

Why U.S. forces are open to a Soviet first strike

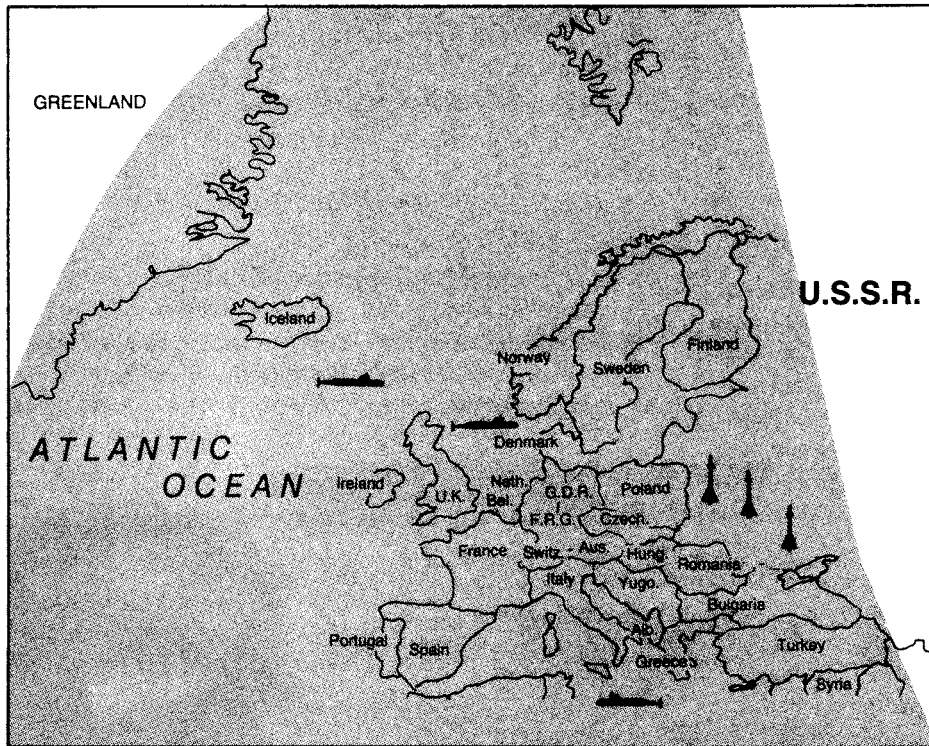
by Criton Zoakos

During 1980, the U.S. government, in a statement contained in then-Defense Secretary Harold Brown's Defense Guidance report, publicly admitted that this nation is no longer in possession of a land-based ICBM deterrent force. This conclusion was reached as a result of the fact that the Soviet Union by that time was in possession of a sufficient number of highly powerful and accurate land-based nuclear warheads (over 5,000), a mere fraction of which could destroy either all or 90 percent or more of America's 1,052 ICBMs in a first strike attack. After such a successfully executed Soviet first-strike, the Soviets would still be in possession of a strategic reserve of over 3,000 land-based nuclear warheads.

This is an officially acknowledged fact of life. We are not in possession of a land-based strategic deterrent. Under the direction of McGeorge Bundy and W. Averell Harriman, the entire crew of socially upwardly mobile arms control bureaucrats both inside and outside the government, from Henry A. Kissinger on down, counseled: "Not to worry. We still have our marvelous nuclear submarine-based deterrent, our fabulous SLBMs, which could destroy the Soviet Union many times over."

This is a stupid, fatuous, and self-serving argument of the arms-control crowd. It is more likely than not that as of now, the United States either no longer has an SLBM deterrent force or is about to lose it in the same way it lost its land-based ICBM deterrent. The characteristics of our meager nuclear submarine force are such that they can fire at Soviet targets only from certain very specific locations, all of which are covered by the effective range of the SS-20 missiles as they are currently deployed (see article, page 24, for the possible relationship between the American Submersible Ballistic Nuclear (SSBN) submarines and Russian SS-20s).

