be perceived to give the USSR marginal advantages in a central strategic conflict-- for example, active and passive defenses, a survivable command and control system, and superior countersilo capabilities. Beyond that time frame, however, they are concerned that US progress in areas such as cruise missiles and advanced ICBMs could work against them should the US successfully exploit its present technological advantages.

5. The regional military balances that most concern the USSR are with Europe and China. In both regions the Soviets are relatively confident that they possess clear military superiority, subject to important qualifications. In Europe, Soviet superiority presupposes successful conduct of a swiftly initiated offensive drive to the west that could, however, be thwarted if it triggered large-scale NATO use of nuclear weapons or if it failed to achieve victory before NATO could bring its larger economic and population resources to bear on the course of the war. In Asia, Soviet military superiority would permit the USSR to defeat Chinese military forces in a wide range of conflict situations. But it could not at the nuclear level assuredly prevent China from striking a limited number of Soviet urban areas; nor would it permit the USSR to invade and occupy central China.

6. The Soviets have made steady progress in building naval capabilities to operate in the world's oceans beyond the coastal defense regions traditionally dominant in their planning. While this effort was driven largely by the pursuit of strategic defensive objectives in the central nuclear competition, it has carried the Soviet Navy to a role of distant area operations where showing the flag in peacetime and a contingent capability to disrupt US naval and maritime operations in the event of hostilities serve Soviet foreign policy interests.

7. Growing military aid efforts have served as the main conveyor of Soviet influence into the Third World. Under permissive conditions, Soviet military assistance and support to proxies have come to be an effective form of bringing Soviet power to bear in distant areas. Recent large-scale support to Cuban expeditionary elements in

- vi -
~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Africa has shown Soviet willingness to press forward, and to explore the limits of the USSR's ability to project military power short of direct combat involvement.

8. The irony of the Soviet military situation overall is that, on one hand, direct comparison between the USSR and its major opponents shows the USSR in increasingly favorable positions, but, on the other hand, Soviet military doctrine and security aspirations continue to present exceedingly heavy demands. Thus, in the strategic nuclear arena, Soviet doctrine posits the real possibility of a central nuclear war and of one side prevailing in such a conflict. This in turn sets to Soviet policy the task of providing effective war-fighting capabilities, beyond those of pure deterrence, that are difficult to attain against a determined opponent. Similarly, unremitting Soviet defense efforts are seen as required for confident superiority over NATO and, in less degree, over China. The military policy of the USSR continues to be influenced by a deeply ingrained tendency to overinsure against perceived foreign threats and to overcompensate for technological deficiencies. But no less than these influences, the ambitious standards of Soviet military doctrine, deriving from tenacious notions of international competition, drive Soviet military efforts and sustain Soviet anxiety about prevailing military balances.

9. The Soviets see their growing military strength in general as providing a favorable backdrop for the conduct of foreign policy. It causes the USSR to be perceived as a natural and legitimate participant in the development of global and regional security arrangements. Soviet leaders ascribe the progress of Moscow's policy of detente since the late 1960s in large measure to the growth of their military power.

10. Where a palpable Soviet military preponderance can be achieved, the Soviets believe that it will, over time, encourage regional actors to seek security arrangements based on Moscow's good will, with attendant political and military concessions, especially as the alternatives of military self-help and countervailing alliances prove less attractive. They view this as a long-term process best promoted by persistent diplomatic efforts and the steady amassing of military strength to alter the security environment gradually while avoiding unwanted crises. But the Soviets know that this process is subject to disruption

- vii -

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

by circumstances they can neither foresee nor be wholly confident they can control. In any crises that may supervene, military power is seen by the Soviets as necessary for defending their interests and for leveraging crisis solutions in directions acceptable to them.

11. Soviet foreign policy has long displayed both conservative and assertive behavior. Soviet leaders themselves see their foreign policy as essentially revolutionary, resting on the expectation of fundamental changes in the international system and within the states that constitute it, and deliberately seeking--though cautiously and intermittently--to help bring these about. Their ideology and their experience in world affairs impart to Soviet leaders a mentality that permits near-term temperance and agile pragmatism to coexist with a deep sense of manifest destiny for Soviet power in the world. It sustains Soviet policy in steady pursuit of systemic shifts in the world through small steps, and guards its fundamental beliefs against demoralization and massive reappraisals in the face of reversals. The Soviets see the sweep of postwar international affairs as broadly confirming their convictions about the march of history. Because their beliefs about the course of world politics have deep cultural roots and stem from an ideology that confers domestic political legitimacy, even profoundly novel or disconcerting developments, such as the appearance of nuclear weapons and the defection of China, have not undermined their governing orthodoxy.

12. On balance, the performance of Soviet foreign policy under their rule is rated by present Soviet leaders as a success, and much of this success is attributed to the cumulative political impact of growing Soviet military power. This judgment is drawn in the light of a previous history of gross inferiority and desperate conditions in which options for assertive foreign policies were seriously constrained. Not only did Soviet policy succeed in averting disastrous possibilities, but it secured acknowledged coequal superpower status with the United States and moved the Soviet Union steadily into new areas at relatively low risk.

- viii -

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

13. Although they expect fluctuations in their fortunes abroad, the Soviets still see basic trends in the world as positive for themselves and negative for the United States. In seeking to capitalize on these trends, however, they are beset by problems of various kinds. In areas where they have actively sought to advance their influence they have suffered a number of setbacks, some of them very costly. Events of recent years in Egypt, Sudan, and Somalia provide examples. Elsewhere, as in Vietnam, Angola, and Ethiopia, they have been more successful. Although not oblivious to the costs and risks incurred by these enterprises, the Soviets see them as the inevitable accompaniment of a forward policy in the Third World.

14. While the Soviets have won recognition as the strongest military power in Europe and a legitimized role in the management of European security, they have not succeeded in winning the full respect for Soviet interests and preferences that they have sought. Some domestic developments in Western Europe, particularly the rising fortunes of Eurocommunism, give new promise of weakening NATO, but at a possible cost of further diminishing Soviet influence over European Communist parties and eventually of contaminating Eastern Europe.

15. To Soviet leaders the strategic meaning of US-Soviet detente is the management of change in world politics in ways that control costs and risks while constraining as little as possible Soviet efforts to exploit fresh opportunities for gain. Such processes as the strategic arms limitation talks (SALT) and US-Soviet cooperation in regional security negotiations allow the superpower competition to be monitored and modulated. On occasion, they offer Soviet leaders opportunities for exerting by diplomatic means influence that might not otherwise be available or require more costly or risky measures to pursue. These processes also oblige Soviet leaders to calibrate their own competitive behavior against the risks of disrupting detente, particularly in areas where core US interests are perceived to be deeply engaged. This concern does not, however, appear to have reduced the USSR's willingness to pursue competitive advantages vigorously in areas such as Africa, where Moscow may perceive US interests to be less deeply engaged or US policy more hamstrung by domestic political constraints.

- ix -
~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

16. The Soviets probably expect to continue the military programs they have pursued in the last 10 years, with some marginal shifts in emphasis. They probably expect to improve somewhat on their present strategic relationship with the United States, at least temporarily in the period 1980-85; to keep their overall advantages in relation to China and NATO; and to make steady progress in the kinds of forces and access necessary for projection of their influence in third areas.

17. Soviet international behavior in the 1980s is likely to include a purposeful, cautious exploration of the political implications of the USSR's increased military strength. Soviet policy will continue to be competitive and assertive in most areas of engagement with the West. In crisis situations, the Soviets are likely to be more stalwart in defense of their declared interests than they have been in the past, particularly during the Khrushchev period. They will probably continue to assert the right to experiment with unsettled political-military conditions, as they have recently in Africa, in search of enduring new beachheads of influence.

18. On the whole, such a prognosis, while projecting some increase in the assertiveness of Soviet external behavior, represents a fairly natural evolution of the USSR's foreign policy. The changes from past behavior that are implied are gradual and unbroken, and are rooted in the basic perceptions and values that have long informed Soviet policy. It is therefore essentially a prognosis of continuity, taking into account, however, the greatly enhanced military capabilities and more insistent claims to a global role associated with the USSR's emergence as a superpower.

19. Soviet leaders are aware that current trends they now discern in international relations could be disrupted by large discontinuities they can envisage but not predict. Among those that would present major challenges to their interests are: reversion of the US to a "cold war" posture, large-scale Sino-American military cooperation, new wars in the Middle East or Korea threatening Soviet-American military confrontation, and widespread violent upheaval in Eastern Europe. Other abrupt changes could present major new opportunities: Sino-Soviet accommodation, revolutionary regime changes in Saudi Arabia or

- x -
~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Iran, and defection from the US alliance system of Japan or a major West European state. Soviet leaders probably regard their military investments as both a hedge against possible adverse contingencies and as providing options for exploitation of possible windfalls.

20. Soviet leaders are sensitive to a range of domestic problems that seem likely to become aggravated in the coming decade, but evidently do not now see them as having the potential to raise challenges of a fundamental kind to the conduct of their foreign policy. In Soviet conditions, uncertainty, if not crisis, inevitably attends political succession, which will soon be upon them. Agriculture remains a major drag on the economy, serious energy and manpower problems are looming, and Soviet economic growth has slowed to the point where it probably already lags behind the growth in military spending. Far-reaching solutions to these problems might in the future require important shifts in the pattern of resource allocations and corresponding modifications of Soviet foreign and military policies, but the Soviet leadership as yet shows no signs it is preparing for radical new departures.

21. During the coming decade a substantial renovation of the top Soviet leadership is virtually certain. While the new Soviet leaders will have been promoted from the same political and social milieu as their predecessors, generational differences could affect their outlook in ways important for the future conduct of Soviet foreign and military policies. To a successor leadership, the USSR's superpower status may appear not so much the culmination of prolonged and costly efforts that must above all be consolidated, but as a point of departure from which to exert more pervasive leverage on world affairs. Alternatively, but less likely, younger leaders, lacking the conditioning preoccupation of their elders with the experience of confronting external threats from stronger opponents, may be inclined to give overriding priority to the solution of internal problems which their predecessors allowed to accumulate.

22. In any event, the new leaders, relatively inexperienced in managing the USSR's external affairs, will be impressionable in the early post-Brezhnev years and

- xi -

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

strongly influenced by their perceptions of the opportunities and risks of more venturesome foreign policies, on one hand, and of the costs and benefits of seeking more cooperative relations with the West, on the other. The quality and effectiveness of US international policies, particularly in areas of defense, in alliance cohesion, and in the Third World, are likely to be the principal external factor shaping the perceptions of new Soviet leaders.

The Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, agrees with the general thrust of this Estimate that the USSR will continue to insist on being treated as a military coequal of the United States and that it will be no easier--indeed, perhaps more difficult--to deal with in the coming decade. However, he believes this Estimate tends to overemphasize the Soviets' perceptions of their own military power and undervalues political and economic considerations.

Specifically, the Director, INR, believes that the Soviets have a less positive, even more ambivalent view of the military balance in Europe and would be less confident of the superiority of the Warsaw Pact's forces over those of NATO than the net judgments of the Estimate suggest. INR believes that, in assessing the balance in Europe, the Soviets are very conservative in their calculations and make a number of assumptions which highlight their own weaknesses and Western strengths; the Soviets have greater fear of Western attack than the Estimate suggests. For these reasons, INR would draw the following implications of Soviet perceptions of the European balance:

-- INR believes that Soviet programs to improve tactical aviation, upgrade armored forces, and enhance tactical nuclear capabilities are intended to remedy what Moscow evidently regards as weaknesses rather than to maintain or enlarge existing advantages. If so, Soviet motives would appear to be more compelling than the text suggests, and Moscow's efforts may be more intense.

- xii -

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-- We doubt that the Soviets consider themselves to be in an appreciably better position militarily--and hence possibly more inclined--than they were 15 years ago to link a crisis in a third area to Europe. In terms of strategy, Moscow could easily manage to assemble a much superior force against the Western garrisons in Berlin, just as it could have done in earlier decades; moreover, the Soviet reckoning of the results of escalating such a localized confrontation would not be very different from what it was before. The Soviets would still have to count on the dangers of a major engagement of large ground forces and its potential for escalation to one or another degree of nuclear warfare.

In addition, INR would note that the arms control motives attributed to the Soviets in the Estimate are essentially those which would apply to any participant in arms control negotiations. For example, they reflect a desire to prevent or slow the competition in areas where they are disadvantaged, and the desire to trade minimal restraint on their side for maximum restraint on the other. The Soviets probably see a range of potential benefits--political and economic as well as military--in arms control. At the same time, however, they also realize that there are practical limits to what arms control negotiations can accomplish.

- xiii -

~~SECRET~~

36. NIE 11-3/8-79 Soviet Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict Through the 1980s

~~Top Secret~~

SUMMARY ²

1. During the next few years, Soviet strategic capabilities will continue to grow relative to those of the United States and NATO. The Soviets have pursued steady, persistent strategic programs for many years, while new Western programs remain largely in planning and development phases. We believe that important aims underlying these Soviet programs are to strengthen the USSR's deterrent, to support its foreign policy, and to foster strategic stability through Soviet advantage. In these efforts, however, the Soviets would face less favorable strategic trends over the longer term if additional and more formidable weapons now in prospect are deployed by the United States and NATO in the middle and late 1980s.

2. Throughout the 1980s, with or without SALT limitations, the retaliatory capabilities of US and Soviet forces surviving even a surprise attack would be very large. In the early 1980s, when Soviet forces would have greater capabilities than today to reduce US surviving weapons in a surprise attack, the Soviets would still have to expect the United States to retain the potential to destroy a large percentage of the USSR's economic and military assets. Similarly, despite the improvements planned for US forces in the late 1980s, the Soviets could expect to retain the potential for massive retaliation against US economic and military facilities, even under circumstances of a US surprise attack. This Soviet potential, however, would be less than in the early and middle 1980s, and such a prospective decline is cause for Soviet concern.

3. In seeking to meet the challenges posed by prospective US and NATO force improvements, we believe that the Soviets would hope to avoid substan-

tial further increases in the costs of their strategic programs. We believe that principal Soviet aims will be to slow or halt the Western programs through a combination of threats, inducements, and arms negotiations and, at the same time, to continue to develop force deployment options that could counter these programs. The Soviets would have more latitude to develop and deploy such counters if they were not bound by the limits of SALT II or if those limits were to lapse in 1985. If Western strategic programs proceed as planned and SALT II limits are not changed, the Soviets could find it increasingly difficult to reconcile their strategic force objectives with their desire to continue the SALT process.

4. We do not expect immediate, irreversible responses by the USSR to US deferral of the SALT Treaty. We believe the Soviets will wish, at least initially, to avoid visible changes in strategic programs that could seriously jeopardize the chances of eventual US ratification. They could, however, take measures designed to pressure the United States, with the idea of reversing them later if the Treaty were eventually ratified. A US rejection of the Treaty, particularly in light of prospective US and NATO force improvements, would probably result in a combination of actions by the Soviets that would increase their forces and capabilities beyond those they could have under the SALT II agreement.

A. Soviet Strategic Planning for the 1980s

5. The Soviet leaders view their strategic requirements in the context of persistent long-term struggle between social systems, continuing rivalry with the

² The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy, the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, and the Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps, disassociate themselves from this volume and its characterization as a Summary of the Estimate. In general, they believe the Summary is not representative of the intelligence analyses developed in the Estimate. In their judgment, it concentrates on quantitative information at the expense of intelligence concerning Soviet doctrine, policy, capabilities, future programs, and possible initiatives. In their view, the extensive use of comparative force analysis in the Estimate drives and distorts the Estimate's judgments, especially in this Summary volume.

The holders of this view also consider the judgments outlined in the Summary as unduly shaped by US perceptions and strategic thinking and not properly reflective of Soviet strategic objectives. The Summary should emphasize that the Soviets are pursuing strategic nuclear capabilities for motives quite different from those of the United States. Because of this misplaced emphasis, the Summary fails to explain satisfactorily the comprehensive nature of Soviet strategic planning involving both offensive and defensive systems. The very great political and conventional military consequences of the asymmetries in strategic forces and doctrine are not adequately addressed.

~~Top Secret~~

United States for global power and influence, and concern for the policies and forces of countries on the Eurasian periphery, especially NATO and China. Within this framework, the Soviets seek strong and growing strategic capabilities to provide:

- A powerful deterrent against nuclear attack by any adversary.
- Along with other military forces, the prospect of greater freedom of action in the world arena while minimizing the risk of nuclear war.
- An improvement in the chances that, if nuclear war should occur, the USSR could survive and emerge in a better position than its adversaries.

6. The Soviets have made substantial progress toward these goals over the past 15 years. Their strategic forces are generally acknowledged to be equal to those of the United States, and are superior to those of all their other adversaries combined. Despite Soviet progress, however, powerful US retaliatory capabilities would survive even successful Soviet initial strikes, and active and passive Soviet defenses could not prevent the devastation of the USSR. From their statements and writings, it is clear that the Soviet leaders perceive the present US-Soviet strategic relationship as one in which each side could inflict massive damage on the other side under any circumstances. The Soviets would prefer a relationship in which deterrence and strategic stability were assured by Soviet possession of superior capabilities to fight and survive a nuclear war with the United States.

7. The Soviets probably view their improved strategic position as providing a more favorable backdrop than before to the conduct of an assertive foreign policy and to the projection of Soviet power abroad. They probably do not see the present situation of approximate strategic nuclear parity as providing them with the latitude to safely confront the United States directly in areas where they perceive US vital interests to be involved. However, in areas that they believe the United States regards as less central to its interests, particularly in regions where the USSR enjoys a preponderance of conventional forces and the advantage of proximity, such as Afghanistan, the current strategic relationship probably enhances Soviet confidence that the risk of a US local or escalatory military response would be negligible.

8. There is an alternative view which holds that the increasing aggressiveness of Soviet foreign policy will expand as the Soviet Union's advantages in strategic

nuclear forces become more pronounced. The Soviets may now perceive that they have nuclear superiority. As they see this superiority increase during the next three to five years, they will probably attempt to secure maximum political advantages from their military arsenal in anticipation of US force modernization programs. Moreover, the holders of this view sense that the Soviet leadership remains uncertain about the bounding of US national interests and American resolve to meet challenges to these interests. If such uncertainties continue, there is the distinct danger that the USSR may grossly miscalculate US reactions during a regional crisis and thus set the stage for a serious military confrontation between the superpowers.³

9. This year the Soviets find themselves at what they may well regard as a critical juncture in their planning for future strategic forces. They are nearing the end of large ICBM and SLBM deployment programs and the beginning of a new five-year economic plan. They confront growing internal economic problems, which could be complicated by a transition in leadership some time soon. External problems include deteriorating relations with the United States and China, uncertainty about US ratification of the SALT II Treaty, and a growing Western determination to counter improvements in Soviet military forces. Further, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the international condemnation that it incurred probably indicate that, in their present planning, the Soviets are not counting on much benefit from detente.

10. The Soviets must now plan for the middle and late 1980s, a period that they almost certainly perceive as posing major challenges. US Trident submarines and air-launched cruise missiles will make it even harder for them to overcome their insufficiencies in antisubmarine warfare and in air defense. Planned new NATO long-range theater nuclear forces could reduce the large Soviet advantage in forces for peripheral attack; long-range cruise missiles in the European theater would be of particular concern to the Soviets. Finally, the Soviets would see deployment of an MX/MPS system as giving the United States the potential in the late 1980s to destroy the bulk of their ICBM silos and as restoring a measure of survivability for the US ICBM force. The Soviets interpret these Western programs as attempts to regain a strategic

³ The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force; and the Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps.

4

~~TCS 3112 80/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

advantage rather than as countervailing responses to Soviet initiatives.

11. SALT considerations will figure heavily in Soviet decisions about how to deal with these challenges. As would be expected, the Soviets negotiated the SALT II Treaty so as to protect program options they considered crucial to their strategic needs during the period of the Treaty. The Soviets do not appear to have strategic requirements so pressing as to cause them to make major visible alterations in their strategic programs in the coming months, while US ratification of the Treaty is deferred. They have indicated their willingness, if the Treaty is ratified, to proceed promptly to negotiate further reductions and limitations, but their aims would be complicated by the new Western programs. Moreover, the Soviets might find it difficult to accept continuation beyond 1985 of the SALT II limitations on new ICBMs, ICBM fractionation, and perhaps total numbers of launchers. These provisions would limit their options for increasing the counterforce capabilities and survivability of their land-based missile forces in response to the US MX/MPS and other programs. We are, therefore, uncertain whether the Soviets would be willing to extend such limits beyond 1985.

12. Economic considerations are also a factor in Soviet planning for strategic forces in the 1980s. Energy, demographic, and productivity problems are adding to Soviet economic difficulties. To help ease these difficulties, the Soviets might consider reducing the rate of growth of military spending. However, the evidence available to us on current and planned Soviet programs leads us to conclude that growth in total defense spending and in spending for strategic programs over the next few years will be at or near the historic long-term rate of 4 to 5 percent a year. If the Soviet leaders should perceive economic pressure so severe that they had to consider a moderation of the rate of growth in their defense spending, we believe they would not single out strategic programs for a major reduction in growth.

13. Several major factors lead us to believe that the Soviets are not likely to alter significantly their commitment to long-term strategic force improvements. These factors include the following:

- Continued progress toward the achievement of Soviet objectives for strategic nuclear forces remains a priority element in leadership planning.

- A cutback in Soviet strategic forces would have only a limited effect on the USSR's most serious economic problems.
- The momentum of Soviet strategic programs would be hard to arrest, particularly in a period of leadership transition.
- New signs of Western determination and the deterioration of detente probably will contribute to continued Soviet determination to seek to shift the correlation of forces in the USSR's favor.
- The possibility, however remote, of large-scale nuclear war will continue to support efforts to improve Soviet war-fighting capabilities.

Thus we believe that, while seeking to slow or halt US and NATO weapon programs, the Soviets will at the same time initiate and continue programs designed to overcome current weaknesses, especially in their strategic defenses, and to give themselves options to counter the prospective Western programs.

B. Main Current Trends in Soviet Programs

14. Much evidence on past and present Soviet strategic programs leads us to believe that the Soviets have been striving to acquire and maintain strategic forces and supporting elements that, in the event of nuclear war, could:

- Launch crippling counterforce strikes.
- Survive large-scale nuclear attack.
- Be employed flexibly against a wide range of targets.
- Substantially limit damage to the USSR.

15. The number of Soviet weapons with good counterforce capabilities is increasing rapidly:

- Conversion of 820 older silos to make them capable of launching ICBMs with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) will be completed in 1981.
- The latest MIRVed versions of the SS-18 and SS-19, now being deployed, are considerably more accurate than earlier versions of these missiles and have substantial hard-target capabilities.
- Available evidence still points to Soviet programs for five new or modified ICBMs. The characteristics of at least some of them will probably

5

~~TCS 3112-50/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

include improved reliability and even better accuracies

- Flight-testing of follow-ons to the SS-17, SS-18, and SS-19, however, is not likely to occur for a few years. The Soviets have already incorporated into their current systems major [] modifications that we had expected to appear on the follow-on systems, and they are still working on other modifications.

16. The Soviets are steadily improving the *survivability* of their strategic forces and supporting elements. Recent developments include:

- The much greater hardening of silos as they are converted to accommodate MIRVed ICBMs, and research and testing to make the silos even harder.
- The continued deployment of MIRVed, mobile IRBMs and [] development of two solid-propellant ICBMs, at least one of which could be deployed on mobile launchers.
- The further deployment of MIRVed SLBMs and an increase in the number of SSBNs on patrol or in transit. Additional increases are likely in the 1980s, especially with deployment of the new, large Typhoon submarine and missile.
- The continued expansion and protection of capabilities for command, control, and communications by a combination of hardening, redundancy, and mobility.

17. The Soviets are adding to their capabilities for *flexible employment* of strategic nuclear forces under a variety of circumstances:

- The deployment of MIRVed missiles and the improvement of command and control systems are adding to Soviet targeting flexibility.
- Aerodynamic systems are being retained as part of both intercontinental and peripheral attack forces. Backfires continue to be deployed. A new bomber and cruise missile carrier are under development, but we now doubt that they could be operational until after 1985. The development of a long-range air-launched cruise missile (ALCM) continues.
- The SS-20 IRBM is adding to Soviet striking power and flexibility for attacking targets in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. A variant of the SS-20 is being flight-tested. Some older

MRBM and IRBM sites have been deactivated, but some of the launch-related equipment and missiles are apparently being transferred to remaining active sites.

- The Soviets are increasing the proficiency of their command and control system []

- The Soviets are improving their ability to launch their missiles on receipt of tactical warning. They are completing large new radars that will improve ballistic missile early warning. Their launch detection satellite program is still in difficulty, however.

18. The capability of Soviet strategic defenses to contribute to *limiting damage* to the USSR remains low despite large, continuing Soviet investments. Weapon systems now being tested should bring some improvement, notably in strategic air defenses.

- In strategic air defense, the Soviets are starting to deploy new versions of existing interceptors, but their low-altitude capabilities will be limited. Modified and new interceptors with lookdown/shutdown capabilities are being flight-tested, and deployment of a new low-altitude surface-to-air missile system is imminent. An airborne warning and control system (AWACS) that is being tested probably will have capabilities over land as well as over water. These systems will have better capabilities against low-altitude bombers, but they probably will have only limited capabilities against cruise missiles. There is as yet no evidence of active development of systems designed specifically to intercept cruise missiles at low altitudes.
- In ballistic missile defense, the Soviets are continuing to develop an ABM system that could be deployed more rapidly than the Moscow system. The R&D program for antiballistic missiles could give them options in the 1980s for upgrading their present ABM system at Moscow or for deploying ABM defenses more widely.
- In antisubmarine warfare (ASW), intensive efforts are under way to improve both acoustic and nonacoustic sensors. However, Soviet towed-array sonar development is not as far along as we had thought. []

6

~~TCS 0112 80/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

- In directed-energy technology, the Soviets are conducting a broadly based research program to investigate applications for strategic defense. They are continuing to develop laser weapon prototypes for testing against aerodynamic vehicles, satellites, and ballistic missile reentry vehicles.
- In civil defense, new evidence and analysis show that the proportion of urban residents that could be accommodated in blast shelters is toward the low side of our previous estimate of 10 to 20 percent. This reinforces our belief that the Soviets would have to rely on city evacuation as their principal means of protecting the urban population. The Soviets, however, could shelter a large proportion of their political leadership and many key industrial workers.
- The Soviets have operational systems capable of attacking or degrading some US satellites and are probably working to improve their capabilities.

