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THREAT AND OPPORTUNITY: THE SOVIET VIEW OF THE STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE

by

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Threat and Opportunity: The Soviet View of
the Strategic Defense Initiative

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ABSTRACT

The Soviet response to the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) during the period March 1983 through November 1985 provided indications of their view of the program both as a threat and as an opportunity to weaken NATO. The SDI is seen not only as a threat to the physical security of the Soviet Union but as part of an effort by the United States to seize the strategic initiative by neutralizing the military component of Soviet strategy. A major objective of that strategy is the political separation of Western Europe from the United States which the Soviets sought to facilitate by aggravating allied concern over the SDI's potential implications for European security and economic interests.

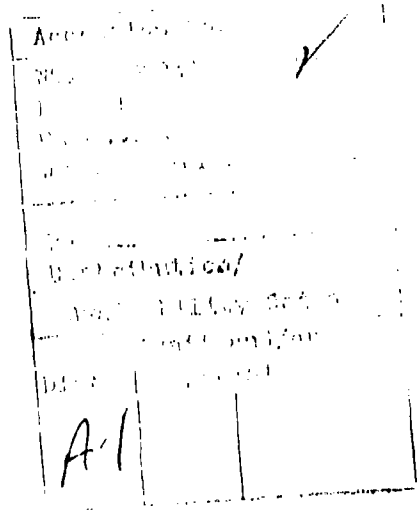


TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) was announced by President Reagan in March 1983 with virtually no public (and minimal official) debate concerning its implications for United States policy in terms of the possible reactions of the NATO allies and the Soviet Union to the program. Since then, a great deal of debate has been generated on both sides of the Atlantic centering on the SDI's technical feasibility and strategic desirability. At the hub of the controversy is the Soviet Union for it is here that the other aspects of the debate largely hinge.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the factors that have conditioned the Soviet response by examining the SDI in the context of the US and Soviet views of their opponent's political-military strategy. Consideration of US strategic motives from the Soviet perspective enables a fuller understanding of the actual Soviet perception of the SDI. Such an understanding is necessary to support American political objectives for the program as well as for countering Soviet efforts to deny their achievement.

The Reagan Administration's apparent motives for launching the SDI are presented in Part II. The threat rationale for the SDI involves its role in countering trends in Soviet strategic force posture. The Administration has argued that the SDI is intended to restore equilibrium in Soviet-American strategic capabilities as a necessary pre-condition for large-scale reductions in offensive nuclear forces.

The arms control rationale for the SDI lies in its potential for providing the Soviets with an incentive for cooperating with the United States in achieving the offensive force reductions sought by the Administration.

Part III considers the SDI in the context of strategic deception. The Administration's persuasive and compellant objectives for the SDI are identified and distinguished from the potentially deceptive objectives as they might be viewed by the Soviets. It is hypothesized that the Soviet predisposition to see deception behind the SDI is reinforced by their assessment of US intentions and capabilities and the utility of military deception in furthering the achievement of political goals. Using the concept of "transparent cover" as a model, it is further argued that that the SDI as deception is theoretically possible. Therefore, Soviet claims of deception in their response to the SDI should not be dismissed as mere propaganda.

Part IV examines the Soviet response from the SDI's announcement in March 1983 to the Geneva summit in November 1985. Commentary drawn from Soviet open sources was analyzed in order to distinguish the actual Soviet perception of the SDI from the purely propaganda element in their public statements and positions.

It was anticipated that the Soviet response would contain both defensive and offensive characteristics. The defensive aspect derived from their view of the SDI as part of a US effort to seize the strategic initiative by neutralizing the military component of Soviet strategy. The Soviets therefore rejected the Administration's defensive and arms control rationales for the program. In their

discussion of the SDI as a threat the Soviets also provided direct and indirect indications of their view of the SDI as an attempt at deception.

In order to gain support for the SDI, the Administration has tried to persuade the NATO allies that the program would insure the maintenance of European security. The offensive aspect of the Soviet response consisted of efforts to reinforce European misgivings on strategic defense thereby undermining allied support for the program. The SDI was thus seen by the Soviets as another opportunity to exploit existing divergences of interest between the United States and NATO Europe.

II. APPARENT MOTIVES FOR THE SDI

The Administration's case for the SDI is grounded in two arguments. First, the SDI is considered a necessary response to the Soviet military threat. Developments in Soviet offensive and defensive forces are seen as consistent with a global strategy that calls for military superiority across the board. The SDI has been offered as one element of a US defense program that will restore and maintain the balance between Soviet and American strategic forces. Second, it is argued that the SDI will help to restore some measure of efficacy to the arms control process. The prevailing opinion within the Administration seems to be that, given the nature of Soviet strategic objectives, arms control as it has been conducted in the past has not been to the net benefit of the United States. The SDI has been recommended as an incentive for the Soviets to engage in serious negotiations that will ultimately result in large-scale reductions in offensive forces.

A. THE THREAT RATIONALE

The Department of Defense has identified three developments in Soviet military capabilities that pose major challenges for US defense policy:

- The Soviet military buildup, both qualitative and quantitative, has produced a major shift in the nuclear and conventional balance;
- The Soviet military offensive capability has increased dramatically; and

- The Soviets have significantly extended the global reach of their military forces, enhancing the ability to project influence and power, especially in the Third World [Ref. 1:p. 133].

These and other statements by Administration officials reflect an image of the Soviet Union characterized by the latter's long-term global policy of (1) revisionism with respect to the strategic balance of power; (2) obsession with achieving strategic superiority which facilitates (3) expansion into the Third World. Underlying all of these themes is a perception of the demonstrated and potential political utility of the Soviet military in peacetime in a manner harmful to US global interests.

A fundamental assumption in the Administration's view of the Soviet strategic program is the latter's rejection of the concept of mutual assured destruction (MAD). Simply put, MAD assumes that both the US and USSR retain sufficient non-vulnerable kill capacity to guarantee destruction of an attacker even after the absorption of a first strike [Ref. 2:p. xii]. Since the mid-1960s, US declaratory (public) doctrine has been to favor programs that enhance an "assured destruction" capability. The United States had apparently concluded that against a determined and powerful opponent like the Soviet Union, a major effort to achieve clear-cut superiority would be unavailing, at best needlessly expensive, and at worst dangerously provocative and destabilizing [Ref. 3:p. 84]. In other words, given the enormous destructive power of nuclear weapons, the United States had adhered to the concept of MAD as the most rational course in limiting the possibility of nuclear war. The maintenance of MAD, which assumes the

maintenance of the strategic balance, was deemed worthy of pursuing because it has worked and there are no practical alternatives.

The dictates of their strategic culture cause the Soviets to take quite a different view of the MAD concept. According to Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the Soviet Union is compelled to act as an instrument of the forces of history which will ultimately result in the worldwide victory of socialism. Therefore, the Soviets must challenge the status quo in all areas where progress toward the ultimate goal might be inhibited. Since the MAD concept reinforces the strategic status quo, it inherently contradicts Marxist-Leninist doctrine and its acceptance by the Soviets could be interpreted as abandonment of the world socialist mission. The strategic corollary of the Soviet ideological position would consider permanent parity with the United States as equivalent to permanent defeat. The Soviets have thus found it expedient to abide by the tenets of MAD not as a normative concept but rather as an objective, and temporary, fact. Similarly, strategic nuclear parity with the United States is not considered by the Soviets to be necessarily permanent.

The Administration's perception of the Soviet Union's revisionist orientation is reinforced by the nature and extent of the latter's strategic doctrine and weapons programs. Over the years, the declaratory doctrine espoused by the party leadership has consistently denied any intention of seeking military superiority. Yet Soviet military literature has shown similar continuity in basic attitudes toward nuclear war and policies to prepare for it. Central to Soviet attitudes is their focus on fighting nuclear war and the attending

requirement for various forms of superiority, even if only marginal [Ref. 3:p. 84]. In the view of the Department of Defense:

> "This dangerous shift in the global balance unmistakenly demonstrated Soviet intentions to attain a position of military superiority. Should this trend continue unchecked, one must assume--given Soviet writings, force deployments, and strategic exercises--the Soviet leadership could conclude that they had acquired the capability to fight and win a nuclear war." [Ref. 1:p. 134]

Another major development of concern to the Reagan Administration is the Soviet acquisition of a power projection capability. This capability and the issue of the strategic balance are directly related. The attainment of strategic parity with the United States in the early 1970s was interpreted by the Soviets as their having achieved global status. Such a view was tacitly reinforced by the United States in the SALT I agreement. However, the latter did not foresee the effect that recognition of the Soviet Union as an equal strategic power would have on the its opponent's global policy, i.e., that such recognition would be received as conferring upon the USSR the status of an overall equal to the United States including the right to pursue an activist policy in the Third World [Ref. 4:p. 2].

By the mid-1970s, as Soviet doctrinal literature increasingly emphasized the need to be able to act and react in areas distant from the homeland, Soviet military developments, particularly the growth in naval and airlift assets, indicated that the Soviet Union was rapidly acquiring a capability commensurate with its perceived global status [Ref. 2:p. xiii]. Increased Soviet activism in the Third World is at least partially attributable to the confidence provided by strategic

offensive and defensive forces that had also been undergoing continuous modernization and expansion.

i. Soviet Offensive Programs

The Reagan Administration is concerned over what it perceives as "worrisome" trends in the strategic balance brought about by increased Soviet deployments of multi-warhead land missiles. The Soviet Union, like the United States, possesses a strategic "triad" of land-based, submarine-launched, and airborne nuclear forces capable of intercontinental attack. But it is the combination of quantitative increases and qualitative improvements in the land-based component of the Soviet strategic nuclear arsenal that the Administration finds most threatening [Ref. 5].

The Soviet Strategic Rocket Force consists of some 1,400 silo launchers compared to about 1,026 for the United States as of mid-1985. Beginning in the mid-1070s, however, the growth in the number of Soviet ICBM reentry vehicles has been rapid due to the deployment of SS-17, SS-18, and SS-19 ICBMs. These fourth generation systems carry more and larger multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) than the most modern US ICBM, the MINUTEMAN III. The number of Soviet ICBM reentry vehicles is currently assessed at about 6,300 versus roughly 2,100 for the United States. The newer Soviet systems, moreover, are believed to be considerably more accurate and, through silo hardening, more survivable than the predecessor systems. [Ref. 1:p. 29]

Concern within the Administration is further aggravated by evident Soviet plans to deploy two new ICBMs, the medium-size SS-X-24 and the smaller SS-25. Under the rules of the SALT II Treaty, which

both powers are observing even though it was not ratified by the Senate, the US and USSR are allowed to deploy one new missile each. The Soviets have claimed the SS-X-24 as their entry while the United States has chosen the MX (Missile-Experimental), or PEACEKEEPER. The Soviets insist that the SS-25 is merely an updated version of the obsolescent SS-13 and so does not qualify as a new weapon or as a SALT violation. The Administration continues to dispute both points. In any case, the potential mobility of both the SS-X-24 (mounted on a disguisable train launcher) and the SS-25 (transported and launched from flatbed trucks) will make the task of locating and engaging these weapons in a counterforce strike much more difficult if not impossible. [Ref. 6]

The perceived quantitative imbalance between US and Soviet land-based nuclear forces combined with improvements in Soviet ICBM capability and survivability are seen as enhancing the latter's potential for the destruction of US nuclear forces either through a limited preemptive attack or through a massive first strike. According to Secretary of Defense Weinberger, a fraction of the Soviet first-strike force--itself representing only a portion of the Soviet ICBM force--has the capability of destroying most of the US land-based missiles, submarines in port, and bombers on airfields thereby neutralizing the American retaliatory capacity [Ref. 7:p. 3]. The Administration contends that a future president, left with only submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) of insufficient accuracy to destroy anything but Soviet cities, is not a credible retaliatory

threat. Such an attack would probably only result in a Soviet attack on US population centers [Ref. 8].

The Reagan Administration has thus felt compelled to take steps to restore the strategic balance and, in the process, revitalize the deterrent posture of the United States. One aspect of the US response is the Strategic Modernization Program begun in October 1981 which aims to redress perceived deficiencies in the US strategic triad, for example, through the deployment of the PEACEKEEPER (MX) ICBM, and the TRIDENT II SLBM both of which have the capability of penetrating hardened targets. [Ref. 1:p. 135]

A second potential US response is the Strategic Defense Initiative announced in March 1983. The impact that SDI deployment would have on their strategic posture is not lost on the Soviets. The SDI, which is intended to engage nuclear delivery systems and warheads after launch could, in effect, negate whatever advances the Soviets have made in improving the survivability of their fourth and fifth generation ICBMs either through silo hardening or mobile platforms. Even if the President's ultimate goal of making nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete" is not realized, other Administration officials have pointed out that the uncertainty introduced to the Soviet decision making process by even an imperfect US defense could enhance deterrence by reducing a potential attacker's expectation of success [Ref. 9:p. 3]. It is important to note, however, that the President's stated objective for the SDI of eliminating nuclear weapons has not been contradicted by any official in the Reagan Administration even as

arguments against the technical feasibility of this goal began to mount.

2. Soviet Defensive Programs

Soviet efforts since the end of World War II to provide defense against attack from aircraft, missiles, and satellites have existed on a scale considerably beyond any such efforts by the United States [Ref. 10:p. 159]. This effort has resulted in the most extensive strategic defense system in the world including thousands of surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems and interceptor aircraft and the world's only deployed antiballistic missile (ABM) defense system in the vicinity of Moscow. Though the current Soviet ABM system is relatively primitive and rudimentary, the breadth and depth of the Soviet conventional air defense network and its technical upgrading along with Soviet research and development in the area of new weapons technology is a source of increasing concern to the Reagan Administration.

The Soviet Union has long been committed to the doctrine of "damage limitation" as reflected in the continuing search for a viable means of ballistic missile defense (BMD). Soviet preoccupation with war survival is also a manifestation of their unease with MAD as the best available deterrent and guarantee of peace. A fundamental precept of MAD holds that mutual vulnerability effected through agreements to refrain from building nuclear defenses would provide each side with the unchallenged capacity to destroy the other [Ref. 2:p. 3]. The realization that complete defense against nuclear attack was not feasible in any case given the technical means at hand and the imminent deployment of MIRVed warheads led the US and the USSR in 1972 to

conclude a treaty limiting the deployment of ABM defenses to one system for each side. The subsequent abandonment by the US of its ABM system not only did not result in a reciprocal move by the Soviets (though such was not necessarily the intent of the US' action) but also did not inhibit the continued expansion and improvement of Soviet conventional air defenses nor slowed down their efforts in BMD research and development. If anything, Soviet activities in these areas intensified [Ref. 10:p. 159].

Soviet advancements in ABM defense have aggravated the Administration's concern for the threat to the ICBM and SLBM legs of the US strategic triad. The Soviets are believed to be in the process of upgrading the Moscow ABM network with a new interceptor that is much faster than the original system [Ref. 11]. In addition, two new SAM systems may have the capability to intercept some types of US ballistic missiles [Ref. 1:p. 50].

Despite the perceived Soviet lead in deployed ABM systems, it is generally acknowledged that the USSR lags in technologies such as computers and software, automated control, telecommunications, and guidance systems. However, the United States must be concerned not only with current Soviet activities and near-term developments but also with indications of Soviet capabilities and intentions as much as twenty years into the future. Thus, on-going Soviet research in the area of new-in-principle weapons including directed energy are regarded as ominous. It is feared that such weapons could be intended for land-based and spaceborne applications as part of a program for

comprehensive defense of national territory, i.e., a Soviet version of the Strategic Defense Initiative [Ref. 12].

According to the Secretary of Defense, the Soviet Union since the late 1960s has been pursuing a substantial advanced defensive technologies program that has been exploring many of the same technologies of interest to the United States in the SDI program [Ref. 7:p. 16]. Significantly, Soviet progress in the research and development of these technologies is believed to be equal to that of the United States. In some areas, the Soviets may actually be leading as, for example, in the case of high-power generators for driving some types of directed energy weapons [Ref. 1:pp. 44-45]. The Soviets are also believed to possess an operational anti-satellite (ASAT) interceptor while the US system is still in the testing phase [Ref. 13:p. 251].

The Soviet investment in their advanced technologies program combined with indications that they have reached the prototype phase in some types of weapons have raised Administration fears of a potential breakout in the deployment of these systems in an ABM role [Ref. 9:p. 3]. According to Department of Defense estimates, the Soviets could be ready to deploy a ground-based laser for ballistic missile defense by the early-to-mid-1990s. High-energy lasers for strategic air defense could be fielded sooner and space-based laser systems for BMD after the year 2000 [Ref. 1:p. 44].

Key Administration officials, including the President, are convinced that the Soviet Union has embarked upon a program for extending the defense of their national territory against not only manned

aircraft but also against the threat from ballistic missiles. As such, the SDI can be said to be intended not only as a counter to existing and near-term improvements in Soviet strategic offensive forces. It is further intended to close a perceived "gap" in Soviet-American strategic defensive potential. As the Administration sees it, Soviet activities in the latter area have succeeded in undermining the basic deterrent core of MAD and are indicative of Soviet contempt for the arms control process.

