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BALTIMORE SUN

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# How much has Soviet spent on arms? U.S. agencies split

New York Times News Service

Washington — A dispute over Soviet military spending has erupted among U.S. intelligence analysts, according to government officials, with specialists in the CIA saying the growth rate has been overstated for the last six years.

The CIA specialists responsible for annual reviews of Soviet military spending now say their previous estimates of increases of 3 percent to 4 percent each year, after inflation, may be wrong, and that the rate of growth may have been no more than 2 percent. Their judgment is based on evidence that the Soviet Union has been producing less military materiel than expected.

The difference in growth rates of Soviet military outlays would mean the Russians are spending the equivalent of several billions of dollars less each year than had been surmised.

While the new evidence is generally accepted within the CIA and the State Department and among some military analysts, it is disputed by the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). Senior officials of the CIA and DIA are also said to give the evidence a different interpretation. To them, Moscow has been spending as much as predicted but has been getting less for it, in part because of the higher price of more advanced arms, in part because of Soviet industrial inefficiency.

Government officials said the debate could be politically explosive since the Reagan administration has been talking about growing Soviet expenditures to help justify increases in U.S. arms outlays. The military budget is already under criticism from both parties in Congress, business

groups and prominent former officials.

Government officials acknowledged that estimating Soviet military spending is an inexact art, based on sketchy information, assumptions and difficulties in translating Soviet ruble costs into dollar values.

Total Soviet military spending must be estimated because the single published Soviet budget figure labeled "defense" is believed to cover only some kinds of outlays. This figure has been holding fairly steady at about 17 billion rubles in recent years, or \$24 billion at the current exchange rate.

The DIA has reported to Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger that the Soviet Union spent the equivalent of \$222 billion, 44 percent more than the United States, in 1981, the most recent year reviewed.

No CIA estimate for 1981 has been published, but officials said it was much lower and thus closer to the United States' \$154 billion.

Whatever the outcome of the debate, any gap in spending is being closed by President Reagan's large military outlays. While the Soviet Union has been increasing its spending, according to U.S. estimates, at a rate of 3 percent to 4 percent, the United States is scheduled to spend 9.5 percent more this year than last.

To estimate Soviet spending, U.S. analysts try to obtain information about weapons, equipment, construction, testing, training and operations, largely from satellite photographs. Then they undertake a laborious count and allow for other costs such as storage space for things unseen.

The specialists assign a dollar value to what it would cost to produce a similar tank, ship or plane in the United States, bring to bear judg-

ments from Soviet statements and other intelligence, and run the information through computers to arrive at a spending estimate.

Some U.S. specialists on the Soviet economy have questioned the validity of this approach. In view of higher American labor costs, they say, weapons may be more expensive in the United States than in the Soviet Union, and attaching the U.S. dollar cost to Soviet-made weapons may exaggerate their cost to the Soviet economy.

Government officials now say CIA analysts were surprised late last year when their count of Soviet arms turned out to be less than might have been expected with a growth rate of 3 percent or 4 percent. They looked back over the last six years and found that arms-production rates had been more consistent with a growth rate of 2 percent.

The analysts offered two explanations: The Soviets either were spending less than estimated or were less efficient than presumed. Opinion was said to be leaning toward the lower-expenditure theory.

The analysts speculated that the slowdown in Soviet economic growth that has been observed since 1977 might have affected the military sector: When economic growth slowed from about 4 percent a year to 2 percent, military spending also slowed.

This reasoning brought protests from the senior officials at the CIA and the DIA, who placed greater weight on industrial inefficiency. They also said modern weapons were costlier, so that a given amount of money would buy fewer but more capable weapons.

Also, according to Pentagon officials, the DIA questioned the CIA analysts' count of Soviet weapons. A new count is said to be under way.

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National Volunteer Week. At least during that week, America's heroic private-sector initiative efforts should be given the attention they deserve. Then if the ratings go down, they can go back to bad news."

The text that was distributed before Reagan's speech contained a gibe at some television anchormen that the president did not deliver. The text said "... I only wish Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw, Ted Koppel and others in the media would focus

a bit more on some of the truly admirable things being done by the American people." Assistant press secretary Anson Franklin said that these words were written by speechwriter Dana Rohrabacher and deleted by Reagan when he returned the speech draft with his revision Wednesday afternoon.

Broadcasters responded critically, nevertheless.

"Politicians are always trying to sell the idea that the only coverage

that is fair is coverage that is favorable," Rather said. And Paul Greenberg, executive vice president of NBC Nightly News, said: "We get this from every administration. We led last night with Barney Clark. That's bad news? We had a story about the upturn in the economy. That's bad news? The pope was bad news? What is he talking about?"

