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SOVIET STRATEGIC CONDUCT AND THE PROSPECTS FOR STABILITY.(U)
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Throughout the past decade, the Soviets have refused to entertain SALT proposals that would require the Soviet Union to become an active partner in increasing its own vulnerabilities. They have also revealed a penchant for immoderate levels of arms acquisition, which raises disturbing questions about their willingness to settle for a strategic posture "essentially equivalent" to that of the United States. These features of Soviet strategic style constitute major obstacles in the path of achieving a cooperative solution to the security dilemma traditionally espoused by Western theories of mutual assured destruction. If the United States is to endure as a respectable player in the strategic arms competition, it will have to begin imposing measures conducive to stability through a strategy that appeals primarily to Soviet sensitivities, rather than to the doubtful prospect of eventual Soviet convergence with the preferred concepts of the West.

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December 1980

Soviet Strategic Conduct and the Prospects for Stability

Benjamin S. Lambeth

**A Project AIR FORCE report
prepared for the
United States Air Force**

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PREFACE

The Rand Corporation, in response to a request from the Assistant Chief of Staff/Intelligence, Headquarters United States Air Force, is conducting research under Project AIR FORCE on the question of possible Soviet conduct in a variety of military confrontations with the United States. This effort is concerned with the linkages between Soviet military doctrine and operational practice. It seeks to examine how specific Soviet capabilities and styles might make their influence felt in major crises and war.

The present report is a background analysis aimed at illuminating the sources of Soviet strategic competitiveness and describing the fundamentals of Soviet thought as they affect Soviet weapons acquisition, contingency planning, and political-military behavior. Its objective is to highlight the more disturbing elements of recent Soviet strategic comportment. A companion analysis now in preparation addresses those factors of risk, uncertainty, and unpredictability which might have a moderating effect on Soviet planning and lessen the confidence with which Soviet decisionmakers would consider entering into a major military showdown with the United States.

The information provided here should be of interest to the national security community in the ongoing dialogue on Soviet capabilities and intentions.

SUMMARY

Over the past two decades, Soviet military planners have harbored a conception of deterrence and the operational requirements for maintaining it which has stood at distinct odds with the views that have largely informed American strategic policy. Unlike their U.S. counterparts, who have preferred a deterrent system based on the certainty of mutual annihilation should either side transgress the nuclear threshold, the Soviets have staunchly held to the time-worn military axiom that the only reliable deterrent lies in a force capable of fighting to victory should war actually occur.

During the period of Soviet strategic inferiority, American decisionmakers could console themselves with the belief that this Soviet portrayal of the deterrence problem was merely a parochial view of the professional military and that responsible civilians on the Politburo were quite intelligent and worldly enough to recognize the practical unattainability of nuclear victory. In light of Moscow's subsequent attainment of parity and associated efforts to acquire a comprehensive war-fighting capability, however, it has become increasingly clear to most American observers that a more sober-minded appreciation of Soviet strategic motivations is in order.

Until recently, the United States approached its defense and arms control planning on the optimistic assumption that the Soviet Union was essentially a cooperative adversary with shared beliefs in the necessity of seeking security through a system of stable deterrence based on mutual societal vulnerability. As a result of the disappointments of SALT and the relentless pattern of Soviet force enhancement over the past decade, this perspective has gradually lost most of the appeal it formerly enjoyed and a new consensus has begun to emerge around the importance of accepting Soviet doctrinal uniqueness as a fact of life.

In practical planning terms, this evident Soviet leadership insistence on keeping its own strategic counsel suggests a number of policy implications for the United States. The Soviets have shown a consistent refusal to have any traffic with bilateral arms control schemes that require the Soviet Union to be an active partner in the enhancement of its own vulnerabilities. They have also revealed a penchant for immoderate levels of arms accumulation as a result of their combat-oriented military philosophy which raises fundamental questions about their long-term willingness to settle for a strategic posture "essentially equivalent" to that of the United States. Taken together, these features of Soviet strategic style constitute major obstacles in the path of achieving the sort of cooperative arrangement toward moderating the dangers of the nuclear standoff traditionally advanced by Western deterrence and arms control theory. Instead, they reflect a disturbing orientation toward the pursuit of Soviet security through a policy of ever-increasing military strength.

As long as the Soviets remain under the influence of these preferences, they will largely set the ground rules for future East-West strategic interaction, and such diplomatic endeavors as SALT will never provide more than peripheral instruments for modulating the strategic arms competition at the margins. If the West is to remain a respectable player in this competition, it will have to begin imposing measures conducive to stability in spite of Soviet intractability, rather than continue pursuing the elusive hope of eliciting Soviet cooperation on the cheap.

This is not to say that détente has become a goal without prospect or that arms control as a medium of superpower dialogue has proved to be irretrievably hopeless. As the 1972 ABM Treaty demonstrated, the Soviets have shown themselves quite capable of accepting temporary

self-denying ordinances when the alternative has appeared decidedly worse. Yet this willingness has had little to do with any Soviet interest in a bilateral relationship governed by mutual deterrence and moderated arms competition. Rather, it has principally reflected a self-interested Soviet desire to head off or delay U.S. technological developments that might threaten to undermine the effectiveness of Soviet strategic force improvements.

The imperative thus facing the United States in the coming years is to begin forging a new approach to stability that appeals primarily to Soviet strategic sensitivities and insecurities rather than to the doubtful prospect of eventual Soviet convergence with the preferred concepts of the West. This will require, at the least, a continuation of the current U.S. effort to project a refurbished image of strategic seriousness through such programs as MX. Given the disappointing returns of SALT II and the profound concern generated by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, it may also require an end to the SALT process as it has been understood and conducted so far. In time, there is plausible reason to believe that a purposeful remobilization of American industrial and technological assets might effectively help circumscribe Soviet expectations about the limits of the possible in their own strategic ambitions. Between the two undesirables of continued business as usual and a return to outright international jungle warfare, it is hard to imagine any other American alternative.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the nuclear age, American defense planners have had ample exposure to the broad essentials of Soviet strategic thought, including its stress on the operational virtues of superiority and its persistent advocacy of forces capable of fighting to meaningful victory in the event of war. Until recently, however, U.S. officials tended to dismiss these views as mere parochial ambitions of the General Staff and to profess confidence that those civilians on the Politburo "who really mattered" had the inherent good sense to appreciate the superior wisdom of prevailing Western strategic logic.¹

As long as the United States remained comfortably ahead of the Soviet Union in the quality and numerical strength of its strategic forces, this sort of ethnocentric attitude could be indulged in with little immediate consequence to Western security. Even skeptics concerned about the thrust of the Soviet buildup which first became apparent around 1966 could, at least during the early stages of SALT I, maintain reasonable hope that once the Soviets attained clear strategic parity with the United States, they might discover substantial merit in moderating their subsequent deployments and pursuing their global interests within a deterrence environment spared of significant risk of war by the stabilizing influence of "assured destruction" capabilities on both sides.

