LAWRENCE FREEDMAN

U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat

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US INTELLIGENCE AND THE SOVIET STRATEGIC THREAT

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'I was wondering what the mouse-trap was for,' said Alice. 'It isn't very likely there would be any mice on the horse's back.'
'Not very likely, perhaps,' said the Knight; 'but, if they *do* come, I don't choose to have them running all about.'
'You see,' he went on after a pause, 'it's as well to be provided for *everything*.
That's the reason the horse has all those anklets around his feet.'
'But what are they for?' Alice asked in a tone of great curiosity.
'To guard against the bites of sharks,' the Knight replied. 'It's an invention of my own. . . .'

LEWIS CARROLL
Through the Looking-Glass

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Foreword to the Second Edition

I

This book describes the working of the US intelligence community, especially with regard to the preparation of estimates on future Soviet strategic capabilities, and examines its influence on the defence policies of the United States. For this edition no changes have been made to the original text. Unfortunately this means that the occasional thickets of acronyms, about which some of the reviewers of the first edition understandably complained, have not been thinned. The purpose of this introduction to the new edition is to draw attention to some of the factors that have changed since the book was first published in 1977, including the quality of information and analysis now available for those working in this area, and to assess the arguments in the light of the developments in both the US intelligence community and strategic arms policy of the intervening years.

The basic theme of the book is that the treatment of the threat in US policy-making is as much determined by the character of and dominant issues within the wider policy debate as it is a crucial input into that debate. This is because intelligence estimates are formulated through a political process that is linked to the higher levels of decision-making. The fragmented nature of the intelligence community follows closely the fragmentation of the executive branch. Amongst other things this means that the inputs from individual agencies, especially those connected with the military services, reflect wider interests than a straightforward commitment to the highest quality intelligence product.

This judgement does not reflect on the integrity of the individuals undertaking the estimates. By and large the respect for hard evidence is high, however uncomfortable its implications. Nevertheless, even with steadily improving means of intelligence collection, a large number of things can simply not be known. Estimates of future Soviet capabilities must anticipate the outcome of debates still underway in the Politburo. There is thus a large area of ambiguity in which the available evidence can support a variety of more or less reasonable constructions. At this point an equal variety of biases might intrude in the choice of one construction rather than another. Service or broader political interests by no means exhaust the sources of these biases: ideological leanings or the weight of intellectual traditions within a particular agency provide

alternative sources. It is no part of the argument, as some critics have suggested, that the only source of bias is military interest. Institutional pressures and prevalent political philosophies, as well as a desire to make a case for new weapons or influence arms control, produce their own biases.

An intellectual framework and some set of expectations about the subject matter are necessary if the estimator is to make sense of the information available (which in some areas will be too much rather than too little). Furthermore, a full definition of the 'threat' must include much more than an assessment of current and future Soviet activities. It must logically bring together a sense of national interests and vulnerabilities (that which is to be threatened) with the capabilities of potential enemies (that which threatens). Debate on the threat is therefore bound up with debates on American strategic vulnerabilities and their possible remedies. At issue is not only what the Soviet Union is up to but the potential implications of these actions. To what extent does it matter if the Soviet Union enjoys a numerical advantage in the strategic balance, if it is still nowhere near a first strike capability? How important would be an ability to conduct nuclear operations over an extended period? How might nuclear guarantees to allies be undermined?

The particular vulnerability taken as a case study in this book is that of silo-based American ICBMs to a surprise attack from a portion of the Soviet ICBM force. Concern about this grew with the quantity and quality of Soviet warheads. According to one school of thought this vulnerability is critical, in that a successful Soviet strike, decimating the US ICBM force while much of its own was kept in reserve, would force the United States to either succumb to superior strength or escalate to the cataclysmic level of nuclear exchanges directed against cities. To another school, such fears underestimate the risks that the Soviet Union would face in contemplating such an attack, including the probability that the victims would fail to recognise its limited quality, and therefore exaggerates the strategic significance of the whole development. The arguments on this matter have raged on for many years, prompted both by decisions on new weapons and proposals for arms control agreements. Throughout, intelligence estimates have been cited in support, despite a consistently high range of uncertainty in the actual estimates.

In these circumstances, those providing the intelligence estimates are caught in a paradox. It is one faced by all experts advising on the more controversial areas of policy-making. The resultant dilemmas can be eased the greater the inner strength and coherence of the expert community, but even the most self-assured cannot be impervious to the political context in which they must operate. The paradox is that there is a direct relationship between the potential importance of the

estimates in critical policy debates, and the difficulty faced within the community in forging an agreed consensus and in preventing estimates being misused by the political masters.