C. Future Soviet Forces for Strategic Attack

Possible Soviet Reactions to MX/MPS

19. *Under SALT II.* While the Soviets will try to halt or severely limit the MX/MPS system, they can also be expected to use the time between now and the middle 1980s to develop counters to both the hard-target capabilities and the survivability features of the US system. One of the first indicators of the Soviets' response is likely to be the missile they choose to flight-test as the one new type of ICBM permitted them under SALT II restrictions. They could select either of two new solid-propellant ICBMs [a small system that could be deployed on offroad mobile launchers but could carry no more than a few MIRVs, and a medium system that could be fitted with a large single reentry vehicle or with up to 10 MIRVs but, if deployed in a mobile configuration, probably would be restricted to improved roads or special deployment areas. Alternatively, the Soviets could develop a medium-size liquid-propellant ICBM to carry 10 RVs, but such a system could not easily be deployed in a mobile mode and we have no evidence that it is under development.

20. At present, the Soviets are keeping their options open. We assume that, under SALT II limitations, they

would choose as their new ICBM a single-RV medium solid system to replace the SS-11, and would deploy it in silos and perhaps on mobile launchers. We think they would also develop—but not flight-test—a MIRV version of this system and a more highly fractionated version of the SS-18. By these actions they could minimize disruptions to their present ICBM programs and be ready to flight-test and deploy ICBMs with greater numbers of RVs if the SALT II limitations expired at the end of 1985. We do not have high confidence that the Soviets will follow this course of action. A 10-RV replacement for SS-17s or SS-19s, or both, seems only a little less likely than a single-RV replacement for SS-11s, especially if the Soviets expected SALT II limitations to be extended beyond 1985 and wanted to maximize their counterforce RVs within these limitations.

21. *Under No-SALT Conditions.* If the SALT limitations on offensive arms were abandoned this year and the Soviets embarked on a major program of force improvement and expansion, they would have more options to respond to the prospect of MX/MPS deployment. They could take full advantage of their large ICBM throw weight and their ongoing R&D programs. Anticipatory actions could be taken gradually, without disrupting near-term Soviet programs. For example, we would expect the Soviets to deploy 14 RVs on SS-18s after a brief flight test program, and to deploy another version with still more RVs in about 1985. A MIRVed medium solid ICBM could be deployed without having to replace existing SS-17s and SS-19s, which themselves could be upgraded to carry more MIRVs. The smaller solid-propellant ICBM could also be flight-tested and deployed. Mobile ICBM launchers as well as additional SLBM launchers could be deployed without compensatory dismantling. We believe that, through such means, the Soviets would seek to counter the US MX/MPS and other programs as they emerged.

Soviet Intercontinental Striking Forces

22. Our projections of Soviet intercontinental striking forces reflect our judgment that the USSR will continue its historical heavy reliance on ICBMs, secondary reliance on SLBMs, and maintenance of a relatively small force of aerodynamic systems for intercontinental attack. The four projections we display illustrate alternative future Soviet force levels under various assumptions about SALT. The projections are based on observed recent trends and our best estimates of Soviet technological progress, and are

7

~~TCS 3112 30/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

made in the light of Soviet objectives for strategic forces as well as US strategic program options. They are not confident estimates of what the Soviets will actually do over a period as long as 10 years ahead, especially in this period of transition in Soviet and US programs

23 We project two moderate SALT-limited (Mod SAL) Soviet forces, in which we assume that the SALT II Treaty enters into force this year and remains unchanged through mid-1989. In the first force we assume that the Soviets elect as their permitted one new type of ICBM a medium solid-propellant missile with a large single RV, and deploy it in upgraded SS-11 silos and on mobile launchers. The second Mod SAL force illustrates the effects of a Soviet decision to maximize the number of ICBM RVs within SALT II limits, by replacing all SS-17s and SS-19s with a medium solid-propellant system having 10 RVs, deployed in silos and on mobile launchers.

24 We project a third force (termed SAL/No-SAL) which illustrates the Soviet potential to develop and deploy additional forces and to respond to the MX/MPS system if SALT II limitations are in force through 1985, but expire at the end of that year. This projection assumes that the USSR prepares in advance for rapid, subsequent improvements in the counterforce capability and survivability of its offensive forces.

25 A fourth force (Mod No-SAL) illustrates Soviet development and deployment options under circumstances in which the SALT II Treaty is abandoned this year, the SALT process breaks down, and US-Soviet relations deteriorate still further. In this environment, we believe the Soviets would be motivated to compete more vigorously with the United States by deploying additional improved systems. Further, without SALT II constraints they probably would retain many of the older systems that would have been deactivated under the provisions of the Treaty. The projection assumes that the Soviets would field a large force of highly fractionated ICBMs to increase their striking capabilities, and that they would seek still further to improve the survivability of their forces by deploying larger numbers of mobile ICBMs and MIRVed SLBMs.

Static Comparisons of US and Soviet Intercontinental Striking Forces

26. Figure 1 illustrates projected trends in the number of weapons in future Soviet forces and in their

explosive power, with and without SALT II limitations. The top two charts compare the moderate SALT-limited Soviet forces, and the SAL/No-SAL force, with a US SALT-limited force that is based on Department of Defense projections. The charts show that the projected Soviet SALT-limited forces would improve relative to the projected US force in the early and middle 1980s, but that the trends would become less favorable to the Soviets in the second half of the decade if SALT II limits remained in effect throughout the period. The charts also show that Soviet forces could match or exceed those of the United States in the late 1980s if SALT II limitations expired in 1985, the Soviets expanded their forces, and the United States continued to develop its forces as currently programmed:

- In online missile RVs and bomber weapons, the present US lead becomes very small by the early 1980s. The United States would regain the lead in the late 1980s under SALT-limited conditions, unless the Soviets deployed 10 RVs on all their MIRVed ICBMs. However, the Soviets could achieve an advantage in the late 1980s if the SALT II Treaty expired in 1985 and the United States did not change its programmed force.
- In online equivalent megatons, the Soviet forces maintain their current lead in each of these assumed circumstances.

27 The bottom two charts in figure 1 illustrate the prospects for Soviet force improvement and expansion under conditions in which SALT II is abandoned and the Soviets begin a buildup this year. In these circumstances, we project that Soviet forces would achieve qualitative and quantitative characteristics that would substantially exceed those that they would be likely to have under SALT II:

- In numbers of online missile RVs and bomber weapons, the Soviets would be able to deploy more highly fractionated ICBMs and SLBMs (for example, a 20-RV SS-18 in 1985) than they could under SALT II. Owing to this greater flexibility, the number of Soviet missile RVs and bomber weapons grows more rapidly and by 1989 exceeds that of the SALT-limited forces by a substantial margin
- In online equivalent megatons, the Soviet No-SALT force grows to a level greater than that of the SALT-limited forces. The rate of increase,

8

~~TOP SECRET~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

however, is more gradual than that shown for missile RVs and bomber weapons. This is because highly fractionated payloads tend to have less explosive power than payloads with fewer RVs.

For comparison, the SAL/No-SAL projection is also reproduced on the bottom two charts. It illustrates that by preparing themselves to break out of SALT limitations rapidly upon expiration of a SALT II Treaty in 1985, the Soviets could by 1989 acquire forces which, in these indexes, approach the forces we would expect them to acquire through a more gradual No-SALT buildup beginning this year. If the Soviets were to delay the start of a buildup because of uncertainty over the outcome of SALT II but began it in 1982, for example, the Soviet curves on these graphs would probably be between the SAL/No-SAL and the No-SAL curves.

28. A variety of possibilities exist for more threatening Soviet intercontinental offensive forces. Even under SALT II limitations, the performance characteristics of Soviet weapons might be better, or might be improved faster than our best estimates indicate. If there were no SALT limitations, the Soviets could deploy even more MIRVs and relatively survivable launchers than in our Mod No-SAL projection. It is highly unlikely, however, that the Soviets could substantially exceed our best estimates of deployment and technological achievement in all components of their forces. This would strain Soviet development and production capacity and incur the costs and risks of very fast replacement rates. Projections illustrating the upper bounds of our uncertainties about Soviet technological progress and deployment rates can be found in chapter V in the main text of this Estimate.

Soviet Strategic Forces for Peripheral Attack

29. Soviet medium- and intermediate-range forces for strategic attack on the Eurasian periphery have long been superior in numbers and capabilities to comparable Western and Chinese forces. The asymmetry is increasing with the deployment of the mobile SS-20 IRBM and the Backfire bomber. On the basis of limited evidence of Soviet planning in the mid-1970s, and trends in production and deployment since then, we have projected a continued, moderately paced Soviet program to modernize peripheral strategic striking forces. The main features of this projection are:

- Deployment of about 300 launchers for MIRVed, mobile IRBMs by about 1985, and the replacement of the SS-20 with a follow-on missile.

- Deployment of some 200 Backfires to Long Range Aviation by 1989, assuming that Backfire production is limited to 30 per year and that output continues to be shared about equally between LRA and Soviet Naval Aviation.

- Basing of the new weapon systems to ensure coverage of all areas on the Eurasian periphery, with mobile IRBMs divided in about equal thirds among the western, eastern, and central USSR and Backfires oriented primarily to penetrate European air defenses. There is an alternative view that the Backfire has good intercontinental capabilities, and that some portion of the Backfire force would be employed against targets in the United States.*

- Some continued deactivations of older MR/IRBM launchers, and retirements of older medium bombers. We are uncertain, however, about whether these aging systems will gradually decline or be retained, in part because the Soviets are probably hedging against NATO force modernization.

30. We have no present basis for estimating how improvements in NATO long-range theater nuclear forces would affect Soviet peripheral attack programs, or what specific arms control proposals the USSR may put forward. The Soviets would have the option of expanding their peripheral attack forces with a higher level of effort, and could take further steps to improve tactical nuclear forces.

D. Counterforce Capabilities and Prelaunch Survivability of Soviet Intercontinental Striking Forces

31. The Soviets expect that intercontinental nuclear conflict would most likely arise out of an intense US-Soviet crisis or confrontation, probably involving a conventional theater war that had escalated. The Soviets generally envisage strategic nuclear operations as complex engagements, rather than as a single, all-out exchange [

the Soviets stress employment flexibility and endurance in the

*The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force.

~~Top Secret~~

development of their strategic weapons and supporting elements. A longstanding aim of the Soviets is to improve the survivability of their command and control system so that it could function even under circumstances in which it had suffered direct, large-scale nuclear attacks.

32. Recent Soviet programs for intercontinental attack forces and supporting elements include features reflecting the stress on flexibility and endurance.

Over the years the Soviets have acquired capabilities to employ their intercontinental nuclear forces in initial, preemptive, or retaliatory strikes, and in recent years they have been developing capabilities to launch their forces upon receipt of tactical warning that an enemy attack had been launched. We believe that the Soviet command and control system could support any of these employment options. We also believe the system would have good capabilities for sustained battle management following an initial nuclear strike, but would be severely degraded if national-level command bunkers and communication centers were destroyed.

Counterforce Capabilities

33. If the Soviets were to launch a strike on the United States, their objective of highest priority would be to reduce the retaliatory capability of opposing offensive forces. The Soviets would target US bomber and SSBN bases, of which there are only a few, as well as US ICBM silos, of which there are about 1,000. In addition, the Soviets will be faced with a large number of MX shelters in the late 1980s.

34. Judging by present trends in the number and capabilities of Soviet ICBM RVs, we believe that from now on the Soviet ICBM force will be capable of destroying most US ICBM silos and still have many warheads remaining for other purposes. An MPS system, however, would tax Soviet counterforce capabilities in the late 1980s. The Soviet choice of which new ICBM to deploy under SALT limitations would influence the number of ICBM RVs available to attack MX shelters, but the more important factor affecting the number is whether or not SALT limitations were in effect. The table below shows our alternative projections of total online Soviet ICBM RVs in 1989, those with hard-target capabilities, and the number on ready missiles in excess of those required to attack silos. While all such excess RVs would theoretically be available to attack MX shelters, it should be noted that the Soviets would also have requirements to attack other kinds of targets and to withhold ICBMs for other purposes. These requirements would reduce the number of ICBM RVs actually available for attacking MX shelters.

35. There is a divergent view that, because of the other Soviet targeting and withhold requirements for ICBM RVs, the number of Soviet hard-target ICBM RVs available for use against the planned US MX/MPS system would be far fewer than the "excess" shown in the table. As a result, the holders of this view believe the table and figure 2 overstate the threat to the planned US MX/MPS system.⁵

36. Figure 2 illustrates the number of ICBM RVs remaining on each side if the ICBMs of the Soviet SALT-limited forces were used to attack all US ICBMs

⁵ The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Senior Intelligence Officers of the military services.

Soviet Hard-Target ICBM Reentry Vehicles in 1989

Moderate Force Projections	Total Online ICBM RVs	Hard-Target-Capable ICBM RVs	Hard-Target RVs in Excess of Those Required To Attack Minuteman Silos
SALT limitations through 1989 New ICBM with single RV	6,200	6,200	4,600
SALT limitations through 1989 New ICBM with 10 RVs	8,600	8,200	6,500
SALT limitations through 1985 Buildup begins in 1986	11,700	11,700	9,900
No SALT limitations Buildup begins in 1980	13,800	13,800	11,400

~~Top Secret~~

and MX shelters. For this purpose, we assume that the Soviets target two ICBM RVs against each US silo and one RV against each MX shelter, and that US ICBMs ride out the attack. The figure shows:

- In the top two charts, if the Soviets elected to deploy a new ICBM with a single RV, a Soviet attack on all US silos and the 4,600 MX shelters currently programmed would leave the US ICBM force with few surviving RVs but, by 1989, the USSR would also be left with few ICBM RVs for other missions
- In the bottom two charts, if the Soviets elected to deploy a new MIRVed ICBM with 10 RVs, the Soviet attack would leave the USSR with about 2,000 ICBM RVs available for other missions in 1989.

37. If the SALT II limits were to expire in 1985 or if SALT II were abandoned this year, the Soviets would have the flexibility to increase their inventory of ICBM warheads far beyond what would be required to attack all US silos and the 4,600 MX shelters currently programmed. With this US shelter program, the Soviets could have 5,000 to 6,000 ICBM RVs remaining after an attack on US ICBMs in the late 1980s under these No-SALT circumstances. However, the Soviets probably would expect the United States to increase the number of MX shelters substantially. In this case, Soviet RVs remaining after a Soviet silo/shelter attack would be significantly reduced.

38. We believe the Soviets are now considering some form of advanced guidance system for their future SLBMs, but it is unlikely that MIRVed SLBMs with hard-target capabilities could be deployed before the 1990s. To acquire such capabilities, the Soviets would have to develop guidance techniques employing global positioning satellites or terminal RV homing. This would involve more technical risk and vulnerability to countermeasures than the Soviets have been willing to accept in their SLBM systems to date. We cannot, however, exclude the possibility that the MX/MPS system might motivate the Soviets to develop such techniques and that, with a high level of effort, they might be able to start deploying SLBMs capable of attacking MX shelters in the late 1980s.

39. The Soviets have ample capabilities to destroy all US SSBN bases as well as the bases of the US bomber force. We have no present evidence that the Soviets are trying to minimize the flight time of SLBMs in order to pose a greater threat to US alert

bombers. In view of the dispersal and other measures the United States could exercise, it is unlikely that the Soviets would be able to destroy more than a few of the bombers the United States keeps on alert.

Prelaunch Survivability

40. The overall survivability of Soviet intercontinental offensive forces in the 1980s will remain heavily dependent on the survivability of their fixed ICBMs. Deployment of more SLBM RVs and mobile ICBMs would increase the relatively survivable portion of Soviet forces, but present trends do not suggest a radical shift away from silo-based ICBMs. Figure 3 depicts the threat to Soviet ICBMs posed by current and programmed US SALT-limited forces, assuming that the United States targeted two ICBM RVs against each Soviet silo and that Soviet silo-based ICBMs rode out an attack. The figure shows:

- In the top two charts, if the Soviets elected to deploy a new ICBM with a single RV, some 3,000 Soviet RVs on silo-based ICBMs could be expected to survive an attack by US ICBMs through the middle 1980s. In the late 1980s, however, the number of silo-based RVs expected to survive would be reduced to about 500 because of the increased counterforce capability of the MX.
- In the bottom two charts, if the Soviets elected to deploy a 10-RV new ICBM, the number of silo-based RVs expected to survive in the late 1980s would be only slightly higher.
- In both cases, a two-on-one attack on all Soviet silos would leave the United States with virtually no ICBM RVs remaining until the late 1980s, at which time, it would have unused ICBM RVs available for other purposes.
- Soviet mobile ICBMs would be vulnerable to a US ICBM attack if deployed at fixed support bases like those used for the SS-20 IRBM. Their survivability could be increased if, as we think likely, the Soviets dispersed them in a crisis. The charts show that with dispersed mobile launchers, the Soviets could have as many as 1,500 additional surviving ICBM RVs if the USSR elected a 10-RV missile as its new ICBM and deployed a number of them on mobile launchers. A single-RV new ICBM would not offer this advantage because even a large force of mobiles would carry relatively few RVs.

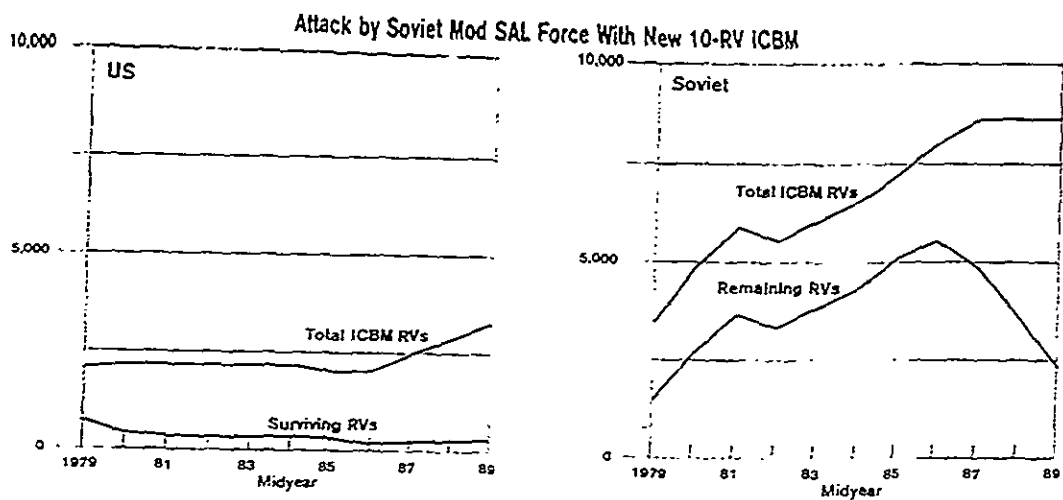
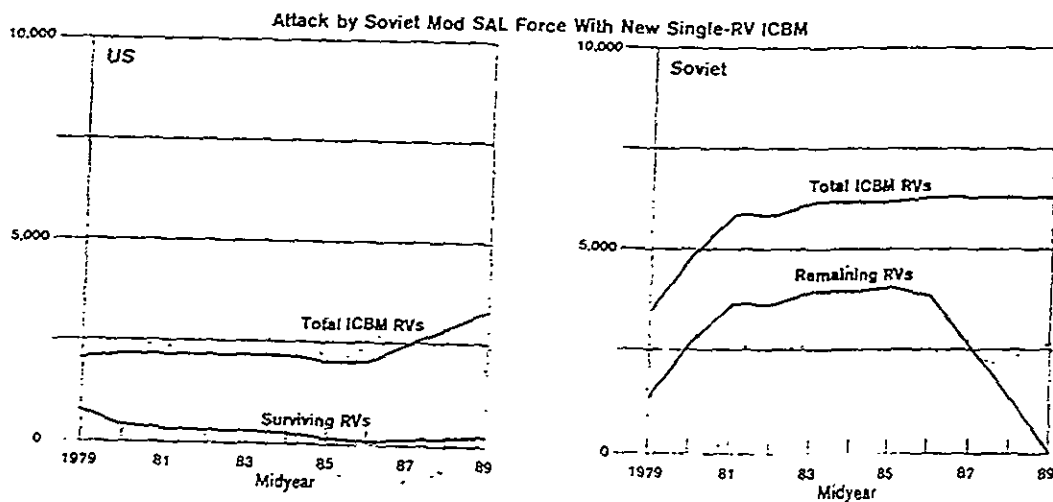
12

~~TOP SECRET~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

Capability of Soviet ICBMs To Attack US ICBMs in Silos and Shelters
 Soviet ICBMs Attack Minuteman Two-on-One, MX One-on-One; US ICBMs Ride Out Attack

Figure 2



There is a divergent view which holds that this figure improperly portrays the threat to the planned US MX/MPS system. See paragraph 35 for details of this view, held by the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Senior Intelligence Officers of the military services.

~~Top Secret~~

TCS 3112-80/H

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

41. The foregoing charts indicate that in SALT-limited circumstances the Soviets could expect a substantial number of their silo-based ICBM RVs to survive in the early and middle 1980s even if they rode out an attack. Under No-SALT circumstances, the Soviets could MIRV virtually all of their ICBMs, and therefore could expect a somewhat greater number of ICBM RVs to survive a US attack in the early and middle 1980s. In the late 1980s, however, the number of expected Soviet ICBM RV survivors probably would still decline to relatively low levels, unless the Soviets were to change their force mix more dramatically than we believe likely even under No-SALT circumstances.

42. It should also be noted that the highly accurate US bomber and ALCM weapons would pose an additional threat to Soviet silo-based ICBMs. The Soviets would be concerned about this additional capability but would be aware that the US aerodynamic systems would be subject to attrition by Soviet air defenses and that their long flight times would give the USSR more time to decide whether to launch its silo-based ICBMs.

43. With regard to the survivability of the other elements of Soviet intercontinental striking forces, roughly 75 percent of the Soviet SSBN force is normally in port and no bombers are kept on alert. Therefore, both elements are vulnerable to surprise attack. [

[With [warning, the Soviets could put [of their modern SSBNs to sea in combat-ready status. At full combat readiness, the survivability of bombers would be increased because they probably would be dispersed and placed on alert.

E. Quasi-Dynamic Analysis of Soviet and US Intercontinental Striking Forces⁶

44. Comparisons of the aggregate size of strategic forces provide important insights into significant trends in US and Soviet intercontinental striking power. Because such comparisons are essentially static in nature, however, they cannot fully reflect differences between the two forces and their capabilities that arise from qualitative asymmetries. These differ-

⁶ For the view of the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Senior Intelligence Officers of the military services on the validity and propriety of this analysis, see paragraph 47

ences can be better illuminated by using an analytical technique—quasi-dynamic analysis—that has been an integral part of this Estimate for the past several years. This analysis addresses the potential of one side's ICBMs to attack the retaliatory forces of the other side and then compares the residual destructive potentials. The respective arsenals are reduced by subtracting those ICBMs needed for the attack and those retaliatory forces destroyed in the attack; the ICBMs of the side attacked are assumed to ride out the attack without being launched. The residuals are on-pad potentials, calculated without considering such factors as specific targeting doctrines, command and control degradation, attrition by air defenses, and other operational variables.

45. The calculations in the analysis do not attempt to simulate actual conflict outcomes. Rather, they seek to display comparative capabilities and limitations in a manner most relevant to nuclear deterrence in its most elementary form—that is, assured destruction. The analysis illustrates the retaliatory destructive potential that a side contemplating an attack would have to expect to survive on the side attacked. It also compares this surviving destructive potential with the destructive potential remaining to the attacking side, a consideration important to both sides.

46. The measures employed in the analysis—lethal area potential and hard-target potential—describe the remaining and surviving potentials of each side to apply a prescribed overpressure over a wide area or to attack representative hardened silos on the other side.⁷ The analysis makes no estimate of which of these or other capabilities, or what mix of them, national leaders would elect in retaliatory or second strikes. But the comparison of the US and Soviet potentials does give some feel for the options that would be available to national leaders, and the composition of the residual potentials provides insights about the suitability of the forces for rapid or delayed response.

47. There is a view in the Intelligence Community that the quasi-dynamic residual analysis in this Estimate produces misleading results with respect to trends in the strategic balance, sheds little light on the question of deterrence, and comprises a net assessment from the US perspective which is not a proper func-

⁷ The Soviet hard-target potential is gauged against representative US silos hardened to [

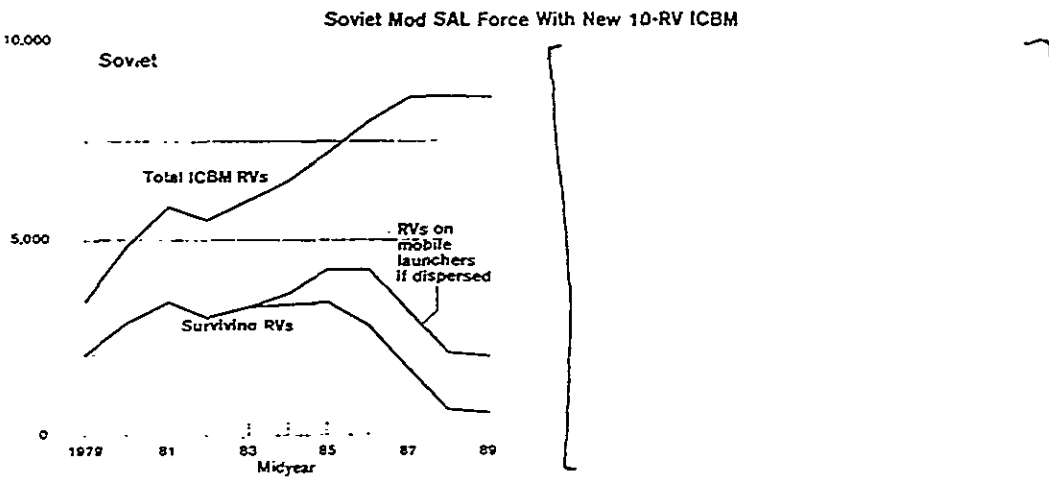
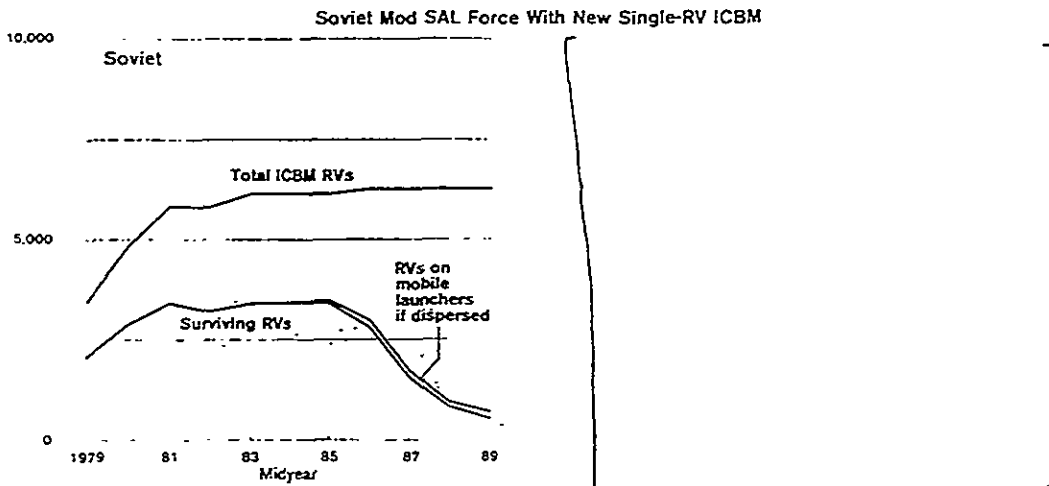
[The US potential is gauged against representative Soviet silos of hardnesses [

~~Top Secret~~

Survivability of Soviet ICBMs If Attacked by US ICBMs

Figure 3

US ICBMs Attack Soviet Silos Two-on-One, Soviet Mobile Support Bases One-on-One;
Soviet ICBMs Ride Out Attack



~~Top Secret~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TCS 3112-60/1~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

tion of intelligence. According to this view, only analysis of comprehensive two-sided exchanges can convey valid and useful impressions about relative US and Soviet strategic nuclear capabilities. In this view, such analysis from the US perspective should be accomplished within the Department of Defense with intelligence as a full partner, and should not be included in a National Intelligence Estimate. Consequently, the holders of this view believe that the analysis of residual forces in this Estimate (as summarized in figures 4 and 5) should be removed. Further, the holders of this view believe that the Intelligence Community should focus its efforts on understanding and, if possible, duplicating Soviet analytical techniques for net assessment.⁴

48. The Director of Central Intelligence believes that it would be a disservice to national decision-makers to produce this Estimate without any interpretation of relative US and Soviet strategic nuclear capabilities beyond that shown by static indicators. In his view, the inclusion of quasi-dynamic analysis, despite its limitations, allows the Estimate to reach more comprehensive conclusions about relative strategic capabilities and deterrent potentials and about perceptions of them. He believes that the quasi-dynamic analysis is important to those who see the key ingredient of deterrence as the capability of one side to absorb a first strike and retain enough absolute destructive potential to destroy a broad mix of targets on the other side.