In light of the repeated frustrations encountered throughout SALT II and the growing evidence of Soviet determination to acquire forces well beyond those required to support a simple "assured destruction" policy, however, it has now become clear to most observers that the time for such optimism has long since passed and that a considerably more sober-minded appreciation of Soviet motivations and goals is in order. With its uninterrupted record of force enhancement since the conclusion of SALT I eight years ago, the Soviet leadership has signalled its unambiguous commitment to the accretion of a comprehensive war-fighting capability, in total indifference to repeatedly articulated Western security sensitivities. Although this commitment does not mean the Soviets are any less interested than their Western counterparts in the continued avoidance of nuclear war, it does suggest an underlying Soviet conception of deterrence quite unlike that which has traditionally held sway in the United States. Accordingly, the U.S. defense community has found itself increasingly driven to base its future planning on the discomfiting reality of demonstrated Soviet performance rather than on the evanescent hope of eventual Soviet convergence toward preferred American strategic values.

How this growing appreciation of Soviet doctrinal dissimilarity will ultimately affect the complexion of U.S. strategic programs, of course, remains far from self-evident. The mere fact of consensus on the broad nature of Soviet strategic philosophy in no way implies any unanimity of opinion on what the United States ought to do in order to accommodate it. This is not the place for a detailed review of the current points of contention on the issue of U.S. force requirements for the coming decade, let alone any attempt to join the debate with specific program recommendations for addressing the Soviet strategic challenge. It is, however, an

¹Apart from intelligence information, specifics on Soviet strategic thinking have been available in a substantial body of scholarly analysis running back for more than two decades, beginning with Raymond Garthoff's *Soviet Strategy in the Nuclear Age* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958). As Colin Gray has observed, "most American strategic thinkers have always *known* that there was a uniquely 'Soviet way' in military affairs, but somehow that realization was never translated from insight into constituting a serious and enduring factor influencing analysis, policy recommendation, and war planning." "Nuclear Strategy: The Case for a Theory of Victory," *International Security*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Summer 1979, p. 60.

appropriate forum for exploring some of the aspects of Soviet behavior that have given rise to the problem in the first place and whose understanding will be vital to any rational consideration of alternative U.S. policy options in the years ahead.

II. THE SOURCES OF SOVIET STRATEGIC INTRACTABILITY

Although ideological imperatives and traditional great power ambitions obviously account for a great deal of the adversarial nature of Moscow's strategic comportment, much of the difficulty the United States has encountered in trying to elicit a measure of cooperative Soviet behavior in recent years can be explained simply by the fact that the Soviet Union approaches its security problem in a way fundamentally unlike that characteristic of most Western defense planning processes. This distinctive Soviet strategic style is not, in itself, an outgrowth of conscious malevolent intent so much as the natural product of a unique political culture and historical tradition.¹ All the same, it has had the effect of reinforcing the inherent competitive tendencies of the Soviet leadership and exacerbating the problem faced by U.S. leaders in their efforts to induce the Soviets to agree to a common code of strategic conduct in the superpower relationship.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE DETERRENCE PROBLEM

To begin with, the Soviets define the nuclear dilemma and the force requirements they see dictated by it using an intellectual approach quite alien to the concepts that have largely informed U.S. strategic policies over the past two decades. To put the point of critical difference in a nutshell, the American propensity—running as far back as the formative works of Bernard Brodie in the late 1940s—has been to regard nuclear weapons as fundamentally different from all other forms of military firepower because of their unique potential for inflicting truly catastrophic damage in a single blow. Naturally flowing from this appreciation has been a consuming U.S. belief that any widespread employment of these weapons would bring down, such an unmitigated calamity on all participants as to make a mockery of the traditional Clausewitzian portrayal of war as a purposeful tool of national policy.² As a consequence of this pervasive disbelief in the practical attainability of meaningful victory by either side in nuclear war, the American defense community at the most senior civilian levels has come to embrace the notion of deterrence based on the certainty of mutual societal annihilation in the event of nuclear war as, *faute de mieux*, the only workable solution to the problem of ensuring Western security in the modern era.³ Without digressing into a detailed review of the numerous American policy choices that have emanated from this conceptual mind-set in recent years, we may simply list as the more notable among them the rejection of strategic superiority as a U.S. force posture goal, the abandonment of efforts to provide for significant active and passive

¹For an interesting elaboration on this point, see Robert Conquest, "Why the Soviet Elite Is Different From Us," *Policy Review*, No. 2, Fall 1977, pp. 67-72.

²In his first major statement of this thesis, which set the intellectual tone for more than three decades of subsequent American strategic theorizing, Brodie asserted: "Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other useful purpose." *The Absolute Weapon* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946), p. 76. By 1955, Brodie had concluded that because of the destructiveness of nuclear weapons and the loss of the postwar American nuclear monopoly, the world had fully come "to the end of strategy as we have known it." "Strategy Hits a Dead End," *Harper's*, Vol. CCXI, October 1955, p. 37.

³This conviction was most recently reaffirmed in a high level strategic balance assessment produced by the Carter administration in 1977. See Richard Burt, "U.S. Analysis Doubts There Can Be a Victor in Major Atomic War," *New York Times*, January 6, 1978.

defenses against a Soviet attack on the United States, the conscious refusal (at least up to now) to seek comprehensive hard-target capabilities that might threaten the survivability of Soviet strategic retaliatory forces, and the persistent effort through SALT to bolster the long-term stability of the nuclear balance by assuring that mutual societal vulnerability remains the central regulating mechanism of the East-West deterrence relationship.

The Soviets, for their part, fully share this U.S. appreciation of the awesome destructiveness of nuclear weaponry and equally elevate deterrence to a level of preeminent importance in their hierarchy of security concerns.⁴ Beyond these elementary and obvious points, however, any significant similarities between Soviet and American strategic theory are hard to come by. Perhaps most important, Soviet political-military decisionmakers reject the notion that the security of the Soviet state should be entrusted to any autonomous and allegedly self-sustaining "system" of nuclear deterrence such as that envisioned by the Western concept of mutual assured destruction.⁵ In their view, while nuclear war may remain highly remote, it is far from inconceivable and could have grave consequences for Soviet interests, to say the least, in the absence of adequate preparations to minimize its effects.