Those seeking to do an honest, professional job are likely to find life most congenial when they are working in areas of marginal interest to the policy-makers. But at the very point when the estimates might be expected to have their greatest influence, and when they will be achieving their highest visibility, the factors encouraging distortion and misuse will be at their most intense. Furthermore, at such times, many other factors–from the value of the defence contracts involved, to the implications for an arms control agreement, to the personal predilictions of key policy-makers, to the political balance within Congress–are also more keenly felt than usual. In these circumstances the estimates are likely to become important as much as a source of political ammunition as policy illumination, with the risk that those producing the estimates will get caught up in the political battle and find their integrity impugned, often unfairly, as a result. This was the position in which the community found itself as the Ford Administration drew to a close, the end of the period covered by the book.

The position since then has not improved dramatically, if for no other reason than strategic arms policy has not ceased to be an area of controversy. To bring the story up to date we therefore need to look first at developments within the intelligence community and then at the wider strategic debate. Before doing that it might be useful to offer a few observations on the development of the study of this area of policy-making.

II

In writing the book the problem of sources did not turn out to be as great as had been anticipated. Nevertheless the wealth of material now available would make the task much easier. Vast quantities have become available over the past decade, much of it as a result of the passage of the Freedom of Information Act. However this wealth would probably have also made it unrealistic to even attempt to research such a book in Britain with only a few months spent in the United States.

Fortunately one author–John Prados–has made the effort to fully explore archives and recently declassified material, as well as conduct his own interviews. He has therefore greatly added to our stock of knowledge on the estimates made by the US intelligence community of the Soviet Union and has also taken the story up to the 1980s. Although Prados has uncovered evidence that would lead to certain changes in emphasis and interpretation, I believe it is fair to say that he does not challenge any of the major judgements in this book.[1]

Prados's work is part of a general trend towards a greater academic interest in the workings of the intelligence community. In the past there has been a tendency to treat this area as being not quite nice, notoriously frustrating when it comes to sources and full of sensationalist exposés. As more material has become available, however, and with increasing evidence of the importance of intelligence in twentieth century diplomatic and military history, research on the workings of the intelligence community and the general means by which the leaders of great powers weigh each other up have moved ahead by leaps and bounds. A substantial amount has now been written on the question of 'strategic surprise'[2] and on 'threat perception'.[3] In addition there have been a number of symposia covering all aspects of intelligence work.[4] This means that it is increasingly possible to treat this area in a proper academic fashion without having to rely solely on carefully worded memoirs or investigative journalists.

This is not to say that either of these latter two sources can now be put to one side. Over the past decade there have been useful autobiographies-cum-reflections on the profession of intelligence from two former Directors of Central Intelligence, William Colby and Stansfield Turner,[5] and one of the key figures in the estimating process since the formation of OSS, Ray Cline.[6] There has also been a thorough biography of Richard Helms.[7] The role of an effective journalist was highlighted by the publication of Strobe Talbott's extraordinarily detailed account of the development of policies on nuclear arms control during the first term of the Reagan Administration.[8]

A final factor to note is the extent to which much of the intelligence debate has gone 'public'. The expectation in Congress for high quality information, the persistent tendency to use this information to back up positions on the more controversial policy issues and the accumulating source material has meant that there is an increased willingness by non-governmental groups to put together their own estimates of Soviet capabilities and plans, or at least to provide thorough analyses of the development of Soviet capabilities. This makes it easier to enjoy the benefits of hindsight when assessing the US intelligence community, because there is now a much clearer picture within the public domain of the actual developments that the intelligence agencies were seeking to identify, interpret and anticipate.[9] One might add that the 'private sector' intelligence analysts have also effectively turned their attention to American capabilities and plans![10] The lack of an adequate data base is declining as a serious inhibition in the study of American strategic arms policy. One reason for this is the policy debates have become even more intense!

III

In 1977, at the start of the Carter Administration, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was demoralised. This was in part because of the doubts cast on the quality of its estimates during the Nixon Administration and the dismantling of the Board of National Estimates in 1973,[11] thereby removing one of the bulwarks of the intellectual independence of the estimating process. However much more damaging to morale had been the series of revelations on the side of the intelligence community connected with covert operations which exposed the Agency to charges of incompetence as well as malfeasance, and encouraged searching Congressional investigations.[12]

Carter's first choice as Director of Central Intelligence, Theodore Sorenson, withdrew after it became clear that his liberal beliefs and lack of qualifications would result in difficulties with Congress in securing its approval. Carter's second choice, Admiral Stansfield Turner, was politically and professionally more acceptable and served for the duration of the Carter Administration. The desire not to let the CIA slip out of firm executive control meant that it was held under very strict control by the National Security Council.[13] Turner's approach reflected the prevailing suspicion of covert operations, and activities in this area were curtailed. In moves which appear to have undermined morale further, a lot of the old CIA guard was dismissed, in the intelligence as well as the operations directorate.[14] By 1980, for example, Turner was given additional powers to manage the community, and in the area of technical collection programmes he improved matters. Little attention, however, was given to the use of agents for collection, and the technical improvements were not matched by an improvement in analytic capabilities; for instance, by 1980, the number of analysts working on the Soviet economy had declined from over 300 to fewer than 50.[15] The CIA's Directorate of Intelligence was reorganised as the National Foreign Assessment Center.[16] According to one report there was a glut of signal and photo intelligence, but a paucity of badly needed insight on Soviet strategy, tactics and capabilities.[17] Certainly the output of the community declined–the number of National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) for example declined to around 12 at a quarter of the previous level. This reflected Turner's view that the NIEs were not an efficient form of presenting finished intelligence.

