

ORGI SALT
CIA INTERNAL USE

U.S. Aides Say Loss of Iran Sites Cuts Test Data on Soviet Missiles

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WASHINGTON, April 24 — The loss of two electronic listening posts in Iran, has resulted in a setback to American efforts to monitor the earliest stages of Soviet missile development not directly related to the strategic arms limitation treaty, Defense Department officials said today.

Although the loss of the listening posts has focused attention on the verification question, whether the United States has the ability to adequately verify Soviet compliance with the new treaty, defense officials said that the issue was a "relatively small" part of a major problem. That problem is the loss of key monitoring facilities near the Soviet Union that detected early testing and research and development of Soviet missiles.

"These sites had certain advantages over other means of collection, and the loss certainly sets back our ability to monitor Soviet missile developments," said a defense official. "SALT is only one part of a much bigger problem."

The posts gave "a distinct early fix" on strategic research and development, another official said. "We have other collection means but the data, so far, is not as good."

U.S. Seeking Other Ways

To compensate for the loss of the Iran monitoring stations, which were only 700 miles from the Tyuratam missile test range, the United States has been exploring ways to use other radar listening posts in Turkey, as well as surveillance satellites in an orbital pattern keeping them stationary over the Black Sea.

But the Turkish sites are farther from the Soviet missile test areas and Soviet electronic transmissions are partly blocked by trees and mountains.

At the same time, stationary electronic orbits, or spy satellites, to photograph

and monitor Soviet missile sites and record electronic data transmitted from missiles to tracking stations during tests, are less powerful than ground listening posts.

According to defense officials, the Iran sites, called Takman I and Takman II had the capability of "collecting the early stuff" of a missile's launching — data relating to its size, thrust and boost.

Defense officials said that the Administration was exploring ways to "improve existing collection capability," such as spy satellites, and to intensify efforts to develop as much information as possible from current intelligence data.

"The point is to exploit these capabilities, look harder at the data," one official said.

'Political Considerations'

Defense officials said that "political considerations" had largely thwarted the Administration from using countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan to collect significant data about Soviet missile tests.

Several members of Congress have suggested that the United States place ground stations in China to monitor the Soviet missile tests, but the Administration is reluctant to do so. One reason is that China insists that the United States share information that may be collected. Another is that State Department officials believe the use of China to collect such data would be politically unwise because it would antagonize the Soviet Union.

The Iran stations, equipped with huge antennas, intercepted radio signals emitted by Soviet missiles during test firings, and gained information about the size and accuracy of Moscow's growing strategic arsenal.