From this premise unfolds a logical chain of reasoning and goal-setting entirely at odds with the approach hitherto pursued by mainstream American defense analysts and policymakers. For one thing, the Soviet recognition that nuclear war is a possibility that might someday have to be confronted and dealt with has led to a perceived obligation on the part of the leadership to undertake every feasible measure to mitigate its destructiveness so that the Soviet state might emerge in the least impaired condition permissible under the circumstances. For another, it has inspired the development and systematic refinement of a military doctrine concerned less with manipulating the peacetime perceptions of potential adversaries than with accumulating the operational concepts and repertoires necessary for assuring the effective combat employment of Soviet forces should the ultimate day of strategic reckoning ever come. What it essentially boils down to is an approach to deterrence based not on acceptance of a mutual suicide pact but on an abiding belief in the plausibility of achieving recognizable victory in nuclear war.⁶

⁴This point has been missed by many observers of the Soviet military scene. There has been a tendency in recent U.S. strategic debate, particularly on the conservative side, to contrast the American orientation toward "deterrence" with the Soviet doctrinal fixation on "war fighting," as though the two approaches were somehow aimed at diametrically opposed objectives. This distinction misunderstands the essence of Soviet political-military thinking. The Soviet stress on the importance of credible war-fighting options signifies neither a complacent attitude about nuclear war nor a rejection of deterrence as a transcendent policy goal. It merely reflects a different Soviet attitude regarding what a comfortable deterrent posture requires. In the United States, the tendency has been to accept an "assured destruction" retaliatory capability against urban-industrial targets as sufficient for most probable conditions of political-military crisis. The Soviets, for their part, have preferred to stick to the more traditional notion that if you want peace, prepare for war. In both cases, the question has not hinged on the objective desirability of deterrence so much as on the force characteristics and associated strategies required for maintaining it. On this score, while most American theorists have been content to place major reliance on the assumption of Soviet leadership rationality at the brink of war, the Soviets have chosen to hedge against uncertainty in more classical fashion by keeping their powder dry.

⁵This point was succinctly articulated by one of the nominal "moderates" in the internal Soviet defense debate during the mid-1960s: "When the security of a state is based only on mutual deterrence with the aid of powerful nuclear rockets, it is directly dependent on the good will and designs of the other side, which is a highly subjective and indefinite factor. . . . It would hardly be in the interests of any peaceloving state to forgo the creation of its own effective means of defense against nuclear-rocket aggression and make its security dependent only on deterrence, that is, on whether the other side will refrain from attacking." Major General N. Talenskii, "Antimissile Systems and Disarmament," in John Erickson, ed., *The Military-Technical Revolution* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), pp. 225, 227. The same philosophy was echoed by Premier Kosygin at the Glassboro summit in 1967, when he reportedly told President Johnson that the idea of giving up defensive weapons was "the most absurd proposition he had ever heard." Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), p. 208.

⁶As one Soviet military commentator has put it, "there is profound error and harm in the disorienting claims of bourgeois ideologues that there will be no victor in a thermonuclear world war. The peoples of the world will put an end to imperialism, which is causing mankind incalculable suffering." Major General A. Milovidov and Colonel V.

To be sure, this Soviet doctrinal certitude regarding the theoretical "winnability" of a nuclear exchange scarcely implies that the Soviet leaders take the prospect of such an exchange lightly or harbor confident expectations that any victory worth having would inexorably be theirs even in the best circumstances of war initiation, let alone the worst case. It does, however, attest to an attitude toward the role of strategic power heavily informed by classical principles of military thought and reinforced by a pervasive fear that denial of the possibility of victory would entail a fundamental rejection of the legitimacy of military institutions, with eventual defeatism and moral decay the inevitable results. More important, it also dictates guidelines for Soviet force development quite inconsistent with the reasoning typically invoked in support of annual U.S. strategic program proposals.

Because of its orientation toward the amassment of credible war-waging options rather than the mere preservation of deterrence through punitive retaliatory capabilities, Soviet doctrine calls for force quantities and characteristics well in excess of what would be adequate for underwriting a simple assured destruction policy. In practical terms, this involves, among other things, a requirement for such interrelated strategic assets as comprehensive counter-military targeting capabilities, a surveillance and warning network capable of supporting timely intracrisis preemption, substantial secure reserve forces for transwar escalation control and contingency employment, and a command and control system configured to provide sustained national direction of Soviet operations throughout the duration of a potential war. It would require a thick catalog to document the numerous activities of this sort that have been steadily under way in the Soviet Union in recent years. It is enough to say here that virtually nothing about any of them gives substantial ground for questioning the central role played by the basic premises of Soviet doctrine in lending organization and coherent purpose to Soviet military construction efforts.

Two broad implications of this Soviet "deterrence through denial" fixation for the long-term prospects for East-West stability warrant underscoring. Neither of them offers much counsel for encouragement. The first of these is the dead-set Soviet leadership refusal to have any traffic whatever with bilateral arms control schemes that require the Soviet Union to be an active partner in the enhancement of its own strategic vulnerabilities. Although the Soviet concept of security stresses the importance of avoiding nuclear war at every reasonable cost, it contains not a shred of evidence to indicate any Soviet belief that the deterrence enforcing that imperative ought in any way to be "mutual." Even though the Soviet leaders recognize and acknowledge the *existence* of mutual deterrence (if only because, at least for the moment, it constitutes an inescapable fact of strategic life), they scarcely consider it a desirable situation to be continued indefinitely and indeed have directed much of their strategic investments since the conclusion of SALT I precisely toward doing away with it at the earliest possible opportunity. It is one of the more notable ironies of the modern era that despite a decade of superficially tranquilizing détente politics, the prelaunch survivability of U.S. land-based ICBMs is now substantially less than it was when the SALT process first began and faces the almost certain prospect of disappearing altogether by the mid-1980s as a result of projected accuracy improvements in the Soviet SS-18 and SS-19 missile forces.

Although to a considerable degree the United States has no one but itself to blame for this looming unpleasantness because of its unilateral choice not to proceed earlier with corrective measures such as MX, the fact remains that the impending threat to Minuteman was altogether foreordained from the outset of SALT by the inexorable logic of Soviet strategic doctrine

and technological change. Soviet military theory stresses the critical importance of minimizing Soviet susceptibilities to nuclear war through the vigorous pursuit of offensive and defensive damage-limiting capabilities. It says nothing, however, about cooperation in minimizing the susceptibilities of the adversary and quite a bit about the virtues of endeavoring to do precisely the opposite. From the Soviet viewpoint, as a Rand colleague has remarked, "Minuteman vulnerability is *our* problem. That it happens to be *our* problem of *their* making . . . simply reflects the continuing competitive nature of détente." So long as Moscow persists in its commitment to deterrence through damage limitation and the United States remains locked into mutual assured destruction thinking, this sort of calculated Soviet insensitivity to Western security concerns will remain a fundamental impediment against achieving a common strategic language in the arms control arena.