B. THE ARMS CONTROL RATIONALE

The on-going debate on the desirability of the SDI includes arguments on the potential effects the program could have on strategic stability, specifically, that it might stimulate the Soviets into accumulating even greater numbers of offensive weapons to offset US defensive advantages. However, the Administration's apparent disregard for Soviet threats to renew their offensive weapons buildup undoubtedly has caused the Soviets to reconsider the US' attitude toward arms control.

1. The Results of the SALT Process

The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) have yielded three major agreements: the SALT I Interim Agreement, the ABM Treaty (both concluded in 1972), and the unratified SALT II accord of 1979. Despite high hopes and some early indications of success, the SALT process has failed to produce the more stable and peaceful world order originally envisioned by many of its proponents [Ref. 14:p. 69]. That the Administration's disappointment with the arms control process is shared

by some members of Congress is reflected in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee report on SALT II:

> "While giving due weight to these modest though useful steps, the Committee is disappointed that more could not be achieved from the arms control point of view....The most important reason for the Committee's sense of disappointment is the large increase in warheads expected on both sides, despite the modest reduction in the number of permitted launchers. Thus, paradoxically, a vast increase in the quantity and destructiveness of each side's strategic power will occur during the period of a treaty that seeks to limit strategic offensive arms ." [Ref. 15]

There was indeed significant growth in the aggregate numerical levels of US and Soviet ICBMs, SLBMs, and strategic bombers from the beginning of SALT I in 1969 to the conclusion of SALT II in 1979. The number of strategic delivery systems has remained relatively stable since SALT II was signed. Beginning in the mid-1970s, however, ICBM and SLBM reentry vehicle (RV) quantities have risen considerably on both sides but in no case more dramatically than in Soviet ICBM RVs. According to the Department of Defense, Soviet RVs in this category increased from a total of about 2,000 in 1975 to more than 6,000 in 1985. During the same period, US SLBM RV quantities also rose from about 3,500 to more than 5,500. [Ref. 1:pp. 30-33]

From the Administration's perspective, the arms control process has not only failed to inhibit growth in the superpowers' nuclear inventories but, as indicated above, has resulted in a Soviet advantage in land-based strategic missiles. In the view of Paul Nitze, a senior arms control advisor, the failure of SALT to include controls on the aggregate missile payload, or throwweight, of the forces on both sides, and not just on the numbers of missile launchers, institutionalized the Soviet ICBM advantage. [Ref. 14:p. 66]

The SALT process, moreover, is probably responsible in part for aspects of Soviet political-military behavior that have worked to the detriment of US interests. As discussed earlier, it is believed that US recognition of the Soviet Union as an equal strategic power through SALT I was responsible for setting in motion the Soviet program for increased activism in the Third World during the mid-1970s. In any case, the arms control process is not seen by the Administration as having had a significant effect on curbing the Soviet drive for superiority as evidenced in their strategic offensive and defensive programs. As implied by Marshal Grechko's assertion that reliable deterrence can be provided only by strengthening Soviet military capabilities, arms control apparently does not rank high in Soviet strategic thought as a means of safeguarding the security interests of the USSR [Ref. 3:p. 85].

2. The Question of Soviet Compliance

The Administration's confidence in the arms control process has been further undermined by a perceived unwillingness on the part of the Soviet Union to abide by either the spirit or the letter of arms control agreements. In his report to the Congress documenting Soviet violations of their arms control obligations, President Reagan has stated:

> "Soviet noncompliance is a serious matter. It calls into question important security benefits from arms control and could create new security risks. It undermines the confidence essential to an effective arms control process in the future. It increases doubts about the reliability of the USSR as a negotiating partner and thus damages the chances for establishing a more constructive US-Soviet relationship." [Ref. 1:p. 23]

Among the numerous cases of Soviet violations and probable violations cited by the President, some of the more important involve activities within Soviet offensive and defensive programs. The Administration has accused the Soviet Union of violating at least two provisions of the SALT II accord: encryption of telemetry to impede verification and development and testing of more than one new ICBM [Ref. 13:p. 244]. The Administration is also convinced of the Soviet commitment to build a nationwide BMD system similar to that envisioned for the SDI. But while the SDI is defended on the grounds that the character of its research is in no way illegal, Soviet BMD-related activities are cited as flagrant violations of the ABM Treaty. Soviet transgressions are said to include the configuration of the radar located at Krasnoyarsk and the testing of SAM components in an ABM mode, among others [Ref. 1:p. 23].

The Soviet BMD program as well as their efforts to deny the United States critical verification data may not be mere violations of arms control agreements. In the opinion of some analysts, they reflect a larger Soviet program designed to deceive the West regarding Soviet strategic capabilities and intentions [Ref. 16:pp. 41-42]. Such a view is not contradicted by the Administration's assessment of the Soviet approach to arms control.

3. The Need for "Real" Arms Control

Closely related to the problem of alleged Soviet arms control violations is the issue of verification as a means of inhibiting such behavior. The Soviet position on this issue (e.g., their refusal to permit on-site inspections), coupled with the inherent limitations of

remote surveillance systems, has caused some in the Administration to be pessimistic on the ability of the US to monitor Soviet compliance with specific treaty provisions. Confidence in negotiated agreements as an effective means of arms control has thus been eroded:

> "Soviet violations cast serious doubt on some of the key assumptions about arms control that have guided US policy and Western public opinion for 30 years. Specifically, they call into question that the risk of detection would generally deter the Soviets from violating their arms control obligations, or in the rare instances when the Soviets would not be deterred, they would suffer serious penalties....Our verification capabilities have not deterred the Soviet Union from violating arms control agreements. Moreover, if the Soviets are not made to account for their actions, it is unlikely that they will be deterred from more serious violations. We must approach arms control today more carefully than we have in the past." [Ref. 1:p. 23]

The Reagan Administration's goals for achieving "real" arms control are not substantially different from those of previous administrations. The United States continues to maintain, for example, that arms control accords should be effectively verifiable. What is perhaps new in the current administration's position, however, is the evident insistence that any new agreement be verifiable [Ref. 17].

As with its predecessors, the Reagan Administration also expects arms control accords to reduce nuclear weapons to equal and substantially lower levels and to increase strategic stability thereby reducing the risk of war [Ref. 13:p. 249]. The Administration's perception of the SALT agreements as having failed to achieve the former goal have already been noted. SALT I and SALT II, by merely limiting future arms growth, succeeded only in legitimizing such growth while simultaneously leading to the current US position of perceived

[illegible] decrease, not increase, strategic stability.

In the Administration's view, this state of affairs has arisen partly through the failure of the United States to provide the Soviet Union with incentives to bargain seriously. Arms control negotiations are seen as having been conducted in relative isolation rather than as a single element in a range of political, economic, and defense efforts [Ref. 13:p. 249]. Thus, the results one could reasonably expect from such negotiations have been unrealistically high particularly when Soviet predispositions and behavior are considered. The alternative approach now being pursued by the Reagan Administration has been to predicate any new arms control agreement with the USSR on the restoration of the strategic balance through mutual and verifiable reduction, as opposed to limitation, of the strategic nuclear arsenals of both sides with the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons altogether.

The manner in which the Reagan Administration intends to restore and preserve the strategic balance is to bolster the US deterrent capability through the modernization of strategic and conventional forces. This provides an incentive for the Soviets to agree to significant mutual arms reductions in the near term. [Ref. 7:p. 24]

The far-term objective of further reducing or eliminating nuclear weapons could be attained through the SDI. The implications of an SDI deployment decision for US defense policy, however, are enormous. First of all, it would mean abandonment by the United States of the MAD

concept which has been widely perceived as the core of US deterrent doctrine for a generation. Indeed, the Secretary of Defense has stated that MAD had already been made "obsolete" by the Soviet pursuit of offensive and defensive capabilities outlined above [Ref. 18].

A fundamental question that remains to be addressed is the Soviet perception of US motives behind the SDI. The overt signal being sent by the United States is that the SDI is a military countermeasure: asymmetrical in response to the Soviet offensive buildup and symmetrical as a means of redressing a perceived imbalance in strategic defenses. The Administration is saying, in effect, that in the absence of significant modifications in the Soviet attitude toward arms control, the United States has no choice but to adopt measures similar in nature to that being pursued by the Soviet Union. The problem is that the Administration is convinced that the object of Soviet strategy (as reflected in their strategic weapons programs) is the attainment of superiority over the United States, notwithstanding Soviet assertions to the contrary. The question is will the Soviets impute similar motives to the Reagan Administration.

C. SUMMARY

A Soviet assessment of US motives in promoting the SDI would have to consider the general climate of US-Soviet relations particularly from the American point of view. The Soviets could not fail but to acknowledge the Reagan Administration's appraisal of relations between the two powers as being primarily one of conflict rather than accomodation and competition rather than cooperation. Indeed, the

Administration has gone out of its way to point out to the Soviets and to world public opinion its belief in the fundamentally aggressive nature of Soviet global ambitions and the ideology that underlies them.

The Administration has provided clear signals to the Soviets of its awareness of the objectives of Soviet strategy and detailed knowledge of the means available to the USSR for executing that strategy. Trends in Soviet strategic forces, if allowed to proceed unimpeded would, in the Administrations's estimate, enable the USSR to obtain a decisive advantage in first-strike potential while eliminating the US capacity for effective retaliation. Such a capability would enormously enhance the coercive utility of Soviet nuclear weapons during a crisis. The Administration has therefore recommended the Strategic Modernization Program and the SDI as the means of redressing perceived imbalances in strategic offensive and defensive forces.

That the Reagan Administration perceives it is compelled to resort to a strategic buildup in order to reinforce strategic stability is an expression of a lack of faith in the manner in which the United States had previously conducted arms control. The failure to provide the Soviet Union with adequate incentives to bargain seriously has enabled the latter to sustain and legitimize the attainment of superiority in land-based missiles. This situation has provided political pay-offs to the Soviets by increasing confidence in their ability to pursue an activist policy in the Third World with less concern for interference by the United States.

The offensive side of the US response, as embodied in the Strategic Modernization Program, would be interpreted by the Soviets as a

worrisome but predictable development fully in keeping with the US doctrine of deterrence through offensive means. The SDI is quite another matter for it implies eventual US abandonment of the MAD concept in favor of defenses which, in the context of Soviet strategic doctrine, is a component of nuclear war-fighting--a possibility that the Soviets can ill-afford to ignore.

III. A DECEPTION HYPOTHESIS

The Administration's stated goal of eventually eliminating nuclear weapons assumes that Soviet cooperation will be necessary if the goal is to be achieved. This view was reflected in comments by LTG James A. Abrahamson, Director of the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization to the effect that a "totally effective defense" requires that the Soviet Union agree to a "cooperative transition" from current deterrence based on nuclear retaliation to defenses and a "carefully drawn down" mutual reduction in arsenals of offensive missiles. At the same time, a "modification" of the ABM Treaty will be necessary to allow both the Americans and the Soviets to transition from a deterrent posture based on retaliation to one based on defense [Ref. 19:p. 10]. The problem, of course, is how to elicit Soviet cooperation in the prevailing atmosphere of conflict and mutual suspicion that, from the Soviet perspective, has been aggravated, not ameliorated, by the SDI.

The solution to this problem is suggested by the existence of the SDI itself and may be summed up in the concept of compellant use of military force. In theory, the compellant use of force deploys, or threatens to deploy, military power either to stop an adversary from doing something he has already undertaken or to force him to do something not yet undertaken. Compellance, moreover, can employ force physically or peacefully. [Ref. 20:p. 29]

The relevance of compellance theory to Soviet strategic behavior and the Administration's efforts to modify that behavior is readily

seen. The existing condition of strategic instability and the resulting reduction in the credibility of the US deterrent are a function of the buildup of Soviet strategic offensive and defensive forces. In the long term, the Administration hopes to persuade the Soviets to abandon their reliance on strategic offensive forces and to embrace strategic defense. In the interim (i.e., during the SDI research phase), the Administration aims to compel the Soviets to reduce the size of their strategic offensive forces (particularly the ICBM component) on a large scale while inhibiting further advancements in strategic defenses. The objective, in other words, is to force the Soviets to engage in "real" arms control.

The mechanism of compellance is the US' own Strategic Modernization Program and the SDI which together are intended to evoke a more cooperative attitude on the part of the Soviet government. The relationship between these programs and their combined effect on Soviet arms control behavior was explicitly stated by both the Secretaries of State and Defense:

> "First, we must modernize our offensive nuclear forces in order to ensure the essential military balance in the near term, and to provide the incentives necessary for the Soviet Union to join us in negotiating significant, equitable, and verifiable nuclear arms reductions....Second, we must act now to start constructing a more reliable strategic order for the long term by examining the potential for future effective defenses against ballistic missiles....The SDI provides a necessary and powerful deterrent to any near-term Soviet decision to expand rapidly its ABM capability beyond that permitted by the ABM Treaty. The overriding importance of (the SDI), however, is the promise it offers of moving to a better, more stable basis for deterrence in the future and of providing new and compelling incentives to the Soviet Union to agree to progressively deeper negotiated reductions in offensive nuclear arms." [Ref. 21:p. 4] (Emphasis added)

The negative character of the US "incentive" is clear enough though there is obviously no guarantee that the Administration's compellant strategy will succeed. Yet the return of the Soviets to the arms control talks in Geneva in March 1985 (following a 15 month absence) was encouraging to many SDI supporters particularly when it became apparent that the SDI had become the central element of the talks [Ref. 22].

The view that renewed Soviet interest in pursuing serious arms control negotiations was at least partially attributable to the SDI was reinforced by the Soviet proposal of late-September 1985 for significant reductions in land-based missiles in exchange for a halt in SDI research [Ref. 5]. Though the Administration perceived serious flaws in some aspects of the Soviet offer (beyond the proposed ban on SDI research which was quickly rejected), it was nevertheless received as a possible basis for more substantial negotiations [Ref. 23]. Some SDI supporters were inclined to take this one step further by attributing the apparent change in Soviet attitudes as a direct result of the SDI. In the words of Richard G. Lugar, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

> "Now, however, Moscow has indicated that it is prepared to consider deep cuts in nuclear inventories. Leaving aside for the moment the specific problems with the Soviet offer, it seems reasonable to conclude that it has been because of, not in spite of, the Strategic Defense Initiative. The Initiative has already achieved its first notable success." [Ref. 24]

While such a conclusion may be debatable, the SDI has undoubtedly been successful in capturing the Soviets' attention. They are clearly worried about the SDI but the issue that remains to be addressed is the

nature of their concern. The Soviets are surely aware of the Administration's compellant objectives for the SDI during the program's research phase. However, they probably also harbor serious doubts that the Administration's intentions for the SDI are limited only to achieving those stated or implied objectives relating to arms control and restoration of the strategic balance. Rather, it is likely that the Soviets will perceive the SDI as part of an attempt by the United States to regain the position of strategic superiority which it unilaterally surrendered in the early 1970s. The SDI will be perceived, in other words, as the key component of a strategic deception with grave implications for Soviet political-military strategy.

The Soviets have undoubtedly been following the SDI debate with great interest. The positions of the United States and European NATO governments on the SDI and how the populations of the principal countries respond to these positions will be a significant factor in the Soviet public campaign against the program. More importantly, the Soviets will be searching for indications of the Administration's true intentions for the SDI, i.e., whether the intent is merely to compel a restoration of the strategic equilibrium (as the Administration claims) as opposed to an attempt to achieve strategic superiority (which implies deception).

It will be argued below that strategic deception by the United States in peacetime is theoretically possible. An assumption central to deception theory is that cover, the effort to protect and obscure a secret, is necessary to all deceptions. Yet there have been instances (such as the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968) where deception

serves the purposes of the deceiver better if the cover remains "transparent" [Ref. 25:p. 364]. Using the concept of "transparent cover" as the primary vehicle, the possible deceptive utility of the SDI will be examined. The object of this investigation is not to "prove" that the intent of the SDI is anything other than what the Administration claims it to be. Rather, if the SDI as deception can be established on a theoretical basis, Soviet claims that the program actually is a deception will appear more credible as a reflection of their actual views and not merely as propaganda.

The deceptive potential of the SDI will be considered in terms of its enabling the United States to manipulate the perceptions of the Soviet leadership. It will be argued that the nature of the SDI program has placed the Administration in a position to exploit Soviet preconceptions regarding their own weaknesses and Western strengths while heightening Soviet concerns over possible US intentions.

A. DECEPTION PRACTICE IN OPEN SOCIETIES

Factors that are believed to work against the practice of strategic deception in peacetime by the United States are of two types: cultural and institutional. Though the present discussion focuses on the latter aspect, the question of deception as a function of culture deserves some attention particularly as it is reflected in strategic culture.