Dissatisfaction with the performance of the intelligence community, which grew–possibly unfairly–as a result of the failure to anticipate the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979, and the increasing sensitivity to national security issues in Washington (especially following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan later that year), led to a turnaround in the funding of the intelligence community, and the general climate became

much more supportive of their efforts. This trend continued under the Reagan Administration.

President Reagan appointed William Casey as Director of Central Intelligence. Although very clearly a political appointee, Casey was involved in the OSS during the war and appears to have been highly thought of by his employees. He also enjoyed the crucial advantage of being a friend and a confidant of the President. He has been less skilled in managing the other important political relationship for a Director of Central Intelligence, of recent origin, which is with the Congressional Oversight Committees.[18] Under Casey the intelligence side of the CIA has been given a boost by the appointment of a career officer, Robert Gates, as Deputy Director for Intelligence, and by the output of both long-term reports and National Intelligence Estimates showing marked increases, the annual production of the latter reaching 1960s levels of 50 to 60. The Directorate of Intelligence has been reorganised again to bring together political, economic and military experts in regional offices rather than, as previously, organised on the basis of functional categories.[19] Casey, however, displayed the familiar fascination with covert operations and received rebuffs over his attempt to get involved in operations against the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua.[20]

Estimators were generally able to work with steadily improving sources of information, with the new KH-11 satellites,[21] although there were some losses such as listening posts in Iran. The estimating process itself developed along the lines set down by William Colby when he disbanded the Board of National Estimates. Individual National Intelligence Officers (NIOs) were designated with responsibility for broad areas of policy and charged with drawing on the overall resources of the intelligence community in putting together the NIEs. The NIO system was responsible, according to a number of observers, for the decline in the quality and quantity of national estimates. The drafting process became complex, *ad hoc*, elongated and disorganised. The NIOs became increasingly involved in management, and still dependent on the CIA for analytic support. Under Turner, there was a move back to the sort of corporate identity that had been found with the Office on National estimates when the NIOs were grouped together under a National Intelligence Council. This led to an immediate improvement. Casey put the national estimating process directly under the supervision of the Director of Central Intelligence, separating it administratively from the intelligence arm of the CIA and encouraged the MOs to draw on the whole community. According to Cline, who considered this move unfortunate:

> The estimates unit, whatever its name, can be better staffed and is less likely to become isolated and rigid in its views, if it is an integral part of the CIA analytical services. It would also be more likely, in

my view, to be protected from White House political pressure.[22]

Prados's analysis supports the view that the NIO system is much more vulnerable to political manipulation than the old Board of National Estimates had been. At the very least it has created temptations for the Directors of Central Intelligence. Prados reports that 'Admiral Turner's intense interest in the national estimates led him to redraft NIEs himself or to ask the NIOs for changes in order to "fine-tune" the estimates'. In 1980 he drafted his own summary of the NIE on Soviet strategic intentions and capabilities.[23] Under Casey, while the great majority of reports have been untainted by ideological prejudices, this is not the case where 'the political heat is particularly high'. Then the Agency has adopted 'a more partisan tone'.[24]

The other side of the same coin was that politically insensitve intelligence would be useless. As Admiral Robert Inman put it, having retired as Deputy Director of the CIA and with the benefit of experience in the NSA and DIA:

> We have to run the risk of politicization to make certain that the intelligence being produced is relevant to the critical issues we face. If you leave it to its own devices, the intelligence community will write scholarly tomes that can fill your walls.[25]

There does not appear to have been any notable decline in the traditional rivalry between CIA and DIA. In the early months of 1985 testimony was released by the Joint Economics Committee of Congress which revealed striking disparities in estimates between the two agencies on Soviet defence spending. This raised an old sore. When the CIA was forced in 1975 to almost double its estimates of Soviet defence spending, this was taken as more evidence of the Agency's tendency to underestimate the threat (see pp. 196-7). The CIA attempted, unsuccessfully at the time, to point out that its changed estimates on Soviet spending did not affect the estimates on Soviet capabilities (because estimates on spending work backwards from the visible output of the Soviet military system) and that the main conclusion that might be drawn from the revision was that defence resources were used much less efficiently in the Soviet Union than had previously been assumed.[26] The issue never quite died away.[27] When it revived in 1985 at issue was not so much the absolute level of Soviet spending as its rate of growth, with the CIA suggesting that the growth rate had been at around two per cent in recent years, while the DIA suggested that the figure was between five and eight per cent.[28] At the same time there were reports of differences over the exact count of Soviet warheads and the extent to which a new radar was in violation of the ABM Treaty.[29]