The second problem posed for stability by Soviet doctrinal imperatives concerns the immoderate force acquisition goals which Moscow's pursuit of comprehensive war-waging options naturally implies. Traditionally, Soviet military spokesmen have been emphatic in their insistence on the importance of what they have termed "military-technological superiority." Throughout the SALT experience, however, such injunctions have become progressively muted over time, to the point where Brezhnev has lately come to make it one of the central themes of his public relations posturing toward the West that the Soviet Union lacks even the slightest interest in, let alone ambition toward, pursuit of such superiority.⁹

With all due regard for the personal rectitude of the Soviet President, it must be said that a great deal of disingenuousness lies behind such professions of innocent intent. It would be difficult, of course, to refute the argument that the Soviets are genuinely committed to the principles of "essential equivalence" and "equal security," insofar as such commitment entails little more than mere agreement to comply with the precise letter of verifiable SALT restrictions and ceilings. To extend such an argument to the point of maintaining that the Soviet leadership has abandoned its traditional belief in the value of tangible military advantages in deterrence and conflict management, however, would be to misread fundamentally the underlying purposes of current Soviet force modernization activities.

Whether or not one elects to call it "strategic superiority," the central goal of the Soviet military investment effort of the past decade has consistently been the acquisition of an overall force posture of sufficient strength and versatility to enable the Soviet Union to command the initiative in any determined military showdown with the West.¹⁰ There is every reason to

⁹W. E. Hoehn, Jr., *Outlasting SALT II and Preparing for SALT III* (The Rand Corporation, R-2528-AF, November 1979), p. 21.

¹⁰See, in particular, Lieutenant Colonel V. Bondarenko, "Military-Technological Superiority—The Most Important Factor in the Reliable Defense of the Country," *Kommunist Vooruzhenykh Sil*, No. 17, September 1966, pp. 7-14.

¹¹In a representative pronouncement, Brezhnev claimed in 1978 that "the Soviet Union considers that approximate equilibrium and parity are enough for our defense requirements. We do not set ourselves the objective of gaining military superiority. We also know that this very concept loses its meaning with the existence of the present enormous stockpiles of accumulated nuclear weapons and means of their delivery" (*New Times*, No. 19, May 1978, p. 7). More recently, Brezhnev also asserted: "I should like to emphasize again what I have repeatedly said of late. We are not seeking superiority over the West. We do not need it. All we need is reliable security" (*Time*, January 22, 1979, p. 22). The problem with the "reliable security" formula, of course, is that it is open-ended and does not recognize any natural stopping points for Soviet weapons acquisition. In effect, given the uninterrupted pace of recent Soviet force modernization, it amounts to little more than a case for superiority by another name. For further discussion on this point, see Benjamin S. Lambeth, "The Political Potential of Soviet Equivalence," *International Security*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Fall 1979, pp. 26-32.

¹²Contrast Brezhnev's assurances, for example, with this injunction attributed to Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, Chief of the Soviet General Staff, following a meeting in Moscow in 1978 with members of the House Armed Services Committee: "Today the Soviet Union has military superiority over the United States and henceforth the United States will be threatened. You had better get used to it." "Sounding Brass and Tinkling Symbols," *Air Force Magazine*, July 1978, p. 6.

believe the Soviets consider this goal to lie well within their grasp. Aside from activities expressly proscribed by existing SALT agreements, they will almost certainly continue bending every possible effort to bring it about. Should the net result prove to be a further exacerbation of the already considerable "arms race instabilities" inherent in the superpower relationship, it will merely stand as yet another reminder that the Soviet Union has never accepted "stability" as an appropriate goal of strategic planning to begin with and has never shown the slightest interest in considering unilateral restraints whose sole objective was merely to help the West solve its security problems.

DECISIONMAKING AND WEAPONS ACQUISITION PROCESSES

Although the detailed workings of Soviet strategic program formulation and implementation are poorly understood, even a synoptic accounting of what little we know about them would require far more space than is available here. What needs noting for the purposes of this discussion is simply that the distinctive style of Soviet military R&D and weapons procurement, with its relative insulation from disruptive outside influences, constitutes an almost natural institutional handmaiden in the service of systematically (if not always efficiently) carrying out the broad force structure directives provided by Soviet doctrine and leadership choice.

Here again, it may be instructive to examine the Soviet arms acquisition process from the perspective of the various ways in which it differs from that of the United States. In the American case, to note perhaps the most fundamental point of divergence, there has typically tended to be little more than the most superficial correlation between "doctrine" and the actual complexion of U.S. strategic force characteristics in recent years. Indeed, given the almost obligatory determination of each successive administration to dismantle the conceptual architecture left by the previous incumbents and to reformulate U.S. defense policy in a fashion more congenial to its own thinking, it is not unreasonable to ask whether the United States has even *had* a consistent strategic doctrine worthy of the name. For the most part, American defense procurements essentially constitute recurrent short-term suboptimizations based more on considerations of cost-effectiveness and the exigencies of budgetary politics than on any coherent effort to relate military capability to broad strategic concepts and goals. Development proposals and deployment options are invariably subjected to the most rigorous technical and economic scrutiny and, as often as not, end up being rejected on grounds of excessive cost.

¹One example of the inefficiency produced by this system may be seen in the diversity of the Soviet ICBM posture. As a consequence of the Soviet practice of multiple prototyping and concurrent deployment of complementary systems, the Soviet ICBM inventory includes at least six distinctive missile types and more than twice as many variations or "mods." (By contrast, the U.S. ICBM force consists of just two Minuteman variants, with some 50 additional Titans held over from the 1960s.) However impressive the overall capability afforded by this nonstandardized Soviet ICBM posture may be, it almost certainly comes at a high price in terms of associated problems of maintenance support, launch crew training, and operational readiness. Such a differentiated force structure would probably be regarded by U.S. planners, with good reason, as needlessly and unacceptably complicated.