Franklin said that Reagan deleted the reference because he considered it inappropriate.

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# White House Rules Out Use of U.S. Combat Troops in El Salvador

By Lou Cannon  
Washington Post Staff Writer

LOS ANGELES, March 3—The White House today ruled out the use of U.S. combat troops in El Salvador, but confirmed that a proposal that would permit U.S. military advisers to accompany Salvadoran troops into war zones is under review. "There is no plan whatsoever to use U.S. troops in a combat role," said White House spokesman Larry Speakes.

As to plans to increase the number of U.S. advisers in El Salvador, Speakes said there were 45 there as of Tuesday. "Our initial plan is to make it to 55 and then see how that works," he said. Speakes also described as "unfortunate" a remark attributed to an unidentified administration official in Wednesday's Washington Post, to the effect that President Reagan had received a negative assessment of the developing Salvadoran situation and would take "all necessary measures" to prevent the country from falling to leftist rebels.

Speakes said that instead the administration would do "whatever it can" to help the Salvadoran government.

The White House is trying to steer a fine line between arousing Congress about what the president considers a critical situation in El Salvador and avoiding any suggestion that the United States is becoming involved in a Vietnam-type situation.

Earlier this week the administration asked Congress to approve a request for \$60 million in additional military aid for the Salvadoran regime.

Yesterday two Republicans, Sen. Mark O. Hatfield (Ore.) and Rep. Jim Leach (Iowa), introduced legislation that would require a cutoff of all military aid to El Salvador and the withdrawal of U.S. military advisers unless the Salvadoran government actively participates "in good faith" in negotiations to achieve a political solution to the civil war.

Their bill would make further security assistance dependent on whether the Salvadoran authorities are willing to open talks "with all major parties to the conflict which are willing to participate unconditionally... for the purpose of

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## U.S. Official Clarifies Status Of Salvadoran Ammunition

Associated Press

The Reagan administration's prediction that the Salvadoran army could run out of ammunition in 30 days is based on the assumption of far heavier combat than is now occurring, an undersecretary of state said yesterday.

"For example, if Nicaragua decided to invade with a 40,000-man army that's at their disposal," said William Schneider Jr., undersecretary for security assistance, at a hearing of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on international security.

He was interrupted by Rep. Gerry E. Studds (D-Mass.):

"Is that the assumption on which you're telling us they're going to run out in 30 days?"

"No, I'm giving you a hypothetical characterization," Schneider began to reply.

Studds interrupted again:

"I'm not asking you for an hypothesis. I want to know why we say they're in a critical situation and they say they are not."

Schneider replied that it was because the way the administration calculates Salvadoran stocks is based not on intentions, but on the potential threat that could use up the ammunition fast.

"I'm sure we could run out ourselves if we made certain assumptions," Studds remarked at one point.

Administration officials have said they do not think Nicaragua will invade El Salvador.

Thomas O. Enders, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, told another subcommittee Tuesday that Salvadoran soldiers would run out of ammunition in 30 days without \$60 million in additional military aid.

Schneider is Enders' boss.

achieving a cease-fire and an equitable political solution . . . ."

And a third Republican, Sen. David F. Durenberger (Minn.), sent a letter to Reagan saying he will not support additional military aid either unless there is progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Salvadoran conflict.

Durenberger, who said he had been "a consistent and faithful supporter" of Reagan's Central America policy, also strongly criticized recent statements by Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Vice President Bush about the role of the Roman Catholic clergy in El Salvador as "astounding" and betraying "little understanding" of the church's role in the region.

Both have complained and voiced puzzlement about the fact that Catholic priests are supporting Marxist rebels.

At the Pentagon, meanwhile, an official who briefed reporters on the condition that he not be identified said that under the policy under

study U.S. trainers would go only to "safe areas," and he stressed that there would be no change in their role and that they would not go into combat.

He also said it might be necessary to exceed the present self-imposed limit of 55 advisers if the Pentagon is required to train more troops inside El Salvador.

The official, under questioning, said he wasn't sure why the 55-man limit was imposed. "I suppose it was just to pacify those critics who say we're getting involved in another Vietnam."

On another subject, Reagan in a speech here today urged television to cover "good stories" rather than bad news, giving as an example an account of how a barber in Monroe, Ohio, raised \$50,000 to build an athletic training center that the local school board couldn't afford.

"I offer this challenge," Reagan said. "April 17 through April 23 is

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