



Director of
**Central
Intelligence**

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Soviet Civil Defense: Objectives, Pace, and Effectiveness

**Interagency Intelligence Memorandum
Memorandum to Holders**

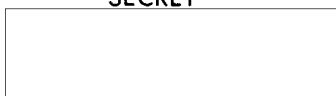
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**SOVIET CIVIL DEFENSE: OBJECTIVES,
PACE, AND EFFECTIVENESS**



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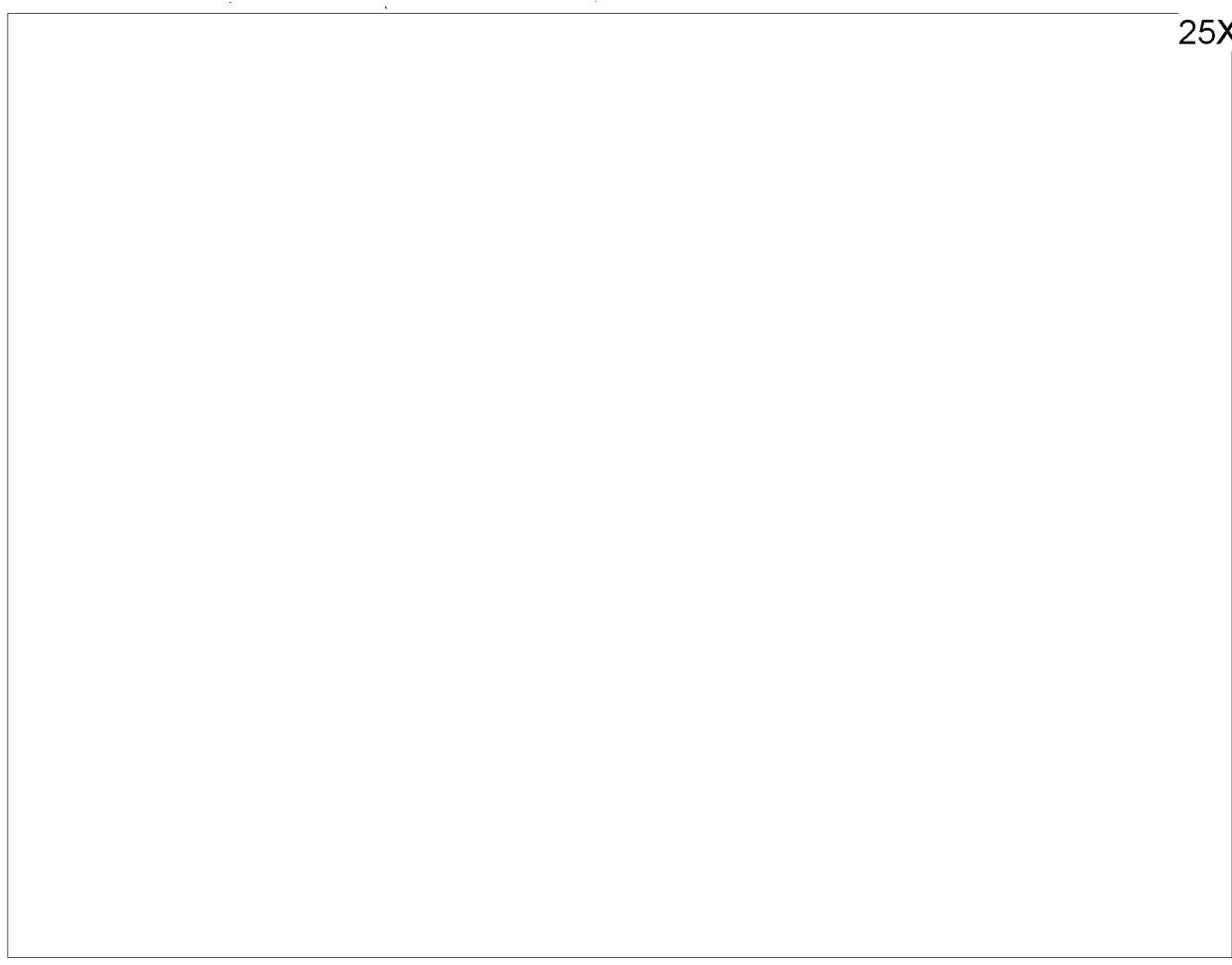


CONTENTS



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KEY FINDINGS 1



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KEY FINDINGS

1. *Scope.* Soviet civil defense is a nationwide program under military control. It is viewed by the Soviet leadership as part of the USSR's military strategy and strategic posture. Its objectives are to protect people—the leadership, the work force of key economic facilities,¹ and the general population, in that order; facilitate the continuity of economic activity in wartime; and enhance the capability for recovery from the effects of war.