American military and intelligence specialists had in the past discussed the question of what the assigned combat mission of the Russian SS-20s might be. The hypothesis had been raised that the SS-20 might be given an anti-submarine warfare (ASW) mission against American SSBN submarines operating in those areas of the North Atlantic, North Sea, Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea,



Range of Soviet SS-20s

 U.S. submarine deployments
 Soviet SS-20s

shaded area shows range of the SS-20s

and Persian Gulf, the only locations from which American submarine-launched ballistic missiles can possibly strike at Soviet targets. The hypothesis was later dropped for no good reason. Meanwhile, the number of deployed SS-20s has kept piling up, and Soviet propaganda has been grinding out stories to convince Western European housewives that the SS-20s are aimed at them. In truth, there are no more than 30 military targets in Western Europe which would merit an attack by SS-20 warheads. And there exist no military commanders who would waste their cherished nuclear warheads against housewives. And there exist now at least 2,100 SS-20 nuclear warheads. The obvious assumption to make is that those warheads are aimed at the only remaining strategic headache of the Soviet military command: the nuclear submarine deterrent of the United States, the only deterrent this country has.

What is the Soviet order of battle?

Our intelligence and national security community is too scared to look into this matter because if they look into it, they must revise, in a fundamental way, their entire estimate of what the Soviet order of battle looks like. If our intelligence community, the office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), the Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, the State Department's Intelligence and Research Section, and so forth, reopened the file on the subject of the possible ASW combat mission of the Soviet SS-20s, then automatically, the entire matter of reviewing the status of the Soviet order of battle will come up for discussion. If this latter subject comes up

for discussion, then the currently ongoing clamor over Soviet violations of the SALT I and SALT II treaties is placed in an entirely different context. Then Congress will not have to deal with the mere legalistic problem of Soviet treaty violations but rather with the substantive problem of what all these scores of massive violations have produced by way of total Soviet strategic capabilities. What is the true nature of the military beast?

EIR and in particular its founder, Democratic presidential contender Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., have raised with great persistence the subject of the Soviet armed forces' strategic doctrine which determines Soviet deployments, research and development programs, and order of battle. For this, we have been hounded and reviled. The principal objection to the issue we have been raising boils down to: "Look, you are wrong; what is known to be the Soviet order of battle does not bear out what you say about the subject of Soviet strategic doctrine"—not in so many words, but essentially in this spirit.

But, fellow, you've got the Soviet order of battle wrong.

We have substantiated reasons to believe that the final product which the intelligence community has placed before the desks of policymakers under the heading "Soviet order of battle" is a bunch of self-deluded baloney. Here are our reasons:

First, if you count the total number of facts known (or treated by our intelligence services as known) about the deployment of Soviet strategic forces and compare this with the total number of factually proven Soviet violations of the SALT I and SALT II agreements, you will conclude that the number of proven Soviet deceptions in this area is greater

than the number of "proven facts" cited by our critics.

Second, the Soviet military official who negotiated the SALT I agreement with Kissinger was Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, who, at the time of those negotiations from 1969 to 1972, was also the chief of the Soviet General Staff's Chief Directorate of Strategic Deception, an institution founded by Ogarkov himself, who is now, of course, the chief of staff of his country's armed forces.

Third, on the basis of the above arrangement, the American intelligence community normally would have been obliged to regard any item of information pertaining to any Soviet deployment, both of the kind verified as deception and of the kind authentically verified as truth, as part of the pattern of Soviet strategic concealment policy. In other words, even those true facts about Soviet strategic deployments, known to the Soviets to be known to us, must be assumed by us to belong to that category of true facts which the Soviets wish us to possess, or do not object to us possessing, as an included necessary part of their Strategic Deception policy. As is known, the best form of deception is founded not merely on lies, nor on evasions, but on partial truths. We must therefore ask, concerning the partial truth of Soviet deployments we have been allowed to obtain, what is it designed to conceal?

Fourth, the nature of those items which have been jealously concealed by the Soviets: These primarily include telemetric data on certain Soviet weapons, data of utmost analytical value for the United States which the Soviets have encrypted in violation of standing agreements. What are the flight and combat characteristics of the SS-20, of the SS-16? What are the flight and combat characteristics of the SS-X-24 (PL-4) and the SS-X-25 (PL-5)? What is going on in those portions of the 80 percent of the Soviet Union's territory off limits to travelers which are not under our satellite scrutiny?

