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Soviet Strategic Forces for Peripheral Attack

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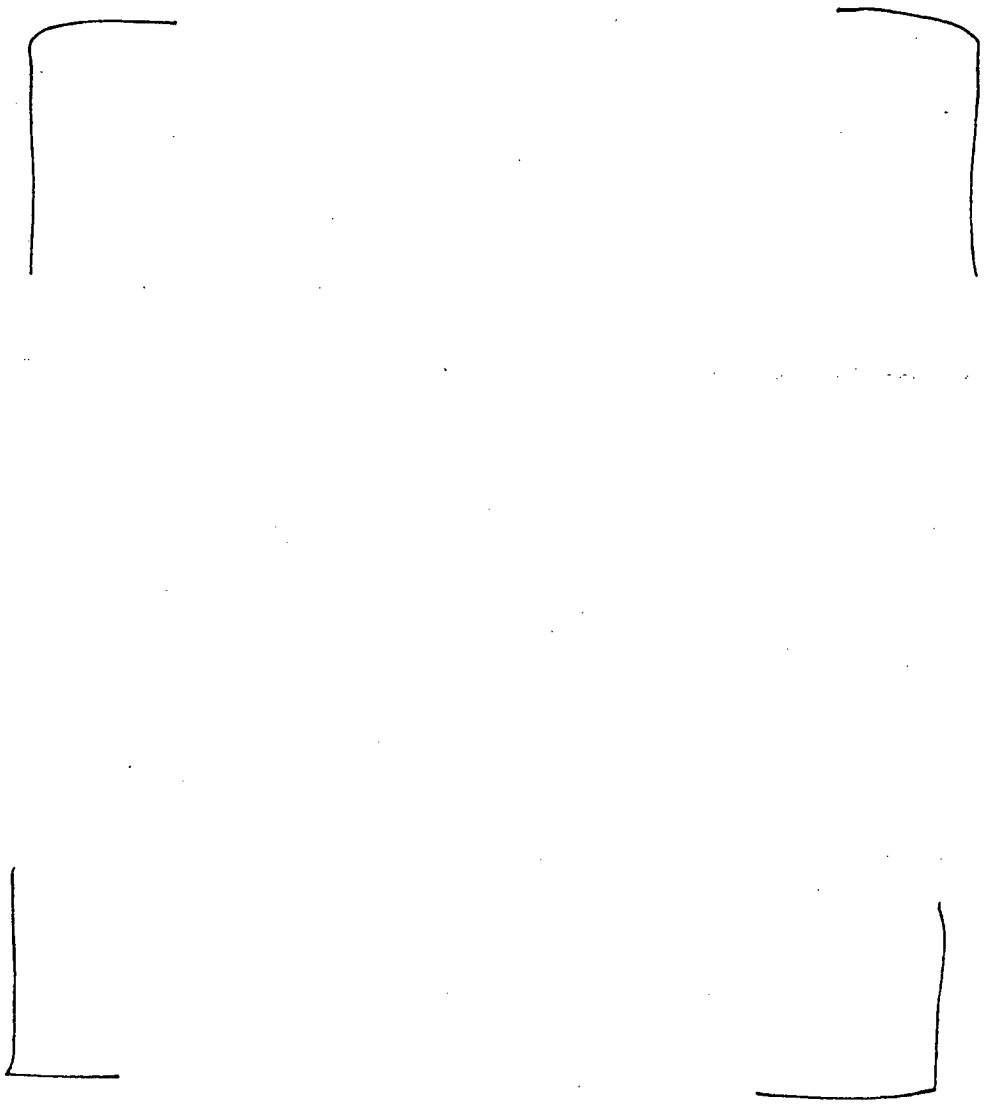

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SOVIET STRATEGIC FORCES FOR PERIPHERAL ATTACK

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THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS, EXCEPT AS NOTED IN THE TEXT.

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the Estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Energy, and Defense, and the National Security Agency.

Also Participating:

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

FOREWORD

This Estimate addresses that sizable protion of the USSR's strategic forces which is intended for use primarily against land targets in Western Europe, China, the Middle East, and other areas on the periphery of the USSR. The relevant targets are generally beyond the immediate area of ground force engagements but at less than intercontinental range. We refer to these as peripheral strategic targets, and to the Soviet forces whose mission is to attack them as strategic forces for peripheral attack.

At present, the Soviet strategic forces for peripheral attack consist mostly of medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles of the Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) and intermediate-range bombers of Long Range Aviation (LRA). Some intercontinental ballistic missiles of the SRF, heavy bombers of LRA, and ballistic missile submarines of the Soviet Navy also contribute to this mission. The peripheral strategic attack forces are not organized as a separately identifiable entity but are parts of major components of the Soviet military establishment which themselves have broader missions. Our identification of forces concerned primarily with the peripheral attack mission is based on such factors as the characteristics of their weapons and their deployment patterns, [redacted] as well as on Soviet documents and statements.