²This absence of an enduring vision in U.S. strategic policy has not escaped Soviet notice. As one Soviet military theoretician remarked with almost embarrassing incisiveness, the term military doctrine has been employed in Western parlance "in so many and varied ways that it has virtually lost its true meaning. It is frequently identified with strategy or understood in a narrow sense, connected only with certain tasks the state is resolving or plans to resolve through military means at a particular time. . . . Let us just take U.S. military doctrine. How many names it has been given! All these names, of course, reflect their authors' aspirations to adapt to changing conditions, but they confuse a correct understanding of military doctrine. . . ." Lieutenant General I. Zavyalov, "The Creative Nature of Soviet Military Doctrine," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, April 19, 1973, p. 2.

irrespective of whatever contribution they might make toward enhancing U.S. preparedness.¹³ Insofar as "doctrine" (if one can call "mutual assured destruction" a doctrine) has shown any direct bearing on the character of the U.S. strategic posture at all, it has tended to have an inhibiting rather than invigorating effect by restraining program initiatives that, in the view of prevailing American deterrence theory, would threaten to destabilize the strategic balance.

In sharp contrast to American defense decisionmaking, with its myriad conflicting influences and pressures, the Soviet system of force planning and implementation is almost pristine in its simplicity. Unlike the case of the United States, where it frequently seems that everybody is a strategic expert after a fashion, the process of setting force requirements and determining implementation schedules in the Soviet Union is an exclusive prerogative of the General Staff. As well as we can gather, the civilian leadership (at least throughout the Brezhnev era) has tended to hold a fairly loose rein on the activities of its military R&D and planning communities and to restrict its own role largely to the determination of broad policy goals and budgetary allocations.¹⁴ As a consequence, Soviet military program management tends to involve a highly routinized pattern wherein Defense Ministry and General Staff officials lay out specific procurement needs based on available fiscal authorizations, the Military-Industrial Commission assigns various design bureaus and production entities appropriate implementation responsibilities, and the various armed services oversee the ultimate deployment of new systems—all with relentless regularity.

There is evidence, for example, that Soviet missile design bureaus are authorized to generate successions of prototypes as a standard practice without having to wait for the Defense Ministry to issue formal requirements for new systems. These prototypes are then tested and routinely served up for production and deployment decisions at periodic intervals in the development cycle. There is also evidence that the leadership frequently approves simultaneous deployment of competing prototypes for little reason other than to hedge against technological risk and to maintain adequate work programs for all major design and production entities. The net result is a Soviet missile industry which, in one graphic description, "for years has been grinding out new ICBM models like Ford and General Motors put out cars."¹⁵

Of course, this is a grossly oversimplified encapsulation of a highly complex and bureaucratized military decisionmaking world in actuality, and it is scarcely intended to leave the impression that the institutional machinery of Soviet defense planning is free of significant internal frictions and corporate rivalries. What disagreements that may arise, however, typically tend to be more over matters of detail rather than substance and are ultimately adjudicat-

The cancellation of the B-1 bomber by President Carter in 1977 after over \$4 billion of investment for prototype development is only the most dramatic recent example of this tendency. Whatever the underlying strategic wisdom of that decision may have been, it stemmed in considerable part from what must be recognized as an unusually extravagant U.S. style of advanced weapons development. Over the past two decades, the American military R&D community has been so driven by the assumed promise of high technology that it has insisted on producing successive generations of weapons incorporating simultaneous advances across the entire spectrum of system characteristics. As a result, it has tended to produce dream machines of undeniable technical elegance (as supremely typified by the B-1), yet with performance gains of frequently questionable operational need and design features of such sophistication as to render the overall procurement package either unaffordable or excessively costly for deployment in sufficient strength. The Soviets, by contrast, have tended to follow a more conservative philosophy of incremental product improvement, motivated by the conviction that the best is the worst enemy of good enough. Although this practice has yielded Soviet innovations of rather modest quality as measured by prevailing U.S. technological standards, it has also facilitated the steady Soviet accumulation of large numbers of weaponry adequate for fighting the war that could occur tomorrow morning. In the United States, the preferred course has been the more ambitious one of concentrating on highly refined and expensive systems that might or might not, because of the vagaries of domestic budgetary politics, be deployed to fight the war that could occur ten years down the road. The consequence of the latter approach has all too often been lots of impressive R&D but little ultimate contribution to the U.S. strategic posture.

¹³For a detailed analysis of the key organizational features of the Soviet weapons acquisition process, see Arthur J. Alexander, *Decisionmaking in Soviet Weapons Procurement* (Adelphi Papers No. 147-148) (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1978).

¹⁴Walter Pincus, "Soviets Seek SALT Change to Keep Missile Developers Busy," *Washington Post*, January 7, 1979.

ed within the family, as it were, rather than through external intervention. As a consequence, it is not surprising that Soviet military programs should show such close congruence with the formal precepts of Soviet military doctrine. There is no legislative agency to subject them to disruptive line-item scrutiny and amendment, no independent "arms control" constituency to challenge their premises and wage obstructionist rear-guard campaigns against them, and a sufficiently entrenched leadership structure to obviate tendencies toward the sort of erratic and costly program starts, stops, and delays that have often afflicted the orderly implementation of U.S. defense plans in recent years as a result of frequent senior personnel turnover.

As for the weapons acquisition process itself, what matters for ultimate Soviet behavior as a strategic competitor is that the inherent inertia of R&D and production processes once commitments to commence work have been authorized tends to impart a snowballing effect to Soviet programs which renders them extremely resistive to modification or termination. Given the pervasive Soviet doctrinal belief in the operational virtues of military abundance, there is typically little disposition to turn off the machine once it starts producing and a whole cornucopia of bureaucratic incentives for keeping it going. In the United States, there are all varieties of institutional constraints on the numerical levels to which U.S. forces can attain, quite apart from the formal limitations imposed by SALT. In the Soviet Union, there are no known strictures on such force expansion other than absolute budgetary ceilings and the military's capacity to assimilate new hardware in a controlled manner. Leaving aside those systems governed by SALT, one must search far and wide for any evidence that the overall Soviet military expansion effort—whether in tanks, tactical fighter aircraft, or other weapons—has any clearly defined endpoint in sight.

If it is true, as one must suppose, that this all but self-energizing mode of arms accumulation is a product of conscious leadership choice (or at least acquiescence) rather than merely the manifestation of a mindless military bureaucracy rolling about like a loose cannon without rational purpose or political discipline, one must conclude that the Soviet concept of deterrence is likely to remain dominated by a preference for unilateral investment over bilateral agreements for the indefinite future, making continued Western matching efforts in comparable equities the inevitable price for staying in the game. What renders the prospect of such efforts so problematic in this troubled time of history is the West's lack, for better or worse, of the comparative advantages afforded by the Soviet Union's largely unfettered institutional mechanisms and political environment for singlemindedly pursuing its defense business without having constantly to check over its shoulder for the political opposition.