These issues were important because of the prominence given to the

Soviet threat in the public presentation of the Reagan Administration's defence policies. Under Carter the initial inclination had been to play down the concern about the Soviet Union and focus attention more on other problems of foreign policy. In an early speech the President spoke of the need to move beyond the obsession with the Soviet Union. This affected the requirements set for intelligence collection, and indeed even under the Reagan Administration there was increased emphasis on the need to develop improved information and understanding on a range of hitherto neglected countries, so as to be able to advise honestly on the generality of foreign policy problems facing the Administration. Following the invasion of Afghanistan, which President Carter admitted had changed his views of the Soviet Union, there was a growing willingness to devote resources to intelligence on the Soviet Union.

Up to this point the Carter Administration had been under increasing pressure from hawks in Congress, and the defence establishment generally, to acknowledge the pace and apparent inspiration of the Soviet missile build-up. The starting point for many of the critiques had been the controversial 'Team B' assessment prepared during the closing months of the Ford Administration (and discussed on p. 197). The actual effect on CIA estimates remains uncertain, but there is little doubt that the episode shifted the terms of the debate in the United States in the direction of greater anxiety over long-term Soviet intentions and plans.[30]

A number of those on Team B were founder members of the Committee on the Present Danger which provided a continuing challenge to President Carter's efforts to secure a SALT II Treaty with the Soviet Union. Their analyses stressed the general pace of the Soviet strategic build-up and the specific problems resulting from the Soviet strength in heavy ICBMs which would put the US ICBM force in danger from a first strike.[31]

Many of those involved in the Committee went on to high positions in the Reagan Administration. It was therefore not surprising that most of the early pronouncements from Administration officials on security policy had the Soviet military build-up as the centrepiece. The concerns ranged from the growth of the SS-20 Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile force facing Western Europe to the delivery of weapons to Nicaragua to improved means of power projection. A number of the distinctive features of the Reagan Administration's policies on strategic arms appeared to depend on views of the Soviet Union such as the Kremlin's propensity to cheat and lie and its long-term ambitions.[32]

In order to underline the message the Pentagon began a series of annual publications with the self-explanatory title of *Soviet Military Power*, full of detail and photographs, as well as artists' representations of Soviet systems loosely based on satellite photographs. Such was the

intense nature of the East-West competition over this period that the Soviet Union rather gamely replied with a publication of its own, describing American military power and quaintly entitled *Whence the Threat to Peace?* Information was also released detailing alleged Soviet violations of arms control agreements.[33]

So much stress was placed on the 'threat' that the suspicion grew that intelligence information was being used by the Administration in a self-serving and tendentious manner. For the reasons described above there was an increasing willingness by individuals and groups opposed to official policy to challenge the presentation of the 'threat' with alternative analyses.[34]

As with previous Administrations, the Reagan Administration found it difficult to fine tune the presentation to something less alarmist when it saw opportunities for an improvement in relations with the Soviet Union. It is often assumed, even by practitioners, that 'threatmanship' consists entirely of painting the most lurid picture of the potential enemy in order to secure funds from Congress. After a number of years of growing defence budgets, however, it became steadily difficult to argue that the situation was still dire and that all the trends were in the wrong direction, for this implied that the previous exertions had been a waste of effort.

The President argued that his programme of rearmament was necessary to force the Soviet Union into a more accommodating stance in arms control negotiations. When it seemed that this had succeeded in early 1985 it was tempting to argue that the reason was America's new-found strength. In fact at the strategic level there had not been an enormous change in the strategic balance since the Carter Administration. Just before talks resumed the Soviet Union announced a substantial increase in defence spending and the introduction of new missiles, developments that the Administration chose to play down,[35] just as they played down Soviet announcements of new Medium-Range missile deployments in East Germany and Czecheslovakia after the arrival of the first Cruise and Pershing missiles into Western Europe in late 1983 and the breakdown of the arms control talks then underway.[36] Up to that point (and since) the Administration had ensured full publicity for all new SS-20 Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missiles. The logic appeared to be to draw attention to Soviet developments except when to do so would clearly present the Soviet Union with a clear political gain.