The Soviet concept of warfare involves a continuum of action at distances ranging from the immediate area of ground engagements to the intercontinental arena. The Soviets have sought flexibility of weapons employment in implementing this concept. No hard-and-fast lines can be drawn between peripheral strategic forces and other Soviet forces in all circumstances. Some of the forces considered in this Estimate are capable of contributing to intercontinental strikes, whereas many other forces not discussed in detail are capable of being used against peripheral strategic targets. Included in the latter category are Soviet Naval Aviation aircraft, some missile-launching surface ships and cruise missile submarines, and many tactical aircraft and missiles.

These other forces are committed largely to other missions and have therefore been excluded from detailed consideration in this Estimate. We have, however, taken their capabilities into account in our assessment of the implications of trends in Soviet peripheral forces for strategic attack and in an annex on comparisons of Soviet and non-

Soviet forces. In particular, we have recognized the impact of Soviet tactical forces on the USSR's overall capabilities for theater nuclear warfare and on the conduct of any Soviet military effort in Eurasia.

For detailed discussions of other Soviet forces whose capabilities overlap those of the forces addressed in this Estimate, see especially NIE 11-3/8-77, *Soviet Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict Through the Late 1980s* (February 1978), and NIE 11-14-78, *Warsaw Pact Forces Opposite NATO* (forthcoming).

CONTENTS

	Page
SUMMARY	1
Bombers	1
Land-Based Ballistic Missiles	2
Ballistic Missile Submarine Systems	3
Operational Considerations	4
Future Trends	5
Implications	8
Comparisons of Soviet and Non-Soviet Forces	10
DISCUSSION	14
I. HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT	14
A. Bombers for Peripheral Attack	14
B. Medium- and Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missiles	14
C. Ballistic Missile Submarine Systems	16
D. Cost of Peripheral Attack Forces	16
II. CURRENT FORCES	17
A. Intermediate-Range Bombers	17
B. Backfire	18
C. Other Bombers	22
D. Medium- and Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missiles	22
E. Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles	28
F. Targeting of Missile Forces	29
G. Ballistic Missile Submarine Systems	29
H. Other Naval Forces	32
III. COMMAND AND CONTROL	32
A. Emerging Theater Control Structure	33
B. Improvements in Flexibility and Survivability	35
IV. EMPLOYMENT	36
A. Targets	36
B. Employment Doctrine	37
V. FUTURE FORCES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS	39
A. Factors Affecting Soviet Force Planning	39
B. Alternative Force Projections	42
C. Implications of the Force Projections	48
D. Effects of Improvements	52
ANNEX—The Problem of Comparing Soviet and Non-Soviet Forces	57

SUMMARY

The Soviets began after World War II to build forces capable of striking a variety of strategic targets in areas adjacent to the USSR. Large forces were deployed for this purpose in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Although emphasis shifted in the mid-1960s to strengthening Soviet intercontinental attack capabilities, strategic forces for peripheral attack continue to play an important part in Soviet plans and to represent a significant portion of the USSR's military strength.

International tensions, the proliferation of nuclear capabilities among several nations, uneasy relations with China, and Western technological advances in the weapons field will continue to be of sufficient concern to the Soviets to preclude any reduction in the overall capabilities of strategic forces for peripheral attack. Present trends point to qualitative improvement rather than quantitative growth. The deployment of new weapon systems now under way, along with some improvements to existing systems, will provide the peripheral strategic forces with greater capabilities, increased survivability, and more flexibility.

BOMBERS

The first elements of the Soviet strategic forces to have a peripheral strike role were intermediate-range bombers, deployed shortly after World War II. After reaching a high of 1,400 aircraft in 1957, the size of the intermediate-range bomber component of Long Range Aviation (LRA) began to decline as a result of the retirement of older aircraft, the transfer of some to Soviet Naval Aviation (SNA) and to Soviet Air Force training units, and the sale of some to other countries. Currently, LRA has some 650 intermediate-range bombers, most of them TU-16 Badgers and TU-22 Blinders. It is likely that a force of about this size will be retained over the next 10 years.[1]

In 1974 the Soviets began to deploy a new bomber—the Backfire—that appears well suited for peripheral attack and naval missions. According to one view in the Intelligence Community, the Backfire also poses a significant threat to the contiguous United States, a

[1] The numerical estimates included in this Summary are based on the moderate force projection treated in detail in chapter V.

capability which the Soviets could employ at their discretion.[2] About 45 Backfires are now operational with LRA. (Approximately 40 others are assigned to SNA.) We believe some 200 to 270 Backfires will be assigned to LRA by 1988, largely as replacements for older aircraft. The low-altitude and supersonic capabilities of the Backfire, as well as its improved avionics, give it a much-improved capability to penetrate air defenses, strike peripheral strategic targets, conduct armed reconnaissance, and recover for additional missions.