Soviet and US Residual Potentials

49. Figure 4 displays the results of our analysis of residual potentials under a worst case circumstance for the side attacked—that is, a surprise attack when forces are on day-to-day alert. The SALT-limited forces of each side are used. In the US force, 200 MX missiles with 4,600 shelters are deployed between 1986 and 1989. The forked lines on these charts indicate our uncertainty about whether the Soviets will deploy a single-RV or a 10-RV missile as their one new ICBM, and show that the trends would not be very different in either case.

50. The charts illustrate that, under SALT II limits, the potentials of residual Soviet forces—measured either in terms of lethal area potential or in terms of hard-target potential—will improve over the next few

⁴ The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Senior Intelligence Officers of the military services.

years regardless of which side struck first. The Soviets will have a sizable advantage in these potentials in the early and middle 1980s, but US force improvements will erode and even reverse the Soviet gains if SALT II limits extend beyond 1985. By 1989, Soviet residual potentials would revert to levels equal to or less than those the Soviets would have today, while US residuals would grow to levels substantially larger than those available to the USSR. The Soviets could alter these adverse trends if they deployed even larger numbers of mobile ICBMs and SLBMs or established high alert rates for such systems. It would be difficult, however, for the Soviets between now and the late 1980s to change their force mix sufficiently to reverse these trends.

51. Figure 5 compares the composition by major force element of the residual lethal area potentials and hard-target potentials of US and Soviet SALT-limited forces after a surprise attack by the other side:

— The composition of the surviving Soviet potentials reinforces the impression that it is the continued heavy Soviet reliance on silo-based ICBMs that causes the adverse effects on Soviet residuals in the late 1980s if the United States deploys the MX.

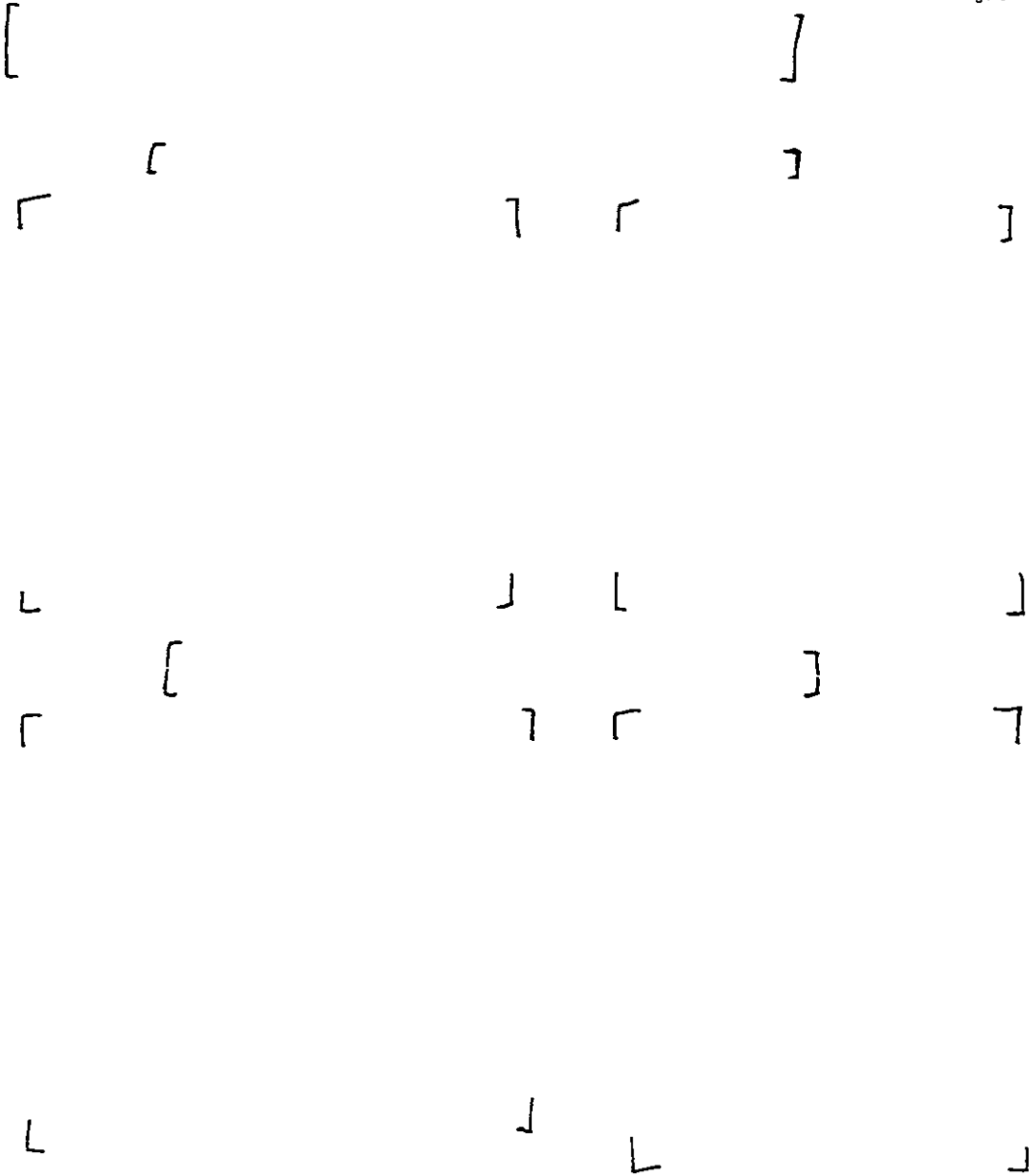
— The composition of surviving US forces shows that, despite increasing US ICBM silo vulnerability, US residuals decline only slightly in the early 1980s because ICBMs make up a relatively small portion of US prestrike potentials. Deployment of MX with 4,600 shelters would not significantly increase the surviving US potentials if, as assumed in this analysis, the Soviets were willing to expend large numbers of their ICBMs to attack all MX shelters. The charts show that bombers and ALCM carriers, which must be launched to survive attack and are subject to air defense attrition, would account for a large and increasing fraction of the surviving US potentials.

52. To provide an indication of the urban and industrial destruction that could be achieved by the surviving lethal area potentials of these SALT-limited forces, we have compared them with US and Soviet urban areas. We find that:

— Throughout the 1980s, the area over which surviving US forces could theoretically create overpressures sufficient to destroy reinforced concrete buildings would be equivalent to the [square kilo-

~~Top Secret~~

Figure 4



~~Top Secret~~

~~SECRET~~

~~TCS 6112-60/1~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

meters. Even the relatively few surviving US ICBM RVs would have the potential to destroy a large share of Soviet economic value.

- In the early and middle 1980s, the Soviet surviving lethal area potential would be equivalent to [kilometers. By the late 1980s, the surviving Soviet potential would have been reduced to less than one-half of this amount. Even then, however, the Soviet potential would exceed that required to destroy most of the US economic value.

53. We have also examined the surviving hard-target potential of each of these forces in relationship to the missile silos, shelters, and hardened command and control bunkers of the other. We find that:

- Surviving US ICBM warheads would have the potential to destroy only a small number of Soviet ICBM silos, but a large proportion of the Soviet national- and intermediate-level command and control bunkers. Surviving US bomber weapons would have the potential to destroy a substantial portion of Soviet ICBM silos, although they have relatively long flight times and would be subject to air defense attrition.
- Surviving Soviet ICBM warheads, on the other hand, could destroy a substantial number of US silos, as well as US hardened command and control facilities in quick-reaction retaliatory strikes. They could destroy only a small fraction of the US MX shelters available in 1989, however.

54. Finally we have examined the surviving potentials of the SALT-limited forces of each side to destroy nonsilo military targets, which vary widely in area and hardness. Throughout the 1980s under SALT circumstances, each side would have the surviving potential to destroy a large percentage of these targets on the other side. For the United States, the bulk of this potential would reside in either its surviving SLBM warheads or its bomber weapons. For the USSR, the potential would reside in either its surviving ICBM or SLBM warheads.

Implications

55. With regard to absolute residual capabilities the quasi-dynamic analysis indicates that, throughout the period of the Estimate, the SALT-limited forces of

each side could devastate the other side in retaliation after absorbing a first strike.

56. With regard to relative residual capabilities:

- The analysis shows that, if they struck first with SALT-constrained forces, the Soviets could have a substantial advantage in residual potentials through the middle 1980s. The United States would begin to narrow the gap thereafter and, in the late 1980s, would achieve residual potentials about equal to those of the USSR. Thus, the United States is at a disadvantage through the middle 1980s and the situation then improves.

- From the point of view of Soviet concern about the possibility of a US first strike, again with SALT-constrained forces, the analysis indicates that Soviet residuals would be the greater in the middle 1980s, but would fall well below those of the United States by the late 1980s.

57. With regard to the very broad trends under SALT II conditions:

- The analysis shows a substantial Soviet improvement in the next few years, reaching a plateau in the early and middle 1980s or peaking in the middle 1980s. It shows a slight US decline in the early 1980s and a sharp improvement in the US position in the late 1980s.
- These trends are caused by the combined effects of heavy Soviet reliance on fixed land-based ICBMs, US force diversity and planned modernization, and SALT II limitations if extended through the decade.

F. Capabilities of Soviet Strategic Defenses

58. In light of the improving Soviet intercontinental offensive capabilities, the extent to which Soviet strategic defenses—air and missile defenses, antisubmarine warfare forces, and civil defense—could reduce the damage to the USSR from US retaliatory strikes is becoming even more important. Currently, Soviet strategic defenses would be unable to reduce significantly the weight of a large-scale US nuclear attack on the USSR.

Air Defense

59. At present the massive Soviet air defense forces, if unupgraded, would probably perform well against aircraft at medium and high altitude, but they have

AD/10

~~Top Secret~~

Figure 5

┌

┐ ┌

┐

└

┘ └

┘

┌

┐ ┌

┐

└

┘ └

┘

~~Top Secret~~

~~TCS 8112 60/7~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

little capability to intercept targets at low altitudes. The graphs in figure 6 reflect our projections that:

- New interceptors, the majority of them equipped with modern lockdown/shutdown capabilities, and a new low-altitude surface-to-air missile system will be deployed in substantial numbers during the 1980s.
- The percentage of the area of the western USSR covered by air defense warning and control systems capable of vectoring lockdown/shoot-down fighters will grow gradually. Significant gaps in coverage will remain, however.
- With the deployment of AWACS aircraft in conjunction with longer range interceptors, the Soviets in the middle and late 1980s would be able, for relatively brief periods (during a crisis, for example), to mount forward defenses along the approach routes to the western USSR. Such defenses would be designed to intercept US bombers and to force ALCM carriers to launch their missiles at considerable distances from Soviet borders.

60. We are unable to quantify the attrition that Soviet air defenses would be able to inflict on US low-altitude aircraft and cruise missiles, in part because of uncertainties about key technical characteristics of future Soviet systems, and in part because we cannot quantify the effects of important operational factors and interactions that would bear heavily on actual air defense performance. Accordingly, there is a view in the Intelligence Community which holds that graphs showing the gross area of theoretical coverage of air defense systems, particularly when standing alone, can be misleading as measures of Soviet air defense potential. Because such graphs cannot incorporate important deployment and operational considerations, this view concludes that the graphs are not useful.⁹

61. The estimates that follow represent our best judgments about the capabilities of Soviet air defenses against programed US aerodynamic forces over the next decade:

- In the early 1980s, improved Soviet air defense systems will not be available in numbers large enough to markedly improve defense against bombers and cruise missiles at low altitudes.

⁹ The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Senior Intelligence Officers of the military services

- In the middle and late 1980s, Soviet air defenses will probably have reduced the USSR's vulnerability to US defense avoidance tactics and, if undegraded, will have the potential to inflict considerably higher attrition against US bombers of current types. They will probably have little or no effective capability against in-flight US short-range attack missiles (SRAMs) carried by bombers.
- The Soviets will gradually develop the capability to defend some key areas against currently programed US cruise missiles. Because of technical and numerical deficiencies, however, their capability to defend against a large force of US cruise missiles will probably remain low.
- In addition, precursor missile attacks, defense saturation and suppression, and electronic warfare would degrade the overall effectiveness of Soviet air defenses.
- Thus, the actual performance of the defenses against combined attacks involving large numbers of US bombers, SRAMs, and cruise missiles will probably remain low during the period of this Estimate.

ABM Defense

62. Soviet R&D activities in ballistic missile defense continue. In our view, these efforts represent hedging against an uncertain future and are aimed at deterring the United States from abrogating the ABM Treaty and developing options for ABM system deployment in the 1980s. There continues to be no evidence to suggest that the Soviets have decided to deploy ABM defenses beyond Moscow.

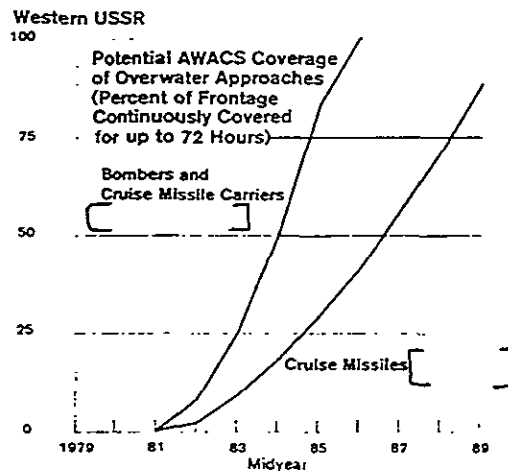
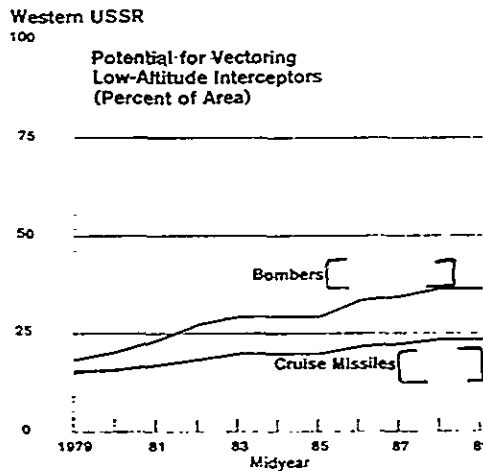
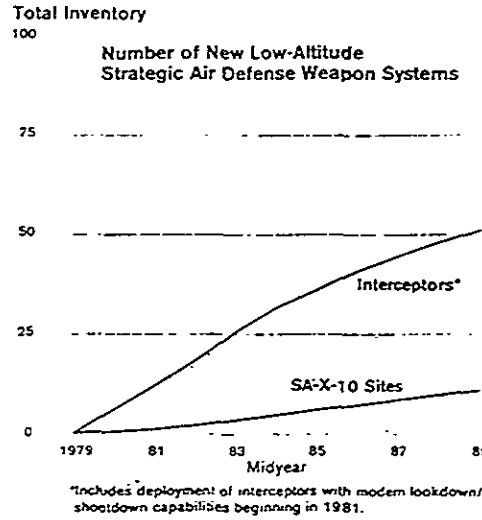
63. Within the provisions of the ABM Treaty, the Soviets could use the systems they have under development to improve their limited ABM defenses at Moscow. Such improvements could provide better capabilities to defend a few selected targets in the Moscow area, such as command and control facilities, but could not provide more than minimal defense against a large US missile attack.

64. The Soviet ABM R&D program could give the USSR options to deploy additional ABM defenses beginning in the early or middle 1980s. If the ABM Treaty is abrogated, these options would include: further expansion of the Moscow ABM defenses; relatively rapid deployment of an ABM system with aboveground launchers to protect other key area tar-

~~Top Secret~~

Soviet Strategic Air Defense Forces
Measures of Low-Altitude Defense Potential

Figure 6



There is a divergent view which holds that these graphs are not useful because they do not incorporate important deployment and operational considerations. See paragraph 60 for details of this view, held by the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Senior Intelligence Officers, of the military services.

~~Top Secret~~

~~TCS 3119-60/1~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

gets, and slower paced deployment of a system with silo launchers for defense of key area targets or for hard point defense of selected military targets. The ABM system available for such deployment in the middle or late 1980s would be able to intercept US missile RVs of all current types, including those accompanied by chaff. The effectiveness of these defenses would depend most importantly on US reactions, such as the deployment of penetration aids and the adaptation of tactics.

65. For the past several years, we have expressed concern that, in addition to ballistic missile early warning (BMEW), the four large radars that are being built along the periphery of the USSR could also have or be given the capability to perform ABM battle management. With such a capability, these radars could constitute long-leadtime preparations for future ABM deployment. In terms of size and power, they have the inherent potential for ABM battle management.

66. Recent analysis [

] leads us to conclude that they have been designed and are intended for BMEW and space surveillance alone.

67. There is a divergent view in the Intelligence Community that the available evidence is subject to alternative interpretation as to the capabilities and intended use of the new radars, and is insufficient to conclude that they are only for BMEW and space surveillance. According to this view, the fact remains that these long-leadtime items possess a significant potential for future ABM battle management and could provide data accurate enough for such employment.¹⁰

Antisubmarine Warfare

68. Soviet forces with ASW capabilities are not now an effective counter to US SSBNs. The critical problems confronting the USSR are limitations in sensors and signal data processing. Major R&D programs are

¹⁰ The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

under way to develop improved sensors for submarine detection. The number of nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) with improved but still limited ASW capabilities will probably increase from about 25 at present to about 85 in the late 1980s, or to as many as 100 if a number of Y-class SSBNs are converted to SSNs. We believe new classes of Soviet SSNs will incorporate more effective noise reduction methods than those in existing submarine classes. New types of surface ships and long-range patrol aircraft with somewhat improved capabilities for ASW are likely. As a result:

- During the period of the Estimate, the USSR is likely to acquire somewhat better capabilities to detect, track, and attack SSBNs that are operating near the USSR or in confined waters, are leaving ports, or are transiting choke points.
- Despite increasing numbers of ASW-capable forces and improved ASW sensors, we believe the Soviets have little prospect over the next 10 years of being able to detect and track US submarines in broad ocean areas.
- Moreover, longer range US SLBMs are significantly increasing the ocean area within which US SSBNs will be able to operate and remain within missile range of targets in the USSR.
- We therefore believe that, throughout the period of this Estimate, the Soviets would be unable to prevent US SSBNs on patrol in broad ocean areas from launching their missiles.

Directed-Energy Weapons

69. As part of a long-term developmental effort in technologies applicable to air, missile, and space defense, the Soviets are conducting extensive research in the advanced technologies of lasers, particle beams, and nonnuclear electromagnetic pulse generation. The magnitude, scope, and variety of these programs suggest that the Soviets are actively exploring ways by which they might use directed-energy technology to overcome or alleviate major weaknesses in their strategic defenses.

- The Soviets may now have a ground-based laser capable of damaging some satellite sensors and may have a space-based antisatellite weapon under development. With a successful high-priority effort, the Soviets might be able to have ground-based laser air defense weapons ready for operational deployment to strategic air defense

~~Top Secret~~

forces in the middle-to-late 1980s. The Soviets evidently are also investigating the feasibility of a laser weapon for ballistic missile defense. We believe that such a weapon, if feasible, could not be ready for operational deployment before 1990.

- The Soviets probably have the capability to develop, by the middle 1980s, a ground-based nonnuclear electromagnetic pulse weapon designed to disrupt or destroy the electronic circuitry of enemy delivery systems.
- Soviet research programs applicable to particle beam weapons (PBW) may permit the USSR to determine the feasibility of such weapons several years before the United States. If feasibility is proved, the Soviets probably could begin testing a prototype short-range (about 3 km) PBW system for air defense by about 1990. There is an alternative view that Soviet research in technologies applicable to PBW could be sufficiently advanced to allow the USSR to begin prototype testing by the middle 1980s, if feasibility is proved.¹¹ All agree that development of long-range PBW weapons would take much longer.

Civil Defense

70. We have reassessed the ability of Soviet civil defenses to reduce casualties from a US retaliatory attack following a Soviet first strike. Casualties and fatalities would vary greatly depending on the extent of civil defense preparations. Our findings indicate that, at present:

- Prompt Soviet casualties would be about 120 million (including 85 million fatalities) in the case of little or no preparation, about 100 million (60 million fatalities) if urban shelters were fully occupied, and about 40 million (15 million fatalities) if both sheltering and evacuation plans had been fully implemented.
- With a few hours' warning, a large percentage of the Soviet leadership at all levels of government probably would survive. With several additional hours for preparation, about one-fourth of the work force in key Soviet industries probably would also survive.

¹¹ The holder of this view is the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force.

— Civil defense could not prevent massive damage to the Soviet economy.

71. In the late 1980s, prompt casualties and fatalities among the general Soviet population would be somewhat greater than in 1979. At present rates of shelter construction, the projected increase in shelter capacity would be more than offset by increases in Soviet urban population and by improvements in US forces. Mass evacuation of cities would still be necessary to save a substantial portion of the urban population. An even larger percentage of the leadership and essential personnel will probably have shelter protection, but the Soviet economy will remain about as vulnerable as at present.

72. Given their belief that all aspects of society contribute to a nation's military capabilities, the Soviet leaders probably view civil defense as contributing to their strength in the US-Soviet strategic balance. They almost certainly believe their present civil defenses would improve their ability to conduct military operations and would enhance the USSR's chances of surviving a nuclear war. Our latest analyses of the effects of civil defense, however, provide additional support to our previous judgment that present and projected Soviet civil defense programs would not embolden the Soviet leaders to take actions during a crisis that would involve deliberately accepting a high risk of nuclear war.

73. There is an alternative view that the Soviet Union's capability to protect its extensive leadership infrastructure at all levels, even under conditions of limited warning, enhances its ability to conduct military operations, improves its crisis management, and promotes postwar recovery. The continuing Soviet investment of major resources in the civil defense program clearly demonstrates the confidence the Soviet leaders have in its value. This confidence could contribute to Soviet resolve in a future crisis environment. According to this view, the Soviet civil defense program—through its potential for influencing political perceptions, providing leverage for coercion during a crisis, affecting nuclear exchange outcomes, and contributing to postwar recovery—impacts on both the reality of the strategic balance and on perceptions of the balance in the USSR and elsewhere.¹²

¹² The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Senior Intelligence Officers of the military services.

37. NIE 11-3/8-80 *Soviet Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict Through the Late 1980s*

~~Top Secret~~

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
CIA HISTORICAL-REVIEW PROGRAM

PART ONE—KEY JUDGMENTS

PREFACE

These Key Judgments consist of two sections. This year the Director of Central Intelligence has added his own key judgments (section A), which have not been coordinated with the Intelligence Community. He does not hold major disagreements with the key judgments coordinated by the Intelligence Community agencies (section B) or with the basic analysis in the Estimate. He does not believe, however, that the findings in section B adequately emphasize those areas of key importance to the President and his principal advisers on foreign policy. His key judgments, therefore, address what the basic Estimate tells us about the following four issues of cardinal importance to US policy on strategic forces:

- How the strategic capabilities of the two sides compare.
- What actions the Soviets may take as they view the comparative strengths of the strategic forces.
- Whether and how the balance of strategic forces prompts the Soviets to pursue strategic arms control agreements with the United States.
- Whether or not the advantages that the Soviets seem to have in ICBMs through 1986 would induce or pressure them to exploit what they might perceive as a "window of opportunity" before those advantages may be erased toward the end of this decade.

A. KEY JUDGMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Soviet Perceptions of the Strategic Environment

1. The comprehensive nature of Soviet strategic offensive and defensive programs, the emphasis in Soviet military doctrine on capabilities to fight a nuclear war, and assertions that general nuclear war can be won indicate that some Soviet leaders hold the view that victory in general nuclear war is possible. The Soviets assert that a general nuclear war will probably be brief, but we believe that they have

~~TCS 3333-59/1~~

A-1
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

contingency plans for protracted conflict. Soviet military writings and exercises imply that victory would be an outcome that preserves the Communists' political control, permits reconstitution of their economy, and leaves them in a superior military position on Eurasia, while neutralizing the United States and undermining the political and social systems of their weakened adversaries. Despite their growing strategic capabilities, the Soviets are aware that they could not prevent a large-scale retaliatory US nuclear attack from causing tens of millions of casualties and massive destruction of urban-industrial and military facilities in the USSR. Whether they view this as contradictory to what they consider to be their definition of "victory" is difficult to gauge.

2. We see the Soviets as basically pleased with the general recognition that they have achieved at least "parity" or perhaps "superiority" with the United States in strategic weaponry and the acknowledgment of superpower status which this confers. The Soviets must also see that they hold certain advantages in the strategic force competition with the United States that will help them maintain their present position.

- They have a massive, well-disciplined R&D organization, with a large number of new programs, as well as an expanding production capability, all of which provide options for future force growth and improvement. There are, for instance, 16 design bureaus engaged in developing some 90 strategic, tactical, and space systems or system improvements.
- In the defensive area, they are continuing an active ABM R&D program; attempting to solve problems of defense against low-flying aircraft and missiles, against SSBNs, and against satellites; continuing to expand their civil defense program (however, this effort relies heavily on massive evacuation and would likely provide a tipoff of Soviet intentions); and striving to achieve technological breakthroughs in laser and directed-energy approaches to solving defensive tasks.
- In the area of command and control, the Soviets continue to enhance their ability to flexibly control strategic forces. They are constructing redundant, hardened, and mobile command and communication links to enhance force survivability. Their early warning system, though suffering from some shortcomings, continues to improve, and the Soviets have the capability to employ their strategic nuclear forces in both initiative (bolt-from-the-blue or preemption) and responsive (launch-on-tactical-warning or retaliation) strikes.