Fifth, and most important, the nature of known Soviet violations of SALT I and SALT II. The most important known such violations are: the development and deployment of the SS-19 MIRVed ICBM—prohibited by the SALT I treaty; the development and deployment of the SS-16, a mobile, MIRVed ICBM—prohibited by the SALT II treaty; the testing and development of the PL-5—prohibited by SALT II; the encryption of telemetry data of the test flights of the SS-20, the PL-4 and the PL-5—all prohibited generally; the emplacement of an EBM radar system in Kamchatka in 1974—in violation of SALT I; the emplacement of the Ablakovo ABM radar system which protects three Soviet SS-18 missile sites housing 50 percent of their SS-18 missiles—in violation of the 1972 ABM treaty; the combination of at least another five ABM-range radar systems with anti-aircraft missile installations which have the range characteristics to function as ABM units—in violation of the ABM treaty. And so forth.

Sixth, the issue has been raised that the targets assigned to America's strategic nuclear forces by the nation's Strategic Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP), may be worthless, and that the work of America's targeters may have already fallen

victim to Soviet Strategic Deception operations. This point was made in the September 1983 issue of the *Armed Forces Journal*, in an article titled "Selective Targeting and Soviet Deception," written by Samuel T. Cohen and Joseph D. Douglass, Jr.

The article was placed in the *Congressional Record* of Oct. 8, 1983 by Sen. Jesse Helms.

The apparent Soviet order of battle

From the verified data, not contested by any source or agency, the Soviet Union's arrangement of its strategic weapons into an order of battle is based on the following weapons systems/force comparisons:

Soviet Union:

Nuclear submarines: 83 (as opposed to 62 allowed by SALT).
SLBMs: 989 with a range capable of reaching the United States from home ports.

Nuclear warheads on SLBMs: over 2,300.

ICBMs: 1,398.

Nuclear warheads on ICBMs: nearly 6,300.

Bombers: 150.

Total throw-weight of ballistic missiles: 12.0 million pounds.

United States:

Nuclear submarines: 32.

SLBMs: 520.

Nuclear warheads on SLBMs: nearly 5,000.

ICBMs: 1,042.

Nuclear warheads on ICBMs: 2,142.

Bombers: 297.

Total throw-weight of ballistic missiles: 3.3 million pounds.

On the basis of these numerical assumptions—and for the case of the Soviet numbers, they are pure assumptions since the Soviets have never admitted, at the SALT negotiations or anywhere else, what the true numbers of their weapons are—everyone agrees that these assumed deployments have the following effect:

If the Soviet Union executed a first strike against the United States, it would wipe out almost all our land-based force, assuming that the U.S. land-based force was used as a deterrent and not launched. If then the United States wished to retaliate, it could only do so with its nuclear submarines. Those submarines, because of the range of their missiles, must get close to the U.S.S.R. before they fire. If the Soviets wish to eliminate this retaliatory ability of the United States, they must focus on locating and destroying a total of 15 American submarines near their homeland in the first 60 minutes after launch, and 17 other subs later. Nobody is assuming the bomber force of either side to be anything more than flying junk.

If the United States executed a first strike, it would spend its entire land-based ICBM force to destroy only a portion of the Soviet land force. The Soviet Union would be able to retaliate with its deployed surviving land missiles, with its

submarines firing from home waters and bring forward its strategic reserves.

Conclusion: As of today, the U.S.S.R. is capable, and the U.S.A. is not capable, of executing a successful first strike. An investigation of the possible anti-submarine warfare role of the SS-20 will tell us if the Soviet Union can execute not merely a successful first strike, but a first strike with total impunity. This may already be the case.

Beyond this, no more can be said on the subject of Soviet order of battle based on the assumptions of official force data.

Now assume that the official force data are also a bunch of baloney. The thought which follows is: If the fake order of battle has been able to emasculate the United States' land deterrent and is about to do the same to the sea-based deterrent, what must be the main feature of the real order of battle, based on real data available to the Soviet General Staff? Your answer of course is: *We don't know*. "We don't know" is the best possible starting point for successful intelligence work. Therefore you then ask yourself: Based on what I do know, how do I put myself in the shoes of the Soviet General Staff?