IV

In the actual development of strategic arms policy the details of Soviet capabilities are often less important than the publicity surrounding

them suggests. Of course the overall perceptions of the Soviet Union are a critical factor in the whole approach to this area, especially when it comes to embarking on negotiations. The details of the Soviet force structure are also critical in the development of the formal negotiating positions for arms control and in working out the details of the Western force structure. However, changes in estimates may not necessarily be the result of new information, but of the ascendance within the intelligence community or wider defence establishment of certain views as to what is important in the Soviet force structure, or a new construction on information already available, prompted by a change in American strategic thinking. An example of the former tendency can be illustrated with the debate over the importance to be attached to the Soviet advantage in missile throwweight, in working out the negotiating position on strategic arms control. An example of the latter is the discovery of a major Soviet effort on strategic defences, following President Reagan's decision in March 1983 to put renewed emphasis in this area.

The link between strategic arms policy and constructions of the 'threat' was analysed in the book using the ICBM vulnerability issue as a case study. If anything this issue grew in importance in the late 1970s, so the analysis can now be brought up to date.

Over this period the number of warheads carried by Soviet ICBMs grew markedly. The actual number of Soviet ICBM silos remained constant at around 1398, but the number of those capable of launching MIRVed missiles has grown to some 818, some 340 of which have been added since the signing of the SALT II Treaty in 1979. These are all modern missiles (150 SS-17s, 308 SS-18s, 360 SS-19s). The SS-18s are fully MIRVed, though some SS-17s and SS-19s may be in single-warhead versions. The most recent edition of *Soviet Military Power* states that:

> The SS-18 Mod 4 force currently deployed has the capability to destroy more than 80 per cent of US ICBM silos using two nuclear warheads against each. The SS-19 Mod 3 ICBM could be assigned similar missions . . . [37]

Considerable attention has been devoted to the SS-19 and SS-18 missiles, with the 'heavy' SS-18 in particular getting the most attention. Some argued that this meant that the capable SS-19 tended to get neglected in, for example, the framing of arms control proposals. At the time that this book was being written the SS-18 and SS-19 were just entering service, with question marks against their accuracy (pp 170-3). It was also noted that initial deployments (at least of the SS-18) appeared to be in single warhead versions.

By 1977 testing of a Mod 2 version of the SS-18 with ten warheads

confirmed concerns over the imminent vulnerability of the US ICBM force. However, the view as expressed in the NIEs was that improvements in Soviet accuracy were no greater than had been anticipated. Indeed, it transpired that the Mod 2 was having serious problems, largely as a result of a design flaw in the system for ejecting individual re-entry vehicles; but these deficiencies were remedied. The 1978 and 1979 NIEs revised estimates of Soviet capabilities and tendencies upwards, and the 1979 NIE projected 'drastic improvements' in Russian missile accuracy, which cast doubt on the validity of the estimates upon which President Carter had based his first strategic arms decisions and implied that the period of Minuteman vulnerability would arrive for sure by the mid-1980s. The following year, on the assumption that the SALT II constraints might no longer apply, the possibility was raised of some 11,000 ICBM warheads in place by 1985.[39]

The warhead figure for ICBMs was put at just over 6,000 by *Soviet Military Power, 1985*, indicating that the numbers were levelling off.[40] There continues to be considerable scepticism as to whether the Soviet Union has actually attained the high levels of accuracy necessary to mount a successful attack on the Minuteman silos. One 1983 report, for example, suggested that the missiles 'wobbled' too much to be truly accurate, so that: 'Their accuracy isn't even within the ball park of being able to launch a first strike against our Minuteman missile silos, not even with their large powerful warheads'.[41] Of even greater significance was a report in 1985 that the accuracy of the SS-19 had been downgraded by the CIA from a CEP of 300 metres to 400 metres. Because of the nature of the equation on kill probabilities, such a shift can make a significant change in the number of warheads required to destroy ICBM silos. The DIA were said to hold to the original estimate, and there were even suggestions that the Soviet Union had been digging false impact craters to deceive US intelligence.

Despite these continuing uncertainties, by the time the SALT II Treaty was signed in June 1979 the problem of the impending vulnerability of the American force of 1,000 Minuteman ICBMs had come to dominate strategic debate.[42] The Treaty's failure to deal with this problem, in that the proposed limits did little to restrict the Soviet counterforce potential was deemed its most unsatisfactory feature,[43] especially when possible forms of redress were either ruled out by an existing Treaty (the 1972 ABM Treaty) or marked out for future restrictions (mobile missiles were included in the protocol which would set the negotiating agenda for SALT III). Even those who had previously been sceptical about the significance of this vulnerability now recognised its force. For example, Dr Henry Kissinger, safely out of government, argued that the Soviet Union's advantage in comparative counterforce capabilities could provide it with a 'window of

opportunity' in the overall conduct of its foreign policy during the 1980s until a US rearmament programme had filled the gap.[44]