2. *Pace.* It is difficult to measure the pace of the many preparations called for under the Soviet civil defense program.



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The creation of military civil defense units, begun in 1966, reached a peak in the late 1960s and early 1970s. We have not identified any units established after 1976. Some aspects of civil defense activity have been marked by bureaucratic difficulties and public apathy, which appear to have resulted in uneven implementation of stated goals. On the whole, however, there has been a general trend of improvement in almost all facets of the civil defense program over the past decade.

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3. *Cost.* Total civil defense costs are unknown, but cost estimates have been made of four major elements of the Soviet program—pay and allowances of about 115,000 full-time civil defense personnel, operation of specialized military civil defense units, construction and maintenance of facilities at these units, and blast shelter construction. We estimate that in 1979 the ruble cost of these elements was about 9 percent of the cost for Soviet strategic defense forces, or less than 1 percent of the total Soviet defense expenditures. If these elements were to have been duplicated in the United States, they would have cost about \$2.3 billion with about three-fourths representing manpower costs. (These estimates should be considered rough approximations because they are affected by uncertainties both in the quantitative data on civil defense programs and in estimates of prices.)

¹ Economic facilities include industrial installations and military production plants.


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4. *Protection of the Economy.* Plans for protecting the Soviet economy include wartime sheltering, evacuation and dispersal of the work force, emergency relocation of the essential equipment of certain installations, geographic dispersal of new installations, hardening, and rapid shutdown of equipment. We have evidence that a small number of high-priority installations plan to relocate equipment to low-risk areas, where production will resume. However, among the various measures to protect the economy, the Soviets have focused primarily on sheltering, evacuation, and dispersal of the work force. Those installations located in what the Soviets consider probable risk areas and considered by them to be of low priority to wartime production will cease operations and the work force will be evacuated to low-risk areas during the crisis. Installations whose continued operation is essential to support the war effort and to enhance the Soviet capability for postattack recovery will disperse their off-duty work force to close-in exurban areas. From there these workers will commute to their urban installations to continue work around the clock.

5. *Protection of the Leadership.* We assess the leadership in the USSR to include the top national leaders, party and government officials from national and republic levels down to urban rayon levels, managers of key economic installations, and members of civil defense staffs—about 110,000 people in all. There are extensive facilities in the Moscow area for protection of the top national military and civilian leaders in wartime, that are provided independently of the civil defense program. Preparations to protect the remainder of the civilian leadership are the responsibility of Soviet civil defense officials. We estimate that the Soviets have sufficient shelter space for virtually all leadership elements.

6. *Protection of the Population.* On the basis of our new evaluation of occupancy factors and available shelter space, we estimate that about 11 percent of the total population in urban areas could be accommodated in blast shelters. This figure would rise to about 13 percent by 1988, assuming a continuation of the present rate of shelter construction and taking into account expected population growth in urban areas. Thus, large-scale evacuation away from target areas is the key to a marked reduction in the number of casualties from a nuclear attack on the USSR. Our study also shows that, in general, large cities can shelter a higher percentage of their populations than small cities—about 22 percent as compared to 6 percent.

7. The location of civil defense shelters indicates a Soviet emphasis on protection of the industrial work force. 

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8. During the past year we have acquired new information that has given us a better understanding of Soviet planning for evacuation of urban areas. Formerly we had postulated on the basis of limited information that 75 percent of the population of all cities with more than 25,000 people would evacuate—a total of about 100 million evacuees from some 900 cities. On the basis of a recently completed analysis of data on Soviet evacuation planning, we currently estimate that about 90 percent of the population in some 300 cities would evacuate—a total of about 85 million evacuees. There is an alternative view—that the evidence available is too tenuous to allow a confident assessment of the number of cities the Soviets plan to evacuate. ²

9. We estimate that the evacuation and sheltering of the bulk of the population from urban areas could be accomplished in two to three days, with as much as a week required for full evacuation of the largest cities. These times could be extended and the evacuation process complicated by shortages in transportation, adverse weather conditions, or other problems.