UNILATERAL EXPLOITATION OF SALT

Finally, we must offer at least passing reference to the important role SALT itself has played as a source of Soviet strategic intractability. Here the root causes and resultant manifestations of Soviet conduct become blurred, for the SALT experience can be interpreted as reflecting ample elements of both. On the one hand, the repeated letdowns encountered by the U.S. side throughout the protracted history of SALT II—most dramatically represented by the brusque Soviet refusal even to entertain the 1977 Carter proposal for comprehensive ICBM force reductions—may be said collectively to have provided a fairly definitive test of Soviet strategic intentions by confirming the worst suspicions of those who had always argued that Moscow was trafficking in the SALT trade solely for the purpose of looking after its own

parochial interests.¹⁶ On the other hand, one can argue that SALT (at least since the signing of the initial accords in 1972) has directly affected the character of Soviet conduct as a result of the opportunities it has provided the Soviet Union to participate in the joint legislation, as it were, of constraints on U.S. technological advances, while at the same time offering not only license but encouragement for the unilateral pursuit of Soviet strategic gains within an explicit framework of U.S. acquiescence.

Since it has now become one of the more fashionable enterprises of the season to point out the various ways Moscow has manipulated SALT to the detriment of Western security, it would serve little purpose to review the evidence bearing on that theme at any length here. Simply to illustrate the sort of advantages the Soviets have accrued as a result of their societal closure and U.S. dispositions to give them the benefit of the doubt during the initial round of SALT, we may cite the SALT I provision granting the Soviet Union a roughly three-to-two numerical advantage in ballistic missile submarines as a representative case in point. At that time, one may recall, the Soviet argument justifying the need for this numerical edge stressed the longer transit times required for Soviet SSBNs to reach their patrolling stations compared to those of the United States because of unfavorable geographic circumstances, necessitating a margin of Soviet superiority in submarine strength in order to provide Moscow the capability to match the number of U.S. boats on operational deployment at any given time. Yet scarcely after the ink on the Interim Agreement had dried, the Soviets test-flew their new SS-N-8 SLBM to intercontinental range for the first time, confirming its capacity (known all along by Soviet planners) for covering most U.S. targets from Soviet territorial waters and thereby making a silent mockery of the whole "geographic liability" argument used to such successful effect in SALT I. *One is tempted to suspect in this instance that the Soviets had long before made up their minds about how many SSBNs they wanted and simply capitalized on SALT for assuring a level of Soviet superiority that might not have been allowed to go uncontested by the United States in other circumstances.*¹⁷

Before the growing accretion of such sobering examples knocked the chrome off the halos of those who had professed to see Soviet participation in SALT as a genuine indication of Moscow's interest in seeking a solution to the deterrence dilemma through cooperative stabilizing measures, the American tendency was to approach SALT on the well-intentioned assumption that, under the best of circumstances, it might evolve into an effective *substitute* for unilateral defense planning by bringing the strategic programs of both superpowers into an explicit negotiating context. As the record now shows, things have not worked out that way. The Soviets have done nicely in gaining a measure of indirect influence over the complexion of recent U.S. strategic activities, as perhaps best attested by their success in forcing the Carter administration to forgo a variety of potentially attractive MX deployment options that might create ambiguities regarding U.S. compliance with SALT restrictions on silo launchers and

¹⁶For an informed account of this episode, see Strobe Talbott, *Endgame: The Inside Story of SALT II* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 38-67. In fairness to the record, it should be added that these letdowns also stemmed largely from overblown U.S. expectations rather than from any particular Soviet diplomatic intransigence or double-dealing.

¹⁷Further development of this point is offered in David S. Sullivan, "The Legacy of SALT I: Soviet Deception and U.S. Retreat," *Strategic Review*, Vol. VII, No. 1, Winter 1979, pp. 26-41. In a rejoinder to the Sullivan article, Defense Department SALT Task Force Director Walter Slocombe has strenuously challenged the allegation that the Soviets actively "deceived" the United States in gaining this and other advantages in SALT I ("A SALT Debate: Hard But Fair Bargaining," *Strategic Review*, Vol. VII, No. 4, Fall 1979, pp. 22-28). The argument, however, is academic. Whether the Soviets were guilty of "deception" or simply withheld disclosure of their deployment plans to U.S. negotiators, as Slocombe more correctly maintains, there is no denying that they exploited their societal closure to achieve a satisfactory SALT I arrangement whose attainment would have been far more problematic in the absence of ironclad Soviet secrecy. That the United States has its own naiveté rather than the Soviets to blame scarcely vitiates the independent importance of the Soviet accomplishment.

verifiability.¹⁰ One would be hard put to find an example of American success in achieving any comparable degree of leverage over the technical characteristics of ongoing Soviet strategic programs.

For the Soviets, SALT has been approached from the outset as a direct adjunct of their military planning rather than as an alternative means of addressing the problem of Soviet security. Their most authoritative negotiators have been senior representatives of the military-industrial community with collateral responsibilities in the arena of Soviet defense policy formulation.¹¹ For them, SALT has tended to be employed quite purposefully as a means of attempting to secure at the bargaining table unilateral advantages that might prove less easy to come by on the technological battlefield of unrestrained arms competition. This hard-headed self-interest which has substantially motivated Soviet participation in SALT lies at the heart of the difficulties the United States has long encountered in reconciling its own idealistic expectations with the disappointing returns the SALT process has actually produced.

To help clarify this problem, we can portray the Soviet construction of SALT as an approximate analogue of the way in which the Soviet Union has long formulated its domestic constitutions and laws. It has carefully sought to adopt legal forms within whose broad framework it can comfortably demonstrate literal compliance, while at the same time infusing that language with sufficient ambiguity to permit it to do essentially whatever it would have done in any event, even in the absence of the formal protocol in question. One need only recall the almost casebook cleverness of Moscow's handling of the controversial silo-expansion provision of the SALT I Interim Agreement (which ultimately led to the SS-19, the now-impending Soviet threat to Minuteman, and the recent highly publicized *mea culpas* of Henry Kissinger) to appreciate the benefits this negotiatory approach has bestowed on the Soviets in the arms control arena.¹² One frequently hears laments and protests from commentators of diverse persuasions that even though the Soviet Union may be observing the precise letter of SALT I, its strategic comportment has consistently represented an affront to the "spirit" of arms control. People who express such indignation should know better. Arms control has had little to do with Soviet participation in SALT. The reason the Soviet Union is there is to enhance its own strategic capabilities to the maximum extent possible, ideally deriving the coin of such enhancement at the unilateral expense of the United States. Its negotiators, and their political superiors at home, devote a great deal of thought to the language of the agreements they sign, and for a purpose. For them, the concept of any "spirit" of SALT is purely an artifact of the creative Western imagination.