Conventional wisdom holds that a country like the United States, with a culture noted for the openness, even the naivete of its interpersonal interactions, might find strategic deception uncongenial

to its habitual ways of thinking [Ref. 25:p. 13]. Highly placed values such as honesty and fairplay, it would seem, run counter to the practice of deceit as a significant element in the American mind-set. Yet American culture is not without its own traits of deception, from the hyperbole of Madison Avenue, to trick plays in football, the practice of industrial espionage, the shrewd "Yankee trader," and bluffing at poker [Ref. 26:p. 42].

These and other examples that the reader can probably offer, while trivial in themselves, suggest an important principle: the tendency toward, or the inhibitions against, the practice of deception in American society or elsewhere depends upon the context, or environment, in which the actors find themselves. That is, the question of whether or not deception is an appropriate form of behavior is not so much driven by cultural idiosyncracies as it is by the perceived nature of the existing situation, the goals of the individual, and his assessment of the motives of others including the willingness of the latter to abide by the "rules of the game." This should apply to interstate as well as to interpersonal relations.

In wartime, of course, the United States labors under no inhibitions regarding the use of deception for achieving military goals. For example, US-British cooperation in the use of Ultra intelligence in deceiving the Germans during World War II has been well documented [Ref. 27]. Generally speaking, as the factor of surprise has been cited as a basic principle of warfare over time and across cultures, it is natural to expect that deception as a means of facilitating surprise would be integral to US military doctrine in time of war. The primary

difference between American and Soviet military doctrines in this regard is perhaps the greater emphasis placed by the Soviets on maskirovka in its various forms.

The contrast between apparent Soviet and American attitudes toward the peacetime use of deception outside of the battlefield context are considerably more pronounced. The source of this difference may be found in the Soviet view of peace as merely a "cease-fire" in a continuous and unending war over resources and ideology. In a permanent state of war, all means and methods can be justified including the use of deception in pursuit of strategic goals [Ref. 28:p. 138]. It is the Soviet predisposition to the practice of deception, to the widespread and systematic use of deceit as policy, which makes appraisal of the threat difficult and arms control uncertain [Ref. 26:p. 37].

It is the recognition of these fundamental Soviet attitudes and, more importantly, the skepticism that Soviet behavior can be moderated without considerable pressure from the United States (particularly through negative incentives) that distinguishes the polices of the Reagan Administration from those of its recent predecessors. The conflictive nature of current US-USSR relations, from the Administration's perspective, is the result of a Soviet worldview that allows, even mandates, the latter's attempt to secure unilateral advantages by all means short of war. The Soviets have, in effect, set the "rules of the game" and have compelled the United States to adopt new initiatives that will safeguard its security. If context is more important than cultural constraints as a factor in strategic deception,

it would seem that the conditions necessary for the practice of deception by the United States in peacetime are present whether or not deception is actually being implemented.

A more significant constraint on the practice of strategic deception by open societies in peacetime is the character of their political and military institutions. Here the Soviets have a definite advantage. Soviet-style totalitarianism facilitates their use of deception in such areas as the requirement for operational security. For most deception operations this requirement is best satisfied when the operation is well-organized and well-coordinated [Ref. 25:p. 16]. Indeed, the case for systematic Soviet deception over the years would seem to imply the existence of special agencies for that purpose possibly as part of the state (KGB) or military (GRU) intelligence organizations [Ref. 28:p. 139]. While the actual planning and coordinating agencies for Soviet strategic deception cannot be substantiated in the open literature, Soviet strategic culture would dictate the necessity of centralized control at the highest levels.

The Soviet need for control, particularly of information, is also reflected in the nature of their political decisionmaking process and in the relationship between the Soviet people and their government. The decision to divulge information pertaining to official policy is a function of the will of the Communist Party which reserves the right, and has the power, to determine when the conditions for doing so are appropriate. Moreover, once the decision to inform the public is made, the party's control over the media enables it to determine the form and content of the information it releases thus providing the capacity to

control the public debate surrounding any particular governmental action. Thus, when a major defense policy decision involves deception, say, in the construction of a national ABM system, once the decision to proceed is made, Soviet deception planners are limited mainly by the intelligence capabilities of an opponent.

The freedom to debate public policy issues, including defense policy is, of course, one of the fundamental strengths of Western democratic government. It limits the ability of the executive to adopt policies or programs that may not be considered as being in the national interest by other branches of government or by the public at large. The leadership is therefore obliged to justify major initiatives both to domestic audiences and, if the initiative affects strategic policy, to allies as well if the program is to be successfully implemented.

In its presentation of the merits of the SDI, the Reagan Administration has emphasized the potential of the program to ultimately eliminate the specter of nuclear war. Implicit in its case for the SDI is the perception of a state of strategic instability resulting from the growth of Soviet offensive and defensive programs. However, the implications of the SDI for US strategic and NATO doctrine have stimulated a major public debate concerning the program's technical feasibility and strategic desirability. The Administration has endeavored to defend the SDI on both counts while continuing to maintain its originally stated position, i.e., the elimination of nuclear weapons through non-nuclear strategic defense.

The Administration has further sought to buttress its persuasive argument in two ways: first, by highlighting the potential spin-offs of SDI research, for example, in the form of economic and technological benefits, and second, by making an explicit connection between the SDI and Soviet strategic programs and the utility of the SDI in forcing Soviet concessions in arms control negotiations [Ref. 21].

B. STRATEGIC DECEPTION UNDER "TRANSPARENT COVER"

The Soviets are aware of the inherent limitations of the West in conducting strategic deception in peacetime. In the same way that deception practice is aided by the closed nature of the Soviet system, the very openness of Western society not only enables the Soviets to participate in the defense policy debate but also constrains the ability of Western governments to use deception in peacetime, assuming the inclination to do so exists.

What follows is an investigation of how such constraints might be alleviated through the employment of "transparent cover" whereby the Administration's persuasive and compellant objectives for the SDI as well as deceptive objectives (as viewed by the Soviets) might be attained. It bears repeating that the deception hypothesis does not posit that the SDI, in whole or in part, is actually intended to deceive the Soviet leadership. The purpose is to establish a framework for analyzing the Soviet response to the SDI based on the assumption (reasonable from the Soviet viewpoint) that the intent behind the program could include deception.

1. The Objectives of Deception

The process of deception involves the deliberate misrepresentation of reality for the purpose of gaining a competitive advantage [Ref. 25:p. 3]. As seen by the Soviets, the advantage of the SDI lies in its potential for elevating the United States to a position of strategic superiority. It is important to note that superiority in this sense is not limited to the strictly military attribute of a first-strike capability though such is obviously a key Soviet concern. Rather, the main threat of the SDI in combination with the program to modernize US strategic offensive forces lies in the net impact of an improved US strategic posture in altering the global correlation of forces in a manner unfavorable to the Soviets. The main threat posed by US strategic superiority, in other words, is the implication that the neutralization of the Soviet advantage in the strategic military correlation could result in a reduction in the political utility of military power for the Soviets in peacetime. In the efforts of the Reagan Administration to wrest the strategic initiative away from the Soviet Union, the latter will be inclined to see elements of both intent and capability deception in the SDI.

Earlier it was stated that the primary theme of the Administration's persuasive argument for the SDI is the ultimate elimination of both American and Soviet strategic nuclear weapons. Yet the compellant component of the Administration's case includes proceeding with SDI research as a technological "hedge" while continuing with the modernization of US offensive forces. Both aspects of the US strategic

program are intended as incentives to compel the Soviets into accepting meaningful arms reductions.

The problem with the Administration's stated intentions, particularly from the Soviet viewpoint, is the former's position on the efficacy of arms control, at least as it has been conducted to date. The prevailing opinion is essentially that arms hasn't worked nor, given the Soviet tendency to violate arms control agreements, is it likely to work in the future without a fundamental change in Soviet attitudes. Such a view helps to explain the Administration's adamant refusal to allow the SDI to become a negotiable issue in the Geneva talks. Consider the remarks of Secretary of Defense Weinberger:

> "Some critics would have us use SDI as a bargaining chip at Geneva in the hope of gaining concessions from the Soviets on the size of their offensive force. There are two reasons why we will not do this. First, if SDI bears fruit, it offers the hope, available nowhere else, of moving the world out of the horrible shadow of the nuclear threat. Second, history has taught us not to delude ourselves in thinking that if we halt SDI research, or bargain it away at Geneva, the Soviets will desist in their offensive and defensive buildup." [Ref. 29]

President Reagan has stated that while a negotiated agreement on the mutual reduction of nuclear weapons is the preferred alternative, such an agreement would not inhibit SDI research. Moreover, the United States reserved the right to make the SDI deployment decision unilaterally following "consultations" with the allies and the Soviet government [Ref. 30]. Thus, the Administration has indicated that it intends to proceed with SDI research regardless of the outcome of the arms control talks.

From the Soviet perspective, the Administration's "all or nothing" position would seem to discredit the SDI's incentive rationale

for it requires the Soviet Union to forfeit the heart of its strategic defenses: the ICBM component. If positions were reversed, it is unlikely that the United States would agree to such terms. Neither is it reasonable to expect the Soviets to place their security in the hands of what they perceive as a hostile power. Since the Soviets must necessarily reject any such proposal, and would perceive that the US government must anticipate this, the former might reason that the intent behind the SDI presumes the continued existence of nuclear arsenals on both sides for if the Soviet Union declines significant weapons reductions then the United States has no incentive to do so either. The Soviets might well conclude, then, that the actual intent of the SDI is to provide a shield for US offensive forces which themselves are undergoing modernization. Indeed, these are precisely the motives imputed to the Soviet government by the Reagan Administration.

Such a perception on the part of the Soviet leadership is reinforced by the inherent limitations of strategic defenses as well as their potential offensive applications. Taken together, these considerations lend credence to a Soviet view of the SDI as a deception in capability as well as of intent. First of all, it seems safe to assume that the Soviets are well aware of the strengths and limitations of strategic defenses if the Administration's assessment of long-term Soviet activities in this area are correct. If so, the Soviets must then suspect that a perfect defense of national territory is not possible, that is, that the system can be countered in a number of ways or simply overwhelmed by saturation (another incentive for the Soviets to increase rather than decrease their offensive forces). The Soviets

have, in fact, made statements to this effect in their response to the SDI [Ref. 31:p. 21] which will be more fully developed below.

The Reagan Administration has continued to stress its commitment to pursue a total "multilayer" defense however difficult such a defense would be to achieve [Ref. 19]. Yet spokesman for the Department of Defense [Ref. 32] and the Director of the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency have argued that a less than totally effective defense could still contribute to deterrence. As Kenneth Adelman has pointed out:

> "The results of SDI are years away, and naturally we do not know what they will be. Estimates vary widely. We can surmise now, however, that even a less than perfect or less than comprehensive defense could markedly increase the uncertainty of success to a potential attacker. And this, after all, is the quintessence of deterrence." [Ref. 13:p. 252]

The Soviets are aware of this, of course, but what they fear most is that a future American administration might come to the conclusion that has been attributed to the Soviets themselves: a limited strategic defense, i.e., one designed to protect key nodes of an offensive system (ICBM sites, command and control facilities, and so forth) is far less expensive than one designed for total defense of national or, if allies are included, international territory and populations. Such a defense would still enhance a country's war survival capability by helping to insure the survivability of its retaliatory forces against surprise or preemptive attack. But a limited defense in conjunction with an effective offensive force also improves a country's ability to prosecute a war by degrading or cancelling an enemy's capacity to retaliate after suffering a first strike [Ref. 33]. It is the

potential of the SDI for enabling the United States to conduct a first strike that is at the heart of Soviet concerns. Additionally, the perception of strategic advantage provided by the SDI would significantly increase the political utility of US military power in terms of bolstering NATO solidarity and providing coercive leverage against the Soviet Union during crisis situations.

The Soviets would thus be inclined to see the capability deception aspect of the SDI revealed in the continuing US insistence that defensive technology will permit the shift to a totally defensive posture by both sides while Soviet experience and a considerable body of opinion in the West indicates otherwise. This view will be reinforced by the perception that Western technology will provide the capability for constructing a limited defense that will still provide significant military, and hence political, advantages. Such a defense will, in any case, be superior to that built by the Soviet Union given the inferiority of its technology base. Finally, economic constraints will probably force the United States into adopting the most effective system at the lowest cost which inevitably means a limited, or war-survival, defense similar in nature to that of the USSR.

2. The Dynamics of Deception

The preceding discussion provided what the Soviets might reasonably infer as the deceptive objectives of the SDI. What follows is an investigation of how the United States might achieve these objectives in the process of persuading domestic and allied audiences of the need to force a change in Soviet strategic behavior. The mechanism by which this can be accomplished is "transparent cover" whereby all but the

most crucial aspects of the deception would remain unconcealed. Concealment in this case would entail maintaining the ambiguity of ultimate US intentions for the SDI.

Two important elements of deception are the goal of surprise and the mode of secrecy for insuring surprise. In the case of strategic deception, both are exceedingly difficult to achieve because of the usual size of the operation, the number of individuals and organizations involved (which leads to greater insecurity), and the enemy's surveillance capability which is continually improving through advances in remote sensing technology. Constraints such as these are compounded in the West by the need for a broad consensus on defense issues which necessarily stimulates a great deal of debate among the public and between and among governments and their bureaucracies who are competing over policy preferences and resources. Such an environment inevitably promotes "leaks" either deliberate or merely as an unfortunate by-product of information exchange on a large scale.

As concerns the SDI, the requirement for secrecy for insuring surprise was eliminated at the outset because, for all intents and purposes, the element of surprise in the SDI was achieved by the program's very announcement. Indeed, from the information available on the events leading up to the President's 23 March 1983 speech, it would appear that many of even his closest advisors were purposefully kept in the dark about its contents until shortly before the address. The reason for the "close hold" nature of the SDI's early handling was apparently to avoid any real policy debate. Specifically, it was feared that had the plan been run through the orthodox interagency

review process, immediate objections would either have slowed its progress or stopped the plan altogether [Ref. 34]. Such reasoning remains speculative. What is certain, however, is that most of the governmental bureaucracy was as surprised as the Soviets to learn of the apparently drastic change in US strategic policy. This is reflected in comments by former Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig, Jr., referring to the aftermath of the President's speech the next day in the Pentagon, "...where they were all rushing around saying, 'What the hell is strategic defense?'" [Ref. 35].

Of more concern to this discussion is the Soviet perception not only of the SDI announcement's content but also of their view of the President's tactics leading up to it. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that information on the latter will ever be revealed. It is interesting to note, however, the reflections of strategic deception analyst Barton Whaley:

> "The one certain way of assuring perfect secrecy of plans is for the top decision maker to keep his own counsel, witholding his intentions and final decision until the last moment....Opposing intelligence services have no direct means of penetrating this particular veil of security, short of subverting the reticent top decision maker himself." [Ref. 36:pp. 226-227]

The meaning behind these words should certainly be familiar to the Soviet leadership and deception planners who undoubtedly appreciate the advantages of centralized decision making in helping to insure operational security. It would be reasonable for the Soviets to search for similar attributes in the behavior of others. Yet, the most that can be said regarding the birth of the SDI from the Soviet standpoint is that its unusual delivery was bound to arouse their suspicions.

In any case, with the "surprise" of the SDI revealed up-front the requirement for secrecy now applied mainly to discrete technical aspects of the program which are much easier to manage. Otherwise, the Administration has been able to be completely open about the SDI. In fact, for the broader aspects of the program including the need to "sell" the SDI to domestic and West European audiences as well as to insure that the SDI's compellant message was received be the Soviet leadership, secrecy was not only unnecessary but also undesirable. Thus, by late-1984, the traditional shroud of secrecy over weapons research had been lifted from the SDI and the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization quickly became a fount of information for anyone wishing to know more about the program, particularly Congress and the allies, but presumably also the Soviets within obvious limits [Ref. 37:p. 36].

The reduced requirement for security also facilitates Administration efforts to demonstrate the feasibility of the SDI as a means of bolstering the persuasive argument. A number of tests of SDI components have been conducted and their results highly publicized. These tests have ranged from laser-tracking of objects in space to exploding objects on the ground using a high-powered laser, among other experiments [Ref. 38]. Demonstrations such as these obviously enhance the Adminstration's persuasive and compellant cases but they also serve an important requirement of deception: establishing the plausibility that the deceiver actually has the capability to do what the deception commits him to do [Ref. 25:p. 18].

In their presentation of propositions on military deception, Daniel and Herbig point out that knitting the deception into many strands of truth is an important part of reinforcing its credibility, i.e., the cover story ought to be as near the "real thing" as possible [Ref. 25:pp. 19-20]. As concerns the SDI, the technical aspects of the program which are intended to serve the Administration's compellant objectives are useful for deception as well depending upon the Administration's ultimate intentions. It is the very ambiguity of these intentions that creates the opportunity to exploit Soviet preconceptions in a manner beneficial to compellance or deception, as the following discussion demonstrates.

