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Euromissiles May Get Soviets To Talk Turkey

The Kremlin has spent millions of rubles trying to stop deployment of the 572 U.S. missiles that are going to western Europe. In what a Democratic arms analyst called a "hysterical" reaction, the Soviet Union has threatened everything from a walkout at the Geneva disarmament talks to a nuclear confrontation like the Cuban missile crisis 21 years ago.

The reason is clear: The Pershing II missiles in West Germany and the ground-launched cruise missiles in Britain will give the United States and its NATO allies a more effective deterrent. If the Soviets were to start a European war, most of the important targets in the Soviet Union—including Moscow—would be within range for retaliatory salvos.

A top-secret NATO document obtained by my associate Dale Van Atta spells out the situation in stark percentages: "A 1,500-kilometer [missile] system would place at risk from [West Germany] 65 percent of the high-priority targets" identified by NATO leaders in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The Pershing IIs have a range of 1,500 kilometers [930 miles].

"A 2,500-kilometer system based in the United Kingdom could potentially place at risk approximately 87 percent of the high-priority targets, including Moscow itself." The cruise missiles now being deployed in Britain have a range of 2,500 kilometers [1,550 miles].

The top-secret document notes that NATO has compiled a list of "more than 2,500 high-priority military targets" that would be reachable by the intermediate-range nuclear missiles now being placed in western Europe. "Of these, about two-thirds are located in the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact [nations] and the remaining one-third in the Soviet Union."

The document says "there are many additional military targets in the western Soviet Union which are not included in the European high-priority target list; for instance, ICBMs [intercontinental ballistic missiles] and heavy bomber bases."

These are on the target list for U.S. strategic nuclear forces.

"There are a large number—in excess of 25,000—of economic infrastructure targets which are included in the European Target Data Inventory," the report adds. "Such installations historically have not been targeted by [NATO] forces, although they are not excluded Similar targets would today be struck by (U.S.-based) forces during a general nuclear response."

An arms analyst explained why the Soviets' shrill response to deployment of so-called "theater" missiles in western Europe is considered an overreaction: The number of nuclear warheads that NATO is deploying is small compared to the number of priority targets in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

The analyst and high Pentagon sources are betting that the Soviets will be quite willing to resume arms negotiations after the Pershing II and cruise missiles are in place. They point out that the Kremlin cannot have forgotten that the most important arms-limitation treaties—the 1972 SALT I and associated anti-ballistic missile agreements—were negotiated and ratified by a Republican administration in an election year.