The greater weight of Soviet effort in these areas also contributes to the perception of Soviet parity or superiority.

~~TCS 3333-80/1~~

A-2

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

3. At the same time, the Soviets could be apprehensive about whether they can hold on to their hard-won gains because:

- They are entering the 1980s with a record of declining productivity in the industrial sector, with reduced levels of output in a number of important raw materials such as coal, with a sharp drop in the rate of growth of the labor force, with the prospect of a peak and then a decline in oil production, and with increasing demands for economic support to their client states in Eastern Europe. They would prefer to avoid the additional strain which increased competition in the strategic arena would create.
- The Soviets must anticipate that if the SALT process does not collapse entirely, negotiations for a new strategic arms limitation agreement will take a long time. The Soviets view SALT II as a step toward avoiding greater tensions with the United States than they wish to risk and, they hope, toward reducing the possibility of a US surge in the strategic arms race.
- They feel that they now face an aroused US public which is willing to spend more on defense and a new administration that is likely to increase US strategic programs. This is particularly disturbing to them because of their respect for US technological prowess and industrial capacity.
- They are concerned with the range of major US strategic programs that are in process. They argue that MX is a move toward a first-strike capability; that modernization of tactical nuclear forces in Europe is much the same because of the short time of flight of those weapons to targets in the Soviet Union; and that the cruise missile and Trident programs further compound their problems of defense against attack by nuclear weapons. Moreover, the multiple protective shelters being considered for the MX missile will substantially increase the number of weapons required for a Soviet counterforce attack.
- The Soviets also contend that they face a considerable threat from third, fourth, and fifth nuclear powers, while the United States faces no such threat. The Soviet concern with this threat has been a constant thread in the positions the USSR has taken in SALT.

The strategic environment that the USSR may perceive is, then, one in which the trends in the strategic balance could shift against it later in the decade when programmed US force improvements are deployed. In this environment we conclude that there is substantial likelihood that the leaders of the USSR will be looking at their next Five-Year Plan, which they are currently formulating, with a view toward acquiring even greater strategic forces than they might have contemplated a year ago.

~~TCS 3333-6071~~

A-3
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

What Does "Parity" or "Superiority" Mean, and What Condition Prevails Today?

4. In considering how the Soviets and others view the strategic force balance today, there are three types of measures for comparing strategic forces:

- First, static indicators, such as the number of units, their size, range capability, and so forth.
- Second, quasi-dynamic indicators which describe the fighting or destructive potential of the forces. These are, in effect, measures of what the forces could do if unleashed.
- Third, dynamic measures, such as war games, that attempt to forecast how opposing forces would actually be used and to what end result.

In this Estimate we use the first two measures to compare US and Soviet strategic forces. Adequate means of conducting war-gaming on this scale and of translating the results into estimative conclusions have not yet been achieved.

5. Starting with static indicators, the four most useful are displayed on figure I:

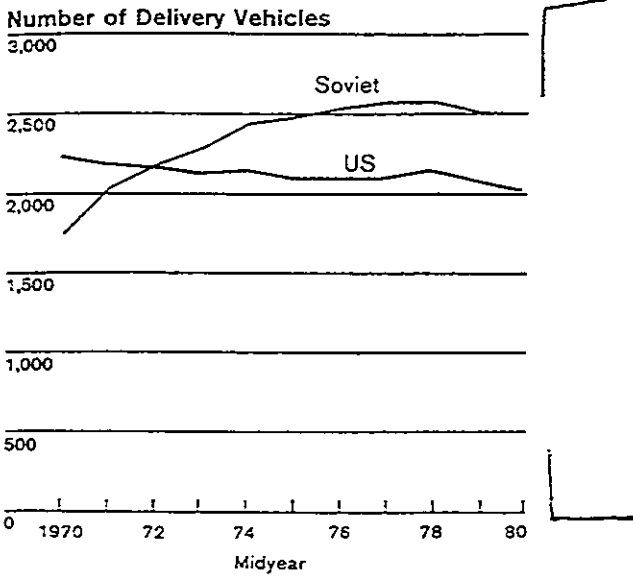
- Number of delivery vehicles. This is a simple indicator which has been the basis for SALT negotiations to date. The upper left-hand graph shows that the Soviet buildup of the late 1960s and early 1970s put the USSR ahead of the United States, which during this same period was retiring older systems.
- Number of weapons. This measure dictates how many targets can be attacked when a delivery vehicle carries more than one weapon—that is, a bomber with a number of bombs or air-launched missiles, or an ICBM with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs). The upper right-hand graph shows the United States has maintained a substantial lead throughout the decade. Although the Soviets have been closing this gap, the United States still has 40 percent more weapons than the Soviets have today.
- Equivalent megatons. This is a rough measure of the theoretical capabilities that weapon yield and number of weapons provide against soft area targets. The lower left-hand graph shows a growing Soviet advantage beginning in the mid-1970s, which is a direct result of an increasing number of ICBMs with large throw weights.
- Accuracy. Accuracy of each side's best ICBMs is another rough measure of the trends. The lower right-hand graph shows that the newest Soviet ICBMs have now surpassed the best US ICBM accuracies, thus eliminating the historical US advantage in this characteristic.

~~TCS 0000-00/1~~

A-4
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

Figure 1
Comparison of Soviet and US Forces for Intercontinental Attack,
1970-80



~~Top Secret~~

~~TCS 3885-96/1~~

A-5
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

In sum, according to these measures the US force excels only in the number of weapons. The Soviets lead in numbers of vehicles and their size, and have now surpassed the United States in ICBM accuracy, thereby closing this technological gap.

6. Next, quasi-dynamic indicators in effect combine these four static indicators into two measures of the destructive potential of a force.

— The first of these is known as lethal area potential (LAP). This is the area of land in which reinforced concrete buildings would be leveled.¹ This calculation is purely theoretical; that is, the target is a nominal, not a specific urban area, and no battle conditions or tactics are considered. Figure II shows that the Soviets have been ahead in LAP throughout the decade. This is because of their large throw-weight advantage. [

] Figure II also shows, however, that the US urban area is more than twice that of the Soviet Union. [

] — The second quasi-dynamic measure is hard-target potential (HTP), or the potential to attack targets with hardnesses comparable to those of missile silos.² Figure III shows that when we consider both the lethality of the large Soviet warheads and their improving accuracies, [

] the Soviets have achieved a substantial advantage in

¹ For calculations of lethal area potential, an overpressure of [] As a practical matter, it is not possible to lay down nuclear weapons in such a way that a constant overpressure could be obtained over an entire area. Furthermore, neither side would actually expend all its weapons in such an attack.

[] As with LAP, neither side would actually expend all its weapons in attacks on hard targets only.

~~Top Secret~~

┌

┌┐

┐

└

└┐

└

HTP. Figure III also compares the HTP of both sides with the respective number of hardened silos. This comparison shows that theoretically the Soviets now have almost twice as much hard-target potential as the United States has silos,└

┐

² In actuality HTP overstates the capability of a side to destroy the other side's ICBMs, but this measure does show important trends in counterforce potential.

~~TCS 6335-50/7~~

A-7
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

7. The critical issue that dominates perceptions in this country, however, is indicated on figure IV. The left-hand graph displays the vulnerability of US ICBMs to a first strike by the Soviets and assumes that the United States does not launch its ICBMs on warning. Today only about 30 percent of the US ICBM launchers would survive. [

]

8. To discern the full meaning of the vulnerability of US ICBMs, we must look at the total forces the Soviets would have to expect the United States to have left, after a Soviet surprise first strike eliminated most US ICBMs. Would surviving US forces be adequate either to deter such a strike in the first place or to wage nuclear warfare thereafter? To examine this issue, we use residual analyses of Soviet and US forces and project them out into the decade ahead.⁵ These residual analyses are, again, theoretical calculations. They depict how many forces of one side would survive a first strike by the other and how that would compare with the forces that would still be left to the attacking side for other missions.⁶

[]
⁵ For these calculations we assume that the Soviets deploy, as their one new missile permitted under the SALT II terms, a medium-size, solid-propellant, silo-based ICBM with a single RV rather than the maximum of 10 RVs which is permitted. The United States is assumed to deploy 200 MX missiles based in 4,600 hardened shelters.

⁶ In this analysis:

- The respective arsenals are reduced by subtracting those ICBMs needed for the attack and those retaliatory forces destroyed in the attack (bombers and SSBNs not on alert or at sea are assumed destroyed); the ICBMs of the side attacked are assumed to ride out the attack without being launched.
- The residuals are on-pad potentials, calculated without considering such factors as specific targeting doctrines, command and control degradation, attrition by air or ASW defenses, and other operational variables.

The calculations in the analysis do not attempt to simulate actual conflict outcomes.

- They seek to display comparative capabilities and limitations in a manner most relevant to nuclear deterrence in its most elementary form—that is, assured destruction.
- The analysis illustrates the retaliatory destructive potential that a side contemplating an attack would have to expect to survive on the side attacked even following a surprise attack—the worst case for the side attacked.
- The analysis makes no estimate of how many of these two types of targets would likely be attacked in retaliatory or second strikes.

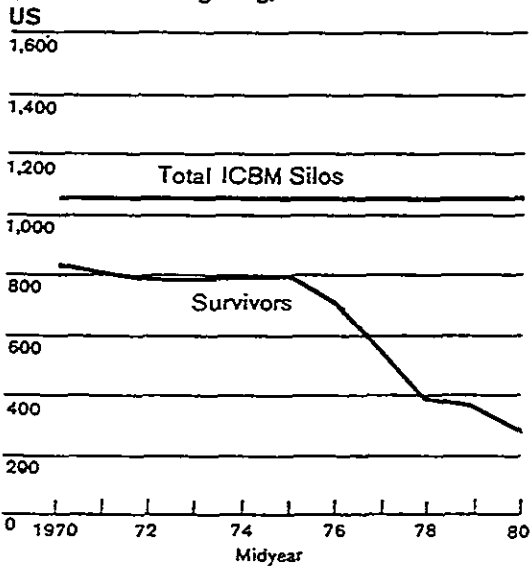
~~TCS 3333-80/1~~

A-8

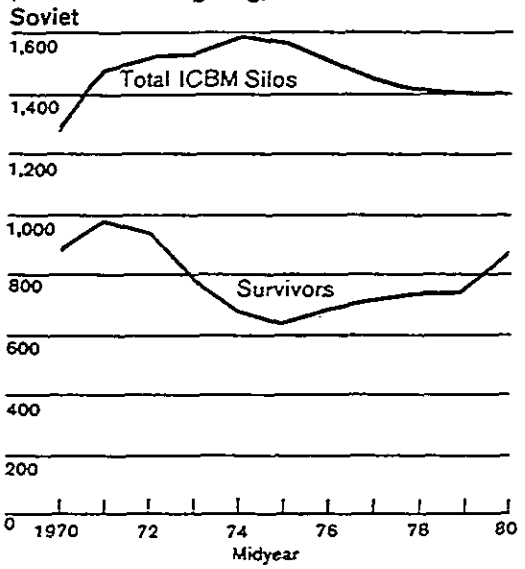
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

Figure IV
Capability of Soviet ICBMs To
Attack US ICBM Silos, 1970-80
 (Two-on-One Targeting)



Survivability of Soviet ICBM Silos If
Attacked by US ICBMs, 1970-80
 (Two-on-One Targeting)



~~Top Secret~~
~~61257-01 ca~~

~~TCS 3333 89/1~~

A-9
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

[

]

[

]

9. Figure V displays, in terms of LAP, what the residual forces of both sides could still do after a Soviet surprise first strike{

]

10. Figure VI illustrates the qualitative differences in the composition of the two residual forces. On the left, the Soviet force is shown to be nearly all ICBMs (until the late 1980s). On the right, the US force has few ICBMs, but many SLBMs and aerodynamic weapon systems such as bombs and cruise missiles. There are, of course, important differences here. ICBMs have greater speed of attack and better responsiveness to command and control. The slower aerodynamic systems would have to penetrate large, growing, and increasingly more effective Soviet air defenses. It is possible that the generally held notions of Soviet superiority derive in part from a preference for the qualities of ICBM systems over those of SLBMs and air-breathing weapons.

~~TCS 3539-60/1~~

A-10

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

11. The answer to the question of whether the residual US forces would be adequate to deter the Soviets lies in a subjective judgment as to conditions under which a Soviet leadership would risk initiating strategic nuclear war. It is likely, however, that, considering the US residual force that is shown on the right on figure VI, the Soviets would see such a war as being a very high risk even in the early 1980s when US surviving potential would be at its lowest.

12. The question of whether Soviet and/or US residual forces would be adequate for war fighting relates not only to the numbers of residual weapons and their destructive potential but also to the enduring survivability of their command, control, communications, and postattack assessment systems. For most of the 1980s the Soviets clearly have greater endurance capability. In terms of residual LAP following a Soviet first strike, they would need greater potential in the late 1980s, if they sought to be able to damage the same percentage of US urban area as they could earlier in the decade. In terms of residual HTP, they have an excess potential relative to the number of US hard targets, even in the late 1980s.

13. Another point on figures V and VI is the sharp dropoff in Soviet residual potential in the latter half of the decade. This dropoff is

A-11

~~FCS 0000-00/1~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

due to the construction of MX shelters, which absorb most of the Soviet warheads in their initial strike. If the Soviets perceive these trends in anything like these terms, they will certainly consider actions to prevent this potential reversal.

14. The Soviets, as noted previously, are poised with a multiplicity of R&D programs. They can move out on whatever track they deem appropriate. We must try to deduce what they may attempt and how it would affect the comparison of forces.

Soviet Options in Strategic Force Programs

15. In considering their strategic programs for the 1980s, the Soviets will want to preserve and extend the gains of the 1970s and early 1980s; and despite economic difficulties and changes in leadership in the Soviet Union that are bound to occur in this decade, they will make a great effort to continue their emphasis on military preparedness.⁷ Under these assumptions, there are a number of options which the Soviets are likely to consider. These include: (1) encouraging some form of nuclear arms limitations; (2) observing the SALT II constraints; (3) ignoring the SALT II constraints and increasing fractionation (increasing the number of RVs carried by a missile); (4) deploying additional offensive and defensive systems. The United States has, of course, a variety of options of its own, including expanding the number of additional MX shelters to counterbalance the Soviet options on fractionation.

16. We believe that the Soviets almost certainly prefer the first of these options—to encourage the ratification of SALT II or some other form of nuclear arms limitation—because it is most likely to dissuade the United States from entering into a strategic arms race. Besides this, it would, the Soviets hope, abet another of their key objectives, that of splitting the NATO allies by lulling them into a false sense of security. The Soviets are particularly worried by the prospect of a buildup of NATO tactical nuclear forces with long enough range to strike at the Soviet homeland. From their point of view, the addition of Pershing II's and GLCMs to the NATO arsenal would affect their position relative to the United States in the late 1980s even more adversely than shown in figure V.

17. If the Soviets chose to observe the limits under SALT II, we believe that they would probably push close to the limits under the agreement and thus hedge against an even greater need in the late

⁷ The membership of the Soviet Politburo has changed substantially during the last 10 years but this has apparently not altered Soviet strategic force objectives.

~~TCS 8336 80/1~~

A-12

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

1980s. One area for expansion within the Treaty limits is in the number of ICBM RVs. The maximum to which the Soviets can expand is 8,600, an increase of 2,700 over that assumed in the previous discussion.⁴ On the left side of figure VII we show again, as in figure V, the decline of residual Soviet LAP in the late 1980s under basic SALT II conditions. At the right we add a graph that shows the situation if the Soviets expand to 8,600 RVs. There would still be a dropoff in residual Soviet LAP but not nearly as much as on figure V. We have also calculated, however, that if the United States should build a total of 7,200 shelters for MX rather than 4,600, the curve would return approximately to that of figure V. In short, an increase by the Soviets of 2,700 warheads could be offset by the addition of 2,600 shelters.

⁴ They could reach 8,600 RVs by choosing to deploy a 10-MIRV ICBM as their one new ICBM permitted under SALT II rather than the single-RV version assumed in the previous calculations. This missile would replace currently deployed SS-17 and SS-19 ICBMs, thereby causing some programmatic disruptions.

┌

┐

└

┘

~~TCS 3333-60/1~~

A-13

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

19. If the Soviets chose not to observe any SALT II limitations, especially those on fractionation, we estimate that the Soviets have the capacity to build to 14,000 ICBM RVs by 1990. The consequent new curve of LAP is shown in the right-hand graph of figure VIII (the two graphs from figure VII are on the left for comparison). Clearly this would completely offset the expected decline in Soviet potential. In turn, a total of about 10,700 MX shelters would be required to counter this and return conditions to those displayed on the left-hand graph. There would also be a US alternative of abrogating the ABM Treaty and deploying a new mobile ABM system.

20. The options examined above put some bounds on the impact of possible Soviet and US moves. It is unlikely that the Soviets would fractionate to 14,000 RVs or that the United States would build 10,700 MX shelters as a countermove. Other alternatives exist for both sides. What the calculations indicate, however, is that the Soviets will have an incentive to enter into a competition to maintain their present relative status; that the United States will then have an incentive to respond in some manner; and that these numbers of 14,000 and 10,700 simply represent some measure of the magnitude of the actions that would have to be considered.

21. Obviously the costs of whatever programs are selected would be considerable. Despite past evidence that economics has not had a profound effect on the size of the Soviets' strategic programs, the magnitude of their forthcoming economic problems may change this. They will at least try to avail themselves of lower cost options. In particular, we expect them to emphasize arms control agreements and to attempt to gain as much leverage as possible from the threat to fractionate extensively. This is certainly the option they can use most readily to pressure the United States. It is also an option they can implement relatively rapidly, and, the earlier they move to extensive fractionation, the more certain they can be of making the competition difficult for the United States. Ultimately, however, the Soviets will not let economic considerations deprive them of strategic forces they deem important to their security.

~~TCS 3333-8071~~

A-14
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

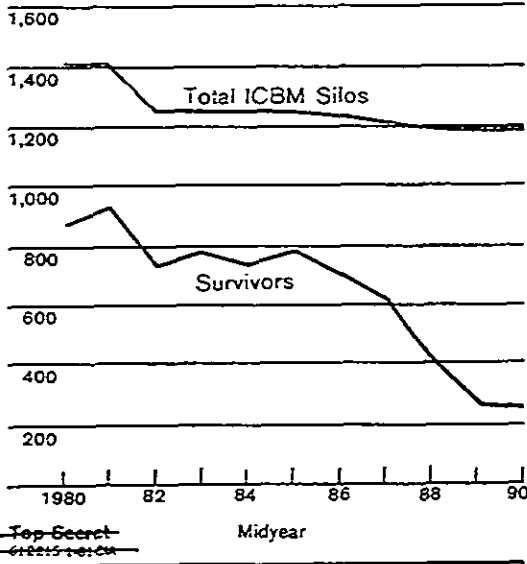
21. The deployment of MX in the US inventory will have a second impact on the Soviets over and above that of acting as a sponge to absorb large numbers of Soviet warheads. As shown on figure IX, the advent of MX will be accompanied by a progressive decline in the survivability of Soviet silo-based ICBMs under conditions of a US first strike. This will then drive the Soviets to take steps to reduce the vulnerability of their ICBM force:

- One step would be to deploy additional SLBMs.
- Another would be to abrogate the ABM Treaty and expand their ABM defenses around their ICBM fields.
- Another would be to develop and deploy mobile ICBMs.
- Still another would be to press the development of long-range cruise missiles.

It is worth noting that the means of verifying mobile ICBMs and cruise missiles under an arms control agreement are limited.

Figure IX
Survivability of Soviet ICBM Silos If
Attacked by US ICBMs, 1980-90

With SALT
(Two-on-One Targeting)
Soviet



~~Top Secret~~

A-17

~~Top Secret~~

~~TCS 3333-33/1~~

~~Top Secret~~

1

Implications

22. Because the Soviets will want, for a time at least, to keep open the possibility of a future SALT accord that would constrain US programs, we estimate that they will approve programs for the next five years that:

- Push their strategic forces toward the maximum levels permitted under SALT II and emphasize growth of a wide range of strategic programs not constrained by SALT II.
- Lay the groundwork for rapid expansion (even during this Five-Year Plan) of their forces in areas now constrained by SALT II, if they concluded that the Treaty were dead.

23. In light of the stark contrast in the projected Soviet strategic position in the first half of the 1980s, and the threat to it in the last half, should we expect the Soviets to take advantage of what some have referred to as the "window of opportunity" of the early-to-middle 1980s? The Soviets have regularly exploited opportunities in the Third World and have taken those measures necessary to secure their control of Eastern Europe even before they achieved parity. They have apparently done this less with reference to the strategic balance with the United States than with their estimation of the US resolve to take counteraction. Since the Vietnam war they have perceived the possibility of such counteraction as remote, especially in the Third World.

24. Accordingly, we believe that the Soviets will continue to make their estimation of US resolve the primary determinant in the degree to which they conduct an aggressive foreign policy in the Third World. Their sense of strategic parity or superiority may well, however, make them judge the risks to be less than they were in the past. In short, the "window of opportunity" which appears to exist in the early-to-middle 1980s with respect to the strategic equation will make the Soviets more willing to be adventuresome but not so much so as to "go for broke" in exploiting every opportunity that presents itself in the Third World. Their perception of the strategic balance is unlikely to induce them to undertake military action in Europe or against the United States. Still, these judgments must be caveated by the recognition that there are several important uncertainties in this estimation:

- First, internal political dynamics in the Soviet Union may become less predictable during a prolonged period of leadership change.

~~TCS 3333-00/1~~

A-18

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

- Second, the Soviets have surprised us before with the continued strength of their strategic programs and might build to a point of such strength that they might miscalculate the prospects for successful military action.
- Finally, with their extensive R&D program, they might achieve a technological breakthrough that would clearly give them superiority.

~~TCS 0255-007~~

A-19
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

B. KEY JUDGMENTS COORDINATED BY THE INTELLIGENCE
COMMUNITY AGENCIES

1. In this section we describe current Soviet programs and highlight those issues and uncertainties that we believe will be critical to the administration as it develops US strategic nuclear policy. We project alternative Soviet forces and discuss some of the implications of these forces. Finally, we address whether the US-Soviet strategic relationship would induce the Soviets to exploit what they may perceive as a period of strategic opportunity before US programs alter trends advantageous to the USSR.

Current Soviet Strategic Programs and Policies

2. Soviet leaders assert the inevitable victory of "socialism" in its struggle with capitalism, and, although they describe general nuclear war as a disaster to be avoided if possible, their military leaders argue that such a conflict can be won by the USSR. Moreover, the Soviets actively plan for national survival in the event of such a war. In public and private commentary, at SALT and in other forums, they have rejected Western notions of strategic sufficiency and the concept of mutual assured destruction. The Soviet Union's refusal to accept mutual vulnerability as a permanent basis for the strategic relationship is consistent with their open-ended weapons acquisition system and policy. The Soviets seek strategic forces and supporting elements, that, in the event of general nuclear war, could:

- Launch crippling counterforce strikes.
- Survive large-scale nuclear attack.
- Be employed flexibly against a wide range of targets.
- Substantially limit damage to the USSR.

3. To these ends the USSR relies on both offensive and defensive measures. Its offensive forces consist primarily of a large land-based ballistic missile force that today has the potential to destroy the bulk of US ICBM silos, and a survivable submarine-launched ballistic missile force that is growing in size and capability. The Soviet long-range bomber force is expected to continue to provide a relatively small portion of the USSR's total intercontinental attack capability. See figure I for an illustration of the growth and composition of Soviet strategic offensive forces over the last decade.

4. The Soviets continue to expand and upgrade what is already by far the largest air defense system in the world. They are developing a

B-1

~~TCS 8333-00/1~~

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

new ballistic missile defense system that could begin widespread deployment in the next few years.¹ They have a nationwide civil defense program that would cost at least \$2 billion per year if duplicated in the United States. Although their antisubmarine warfare (ASW) capabilities have major deficiencies, they continue to expend great efforts in seeking solutions to their problems in this field.

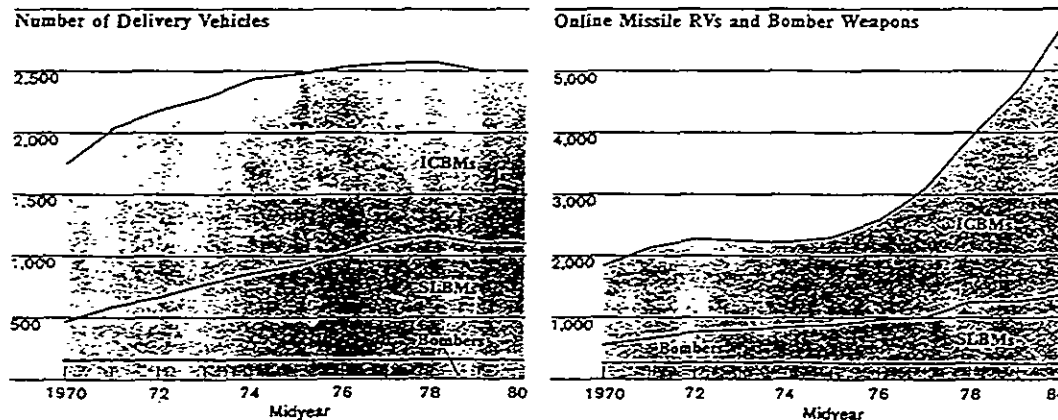
5. The Soviets have long stressed the importance of their command, control, and communications systems as critical to the fulfillment of their strategic goals in the event of war. These systems, even if directly attacked, can ensure the transmission of initial launch instructions to strategic forces. Their communications systems are sufficiently redundant that the loss of any one would not severely degrade command and control capabilities. Moreover, the primary communications circuits could be reconstituted within a period of several hours to a few days. Improvements in command and control have been an important aspect of the Soviets' efforts to enhance the flexibility of their forces.

6. The Soviets have sought to assure their ability to employ intercontinental forces in either initiative or responsive attacks, in either brief or extended conflicts. Which attack option the Soviets would

¹ For an alternative view held by the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, see paragraph 36.

Figure I

Growth and Composition of Soviet Offensive Strategic Forces, 1970-80



These forces do not include systems that have primarily peripheral missions, but also have some capabilities for intercontinental attack.

~~Secret~~

TCS 3333 80/1

B-2

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

select—surprise first strike, preemption, launch-on-tactical-warning, or retaliation—would depend on the circumstances, including the warning indicators available and the Soviet assessment of potential risks and gains.