3. Exploiting Soviet Preconceptions

The success of deception is facilitated if the preconceptions of the target can be anticipated and played upon [Ref. 36:p. 225]. This view of Barton Whaley has its counterpart in the Soviet concept of "reflexive control" which emphasizes the requirement for a complete knowledge of the enemy in order to influence his perceptions, and hence, his behavior [Ref. 39:p. 23]. Both views infer that the stronger the dispositions of the target, the more likely he will ignore or twist information inconsistent with them and, in the process, become an unwitting and cooperative victim of the deceiver [Ref. 25:p. 21].

Certain aspects of the Soviet strategic mind-set are subject to manipulation by means of the SDI. Included here are the need for superior military power, respect for the potential of Western technology, and the utility of strategic deception in peacetime.

The Soviet Union, like the United States, has confronted the hard realities of modern weapons technology and accepted, on a practical level, a deterrent relationship based on mutual societal vulnerability [Ref. 40:p. 6]. However, in their unending search for absolute security, the Soviets have apparently concluded that deterrence is best achieved by building a force capable of dominating events in war and preparing for nuclear war in order to optimize their chances for survival [Ref. 41:p. 213].

In the Soviet view, superior military power is not only a prerequisite for deterrence against military threats but also creates an environment for achieving political aims as well. As the buildup of Soviet strategic forces proceeded to a level of parity with those of the United States, the former's leadership apparently became convinced that Soviet military might had neutralized US military power and thus helped create an international climate in which socialism and "progressive forces" could flourish [Ref. 40:p. 19]. The Soviet perception of the shift in the global correlation of forces was codified in SALT I, reinforced by signs that the United States had assumed as defensive posture during the Vietnam war, and manifiested in an increased level of Soviet activism in the Third World during the 1970s. Soviet military power had thus made it more dangerous for the United States to try to gain political benefits from military threats [Ref. 40:p. 20]. By the same token, any relative advantage gained by the Soviets in military capability would increase their confidence in the ability to achieve political objectives with relatively less concern for interference by the United States.

Soviet policy in the 1970s was to continue to pursue improvements in their strategic posture but to do so without provoking a reaction from the West. They seemed satisified with the outcome of SALT (which assured their advantage in land-based strategic missiles) and the ABM Treaty (that contained the threat to their ICBM force from US strategic defenses) [Ref. 42:p. 18]. The Soviet Union continued to abide by the MAD concept as a practical, but temporary, necessity but was actively seeking to escape its confines through force structure adjustments and weapons development (e.g., ABMs) that would increase the credibility of its war-fighting/war-survival doctrine [Ref. 41:p. 217]. At the same time, the Soviets were quick to condemn any perceived changes in US strategic doctrine designed to enhance the credibility of, or hinted at a shift away from, reliance on assured destruction as the basic premise for that doctrine.

The reason for Soviet alarm over such US doctrinal concepts as "counterforce" (in the 1960s) and "limited nuclear options" (in the 1970s) seems clear in retrospect. From their perspective, such strategies indicated that the United States was moving toward the adoption of a nuclear war-fighting doctrine of its own. Indeed, a move in this direction was probably regarded as inevitable. Soviet strategic doctrine, based on "scientifically derived laws of war," dictated that it reflect the capacity for war winning, war survival, and recovery as the only really logical alternative. Strategic planners in the United States were regarded as essentially rational and so could be expected to adopt a similar doctrine eventually. The question was thus one of which side would escape MAD first. [Ref. 43:pp. 171-172]

The announcement of the SDI, then, while undoubtedly surprising to the Soviets, was probably not totally unexpected. The SDI will be perceived as a deception, however, in the sense that the Administration's position that the United States seeks no military or political benefits from the program, from the Soviet point of view, are dubious at best [Ref. 44].

A second aspect of the Soviet strategic outlook susceptible to exploitation through the SDI is the former's deep and even awesome respect for the economic, scientific, and technological resources of the United States and the realizable military potential in them [Ref. 4:p. 8]. An attempt by the United States to achieve a technological "end run" around Soviet strategy is credible to the latter because, as stated previously, while a total strategic defense may not be possible, any limited defense deployed by the Americans is likely to be perceived by the Soviet leadership as more capable than anything Soviet technology can produce. Here again, military advantage translates to political leverage in the correlation of forces calculus.

The deceptive utility of the SDI also resides in its potential as an instrument of economic-technological warfare. Whether or not the SDI is ever actually deployed, Soviet efforts to counter the program would be expensive as they themselves have admitted [Ref. 46]. The prospect of yet another military buildup must be unsettling to the Soviet leadership in view of the existing constraints and weaknesses of their economy. They must also consider the possibility that the "technological breakthrough" potential of the SDI could be intended to

induce the investment of huge amounts of money, man-hours, and time in the wrong direction [Ref. 28:p. 125].

For the Soviets to see deception in certain aspects of the SDI may be natural given their tendency to use this device in peacetime themselves. Mihalka has provided evidence of a sustained deception effort that has involved elements of both the Soviet strategic offensive and defensive forces including their ABM program [Ref. 16].

The Soviets undoubtedly appreciate the limitations of open societies in the practice of peacetime deception. On the other hand, they appear to respect the capabilities of US intelligence agencies and have not hidden their suspicion of the undue influence that the Pentagon and certain "right-wing" elements have on the policymaking process. Such anxieties have not diminished during the tenure of the Reagan Administration. While the Soviet view of the conspiratorial nature of US intentions should not be overstated, the inclination to distrust foreigners is deeply rooted in the Russian mind-set. This tendency has only been reinforced by a communist ideology that assumes that the capitalists will always try to deceive and therefore should never be trusted in the first place [Ref. 28:p. 139].

C. SUMMARY

The purpose of the preceding discussion was to establish a framework for an analysis of the Soviet response to the SDI. It was hypothesized that this response could include indications of the perception by the Soviets of deception among Reagan Administration motives for promoting the SDI. The Soviet response is also certain to include

other themes of a propaganda nature that are designed to undercut support for the SDI in Western Europe and the United States. But if the SDI as deception could be established on a theoretical basis, Soviet claims of deception would appear more credible as a reflection of their actual views rather than merely as propaganda. This was accomplished by demonstrating that, given the will to do so, some of the constraints that limit the ability of an open society to use deception on a large scale in peacetime could be overcome by means of "transparent cover."

As concerns the SDI, transparent cover would involve being as open about as many aspects of the program as possible except for the sensitive military-technical details of the systems involved and the ultimate intention for those systems following the decision to deploy them. Doing so permits the Administration to pursue persuasive objectives at home and in Western Europe and its compellant objectives vis-a-vis the Soviet Union taking full advantage of media resources while simultaneously reducing security requirements to a more manageable level.

The plausibility of the SDI as deception is supported by the near coincidence of the US' compellant and potentially deceptive intentions. The Administration has emphasized the compellant argument, i.e., the need to restore strategic equilibrium by forcing a change in Soviet behavior. The intent behind the SDI, it is argued, is limited to reinforcing the status-quo (during the research phase) and ultimately to eliminate the need for nuclear weapons.

The Soviets, on the other hand, can be expected to see the SDI research phase as an attempt by the United States to revise the status-quo in a manner favorable to the latter with the ultimate intention of

achieving a position of strategic superiority following deployment. In their view, superiority is a function not merely of capability in a strictly military sense but also of the political leverage that military power provides. Of course, such considerations are important to both sides. But Moscow would be more inclined to see its zero-sum ramifications since military power is perhaps the sole attribute of Soviet strength. Therefore, any unfavorable shift in this key aspect of the correlation of forces is bound to be politically and psychologically disturbing.

The tendency of the Soviet leadership to perceive deceptive intent in the SDI is further reinforced by a number of other preconceptions. Prominent among these is the belief that a totally effective defense (which is necessary to the elimination of nuclear weapons) is probably technically impossible. However, a limited defense is feasible particularly for the United States given its technological advantage. For the United States to adopt a limited strategic defense is predictable, moreover, since the only rational way to deter nuclear war, in the Soviet view, is to prepare to fight and survive such a conflict. This perception is supported by the belief that the United States cannot really expect the USSR to sacrifice its main deterrent (land-based missiles), in effect, placing its security in the hands of the enemy. The United States must therefore expect to keep, and even modernize, its offensive component which implies a shift not to defense alone but to a combined offensive-defensive strategy similar to, but probably more capable than, the Soviets' own.

Finally, the Soviets may be inclined to see their own attitude toward strategic deception reflected in the behavior of others. During the postwar years, the Soviet Union has apparently used deception to its advantage in some cases while in others such use has backfired as, for example, in its encouragement of the "missile gap" myth. Yet a worldview that defines peace as a temporary suspension of international violence naturally accepts the continuing attempt to secure strategic advantage by all means short of war itself. It is also natural to expect such attempts on the "imperialist" side, including the use of deception, especially when the political environment is oriented toward conflict rather than detente.

IV. THE SOVIET RESPONSE TO THE SDI

In this part, the Soviet response to the SDI will be examined from the time of the program's announcement in March 1983 to the Geneva summit in November 1985. The objective is to distinguish the actual perception of the SDI from the purely propaganda element in the public statements and positions of the Soviet leadership.

Research involving the use of Soviet open source materials must consider their propaganda intent and the resulting effect on reliability. The assumption made here is that most Soviet official statements are motivated by their potential propaganda benefits. However, this does not necessarily disqualify such statements as total fabrications. Propaganda simply implies that the speaker seeks some payoff, usually political, from the impact of his statements; the basis for his statements can range from a lie, on the one hand, to something approaching the truth on the other. The aim here is to determine the degree to which the various themes employed by the Soviets with respect to the SDI tend toward the latter end of this continuum. This involves identifying the meaning behind a given statement by analyzing it in a political, military, or other context. In this way, while actual Soviet beliefs can never be positively determined, they can at least be reasonably estimated. To the extent that this process is successful, the fact that the Soviet media is closely controlled by the party helps to reinforce the validity of Soviet public statements as actual views of the party leadership.

The approach taken for this analysis was to select a sample of 200 articles from the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Report on the Soviet Union during the period March 1983 through July 1985. The data base was subdivided into four periods of 50 articles each roughly corresponding to the tenures of Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) General Secretaries Andropov (March 1983-February 1984), Chernenko (early sub-period March 1984-September 1984 and late sub-period October 1984-March 1985), and Gorbachev (April 1985-July 1985). The quantitative portion of the content analysis was restricted to sources of the party-managed media, for example, TASS, Radio Moscow, Pravda, and so forth, which are the responsibility of the International Information Department of the Communist Party Central Committee [Ref. 47:p. 20]. It was assumed that these sources would reflect the prevailing Soviet position and would be supported by sources representing other elite groups such as the military, the scientific, and the academic establishments.

A qualitiative analysis of selected articles published during the quantitative study period was also conducted for the period leading to the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in November 1985. Significant statements from party and other elite sources were drawn and, as for the quantitative portion, all addressed the subject of the SDI. The intent of the qualitative analysis was to expand and elaborate the meaning of certain themes identified in the quantitative investigation.

It was anticipated that the Soviet response to the SDI would contain both defensive and offensive elements. The defensive reaction would derive from the Soviet view of the SDI as part of an effort by

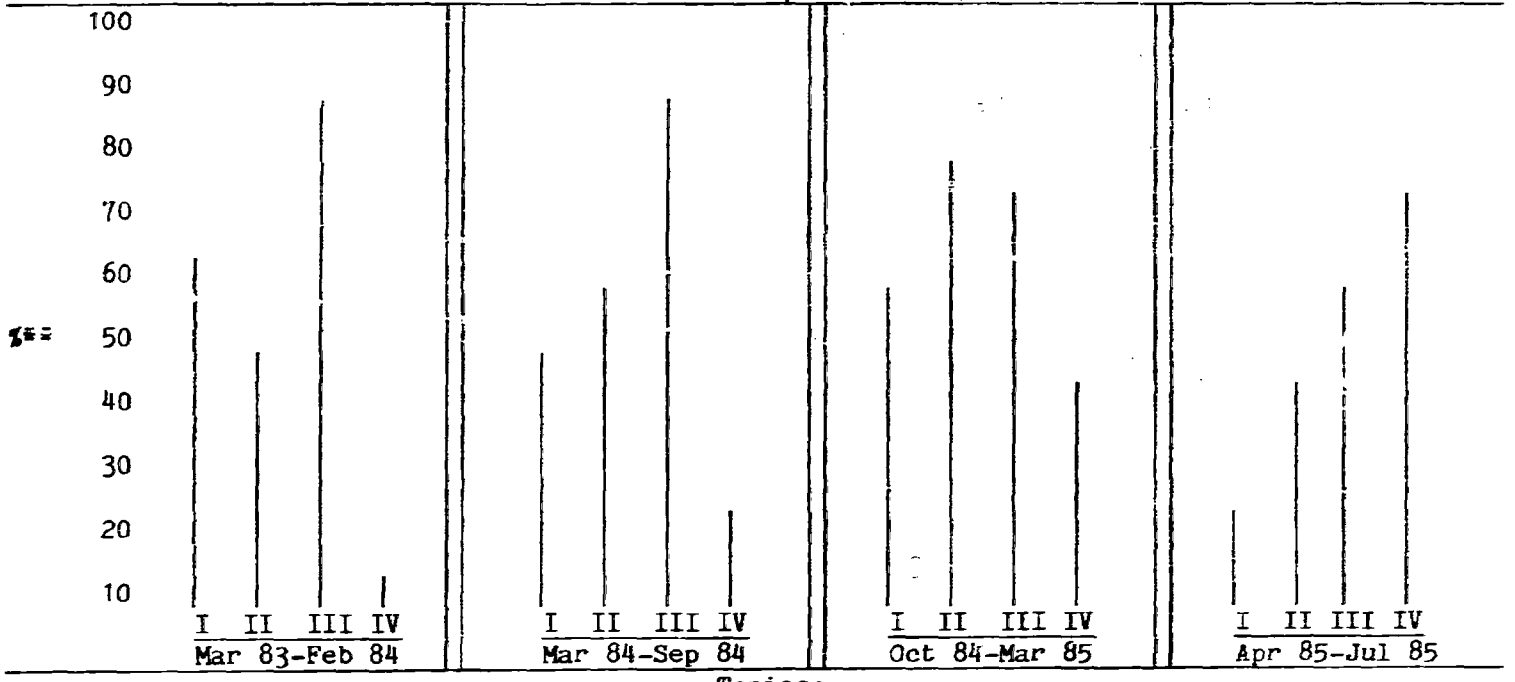
the United States to seize the strategic initiative by neutralizing the military component of Soviet strategy. The Soviets would thus be inclined to see deception behind the SDI and would therefore reject the Administration's threat and arms control rationales for the program. The offensive aspect of the Soviet response would be reflected in their efforts to undermine European support for the program which could contribute to the weakening of NATO.

The quantitative analysis of the Soviet response identified four major topics of interest (see Table 1). Three of these topics pertained to the Soviet view of the SDI as a threat, i.e., the defensive aspect. Specifically, these topics were SDI's role in contributing to the achievement of US political-military objectives (Topic I); US intentions for the SDI (Topic II); and the consequences of the SDI (Topic III). Topic IV concerned the SDI in the context of Western Europe. Here the offensive aspect of the Soviet response was revealed in themes designed to exploit the propaganda opportunities arising from the European view of the SDI. Each of these topics had their own set of themes which are described below.

Table 1 illustrates the proportion of the 50 article sample in which the topic appears. For example, in the first (Andropov) period, Topic I appeared in slightly more than 60 percent of the sample or about 30 articles. The purpose of the appearance/non-appearance criterion was simply to establish the relative emphasis on topics over time. What Table 1 indicates is a gradual shift in emphasis away from those topics pertaining to Soviet-American relations toward attention to the SDI in the context of Western Europe.

TABLE 1

SOVIET MEDIA REACTION TO SDI:
RELATIVE EMPHASIS ON TOPICS, MARCH 1983 - JULY 1985*



Topics:

I. Objectives of US political-military strategy.
II. US intentions for the SDI.
III. Consequences of the SDI.
IV. SDI and Western Europe.

*Media resources under party management, e.g., TASS, Radio Moscow, Pravda, etc.

**Based on a sample of 50 FBIS articles on the subject of SDI for each time period; table reflects the proportion of the sample in which the topic appears.

By the time that Gorbachev came to power, the topic of the SDI's implications for Western Europe appeared to dominate Soviet attention. The relative decrease in Soviet references to the other topics is more apparent than real, however. Some of the themes contained within these topics, particularly those addressing the SDI's consequences, continued to be emphasized but in terms of their impact on Western Europe.

A fifth topic concerned the Soviet view of deception behind the SDI. Since this view was indicated in statements and inferences found within the other topics, no attempt was made to aggregate direct Soviet references to deception in Table 1. But the deception topic, like the others, had its own set of themes which are discussed below.