In the following way:

Having accomplished the task of creating the option of a successful first strike against the adversary, does not mean that you will exercise this option. Instead you shall focus on accomplishing the following tasks: 1) Perfect your advantage by emasculating the remnant of American sea-based retaliation. 2) Now that you can merely survive a hypothetical American first strike, create a situation in which you will be able to totally neutralize the potential of such a first strike by means of anti-ballistic missile defenses of all types. 3) Having accomplished these superior capabilities with respect to the existing generation of American weapons, start working to accomplish the same with respect to the future generation of American weapons, the MX missile and the Trident II D-5 SLBM in particular.

These tasks will determine what the Soviet order of battle will look like. To reiterate: If, by the year 1986, in which the SALT II treaty expires, the Soviets have succeeded in surpassing their present ability to launch a first strike against us, through a combination of ABM systems (anti-missile missiles, EMP, and crude point-defense lasers for now), then their further current task is to preserve both of these advantages (first strike for them and denial of first strike for us), when the next generation of American strategic weapons comes along.

With these tasks in mind, the Soviet command has probably already evolved an order of battle whose current deployment is already beginning to meet the needs of the 1990s. We don't know for sure.

The intelligence community's laundry

During September, the U.S. Senate voted 93-0 for a resolution demanding that President Reagan make public all Soviet SALT violations. In the five weeks from early Sep-

tember to the second week of October, an intelligence community report has been sitting on the President's desk listing all of those Soviet violations which are known. Sen. Helms and others have requested that "President Reagan report to the Congress openly, in unclassified form, absolutely before and no later than Oct. 31, 1983." The President, instead, remained silent on the violations so far and has proposed to the Soviets a set of suicidal measures under the Kissingerian rubric of "build-down." The rationale for the refusal to disclose Soviet violations is that if this is done, the Soviets will break off arms-control negotiations and that would have a deadly impact on the President's re-election chances.

The President is tailoring his national defense strategy to the needs of his election campaign strategy. He would not have been doing so had the intelligence community had the guts to look into the real military situation of the U.S.S.R. and thereby discovered what the current status of the Soviet order of battle is. Had this occurred, more people in Washington would be aware of the fact that there may well not be presidential elections in November 1984! The President would have been acting differently if he had been counseled better.

But the intelligence community of the country is acting with gutlessness. In some respects, we have reasons to suspect that the situation is not unlike that obtaining in November and December of 1967, just before the January 1968 Tet Offensive in Vietnam.

Since the summer of 1966, the chief CIA nam analyst in Washington was arguing that the total strength of Viet Cong effectives inside South Vietnam was over 600,000. The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), General Westmoreland, National Security Council chief Walt Rostow, Col. Danny O. Graham, Robert McNamara, et al. were all telling the CIA to shut up and keep the estimates down to the "official" 245,000 Viet Cong effectives (see *EIR*, Oct. 18). CIA Director Richard Helms was browbeaten into bureaucratic discipline to accept the fake force strength and order of battle presented by the likes of Danny Graham. In late November and again in December 1967, the CIA's field team in Vietnam sent in a report predicting that a massive offensive of extraordinary proportions was underway for the period of the Tet holidays. The entire U.S. Army command in Saigon, the entire DIA, and so forth heaped ridicule on the report on the grounds that neither the force-strength estimates nor the estimated order of battle of the Viet Cong were such as to make such a fabulous offensive possible. However, promptly on Jan. 30, 1968, the Tet offensive materialized, carried out by over 650,000 Viet Cong effectives, organized in more than twice the number of units reported to be in existence by official U.S. Intelligence estimates.