If the Soviets engaged in a nonnuclear war against NATO or in Asia, bombers with peripheral strategic attack capabilities would participate. During such a conflict they would conduct conventional attacks against airfields, nuclear storage facilities, and other targets with the primary objective of reducing enemy nuclear capabilities. During nuclear war, these aircraft would conduct nuclear attacks designed to complement strikes by ballistic missiles. They probably would be used primarily against those targets that did not pose an immediate strategic threat to the USSR, such as troop concentrations, storage facilities, and industrial centers, thus freeing the ballistic missile forces to concentrate on time-urgent targets.

There are indications that under some circumstances, the Soviets plan to use some of their long-range Bear and Bison heavy bombers for peripheral strategic attacks, but we believe that these weapons remain committed primarily to intercontinental attack missions. Some of the intermediate-range bombers assigned to SNA also probably would be used to attack land targets on the USSR's periphery, although this force is committed primarily to antiship missions.

LAND-BASED BALLISTIC MISSILES

The buildup of the land-based ballistic missile element of Soviet strategic forces for peripheral attack began in 1958 with the deployment of the SS-3 medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM). The force grew considerably through the early 1960s as the SS-4 MRBM and the SS-5 intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) were introduced. When deployment of these two systems ended in 1964, the force consisted of more than 675 launchers. It has declined somewhat in total size since then. There are currently about 500 SS-4 and SS-5 launchers deployed in the European and south-central USSR; about 75 percent are soft, and the remainder are silos.

These missile systems are believed to be armed exclusively with nuclear warheads. They lack the accuracy to be used effectively against hardened targets and have slow reaction times. Despite their limitations,

[2] *The holders of this view are 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. For additional discussion of this issue, see chapter II, paragraphs 31-33.*

they would be effective against a variety of targets, such as airfields, nuclear storage facilities, air defense networks, ports, and industrial facilities.

Some SS-4 and SS-5 launchers are now being deactivated, evidently in conjunction with the deployment of the USSR's new IRBM, the SS-20. Modifications to many of the sites since 1973, however, indicate that the Soviets probably are not considering an abrupt phaseout. Some SS-4s and SS-5s probably will remain in service into the mid-1980s.

The SS-20 flight test program began in 1974 and has been highly successful. In 1975, preparations for deployment of this new mobile missile system began in areas opposite NATO and China. Seven bases with facilities for as many as 57 mobile launchers probably now have at least some operational capability. At least five more bases are under construction. We estimate that some 250 mobile IRBM launchers will be operational by the early 1980s, and as many as 300 may be deployed by 1988. The SS-20 carries three multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) and is appreciably more accurate than older MRBMs and IRBMs. Each SS-20 launcher will evidently have several missiles for refire purposes which, because of the survivability of the mobile SS-20 system, are more likely to be usable than the single-refire missile now located with some of the SS-4s and SS-5s at fixed launch positions. Because of their accuracy, MIRV capability, and survivability, mobile IRBMs will become the backbone of the land-based ballistic missile forces for peripheral nuclear attack.

In addition to MRBMs and IRBMs, about 300 Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) probably were once assigned peripheral targets. An unknown but smaller number may still be so assigned. The Soviets will probably retain the option to allocate ICBMs to peripheral strategic targets, but any requirement to do so will decline as SS-20 deployment proceeds.

BALLISTIC MISSILE SUBMARINE SYSTEMS

Submarines equipped with nuclear-armed ballistic missiles began entering the fleet in numbers in the late 1950s with the deployment of diesel-powered G-class and nuclear-powered H-class submarines. Until the early 1970s, most of these submarines had intercontinental rather than peripheral strike missions. Since then, newer, more modern nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) apparently have relieved these older units of their intercontinental missions. The limited range of their missiles, together with recent patrol patterns, suggest that all of the 22 operational G-I-, G-II-, and H-II-class ballistic missile submarines (with 66 launchers) have now shifted to the peripheral attack mission. We believe that these submarines will be phased out of the force by the mid-1980s.

