

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY
G/PM

Mr Keany, NSC
Subj: ABM

33b

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~~RESTRICTED DATA~~

March 31, 1967

MEMORANDUM

TO: G - Mr. Foy D. Kohler
FROM: G/PM - Raymond L. Garthoff *RG*
SUBJECT: Subjective and Objective Strategic Balances

Several recent experiences have led me to reflect that what one chooses to stress can alter one's understanding of the military balance.

All of the statements below are true, to the best of our knowledge. The variations do not reflect differences in our estimates, but rather different ways of presenting--and looking at--the data. (Data are given as of March, 1967, unless otherwise indicated.)

The General Strategic Balance

1. The US has a 3 to 1 strategic superiority over the USSR.

(US ICBMs, POLARIS missiles, and 555 B-52's vs. USSR 440 ICBMs, 101 SLBMs, and 203 BISON and BEAR heavy bombers, for totals of 2,183 vs. 744 delivery vehicles operational. The same ratio also applies if only the ICBM and SLEM forces are counted, and bombers are omitted.)

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✓ 2. The USSR now has a strategic superiority over the US.

(The same categories as above, plus USSR 709 M/IRBMs, about 750 BADGER medium bombers, and 300 SLGMs vs. US MRCMs, 78 B-58 medium bombers, and SLGMs, for grand totals of the USSR 2,503 vs. US delivery vehicles.)

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3. The US has a 4 to 1 superiority in hardened strategic capabilities.

(US hardened ICBMs and POLARIS vs. USSR 295 hardened ICBMs and 101 SLBMs, for totals of US vs. USSR 396)

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4. The US has only a 2 to 1 superiority in ICBMs over the USSR.

(US [redacted] vs. USSR 440 + 47 launchers at Tyura Tam, plus the fact 145 of the Soviet operational launchers are soft and have a refire capability, [redacted])

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(2)(4)

5. By late 1969 the USSR will have as many operational ICBMs as the US [redacted]

(Assuming continuation of the current Soviet rate of starting construction of new ICBM launchers; by September 1967 they will have started construction of 1,054 ICBM launchers, and by late 1969 that number will be operational. The US is not planning to build any additional launchers beyond the last [redacted] MINUTEMAN now in advanced stage of construction and indeed plans to phase out the [redacted] TITAN IIs.)

3.3(b)
(2)(4)

6. By 1976, with no increase in the rate of ICBM launcher construction, the USSR could have a 4 to 1 superiority over the US in ICBM salvo.

(We do not expect a continuation at this rate, but it would certainly be possible. The numbers would be 4,000 to 1,000.)

7. By 1976, the US will have a superiority in the number of strategic ballistic missile warheads of about [redacted] over the Soviet force.

(With MIRVs, the US salvo of independently targetted ICBM and SLBM warheads will [redacted] --as contrasted [redacted] mid-1967--against an estimated Soviet total of only [redacted] warheads by 1976.)

3.3(b)
(2)(4)
6.2(a)

8. In megatonnage, the mid-1967 Soviet strategic missile force has a superiority of well over [redacted] over the US force; by 1969 it will be nearly [redacted]

(Counting IRBMs, MRBM, SLBMs as well as ICBMs; estimated average warheads. USSR ICBM force [redacted] and SLBMs [redacted] for a total of [redacted] vs. US ICBM force [redacted] for a total of [redacted] By 1969, the US force is virtually unchanged, while the Soviet ICBM force would have increased to [redacted] and the Soviet total to about [redacted])

3.3(b)
(2)(4)
6.2(a)

✓ 9. In megatonnage, the mid-1967 USSR strategic forces have a slight superiority over US forces.

(Counting strategic bombers as well as strategic missiles, with typical multi-bomb load, the US in mid-1967 will have [redacted] in the [redacted] POLARIS missiles, and roughly [redacted] in the B-52 and B-58 force. The USSR will have about [redacted]

3.3(6)
(2)(4)
6.2(2)

[redacted] Thus the totals will be about [redacted] for the US vs. [redacted] MT for the USSR. By 1969, the USSR will have a decided superiority as US B-52's phase down and Soviet ICBMs increase.)

✓ 10. In missile payload delivery ("kilopounds", or weight of reentry warheads) the USSR already has a superiority of over 3 to 1, and this superiority will increase.

(The US ICBM and POLARIS force has about [redacted] kpds vs. USSR ICBM/SLBM force 2,400 kpds plus the M/IRBM force [redacted] kpds in mid-1967, with the Soviet ICBM force increasing by nearly 3,000 kpds by 1970.)

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(2)(4)

11. The US and USSR have strategic parity.

(Apart from particular existing and prospective advantages in strategic forces and capabilities on either side, both the US and USSR now have and will continue to have second-strike capabilities adequate to deter any deliberate attack by the other. This of course depends on each side exerting certain efforts to ensure the continuance of its second-strike capability, but both are virtually certain to do so in the eyes of each other, even though some on each side will feel still more should be done in one or another respect.)