A. SDI IN THE SOVIET-AMERICAN CONTEXT

Prior to 1985, the Soviet public response to the SDI was directed mainly toward US strategic behavior and the general implications of the program. Four major topics were addressed: the objectives of US political-military strategy; US intentions for the SDI; the consequences of the SDI; and SDI as deception. The deception topic is addressed first since the logic of Soviet statements in the other areas appears to rest in varying degreees on the assumption of deception. The topic of the SDI's consequences is deferred until the later discussion of the program's implications for Western Europe.

1. The SDI Deception Campaign

The Soviet view of deception behind the SDI took two forms. Implied deception pertained to the "true" nature of US political-military objectives and the role of the SDI in furthering their

achievement. The present discussion addresses overt references to deception which, in the view of Soviet commentators, collectively constituted a deliberate effort on the part of the United States to deceive Western public opinion concerning the SDI:

> "The implementation of this program (costing trillions of dollars) needs the corresponding international and domestic public support. This is why the US Administration is using all the mass media and setting its entire propaganda machine in motion in a vain attempt to make the 'star wars' program, if not actually popular, then at least attractive and, above all, at all costs to conceal the grim truth about it from mankind. That is why the SDI apologists are making more and new propaganda maneuvers in order to deceive the peoples." [Ref. 48]*

The basis for the SDI "deception campaign" was the Administration's contention that US motives for the program are essentially peaceful and harmless. This position was challenged by virtually all Soviet commentators:

> "Without any substantiation and jeering at common sense, they pass off the US President's plans to create an extensive antimissile defense system as a 'peace-loving defensive measure,' as a 'guarantee of security and hope for a peaceful future.' However, all these epithets are only a deception of the public." [Ref. 49]**

Such a view was echoed, for example, by G. Arbatov, Director of the Institute of United States and Canada Studies, USSR Academy of Sciences:

> "The US President is presenting the 'star wars' project to the public as a weapon that will put an end to the nuclear threat and will lead mankind to a paradise for all....The impracticability of the project in the form in which an attempt is being made to sell it to American legislators as well as to the American public and the US's allies, does not, however, make it any less dangerous." [Ref. 50] (Emphasis added)

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*Adm. A. Sorokin, First Deputy Chief of Staff, Soviet Army and Navy Main Political Directorate.

**Col. Gen. N. Chervov, Soviet General Staff.

Dr. Arbatov's reference to the "form" of the SDI is significant. The Administration's primary persuasive arguments for the program were initially centered on the "vision" of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. This argument was later supplemented with the stated need to match or counter developments within Soviet offensive and defensive forces and thus to correct an existing imbalance. Finally, the SDI was offered as a means of compelling the Soviets to engage in "serious" arms control negotiations that would ultimately result in the USSR adopting its own version of the SDI. The aim of Soviet "counter-deception" rhetoric was, first, to argue that the SDI in its advertised form was unachievable, and hence, incapable of accomplishing the Administration's stated objectives (thus opening the question of actual US intentions for the SDI), and, second, to discourage the idea that the SDI could somehow be useful as an instrument of pressure against the Soviet Union.

The basic elements of Soviet reaction to the SDI on the topic of deception are presented in Table 2. The Administration's case for the SDI as a necessary response to Soviet military developments was anticipated by CPSU General Secretary Andropov immediately following the President's 23 March 1983 speech--well before this line of argument was adopted as a major justification for the SDI:

> "The importunate and profuse talk about how all this is being done in response to the 'Soviet military threat,' no matter how often it is repeated, should not mislead anyone. Nothing the Soviet Union has done or is doing testifies in any way to a striving for military superiority." [Ref. 51:p. 4]

The theme that the SDI represented an unwarranted provocation on the part of the United States was consistently present during the

TABLE 2

SOIVET MEDIA REACTION TO THE SDI ON THE TOPIC OF DECEPTION:
RELATIVE EMPHASIS ON THEMES, MARCH 1983 - JULY 1985*

Topic:	Appearance of Theme** Mar 83-Feb 84	Mar 84-Sep 84	Oct 84-Mar 85	Apr 85-Jul 85
What are the principle elements of deception behind the SDI?				
Themes:				
a. SDI is a necessary response to the "Soviet military threat."	12%	16%	12%	22%
b. SDI offers to restore US invulnerability (when it cannot).	8%	16%	10%	0%
c. Defense against nuclear attack is possible (when it is not).	10%	14%	14%	4%
d. SDI is strictly a research program (when it is not).	0%	0%	34%	18%
e. SDI is an effective means of pressuring the USSR.	0%	8%	6%	2%

*Media resources under party management, e.g., TASS, Radio Moscow, Pravda, etc.

**Based on a sample of 50 FBIS articles on the subject of the SDI for each time period; table reflects the proportion of the sample in which the theme appears.

tenures of Andropov and Chernenko. They generally took the form of flat denials of any agressive intent behind Soviet strategic posture. As the focus of Soviet media attention shifted to Western Europe, references to US disinformation on the Soviet threat not only appeared to increase in frequency but became more specific, particularly in regard to Soviet strategic defense activities:

> "It is not difficult to understand what is behind the fabrications of the Pentagon and the US State Department claiming that the Soviet Union has all but set up an ABM system for the country's territory. This is deceiving the public....We do not have a program for developing space strike systems, and we have no 'star wars' plans analogous to those of the Americans. The USSR is strictly fulfilling the unlimited-duration ABM Treaty of 1972." [Ref. 52]*

Shortly after the President's 23 March 1983 speech, the Soviet position on the feasibility of "total" strategic defense was voiced by the scientific community:

> "Based on the knowledge that we, as scientists, possess, and proceeding from our understanding of the very nature of nuclear weapons, we declare most emphatically that there are no effective defensive means in nuclear war and that their creation is virtually impossible....Such 'defensive weapons' can give almost nothing to a country that is protecting the overwhelming majority of the population." [Ref. 53] (Emphasis added)

In 1984, this view was elaborated upon by the Soviet Committee for Peace and Against the Nuclear Threat. In a highly detailed and technical report, the Committee cited the SDI's probable enormous cost and extreme vulnerability to countermeasures as two reasons for concluding:

> "The assertions coming from the Reagan Administration that the new antimissile defense systems spell salvation from nuclear missiles for mankind are perhaps the greatest ever deceptions of our time." [Ref. 31:p. 25] (Emphasis added)

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*Marshal of the Soviet Union S. Akhromeyev, General Staff, USSR.

The main point underlying the Committee's evaluation of the SDI was the continuing dominance of offensive nuclear weapons. The resulting implication that mutual assured destruction remained the basis for the Soviet-American strategic relationship was frankly admitted by academician G. Arbatov:

> "Whatever may be said, peace today is largely the result of deterrence on both sides. It rests on the proposition that each side is aware that if it started a nuclear war it would be subjected to a devastating strike in return." [Ref. 54]

Given that total strategic defense against nuclear attack is impossible, US hopes for a return to a condition of invulnerable "fortress North America" were likewise in vain [Ref. 52].

As Table 2 shows, themes b. and c. received rather consistent play in the Soviet media until the spring of 1985 and then abruptly fell off. It may have been that these themes were found to be inconsistent with propaganda aimed at convincing the West European public that the SDI was intended to protect only the United States.

Toward the end of Chernenko's tenure, Soviet claims that the SDI represented more than exploratory research were heavily emphasized (see Table 2). The military missions of the space shuttle and ASAT tests were regularly identified with SDI research thus revealing the propagandistic nature of such statements. Yet the US budgetary commitment to the program combined with on-going and planned feasibility demonstrations appeared to make an impression on the Soviets beyond their propaganda exploitation potential. In the words of Secretary General Gorbachev:

> "We do not consider (SDI) to be a research program. In our opinion, it is the first stage of a project to develop a new ABM system, which

> is prohibited by the relevant treaty of 1972. Just think of the scale of it alone--the plan is to allocate $70 billion in the next few years. This is an incredible amount for pure research, as is emphasized by US scientists as well....That it is by no means a pure research program is indicated by other facts as well, including the tests that are scheduled for space strike weapons systems." [Ref. 55:p. 16]

Finally, the Administration's contention that the SDI could be used to modify Soviet behavior in some way was characterized simply as another aspect of the deception campaign. Though Soviet spokesmen occasionally admitted that a countermeasures program would probably be expensive, it would be less so than for the SDI program itself [Ref. 56]. In any case, Soviet discussion of the SDI's consequences (presented below) was intended to signal the West that they would not be intimidated by the SDI. More often than not, direct references to the compellant aspects of the SDI were simply dismissed. Gorbachev again:

> "Apparently someone in the US thought there was an opportunity to overtake us, to bring pressure on the Soviet Union. But this is an illusion. It has not succeeded in the past, and it will not succeed now." [Ref. 55:p. 21]

To summarize, most of the overt references to deception were couched in terms of its being perpetrated on US domestic and foreign public opinion. In this vein, the Soviets came down squarely on that side of Western opinion that discounts the technical feasibility of total strategic defense that could eventually permit the abandonment of nuclear weapons. While the Soviets themselves were not "fooled" by such rhetoric, they seemed to be impressed by the skill and resources of the US public relations effort and its potential effect on the anti-nuclear movement [Ref. 57]. The depth of their concern over the SDI

was perhaps best reflected by prominent Soviet spokesmen arguing in favor of mutual deterrence through nuclear weapons. While such admissions were admittedly rare, the Soviet leadership was undoubtedly uncomfortable with finding itself on the "receiving end" of the disarmament issue.

2. US Intentions for the SDI

Soviet claims of a US campaign to deceive Western public opinion centered on what the SDI is not: the SDI could not be intended to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. As discussed above, the Soviets stressed the argument that the state of defensive technology, now and in the future, would not permit abandonment of nuclear weapons for deterrence. The implied aspect of deception behind the SDI centered on what the SDI is: a means by which the United States could acquire the capability for achieving a preemptive first strike against the Soviet Union. This contention was established early-on by CPSU General Secretary Andropov and became a consistent theme in Soviet commentary (see Table 3):

> "At first glance, (the SDI) may even seem attractive to uninformed people--after all, the President is talking about what seem to be defensive measures. But it seems so only at first glance, and only to those who are unfamiliar with these matters. In fact, the development and improvement of the US's strategic offensive forces will continue at full speed, and in a very specific direction--that of acquiring the potential to deliver a nuclear first strike. In these conditions, the intention to obtain the possibility of destroying, with the help of antimissile defense, the corresponding strategic systems of the other side--i.e., of depriving it of the capability of inflicting a retaliatory strike--is designed to disarm the Soviet Union in the face of the American nuclear threat." [Ref. 51:p. 5]

Soviet claims of US intent to obtain a first-strike capability did not begin with the SDI. In the 1960s, the Soviets asserted

TABLE 3

SOVIET MEDIA REACTION TO SDI
ON THE TOPIC OF US INTENTIONS FOR THE PROGRAM:
RELATIVE EMPHASIS ON THEMES, MARCH 1983 - JULY 1985*

	Appearance of Theme**			
Topic:	Mar 83-Feb 84	Mar 84-Sep 84	Oct 84-Mar 85	Apr 85-Jul 85
What is the US intention for the SDI?				
Themes:				
a. To disarm the USSR by providing a shield for first-strike offensive weapons.	42%	36%	50%	28%
b. To acquire the capability to strike terrestrial targets from space.	4%	6%	18%	4%
c. To breach the ABM Treaty.	24%	34%	36%	26%

*Media resources under party management, e.g., TASS, Radio Moscow, Pravda, etc.

**Based on a sample of 50 FBIS articles on the subject of the SDI for each time period; table reflects the proportion of the sample in which the theme appears.

that a first-strike strategy constituted an integral feature of the Flexible Response doctrine [Ref. 47:p. 59]. This theme was invoked again in the 1970s with the announcement of "limited nuclear options" [Ref. 43:p. 151]. More recently, the deployment of PERSHING II missiles in Western Europe was denounced by the Soviets as another manifestation of a US preemptive-strike doctrine [Ref. 58:p. 13].

The question of whether the Soviets actually believed their own propaganda is debatable given the evident absence of a first-strike capability to accompany purported US doctrine. But once again the Soviets professed to see evidence of efforts by the United States to acquire such a capability in elements of the Strategic Modernization Program and "stealth" aircraft as well as the INF:

> "The facts prove that the present administration certainly is not thinking about 'defense.' On the contrary, it is putting its hopes on acquiring the potential for a disabling nuclear first strike. To this end, the accuracy of American nuclear systems capable of hitting our retaliatory strike forces--primarily silo launchers for intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs)--is being improved. Conditions are created for a surprise nuclear attack using the Pershing II missiles that are being placed in West European countries, as well as the long-range cruise missiles in various basing modes that are being deployed close to USSR territory. Various methods are being used to camouflage American missiles and bombers in flight so as to minimize the possibility of their detection." [Ref. 59:p. 7]*

The essential Soviet positions on the deceptive versus actual US intentions for the SDI appear to be contradictory in some respects. On the one hand, the Soviets insist that the fundamental advantage of offensive over defensive technologies makes the goal of assuring the survival of American society infeasible. On the other hand, the

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*Marshal of the Soviet Union S. L. Sokolov, USSR Minister of Defense.

Soviets appear to be deeply concerned that the SDI, in combination with the US strategic and INF force modernization programs, constitute a grave threat to the Soviet Union. The Soviets resolve this inconsistency by concluding that the SDI need not provide an impenetrable defense in order to be militarily useful. The fact that the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment came to essentially the same conclusion [Ref. 60:p. 47], along with comments of US officials on the advantages of "limited defense," tended to reinforce the Soviet view of deception. The Soviet military journal Krasnaya Zvezda puts it this way:

> "The White house, despite tremendous efforts, did not succeed in halting what was literally an avalanche of testimony from high-ranking officials to the effect that it is possible to create only a 'limited' ABM defense. General Abrahamson, responsible for fulfilling the 'strategic defense initiative,' began to cite as an argument in favor of creating this ABM defense its 25 percent or even 50 percent efficiency. On the basis of these admissions the US press noted that this approach refutes publicity ploys regarding the creation of a system designed to 'defend population centers and render nuclear weapons obsolete'....Thus there was revealed the unseemly picture that the Washington Post accurately described as deception--deception geared to misleading millions of Americans in order to seek approval for a sinister design: securing for offensive nuclear weapons a 'space shield' under the cover of which it would be possible to attempt, while counting on impunity, to use these weapons for a surprise first strike." [Ref. 61] (Emphasis added)

The Soviet military's contention that the SDI is intended for purposes other than those claimed by the Administration was obviously shared by the party leadership as indicated in these comments by CPSU General Secretary Gorbachev:

> "We cannot take seriously the assertions that SDI would guarantee invulnerability from nuclear attack systems, thereby leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons. In the opinion of our specialists (and, to my knowledge, of many of yours), this is an unrealizable fantasy, an empty dream. But even on the much more modest scale

in which SDI, according to specialists, is practicable, it is very dangerous." [Ref. 55:p. 16] (Emphasis added)

The Soviet view of the SDI in a limited defense role was consistent with their perception of US strategic doctrine which seeks to control escalation and limit damage to the United States through selected counterforce strikes against Soviet ICBM fields and other military targets.

The following statement by Doctor of Historical Sciences A. Kokoshin indicates that the Soviets correctly perceived that US targeting strategy is not oriented toward assured destruction (except as a last resort) and the SDI's potential for making actual US strategy more effective:

> "US strategists envisage an exchange of strikes against ICBM launch silos without harm to industrial installations or administrative centers and without losses of its population. They also envisage a scenario in which a first strike is delivered against such silos with impunity. After all, they say, the 'ABM shield' will do its work and limit the counterstrike. Soviet military doctrine rejects the idea of 'limited' nuclear war and of waging it 'according to rules' as illusory and exceptionally dangerous." [Ref. 62] (Emphasis added)

The Soviets also attempted to portray the SDI as inherently aggressive in its own right, that is, even without its association with nuclear weapons. References to "space strike" weapons capable of destroying targets other than ballistic missiles on the ground, as well as in the air and at sea, received relatively minor attention in the Soviet media except during the latter half of the Chernenko period (see Table 3). This surge may have been part of a Soviet effort to propagandize their proposal at the United Nations in September 1984 for a "ban on the use of force in space and from space against the earth, as well as from earth against objects in space" [Ref. 63:p. 4].