The Soviet force of modern Y- and D-class submarines is committed primarily to attacks on the United States. The Soviets, however, almost certainly have developed contingency plans for the use of the SS-N-6 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) on some Y-class submarines against targets in Europe and Asia. The relative importance of the peripheral attack role for these modern SSBNs would probably depend largely upon the circumstances leading up to a conflict and the scenario for its initiation. We cannot, therefore, predict the number of units that might be employed for such missions.[3]

Considering their flexibility and survivability, we believe that a small number of ballistic missile submarines probably will retain peripheral strike roles or options for the foreseeable future. They most likely would conduct nuclear strikes against relatively soft targets such as airfields, some nuclear storage sites, ports, missile submarine bases, and other coastal targets.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Limited evidence concerning Soviet targeting concepts for peripheral forces indicates a preference for countermilitary targeting to destroy an enemy's means to wage nuclear war and to create conditions favorable to the success of ground campaigns. Until the late 1960s, Soviet [ ] doctrine that emphasized massive theaterwide nuclear strikes, either to preempt NATO first use of nuclear weapons or in response to NATO use of nuclear weapons on even a small scale. In the Soviets' view, a massive theaterwide exchange still appears to be the most likely eventuality.

[ ] The Soviets clearly would like to achieve their war-fighting objectives at the lowest possible level of conflict and to minimize increasing the risk of intercontinental warfare. In a limited nuclear conflict against NATO, they might withhold the use of strategic nuclear forces based in the USSR and thus seek to avoid inviting attack on the Soviet homeland.

The Soviets have devoted considerable attention to development of their command and control structure. They have undertaken a long-term and expensive program to cope with widely dispersed forces, fast-paced operations, and the massive stresses on the command and control system that would occur in high-intensity conventional or nuclear operations. Among many developments, two have been most notable: significant improvements in the survivability and flexibility of their

[3] *There are divergent views within the Intelligence Community concerning the likelihood that modern SSBNs would be employed for peripheral strike missions. For details, see chapter II, paragraphs 63 and 64.*

command and communication systems; and development of a capability to establish a theaterwide echelon of command with broad authority over forces of all kinds in a large geographic region. In wartime, it is likely that the High Command in each theater would exercise authority over some or all bombers with capabilities to conduct peripheral strategic strikes in its region, and probably over ballistic missiles as well.

FUTURE TRENDS

Soviet peripheral strategic forces now include some 1,150 bombers and missile launchers with about 1,750 bombs and warheads (2,300 when refire missiles are considered) and nearly 2,150 equivalent megatons (about 2,700 when refire missiles are considered). Most currently deployed Soviet weapons with strategic peripheral attack capabilities were designed in the 1950s and now are obsolescent. New weapon systems such as the Backfire and the SS-20 will have significantly improved combat capabilities, notably in the MIRVed warheads, accuracy, survivability, and additional refire capability of the missile systems and the penetration capabilities of the bombers. We expect, however, that some ICBMs and SLBMs will continue to cover some peripheral targets, at least into the early 1980s.

The Soviets do not appear to have compelling military reasons for deploying new long-range [1] cruise missiles for use against land targets on the periphery of the USSR. Nonetheless, improvements in enemy air defenses, US development of cruise missiles, or such developments or deployment in NATO could motivate the Soviets either to modify one of their existing cruise missiles for long-range applications or to pursue development of new systems. The Soviets are already testing what probably is a long-range air-launched cruise missile and could test systems with more advanced technologies by the early 1980s. Cruise missiles could provide the Soviets a means to augment their theater nuclear forces rapidly if they perceived changes unfavorable to them in the theater nuclear balance.

We believe that, in planning for future deployment of peripheral weapon systems, the Soviets have considered the implications of the ongoing US-Soviet negotiations concerning limitations on intercontinental nuclear delivery vehicles. An agreement that called for major reductions of intercontinental delivery vehicles—such as an aggregate ceiling considerably lower than the 2,250 currently under negotiation—could contribute to Soviet motives for increasing the size and capabilities of peripheral forces. Regardless of the outcome of the strategic arms limitation talks (SALT) and despite any lessening of

[1] For purposes of this discussion, long range means in excess of 600 kilometers (320 nautical miles)—a distinguishing range limitation used in the strategic arms limitation talks.

international tensions, the Soviets will continue to perceive a need for large forces capable of attacking targets beyond the borders of the Soviet Union at less than intercontinental ranges.

To illustrate the direction, scope, and pace of growth in capabilities of the peripheral forces over the next 10 years we have developed alternative projections. There are significant uncertainties in both of these projections. One illustrates a moderate level of effort and represents our view of a continuation of recent Soviet efforts without significant changes of emphasis. The other illustrates a high level of effort and is intended to depict the growth we would expect if the Soviets perceived a need for significantly greater enhancement of their peripheral forces. On the basis of present indications, we believe Soviet peripheral strategic attack forces are likely to evolve along the lines of what we term a moderate level of effort, and we consider a program like that of the high level of effort to be unlikely.