¹⁰In explaining the difficulties encountered in settling on a politically acceptable MX basing mode, Lieutenant General Kelly H. Burke, then Director of Operational Requirements for the U. S. Air Force, noted that "this is the first time we've built a strategic system and married it with the arms control process. . . . We're building a system to accommodate SALT as it is and as it may be." "MX Basing Approval Expected," *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, July 30, 1979, p. 12.

¹¹See Igor S. Glagolev, "The Soviet Decisionmaking Process in Arms Control Negotiations," *Orbis*, Vol. XXI, No. 4, Winter 1978, pp. 767-776.

¹²In a *post hoc* effort to rationalize the technical surprise wrought by the SS-19, Kissinger conceded to a State Department press gathering in December 1975 that "we obviously did not know in 1972 what missiles the Soviet Union would be testing in 1974." Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "The SS-19 Loophole," *Washington Post*, July 27, 1979.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LONG-TERM COMPETITION

It is now generally agreed among most U.S. analysts and planners that regardless of whether SALT II is ultimately ratified by the Senate, the United States will come under a growing threat to the survivability of its land-based missile force within the next few years as a result of impending improvements in the hard-target capability of Soviet fourth-generation ICBMs. Whether or not this prospect would have been permitted to occur in the absence of the Vietnam war and its pernicious effect in distracting American attention away from strategic nuclear matters is a fascinating but moot question. The fact is that as a consequence of unilateral U.S. decisions not to invest in significant efforts to deal with the silo vulnerability issue over the past decade, the Soviet Union has succeeded in gaining prospective access to a significant component of the U.S. deterrent triad for a window of at least several years in the early to mid-1980s, during which time the United States will have virtually no options for implementing effective offsetting measures.¹ Even under the best of circumstances, the repeatedly delayed MX is not now expected to reach initial operational capability until 1986, a year after the SALT II treaty is slated to expire.

A proper appreciation of Soviet strategic motivations and objectives on the part of U.S. decisionmakers at the time the SALT dialogue first got under way might have permitted an anticipation of this unfortunate development and the undertaking of appropriate moves to accommodate it in an orderly fashion. Instead, the U.S. national security community elected to observe restraint in strategic R&D and force development in the hope that the Soviet Union, seeing that cue, would reciprocate and join in a mutual effort through SALT to introduce an element of quiescence and order into the superpower nuclear competition. We now know, of course, that this early anticipation was doomed from the outset by the Soviet refusal to view the strategic deterrence problem in shared terms with the premises of Western stability theory. As this essay has sought to argue, the divergent Soviet conception of the deterrence dilemma and the natural tendency of the Soviet military decisionmaking and arms acquisition processes to support that conception have constituted systemic obstacles blocking the achievement of the sort of cooperative superpower arrangement in moderating the dynamism and dangers of the nuclear standoff advanced by Western arms control theorists as the preferred endpoint of the détente process. Given this Soviet uninterest in the attractions of Western strategic logic and Moscow's entrenched unsusceptibility to being "educated" toward a recognition that those attractions might entail benefits for Soviet security, one may even go so far as to express reasonable doubt whether what Thomas W. Wolfe has called "the arms control vision of the strategic future" ever constituted a realistically attainable goal of American foreign policy and diplomacy.²

A great deal of emphasis has been placed in recent U.S. defense debate on the "war-

¹The ultimate *reductio ad absurdum* occasioned by this failure to begin attending to the silo vulnerability issue once it became undeniable has been the increasingly felt need of senior U.S. defense officials to hint openly at the threat of "launch on warning" as a last-ditch deterrent option in deep crises. (See Charles Corddry, "U.S. Debates Launch Time for ICBMs," *Baltimore Sun*, February 11, 1979.) This departure from nearly every accepted principle of command and control is particularly unfortunate in view of the more rational alternatives that could have been pursued with greater forethought and willingness to act accordingly. The Soviet threat to Minuteman scarcely materialized overnight.

²Thomas W. Wolfe, *The SALT Experience* (Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1979), p. 263.

fighting" focus of Soviet doctrine and the implication that this might reflect an underlying Soviet disposition to think the unthinkable in a manner threatening grave consequences for Western security in the event of a nuclear confrontation. Yet ironically, for all its rhetorical toughness, it is not the combat orientation of Soviet military thinking per se which creates the principal grounds for legitimate Western concern. Despite their evident possession of force employment options configured toward the achievement of some identifiable form of military victory should nuclear war prove unavoidable, the Soviet leadership has long been highly risk-averse in its global strategic comportment and fully appreciates the compound uncertainties—about enemy rationality under pressure, about the technical capabilities of their own forces, about the probable performance of their commanders in the swirling confusion of a massive nuclear exchange, and so on—which collectively constitute an important "other side of the coin" of Soviet force application planning and tend to place the superficially ominous language of Soviet doctrine in a rather less alarming light.³ Moreover, the contingency plans and targeting concepts (though not yet the strategic forces themselves) of the United States have, in recent years, been undergoing some highly publicized changes from the simplistic criteria of "assured destruction" toward a more traditional pursuit of military options associated with goals involving some sense of rational political purpose.⁴ Surely none of this has been lost on the Kremlin.

What does warrant reasoned concern about the "war-fighting" proclivities of Soviet strategic thought and the image of victory it inspires is the practical impact which that doctrinal mind-set has had in governing the intensity and scope of actual Soviet military investment efforts. Even here, the tangible outgrowths of Soviet military expenditure must be viewed in proper perspective, something many Western observers have failed to do in their preoccupation with the technical aspects of Soviet strategic activities. It is not the *Backfire* by itself, or the SS-18, or any other combination of Soviet weapons that fundamentally lies at the root of the current Western security predicament. Given the will and the necessary countervailing investments, these sorts of problems can be dealt with. What ultimately matters about Soviet behavior as far as the broader East-West competition is concerned is the overarching philosophical orientation that stands behind it and gives it direction and vitality. It is an orientation firmly wedded to a commitment to security through ever-increasing strength, and as long as the Soviets remain under its influence, it will continue to set the ground rules for East-West strategic interaction. For Soviet leaders and planners, the nuclear environment is almost literally perceived as a modern-day Hobbesian state of nature, in which mere "sufficiency" of armaments can never be enough.

Increasingly, American and West European authorities of diverse outlooks are coming to appreciate this fact and to recognize its practical bearing on the character of Soviet conduct. Despite this salutary trend, however, there continues to be considerable reluctance within official American and NATO European circles to undertake the necessary conceptual leap

³Elaboration on these and other potential Soviet sources of caution may be found in Benjamin S. Lambeth, *Risk and Uncertainty in Soviet Deliberations About War* (The Rand Corporation, forthcoming).