7. To permit effective weapon systems to be regularly produced and deployed in support of the leadership's military and political objectives, the USSR's military research, development, and production establishments have been largely insulated from economic problems. At present the Soviets have under way about a dozen programs devoted to new or modified ballistic missile systems for intercontinental and peripheral attack, a new class of very large ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), possibly long-range cruise missiles, a new ABM system, a new generation of fighters and advanced surface-to-air missiles. Experience indicates that many of these weapon systems will be deployed; however, for technical, political, or mission-related reasons some will not. While the Soviet approach to R&D relies mostly on evolutionary steps to minimize risks and avoid production problems, high-risk, innovative approaches are also undertaken. For example, in the defensive field directed-energy systems are being evaluated for their potential in air and ballistic missile defense and antisatellite applications. Today, the Soviets, by dint of broad and intensive research and development efforts, are in a good position to further modernize their strategic forces.

Critical Issues and Uncertainties

8. *Victory.* The comprehensive nature of Soviet strategic offensive and defensive programs, the emphasis in Soviet military doctrine on fighting nuclear wars, and assertions that general nuclear war can be won combine to indicate that some Soviet leaders hold the view that victory in general nuclear war is possible. While Soviet military writings available to us deal with preparations and operations on the assumption that a war may have to be fought, they do not specify what would constitute a politically meaningful victory in nuclear war. Soviet military writers devote their attention to the accomplishment of military missions rather than to political results, emphasizing what US strategists would call counterforce, damage-limiting missions and culminating in the seizure of key enemy military, political, and economic centers. [] imply that victory would be an outcome that preserves the Communists' political control, permits reconstitution of their economy, and leaves them in a superior military position on Eurasia, while neutralizing the United States and undermining the political and social systems of their weakened adversaries.

9. There is a divergent view that the concept of "victory" in Soviet writings is based on ideology rather than on objective, operational fac-

B-3

~~TCS 8330-80/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

tors. To deny the possibility of "victory" under any circumstances would challenge the legitimacy of Soviet ideology and, in effect, of the regime itself. This view further holds that the existence of military missions is not proof of an operational concept of "victory," given the lack of any identification of the requirements or character of "victory" in Soviet writings.² There is a second divergent view that available evidence indicates clearly that Soviet political and military leaders are in agreement on what would constitute victory. The holders of this view believe that the Soviet concept of a military and politically meaningful victory calls for: the survival of the USSR as a viable political entity, with the Communist party and leadership remaining supreme; the strategic and military neutralization of the United States; and the seizure and occupation of Western Europe.³

10. We believe that the Soviets would launch a preemptive intercontinental nuclear strike only if their leaders were to acquire what they considered unequivocal evidence that a US strike was both imminent and unavoidable. } indicate
 a belief that the most likely way in which intercontinental conflict with the United States would begin would be by escalation from a NATO-Warsaw Pact theater conflict. The Soviets apparently believe that the United States, facing a NATO defeat in Europe, would seek to salvage the situation by launching nuclear strikes.

11. *Limited Intercontinental Nuclear War.* We are uncertain about Soviet capabilities and strategy for limited intercontinental nuclear conflict. The Soviets publicly reject the possibility that limited nuclear wars can be kept limited. On this point, their public condemnation of the so-called "Schlesinger Doctrine" and more recently of PD-59 has been consistent. Privately, however, some Soviet spokesmen seemed to signal in 1975 that the USSR did not entirely disapprove of these concepts, and there is evidence that the Soviets plan for limited nuclear conflict at the theater level. Soviet forces have the technical sophistication and flexibility to initiate a broad range of limited options, although we continue to believe that even a "limited" Soviet strike, in keeping with the major tenets of their military doctrine, would involve a large-scale attack on US strategic forces and command and communication centers. The Soviets' ability to respond in kind to limited nuclear attacks on the USSR is constrained by their attack assessment capabilities. The improvements we expect the Soviets to make in their strategic forces during the 1980s will give them better capabilities for limited

² The holder of this view is the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

³ The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Senior Intelligence Officers of the military services.

~~TOP SECRET~~

B-4

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

intercontinental nuclear war, but we cannot predict the degree of improvement they will make in their attack assessment capabilities.

12. *Protracted Intercontinental Nuclear War.* The Soviets assert that a general nuclear war will probably be brief, but they have long allowed for the possibility that it might become lengthy. In view of their extensive activities aimed at survivability and command continuity—civil defense, leadership protection, force hardening and reconstitution, and hardened and redundant communications—we believe that the Soviets have contingency plans for protracted conflicts. [

] We cannot determine how thorough such planning may be or what specific preparations have been made.

13. *SALT.* Throughout the strategic arms limitation talks the Soviets have endeavored to slow the pace of US strategic force development while keeping open, to the extent feasible, options consistent with the USSR's military doctrine and its force acquisition plans. The agreements, however, have forced the USSR to make some trade-offs. In particular, the Soviets would not have reduced the number of SS-17, SS-19, and possibly SS-18 launchers that we believe they planned for deployment, and would not have dismantled Y-class SSBNs except for the arms control process. Nevertheless, since the strategic arms negotiations began, the Soviets have markedly enhanced the counterforce capabilities of their ICBMs and have continued ABM research and development.

14. Regardless of the fate of SALT II and despite anything the United States is likely to do or not do, the Soviets will substantially increase the capabilities of their forces during the next 10 years. Although they have indicated their willingness, if the Treaty is ratified, to proceed promptly to negotiate further reductions and limitations, we think the Soviet leaders will be very reluctant to entertain deep cuts in land-based ballistic missiles, because this would jeopardize the strategic posture they have worked so long to acquire. Moreover, continuation beyond 1985 of the SALT II limitations on new ICBMs, ICBM fractionation, and perhaps total numbers of MIRVed launchers would limit the USSR's ability to increase the counterforce potential of its ICBM force in response to projected US strategic force improvements. We are, therefore, uncertain whether the Soviets would be willing to extend such limits beyond 1985.

15. In the absence of SALT limitations, particularly in light of prospective US and NATO force improvements, the Soviets probably would take actions that would have been prohibited by the SALT II

~~TCS 8833-88/1~~

B-5

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

Treaty and associated documents. During the next few months the USSR could:

- Begin sea trials for a new SSBN without dismantling older launchers as compensation.
- Test more than one "new type" of ICBM.
- Increase the number of reentry vehicles on the SS-18 beyond the Treaty's limit.

And in the next few years it could:

- Increase the number of land-based MIRVed launchers beyond Treaty limits.
- Deploy mobile ICBMs.
- Increase production of the Backfire bomber.

16. *Soviet Perceptions of the Strategic Environment in the 1980s.* Soviet planning seems driven by the perceived need to maintain forces adequate to prevail over any combination of opponents. There is an alternative view that Soviet force planning is based not on an operational imperative to achieve victory in nuclear war but on a strategy of deterrence through the development of a war-fighting capability.⁴ The Soviets can expect that through the early-to-middle 1980s their ongoing force improvement programs will bring further gains in their strategic posture relative to the United States, NATO, and China. Despite the USSR's favorable prospects over the next few years, the issues now confronting Soviet policymakers and the implications for strategic force programs in the 1980s are unusually complex. They are faced with discontent among allies, the possibility of a deepening military involvement in Afghanistan, a volatile situation involving Middle East clients, continued poor relations with China, and an uncertain future for their relations with the West. They also see a growing Western determination to counter improvements in Soviet military forces. Key among the US and allied strategic initiatives with which the Soviets need to concern themselves are: MX missiles in multiple protective shelters (MPS), cruise missile and Trident programs, possibly a new bomber, and planned deployments in Western Europe of new long-range offensive systems. Thus, the strategic environment that the USSR may project is one in which Soviet gains of the 1970s and early 1980s could be eroded later in the decade.

17. *MX/MPS* is almost certainly a critical element affecting Soviet planning for the late 1980s. The MX missile represents a severe threat to

⁴ The holder of this view is the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

~~TCS 0033-00/1~~

B-6
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

the survivability of the Soviet silo-based force. To enhance the survivability of their strategic forces with or without SALT the USSR could, for example, increase the number of its SLBM RVs. In the absence of the SALT II Protocol limits they could also deploy large numbers of mobile ICBMs.

18. In the event of a massive counterforce attack by the Soviets, the numerous hardened shelters in the MPS scheme would require the use of thousands of weapons in attacks on empty shelters. In response to the requirement to target large numbers of MX shelters, the USSR could, under SALT II limits, replace some of their existing MIRVed ICBMs with a 10-RV version of a missile now under development. In the absence of SALT they could further fractionate existing ICBMs. Another alternative for the Soviets would be to expand the role of their SSBN force to include attacks against MX shelters. The Soviets are considering a program to develop an advanced guidance system for future SLBMs. We do not believe that they will be able to deploy a hard-target-capable SLBM in the 1980s because of the difficulties in achieving the necessary accuracies. An alternative view holds that these accuracies could be attained by the end of the decade.⁵

19. *Long-Range Theater Nuclear Forces.* Prospective NATO long-range theater nuclear force (LRTNF) improvements—the deployment of advanced Pershing ballistic missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles—present the Soviets with new problems and uncertainties regarding warning time and assessment of the size and objectives of a nuclear attack from Europe. Moreover, these weapons could be seen by the Soviets as lessening the probability that they could accomplish their military objectives before a conflict escalated to the nuclear level. LRTNF deployment also serves to undermine the broader Soviet political objective of weakening the NATO alliance by casting doubt on the credibility of the US strategic umbrella.

20. The Soviets will seek to slow or halt these programs by diplomatic pressures, by arms control efforts, and by propaganda. Militarily, they will probably seek to counter NATO deployments by continuing steady improvements in their long-range theater offensive forces, and by deploying new shorter range nuclear missiles in the forward area of Eastern Europe. The Soviets may also have defensive counters. They have been working, since the early 1970s, on a new antitactical ballistic missile that when fully developed and joined to a suitable radar could have limited capabilities against some long-range theater ballistic missiles like the Pershing IIs and some submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

⁵ The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy.

~~TCS 8888-80/1~~B-7
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

21. *Economic Factors.* Soviet defense spending has been increasing at an annual rate of 4 to 5 percent since about 1965. In 1978-79 the rate of growth in gross national product dropped to 2 percent, the lowest since World War II, thus increasing the defense burden. In the 1980s we expect the Soviet economy to continue to experience low growth rates. If, as expected, military outlays continue to rise at previous rates, the military share of GNP could reach 13 to 15 percent by 1985, as compared with today's 12 to 14 percent. Thus, the allocation of available resources among competing sectors of the Soviet economy will become more difficult. Nevertheless, evidence indicates defense spending will continue to increase at the rate of 4 to 5 percent at least through 1985. The number of major weapon systems under development and their pace have remained constant, more technologically complex systems have pushed costs higher, and construction activity at defense plants is at a high level. There is also evidence of planned expansion and modernization of military forces and of greater demands being made on Warsaw Pact allies for significant increases in defense spending.

22. Even if the Soviet leaders were forced by economic pressures to slow the growth of defense spending, we believe strategic programs would be the last to suffer a cutback. Reductions in strategic programs would offer only limited economic benefits, because the production resources devoted to them are highly specialized and are not readily transferable to the civilian economy. If, nevertheless, some cuts had to be made in Soviet strategic programs, we think they would choose only to defer or stretch out some force improvement programs.

Projections of Soviet Offensive Forces

23. Our projections of specific weapon programs are based on our knowledge of programs now in progress, past development and production trends, and our perceptions of Soviet force requirements. We have considered the possibility that, faced with a more challenging strategic environment and mounting economic difficulties, the Soviets might moderate their objectives for strategic forces and their resource commitments to them. We conclude, however, that the Soviets are not likely to alter significantly their commitment to long-term strategic force improvements.

24. *Impact of SALT Limitations.* Certain of the SALT II Treaty provisions would serve to constrain the Soviets' options for improving their forces. The limitations that most directly impact on our projections are:

- No increase in the number of RVs on existing ICBMs. The large throw weight of Soviet MIRVed ICBMs, particularly of the SS-18 booster, would permit much greater payload fractionation without sacrificing countersilo capabilities.

~~TCS 8833-50/7~~

B-8

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

- Only one "new" ICBM, with a maximum of 10 RVs. The Soviets have at least two ICBMs under development that would be categorized as "new" under SALT II. We believe that the constraints of SALT II would lead the Soviets to choose as their "new" ICBM the larger of the two. Its greater throw weight would give the USSR more flexibility in selecting payload options that would maximize counterforce capability under SALT.
- No more than 1,200 launchers for MIRVed missiles. We expect that the continued deployment of the D-III SSBN, concurrent with the deployment of the new very large Typhoon SSBN, will bring the Soviets to the sublimit of 1,200 MIRVed-missile launchers in the mid-1980s. At that time, they would have to dismantle other MIRVed missile launchers to compensate for launchers on new Typhoon SSBNs.

25. *Projections.* To take account of the uncertainties about the future of US-Soviet arms limitation negotiations, we have projected alternative Soviet forces for intercontinental attack. We have used dates of initial operational capability (IOC) and deployment rates consistent with past trends, as well as our best estimates of weapon system characteristics. The SALT-limited projection assumes that the constraints imposed by the SALT II Treaty remain in effect through 1990. We project a single force, with an upper and a lower bound that reflects our uncertainty about Soviet ICBM and SLBM deployment options. Although a Soviet SALT-limited force will probably fall within the range presented, the upper bound is considered a less likely projection than the lower. In the absence of an agreement to extend the SALT II terms, the Soviets have the potential to expand their forces considerably in the mid-to-late 1980s. This potential is illustrated by the SALT/No-SALT projection. The No-SALT force illustrates Soviet development and deployment options under circumstances in which the SALT II Treaty is abandoned by mid-1981 and the SALT process breaks down. Our projections are summarized in the accompanying table.

Comparisons of Soviet and US Offensive Forces

26. To illustrate the capabilities of Soviet strategic offensive forces we use several indexes and we compare Soviet with US forces. US forces were provided by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and are consistent with programmed forces except in the No-SALT examples. The US No-SALT forces provided by OSD are regarded by the Secretary of Defense as unsuitable for use in an NIE. The Department of Defense has not produced an official estimate of what forces it would construct in the absence of SALT limitations. Accordingly, the comparisons which are made in this area must be viewed as representative of what might

~~TCS 3333-60/H~~

B-9

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

Soviet Options for Strategic Offensive Forces With and Without SALT

	Delivery Vehicles				Weapon Totals *		
	ICBM Launchers	SLBM Launchers	Bombers	Total	Hard-Target ICBM RVs	RVs on Mobile ICBM Launchers and SLBMs	Missile RVs and Bomber Weapons
1985							
SALT Lower Bound	1,238	908	104	2,250	5,700	2,650	8,650
SALT Upper Bound	1,238	908	104	2,250	6,100	2,650	9,350
No-SALT	1,569	1,089	151	2,809	8,800	3,400	12,250
1990							
SALT Lower Bound	1,178	972	100	2,250	5,900	3,600	10,250
SALT Upper Bound	1,238	908	104	2,250	5,200	4,400	12,650
SALT/No-SALT	1,454	1,068	190	2,712	12,150	5,950	18,400
No-SALT	1,695	1,224	230	3,149	14,000	6,300	20,450

* These numbers have been rounded to the nearest 50.

~~Secret~~

be done, not as specific predictions. The indexes we use include static measures of the current relative size and qualitative characteristics of Soviet and US forces. We also look at measures of the destructive potential of Soviet and US forces to attack soft urban areas and hardened military targets like silos. There is an alternative view that the US forces used in the Estimate have no official status and therefore should not be used.⁶

27. The static indexes we look at include number of missile RVs and bomber weapons and equivalent megatonnage of the two forces. We also look at key qualitative characteristics, including accuracy of each side's most effective hard-target ICBMs and the hardness of each side's ICBM silos. Our comparisons of current forces indicate the following:

- Missile RVs and Bomber Weapons. The number of weapons is a rough indicator of the number of targets that can be attacked. The United States continues to maintain a substantial lead. It [] and the Soviets about 6,000. The major factors weighing in the US favor are a larger MIRVed SLBM force and a larger force of intercontinental bombers.
- Equivalent Megatons. This measure combines weapon yield and numbers of weapons to provide a rough indicator of the potential of a force to attack soft area targets. The present Soviet advantage that began in the mid-1970s is primarily the result of a large number of ICBMs with high throw weights. []

⁶ The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Senior Intelligence Officers of the military services.

B-10

~~FCI 3353-59/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

— Accuracy. The accuracy of each side's best ICBMs is a rough measure of the trends in hard-target capability.]

— Silo Hardness. The hardness of a silo is a rough measure of its survivability.]

] Overall, Soviet silo systems are probably more vulnerable than indicated by these figures, but we still consider them to be significantly harder than US silo systems.

In sum, the Soviets lead in equivalent megatonnage and average hardness of ICBM silos, and have now surpassed the United States in ICBM accuracy. They still lag behind the United States in numbers of weapons.

28. *Measures of Destructive Potential.* We examine the total number of missile RV and bomber weapons in terms of two theoretical measures—lethal area potential (LAP) and hard-target potential (HTP). LAP is defined as the area of land over which an overpressure] sufficient to level reinforced concrete structures, can be applied. The second measure, HTP, assesses the potential of each side's total force—ICBMs, SLBMs, and bomber weapons—to destroy hardened targets such as missile silos. While these measures indicate trends in the destructive potential of offensive forces, neither side would plan to employ its entire force exclusively for one of these missions and there is thus no pretense that our calculations are based on the application of strategic weapons to real target sets. However, because we apply the same assumptions for both sides, the comparisons are useful in that they convey more information than presented by static force comparisons alone.

— With respect to LAP the USSR has been ahead throughout the 1970s. However, the US urban area is twice the size of the USSR's]

]]

~~TCS 3303-00/1~~

B-11

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

┌

┐

└

┘

— The number and lethality of large Soviet warheads and the hardness of Soviet ICBM silos give the USSR a substantial advantage over the United States in HTP.

29. There is a divergent view that only detailed damage assessment of individual targets can properly indicate destructive potential for meaningful comparison of strategic forces. According to this view, LAP overstates the potential destructive capabilities of a force because actual targets are not clustered in neat circles where overpressure can achieve maximum damage. The HTP calculations also misstate force potential because in many cases when weapons are applied to real target sets the damage achieved is less than the theoretical HTP of a given weapon.⁷

30. *Soviet Potential To Attack US ICBMs.* Projected Soviet ICBM forces will have an increasing potential to destroy US ICBM silos. Using two RVs against each silo, they could destroy about 60 percent today and about 90 percent by 1985. Deployment of the MX missile in multiple protective shelters in the late 1980s, however, would make the accomplishment of the Soviet counterforce mission a much more expensive proposition. Although the US shelter program could dramatically

⁷ The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Senior Intelligence Officers of the military services.

~~TCS 0000 00/1~~

B-12

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

increase the RV requirements for a Soviet counterforce attack—in both the SALT and No-SALT environments—we project the Soviets could meet that requirement but would have to expend most of their ICBM RVs.

31. *Soviet and US Residual Potentials.* The methods and measures used in our analysis are simplified ones. They do not depict the outcome of a US-Soviet nuclear exchange or a protracted nuclear conflict and do not account for the operational factors that would be essential to assess the performance of Soviet and US forces under wartime conditions. They do, however, illustrate the progress made by the Soviets toward satisfying the counterforce requirements they have established for their forces. Further, our assessment of the surviving US potential, after US forces have absorbed a hypothetical first strike, is particularly important to those who see the key ingredient of the strategic balance as the ability of the United States to absorb a first strike and retain enough absolute destructive potential for a large-scale retaliatory attack.

32. There is a divergent view that the residual analysis in this Estimate produces misleading results with respect to trends in the strategic balance, sheds little light on the question of deterrence or escalation control, and comprises an unrealistic net assessment. According to this view, net assessments from a US perspective are not a proper function of intelligence. In this view, analysis based on a US perspective should be accomplished within the Department of Defense with intelligence as a full partner, and should not be included in a National Intelligence Estimate.⁶

33. It is the view of the Director of Central Intelligence that the residual analysis in this Estimate is indeed a proper function for the Intelligence Community. The DCI believes that the Department of Defense should be a full partner in such assessments, but he does not believe it in the national interest that DoD should control all comparisons of the effectiveness of its forces with other forces.

34. Figure III displays the destructive potential of Soviet remaining and US surviving weapons, with and without SALT, following a surprise Soviet attack when US forces are on day-to-day alert—a worst case circumstance for US forces. The charts illustrate that the potentials of Soviet forces—measured in terms of either LAP or HTP—will improve over the next few years whether or not SALT is in effect. The sharp decline in residual Soviet destructive potential in the latter half of the 1980s, shown on the charts, results from planned US strategic force

⁶ The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Senior Intelligence Officers of the military services.

B-13

~~TCS 8999-00/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

improvement, especially MX/MPS. Similar calculations show that in the case of a US first strike, the potential of Soviet surviving forces would also grow only through the mid-1980s.

35. We have examined the potential of US forces during their most vulnerable period—after a surprise attack by the USSR in the early 1980s. Our analysis shows that the United States would retain significant retaliatory potential even though US residual capabilities would be at their nadir. We have presumed mission requirements that surviving US forces be capable of destroying 70 percent of the Soviet economic and military base. We find that:

- Either the surviving US SLBM or bomber force could each destroy more than 70 percent of Soviet economic value and the surviving ICBM force could almost do the same.
- For retaliatory attacks against nonsilo military targets, presumed to have varying degrees of hardness, the mission could be accomplished by a combination of surviving SLBMs, bombers, and ICBMs.

These calculations have not taken into account the attrition caused by Soviet strategic defenses.

36. *The Extent to Which Soviet Strategic Defenses Can Limit Damage.* In the 1980s the Soviets are expected to deploy new air defense systems, particularly for low-altitude defense; further develop their ABM options; continue efforts to acquire effective ASW capabilities; and improve their civil defenses. Despite these growing strategic capabilities, the Soviets during the 1980s could not prevent a large-scale US nuclear attack by surviving US forces from causing tens of millions of casualties and massive destruction of urban-industrial and military facilities in the USSR:

- *Strategic Air Defense.* At present the massive Soviet air defense forces could perform well against aircraft at medium and high altitude, but would have little aggregate capability against targets at low altitudes. In the middle and late 1980s, Soviet air defenses will have the potential to inflict considerably higher attrition against US bombers of current types. By 1990 areas with adequate deployments of new systems could be defended against currently programed US cruise missiles. In addition, a forward defense with AWACS aircraft and interceptors could threaten some cruise missile carriers prior to launch. Nevertheless, because of numerical deficiencies, the Soviet capability to defend against an attack by large numbers of US cruise missiles will probably be limited over the next 10 years. Finally, collateral damage from a prior ballistic missile attack and the use of

B-15

~~TCS 8993-88/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

defense saturation, suppression, and electronic warfare tactics would degrade the overall effectiveness of Soviet air defenses. Thus, the actual performances of Soviet air defenses against combined attacks involving large numbers of US bombers, SRAMs, and cruise missiles will probably remain low during the period of this Estimate.

- Ballistic Missile Defense. The Soviets could begin deployment, after 1982, of an ABM system with the potential for one-on-one intercept of current and programed types of US ballistic missile RVs. As an example (although contrary to the ABM Treaty), the Soviets could have some 150 sites with 900 aboveground launchers for the defense of 20 to 25 high-value targets within four to five years of a deployment decision, assuming a high level of effort. [

] The effectiveness of the missile defense would depend on the size of the attack and the availability of target data, as well as US reactions, such as the deployment of penetration aids or the use of saturation tactics. There is an alternative view that discussions in this estimate of a new ABM system and possible deployment scenarios imply a far greater knowledge than we have and do not convey the significant uncertainties regarding the identification and current status of the components which would constitute a system suitable for deployment. According to this view, there is an insufficient basis upon which to evaluate system capabilities and the likelihood of various deployment possibilities. Moreover, it is misleading to imply that deployment could begin within the next few years,

- ASW Capabilities. The present effective range of Soviet submarine detection sensors is too short to enable the Soviets to detect US SSBNs in their patrol areas, and the capabilities of Soviet forces are too limited to maintain continuous tracking of SSBNs once detected. During the 1980s the Soviet ASW problem will become much more difficult as US SSBN operating areas are expanded following deployment of longer range SLBMs on Poseidon and Trident submarines. We believe, therefore, that during the decade the Soviets would be unable to prevent US SSBNs on patrol in broad ocean areas from launching their missiles.

* The holder of this view is the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

B-16

~~TOP SECRET~~~~TOP SECRET~~

~~Top Secret~~

— Civil Defense. Soviet casualties from the initial effects of a large-scale US nuclear attack could range from 125 to 150 million if little or no time were available for civil defense preparations. The benefit to the USSR of complete implementation of sheltering and evacuation would be the prevention of about 80 to 100 million casualties in the immediate aftermath of an attack. Under these circumstances the Soviet leadership and most of the essential work force would probably survive. Expected improvements in Soviet civil defense preparations in the 1980s will increase the likelihood of survival of a large percentage of the leadership and essential personnel, but the number of casualties and fatalities among the urban population would be somewhat greater than today. Increases in the number of Soviet blast shelters during the next 10 years will be offset by expected increases in Soviet urban population and in the number and yield of US weapons.

Implications

37. The Soviets credit their strategic programs of the 1970s with lessening the probability of general nuclear war with the United States and probably with improving the war-fighting capabilities of their forces. They probably view their improved strategic position as providing a more favorable backdrop than before to the conduct of an assertive foreign policy and to the projection of Soviet power abroad. They probably believe that their strategic forces would deter the United States from initiating intercontinental nuclear war in circumstances short of a clear threat to US national survival. It is likely that they see a high risk of escalation to the nuclear level in any conflict with the United States in areas (such as Western Europe) perceived vital to US interests. In other areas, particularly in regions where the USSR or its allies would have the advantage in conventional forces, the current strategic relationship enhances Soviet confidence that the risk of a direct US military response would be low.

38. The extent to which Soviet gains in strategic forces projected through 1985 would embolden the USSR to challenge the United States is unclear. In part, this is because the relationship between the strategic balance and Soviet behavior in the international arena is uncertain. Even when they were clearly inferior in strategic nuclear power the Soviets regularly exploited opportunities in the Third World and took those measures necessary to secure their control of Eastern Europe. Thus, during the early-to-middle 1980s, when the Soviets' strategic capabilities relative to those of the United States would be greatest, we would expect them—as in the past—to probe and challenge the United States steadily to determine at what point it will react strongly. For

B-17

~~TCS 3333-86/1~~~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

them to "go for broke" during the next few years would mean that they had ignored the strategic equation. We think it highly unlikely that this eventuality will come to pass. Their perception of the strategic balance is unlikely to induce them to take military action against Western Europe or the United States.