Moderate Level of Effort. Under a moderate level of effort, we would expect changes during the next 10 years to result primarily from the introduction into the force of mobile SS-20 and follow-on missiles and of Backfire bombers.[5] According to this projection, as older, single-RV missiles are replaced by MIRVed IRBMs, the total number of delivery vehicles (that is, bombers and missile launchers) declines by about 30 percent. These vehicles, however, will carry about 15 percent more weapons than the present force, with roughly the same equivalent megatonnage. These rather gradual trends change considerably if the refire missiles projected to be available to land-based MRBMs and IRBMs are taken into account. With refire missiles considered, the number of missile RVs and bomber weapons increases by about 65 percent and equivalent megatonnage by about 20 percent over the next 10 years. (For a graphic presentation of trends in the size and composition of the Soviet strategic forces for peripheral attack, as illustrated by numbers of bombs and warheads in the moderate projection, see figure A.)

We expect some shift in the distribution of peripheral forces between the European USSR and the Soviet Far East. Some 80 percent of both the bombers and land-based ballistic missiles for peripheral attack are currently based in the western USSR. There is no present indication of change in the distribution of bombers, but the observed pattern of SS-20 base construction, increasing Sino-Soviet hostility, and anticipated growth in Chinese nuclear forces lead us to estimate that a larger portion of the ballistic missile force will be deployed against targets in Asia. Considering the likely Soviet view of the distribution of threats and targets, however, we believe that when deployment of the

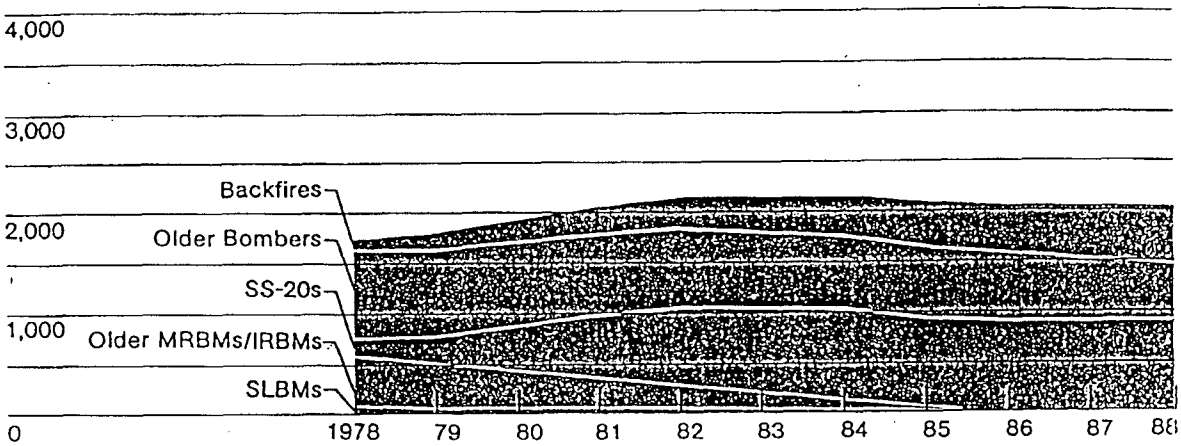
[5] These and subsequent percentage increases would be reduced somewhat if a portion of the Backfire force were reserved for intercontinental missions.

Composition of Soviet Forces for Peripheral Strategic Attack, Moderate Force Projection