In the opinion of some scientists in the United States, the possibility exists that the SDI could be employed offensively against some types of "soft" ground targets and ultimately against "hard" targets as well in a first-strike mode [Ref. 33:p. 1]. Once again, spokesman for the Soviet academic-scientific community adopted or, more precisely, co-opted this theme as a means of demonstrating the Administration's militaristic intent [Ref. 64]. This view also was echoed in comments by CPSU General Secretary Chernenko:

> "It is clear from plans announced in the US that it is intended to deploy antimissile systems in space, to give free range to the operation of various kinds of antisatellite systems, and to deploy ultranew types of weapons designed to strike targets on the earth, in the air, and at sea." [Ref. 65] (Emphasis added)

The SDI's possible implications for the ABM Treaty was immediately apparent to the Soviets both as a threat to the treaty's continued viability and, because of this, the SDI's utility as a propaganda theme. The intention of the United States to breach the ABM Treaty received consistently high play in the Soviet media (as shown in Table 3). The character of Soviet claims changed over time, however, with earlier commentary tending to focus on the SDI's impact on the treaty following a future deployment decision:

> "Certain actions of the US with respect to the unlimited duration Treaty on the Limitation of Antiballistic Missile (ABM) systems cannot fail to cause concern, and the USSR has repeatedly addressed the American side on this matter....For what purpose is the US developing ABM systems that, in the event of their deployment, would go beyond the framework permitted by the treaty and, in effect, would lead to its undermining? After all, it was exactly plans for the creation of such a large-scale ABM system that the American side officially announced in March 1983." [Ref. 66] (Emphasis added)

Later Soviet references to US violations of the ABM Treaty and others were oriented more to the present tense [Ref. 67] and were increasingly related to claims that the SDI was not merely a research program. The reasons for this change in emphasis probably related to the perceived need to counter increasing US stress on Soviet treaty violations and to the increasing utility of the ABM Treaty as a propaganda device as the focus of the SDI debate shifted to Western Europe.

In short, the Soviets attempted to portray actual US intentions for the SDI as being something quite different from those stated by the Administration. In the Soviet view, technological constraints made the prospects of achieving "assured survival" objectively unattainable. Therefore, the stated US intention of pursuing total, i.e., population, defense for the United States (and NATO Europe) was nothing more than deception through propaganda. However, the technical feasibility of protecting limited numbers of targets was borne out by Soviet experience and "informed" Western opinion both inside and outside of government. Thus, actual US intentions for the SDI are centered on acquiring a military advantage over the Soviet Union which, in turn, implies deception.

The nature of the US advantage from the Soviet perspective was cast in typically "worst-case" terms, namely that of placing the United States in a position to launch a first strike. Such a view was by no means new to Soviet propaganda directed against US strategic doctrine and military programs. What <u>was</u> new was that the SDI, deployed for limited defense of military targets in combination with modernized strategic and theater offensive forces, could be seen as closing the

gap between purported US strategy and the capabilities required to execute that strategy. In this regard, it could be said that the gap between Soviet propaganda and actual perceptions was also closing.

3. The Objectives of US Political-Military Strategy

As the actual US intentions for the SDI were seen by the Soviets as being consistent with US strategic doctrine, so was the latter perceived as advancing the achievement of US political-military objectives. The ultimate objective of US strategy, in the view of the party, was proclaimed by CPSU General Secretary Andropov within days of the President's 23 March 1983 speech: "After all, the whole point of the speech is that America should arm itself faster and become the dominant military power in the world" [Ref. 51:p. 4].

Andropov's reference to "military dominance" as a prime objective of US strategy did not originate with the SDI. This theme has been more or less constantly present in Soviet propaganda over the years [Ref. 47:p. 55]. It received particular emphasis in Soviet commentary on INF modernization [Ref. 58:p. 12] and, as Table 4 indicates, the military dominance theme received a great deal of attention in reference to the SDI. The media's apparent deemphasis on this theme after Gorbachev's assumption of power could be due to the predominance of other themes more pertinent to Soviet propaganda objectives in Western Europe. Nevertheless, the role of the SDI in furthering US strategic objectives, particularly as the US rationale for the program increasingly stressed its relationship to Soviet strategic developments, was regularly cited in the Soviet media:

TABLE 4

SOVIET MEDIA REACTION TO THE SDI
ON THE TOPIC OF THE OBJECTIVES OF US POLITICAL-MILITARY STRATEGY:
RELATIVE EMPHASIS ON THEMES, MARCH 1983 - JULY 1985*

	Appearance of Theme**			
Topic:	Mar 83-Feb 84	Mar 84-Sep 84	Oct 84-Mar 85	Apr 85-Jul 85
What are the objectives of US political-military strategy?				
Themes:				
a. To achieve military dominance/superiority in order to conduct nuclear blackmail against the USSR.	52%	44%	46%	22%
b. To disrupt strategic parity/equilibrium in violation of the principle of equality and equal/identical security.	4%	22%	24%	10%
c. To obstruct arms control.	24%	58%	22%	28%
d. To acquire the capability to win a nuclear war.	16%	14%	2%	0%

*Media resources under party management, e.g., TASS, Radio Moscow, Pravda, etc.

**Based on a sample of 50 FBIS articles on the subject of the SDI for each time period; table reflects the proportion of the sample in which the theme appears.

"A comparison between the President's March (1983) statement and his Saturday radio address reveals a radical shift of accents in 'star wars' advertising. The former proclaims the 'aim' of making nuclear weapons 'impotent' and 'obsolete.' The latter does not even mention that. It turns out that the aim is to counterpose the US' own measures to Soviet threats and strategic challenges....The true objective of the plans and actions by the present administration is to obtain strategic superiority with the help of the so-called program of 'rearming America' and developing new types of armaments--strike space weapons." [Ref. 68] (Emphasis added)

Perhaps not surprisingly, it is the political implications of the SDI in furthering US strategic objectives that appeared to be of most concern to party officials and commentators. This is indicated by the relative lack of emphasis on the SDI's contribution to US war-fighting potential (theme d., Table 4).

Shultz's and Godson's analysis of Soviet propaganda during the 1960-1980 period revealed that the party apparently did not perceive any direct threat or challenge to Soviet security interests emanating from alleged US aggressiveness or militarism [Ref. 47:p. 101]. Likewise in the case of the SDI, the potential military threat, though real enough, was neither as immediate nor damaging in the long term as the potential threat to the achievement of Soviet foreign policy objectives. In other words, the Soviet leadership was as much concerned with what the Soviet Union stood to lose as with what the United States might gain through military dominance. Consider the words of former Defense Minister Ustinov:

"The course of imperialist reaction, headed by US ruling circles, became especially aggressive as the 1980s began....The US's and NATO's intentions to deploy new American medium-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe as first-strike weapons pose a special danger. No less dangerous is the Reagan Administration's plan to develop means of waging war in outer space. And all this is being

done in order to establish world domination, to erect a barrier on the path of progressive changes in the world." [Ref. 69] (Emphasis added)

From the Soviet point of view, it was the establishment of strategic parity in the 1970s that created the conditions for "progressive changes" in the Third World and, in certain respects, in Western Europe. The Soviets define parity as the relative equality derived from the sum of quantitative and qualitative inequalities existing between the forces of the Warsaw Pact and NATO. As long as each side retains a secure second-strike capability, parity is preserved [Ref. 70]. It is precisely this "equilibrium" that the Reagan Administration seeks to disrupt, in part, through the SDI (see Table 4). The party's assessment of the political-military motivation for the SDI was expressed by V. Falin, former First Deputy of the Central Committee's International Department:

"In May 1982, reports appeared that the United States was adopting a policy of 'devaluing' the Soviet military potential. This is very important--not the maintenance of equilibrium, nor identical security, but precisely 'devaluation,' by deploying nuclear and non-nuclear first-strike systems and creating techniques for the preemptive destruction of the enemy's strategic means....Consequently, Reagan's March 1983 statement on the construction of an 'impenetrable shield' against nuclear missiles merely dotted the 'i's in the sense of making the final choice of political guidelines and concluding the debate within the Administration itself. Let's go into space, the President decided." [Ref. 71] (Emphasis added)

In other words, the objective of the SDI, in conjunction with other US military programs, is to erode the primary basis of Soviet global strategy--military power.

In a more purely propaganda vein, the Soviets attempted to portray themselves as sincerely interested in halting the arms race

while the objective of the United States was to obstruct the arms control process. Soviet references to US opposition to negotiations in particular and detente in general became more pronounced in the late 1970s as the neutron bomb and INF modernization were being debated in the West [Ref. 47:p. 55]. Following the NATO "dual track" decision of December 1979, the theme of US disinterest in arms control was prominent in the Soviet campaign to prevent INF deployment [Ref. 58:p. 18] and quickly became a major feature of propaganda directed at the SDI after March 1983. As indicated in Table 4, this theme appeared to peak in the early months of Chernenko's tenure. This was due in part to Soviet efforts to absolve themselves of any responsibility for the breakdown of the INF talks in late 1983 and to draw a parallel between this event and US "intransigence" on the issue of space weapons talks as the following TASS statement clearly reflects:

> "Thus, the American administration has again demonstrated in no uncertain terms that it does not intend to renounce its militaristic course or the stepped-up implementation of broad-scale military programs. It is evident that the very possibility of serious talks on arms limitation is perceived in Washington as an obstacle to the realization of such a policy. First, the US wrecked the talks on nuclear arms in Geneva, and now it is making the beginning of talks on space impossible." [Ref. 72] (Emphasis added)

The "proof" of the Reagan Administration's unwillingness to engage in negotiations to prevent the "militarization of space" was revealed by its negative response to a variety of Soviet initiatives including the draft Treaty Prohibiting the Use of Force in Outer Space and from Space toward Earth [Ref. 73] and their call for an agreement on the dismantling of existing antisatellite systems and a ban on the creation of new ones [Ref. 74] (in August 1983); the

proposal for space weapons talks [Ref. 75] and the call for a mutual moratorium on the testing and deployment of space strike systems [Ref. 76] (in June 1984); and the proposal for a Ban on the Use of Force in Space and from Space against the Earth, as well as from Earth against Objects in Space [Ref. 63:p. 4] (in September 1984). Questions posed by the United States Government in response to the Soviet proposals concerning, among other things, the vagueness of language and the lack of attention to the issue of verification were cited by the Soviets as further evidence of the Administration's "obstructionist" attitude toward arms control.

Shortly after the resumption of arms control talks in Geneva in March 1985 (the initiation of which the Soviets assumed full credit), charges of "inflexibility" were once again leveled at the United States [Ref. 77]. Specifically, the US was accused of attempting to use the talks as a means of "legalizing" the arms race whereas the Soviet aim was to prevent such a race [Ref. 78]. This claim was made in reference to arguments by the Administration that SDI research was within the framework of the ABM Treaty. As to the US position on the non-negotiability of the SDI during the research phase, the following statement by CPSU General Secretary Gorbachev provides an indication of the Soviet appraisal of the Administration's uncompromising attitude:

> "Washington is stating with utter frankness: No matter what the Soviet Union does at Geneva or in the military field, the US in any case will develop space strike weapons and antisatellite systems." [Ref. 55:p. 20]

In summary, a significant portion of Soviet commentary on the SDI was intended to emphasize the program's role in US political-

military strategy. Some of the assertions on the nature of US objectives in the SDI context were virtually indistinguishable from those appearing in earlier Soviet propaganda campaigns. Yet to the extent that the SDI could be seen as contributing to the enhancement of current US strategy, as opposed to creating the conditions for movement to a new (defensive) strategy, Soviet assertions of an attempt by the United States to derive military, and hence political, advantage through the SDI appear to be more than mere propaganda.

4. Interpreting the Soviet Response: The SDI as a Threat

Soviet public statements clearly reflect a high degree of anxiety over the implications of the SDI. Included among the SDI's dangerous consequences are a renewed arms race, international instability, and the increased risk of war. As will be discussed below, such outcomes tend to parallel the debate in the West and are thoroughly exploited for their propaganda effect particularly in Western Europe. However, much less is revealed concerning the threat posed by the SDI to Soviet strategic programs and objectives from the latter's perspective. An attempt will be made here to infer from the foregoing discussion the Soviet view of the threat in terms of the SDI's potential contribution to current US strategic doctrine.

The Administration's stated goal for the SDI is that the early stages of deployment should make the existing US deterrent strategy more effective, while later stages would allow movement to a different strategy [Ref. 60:p. 25]. This position could be interpreted in two ways depending upon one's understanding of "current US strategy" and both would be correct.

One interpretation pertains to the US declaratory doctrine of "assured destruction" which the Administration has vowed to replace with "assured survival" based on the SDI. The other interpretation concerns the actual US "countervailing strategy" and its underlying doctrine of Flexible Response which together envision the employment of nuclear weapons in ways that are both militarily and politically useful. From the Soviet point of view, it is the SDI's role in reinforcing the latter "war-fighting" aspect of US strategy that is of prime concern.

The public debate surrounding the SDI has tended to overlook two "myths" of US strategic doctrine. One myth is that mutual assured destruction is the basis of US nuclear planning [Ref. 79:p. 54]. It is widely believed that in the event of Soviet attack at any level of conflict the immediate US response would be rather large-scale nuclear retaliation against Soviet urban-industrial (countervalue) targets. The other, and related, myth is contained within the US-NATO doctrine of Flexible Response which holds that in the event of Soviet conventional attack against Western Europe, NATO will take the initiative in going nuclear [Ref. 80].

The reality is that, in the first instance, US vulnerability to Soviet attack [illegible] forced the search for alternatives that would control escalation and thereby limit damage to the United States and the allies. The goal of US strategic doctrine has been to make MAD the last resort outcome, rather than the initial phase, of a nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union. In the second instance, the very fact of US vulnerability has made the prospect of nuclear retaliation

against a Soviet attack limited to Western Europe less and less credible as a deterrent. The challenge confronting US strategic planners has been to restore the military and political utility of nuclear weapons both as a deterrent and as a means of controlling escalation if deterrence failed in the face of Soviet efforts to restrict the United States to an increasingly incredible assured destruction posture. The objective, in other words, has been to restore some measure of "flexibility" to the doctrine of Flexible Response.

As the momentum of the Soviet strategic buildup showed no sign of slackening either during or after the SALT I negotiations, it became increasingly apparent that the shift in the strategic balance had decreased the damage-limiting capability of US strategic forces [Ref. 42:p. 115]. The United States could neither disarm the Soviet Union nor could it, through a combination of offensive and defensive means, significantly limit damage to itself in an all-out nuclear war [Ref. 79:p. 77]. The President was thus faced with three choices: (1) authorize strikes (preemptive or retaliatory) against Soviet forces that would probably weaken the US more than the USSR; (2) unleash a massive assured destruction strike on all targets, military and urban-industral; or (3) do nothing [Ref. 79:p. 76].

In the view of Defense Secretary Schlesinger, the President needed to be able to contemplate some kind of purely "military" exchange--selected strikes against military targets--and yet still be able to rely on his reserve "second-strike" against civilian targets [Ref. 81]. Thus, the Schlesinger Doctrine (1974) envisioned the creation of smaller attack options that would increase the flexibility

of existing war plans. In the event deterrence failed, the primary US objective was to control the process of escalation, bringing hostilities to an acceptable close at the lowest level of conflict possible, thereby limiting the damage to the United States and its allies. If necessary, escalation control and damage limitation were to be achieved through the use of limited nuclear options (LNOs). These options would serve both a military and political purpose. If escalation control failed, the United States would seek to destroy Soviet military, political, and economic assets so as to retard the USSR's recovery in the postwar period. Such attacks would also be designed to limit the Soviet Union's ability to retard US recovery [Ref. 79:p. 80].

In 1980, United States attack options were further refined in Presidential Directive 59 (PD 59) with emphasis on targeting facilities which the Soviet leadership deemed essential to a successful war effort, that is, targets that comprise the Soviet military force structure and political power structure [Ref. 79:p. 82].

US strategic doctrine had thus evolved from a condition of almost complete reliance on assured destruction to a relatively greater emphasis on the credible use of nuclear weapons as the basis for deterrence. Yet the continuing (and growing) vulnerability of the ICBM (counterforce) leg of the US strategic triad to a Soviet preemptive strike degraded the potential for exercising LNOs as a means of controlling the escalatory process [Ref. 82].

With the growth of opinion in the United States that the SDI's promise for providing near-perfect defense against a massive Soviet attack was virtually hopeless (though officially this remains the SDI's

ultimate goal), the debate shifted to the program's utility in a less-than-near-perfect defense, i.e., in shoring up the war-fighting aspect of US strategic doctrine [Ref. 83]. The increasing emphasis on the SDI's near- and mid-term counter-counterforce role (and corresponding decrease in the long-term goal of "assured survival") is reflected in the remarks of Defense Secretary Weinberger:

> "If the Soviets ever contemplated initiating a nuclear attack, their purpose would be to destroy US or allied retaliatory capability and the military forces that would blunt Soviet aggression. Even partially efffective defenses that could deny Soviet missiles their military objectives or shake the Soviets' confidence in their ability to achieve such dire objectives would discourage them from considering such an attack and thus be a highly effective deterrent." [Ref. 84]

Such reasoning is entirely consistent with current US "countervailing strategy" embodied in PD 59 that attempts to deter the Soviet Union from nuclear attack or threat of attack on the United States or its allies by persuading the Soviets that US nuclear counterattacks would, primarily, lead to unacceptable damage to valued Soviet assets (punishment), and, secondarily, would cause such Soviet attacks to fail in their geopolitical objectives (denial) [Ref. 60:p. 25].