Missile Launching Submarines

1. The US has a 6 to 1 superiority over the USSR in submarine launched ballistic missiles.

(The US has [REDACTED] POLARIS launchers in completed submarines, while the USSR has only 101. Not all of our [REDACTED] ships are at sea, but an even smaller proportion of the Soviet ballistic missile fleet is ever at sea.)

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(2)(4)

2. The US has only a [REDACTED] superiority over the USSR in submarine launched missiles.

(While the US has [REDACTED] POLARIS missiles, the USSR has 101 ballistic missile launchers and 297 to 317 cruise missile launchers on operational submarines as of mid-1967.)

3. The USSR has a better than 2 to 1 superiority over the US in missile launching submarines.

(The USSR at present has 36 ballistic missile launching submarines and 49 to 53 cruise missile launching submarines, while the US has [REDACTED] POLARIS submarines, and no cruise missile launching submarines in commission.)

4. By 1976, the USSR will have a superiority of at least 3 to 1 over the US in missile launching submarines.

(By 1976, it is estimated that the USSR will have 110 to 130 missile launching submarines; if present building rates continued, they would have 160 to 185 such submarines. The US is not presently programmed to have more than the [REDACTED] POLARIS submarines.)

5. By 1976, the US will have a superiority of [REDACTED] over the USSR in the number of submarine launched warheads.

(By 1976, current US programs call for [REDACTED] missiles, each capable of carrying up to [REDACTED] plus [REDACTED] missiles with [REDACTED] for a potential maximum total of [REDACTED] while the estimated Soviet submarine force, without [REDACTED] would almost certainly not have more than [REDACTED] missiles and warheads. In practice, the US figure will be lower than indicated because not all missiles will carry the maximum number of MIRV warheads.)

Strategic Bombers

1. The US has better than a 2.5 to 1 superiority over the USSR in the number of heavy bombers.

(At present the US has 555 B-52s, while the USSR has 195 to 210 BISON and BEAR heavy bombers, including about 30 BISON used as tankers.)

2. The USSR has a superiority of 3 to 2 over the US in strategic bombers.

(At present, the USSR has 195 to 210 heavy bombers and 675 to 775 BADGER and BLINDER medium bombers, while the US has 555 B-52s, and 78 B-58s, and no operational B-47s.)

Anti-Missile Defenses

1. The US is ahead of the USSR in anti-missile defenses.

(It is generally agreed that the NIKE-X system as presently devised would have superior performance to the current Soviet ABM system or systems.)

2. The USSR is ahead of the US in anti-missile defenses.

(The US has not started to deploy any operational anti-missile system, whereas the USSR is deploying the GALOSH system around Moscow, some elements of which probably will become operational this year; in addition, some would include the TALLINN system now being widely deployed in the Soviet Union. At the present time, the Soviets are building about 100 GALOSH launchers and nearly 600 TALLINN launchers; for comparison, the postulated "light" US ABM deployment would have about 400 SPARTAN and 200 SPRINT launchers.)

Medium and Intermediate Range Missiles

1. The USSR have a 20 to 1 superiority over the US in medium and intermediate range missiles.

(The USSR has 709 MRBM/IRBM launchers, while the US has only [REDACTED] medium range cruise missile /MRCM/ launchers. Of course, since the US [REDACTED] MRBM/IRBM deployments, comparison could be expressed as over [REDACTED].)

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Aircraft Carriers

1. The US has a 15 to 0 superiority in attack aircraft carriers.

(The Russians are now building two possible helicopter carriers, but they have never had and have no known interest in acquiring attack carriers.)

General Purpose Forces

1. The US has the largest armed forces in the world.

(In 1966, the US armed forces passed the Soviet armed forces in personnel strengths; now 3.35 to 3.25 million. Communist China remains third with 2.5 to 3.0 million men. The US last had the largest armed forces in the world in 1945, when we had 12.30 million to the Soviet 11.36 million.)

2. The US and its NATO, SEATO and CENTO Allies have a combined superiority over all Communist powers (including China and Cuba) of over 8 million to about 7.5 million men under arms.

3. NATO has larger armed forces than the Warsaw Pact.

(In overall personnel strengths of the member states, wherever deployed worldwide, NATO members have over 6 million men while the Warsaw Pact has under 4.25 million.)

4. [REDACTED] (outside the USSR) is [REDACTED]

(There is no confirmed storage of Soviet nuclear warheads outside of the USSR; there are three suspect storage sites in support of the Soviet forces in East Germany.)

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5. The USSR has 143 divisions to the US 17.

(Total numbers of Army divisions.)

6. The USSR has only 56 divisions compared to the US 22 divisions, and the US divisions are 50% larger and have twice the staying power.

(This counts only Category I Soviet divisions, omitting the 48 understrength--60 to 75%--Category II divisions, and the 39 mobilization cadre--only 10 to 30%--divisions; it also counts the 4 US Marine divisions and 1 Army division equivalent.)

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