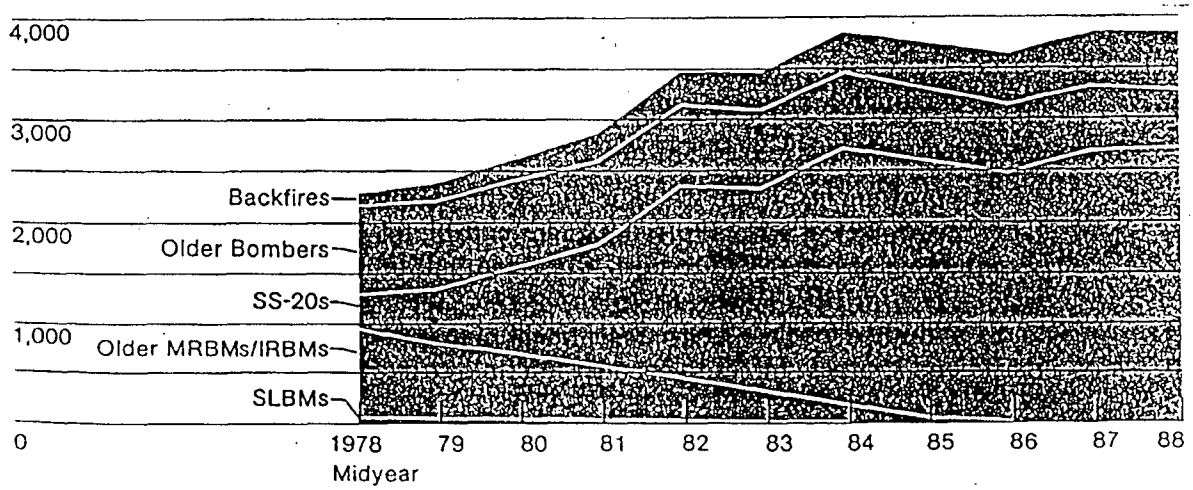
Figure A

Missile RVs and Bomber Weapons by Type of Delivery Vehicle

—not including refire missiles



—including refire missiles



Note: These charts do not depict (a) the possibility of additional bomber sorties, or (b) the possible employment against theater targets of some Soviet ICBMs, modern SLBMs, and/or heavy bombers.

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SS-20 is completed, about two-thirds of the force will be assigned primarily to cover targets in Europe.[6]

If this estimate is correct and older systems are deactivated as we have projected, by 1988 the number of delivery vehicles in the west will decline by about 40 percent while those in the east will increase by about 15 percent. Target coverage, however, will increase in both theaters—markedly so in the east. With refire missiles considered, the number of missile RVs and bomber weapons will increase by about 40 percent in the west and 200 percent in the east.

High Level of Effort. Under a high level of effort we would expect the Soviets to increase the rate at which newer systems enter the force. There are essentially two approaches the Soviets could take: an even-paced approach, accelerating somewhat the deployment of newer systems while retaining large numbers of existing systems; or a quick-modernization approach, stressing rapid deactivation of older systems in order to concentrate efforts on deployment of newer ones. Both approaches would lead to about the same forces in 1988. The quick-modernization approach would give the Soviets a much more capable force in about half the time—including an all-mobile IRBM force by the mid-1980s—albeit with considerable dislocation to current forces and ongoing deployment and developmental programs.[7]

In our high projections the number of delivery vehicles would remain fairly constant, while target coverage would improve dramatically. By 1988, total missile RVs and bomber weapons would more than double, and would triple if refire missiles are considered. We would generally expect the same relative emphasis on the eastern and western theaters as in a moderate level of effort, although the conditions that might impel the Soviets to a high level of effort could relate more specifically to one theater than the other, in which case there could be correspondingly increased emphasis in that theater.

IMPLICATIONS

Improvements in the strategic forces for peripheral attack appear to reflect Soviet attempts to field forces capable of a broad range of war-fighting options. The trends we foresee will improve the Soviets' capabilities for both large-scale, high-intensity theater nuclear warfare and for limited nuclear and conventional operations. The capacity of peripheral strategic forces to conduct multiple strikes over an extended period will increase.

[6] The SS-20 bases currently identified under construction are distributed almost equally among the western, eastern, and central USSR. From central locations, the SS-20 can reach targets throughout most of Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia, thus permitting more flexibility in targeting that portion of the force.

[7] *There are divergent views within the Intelligence Community concerning which of these approaches the Soviets would be more likely to adopt if they undertook a high level of effort. For details, see chapter V, paragraphs 148 and 149.*

One implication is that improvements in the peripheral strategic forces could relieve the Soviets of most requirements to use ICBMs and other systems limited by SALT for attacks on targets in Europe and Asia. Moreover, the improvements which have been occurring in Soviet tactical nuclear delivery capabilities probably will permit the Soviets to conduct theater nuclear warfare at higher levels of intensity before having to resort to peripheral strategic forces, which are based in the USSR, and may also relieve the peripheral strategic force of some of its requirements for support of ground force objectives. Taken together, these developments could allow Soviet planners to draw a more precise distinction between the levels of intensity at which nuclear warfare is waged, to exercise greater restraint in the initial use of nuclear weapons in Europe, and to seek to control the potential for escalation.

Other indications of flexibility include the apparent Soviet intention to maintain a large force of peripheral strike bombers. With the introduction of the Backfire, the Soviets are improving the ability of their bombers to penetrate defended territory in conventional operations, without the need for nuclear suppression of air defenses. In addition, the SS-20, while not suitable for conventional warfare, is better able than its predecessors to conduct limited nuclear strikes in support of tactical commanders. Moreover, the mobile SS-20's enhanced survivability will make more viable a Soviet option to withhold these Soviet-based missiles during the initial phases of a theater nuclear war in Europe in the hope of reducing the risk of retaliation against Soviet territory.

Any increased confidence the Soviets may gain from these improvements to their forces is likely to be tempered by several concerns:

— Uncertainty about their actual ability to control escalation—for example, to deter the West from launching strategic nuclear strikes against Soviet territory in the face of a successful Soviet conventional assault.