39. There is a divergent view regarding the implications of Soviet strategic programs. The holders of this view believe that the overall pattern of Soviet force improvements, while providing a high degree of military security, also enables the Soviets to create and exploit foreign policy opportunities for expansion. They believe that the early-to-middle 1980s has greater potential for Soviet challenges to Western influence than indicated above. They further believe that the Soviet leadership is now confident that the strategic military balance has shifted in the Kremlin's favor and that the aggressiveness of its foreign policy will continue to increase as the Soviet advantage grows. The Kremlin is likely to accelerate pursuit of its global ambitions, weighing the local "correlation of forces" in those regions where it wishes to increase its influence or gain control.¹⁰

¹⁰ The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Senior Intelligence Officers of the military services.

~~FCS 0000-00,7~~

B-18

~~Top Secret~~

Strategic Weapons in Context With Soviet Ambitions

In 1981 a new President, Ronald Reagan, brought a sweeping reappraisal of American security interests and an avowedly "hardline" Soviet policy. His DCI, William J. Casey, had served on the PFIAB, was a member of the Committee on the Present Danger, and a man with a clearly defined conception of the Soviet Union.

Casey saw his task to be a reform and reorientation of the intelligence community. In his tenure, the debate over Soviet objectives was to be subsumed by a new analytical paradigm that understood the strategic arms race in context with "the main threat," defined by Casey as "the Soviet ability and will to project its power worldwide through subversion and insurgency." It was important, Casey felt, not to become fixated on "the surface questions and manifestations of (the) competition with the Soviet Union" but to remember the "real nature of the contest . . . the lineal descendent of the conflict Western civilization had struggled with for millennia—state despotism versus . . . individual freedom and creativity."⁷

The dynamism of the 68-year-old DCI was evident from the moment he took office, evinced by a reorganization of the CIA's Directorate of Intelligence (then the National Foreign Assessment Center). Unusually, among his first actions was to commission a Memorandum to Holders of NIE 11-4-78 (M/H NIE 11-4-78)—some three years after that document was disseminated. This new appraisal painted a portrait of Soviet goals and expectations that was vastly different from the one displayed in 1978: whereas previous NIEs of this series had given strong emphasis to Soviet strategic military policy, this edition focused on Soviet efforts to achieve a dominant position in the Third World. It depicted a Soviet leadership that was assertive and confident despite the approaching succession crisis and a stagnating economy with little prospects for improvement.⁸ The next year's NIE 11-4-82—the last of this NIE series to be written on the Soviet Union—was more traditional in its review of Soviet military policy, but nevertheless focused on Soviet activities in the Third World.⁹

⁷ William J. Casey, *Scouting the Future: The Public Speeches of William J. Casey*, (Washington DC: Regnery Gateway, 1989), pp. 26, 150. According to his biographer, Casey felt that the "indictment" of the 1970s (in the A-Team/B-Team controversy) was "a bum rap . . . The specifics may have been technically accurate, but they had been wrenched out of context and grotesquely magnified to serve political ends." Joseph E. Persico, *Casey: From the OSS to the CIA*, (New York: Viking, 1990), p.216.

⁸ M/H NIE 11-4-78 *Soviet Goals and Expectations in the Global Power Arena*, 7 July 1981; p. 6.

⁹ The NIE 11-3/8 series took over many of the relevant policy functions of the 11-4 series on its demise.

In the strategic forces NIEs themselves, the sharpening of the antagonism between the Soviet Union and the United States, the resurgence of American strategic nuclear programs, and the expanded scope of the arms race was reflected in a growing preoccupation with the prospect of nuclear war. Whereas previous strategic forces NIEs had concentrated on system capabilities and the programmatic aspects of the arms race, the NIEs produced in the 1980s for the first time gave a full account of the Soviet concept of war: ¹⁰ how it might begin, what might cause it to escalate to a nuclear exchange, and the structure and chronology of a potential Soviet strategic strike against the United States and its allies. ¹¹ NIE 11-3/8-83 expanded this discussion to evaluate the role played by mobile ICBMs, ALCMs, and submarine-deployed SLCMs in Soviet nuclear strategy. ¹²

¹⁰ NIE 11-3/8-80 had included a similar discussion, but in much less detail.

¹¹ NIE 11-3/8-82 *Soviet Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict, 1982-92*, 15 February 1983; pp. 27-33. Also see NARA RG-263 NIE 11-3/8-81, pp. 8-12, not reproduced here.

¹² NIE 11-3/8-83 *Soviet Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict, 1983-93*, 6 March 1984; pp. 3-4, 40-49.

38. M/H NIE 11-4-78 *Soviet Goals and Expectations in the Global Power Arena*

~~SECRET~~
~~NOFORN~~

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
CIA HISTORICAL-REVIEW PROGRAM

KEY JUDGMENTS ¹

We believe that Soviet leaders regard military strength as the foundation of the USSR's status as a global superpower and as the most critical factor underlying Soviet foreign policy. As it enters the 1980s, the current Soviet leadership sees the heavy military investments made during the last two decades paying off in the form of unprecedentedly favorable advances across the military spectrum, and over the long term in political gains where military power or military assistance has been the actual instrument of policy or the decisive complement to Soviet diplomacy.

Since the mid-1970s the Soviet Union has demonstrated a new willingness to challenge the West in Third World settings as exemplified by its actions in Angola and Ethiopia and its invasion of Afghanistan. This more assertive Soviet international behavior is likely to persist as long as the USSR perceives that Western strength is declining and as it further explores the utility of its increased military power as a means of realizing its global ambitions.

A central question for the 1980s is whether the Soviets may be more inclined now than in earlier periods to confront the United States in a crisis. Moscow still views such a prospect as extremely hazardous. However, in light of the change in the strategic balance and continued expansion of general purpose forces, the Soviets are now more prepared and may be more willing to accept the risks of confrontation in a serious crisis, particularly in an area where they have military or geopolitical advantages.

Policy Toward the United States

The Soviet leadership sees the present US administration as basically hostile to the USSR and as intent upon linking Soviet behavior in the Third World to East-West relations, particularly arms control. Moscow has categorically rejected this "linkage" and has reaffirmed its

¹ In the view of the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, and of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury (National Security), the Memorandum tends to understate the historical continuity of the ideological and political underpinnings of Soviet assertiveness in the Third World. Moscow has pursued opportunities and advantages during periods of relative military weakness as well as during periods of enhanced strength (for example, Korea, Laos, Congo, Berlin, and Egypt). The factors, moreover, that have influenced Soviet actions in these regions have been more their view of the situation and opportunities and of the potential US responses to Soviet initiatives than the precise state of development of Soviet military programs.

~~SECRET~~
~~NOFORN~~

commitment to support "national liberation" movements. Although the Soviets may doubt that the administration will actually be able to pursue as assertive a policy toward the USSR as it has suggested it would, they are probably reviewing their options for responding over the longer term to that possibility.

The Soviets will continue to stress the importance of the arms control dialogue with Washington as the key to bilateral relations, and they will seek to resuscitate detente as the most promising way of constraining US military policies, of advancing their military and political objectives, and of controlling the costs and risks of heightened international tensions. If they conclude that there is no prospect in the near term for meaningful results from renewed SALT², they may decide to go beyond the SALT II constraints, seeking to place the onus for failure on the United States and to exploit the breakdown to widen cleavages in the Atlantic Alliance. At the same time, Moscow would continue to urge the United States to enter SALT negotiations and would undoubtedly attempt to manipulate West European commitment to SALT in order to increase the pressure on Washington.

Europe

Moscow apparently views the policies of the present administration in Washington as likely to sharpen contradictions within the Atlantic Alliance. The Soviets see a lack of Western consensus—for example, in implementing NATO's program to modernize its long-range theater nuclear forces (LRTNF). They seek to exploit these differences with a dual purpose: to pursue certain economic and political interests with the Europeans even if Soviet relations with the United States deteriorate, and to generate pressures on West European governments to influence Washington toward greater flexibility in its dealings with the USSR.

The USSR perceives that some Western governments are more concerned about military imbalances such as the Soviet preponderance in LRTNF. The Soviets will continue to act politically to prevent the implementation of NATO's force modernization programs (particularly regarding US LRTNF) through arms control offers that would ratify Soviet military advantages in Europe and through threats of counter deployments.

Poland presents the USSR with the most threatening and complex challenge to its vital interests to emerge in Eastern Europe in the postwar period. Soviet leaders are prepared to use military force to preserve Soviet domination if they become convinced that changes taking place in Poland jeopardize the USSR's hegemony over Eastern Europe. However, because they know that the political, military, and economic costs of intervention would be extremely high, they may bring

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET
NOFORN~~

themselves, so long as Poland's commitment to the Warsaw Pact is assured, to live with a much-modified Communist system in Poland.²

The Soviets probably anticipate that their military intervention in Poland, even under the most favorable scenario, would cause a harsh West European reaction and an initially unified US-West European stand against them. They see this as removing or reducing, at least temporarily, what they would otherwise expect to be the restraining influence of the European allies on the United States. Nevertheless, the Soviets would expect that differences between the United States and the European allies on the scope, intensity, and duration of countermeasures against the USSR would gradually emerge and provide the USSR with opportunities for renewing detente with at least Western Europe.

China and Japan

The Soviets are deeply concerned by what they perceive as a quasi-alliance evolving between the United States and China, and they will seek to frustrate and to delay the emergence of a "Washington-Beijing-Tokyo axis" with links to NATO directed against Moscow. They will also cooperate with the Vietnamese who, although wary of Moscow's embrace, have become a junior partner in the Soviet effort to reduce US influence in Indochina and encircle and neutralize China. The present Soviet leaders developed the containment policy against China and built the forces as well as the alliance and diplomatic framework to support this policy. They are unlikely to abandon this policy for the extreme alternatives of either far-reaching concessions to placate Chinese demands or military measures to defeat or coerce the Chinese leaders.

Third World

The Soviets believe that they have the legitimate right and the military strength to pursue an aggressive foreign policy in the Third World. In seeking to assert the USSR's status as a power with broad, global interests, they will attempt to:

- Create as well as to exploit opportunities stemming from regional conflicts to enlarge Soviet influence, using military assistance and Soviet military power.
- Reduce Western—particularly US—influence by expanding the USSR's presence and encouraging anti-Western regimes and elements.

² We are unable to judge the precise limit of Soviet tolerance, and we doubt that the Soviet leaders themselves have as yet determined this limit.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~
~~NOFORN~~

- Augment Soviet strategic reach and counter Western military activity.
- Increase hard currency earnings as well as to promote political and strategic interests through arms sales.

More specifically, in the Middle East, Moscow seeks to:

- Preserve and exploit the strategic advantages it holds by virtue of geography, potentially reinforced by the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan, and by Soviet influence in Syria, Libya, and South Yemen.
- Encourage a shift of Persian Gulf states from a pro-Western to a more "nonaligned," and eventually pro-Soviet position, while at the same time helping "national liberation" movements that might seize power in the Gulf. In this context the Soviets have attempted also to improve relations with the conservative, pro-Western governments in the Gulf region.
- Improve Soviet access to and ultimately establish control over Persian Gulf oil, with all that would mean for enhanced Soviet leverage over Western Europe and Japan.

In attempting to realize these objectives, Soviet policymakers also have to take into account more fundamental concerns. First, they must approach with care any move that could lead to a direct military clash with the United States. Second, they must assess the impact of actions in the Gulf on their own global strategic, political, and economic interests. And, third, they must judge how they wish to affect—and to be seen affecting—Gulf oil supplies to the West. Such considerations might not deter the Soviet leaders if they were confronted by strategic opportunities or severe challenges in the Gulf region. Soviet behavior during the Iran-Iraq war and the evolution of its diplomatic position on Gulf security suggest, however, that Moscow seems more immediately interested in averting a major US military buildup in the region and in advancing Soviet claims for recognition as a legitimate coguarantor of Gulf security than in risking the employment of its military forces.

Moscow's present goals in Afghanistan—not easily realized—are to achieve political control and military consolidation while avoiding the introduction of major additional forces. The Soviets seek to establish conditions for political domination and a continued military presence in the country; the scale and nature of any postinsurgency military presence will reflect their broader regional objectives. Moscow will increase pressure on Pakistan through military threats, border incidents, subversion, and possibly strengthened ties with India in an effort to persuade Islamabad to accommodate Soviet objectives in Afghanistan.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET
NOFORN~~

With respect to Iran and Iraq, the Soviets will seek an outcome of their current war that leaves both dependent to some extent on the USSR, and that does not foreclose the possible further acquisition of oil from Iraq by the USSR and other Soviet Bloc countries. The Soviets will attempt to maintain Iraqi dependency on the USSR for arms supply, and they will seek in the near term to prevent any improvement in US-Iranian relations and to influence the Khomeini succession in a way that might lead a follow-on regime to adopt a posture more favorable to Soviet interests.

There will clearly be continuing opportunities in Africa for the USSR and its proxies. The most acute problems Soviet and Soviet proxy actions in Africa may create for the United States in the next several years could be:

- A substantial increase in Soviet backing for or involvement in the insurgency in Namibia.
- Extension of the USSR's influence elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa by providing military assistance—either directly or through the Cubans—to Soviet clients in order to develop or exploit internal instability in Zaire, Zambia, or Zimbabwe, or by collaborating to further Libyan aims in Chad and Sudan.
- Soviet provision of significantly larger numbers of advisers and equipment, or more support for the Cubans, in order to prop up Moscow-oriented regimes in Angola, Mozambique, or Ethiopia if they are threatened by dissident elements or faced by internal collapse.
- Military conflict between a Soviet client regime and a third country—with or without Soviet encouragement. (For example, Ethiopian encroachment on Somalia, or—less likely—clashes between Angola or Mozambique and South Africa related to Namibia or bilateral disputes.)

Inspired by the success of revolution in Nicaragua in 1979, the USSR is actively seeking to promote insurgencies in Central America aimed at bringing anti-US leftist regimes to power. Cuba is an increasingly important outpost for Moscow in the hemisphere, as well as a surrogate in the Middle East and Africa. The Soviets will continue to use Cuban airfields and other facilities and to underwrite the Cuban economy. Beginning in 1980 the USSR has actively been encouraging and facilitating Castro's return to militancy in Central America. The Soviets seek to maintain a degree of revolutionary momentum in the region, to undermine US interests, and to keep the Atlantic Alliance embroiled over how to deal with Soviet- and Cuban-sponsored instability and civil war thrust on friendly governments in Central America.

~~5
SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~
~~NOFORN~~

Domestic Considerations

Several sources of domestic pressure and vulnerability in the Soviet system could force difficult choices on the leaders in the 1980s. These include deteriorating economic performance, a growing possibility of social instability and internal dissidence, and a change in leadership. None of these factors alone will necessarily alter Soviet behavior. Their interaction could, however, lead to significant changes in foreign policy; it certainly will make this policy less predictable.

As the USSR begins its 11th Five-Year Plan, economic prospects are gloomier than at any time since Stalin's death, and there is a strong possibility the economic situation will get progressively worse in the second half of the decade. Annual increments to national output even in the early 1980s will be insufficient to avoid having to make choices among the competing demands for investment, consumption, the cost of empire, and continued growth in defense spending. As Soviet leaders survey what they regard as a hostile external environment, however, foreign policy and military requirements are likely to dominate their policy calculations. They will therefore try to maintain high defense spending, promote higher productivity and assure domestic control by appeals to a more extreme patriotism, and, if social instability arising from consumer dissatisfaction or ethnic tensions makes it necessary, by resorting to repressive measures.³

It is difficult to assess what impact the forthcoming leadership succession may have on Soviet policy, particularly since the environment in which a new top leadership has to act will probably be more important than the individual views of its members. If the new leaders believe the global "correlation of forces" to be favorable, especially if they are less impressed than Brezhnev with US military might and more impressed with their own, they might employ military power even more assertively in pursuit of their global ambitions. Greater caution in foreign policy could result, however, from the pinch of internal economic difficulties and popular dissatisfaction. On balance, although the policies of the new leadership cannot be confidently predicted with any precision, we believe that they will display general continuity with those of the Brezhnev era.

³ The Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury (National Security) notes that investment, labor, and consumption shortfalls will still be likely, and believes that these will place constraints on major Soviet foreign policy initiatives.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

**APPROVED FOR RELEASE
CIA HISTORICAL-REVIEW PROGRAM**

KEY JUDGMENTS

The Soviet challenge to US security interests is rooted in Moscow's conception of its relationship with the United States as fundamentally adversary. This concept, based on ideological antagonism and geopolitical rivalry, governs Soviet behavior and also shapes Soviet perceptions of US policies toward Moscow. Its most dramatic manifestation is growing Soviet military power and capabilities which form the cutting edge of Moscow's persistent efforts to extend its global presence and influence at the expense of the United States and the West.

Although Soviet leaders regard military power as the USSR's principal currency as an international actor, they also view the East-West relationship as a more encompassing struggle involving political, economic, social, and ideological factors—a totality which the Soviets characterize as “the correlation of forces.” Soviet leaders profess confidence that this correlation is “changing in favor of socialism” and Soviet policy, in turn, has sought to further this transition through the exploitation of a variety of means including military and economic aid, the use of proxies, covert activities, and the political alignment of the USSR with regimes or revolutionary movements opposed to US policies.

The Soviets believe that they enjoy some strategic advantages over the United States and view their current overall position as supporting the conduct of an assertive foreign policy and the expansion of Soviet influence abroad. However, they do not believe that they currently enjoy decisive strategic advantages over the United States and do not wish a major confrontation. They have an abiding respect for US military capabilities and are confronted themselves with the dilemmas of declining economic performance and the increasing burden of defense spending for the economy as a whole. They are unlikely to initiate military hostilities in an area of crucial importance to the United States like the Persian Gulf. However, they will seize opportunities offered by instability in the Third World to enhance their geopolitical influence and also to divert US attention from areas of direct US-Soviet interaction, even in situations where the USSR has little prospect of making significant gains for itself. Moreover, they may increasingly expect that the burden of avoiding potential confrontation, particularly in areas contiguous to the USSR, should shift to the United States. The Soviets' perception of their own opportunities is reinforced by a sense of US frustrations and geopolitical vulnerabilities, partic-

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

ularly in the Third World, where US regional equities appear to Moscow to be increasingly threatened by political radicalism and economic nationalism.

The advent of a new US administration, openly critical of the premises of detente and avowedly intent on increasing US military might, has not changed this basic perception but has raised Soviet concerns about a reinvigorated US effort to counteract Soviet expansionism and exploit underlying Soviet economic and geopolitical vulnerabilities. However, the Soviets view Washington's ability to heighten the economic and military costs of the East-West competition to Moscow as subject to competing US domestic economic priorities and to reluctance on the part of US allies to incur the costs of increased defense expenditures, deferred economic opportunities, or increased tensions with Moscow. West European unease over a perceived lack of US commitment to arms control and US 'allies' resistance toward US restrictive policies on East-West economic relations are viewed by the Soviets as presenting opportunities to provoke divisions between the United States and its principal allies.

In their current efforts to exploit these perceived divisions, the Soviets have been especially active in the clandestine realm. They have been engaged in a range of "active measures," including the dissemination of forged documents intended to embarrass the United States and the covert financing of activities by some elements of the "peace movement" in Western Europe—particularly those groups either closely associated with indigenous Communist parties or anti-American in orientation.

The balance of strategic intercontinental nuclear forces is a critical index for Moscow's assessment of relative military power between the United States and the USSR. The Soviets believe that in the present US-Soviet strategic relationship each side possesses sufficient capabilities to devastate the other after absorbing an attack. Soviet leaders state that nuclear war with the United States would be a catastrophe that must be avoided if possible and that they do not regard such a conflict as inevitable. Nevertheless, they regard nuclear war as a continuing possibility and have not accepted mutual vulnerability as a desirable or permanent basis for the US-Soviet strategic relationship. Although willing to negotiate restraints on force improvements and deployments when it serves their interests, they prefer possession of superior capabilities to fight and win a nuclear war with the United States, and have been working to improve their chances of prevailing should such a conflict occur. A tenet in their strategic thinking appears to be that the

~~2
SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

better prepared the USSR is to fight in various contingencies, the more likely it is that potential enemies will be deterred from initiating attacks on the Soviet Union and its allies, and will be hesitant to counter Soviet political and military actions.

The sustained expansion and modernization of Soviet general purpose forces—both conventional and theater nuclear—highlight the broader aspects of Moscow's military challenge to the United States and its allies. The persistent Soviet effort to upgrade these forces demonstrates Moscow's intention of dominating the regional military balances in Central Europe and along the Sino-Soviet frontier. Moreover, Moscow's military salient in Afghanistan and the Soviet military presence in Ethiopia and South Yemen underscore the vulnerability of pro-Western Arab regimes to potential Soviet military action and the implicit threat to Western oil supplies.

In many respects, the Third World is seen by Moscow as the Achilles heel of the West, where the radicalization of postcolonial elites and the anti-US orientation of many "nonaligned" states have created tempting opportunities for the USSR to insinuate itself through offers of military and technical assistance. The USSR has developed only limited forces for operations beyond the Eurasian periphery, but modest improvements in Soviet airlift and amphibious capabilities enhance Soviet options for dealing with Third World contingencies in the future. In addition, the Soviets have been willing on occasion to use naval deployments to signify their political support for clients and friendly regimes, or to demonstrate Soviet interest in a regional conflict. The Soviets also hope to capitalize on opportunities to gain access to facilities for naval aircraft and ships.

Moscow's presence in the Third World is furthered by means of arms sales and military advisers. Arms sales do not necessarily translate directly into political leverage but they are a keystone of Soviet entree into the Third World and an important source of hard currency income to Moscow. The apparatus for administering arms sales and military training programs is highly centralized and, by drawing on existing large stockpiles, the Soviets possess an impressive capability to respond rapidly to the needs of clients or friendly regimes.

Another significant trend in Soviet Third World involvement is the continuing use of Cuban and East European proxies and other intermediaries together with covert Soviet involvement in supporting insurgent groups and the military adventures of client or dependent regimes. For the Soviets, the proxy relationship minimizes the level of direct Soviet involvement while achieving Soviet aims and projecting the ideological-

~~3
SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

image of "socialist solidarity" with the recipient regimes. Covert Soviet military support for clients allows Moscow the defense of "plausible denial" of Soviet involvement, as in Moscow's support for Cuban activities in Central America. Along with these efforts the Soviets also are involved with allied or friendly governments or entities—notably Libya, certain Palestinian groups, South Yemen, Syria, and Cuba—which in turn directly or indirectly aid the subversive or terrorist activities of a broad spectrum of violent revolutionaries.

Increasing foreign debt obligations and hard currency shortages could affect the level of Moscow's commitment to client regimes in the Third World. Even under present conditions, the hard currency crunch probably will make the Soviets reluctant to provide other clients with economic aid as extensive as that provided to Cuba or Vietnam. Soviet military assistance, however, probably will not be seriously affected and arms sales are unlikely to be affected. The net result is that Moscow will be more dependent on military aid as an entree of influence in the Third World.

The Soviets, nevertheless, recognize that even in areas where they have substantial political or military investments, they remain vulnerable to US and Western economic and diplomatic leverage, and that their ability to project military power into the Third World—with the important exception of the immediate periphery of the USSR—remains inferior to that of the United States. They have suffered dramatic failures in the past—as in their expulsion from Egypt in 1972—and they view current US initiatives, such as the attempt to broker political settlements in southern Africa and the Middle East, as threatening to erode Soviet influence. Regional hostilities, moreover, often present the Soviets with difficult policy choices.

Over the next three to five years, Soviet policies will be motivated by a desire to build upon the Soviet Union's status as a global superpower. Soviet policies, however, will also be determined by leadership anxieties about an uncertain—and potentially more hostile—international environment, the consequences of an ongoing political succession, and declining economic growth. The Soviets view as a serious problem the prospect of a mutual arms buildup with the United States which threatens to tax Soviet economic resources during a period of domestic political uncertainty. On the other hand, the heightened military challenge that the United States poses to the USSR, specifically in terms of strategic nuclear programs planned for the latter half of the 1980s, is an ominous development from the Soviet perspective. But, in

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Moscow's assessment, US plans could be curtailed as a result of domestic political and international factors affecting US policymakers.

It is doubtful, however, that Soviet leaders perceive a "window of opportunity" stemming from an overweening confidence in present Soviet nuclear forces relative to future prospects. From the perspective of the Soviet leadership, there will remain important deterrents to major military actions that directly threaten vital US national interests. These include the dangers of a direct conflict with the United States that could escalate to global proportions, doubts about the reliability of some of their East European allies, and an awareness of the greater Western capacity to support an expanded defense effort. These concerns do not preclude action abroad, but they act as constraints on military actions in which the risk of a direct US-Soviet confrontation is clear.

Strategic nuclear arms negotiations are likely to remain a central Soviet priority even in a post-Brezhnev regime. Moscow will continue to see the strategic nuclear arms control process as a means of restraining US military programs, moderating US political attitudes, and reducing the possibility of a US technological breakthrough that might jeopardize Moscow's strategic nuclear status. But any US decision to go beyond the putative SALT restrictions would induce a similar move by the Soviets. Some Soviet options, however, are reversible—such as an eventual failure to dismantle older missile submarines and land-based missiles as new ones are deployed. The Soviets might therefore undertake such measures either as a means to pressure the United States to refrain from certain weapons deployments or to induce Washington to resume the strategic arms dialogue within the general framework of previous strategic arms agreements.

Despite declining economic growth, we have seen no evidence of a reduction in Soviet defense spending. Indeed, on the basis of observed military activity—the number of weapon systems in production, weapon development programs, and trends in capital expansion in the defense industries—we expect that Soviet defense spending will continue to grow at about its historical rate of 4 percent a year at least through 1985. Such continued growth in defense spending could well lead to declines in living standards. Per capita consumption probably would continue to grow marginally for the next few years, but by mid-decade would almost certainly be in decline.

Although absolute cuts in defense spending are highly unlikely, declining economic growth will further intensify competition for resources, compelling Soviet leaders to weigh the effect of constant—

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

increases in defense spending on the overall development of the economy.

The Soviets believe that, without strong West European support, the United States would have little leverage to affect future Soviet economic choices. Although the Soviets would prefer to expand trade with the United States, particularly to achieve access to US credits and technology, they assess US attitudes toward such expansion as embodying unacceptable political linkages. Past experience undoubtedly has contributed to this assessment, and expanded trade with Western Europe is probably seen by Moscow as an acceptable substitute. The Soviets are likely to look increasingly to Western Europe and Japan as sources of trade and technology, dependent upon the willingness of Western bankers and governments to extend long-term credits to Moscow. In addition, the Soviets view security and trade divergences between the United States and other NATO members as major opportunities to undermine NATO's cohesion as a military alliance and to negate the possibility that the United States might involve its NATO allies in support of a more extended Western defense role beyond Europe.