The Carter Administration was forced to demonstrate that it took the issue seriously. In the protocol to the SALT II Treaty it had been agreed with the Soviet Union that neither would proceed with the deployment of mobile missiles by December 1981. In practice there was no way that the United States could have prepared a mobile missile for deployment by this time, but critics of the Treaty charged that the protocol set a precedent so that thereafter it would be very difficult to proceed with deployment. The Administration insisted that it would not be so restricted and it was partly to allay such fears that, in September 1979, the President authorised the construction of a mobile basing system for the new M-X missile. This would have involved 200 missiles each being transported on a loop road with 23 spurs.[45]

The origins of the M-X are discussed in Chapter 10. They go back at least to the early 1970s. From the start there was tension between the Administration and the Air Force, whose main interest was in developing warheads in sufficient numbers and with sufficient accuracy and yield to match and even surpass Soviet counterforce capabilities.

Those seized with the problem of ICBM vulnerability, however, were most anxious to ensure that the new missile was survivable. As things had been left at the end of the Ford Administration, the first trawl of the alternative basing modes had led to the conclusion that none were truly satisfactory and the best option was probably to return to the silo-basing until something better turned up. This was not considered at all satisfactory under the Carter Administration, in which the key criterion was survivability rather than offensive capabilities. After its trawl of the alternatives, none of which had become desperately more attractive in the interim, it decided on the racetrack system.

The policy on ICBM vulnerability inherited by the Reagan Administration was thus centred on a new missile designed to both match the Soviet counterforce capability and undermine this capability by introducing a more survivable basing mode. A future arms control agreement based on deep cuts in ICBM levels might reduce the problem significantly but existing agreements offered slight amelioration. Some serious amelioration became the main criterion by which the Administration judged strategic arms proposals. However, its lack of confidence in arms control meant that the M-X missile had to be the centrepiece of its policy as well.

Unfortunately the M-X was not without its own problems. The proposed racetrack was to be built in the states of Utah and Nevada, and was attracting considerable local opposition, reflected in the views of their Senators who happened to be close associates of Ronald Reagan. Like the Nixon Administration in 1969, with the safeguard

ABM, it found the most substantial strategic system inherited from the previous Democrat Administration something of a political liability.

Its response in October 1981 was to abandon the racetrack and begin yet another trawl of the alternative basing modes. Meanwhile the first M-X missiles would be fitted in reinforced Titan and Minuteman ICBM silos. In November 1982 the President announced that the new approach was to rely on the so-called 'fratricide effect' by which the attacking missiles would neutralise each other rather than the targets. This was described as 'dense pack'. Whatever its merits this option was greeted with Congressional derision and it soon became clear that it would not be funded. To save the missile the Administration found it necessary to broaden its base of support. This was done by setting up a bipartisan Commission, headed by the former National Security Advisor to President Ford, General Brent Scowcroft. The Scowcroft Commission managed to forge a skilful compromise. Part of this was to play down the whole ICBM vulnerability issue, in terms which nonchalantly pushed to one side all the anxieties of the previous years. It was now the case that:

> The existence of several components of our strategic forces permits each to function as a hedge against possible Soviet successes in endangering any of the others . . . Although the survivability of our ICBMs is today a matter of concern (especially when that problem is viewed in isolation) it would be far more serious if we did not have a force of ballistic missile submarines at sea and a bomber force.[46]

Certainly the development of accurate cruise missiles and SLBMs had made the oft-repeated scenario of a President unable to respond in kind to a counterforce attack somewhat outdated; however, the arguments used by the Commission would have applied even before these improvements in alternative systems.

The logic of the Scowcroft Commission might have been thought to suggest that the US could do without M-X. However the logic was used simply to argue that a return to fixed silos would be tolerable. This was the policy adopted by the Administration, which also accepted the Commission's recommendation that the most suitable successor ICBM would be a small, non-MIRVed ICBM which came to be known as Midgetman (a name that has stuck more firmly than Peacekeeper–the Administration's name for M-X).

Acceptance of the Commission's report was not quite enough to secure Congressional support. There were doubts that the arms control option was being pursued with sufficient enthusiasm, and major changes to the Administration's posture were demanded in return for the votes of key members of the Senate and House of Representatives.

The result was the adoption of the 'build-down' approach, by which it is agreed that new systems can be introduced, but only if a greater number of old warheads are dismantled. Instead of serving as an alternative to arms control, M-X now became dependent on arms control.[46] In March 1985 critical votes in Congress were only one, by using the same 'bargaining chip' argument that had been used to save the Safeguard ABM system in 1971, pointing to the arms control talks on Geneva which had conveniently resumed a few weeks before.[47]

A technical solution to the problem seemed as far away as ever. The contendors were the same as those that had seemed most promising when the issue of ICBM vulnerability was first raised in the 1960s: silo-hardening and ABMs. Although the Safeguard system proposed by President Nixon had not seemed a very credible source of protection against a large-scale and well-executed Soviet attack, dedicated point defences had been developed during the 1970s which appeared more promising.[48] The Carter Administration had supported this research although there had been no question of deployment because this would be prohibited under the 1972 ABM Treaty.