— The West's ability to quickly open new areas of competition in weapon capabilities—especially in the field of cruise missiles—which, from the Soviet perspective, have the potential for adversely affecting the nuclear balance in Europe.

— The improving nuclear capabilities of China, whose nuclear forces, though relatively small, are difficult to target and growing in number.

In any case, the Soviets are now far more capable of engaging in a wide range of theater warfare scenarios than they were in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Their peripheral strategic forces will become even more powerful, flexible, and survivable in the future. The Soviets

certainly view these improving forces as a major contributor to their overall deterrent and war-fighting capabilities and as an important factor in what they hope will be a continuing shift in the strategic balance in their favor.

COMPARISONS OF SOVIET AND NON-SOVIET FORCES

We have examined in an annex several possible views of Soviet and non-Soviet forces composed of roughly equivalent weapon systems that could be used for theater nuclear strikes against land targets at distances beyond the immediate area of ground force engagements. It is very difficult to compare forces using weapon systems with different characteristics and belonging to countries which have different military doctrines and organization and whose national security policies are shaped by different geographic and political factors. The selection of forces to be compared involves somewhat arbitrary choices, combining such criteria as weapon system ranges and deployment areas, organizational affiliation and mission, and unit training and equipment. In some cases, the lack of complete, timely data is a major problem.

The comparisons presented here depict only currently deployed forces. We have not attempted to project future non-Soviet forces. Planning for US and NATO theater nuclear forces with long-range capabilities is currently in a state of flux, and our evidential and analytical base for projecting Chinese forces is weak. In making the comparisons, we have used the same measures used elsewhere in the Estimate: numbers of delivery vehicles, numbers of missile RVs and bomber weapons, and equivalent megatons.

In what we term a Basic Set of Forces, we have compared the Soviet forces defined in this Estimate as strategic forces for peripheral attack with the most nearly equivalent non-Soviet forces. In this comparison, the Soviets have a clear margin of advantage in each of the measures used. (See figure B.) They outnumber the most nearly comparable non-Soviet forces by more than [

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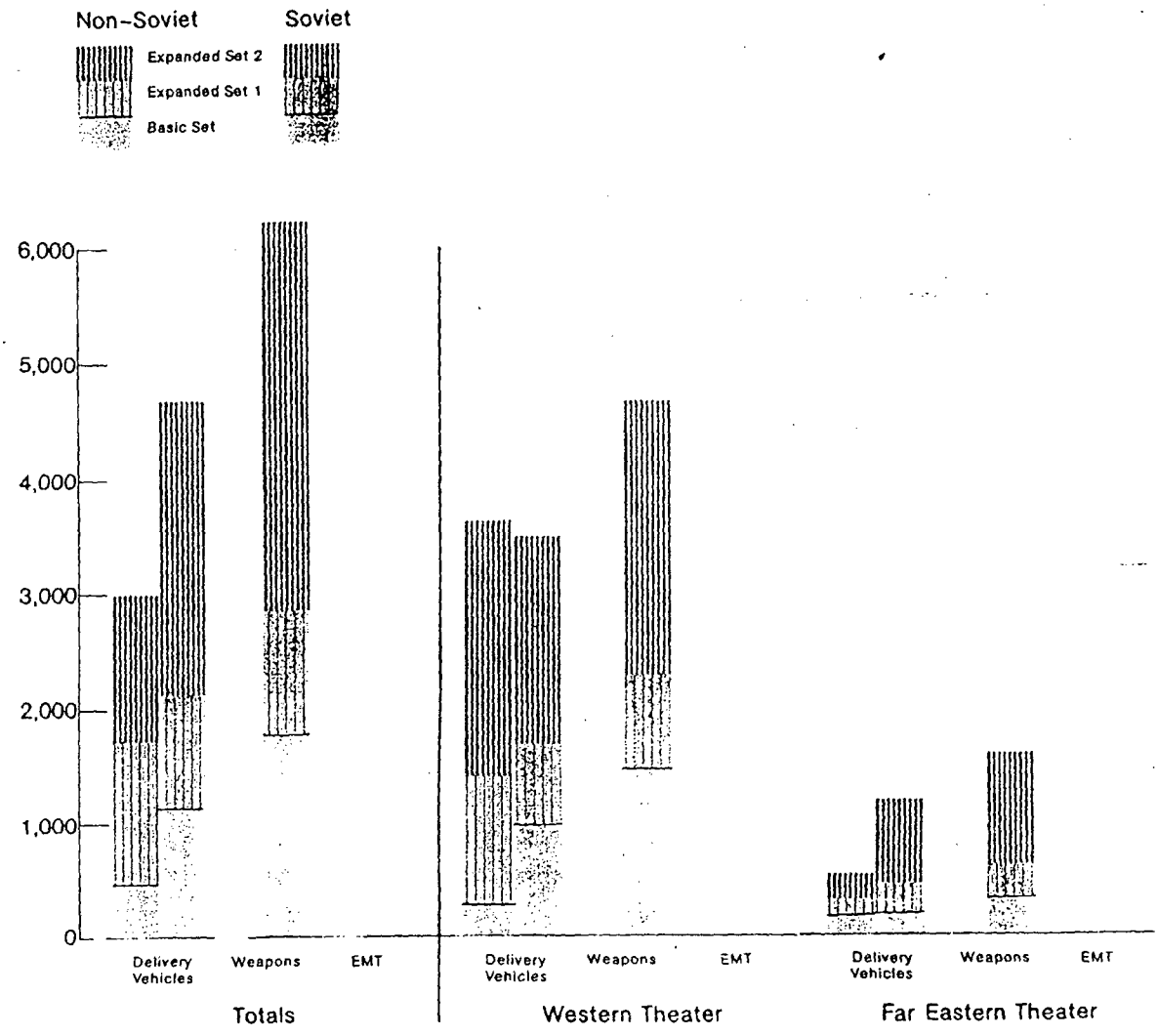
Comparison of Selected Soviet and Non-Soviet Forces: Basic and Expanded Sets (1 July 1978) **Figure B**