The specific foreign policy options of a successor leadership will be conditioned not only by the level of East-West tensions but by the prevailing consensus within the new leadership. Fairly radical policy adjustments cannot be excluded as new leaders review existing policies. A new leadership, for instance, may attempt "breakthrough" policies toward Western Europe or China, designed primarily to undercut the US geopolitical posture. Moscow's principal assets in these instances would be the unique ability to offer greater intercourse between East and West Germany in Europe and, with China, to offer significant concessions on contentious military and border issues.

On the negative side, Moscow is probably concerned about the potential for renewed social and political turbulence in Eastern Europe. The economic conditions that engendered the political crisis in Poland in 1980 are present to varying but significant degrees in the other Warsaw Pact states. Increasing foreign debt obligations, diminishing hard currency reserves, and deteriorating economic performance throughout Eastern Europe will worsen these conditions. Soviet policy-makers as a consequence will be confronted with the dilemma of weighing the increasing burden of economic subsidization of the East European economies against a political reluctance to accept greater economic reform. The result could be a recurring pattern of Soviet repression and intervention.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

The Soviets are probably also pessimistic about the prospects for a significant moderation of US-Soviet tensions over the next several years, particularly in light of planned US weapons programs and the likelihood of a prolonged redefinition of the terms of the strategic arms dialogue. But, even in the event of an improved climate of US-Soviet relations, the fundamentally antagonistic nature of US-Soviet interaction will persist because of conflicting political and international goals. Limited accommodations in the areas of arms control or other bilateral issues are possible, but a more encompassing accord on bilateral relations or geopolitical behavior is precluded by fundamentally divergent attitudes toward what constitutes desirable political or social change in the international order. Moreover, factors that go beyond tangible or measurable indexes—such as ideological conviction and a lingering sense of insecurity and of hostile encirclement—as well as a contrasting confidence and sense of achievement in the USSR's emergence as global superpower, collectively will tend to reinforce Moscow's commitment to sustain the global dimensions of Soviet policy.

Despite uncertainties, the Soviets probably anticipate that they will be able to take advantage of trends in international politics, particularly in the Third World, to create opportunities for the enhancement of Moscow's geopolitical stature. The persistence of regional rivalries, economic disorder, and the political undercurrents of anti-Americanism are viewed by Moscow as developments that will pose continuing dilemmas for US policy and, conversely, relatively low-risk opportunities for Soviet exploitation of regional instabilities. Active Soviet efforts to exploit such instabilities are particularly likely in those areas—such as southern Africa, the Middle East, and Central America—where US policy is closely identified with regionally isolated or politically unpopular regimes. A basic Soviet objective, consequently, will be to frustrate US diplomatic and political attempts to resolve regional disputes in the Third World. In Third World regimes that experience successful economic growth, however, the Soviets will be poorly equipped to offset the economic benefits to such regimes of closer association with the industrialized West.

As the Soviet leadership moves further into a period of political succession, Soviet policies will become less predictable. The potential confluence of greater Soviet military power, increased regional instabilities, more assertive US policies, and the potential for expanded US military capabilities in the late 1980s could make a successor Soviet leadership increasingly willing to exploit opportunities in what it perceives as low-cost, low-risk areas. This attitude, in turn, could increase the possibilities of miscalculation and unpremeditated US-Soviet confrontations, most likely in the Third World.

~~SECRET~~

40. NIE 11-3/8-82 Soviet Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict, 1981-1991

~~Top Secret~~

develop those directed-energy weapon and military support systems that prove to be feasible:

- There is evidence that the Soviets are working on a project to develop a megawatt-class space-based laser weapon. Testing of a megawatt-class prototype, for ASAT application, could begin in the late 1980s at the earliest, more likely not until the early 1990s. If testing were successful, an initial operational system—a few satellites, each having a megawatt-class laser weapon with an ASAT range of hundreds of kilometers—could be available by the early 1990s, more likely in the mid-1990s. If they were developing a prototype with much lower power, it could be tested somewhat earlier than the megawatt-class prototype.
- While space-based weapons for ballistic missile defense are probably feasible from a technical standpoint, such weapons require significant technological advances. In view of the technological requirements, we do not expect them to have a prototype space-based laser ballistic missile defense (BMD) system until after 1990 or an operational system until after the year 2000.
- Soviet particle beam weapon (PBW) research might eventually have some ASAT or BMD applications, but the achievement of a prototype system for such uses would be at least 10 to 15 years in the future. An alternative view holds that a space-based PBW system, intended to disrupt the electronics of ballistic missiles and requiring significantly less power, could probably be developed and deployed in the 1990s.*
- Currently there are two facilities at Saryshagan that are assessed to have high-energy lasers and associated optical equipment with the potential to function as ground-based ASAT weapons.
- We expect that a high-energy laser facility at the test range will be used during the 1980s for testing the feasibility of BMD applications. If feasibility is demonstrated, our judgment is that a prototype ground-based laser weapon for BMD would then have to be built and would not begin testing until the early 1990s. An initial operational capability (IOC) probably would not be

* The holder of this view is the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency.

achieved until after the year 2000. An alternative view holds that, if tests from this facility proved successful in engaging ballistic missile RVs, the Soviets would not have to construct a new prototype weapon, and therefore that a deployed ground-based laser weapon system for BMD could reach IOC by the early-to-middle 1990s.¹⁰

- The Soviets have at least three projects for the development of lasers for air defense, including a naval system for ship defense. If the Soviets continue to advance at the level of the past few years, laser air defense weapons could become available for operational use in the mid-to-late 1980s. Initial ground-based air defense laser weapon systems will probably have engagement ranges of 1 to 10 kilometers, and fixed, transportable or mobile platforms. Because of their limited range and their ineffectiveness against aircraft in or above the clouds, they will probably be used along with SAMs for point defense of high-value targets. These early weapons probably will rely on destroying critical subsystems of aircraft and cruise missiles, such as fuel tanks, avionics, or electro-optics.

D. Operations of Soviet Strategic Forces in a Conflict

Preparations and Training of Nuclear Forces for Conflict

39. As in last year's Estimate we emphasize Soviet views on the probable nature and origins of a US-Soviet nuclear conflict and how the Soviets plan to operate and employ their forces during the various phases of a global war.

¹⁰ The holder of this view is the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency.

27
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

40. We believe that a fundamental Soviet objective in acquiring and operating strategic forces is to assure a high probability of prevailing in a nuclear conflict, even if many important aspects of the conflict turn out worse than expected. To this end, training of Soviet forces for a global nuclear conflict is increasingly broad in scope and complex in the operational factors taken into account. In their military writings, the Soviets note that wars usually do not proceed according to prior expectations and planning. They almost certainly anticipate wide variations in circumstances and events. They recognize that numerous complications and degradations would affect planned operations, particularly in the unprecedentedly difficult nuclear environment,

The inherent uncertainties of warfare cannot be eliminated through such practice, but the Soviets believe that their ability to continue to operate effectively in adverse conflict situations would be enhanced as a result of the experience gained

41. With respect to the first sentence of the preceding paragraph, there is an alternative view that Soviet force acquisitions and operations are guided by the counterforce and damage limitation precepts of military doctrine, and are constrained by technological, bureaucratic, and budgetary influences. The Soviets recognize that the concept of prevailing in nuclear war is far too imprecise to guide force acquisitions and operations, and are fully aware of the great uncertainties and catastrophic losses that would be incurred by all parties in a nuclear war.¹¹

42. Soviet perceptions of the growing complexity of warfare have led to greater efforts to plan forces and operations against a backdrop of more varied contingencies and to achieve greater realism in combat

¹¹ The holder of this view is the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

training. The Soviets' principal aims have been to enhance their operational flexibility and force sustainability and to increase the probability of maintaining continuity of control in a nuclear conflict. In line with this approach, they have:

- Refined their force employment strategies in preparation for more varied contingencies, through measures such as development of a launch-on-tactical-warning (LOTW) capability for land-based missiles, and planning for conducting theater and intercontinental nuclear warfare operations over an extended period and for reconstituting a portion of their forces after an initial massive nuclear strike.)
- Made changes in some of the operational modes of their strategic forces, such as the creation of SSBN bastions where SSBNs can be more effectively controlled and protected by ASW forces, the operation of SSBNs in the Arctic near or under the polar icecap, and the deployment of the mobile SS-20 forces.)
- Gradually increased the stress placed on their personnel in combat training,
- Consistently worked to increase the survivability and flexibility of their command, control, and communications system and thus to increase their assurance of retaining control during the complex circumstances of extended operations in a nuclear environment.

28
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

Scenario for Operation of Soviet Strategic Forces in a Conflict

43. As in last year's Estimate, we have structured a composite scenario, summarized briefly below,

we believe this composite picture captures essential Soviet military views on the operation of Soviet strategic forces and on the nature of a major US-Soviet confrontation that proceeds through large-scale nuclear conflict.

44. The flow of events in an actual conflict would be likely to vary considerably from that presented here. Our presentation, therefore, should not be regarded as a Soviet prescription for nuclear conflict. The presentation does not preclude efforts by the Soviets to achieve political solutions at any stage, or to vary their military actions in response to circumstances. On the contrary, the Soviets evidently intend to prepare the military establishment to meet the contingencies of a long global conflict, to increase the options available to the political leadership at any point in such a conflict, and thus to increase their chances of controlling events and securing favorable conflict outcomes.

45. *Crisis Period.* The Soviets see little likelihood that the United States would initiate a surprise attack from a normal peacetime posture; we believe it is unlikely that the Soviets would mount such an attack themselves.

they expect to have sufficient warning of a US attack to carry out the deployment and dispersal of their forces. They evidently believe that, if a general war occurred, it would most likely result from the expansion of a major theater conflict, preceded by a political crisis period that could last several weeks or longer. During this crisis period the Soviets would:

- Heighten their surveillance of enemy activity, to acquire detailed information on a wide range of US strategic force capabilities and readiness.
- Shift from a peacetime to a wartime posture, while avoiding implementing readiness measures that they thought were unduly provocative.
- As the crisis intensified, seek to confuse Western intelligence and deny it information on the status

of their forces and preparations. They would increase the use of concealment, deception, and disinformation for military, diplomatic, and propaganda purposes in attempting to achieve their objectives.

46. *Conventional Phase.* The Soviets apparently believe that a major nuclear conflict, if it occurs, would be likely to arise out of a conventional conflict. The Soviets perceive the conventional phase of a NATO-Warsaw Pact conflict as lasting from a few days to as long as several weeks, during which the Warsaw Pact would contain a NATO attack and then launch a counteroffensive deep into Western Europe. Key objectives would be to weaken the enemy's theater-based and sea-based nuclear capability, while protecting their own nuclear force:

- At the outset of hostilities, the Soviets would try to implement a theaterwide air offensive in which hundreds of Pact aircraft, employing conventional weapons, would be massed, with the objective of achieving air superiority and destroying NATO's command and control facilities, nuclear assets, and other high-value military targets.
- We believe that most, if not all, of the mobile SS-20 IRBM force would be deployed to the field by this time.
- All available Soviet SSBNs would be ordered to deploy from bases. Soviet general purpose naval forces would protect those SSBNs in areas contiguous to the USSR. In addition to the protection of their own SSBNs, a primary goal of Soviet naval forces would be to weaken as much as possible enemy sea-based nuclear strike forces, principally SSBNs and aircraft carriers.
- We believe that there is a high likelihood that, during this conventional phase, the Soviets would attempt nondestructive interference with selected US space systems that provide important wartime support.

47. *Initial Nuclear Phases.* We believe the Soviets envisage that it would be to their advantage to conduct a rapid conventional campaign to accomplish their theater objectives in NATO. In this campaign they would employ nonnuclear means, including some elements of strategic aviation to attempt to destroy

~~29
Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

NATO nuclear forces, with Soviet theater and strategic nuclear forces standing ready to preempt if NATO were detected beginning nuclear release procedures. The Soviets, in our judgment, are unlikely to initiate nuclear conflict on a limited scale, with small-scale use confined to the immediate combat zone, because they would probably see it as being to their advantage instead to keep the conflict at the conventional force level. However, they appear to be developing a means for dealing with the possibility of NATO's initiation of such limited nuclear use, without the Soviets' necessarily having to go to large-scale nuclear war.;

48. Soviet: a war with NATO as including a brief transitional period, with nuclear use in the NATO theater, where conventional conflict has been taking place, before the onset of intercontinental nuclear war. This phase can begin with small-scale use of nuclear weapons confined to the immediate combat zone. We believe the Soviets would see this initial localized use of nuclear weapons as probably being the last realistic opportunity to avoid large-scale nuclear war. We believe, however, that the Soviets, if faced with or hit by a NATO nuclear attack that seriously threatened their theater objectives, probably would launch massed strikes, rather than a limited strike.]

49. Soviet: a widening conflict that evolves from the initially localized nuclear operations into theaterwide use of operational-tactical nuclear weapons.

an expectation on the part of the Soviets, once such large-scale use of nuclear weapons in the theater occurred, of a likely and imminent escalation to intercontinental nuclear war, although they probably would still prefer, even at this stage if possible, to confine nuclear war to Europe and avoid strikes against US and Soviet territory.!

50. As the likelihood of large-scale nuclear conflict increased, Soviet leaders would face the difficult decision of whether to seize the initiative and strike, as would be consistent with their general military doctrine, or to be more cautious in the hope of averting massive nuclear strikes on the Soviet homeland. There are no easy prescriptions for what the Soviets would actually do under a particular set of circumstances,

despite the apparent doctrinal imperative to mount massive preemptive nuclear attacks:

- The Soviets would be attempting, as in earlier stages, to acquire strategic warning of strikes from enemy forward-based nuclear forces against the Soviet homeland, as well as from intercontinental nuclear forces. We are unable to judge what information would be sufficiently convincing to cause Soviet leaders to order a massive preemptive attack.
- They would be more likely to seize the initiative by launching intercontinental nuclear strikes if the war had already reached the level of theater nuclear conflict, than if it was still at the conventional level. By taking the initiative, they would expect to reduce the capability of US strike forces and to disrupt to some extent the coordination of a US response. Evidence indicates that they would not expect to be able to prevent a US nuclear retaliatory strike. They also probably consider it likely that the United States would attempt to launch its forces on tactical warning.
- We believe they would be likely to launch a preemptive intercontinental strike if there had been large-scale theater nuclear strikes against the western USSR. It is more difficult to judge whether the Soviets would feel similarly inclined if they had launched a large-scale preemptive strike against theater targets but had suffered little or no retaliation from NATO theater strikes.
- If they acquired convincing evidence that a US intercontinental strike was imminent, they would try to preempt. We believe that they would be more likely to act on the basis of ambiguous indications and inconclusive evidence of US strike intentions if a theater nuclear conflict were under way than during a crisis or a conventional conflict.
- In a situation in which nuclear war in Europe was still limited to a battlefield stage, the Soviets' recognition of the consequences of intercontinental nuclear conflict could give them incentives to wait.

30
~~Top Secret~~

Top Secret

— For reasons such as lack of convincing evidence from their strategic warning systems or fear of unnecessarily or mistakenly initiating intercontinental nuclear war, the Soviets might not mount a preemptive strike. Their LOTW capability would permit a larger and more coordinated counterattack than retaliation, while reducing the risk of escalation based on insufficient or faulty strategic information.

— We believe the Soviets recognize the possibility that they might fail to get reliable tactical warning of an enemy intercontinental nuclear strike. They prepare for the possibility that they would be unable to act quickly enough to successfully launch a large number of missiles on tactical warning, and could retaliate only after absorbing an attack.

— We believe the Soviets place considerable emphasis on assessing their strategic offensive capabilities under conditions where they retaliate after the United States launches a major strike. These include scenarios where they are able to launch varying portions of their forces on tactical warning, as well as the most stressful scenario—retaliation only after absorbing a well-coordinated US counterforce attack. The Soviets strongly believe warfare rarely goes as planned and being prepared for adversity and unplanned occurrences is of paramount importance. For the Soviets these retaliation scenarios are the most critical in an evaluation of their capabilities and probably the ones to which they devote most of their training.

51. Elements of Soviet strategic forces would probably have suffered some losses during the previous phases of the conflict. The Soviets expect they would have lost some SSBNs in their forward patrol areas, in transit, and in the protected havens. Some SRF assets might have been damaged or destroyed.

Naval bases and command, control, and communications facilities in the USSR could have been damaged, and losses of strategic bombers in conventional operations probably would have been considerable.

52. Soviet offensive objectives in carrying out large-scale nuclear strikes would be to neutralize US and Allied military operations and warmaking capabilities.

In intercontinental strikes the Soviets would seek to destroy US-based nuclear forces and to disrupt and destroy the supporting infrastructure and control systems for these forces. They would attempt to isolate the United States from the theater campaign by attacking its power projection capabilities. Depending on the circumstances, they might also attempt to reduce US military power in the long term by attacking US military-industrial capacity. Limiting the initial strikes only to command, control, and communications targets, or only to a portion of US strategic forces such as ICBM silos, is not consistent with the evidence.

53. In large-scale theater nuclear strikes, which are likely to be conducted shortly before, concurrently with, or within hours of intercontinental nuclear strikes, the Soviets probably would employ hundreds of tactical nuclear weapons as well as a large share of their strategic forces that have strike missions against theater targets. The Soviet Navy would continue strikes, using both nuclear and conventional weapons, against Western naval strike forces. Soviet strategic aviation would conduct nuclear and conventional strikes against high-value military targets.

54. Soviet large-scale intercontinental nuclear attacks would involve primarily ICBMs and SLBMs. Massive strikes probably would be delivered against worldwide US and Allied military targets, as well as perhaps a more comprehensive set of political and industrial-economic facilities. We believe that the Soviets would conduct repeated attacks in an attempt to destroy, degrade, and disrupt the US capability to employ nuclear forces, and the reconstitution capabilities of US nuclear forces and their command and control:

— The Soviets have considerable flexibility in their employment of ICBMs for intercontinental attack. We believe they would not launch their ICBMs in a single massive strike.

31
Top Secret

~~Top Secret~~

- It is less clear how the Soviets intend to use their SSBNs during intercontinental nuclear conflict. Some forward-deployed Y-class SSBNs would probably be used in an initial strike against time-urgent US command, control, and communications targets and bomber bases. Other submarines also might be employed in an initial attack, against targets in the United States and Eurasia. Some SSBNs in protected areas near the Soviet homeland probably would be withheld for potentially protracted nuclear operations, others for longer term reserve.
- Some strategic bombers may have a role in initial intercontinental nuclear strike operations, within hours after the initial missile strike. We believe it is likely that bombers would be used later, for postattack reconnaissance and strikes against surviving targets in the continental United States. Deployment of the new Blackjack A long-range bomber and of the new variant of the Bear bomber capable of carrying ALCMs, however, will increase the Soviets' flexibility in conducting bomber strikes at intercontinental ranges as well as against theater targets. There is an alternative view that Soviet long-range strategic bombers would, as currently constituted, have a definite role in initial intercontinental nuclear strike operations, within hours after the initial missile strike. The holder of this view believes this role will expand as the new Bear and Blackjack A bombers armed with ALCMs become available in substantial numbers in the late 1980s.¹²

55. Soviet strategic defensive operations in the initial nuclear phase of a conflict would include:

- Ballistic missile defense operations to protect key targets in the Moscow area, by engaging enemy missiles until key elements in the ABM system were destroyed or all available interceptors had been expended.
- Air defense in depth, to impose successive barriers to enemy penetration. The Soviets probably would have relocated some surface-to-air missiles to thwart defense suppression and avoidance tactics. They evidently plan to use nuclear-armed

¹² The holder of this view is the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force.

SAMs against penetrators

the rapid restoration of damaged SAM sites, airfields, and command, control, and communications facilities.

- ASW operations to attempt to destroy enemy SSBNs.
- Attempts to interfere with and destroy US satellites. These actions probably would be effected just before this phase of conflict, at the latest.
- Full implementation of civil defense plans, initiated earlier. Most of the Soviet leaders at both the national and regional levels would be in protective facilities from which they would direct emergency rescue and recovery operations by civilian units and civil defense military troop units. With a few days for preparations, the essential workers either would be in shelters at their place of work or, if off duty, would be dispersed to zones outside the cities. We believe the Soviets would attempt to evacuate most of the urban population.

56. *Later Phases of a Nuclear Conflict.* The Soviets plan for later exploitation phases following major intercontinental nuclear strikes conducted primarily by remaining general purpose forces, but our knowledge of Soviet views concerning these phases is sketchy. In the later stages of conflict, the intensity of theater and intercontinental nuclear strikes would diminish. The Soviets plan to reconstitute some surviving general purpose and strategic forces and to secure their theater objectives—the occupation of substantial areas of Western Europe. The implication seems to be that the strategic nuclear forces of both sides are largely expended or neutralized, but that withheld and reconstituted Soviet strategic nuclear forces play a small, but important, role in achieving Soviet objectives in theater combat during the later phases.

57. We are highly uncertain about their actual capabilities to reconstitute strategic forces. Overall, we believe the Soviets could maintain the combat effectiveness of many of the surviving withheld weapons and would be able to reconstitute strategic forces at least to some extent with surviving reserve weapons and materiel, although damage to the logistic system

32
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

and requirements for decontamination would stretch out the time required for reconstitution. The restoration of combat effectiveness would be contingent on restoring command and control communications.

58. The Soviets prepare for combat operations that could extend weeks beyond the intercontinental nuclear phase. They would clearly prefer to accomplish their objectives quickly, but recognize that the later phases could be protracted, given the difficulty and complexity of conducting operations following massive nuclear strikes. The duration would depend on such factors as the capabilities of remaining theater forces, the status of surviving political leaders, the viability of command and control, and the conditions in the US and Soviet homelands. A key objective for the Soviets in this period would be to prevent the United States from reconstituting its command and control system. In addition:

-- We believe the Soviets would withhold of their initial ICBM force, and a small portion of the peripheral attack forces, for protracted operations. We believe they would reconstitute ICBM and SS-20 forces using reserve missiles and equipment; we believe they maintain reserve missiles for their ICBM and SS-20 force, beyond those required for maintenance and training. We believe these forces would be used against residual enemy conventional and nuclear forces and command and control, and perhaps key surviving elements of the economy supporting military operations. According to an alternative view, Soviet ICBM reconstitution efforts to date have

not the inclusion of refire in Soviet war plans. Moreover, the holder of this view believes that

estimated missile storage capacity is consistent with maintenance and training requirements.¹³

Soviet planning for SSBN operations in a protracted conflict. Some submarines probably would be withheld, under naval force protection, for a reserve force role.

¹³ The holder of this view is the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

Evidence suggests they do not expect most aircraft to survive the earlier phases of nuclear conflict. We believe that any remaining bombers would conduct reconnaissance and strike operations against key surviving targets.

-- Soviet air defense units plan to restore airfields for defensive operations. Fighters and SAM units would operate from alternate sites if necessary. Civil defense units would continue rescue and recovery operations and aid with the distribution of reserve supplies to the civilian population. The Soviets evidently expect that some economic restoration would be possible—even after absorbing multiple nuclear strikes.

59. The evidence that we have on the later stages of general nuclear war deals with the conduct of a successful military campaign with the USSR's forces reconstituting after heavy losses and physically occupying much of continental Western Europe.

the Soviets would seek to end a nuclear war on their terms—by neutralizing the ability of US intercontinental and theater nuclear forces to interfere with Soviet capabilities to prevail in a conflict in Eurasia.

60. We have no specific evidence on whether the Soviets would attempt to end such a war by negotiation, or on initiatives they might undertake if they perceived they could not achieve their military objectives.

E. Trends in Soviet Capabilities To Perform Strategic Missions

61. During the next 10 years the primary wartime missions of Soviet strategic offensive and defensive forces will continue to be to:

- Destroy enemy nuclear delivery means.
- Neutralize enemy command, control, and communications, warning capabilities, and other support systems.

33
~~Top Secret~~

41. NIE 11-3/8-83 Soviet Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict, 1982-1992

~~Top Secret~~

multishot and long-range capabilities. It would also be likely to have a greater capacity to overcome a satellite's defensive measures, such as maneuvering and decoy deployment. We expect to see laser weapon components tested on manned spacecraft; however, unmanned satellites seem better suited as platforms for operational directed-energy weapons.

- We believe there is a high probability (60- to 90-percent chance) that a prototype high-energy space-based laser ASAT weapon will be tested in low orbit by the early 1990s. The psychological effect of the first test of a space-based laser in a weapon-related mode would be greater than the actual military significance of such a weapon in its initial application. Development of a space-based laser for antisatellite application is technically difficult, and we are uncertain as to the approach the Soviets would take. One candidate for a prototype for which there is some supporting evidence would be a megawatt-class laser.

- Although space-based weapons for ballistic missile defense may prove to be feasible from a technical standpoint, such weapons would require significant technological advances in large-aperture mirrors, multimewatt power generation, short-wavelength lasers, and pointing and tracking accuracies. Also, system integration would be a complex undertaking, and the battle management aspects would be a formidable technical and operational challenge. They would also require very large space boosters having perhaps 10 times the capacity of those now in use. We expect the Soviets to have such boosters in the late 1980s. In view of the technological requirements, we do not expect them to have a prototype space-based laser BMD system until at least the mid-1990s or an operational system until after the year 2000.

- The Soviets are expending resources on technologies of critical importance to the development of particle beam weapons (PBWs). We have little evidence, however, of Soviet achievement in this area. Since the early 1970s the Soviets have had a research effort to explore the technical feasibility of a neutral particle beam weapon in space, an approach currently under investigation in the

United States. In this effort, the Soviets have developed some technically advanced components but have not assembled a complete test system. The technical requirements for such a system, including precise pointing and tracking, are severe, and it is unlikely that the Soviets could test a prototype space-based PBW to destroy hard targets like missile RVs before the end of the century and no earlier than 1995 for an ASAT weapon. Lower power systems intended to disrupt electronics systems could possibly be developed and deployed several years earlier. (S/NF)

[] we believe the basic technology for a radio-frequency (RF) weapon already is available,

] There is a moderate likelihood that by 1990 the USSR will test a ground-based RF weapon potentially capable of physically damaging satellites.

E. Operations of Soviet Strategic Forces in a Conflict

Preparations and Training of Nuclear Forces for Conflict

46 []

]

~~TCS 4643 84/1~~

40
~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~

47. We believe that a fundamental Soviet objective in acquiring and operating strategic forces is to assure a high probability of prevailing in a nuclear conflict, even if many important aspects of the conflict turn out worse than expected. To this end, training of Soviet forces for a global nuclear conflict is increasingly broad in scope and complex in the operational factors taken into account. In their military writings, the Soviets note that wars usually do not proceed according to prior expectations and planning. They almost certainly anticipate wide variations in circumstances and events. They recognize that numerous complications and degradations would affect planned operations, particularly in the unprecedentedly difficult nuclear environment. [

The inherent uncertainties of warfare cannot be eliminated through such practice, but the Soviets believe that their ability to continue to operate effectively in adverse conflict situations would be enhanced [

48. With respect to the first sentence of the preceding paragraph, there is an alternative view that Soviet force acquisitions and operations are guided by the counterforce and damage limitation precepts of military doctrine, and are constrained by technological, bureaucratic, and budgetary influences. The Soviets recognize that the concept of prevailing in nuclear war is far too imprecise to guide force acquisitions and operations, and are fully aware of the great uncertainties and catastrophic losses that would be incurred by all parties in a nuclear war.¹⁸

49. Soviet perceptions of the growing complexity of warfare have led to greater efforts to plan forces and operations against a backdrop of more varied contingencies and to achieve greater realism in combat training. The Soviets' principal aims have been to enhance their operational flexibility and force sustainability and to increase the probability of maintaining continuity of control in a nuclear conflict. In line with this approach, they have:

[

¹⁸ The holder of this view is the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

— Adjusted their force employment strategies to respond to more varied contingencies.