10. *Effects of Civil Defense.* During the past year we reassessed the effects of Soviet civil defense



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The reassessment was based on updated findings on the availability of civil defense shelters in urban areas and more detailed simulations of Soviet evacuation plans.

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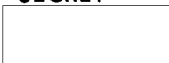


Taking these several differences into account, we conclude that the findings of our current analysis are consistent with our previous assessment: the effectiveness of Soviet civil defense in reducing casualties would depend primarily on the extent to which civil defense measures were implemented; complete implementation of civil defense plans could reduce Soviet casualties by some 80 million to 100 million; and civil defense could not prevent massive damage to the economy. Our current findings show, however, that Soviet casualties and fatalities could be somewhat higher than our previous estimate.

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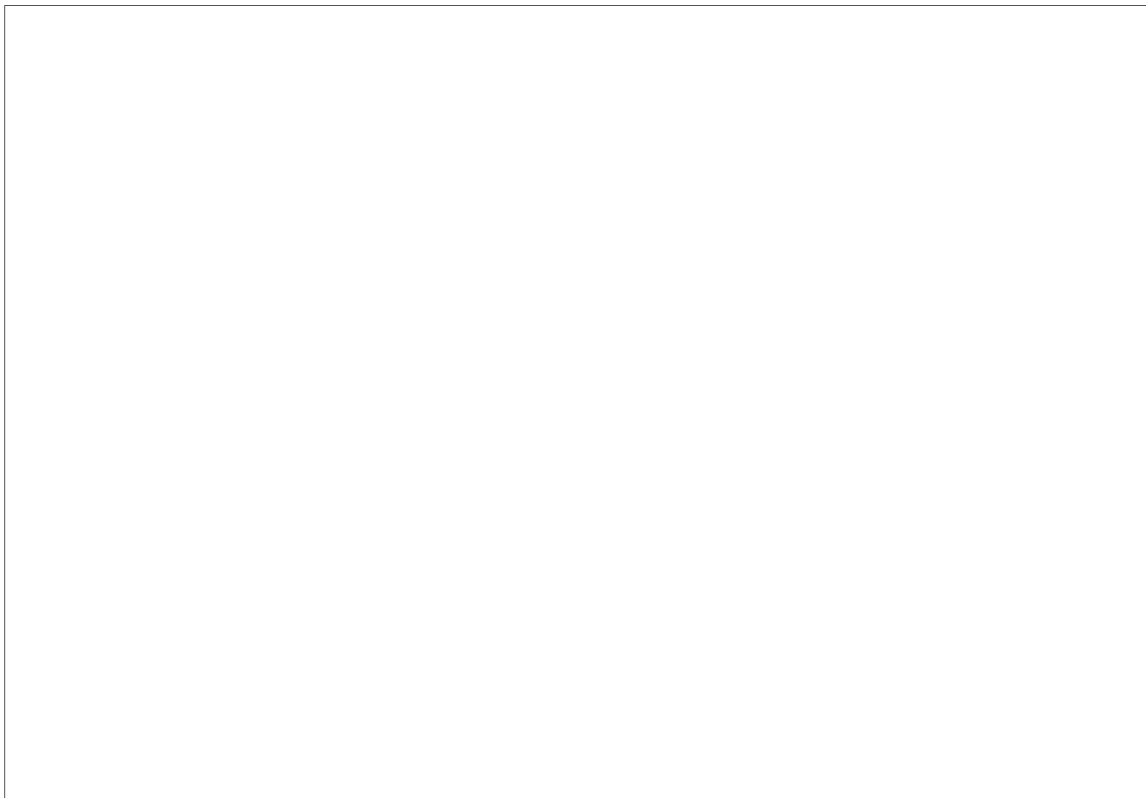
² The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Senior Intelligence Officers of the military services.