Note: These charts include US SLBMs assigned to SACEUR. They do not depict (a) the possibility of additional bomber sorties, (b) the possible employment against theater targets of some Soviet ICBMs, modern SLBMs, and/or heavy bombers, or (c) refire missiles available to Soviet MRBMs and IRBMS.

In Expanded Set 1, we add on each side those tactical forces which have weapon systems with ranges of at least 700 kilometers, have the mission of attacking land targets with nuclear weapons, and are currently trained and equipped to do so.[8] When these forces are added to the Basic Set, we can compare those forces which could be available for prompt employment against strategic targets located, in general, beyond the areas likely to be immediately involved in ground force engagements. In this comparison, the non-Soviet position improves considerably, both in overall totals and in the Western Theater. In numbers of delivery vehicles and available weapons, the Soviets retain only a slight advantage over US/NATO forces. It should be noted, however, that many of these forces would in fact be used in tactical support of ground operations. Conversely, the weight of attacks against peripheral strategic targets might well be augmented by still other forces having intercontinental ranges and/or other missions.

In Expanded Set 2, we add still other forces which have weapon systems with ranges and other characteristics suitable for long-range nuclear strikes against land targets (or are externally identical to those that do) but that, for various reasons, we believe are unlikely to be available for prompt employment against peripheral strategic targets. A change in mission, relatively simple modifications, or provision of the necessary equipment and training could make some or all of this large number of additional weapons available for long-range theater nuclear strikes. In this comparison, the non-Soviet position worsens again. The Soviet forces would have significant advantages in all measures, due largely to the addition of the several hundred Badger, Blinder, and Backfire aircraft assigned to Soviet Naval Aviation. SNA aircraft are intended primarily for naval antiship missions, but could be used to strike peripheral land targets if the Soviets wished to allocate them to that mission. These SNA bombers represent the most significant single addition to the Soviet forces in either Expanded Set. They are offset only partially by the addition of the 67 US FB-111 bombers which, like SNA bombers, are currently committed to other missions.

In the Far Eastern area, where in-theater forces are much smaller than in the West, the Soviet and non-Soviet forces in the Basic Set are roughly equal in numbers of delivery vehicles, weapons, and equivalent megatons. The addition of Expanded Set 1 is generally more favorable to the Soviet forces and gives them an advantage of about 1.4 to 1 in delivery vehicles[ ]Expanded Set 2 would add still further to their advantages in terms of the measures used.

We cannot confidently judge how the Soviets would approach comparisons of forces for strategic peripheral attack and theater nuclear

[8] We have not included the tactical weapons with ranges in this category that would, according to the reinforcement plans of both sides, be moved into the Western or Far Eastern Theaters on fairly short order if hostilities were anticipated or under way.

warfare. The Soviet General Staff might look at the forces differently, for example, if it were planning military operations as opposed to arguing for a force structure before budgetary councils. The Soviets might take yet another position—perhaps deliberately exaggerating the Western threat—in a negotiating atmosphere.

As already noted, any comparisons of this sort involve somewhat arbitrary choices and incomplete data. In any case, the measures used do not fully reflect military effectiveness, which is heavily influenced by qualitative factors and operational considerations. A critical factor affecting the future relationship between Soviet and non-Soviet forces for peripheral strategic attack is the major improvement in the quality of the Soviet systems now being deployed.