— Made changes to enhance the survivability and endurance of some of their strategic forces, such as the creation of bastions where SSBNs can be more effectively controlled and can be protected by ASW forces, the operation of SSBNs in the Arctic near or under the polar icecap, and the deployment of the highly mobile SS-20 force.

— Gradually increased the stress placed on their personnel in combat training. [

]

— Consistently worked to increase the survivability and redundancy of their command, control, and communications system and, thus, to increase their assurance of retaining control during the complex circumstances of extended operations in a nuclear environment. [

]

50. Soviet employment strategies also are being modified to increase the options available to political leaders for using and controlling their intercontinental forces. Soviet military planners have sought to develop force responses applicable to various stages of theater or global conflict. These include a launch-on-tactical-warning (LOTW) capability for Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) weapons as well as increased preparations for extended operations.

Scenario for Operation of Soviet Strategic Forces in a Conflict

51. We have structured a composite scenario, summarized briefly below, [

] we believe this composite picture captures

~~Top Secret~~

-Top Secret-

essential Soviet military views on the operation of Soviet strategic forces and on the nature of a major US-Soviet confrontation that proceeds through large-scale nuclear conflict.

52. The flow of events in an actual conflict would be likely to vary considerably from that presented here. Our presentation, therefore, should not be regarded as a Soviet prescription for nuclear conflict. The presentation does not preclude efforts by the Soviets to achieve political solutions at any stage, or to vary their military actions in response to circumstances. On the contrary, the Soviets evidently intend to prepare the military establishment to meet the contingencies of a long global conflict, to increase the options available to the political leadership at any point in such a conflict, and thus to increase their chances of controlling events and securing favorable conflict outcomes.

53. *Crisis Period.* The Soviets see little likelihood that the United States would initiate a surprise attack from a normal peacetime posture; we believe it is unlikely that the Soviets would mount such an attack themselves. [

] they expect to have sufficient warning of a US attack to carry out the deployment and dispersal of their forces. They evidently believe that, if a general war occurred, it would most likely result from the expansion of a major theater conflict, preceded by a political crisis period that could last several weeks or longer. During this crisis period the Soviets would:

- Heighten their surveillance of enemy activity, to acquire detailed information on a wide range of US strategic force capabilities and readiness.
- Shift from a peacetime to a wartime posture, while avoiding implementing readiness measures that they thought were unduly provocative.
- As the crisis intensified, seek to confuse Western intelligence and deny it information on the status of Soviet forces and preparations. The Soviets would increase the use of concealment, deception, and disinformation for military, diplomatic, and propaganda purposes in attempting to achieve their objectives.

54. *Conventional Phase.* The Soviets apparently believe that a major nuclear conflict, if it occurred,

would be likely to arise out of a conventional conflict and could involve several theaters. The Soviets perceive the conventional phase of a NATO-Warsaw Pact conflict as lasting from a few days to as long as several weeks. Key objectives would be to weaken the enemy's theater-based and sea-based nuclear capability, while protecting their own nuclear force:

- At the outset of hostilities, the Soviets would try to implement a theaterwide air offensive in which hundreds of Pact aircraft, employing conventional weapons, would be massed, with the objective of achieving air superiority and destroying NATO's nuclear assets, command and control facilities, and other high-value military targets.
- We believe that most, if not all, of the mobile SS-20 IRBM force would be deployed to the field by this time.
- All available Soviet SSBNs would be ordered to deploy from bases. Soviet general purpose naval forces would protect those SSBNs in areas near the USSR. In addition to the protection of their own SSBNs, Soviet naval forces would attempt to destroy enemy sea-based nuclear strike forces, principally SSBNs and aircraft carriers.
- We believe that there is a high likelihood that, during this conventional phase, the Soviets would attempt to interfere with selected US space systems that provide important wartime support, using both destructive and nondestructive means. The decision to launch ASAT interceptors against such systems during the early part of a conventional phase of such a conflict would be affected by Soviet uncertainties with regard to US responses, including the likelihood of attacks on Soviet space launchsites.
- We believe the Soviets currently have the technological capability, using active electronic warfare (EW), to attempt to interfere with enemy space systems. [

] We believe, however, that the Soviets intend to use active EW to attempt to interfere with such space systems. Potential Soviet active EW platforms include many fixed, transportable, and mobile transmitters. [

-Top Secret-

]} An alternative view contends that there is insufficient evidence at this time to support the judgment of Soviet intent to use active EW against satellites. [

]} Moreover, the holder of this view concludes that, if a Soviet active EW capability against satellites does exist, brute force jamming would be the most likely EW technique. [

]}¹⁰

55. *Initial Nuclear Phase.* We believe the Soviets envisage that it would be to their advantage to conduct a rapid conventional campaign to accomplish their theater objectives in NATO. In this campaign they would employ nonnuclear means, including some elements of strategic aviation to attempt to destroy NATO nuclear forces, with Soviet theater and strategic nuclear forces standing ready to preempt. The Soviets, in our judgment, are unlikely to initiate nuclear conflict on a limited scale, with small-scale use confined to the immediate combat zone, because they would probably see it as being to their advantage instead to keep the conflict at the conventional force level. Moreover, they would see the use of nuclear weapons on any scale as substantially increasing the risks of escalation to strategic nuclear war. We believe, however, that the likelihood of Soviet initiation of nuclear strikes would increase if Soviet conventional forces were faced with a major defeat or a NATO counteroffensive into Eastern Europe.

56. Soviet [] depict the transition from conventional to nuclear war in Europe occurring as Soviet forces attempt to preempt what they perceive to be an imminent NATO massed nuclear strike by launching their own initial massed nuclear strike. [] assert that a successful preemptive strike could provide one side with a decisive advantage and therefore stress the importance of a timely Pact strike—either a preemptive one or one at least nearly simultaneous with the launch of NATO's massed strike.

¹⁰ The holder of this view is the Director, National Security Agency.

57. The available evidence implies that, concurrent with the initial massed strike by nuclear forces in the theater, an initial strategic strike would take place—presumably including intercontinental forces. Soviet doctrine up to the early 1970s generally held that use of nuclear weapons on any scale constituted the initiation of nuclear war, with escalation to large-scale or "massed" nuclear strikes inevitable. Soviet writings thus declared that any NATO use of nuclear weapons would be met with a massive response, drawing on the USSR's full arsenal of strategic weapons. [

]} if it became apparent NATO was about to use nuclear weapons, the Pact should preempt with a massed strike even if it were not apparent that the NATO strike would be a large one. [

]} Later Soviet doctrinal material asserts that the circumstances under which nuclear weapons first would be employed cannot be predicted with certainty, and that preparations must be made to cover contingencies. [

]} the need to develop a wider array of nuclear options, including capabilities for using only those nuclear weapons deployed with tactical forces. Nevertheless [

]} rejected the feasibility of limiting escalation once nuclear weapons have been used.

58. [] the Soviets continue to emphasize the use of massive strikes to accomplish their strategic objectives. Since the early 1970s. [

]} in a few cases, the initial use of nuclear weapons—mostly small-scale—confined to the battlefield. Development of this concept—which is described in their doctrine as "limited" or "selective" use—suggests that the Soviets believe that there may be situations where at least small-scale use of nuclear weapons could be confined to the battlefield. [

]} the Soviets remain highly skeptical of the chances for controlling escalation.

59. If they perceived that NATO intended to use nuclear weapons only on a limited scale that would not result in a major defeat for the Pact, it is possible the Soviets might decide against initiating a large-scale preemptive strike. We should note, however, that we

~~Top Secret~~

do not know how the Soviets would be able to determine and be convinced that an imminent NATO strike will be limited, rather than large-scale; warning of a NATO nuclear strike is likely to prompt a massive Soviet preemptive strike. While the Soviets' overriding goal is combat success, not control of escalation, we cannot predict how the Soviets would react when actually faced with the prospect of a global nuclear war. A motivation for restraint would be a desire on their part to avoid unnecessary escalation to theater-wide or even global nuclear war. Their decision would be based on several factors, including a desire to avoid damage to the USSR, and their assessment of the likelihood they could still achieve their objectives.

60. As the likelihood of large-scale nuclear conflict increased, Soviet leaders would face the difficult decision of whether to seize the initiative and strike, as would be consistent with their general military doctrine, or to be more cautious in the hope of averting massive nuclear strikes on the Soviet homeland. There are no easy prescriptions for what the Soviets would actually do under a particular set of circumstances, despite the apparent doctrinal imperative to mount massive preemptive nuclear attacks:

- The Soviets would be attempting, as in earlier stages, to acquire strategic warning of strikes from enemy forward-based nuclear forces against the Soviet homeland, as well as from intercontinental nuclear forces. We are unable to judge what information would be sufficiently convincing to cause Soviet leaders to order a massive preemptive attack. Should the Soviets acquire warning of US missile launches, they probably would await confirmation from ballistic missile early warning (BMEW) radars before deciding whether to order a responsive strike.
- They would be more likely to seize the initiative by launching intercontinental nuclear strikes if the war had already reached the level of small-scale battlefield nuclear use, than if it was still at the conventional level. By taking the initiative, they would expect to reduce the capability of US strike forces and to disrupt to some extent the coordination of a US response. Evidence indicates that they would not expect to be able to prevent a US nuclear retaliatory strike. They also

probably consider it likely that the United States would attempt to launch its forces on tactical warning.

- We believe they would launch a coordinated theater and intercontinental strike if there had been a large-scale theater nuclear strike against the western USSR. Should the Soviets choose to launch a massive preemptive theater strike against NATO forces in Europe, we believe they would also launch a preemptive strike against the United States at the same time, as available evidence suggests. It is possible, however, they could choose to delay the intercontinental strike, in the possible hope that the United States would not retaliate against the Soviet homeland. An alternative view holds that—even though decoupling is a long-term Soviet goal—the available evidence suggests that it is highly unlikely that the intercontinental strike would be delayed.²⁰
- If they acquired convincing evidence that a US intercontinental strike was imminent, they would try to preempt. We believe that they would be more likely to act on the basis of ambiguous indications and inconclusive evidence of US strike intentions if a battlefield nuclear conflict were under way than during a crisis or a conventional conflict.
- For reasons such as lack of convincing evidence from their strategic warning systems or fear of unnecessarily or mistakenly initiating intercontinental nuclear war, the Soviets might not mount a preemptive strike. Their LOTW capability would permit a larger and more coordinated counterattack than retaliation, while reducing the risk of escalation based on insufficient or faulty information.
- We believe the Soviets recognize the possibility that they might fail to get reliable tactical warning of an enemy intercontinental nuclear strike. They prepare for the possibility that they would be unable to act quickly enough to successfully launch a large number of missiles on tactical warning, and could retaliate only after absorbing an attack. For example, their tactical warning

²⁰ The holder of this view is the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency.

-Top Secret-

sensors might have been damaged or destroyed in the prior phases of conflict. They would attempt to maintain control of the force and launch large-scale strikes with surviving forces.

— We believe the Soviets place considerable emphasis on assessing their strategic offensive capabilities under conditions in which the United States were to launch the initial major strike. These include scenarios where they are able to launch varying portions of their forces on tactical warning, as well as the most stressful scenario—where they fail to launch on tactical warning and must absorb a well-coordinated US counterforce attack. The Soviets strongly believe warfare rarely goes as planned and that being prepared for adversity and unplanned occurrences is of paramount importance. For the Soviets these scenarios are the most critical in an evaluation of their capabilities.

61. Elements of Soviet strategic forces would probably have suffered some losses during the previous phases of the conflict. The Soviets expect they would have lost some SSBNs in their forward patrol areas, in transit, and in the protected havens. Some SRF assets might have been damaged or destroyed.

Naval bases and command, control, and communications facilities in the USSR could have been damaged, and losses of strategic bombers in conventional operations probably would have been considerable.

62. Soviet offensive objectives in carrying out large-scale nuclear strikes—regardless of which side initiated the strikes—would be to neutralize US and Allied military operations and capabilities. In intercontinental strikes the Soviets would seek to destroy US-based nuclear forces and to disrupt and destroy the supporting infrastructure and control systems for these forces as well as the National Command Authority. They would attempt to isolate the United States from the theater campaign by attacking its power projection capabilities. They probably would also attempt to reduce US military power in the long term by attacking other nonnuclear forces, US military-industrial capacity, and governmental control facilities, although the extent of the attack on these targets in the initial strikes could vary, depending on the circumstances. Limiting the initial strikes only to command, control,

and-communications targets, or only to a portion of US strategic forces such as ICBM silos, is not consistent with the available evidence.

63. In large-scale massed theater nuclear strikes, which they would be likely to coordinate with intercontinental nuclear strikes, the Soviets probably would employ hundreds of tactical nuclear weapons as well as a large share of those strategic forces that have missions against theater targets. Adjustments in weapon allocations would have to be made for weapons destroyed in the conventional phase. Strategic systems would be used to support front operations and to strike targets beyond the area of front nuclear targeting responsibility. The Soviet Navy would continue strikes, using both nuclear and conventional weapons, against Western naval strike forces. Soviet strategic aviation would conduct nuclear and conventional strikes against high-value military targets.

64. Soviet large-scale intercontinental nuclear attacks would involve primarily ICBMs and SLBMs. Massive strikes probably would be delivered against worldwide US and Allied military targets, as well as a more comprehensive set of political and industrial-economic facilities. We believe that the Soviets would conduct continuing attacks in an attempt to destroy, degrade, and disrupt the US capability to employ nuclear forces, and the reconstitution capabilities of US nuclear forces and their command and control: (s)

— The Soviets have considerable flexibility in their employment of ICBMs for intercontinental attack. We believe they would not launch their ICBMs in a single massive strike.

— It is less clear how the Soviets intend to use their SSBNs during intercontinental nuclear conflict. Some SSBNs in protected areas near the Soviet homeland probably would be employed in an initial attack against targets in the United States and Eurasia, while others probably would be withheld for potentially protracted nuclear operations. We have no direct evidence of Soviet

45

TCS-4649-84/T-

-Top Secret-

-Top Secret-

plans to launch forward-deployed SS-N-6 SLBMs against critical US command, control, and communications targets and bomber bases. Simultaneous launch of such SLBMs with ICBMs, however, would mean SLBM impact 10 to 15 minutes ahead of ICBMs, and would minimize the reaction time available to the US National Command Authority and bomber bases. We have reevaluated the use of forward-based SLBMs. We believe it is highly unlikely that the Soviets would make the execution of their overall intercontinental strike plan dependent on the success of forward-based SLBM strikes. The Soviets could not be confident of the survivability of these SSBNs, there are operational difficulties, they have not improved the Y-class SSBNs in many years, and they are withdrawing some of them from the forward patrol areas. Although the Soviets would use their ICBM, and probably long-range SLBM, force to strike critical command, control, and communications facilities and bomber bases, it is also possible they would target forward-based SS-N-6 SLBMs against these targets because such an attack, if successful, could offer the possibility of substantially degrading a US retaliatory attack.

- Some strategic bombers would probably have a role in initial intercontinental nuclear strike operations, within hours after the initial missile strike. We believe it is likely that other bombers would be used later, for postattack reconnaissance and strikes against surviving targets in the continental United States. Deployment of the new Blackjack A and Bear H bombers, both capable of carrying ALCMs, will increase the Soviets' flexibility in conducting bomber strikes at intercontinental ranges as well as against theater targets, and the intercontinental attack capabilities of the bomber force will expand as these bombers, armed with ALCMs, become available in substantial numbers in the late 1980s.

65. Soviet strategic defensive operations in the initial nuclear phase of a conflict would include:

- Ballistic missile defense operations to protect key targets in the Moscow area, by engaging enemy missiles until key elements in the ABM system were destroyed or all available interceptors had been expended.

- Air defense in depth, to impose successive barriers to enemy penetration. The Soviets probably would have relocated some surface-to-air missiles to thwart defense suppression and avoidance tactics. They evidently plan to use nuclear-armed SAMs against penetrators [

] the rapid restoration of damaged SAM sites, airfields, and command, control, and communications facilities.

- ASW operations to attempt to destroy enemy SSBNs and SSNs.
- Full implementation of civil defense plans, initiated earlier. Most of the Soviet leaders at both the national and regional levels would be in protective facilities from which they would direct emergency rescue and recovery operations by civilian units and civil defense military troop units. With a few days for preparations, essential workers either would be in shelters at their place of work or, if off duty, would be dispersed to zones outside the cities. The Soviets have shelters for about 18 million people in urban areas. Their plans for protection of the general urban population are based on mass evacuation of about 100 million people and require adequate warning time.

66. *Later Phases of a Nuclear Conflict.* The Soviets plan for later exploitation phases following major intercontinental nuclear strikes. This exploitation would be conducted primarily by remaining general purpose forces, but our knowledge of Soviet views concerning these phases is sketchy. The Soviets plan to reconstitute some surviving general purpose and strategic forces and to secure their theater objectives [the occupation of substantial areas of Western Europe. The implication] seems to be that the strategic nuclear forces of both sides are largely expended or neutralized, but that withheld and reconstituted Soviet strategic nuclear forces play a small, but important, role in achieving Soviet objectives during the later phases.

67. The Soviets are working to improve the survivability of the assets required to reconstitute strategic forces, although we are highly uncertain about Soviet reconstitution capabilities. Overall, we believe the Soviets could maintain the combat effectiveness of

~~Top Secret~~

many of the surviving withheld weapons and would be able to reconstitute strategic forces at least to some extent with surviving reserve weapons and materiel, although damage to the logistic system and requirements for decontamination would stretch out the time required for reconstitution. Combat effectiveness would be contingent on many factors, including the restoration of command and control communications.

68. The Soviets prepare for combat operations that could extend weeks beyond the initial nuclear phase. They would clearly prefer to accomplish their objectives quickly, but recognize that the later phases could be protracted, given the difficulty and complexity of conducting operations following massive nuclear strikes. The duration would depend on such factors as the capabilities of remaining theater forces, the status of surviving political leaders, the viability of command and control, and the conditions in the US and Soviet homelands. A key objective for the Soviets in this period would be to prevent the United States from reconstituting its command and control system. In addition:

— We believe the Soviets would withhold [] of their initial ICBM force, and a small portion of the peripheral attack forces, for protracted operations. They plan to reload and refire from some of their ICBM silos and SS-20 launchers using reserve missiles and equipment. We believe these forces would be used against residual enemy conventional and nuclear forces and command and control, and perhaps key surviving elements of the economy supporting military operations. According to an alternative view, []

[] not the inclusion of refire in Soviet war plans. ²¹

— We have few details of Soviet planning for SSBN operations in a protracted conflict. Some submarines probably would be withheld, under naval force protection, for a reserve force role. The Soviets also probably plan to reload some SSBNs. We judge that their capability is limited, however, and that any reload operation could include

²¹ The holder of this view is the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

only a few SSBNs. According to an alternative view, the assertion that the Soviets probably plan to reload SSBNs during a nuclear war is not supported by the minimal available evidence or by any meaningful Soviet capability. Any SLBM reload operation would face a host of difficulties, and the contribution to Soviet striking power of any reloading that could reasonably be achieved would be so small as to make it unlikely that SLBM reload figures in Soviet war plans.

**

— We have little evidence on how the Soviets would employ their strategic bomber force during this period. Evidence suggests they do not expect most aircraft to survive the earlier phases of nuclear conflict. We believe that any remaining bombers would conduct reconnaissance and strike operations against key surviving targets.

— Soviet air defense units plan to restore airfields for defensive operations. Fighters and SAM units would operate from alternate sites if necessary. Civil defense units would continue rescue and recovery operations and aid with the distribution of reserve supplies to the civilian population. The Soviets evidently expect that some economic restoration would be possible—even after absorbing multiple nuclear strikes.

69. The evidence that we have [] on the later stages of general nuclear war deals with the conduct of a successful military campaign. [] with the USSR's forces reconstituting after heavy losses and physically occupying much of continental Western Europe. []

[] the Soviets would seek to end a nuclear war on their terms—by neutralizing the ability of US intercontinental and theater nuclear forces to interfere with Soviet capabilities to prevail in a conflict in Eurasia.

70. We have no specific evidence on whether the Soviets would attempt to end such a war by negotiation, or on initiatives they might undertake if they

²² The holders of this view are the Director, National Security Agency, and the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

-Top Secret-

perceived they could not achieve their military objectives. [

]

Impact of Future Systems on Soviet Operations

71. We believe the structure and operations of Soviet strategic forces will be markedly different by the 1990s, as new weapons and military support systems are deployed and future systems become operational. Expansion of the offensive forces weapons inventory to include mobile ICBMs, cruise missiles, and new bombers will require that the Soviets make major changes in their offensive operations plans—as well as in readiness and command and control procedures—to accommodate these new weapon system capabilities:

- A mixed force of mobile and silo-based systems will enable the Soviet planner of the 1990s to continue to rely primarily on silo-based ICBMs for use in initial strikes, while withholding most or all of the mobile ICBMs for subsequent strikes. Mobile ICBMs provide a highly survivable force element. We believe the Soviets will apply extensive camouflage, concealment, and deception measures to make the probability of accounting for or detecting their mobile ICBM units on a timely basis more difficult.
- The deployment of mobile ICBMs will also lead to improved capabilities for ICBM reload. Although mobile ICBMs would have many of the logistic and operational problems associated with silo-based systems for reconstitution and refire. The use of solid propellants would ease handling procedures and shorten reaction time. Mobility would improve ICBM survivability, thereby increasing the Soviets' capability to reconstitute a larger fraction of their ICBM force. Reloading could be concealed and carried out in remote locations. Mobile launchers dispersed from a central support base could avoid the damage and contamination that might be present for reload of fixed-point silos. In addition, a mobile system probably would be less vulnerable to enemy follow-on strikes. The SS-X-25 is apparently going to be deployed in a manner similar

to that for the SS-20, and we expect its reload practices to be similar to those for the SS-20. An alternative view holds that, while mobile ICBMs theoretically offer advantages for reload, operational considerations suggest that requirements for additional deliverable warheads can be satisfied with greater assurance by deployment of missiles on launchers. The holder of this view notes that unwieldy and vulnerable logistics, as well as damage and contamination from US nuclear strikes, could make refire as problematic as for silo-based ICBMs. [

]

- The Soviets almost certainly will apply their experience with the mobile SS-20 IRBM in establishing command and control readiness procedures for these units. We believe they will greatly expand their present mobile command and control system of fixed-wing and helicopter airborne command posts and field-mobile command, control, and communications van units at all echelons.
- The Soviets' new extremely-low-frequency (ELF) communications system will potentially increase the survivability of their SSBN force by allowing SSBNs to operate deeper or under polar ice and still be able to monitor communications. Also, an ELF system is capable of operating in an electronic warfare environment, and its signal is relatively unaffected by nuclear bursts and atmospheric disruptions, but its transmitters are subject to direct attack.
- The introduction of long-range cruise missiles into the strategic bomber force probably will not alter the fundamental relationship between bombers and ballistic missiles in Soviet planning. The employment of bombers in intercontinental strikes would be likely to follow massive strikes by land- and sea-based Soviet missile systems. Deployment of the AS-X-15 ALCM will give the Soviets the long-range standoff strike capability

² The holder of this view is the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

-Top Secret-

-FCS 4640-54/1

~~Top Secret~~

they currently lack; aircraft will be able to launch AS-X-15s from Canadian airspace or from points several hundred kilometers off either US coast and still strike most target areas in the continental United States.

- The Blackjack bomber probably will be operated with a mixed load of ALCMs and bombs; some may carry only ALCMs. We believe this bomber will be employed for both theater and intercontinental missions, with emphasis on the latter. The Soviets will also probably use some of their new Candid tankers to refuel bombers for both theater and intercontinental missions.
- The Soviets' new SLCMs will enhance their offensive capabilities. Although we estimate that the SS-NX-21 is probably intended for theater targets in Europe and Asia, we believe the Soviets may deploy a few SS-NX-21-equipped submarines near the United States in 1984. Such deployments would be consistent with Soviet statements concerning a "response" to US INF deployments. Deployment of SS-NX-21s on submarines would require a trade-off in mission capability since they could then carry fewer ASW and antiship weapons. The SS-NX-24 [] will be deployed on dedicated SSGNs. We have no direct evidence, but we believe the mission of the SS-NX-24 will probably include coverage of both US and theater targets. []

Launching submarines would be subject to detection by ASW systems.

72. To improve their capability to defend against attacks by low-altitude bombers and cruise missiles, we believe the Soviets will alter air defense command operations procedures and introduce improved communications equipment and data systems in order to better integrate the operations of their new air defense fighters, Mainstay AWACS aircraft, and SAM systems:

- They probably will concentrate their available AWACS aircraft in the most critical approaches from which they perceive attacks by low-altitude

penetrating bombers and cruise missiles would be likely to come.

- The introduction of the new Candid tanker forces could enhance their air defense capabilities by providing greater on-station time for the Mainstay AWACS and interceptor aircraft. This could enable the Soviets to extend their air defense coverage farther from their borders in an effort to engage US cruise-missile-carrying aircraft before they could launch their ALCMs. The some 100 projected tankers by the early 1990s seem insufficient, however, to fully support the needs for both strategic air defense missions and strategic bomber missions, and we are uncertain how the Soviets will allocate tankers among these missions.
- If the Soviets are to maximize the potential of an integrated air defense system against low-altitude targets, they would have to change their present procedures to enable air defense pilots to use more initiative in engaging targets within their area and to be more independent of centralized control. It is possible, however, that the Soviets will not be willing to give up centralized control to take advantage of the increased flexibility a fully integrated air defense system would provide.

F. Trends in Soviet Capabilities To Perform Strategic Missions

73. During the next 10 years the primary wartime missions of Soviet strategic offensive and defensive forces will continue to be to:

- Destroy enemy nuclear delivery means.
- Neutralize enemy command, control, and communications, warning capabilities, and other support systems.
- Destroy other military and nonmilitary targets.
- Assure the survivability of sufficient offensive forces and command and control capabilities to perform the missions envisioned by Soviet strategy.
- Defend the Soviet homeland against attacks by ballistic missiles, bombers, and cruise missiles.
- Protect the Soviet leadership, economy, and population through civil defense.