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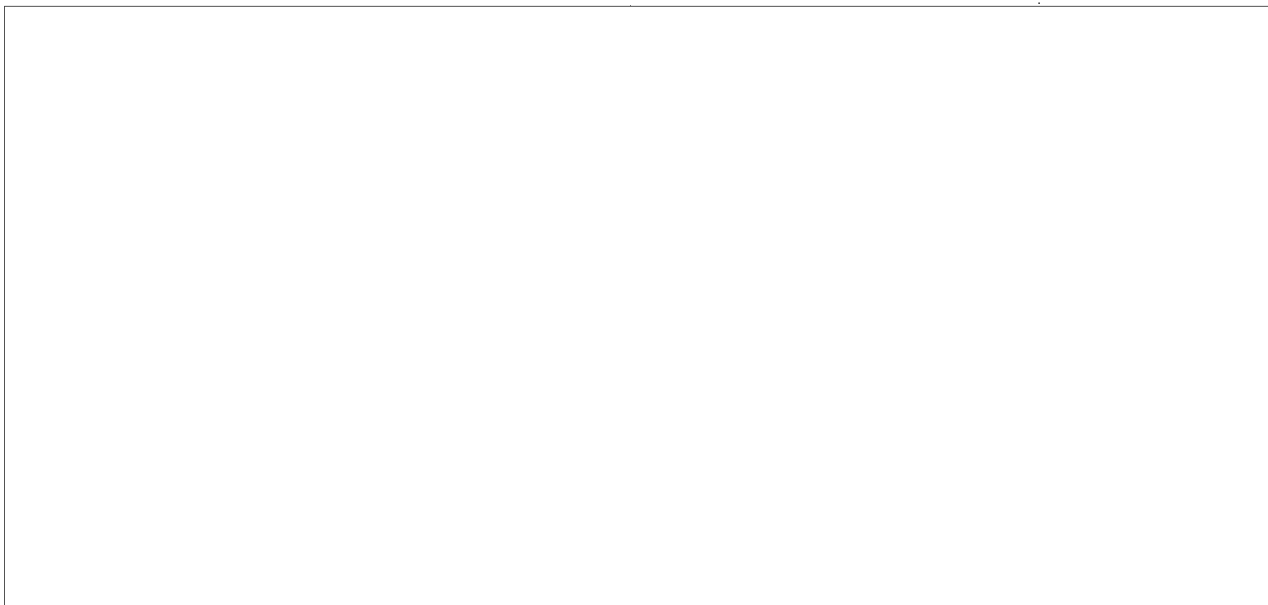
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11. The key features of our reassessment of Soviet civil defense are:



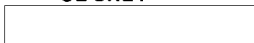
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— Three different levels of Soviet civil defense preparation were assumed—little or no preparation; implementation of the shelter program; and full implementation of civil defense plans for protecting the population, including sheltering and evacuation of urban areas.