The SDI debate, then, no longer centered on the question of protecting American cities perfectly but on improving deterrence through a mix of offensive and defensive forces [Ref. 85]. Advocates of the SDI's limited deployment role argued that the nature of a Soviet attack would most likely involve limited strikes against US military targets under the assumption that the Soviets also have an interest in avoiding national suicide [Ref. 86]. Defense against such an attack

would not only not have to be perfect to be useful as a deterrent but, by enhancing the survivability of US ICBMs, would preserve the strategic options available to the President [Ref. 87].

The Soviets saw American plans for more selective use of strategic weapons (LNOs and PD 59) as an indication that the United States was trying to escape the restrictions of "parity" and to restore political utility to its strategic forces [Ref. 88:p. 50]. Indeed, they appeared to perceive LNOs as a move toward a preemptive, war-fighting strategy similar to their own. The Soviets viewed theirs as the only truly rational, objective, and scientific doctrine. Assuming the Soviet perception of American planners as rational, it followed that the United States was considering a similar doctrine for its own use. Deterrence, moreover, was not considered to be inconsistent with a war-fighting capability. In the Soviet view, what could deter more effectively than an imposing offensive arsenal backed up by the best possible active and passive defense? [Ref. 40:p. 11]

Since LNOs incorporated certain aspects of nuclear war-fighting, the Soviets looked for the United States to start bolstering its strategic defenses so as to obtain a credible war-survival capability. When no such thing happened, LNOs lost credibility [Ref. 43:p. 152]. Similar motives were imputed to the "countervailing strategy," i.e., an attempt by the United States to achieve superiority through LNOs and through the qualitiative improvement of nuclear forces, for example, by improving the accuracy of ballistic missiles. But PD 59 was not credible, again, because the United States was too vulnerable

to rationally threaten the Soviet Union with even highly selective nuclear attack [Ref. 43:p. 163].

In their propaganda, the Soviets denounced limited nuclear war concepts as US contrivances to make nuclear weapons use more "acceptable" and to rationalize the quest for counterforce advantages [Ref. 89]. The Soviets have also acknowledged and criticized the SDI's relationship to US limited war concepts [Ref. 90]. As discussed earlier, this criticism has assumed typical "worst-case" form: the intention of the United States to provide a shield for first-strike offensive weapons.

Notwithstanding the obvious propaganda intent of such statements, the Soviets are clearly haunted by a "nightmare scenario" in which the United States beats them to the defensive punch and combines the SDI with on-going offensive improvements to gain real nuclear superiority [Ref. 91:p. 86]. At the very least, the SDI is seen as but one element (perhaps not wholly unexpected) in current strategic trends that cause Soviet defense planners to worry about the erosion of their war-fighting options, and hence by Soviet definition, the weakening of deterrence [Ref. 91:p. 102].

On the other hand, the relative lack of emphasis in Soviet commentary on the capability to win a nuclear war as an objective of US political-military strategy, partly by means of the SDI, is a reflection of their concern for the program's utility under conditions other than the "nightmare scenario." Specifically, it is the SDI's potential for restoring credibility to the war-fighting aspect of US strategic doctrine (and, by extension, to NATO's doctrine of Flexible Response)

that is more worrisome to the party leadership. As has been demonstrated in the past, the party will view any attempt by the United States to improve its military position, particularly if it entails movement away from an assured destruction posture, as being detrimental to the political advantages the Soviet Union has enjoyed by virtue of its military policies particularly with regard to Western Europe.

Three major strategic goals have shaped the evolution of Soviet defense policy. One is the necessity to provide robust deterrence against any military operations against the USSR and its allies. Another is the maintenance of a military doctrine and force structure that theoretically enables the Soviet Union to prevail in any type of conflict. The third goal, which derives from the second, is the ability to maximize the political leverage provided by Soviet force posture and doctrine while denying the same to their opponents. [Ref. 91:p. 87]

Ideally, the Soviets would prefer to achieve their political objectives peacefully, that is, to gain the fruits of war without having to resort to war in the first place. Thus, in the opinion of some analysts, the political goals of Soviet military strategy assume crucial importance:

> "The main purpose of the Soviet military buildup in Europe is not first to prepare for and then fight war, conventional or nuclear, but to influence Western perceptions. It is to change the psychology of Western European and American public opinion and political leadership. It is to maintain and enhance, rather than alleviate, Western insecurity; to create an atmosphere in which the first use of nuclear weapons by NATO is seen as militarily counterproductive and morally reprehensible; and to convey the impression that Western Europe cannot and therefore, will not be defended." [Ref. 92:p. 95] (Emphasis in original)

The Soviet Union has thus sought to capitalize on the politico-psychological benefits of the appearance of superiority, or at least equality [Ref. 40:p. 5]. Indeed, the Soviet view of the "balance" in Europe indicates a belief in the continued and even increasing utility of manifestations of preponderant power [Ref. 81]. The image of Soviet power, moreover, is reinforced by a military doctrine that emphasizes a willingness to use that power should the need arise.

The Soviet predilection for war-fighting as opposed to deterrent capabilities has long been cited as a key aspect of their military doctrine. Actually, as stated earlier, such a distinction is a false dichotomy since the terms are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Even in the West there are those who believe that the most credible form of deterrent would be a capability to fight and win a war if necessary [Ref. 93:p. 270].

Beyond its utility for deterrence, however, the Soviet emphasis on war-fighting is also designed to maximize the political effect of military capabilities. The adoption of a purely deterrent or defensive posture would have a minimal political effect, or none at all [Ref. 92:p. 94]. Thus, the notion of "limited" nuclear war, apparently preferred by the United States, was undermined by Soviet assertions of the unavoidable escalation of any war between the superpowers. An image was offered of an all-out conflict opening with massive nuclear exchanges in which few cities would escape unscathed [Ref. 93:p. 266].

The declared Soviet willingness to engage in such a conflict, "if unleashed by the imperialists," does not mean the Soviet leadership believes that it can fight and "win" a nuclear war. Rather, it is part

of an effort to exploit US-NATO over-reliance on nuclear weapons. The combined effect of Soviet offensive doctrine backed up by the threat of escalation dominance at every level of the arms competition has been to create concern on the part of Western public opinion and political leadership (especially in Western Europe) that the link provided by Flexible Response between conventional and nuclear war, as well as between war in Europe and general war, has been weakened and can be broken altogether. [Ref. 92:p. 95]

Soviet policy has thus aimed to destroy the credibility of US-NATO strategy thereby providing the USSR with a military and political advantage in its relations with Western Europe. References in Soviet commentary to efforts by the United States to achieve military dominance, in part through the SDI, take on a new meaning when seen in this light.

The most worrisome aspect of the SDI from the perspective of the party leadership is not so much the potential military threat though such is obviously a serious long-term consideration. More compelling is the prospect of the SDI's contribution to the "devaluation" of Soviet military power and the consequent neutralization of political leverage which the Soviets have sought to cultivate through the appearance of superiority. In other words, to the extent that the SDI makes current NATO strategy more effective, the political benefits of Soviet strategy are proportionately reduced. In short, what has been taking place between the United States and the Soviet Union is not only a competition in arms but, perhaps more importantly, a competition in strategies [Ref. 88:p. 72].

The SDI's potential for providing the United States with marginal advantages in this competition is the basis for the Soviet view of deception behind the program. Deception, by definition, is the deliberate misrepresentation of reality done to gain a competitive advantage [Ref. 25:p. 3]. In their commentary, the Soviets have provided direct and indirect indications of their belief that the actual rationale for the SDI is to improve the US' strategic position vis-a-vis the USSR to the latter's disadvantage. This belief is reinforced by Soviet preconceptions regarding the continuing dominance of offensive over defensive technology; the limited though useful role that defensive weapons play even under conditions of offensive dominance; the probable superiority of a US defensive system regardless of its deployment configuration; and the likely unwillingness of the United States to forego this advantage once it has been achieved.

The Soviets dismiss the Administration's contention that the SDI is intended to enhance current US strategy on the way to creating the conditions that will allow the transition to a new strategy. On the contrary, they seem convinced that on technical, military, and strategic grounds such a transition will never take place. Therefore, the Soviet characterization of "assured survival" through the SDI as deception probably reflects their actual belief whether the intent is to deceive Western opinion or the Soviets themselves.

B. SDI IN THE CONTEXT OF WESTERN EUROPE

As 1985 approached, Soviet commentary on the SDI increasingly focused on the program's relationship to Western Europe. This is not

to say that the European context was neglected in the two years following the SDI's announcement. Actually, references to the SDI's implications for Europe increased during Chernenko's tenure. But there was also a subtle message for the Europeans in some of the themes that were apparently directed toward the United States. Both aspects of the Soviet response will be presented below. As a prelude to this discussion, the European reaction to the SDI will be addressed first.

Since the early 1950s, NATO strategy has revolved around the dual requirement of deterring a Soviet nuclear or conventional attack on Western Europe and, if deterrence failed, defeating the attack on terms favorable to the allies. Throughout the post-war period it has been the deterrent aspect of alliance strategy that has received the most attention, with nuclear weapons at the center of that strategy.

The rationale for NATO reliance on the nuclear deterrent has not significantly changed over the years; it is derived essentially from the costs (political and economic) entailed in a shift to a strategy on any other basis. Alliance strategy also involves the belief, particularly among the Europeans, that "victory" in Europe would be meaningless because of the destruction of their homelands that would result from the defeat of the attacker.

The problem for NATO has been one of maintaining the credibility of its deterrent strategy in the context of domestic and intra-alliance political constraints, and in the face of the evolving and more ominous Soviet threat. The source of the problem is the changing nature of the threat and differing perceptions of both sides of the Atlantic on the best measures to deter or defeat it.

The Flexible Response doctrine was adopted by NATO in 1967 with the aim of bolstering deterrence by providing a political incentive to the Soviet Union to refrain from attacking, and to provide the means for early termination of a war should deterrence fail. Its viability depended upon maintaining the credibility of the triad which together provide the doctrine's foundation: the US strategic deterrent; European national and allied theater nuclear forces; and conventional forces in Europe. As time passed, it became increasingly clear that an imbalance in one or more of the components threatened to subvert the credibility of the doctrine as a whole. It was precisely this situation that the Soviets sought to create through an across-the-board military buildup beginning in the early years of the Brezhnev regime.

In the presence of the growing Soviet threat, the basic tensions between the United States and European interpretations of Flexible Response were exacerbated. Generally, this has involved US efforts to raise the nuclear threshold by limiting the potential use of nuclear weapons to carefully defined military target sets in the hope of controlling the escalation process. In this way, the credibility of the actual use of these weapons is presumably reinforced and deterrence is thereby enhanced. The Europeans, on the other hand, refuse to contemplate any role for nuclear weapons except in their capacity as a deterrent. Particular stress is placed on the massive first use of the British and French independent nuclear forces. By emphasizing uncontrolled escalation to the level of the US strategic component of the NATO triad, from the European perspective, deterrence is strengthened.

The SDI has been offered by the Reagan Administration as a potential solution to the declining credibility of NATO's deterrent strategy because it could be used to reinforce the US strategic leg of the NATO triad. But rather than reassuring the allies, the effect has been to aggravate long-standing European concerns over the implications of ballistic missile defense for European security. Such concerns provide the Soviet Union with additional opportunities for exploiting divergences of interest between the United States and NATO Europe.

1. The European Reaction to the SDI

Western Europe's initial reaction to the President's March 1983 speech was a combination of surprise followed by consternation, confusion, and misgivings. With apparently the sole exception of Prime Minister Thatcher of Britain, no allied leaders were informed in advance of the speech's ballistic missile defense theme [Ref. 94:p. 112]. The general European reaction ranged from one of perplexed puzzlement to undisguised anger over the lack of consultations. This applied to the British as well since "informing" Mrs. Thatcher as to the contents of the speech did not equate to discussing its implications. State Department officials later confirmed that there were no previous consultations with the allies, and in fact officials at the highest levels of the Department itself were informed of the contents of the speech only hours before it was delivered [Ref. 95:p. 27].

The reaction of surprise to the SDI speech was accompanied by amazement as to the breadth of the President's goals: "Rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete" and "eliminating the threat posed by strategic nuclear missiles." In Europe as eleswhere the

feasibility of constructing leak-proof comprehensive defenses struck many as being technologically naive. The European governments also found the insinuation that NATO strategy is immoral to be badly timed, considering their efforts to defend that strategy and to justify the impending deployment of new US nuclear missiles in Europe. [Ref. 94:p. 113]

Finally, the Europeans indicated a nearly reflexive fear of the initiation of a new arms race. There was considerable concern that the Soviet Union would intensify its own BMD activities and prepare improved countermeasures to penetrate and overcome projected US BMD capabilities [Ref. 94:p. 113]. Also, the British and French were unhappy with the possible impact on their independent nuclear deterrents.

The fundamental elements of European concern over the SDI can be traced back to alliance BMD deliberations of the late-1960s. Defense Secretary McNamara's September 1967 speech announcing the decision to deploy the SENTINEL ABM system for defense against projected Chinese strategic capabilities was not favorably received in Europe. The Europeans feared that strategic stability and prospects for arms control and detente would be needlessly endangered by highly expensive technology that probably would not be reliably effective. It was argued that even a limited defense (of ICBMs) might lead to area defense and thus to a virtual "decoupling" of the US security guarantee, as well as to the erosion of the European nuclear deterrents as a result of Soviet BMD counterdeployments. The Europeans also believed that BMD was naturally oriented toward fighting wars rather than toward

their prevention, and as such was inherently inimical to European security. Additionally, the announcement of SENTINEL was seen as having been made without adequate allied consultation, which stimulated suspicion of American tendencies to subordinate European security interests to those of the United States. [Ref. 96:p. 144]

In 1969, the Nixon Administration decided to revise the anti-Chinese orientation of SENTINEL to a SAFEGUARD system dedicated primarily to protection of US retaliatory forces, and secondarily against accidental or small attacks by the Soviets or the Chinese. However, the ABM Treaty of 1972 and its 1974 Protocol put an end to these plans. The treaty was welcomed in Western Europe for curtailing American and, it was believed, Soviet BMD activities, thereby butressing European security by ensuring the continued credibility of the British and French deterrents; inhibiting the transfer of ABM technology to third countries; and assuring that the United States would be just as vulnerable to ballistic missile attack as its allies. [Ref. 96:p. 146]

As the 1970s progressed and Soviet-American relations took on an increasingly unfriendly tone, the ABM Treaty assumed special importance to the Europeans as the surviving "keystone" of detente. United States interest in renegotiating the treaty therefore appears dangerous and potentially destabilizing to many in Western Europe and still more so the possibility of the treaty's abrogation [Ref. 96:p. 146]. Given the fundamental European opposition to BMD, the question arises as to whether some factions and governments in Europe might be persuaded that qualified support of the SDI is in their interests.

Subsequent to the SDI speech, the Reagan Administration has made a vigorous effort to persuade the Europeans that SDI research serves their interests on political, economic, and strategic grounds. Above all the Administration has sought to reassure the allies that the SDI will remain in the research phase for several years, within which time the United States intends to abide by the restrictions of the ABM Treaty [Ref. 97]. Second, the United States is committed to consultations with the allies up to the point where a decision to deploy elements of the SDI is made [Ref. 7:p. 17]. Third, the Administration has indicated a willingness to accelerate research in technologies applicable to defense against shorter-range ballistic missiles [Ref. 19:p. 10]. Finally, the Administration has attempted to convince the allies that the SDI does not represent abandonment by the United States of the arms control process, but that the program could help to restore the efficacy of the process which has been undermined by Soviet activities [Ref. 9:p. 2].

SDI research has also been defended in terms of its potential "spin-off" benefits. In the political area, the non-nuclear and apparently defensive nature of the SDI could serve to co-opt the European anti-nuclear movement. The Europeans also stand to gain economically from the jobs and civilian applications of SDI technology that would derive from participation in the research phase of the program. Conversely, failure to participate could cause Europe to fall further behind in the technology competition with the United States and Japan. West European opportunities for influencing US decision making in the program would also be greatly reduced. SDI research, moreover,

is likely to produce technical advances with cross-applications to military programs of interest to NATO--for example, improved software for automated command, control, communications, and intelligence in the European theater.

Generally speaking, while the Europeans remain dubious as to the SDI's technical feasibility and strategic desirability, they seem to be convinced that the United States is genuinely committed to proceeding with SDI research. As a consequence of this assessment, the West Europeans prefer not to reject the SDI outright because of their concern that the United States will forge ahead without European participation. Additionally, a consensus seems to have developed on the possible consequences to European security that could result from failure to respond to advances in Soviet strategic defense. The recognition of this threat even among governments that have expressed opposition to the SDI, such as in France, suggests that this may be the Reagan Administration's strongest case for the program.