When the Reagan Administration came to power some officials indicated that they thought that the Treaty had outlived its usefulness, but the official position was that there would be no abrogation. In March 1983, President Reagan caused something of a stir by suggesting that in the future it would be more profitable and moral to concentrate on defensive rather than offensive systems and so move away from mutually assured destruction and render offensive nuclear weapons 'impotent and obsolete'.[49] It remains unclear just how important this ultimate objective is to the Strategic Defense Initiative, that followed the President's speech, especially as most experts concede that it is impractical—even when contemplating the technologies of the next century.

Certainly many supporters of the Initiative have put stress on the need to defend against a Soviet first strike as a more sensible 'intermediate' objective.[50] Critics charge that there is no evidence that the Soviet Union is anywhere near a first-strike capability, since the necessary breakthroughs in Anti-Submarine Warfare remain well beyond its grasp, while if the problem is one of protecting ICBM bases then dedicated terminal defences would suffice, without the necessity of moving to the more exotic space-based systems foreshadowed in the President's speech.

Meanwhile, the Air Force was discovering that levels of silo hardness could be achieved that pushed the requirements for an attacker well beyond the levels that had been discussed in the 1970s. It was even questioned whether the vulnerability problem was as great as advertised.[51] So, not only did the range of uncertainty over the extent of the vulnerability problem remain more constant than might have been

expected, but also the range of options available for dealing with the problem remained circumscribed.

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NOTES TO THE FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

1. John Prados, *The Soviet Estimate: US Intelligence Analysis and Russian Military Strength* (New York: The Dial Press, 1982). This book contains an excellent bibliography. Unfortunately the author has not referenced his actual analysis as closely as one might have wished.
2. Michael Handel, 'Intelligence and the Problem of Strategic Surprise', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, VII:3 (September 1984). Richard Betts, *Surprise Attack: Lessons for Defense Planning* (Washington DC, The Brookings Institution, 1982).
3. Ernest May (ed.), *Knowing One's Enemies: Intelligence Assessment before the Two World Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).
4. Cristopher Andrew and David Dilks (eds.), *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1984). Robert L. Pfaltzgraff Jr., Uri Ra'anan and Warren H. Milberg (eds.), *Intelligence Policy and National Security* (London: Macmillan, 1981); See also the *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980s* series of the Consortium for the Study of Intelligence, edited by Roy Godson. In particular, *Elements of Intelligence* and *Analysis and Estimates* (National Strategy Information Center, Washington DC, 1979 and 1980). For an astonishing collection of detail on US intelligence see Jeffrey Richelson, *The US Intelligence Community* (Cambridge, Mass., Ballinger, 1985). An overview is provided by Mark M. Lowenthal, *US Intelligence: Evolution and Anatomy* (Washington D.C., Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1984).
5. William Colby, *Honourable Men: My Life in the CIA* (London: Hutchinson, 1978); Stansfield Turner, *Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1985).
6. Ray Cline, *The CIA Under Reagan, Bush and Casey*, (Washington DC: Acropolis Books, 1981). An earlier version was published as *Secrets, Spies and Scholars: Blueprint of the Essential CIA* (Acropolis Books, 1976).
7. Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept The Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979).
8. Strobe Talbott, *Deadly Gambits* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984).
9. For example, Robert Berman and John C. Baker, *Soviet Strategic Forces: Requirements and Responses* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1982).
10. Thomas B. Cochran, *Nuclear Weapons Databook, Volume 1, US Nuclear Forces and Capabilities* (Cambridge, Mass., Ballinger, 1984). The same group, sponsored by the Natural Resources Defense Council, will be producing a later volume in this series on Soviet forces.