⁴This trend began with the quest for greater targeting flexibility promoted by Secretary Schlesinger during the Nixon incumbency and has continued, with much less public fanfare, throughout the period of the Carter administration. On the origins and early content of this effort, see Benjamin S. Lambeth, *Selective Nuclear Options in American and Soviet Strategic Policy* (The Rand Corporation, R-2034-DDRE, December 1976). For subsequent developments since President Carter's arrival in office, see also Richard Burt, "U.S. Moving Toward Vast Revision of Its Strategy on Nuclear Warfare," *New York Times*, November 30, 1978; Robert Kaylor, "Brown Would Widen Range of Russian Military Targets," *Washington Post*, January 14, 1979; and Michael Getler, "Carter Directive Modifies Strategy for a Nuclear War," *Washington Post*, August 6, 1980. A well-informed analytical overview of these trends may be found in Desmond Ball, *Developments in U.S. Strategic Policy Under the Carter Administration*, ACIS Working Paper No. 21, Center For International and Strategic Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles, February 1980.

toward a more responsive force development policy dictated by this recognition of Soviet reality. Although awareness of Soviet doctrinal and operational uniqueness is now widespread throughout Western intelligence and defense agencies, and has even begun to make its influence felt in certain marginal areas of contingency planning and military training,⁵ it still figures only remotely, at best, in the formal processes of actual force structure development and implementation. This circumstance will require substantial alteration before any significant progress can be made toward undoing the cumulative ills that have come to beset the U.S. strategic posture and the NATO military balance since the Soviet force expansion program first began. There is ample room for differing views about the specific Western declaratory policies and program decisions that might be best suited to dealing with the challenge posed by the Soviet strategic threat. If there is any message here that might help inform a drawing of the appropriate outer boundaries for such contention, it is that such endeavors as SALT will never provide more than peripheral instruments for attempting to modulate the East-West strategic competition and thereby enhance international security at the margins. If the West is to remain a respectable player in this competition, it will have to begin imposing measures conducive to stability in spite of Soviet strategic intractability, rather than continue its adherence to the elusive hope of eliciting Soviet cooperation on the cheap.

Whether this gloomy verdict means that SALT and détente have become hollow goals without promise or prospect will depend heavily on how the United States elects to reconfigure its foreign and strategic policies in the coming decade. It would surely be wrong, at least yet, to conclude that the United States has been reduced to emulating the worst features of Soviet behavior simply for lack of more imaginative alternatives. At the same time, it seems increasingly clear that the optimistic assumptions that underlay U.S. détente diplomacy throughout most of the past decade have failed to elicit the sort of Soviet reciprocity which any stable ordering of East-West relations necessarily must require. This is not to say that Moscow is unsusceptible to arms control agreements that coincidentally happen to serve Western interests or that SALT should be summarily abandoned simply because of past U.S. disappointments and frustrations. As the ABM Treaty of 1972 demonstrated, the Soviet leadership has shown itself quite capable of accepting highly specific self-denying ordinances when the alternative to doing so has appeared decidedly less attractive. The bulk of SALT I, however, was a noble but largely unsuccessful test of the Soviet Union's broader willingness to work toward a bilateral relationship disciplined by a common commitment to mutual deterrence and moderated arms competition. By their persistent refusal to accommodate to this expectation in SALT II, the Soviets failed that test and revealed their abiding disdain for Western notions about what the strategic world should ideally entail.

The imperative thus facing the United States in the immediate years ahead is to begin forging a new approach to stability that appeals primarily to Soviet strategic sensitivities and insecurities, rather than to the dubious prospect of eventual Soviet empathy with the preferred concepts and goals of the West. This will require, at the least, a continuation of the current U.S. effort to project a refurbished image of strategic seriousness through such programs as MX and NATO nuclear force modernization. Given the profound concern and ill will generated by

⁵Particularly notable in this regard has been the U.S. Air Force's effort to provide realistic air-to-air training for its tactical fighter aircrews through the use of aggressor squadrons flying the F-5E as a MiG-21 surrogate simulating known Soviet aerial combat techniques. Also notable is Project Checkmate, a headquarters-level Air Force program intended to enhance USAF tactical air employment planning in Europe by contributing informed insights into Soviet operational styles and illuminating potentially exploitable Soviet vulnerabilities. See Captain Don Carson, USAF, "Teaching Tactics in TAC's MiGs," *Air Force Magazine*, March 1974, pp. 44-47, and Phillipe Grasset, "Dissimilar Air Combat Training—A Revolution in Realism," *International Defense Review*, Vol. 8, No. 6, December 1975, pp. 823-827. See also Captain James Lawrence, USAF, "Readiness: Project Checkmate," *Aerospace Safety*, September 1978, pp. 1-5.

the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, it may also require an effective end to the SALT process as it has been understood and conducted thus far. In time, however, there is every reason to believe that a resurgent mobilization of American industrial and technological assets will perceptibly work to circumscribe Soviet expectations about the limits of the possible in their own strategic ambitions.⁶ Notwithstanding the nominal strictures of SALT, the Soviets have been working with intense determination in their military construction efforts for more than fifteen years. Much of the resultant success in improving their strategic posture, moreover, has been directly attributable to the comparative slackening of countervailing American investments over the same period. The Soviets deeply respect Western technological prowess and would have good reason to wonder how long they could continue their present rate of military growth without the buffering influence of some SALT-like governing mechanism in the event the United States elected to run the gauntlet of serious arms competition once again. Whatever the outcome, such an effort would at least promise to present a new test couched in more familiar terms which the Soviets would be less likely to fail once again. Between the two undesirables of continued business as usual and a return to outright international jungle warfare, it is hard to imagine any other acceptable American alternative.

⁶Although a proper survey of alternative U.S. responses suitable for meeting this objective would require another essay, it should be noted in passing that none of them requires either a comprehensive pursuit of "strategic superiority" (which would almost certainly be blocked by countervailing Soviet efforts) or an indiscriminate campaign to match Soviet forces number for number. Rather, what is needed is a closer linkage between U.S. operational doctrine and force posture which seeks to disabuse Soviet military planners of any confident expectation that their strategic principles would be workable in the face of a serious military test. Although success in attaining such a capability will not necessarily require a resumption of open-ended "arms racing" with the Soviet Union, it will plainly call for investment in a number of military forces, operational readiness needs, and command and control assets that have not been vigorously pursued in recent U.S. strategic planning.

