



Photo by Tass from Sotafu

The Soviet SS-9 ICBM, shown in the Moscow November parade, is believed to have a 25-megaton warhead.

**Intelligence Estimates**

**U.S.-Soviet Defenses Compared**

Missiles: Unpublished defense intelligence estimates predict that the Soviet Union could have as many as 1100 intercontinental ballistic missiles by 1971. This would give the Russians as many ICBMs as the projected United States arsenal at that time unless the Pentagon changes its plan to limit the Air Force Minuteman arsenal to 1000 missiles. Both the United States and the Soviet Union plan to use multiple warhead missiles, the so-called MIRV (multiple-independently-targetable-re-entry vehicle). The argument over which country will have the biggest ICBM punch, as Defense Department analysts see it, will hinge on which nation builds the greatest accuracy and survivability into its system.

Naval forces: London's Institute for Strategic Studies, which conducts authoritative surveys of international

military developments, estimates that the Soviet nuclear submarine force has grown from 40 to 50 between 1965 and 1967. Pentagon sources estimate the number of surface warships plying the Mediterranean has increased tenfold in the last three years. Amphibious forces also have been strengthened, with emphasis on construction of helicopter-carrying ships and landing craft that could deploy Soviet marines in a hurry for limited warfare.

**Bomber production:** While the U.S. has stopped producing strategic bombers, the Soviet Union still has the Bison and Blinder bombers in production. The Pentagon plans to use the TFX fighter-bomber for the strategic bomber role. The Soviets also have showed off a variety of new fighter prototypes, including ones with variable sweep wings like the TFX.

**Reds Adopt Flexible Response**

By George C. Wilson  
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Soviet Union is engaged in a broad effort to build the capacity for flexible response to military challenges throughout the world.

In doing so, the Soviet Union is following the lead taken by the United States during the early 1960s when the Kennedy Administration built beyond one "massive retaliation" forces of the Eisenhower era.

Military and diplomatic leaders here believe the buildup represents the Soviet Union's determination to be a full equal of the United States—both militarily and diplomatically. They do not think the Soviets are building up for a war.

**Extending Guns' Range**

The Soviet show of force in the Mediterranean these days—some 40 war ships—is part of this general effort to fill in the military gaps, as top military leaders see it. They contend the Soviets will not rest until they achieve their centuries-old ambition for a warm water port.

One general said: "Russia is out to extend the range of her guns. She always has been very tough when she has been under her own guns."

Both military and diplomatic officials look back upon the Cuban missile crisis as the last time the Soviet Union will rely solely on massive retaliation.

One State Department Soviet specialist said Russia, by sneaking missiles into Cuba, had hoped to close her missile gap with the U.S. "on the cheap." But the confrontation denied the Soviet Union parity by that route. Her diplomatic position on Cuba was backed up by too drastic a weapon—nuclear missiles which would bring on World War III if fired.

**Bomb-in-Orbit System**

So now the Soviet Union is taking the longer road to parity with the United States. This means improving ICBMs for nuclear retaliation, building the non-nuclear forces for limited wars like Vietnam and continued prob-

ing for a Sputnik-type breakthrough in weaponry.

One theory in both the Pentagon and State Department is that the planned Soviet bomb-in-orbit system meets the Soviets' cost-effectiveness tests, if not the Pentagon's. In this drive toward parity, the orbiting bomb system is seen as a quick counter to the superior U.S. bomber force. The space weapon also forces the Pentagon to divert resources for satellite detection, inspection and destruction.

Behind this front line of a wide-ranging Navy, improved missile arsenal and flexible conventional forces, the Soviets have built a solid industrial and scientific base. Richard Helms, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has been emphasizing the importance of this base during recent Congressional briefings on growing Soviet power.

Last month Soviet Marshal Sokolovskiy said:

"Today the defense of socialism includes insuring the security of the whole socialist community. The armed forces of the U.S.S.R., in militant unity with the armies of the countries of the new world, are called upon to guard the victories of the people who are constructing socialism and communism."

In the same vein, Soviet Party Chief Brezhnev demanded last April that the U.S. remove its Sixth Fleet from the Mediterranean.

**Peace Through Balance?**

Privately, Communist diplomats here state that since the United States will not withdraw its fleet from the Mediterranean, the Soviet Union will have to keep one there, too. "We can't preserve the peace in the Middle East if only one of us has a fleet there," said one Soviet diplomat. "Put both fleets there, and we'll sink or swim together."

Military leaders oppose U.S.-Soviet equality. They argue that the United States must maintain the "Cuban environment." This is the term Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, uses to connote the

military superiority the United States had during the Cuban missile crisis.

The stress the Soviets are placing on amphibious forces eventually will give them the capability to intrude in distant conflicts—as the United States did in Lebanon and Vietnam.

A State Department Soviet specialist said there is no sign the Soviets have a Vietnam war type of engagement. "But Nations tend to do what they can do," he said. This is why the Soviet "flexible response" strategy is surprising to the diplomats.

The military answer to the growing strength of the Soviets is to go them one better. Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara—now on his way out of office—has frustrated these ambitions to the point that the Joint Chiefs have given up on getting money for another generation of ICBMs, for example, for two years.

McNamara has argued that nuclear missiles and military strength are not interrelated in this day of the H bomb. Why have enough bombs to kill everybody in the world 10 times over, he argues.

But the Chiefs use the seesaw analogy in giving their side of the nuclear parity argument. A seesaw is most stable when it has a heavy weight at one end; least stable when it is perfectly balanced. They want the United States to be the heavy end, arguing that the Communists have never abandoned their goal of world conquest.

Presidents Kennedy and Johnson since 1961 have tried to slow the arms race. There is widespread belief among military leaders in the Pentagon that both Administrations favor a strategy of nuclear parity, of letting the Russians catch up.

The present visibility of Soviet strength is bringing the nuclear parity issue to the fore. The question will be argued in Congress and in the presidential campaign of 1968. The Senate Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee—focal point of the bombing issue this year—is expected to be the focus next year of the parity issue as it examines the relative strengths of the United States and U.S.S.R.