11. Colby explains some of his reasons in *Honourable Men*, op. cit., pp. 351–4.
12. For a sample set of criticisms see Howard Frazier (ed.), *Uncloaking the CIA*, (New York: The Free Press, 1978).
13. According to Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Turner: 'had relatively little access to the President, briefing him only once a week and then, later, only twice a month and always with me in attendance. He had throughout the four years practically no one-to-one meetings with the President, and all CIA reporting was funneled to the President through me. Moreover, all major decisions regarding the CIA had to be vetted by the SCC [Special Coordination Committee] or in private one-to-one meetings between Turner and me.' Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Advisor 1977–81* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1983) pp. 72–3.
14. According to Cline, Turner isolated himself from career intelligence specialists and thought 'the CIA was like a battleship, with replaceable crew members on call when needed'. Cline, *The CIA*, op. cit., p. 270.
15. Robert Gates, 'Is the CIA's Analysis Any Good?', *Washington Post*, 12 December 1984.
16. The first Director was Robert Bowie. Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, op. cit., p. 256.
17. *Guardian*, 11 April 1979.
18. On these Committees see the essays in *Washington Quarterly* (Summer 1983).
19. Gates, *Washington Post*, 17 December 1984.
20. *International Herald Tribune*, 26 January 1983.
21. For details see Jeffrey Richelson, 'The Keyhole Satellite Program', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, VII:2 (June 1984). Richelson provides some valuable historical detail on the development of US reconnaissance satellites as well as some important reminders on the limitations of this intelligence source. See also his book (fn 4).
22. Cline, *The CIA*, op. cit., p. 303. See Stephen Flanagan, 'Managing the Intelligence Community', *International Security* (Summer 1985).
23. Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, op. cit., pp. 256–7, p. 293. See also *Guardian*, 11 April 1979; *Washington Post* (9 May 1980). The DIA and the military dissented completely from Turner's view.
24. *International Herald Tribune*, 26 January 1983. However note the comment of Maj. Gen. Jasper Welch that 'there is much more widespread professional respect throughout official Washington for the current arrangement'. *Armed Forces Journal* (December 1948).
25. Interview with Admiral Inman, *US News & World Report* , 20 December 1982. Inman added: 'You have to have faith that the CIA's professionals are strong enough to make straight calls'.
26. See Arthur Macy Cox, *Russian Roulette: The Superpower Game* (New York: Times Books) p. 109.
27. *National Journal* (26 June 1982); Franklyn D. Holzman, 'Soviet Military Spending: Assessing the Numbers Game', *International Security* (Spring 1982).
28. *New York Times* (3 March 1983).
29. The differences over warhead numbers arose from a question of whether the SS-18 missile carried 14 or 10 warheads, *Washington Post*, 5 April 1985

(see also below, n. 40); On the radar see *New York Times*, 15 March 1985. The whole question of the extent of Soviet violations of arms control treaties was an important issue during this period and was a starting point for many of the hawkish critiques of the past performance of the intelligence community. This in turn was part of a much wider debate on the extent to which the Soviet Union consciously engaged in attempts to deceive US intelligence analysts. See for example Michael Mikhalka, 'Soviet Strategic Deception, 1955–1981', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, V:1 (March 1982). Joseph Douglass and David Sullivan, 'Intelligence, Warning and Surprise', *Armed Forces Journal* (December 1984). Sullivan, a former CIA analyst, has been especially active in 'exposing' CIA mistakes and Soviet deception.

30. See Prados. *The Soviet Estimate*, Committee on Intelligence, Subcommittee on Collection, Production and Quality, *Report on the National Intelligence Estimates, A-B Team Episode Concerning Soviet Capability and Objectives* (US Senate: 1978).
31. See Charles Tyroler II (ed.), *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on The Present Danger* (New York: Pergamon, 1984).
32. For an account of the strategic perspectives of the Reagan Administration which puts great stress on these features as Present Danger see Robert Scheer, *With Enough Shovels: Reagan, Bush and Nuclear War* (New York: Random House, 1982).
33. *The President's Report to the Congress on Soviet Noncompliance with Arms Control Agreements*, White House Press Release, 23 January 1984.
34. See for example William M. Arkin and Jeffrey I. Sands, 'The Soviet Nuclear Stockpile', *Arms Control Today*, XIV:5 (June 1984). See also Andrew Cockburn, *The Threat: Inside the Soviet Military Machine* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984).
35. *New York Times*, 14 October 1984.
36. *Washington Post*, 25 October 1983.
37. *Soviet Military Power 1985* (US Department of Defense: April 1985) p. 30. The 1985 posture statement translates this into a threat to 'most' US ICBMs. See Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, *Annual Report to the Congress, Fiscal Year 1986* (4 February 1985) p. 50.
39. Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, op. cit., p. 257; Cockburn, *The Threat*, op. cit., pp. 328–9 (see also his subsequent discussion of the problems of assessing missile accuracy). John Edwards, *Superweapon: The Making of MX* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983) pp. 143–4; *International Herald Tribune*, 12 May 1980; *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 25 February 1980.
40. There have been suggestions that the number of warheads has been underestimated and is in fact over 7,000. This is based on the possibility that the SS-18 has been tested with 14 warheads rather than the 10 allowed under the SALT II Treaty. *Washington Times*, 22 March 1985. The uncertainty may result from a Soviet practice of simulating releases of extra re-entry vehicles during the course of tests in which actual re-entry vehicles are also released. It has been felt 18 could carry many more warheads than the ten with which it had been tested. The maximum might be as high as 40 per missile. The bad design was felt only to explain some of the problem. Thus when a late 1978 SS-18 test revealed two simulations along with ten