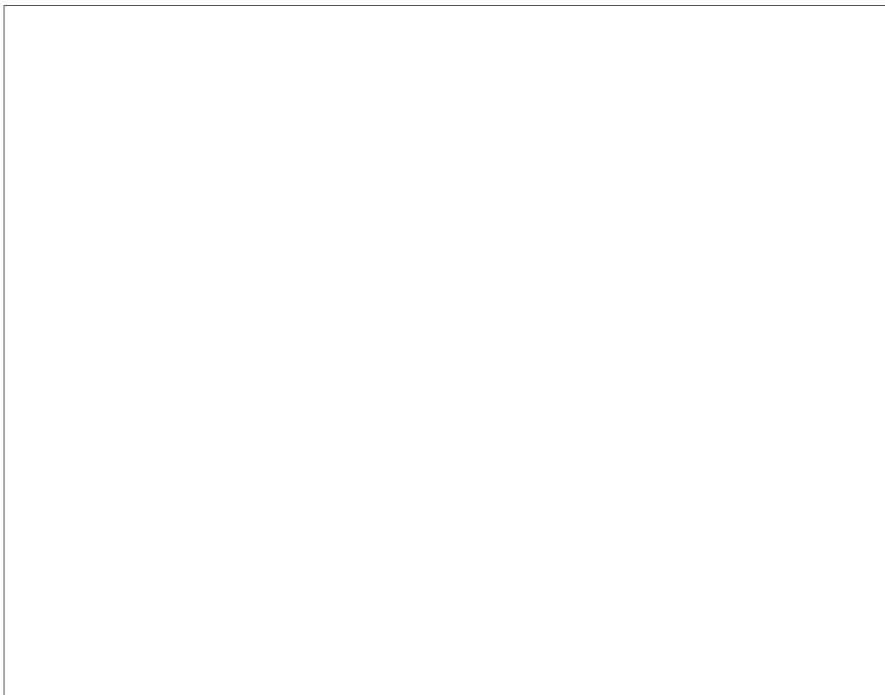


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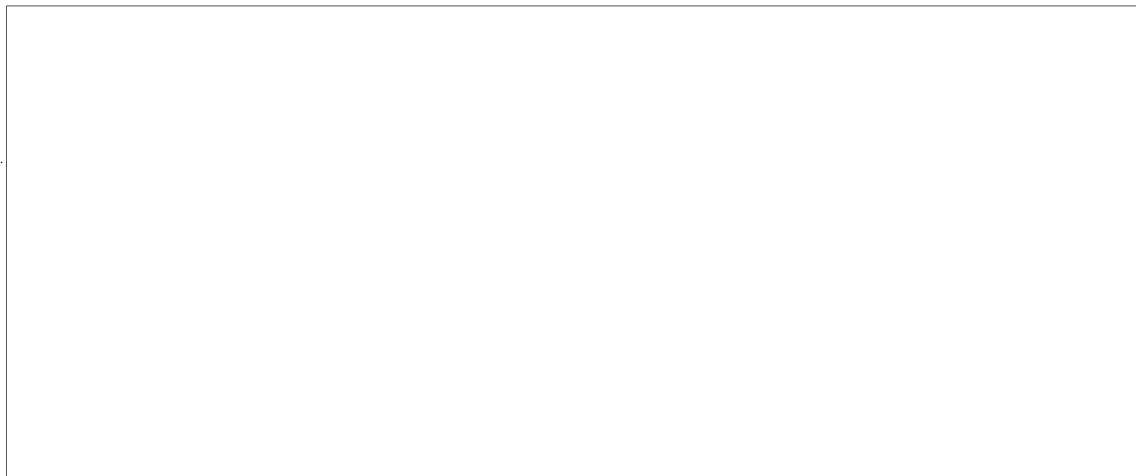
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13. These findings were generally consistent with estimated Soviet casualties and fatalities



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indicated that casualties would be:

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- About 150 million (including 100 million fatalities) in the case of little or no implementation of civil defense plans.
- About 100 million (including 65 million fatalities), if urban blast shelters and the best available protective structures were occupied.
- About 50 million (including 27 million fatalities), if the Soviets implemented both the shelter program and evacuation.

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15. Our assessment indicates that in 1988 a hypothetical retaliatory attack by US forces on generated alert would result in an even larger number of Soviet casualties among the general population than in 1979.

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Expected improvements in Soviet civil defense preparations would, however, increase the likelihood of survival of a large percentage of the leadership and essential personnel.

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16. Full implementation of civil defense preparations would greatly reduce the level of Soviet casualties that would result without such preparations. We do not have high confidence, however, in the absolute values shown by our analysis for the number of Soviet casualties and fatalities resulting from the prompt effects and fallout from a large-scale US nuclear attack on the USSR. We believe that Soviet civil defenses would be most effective in coping with the effects of a limited nuclear attack, such as an attack on Soviet military targets only. But we are unable to assess the longer term effects of an attack involving many thousands of nuclear weapons on the survival of the Soviet population or on the prospects for Soviet economic recovery.

17. In view of 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-USSR strategic balance. They probably expect civil defense to contribute to their ability to conduct military operations and to enhance the ability of the nation to survive and recover from a nuclear exchange. However, in light of the uncertainties they would have about their ability to implement civil defense plans and about the immediate and longer term effects of a massive nuclear exchange, the Soviet leaders cannot have confidence in the degree of protection that their civil defenses would afford at present or in the late 1980s. There are alternative views about the strategic implications of the Soviet civil defense program:


- According to one view, it is doubtful that Soviet leaders would have sufficient confidence in civil defense in a crisis for it to contribute more than marginally to decisionmaking. New analy-

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sis in this Memorandum  on Soviet civil defense shows the program to be less effective today than shown in our estimate of three years ago: there would be fewer people evacuated and greater numbers of casualties. The holder of this view also notes that civil defense projections suggest that current major shortcomings will not be overcome.³

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- There is another view that 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.⁴

Our assessment of the impact of the Soviets' capabilities for strategic nuclear conflict, including civil defenses, on their policies and conduct toward the United States is contained in National Intelligence Estimates.

³ *The holder of this view is the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.*

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

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