At the very top of the U.S. government, officials did not know because they did not wish to know. Had they accepted the higher, accurate estimates of individual CIA officers, they would have had to admit that the kind of war they were fighting against Vietnam was a total failure. They therefore

ignored painful truths. Something similar is now occurring with respect to the Soviet order of battle: A full generation of policy and intelligence officials has been raised into careers ranging from the merely admirable to the fabulous in the pursuit, for 25 years now, of the Pugwashian delusion of deterrence, MAD, negotiating partners, the Soviets, never had any respect. Our intelligence estimates of Soviet force strength and order of battle are the result of our intelligence agencies' and politicians' efforts to fit Soviet military realities into the straight-jacket of what our Pugwashed establishment considers "deterrence."

The point is: Yes, Soviet forces are deployed for "deterrence." But the Soviet diplomatic and military community employs two distinct words of the Russian language to convey the meaning of "deterrence." One, word, used in Russian to denote American deterrence, is *ustrasheniya* which translates as "intimidation." The other, employed to denote Russian deterrence, is *sderzhivaniye* meaning "constraint." It is fair. Our Pugwashed crowd wishes to deter them by threatening a "big bang," a mutual suicide pact. They don't go for this mutual suicide stuff. Instead, they intend to "deter" us, by emasculating our possibilities to either conduct a first strike or to retaliate against their first strike. They are doing so by the way in which they are deploying their strategic forces and by the type of forces they are developing.

U.S. nuclear sub vulnerability

by Robert Gallagher

Nearly every argument of the advocates of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) is based on the assertion that the U.S. ballistic missile submarine force is virtually invulnerable and will therefore reliably deter a Soviet attack. But the evidence shows the contrary: U.S. submarines are highly vulnerable on a number of counts.

Communication between command center and the U.S. submarine force is vulnerable to Soviet anti-submarine warfare (ASW). Secondly, there is reason to believe that the purpose of a sizeable portion of Soviet SS-20 missile forces is to strike U.S. ballistic missile submarines.

For the U.S. submarine force to be a truly invulnerable and reliable retaliatory force, it must be able 1) to survive a Soviet preemptive strike, 2) to receive information that such a strike has occurred and its orders to retaliate, and 3) to

retaliate against the Soviet Union through launch of its ballistic missiles before undergoing destruction by Soviet ASW forces.

Although arms control treaties with the Soviet Union permit the United States to deploy 41 ballistic missile submarines, obsolescence and the slow rate of Trident submarine deployment have yielded only 31 presently operational vessels. A third of these are in port undergoing maintenance at any given time. Others are in transit between port and stations. It is assumed that this approximately one-half of the force would be destroyed in a Soviet attack, leaving at most 15 to 20 U.S. ballistic missile submarines. Some of these subs on station could also be destroyed by Soviet ASW.

Communications: an 'Achilles Heel'

Communications with submarines is a much more serious problem than generally supposed. John M. Collins of the Library of Congress writes in *U.S.-Soviet Military Balance*:

The Navy currently relies on satellites, shore installations, and 12 EC-130Q TACOMO aircraft to make emergency contact via Very Low Frequency (VLF) radio. VLF, however, leaves a lot to be desired because it "is not effective beyond (submarine) antenna depths of 25 to 30 feet below the ocean surface." Risks of detection and destruction increase when captains receive instructions under those circumstances. Response times could be considerable, because radio contacts, which cannot be constant, are separated by several hours. Some U.S. strategists consider that shortcoming an Achilles Heel.

Louis Gerken, president of American Scientific Corp., reported recently at a Washington conference that submarines receive these transmissions for six hours in the course of a day. It appears to be a reasonable assumption that only 25 percent, or five of the U.S. ballistic missile submarines on station during a hypothetical surprise Soviet attack would receive immediate notification, the remainder being at depths too great to receive radio transmissions. These submarines would be vulnerable to detection and destruction.

The retaliatory force is only as invulnerable as its communications, and all the communications systems are more vulnerable than the submarines. The land-based systems are not hardened. No one expects satellites to function following the first few minutes of a Soviet attack. And the TACOMO radio relay aircraft are aging propeller planes that trail a five and a half mile antenna to generate the radio signals for the submarines. Only one of these is on patrol at a given time.

Thus only the half-dozen vessels in range of radio transmission at the time of a surprise attack would receive their orders. If the attack occurred during a crisis when the force was on alert and a larger proportion of vessels received immediate notification, that larger percentage would also be