A curious aspect of the President's March 1983 speech was the omission of any reference to the magnitude of Soviet BMD research and development efforts and to related civil defense and air defense programs [Ref. 94:p. 113]. Indeed, emphasis on the SDI as a necessary response to Soviet strategic defense was, until 1985, a lesser theme in the Administration's argument for the program. This apparent discrepancy has now been rectified, however, and Administration spokesmen have come out strongly against what is perceived as a growing threat in Soviet active and passive defense programs [Ref. 21].

The Administration's threat rationale for the SDI seeks to identify European security with the American view of Flexible Response. First, to the extent that NATO's selective nuclear strike options depend upon US ICBMs and shorter-range ballistic missiles such as PERSHING and LANCE, Soviet BMD could erode the credibility of NATO strategy. Second, Soviet control over the escalation process could be enhanced if they were to gain a unilateral BMD advantage. In this event, the USSR would possess a more clear-cut ability to try to influence US nuclear employment decisions--i.e., to control escalation by "deterring the US deterrent." Finally, Soviet defensive deployments would be consistent with a strategy that prefers to gain hegemony without war by leading Western Europe to accomodate Soviet goals politically in the face of superior Soviet war-waging potential. The Soviet Union would thus be in a position to conduct strategic blackmail with the ultimate goal of separating the United States from its allies. [Ref. 98]

The Administration has sought to convince the allies that expanded roles for BMD are probably inevitable, not because of the SDI, but as a result of Soviet activities. The "initiative" element of the SDI resides in its value for providing an incentive for the Soviets to approach offensive and defensive arms control seriously. According to this view, the United States would place international stability, Western security interests, and arms contol at risk if it failed to proceed with SDI research as a hedge against a potential break-out of Soviet strategic defenses. [Ref. 94:p. 128]

Despite the partial success to date of US efforts to "sell" the SDI to the allies, European anxieties that were evident during the late 1960s debate on BMD have not gone away. Though apparently cognizant of the possible consequences of failing to respond to Soviet defense activities, the Europeans continue to harbor legitimate reservations as to the effect of the SDI on their long-term security interests.

The SDI appears destabilizing to many Europeans because of their belief that the deployment of defenses would be more dangerous than preserving mutual vulnerability. An arms race in BMD could lead to illusions about the controlability of nuclear war in either or both the United States and the Soviet Union, and to mutual fears of preemptive attack. The arms race would be intensified by expanded offensive forces and penetration aids to overwhelm defenses, as well as by competition in defensive capabilities. [Ref. 94:p. 117]

The Europeans are naturally concerned about the implications of the SDI for the future of East-West relations. Despite reassurances from the Administration to the contrary, many Europeans see the SDI as a threat to the ABM Treaty, which is regarded as a monument to detente [Ref. 94:p. 118]. The tendency of the Europeans to place top priority on arms control as a barometer of their security has apparently not been significantly affected by evidence of Soviet violations of arms control accords--including the ABM Treaty.

The Europeans are further concerned over ultimate US intentions for the SDI. Specifically, is the SDI intended for population defense or protection of strategic weapons? In his March 1983 speech, the President stated, and has continued to maintain, that the purpose of

SDI research is to see if a system could be built to provide complete protection of the United States and its allies against an attack with ballistic missiles. But many see complete protection (particularly of Europe) as technically infeasible and so fears of differing levels of vulnerability, and hence strategic decoupling, are raised.

On the other hand, some officials in the United States have indicated that point defenses of strategic missile sites might alone be feasible. But this option calls into question the sincerity of US intentions to eliminate or substantially reduce the level of strategic arsenals, as opposed to providing a shield for modernized offensive weapons. The latter alternative implies the intent to replace mutual assured destruction not with mutual survival through defense, but with a war-fighting doctrine that could well leave Western Europe dangerously exposed. To repeat: from the European perspective, a doctrine which contemplates a role for nuclear weapons on any other basis than pure deterrence is to be avoided.

Closely related to such concerns is the fear that the SDI could lead the United States to adopt a "fortress America" isolationist position, and hence abandon Europe to Soviet domination. A less extreme version of this view is that a Soviet-American agreement on strategic defenses (formal or implicit) could lead to a new form of superpower condominium with Western Europe clearly subordinated to the United States by dependence on US technology [Ref. 94:p. 121]. Yet another variant of this line of reasoning is the potential detrimental effects of the SDI on the independent deterrents of Britain and France. These forces are held to be valuable because (among other reasons) they

complicate Soviet attack plans thereby enhancing deterrence. The counterargument to the SDI is that it would further stimulate Soviet efforts to develop countermeasures; as a consequence, both the British and French nuclear forces, being smaller than those of the United States, would experience greater difficulty in penetrating an improved Soviet defense [Ref. 95:p. 31].

The Europeans are ill-disposed to accept the financial burden of yet another expensive weapon system. While the allies are anxious to gain the benefits that might derive from lucrative SDI research contracts, they are not anxious to bear a substnatial part of the costs of an anti-tactical missile defense system for Western Europe [Ref. 95:p. 33]. They are further worried over the probable opportunity costs of the SDI to both the United States and Europe--i.e., less resources would be available for improving conventional defenses.

Perhaps most frightening is the prospect that both the American and Soviet versions of the SDI might work. Such a condition could make the possibility of fighting a conventional [illegible] more likely and more acceptable. The European view of deterrence through offensive means continues to be that it has been successful in keeping the peace, however imperfectly. The highly-destructive potential of nuclear weapons is seen as an unpleasant reality, but one that has served for decades as a successful deterrent to conflicts between the major powers. Even if the SDI proves effective, no European wants to make the world safe for conventional war. [Ref. 95:p. 36]

2. Soviet Portrayal of the SDI's Impact on Europe

The Soviet campaign against the SDI was designed to reinforce and exploit some of the existing European concerns outlined in the preceding discussion. The thrust of Soviet commentary was to portray the SDI as being harmful to European interests as a result of (1) the general consequences of the SDI following from increased Soviet-American strategic competition; and (2) the unequal nature of the SDI's costs and benefits as they might be viewed by the NATO allies.

a. Effects of Increased Superpower Competition

Soviet characterization of US political-military strategy as agressive and militaristic is a perennial theme of Soviet propaganda [Ref. 47]. As concerns Western Europe, the intent of such statements is obviously to undermine support for the SDI by portraying the Soviet Union as the injured party, while attempting to discredit the Reagan Administration as being opposed to detente. While such a view would readily be accepted by the pacifist minority, many European moderates are also disturbed by what they see as a confrontationist orientation in US policy toward the Soviet Union that places priority on the military aspect of US-USSR relations.

The Europeans favor a more differentiated approach which takes into account the military dimension, but which also sees the continuation of detente as being in the long-term interests of European security [Ref. 99:p. 5]. Thus, while the Europeans "consider the source" of Soviet accusations of US hegemony-seeking, they are nonetheless concerned by the latter's emphasis on military solutions to the

problem of European security, and the relative lack of emphasis on other approaches for dealing with the Soviets, for example, through trade and arms control.

It was therefore not surprising when the Soviets accused the United States of attempting to secure its strategic objectives by resort to deception, disinformation (particularly with respect to the "Soviet threat"), and by obstructing arms control. The deception theme was usually couched in terms of its perpetration on the allies:

> "Washington seeks to secure support for the 'star wars' program from its allies, justify its policy of militarizing outer space in the eyes of West Europeans, and remove or dull apprehensions mounting in Western countries over this new step of the American leadership, which is extremely dangerous to the cause of peace. By having recourse to all manner of tricks and downright deception and keeping silent on the true aims and unavoidable consequences of its plans to militarize outer space, the US administration is out to mislead public opinion and governments of West European countries....Washington's plan is offensive and aggressive and aims to give the United States a military advantage. It is into this pursuit of the mirage of superiority, which is unattainable since the Soviet Union will not allow it, that they now hope to drag Western Europe." [Ref. 100:p. AA8] (Emphasis added)

According to the Soviets, the SDI represented a deception of intent with respect to its allegedly defensive nature, which was deemed to be inconsistent with the overall militarisitic character of US strategic objectives. The SDI was also a "capability deception" in that the stated US goal of achieving a "totally effective" defense was held to be technically infeasible. The Soviets also claimed that the United States was exaggerating the Soviet threat in order to garner public support for the SDI. This theme, along with accusations that the United States was set on obstructing arms control, became more

prominent as the focus of Soviet media attention shifted to Western Europe.

All of these themes were designed to undercut support for the SDI by attacking the Administration's credibility. The arms control theme was perhaps the most potent, given the priority which Europeans place on this subject as a gauge of detente. The employment of this theme appeared to peak with the Soviet proposal for a total ban on "space weapons" and ASAT testing in early 1984, but has generally been invoked in connection with the United States' refusal to negotiate on SDI research.

The Soviets generally condemned the SDI for its potentially negative effect on "strategic stability" and specifically its implications for the ABM Treaty. As discussed earlier, both are sensitive subjects to the West Europeans. The Soviets attempted to capitalize on European concerns by including the military-related activities of the space shuttle and ASAT testing as elements of the SDI. As such, the United States was accused of already having breached the ABM Treaty.

The claimed consequences of the SDI were particularly pertinent to Europe (see Table 5). The logic of the Soviet position was simple and straight forward: If the United States proceeded with the SDI, the Soviet Union will be forced to adopt countermeasures which will stimulate an arms race in all spheres. Thus, not only would SDI mean the end of the arms control process, but the international situation would become more unstable and the risk of war would increase.

TABLE 5

SOVIET MEDIA REACTION TO SDI
ON THE TOPIC OF CONSEQUENCES OF THE PROGRAM:
RELATIVE EMPHASIS ON THEMES, MARCH 1983 - JULY 1985*

Topic:	Appearance of Theme**			
	Mar 83-Feb 84	Mar 84-Sep 84	Oct 84-Mar 85	Apr 85-Jul 85
What are the consequences of SDI?				
Themes:				
a. The USSR will be forced to take countermeasures.	10%	30%	28%	10%
b. Stimulate offensive/defensive/space arms race.	44%	58%	58%	36%
c. Derail the arms limitation process.	18%	16%	22%	32%
d. Destabilize the international situation and increase the risk of war.	26%	24%	44%	22%

*Media resources under party management, e.g., TASS, Radio Moscow, Pravda, etc.

**Based on a sample of 50 FBIS articles on the subject of the SDI for each time period; table reflects the proportion of the sample in which the theme appears.

It is noteworthy that as Soviet attention increasingly concentrated on Western Europe, their emphasis on the SDI's implications for the arms control process appeared to increase even as the other general consequences of the program received relatively less attention. Again, this effect was probably due in part to Soviet efforts to portray themselves as non-belligerent and the United States as recklessly endangering arms control. It was also intended to propagandize the recently resumed talks in Geneva.

Soviet references to military countermeasures to the SDI were cast in terms of their being forced upon the USSR. Beyond this, such statements were intended to undercut two key Reagan Administration arguments for the program. First, the Soviets predictably came down on that side of the feasibility debate which held that countermeasures to the SDI would be infinitely cheaper to implement than the SDI itself [Ref. 101]. Second, they indicated that the USSR would not be forced into a transition to strategic defenses against its better interests, thus countering the SDI's arms control rationale. Defense Minister Sokolov:

> "If the US starts the militarization of space and thereby undermines the existing military-strategic equilibrium, the Soviet Union will be left with no other choice but to take retaliatory measures to restore its position. These could be measures in the field of defensive arms or in that of offensive arms. Needless to say, the USSR will choose modes of action that correspond best to the interests of its defense capability, but not those that the people in Washington would like to persuade it to pick." [Ref. 59:p. 8] (Emphasis added)

Within days of the SDI's announcement, the Soviets assumed the role of staunch defender of the ABM Treaty. Notwithstanding their own activities in the area of strategic defense, the Soviets stressed

offensive-defensive interaction as a controllable cause of the arms race [Ref. 102]. As General Secretary Andropov's comments indicate, it is this linkage that is threatened by the SDI:

> "When the USSR and the US first began to discuss the problem of strategic arms, they jointly recognized that there is an indissoluble connection between strategic offensive arms and defensive arms....Now, however, the US has conceived the idea of severing this connection. The practical result of this concept, should it be realized, would be to open the floodgates to an unrestricted arms race in all types of strategic weapons--both offensive and defensive." [Ref. 51:p. 5]

The party's position on the subject of future arms control talks was laid down by General Secretary Andropov shortly after the President's 23 March 1983 speech. Andropov argued to the effect that, unless the SDI were abandoned, the entire process of strategic arms limitation would be derailed [Ref. 103]. The same threat had been made in Soviet propaganda against NATO's planned deployment of INF missiles prior to the Soviet walkout of November 1983 [Ref. 58:p. 32]. Their return to the negotiating table in March 1985 has still not prevented the Soviets from employing the threat of an arms control breakdown in their campaign against the SDI.

Stimulating fear of increased tension or war has been a standard major aspect of Soviet propaganda against NATO. This theme was employed during 1983 both against the planned deployment of INF missiles [Ref. 58:p. 26] and against the recently announced SDI program. Andropov again:

> "The adventurism and danger of this whole undertaking is that here they put the emphasis on impunity, on delivering a first nuclear strike while assuming that they can secure themselves against a retaliatory strike. From here, its not far to the temptation to reach for the launch button. <u>This is the chief danger of the new American</u>

military concept. It is capable only of bringing the world closer to the nuclear abyss." [Ref. 104] (Emphasis added)

As Table 5 indicates, the SDI's potential for increasing the risk of war received relatively less play in Soviet commentary following Gorbachev's assumption of power. This moderation in tone is in keeping with Soviet efforts in 1985 to reinforce through persuasion already-existing European reservations concerning the SDI.

b. The Unequal Nature of the SDI's Costs and Benefits

In their analysis of Soviet propaganda activities, Shultz and Godson found that a significant amount of attention was devoted to the topic of problems within the NATO alliance, and specifically, divisions among the allies. Key factors contributing to these divisions, according to the Soviets, include the interference of the United States in West European politics, and American pressure on European governments to conform to Washington's preferences. [Ref. 47:p. 97]

A similar pattern was revealed in Soviet treatment of United States and allied differences over the SDI. Soviet efforts to aggravate disunity over this issue appeared to increase after Gorbachev assumed leadership of the Communist Party. A causal relationship is not necessarily indicated here because a trend in this direction had been established during Chernenko's tenure. It was more likely a reaction to increased US efforts to gain European support for, and participation in, SDI research. Again, it probably also was part of the Soviet program to influence European public opinion after the resumption of arms control talks in Geneva in March 1985.

A prominent theme employed by the Soviets was emphasis on conflicts between United States and allied security interests. This generally took the form of portraying the Americans as being concerned primarily (or exclusively) for their own security, thereby placing European interests in jeopardy:

> "In postwar history, the relations of the West European countries with the transatlantic superally (sic) have known quite a few sharp differences and disputes but perhaps never before have they been so broad and protracted as they are regarding the question of the 'star wars' project. Maybe in London, Paris, Brussels, Rome, and Bonn they do not always speak their minds fully--lest they irritate their patron unnecessarily--but the ruling circles of those capitals surely realize the grave consequences of their participation in Washington's space madness....It is the sovereignty, security, and maybe the very existence of the West European countries that would eventually have to be placed on the altar of the Reagan program, and many people in Western Europe are well aware of this." [Ref. 105] (Emphasis added)

Despite the implied threat in this passage, Soviet attempts to exploit European concerns over the SDI were generally low-key. The negative implications of the SDI for European security were held to be the result of agressive actions by the United States which would prompt a reluctant, and largely undefined, Soviet response. The main threat to Europe, it was said, derived from US desires to limit war to Europe; the SDI was an obvious manifestation of this aim:

> "The acquisition by the United States of even minimum opportunites to somewhat reduce the damage to its territory that would result from a retaliatory nuclear blow could turn the heads of some people in Washington, giving them a false sense of security and the false idea of the acceptability and admissability of unleashing all manner of 'limited' wars far from America's shores, first of all in Europe." [Ref 100]

Soviet references to US intentions for the SDI alleged that the United States was attempting to force the program on Europe (against the latter's better interests), or to lure the West European

governments with promises of economic and technological gain. The purpose again was to highlight the unequal nature of US-European relations"

> "At the end of March, US Defense Secretary Weinberger sent the allies a message which, in the form of an ultimatum, demanded that they say within 60 days whether they will participate in research work on the...Strategic Defense Initiative. The pressure caused considerable shock on this side of the Atlantic....This is understandable: Who wants to publicly acknowledge his status as Washington's 'vassal'?" [Ref. 106]

> "It must be pointed out that the unusual word 'Europessimism,' denoting the European community's marked lagging behind the United States and especially Japan in the technological contest, has become fashionable in Western Europe. The White House leaders are playing on these feelings, attempting to entice Western Europe with the opportunity to utilize their participation in (SDI) to obtain technological benefits." [Ref. 107]

On the issue of SDI technology transfer, the Soviets placed considerable emphasis on US intentions to exploit Europe--i.e., by draining its scientific talent and resources without providing any substantial technical or scientific returns. The immense profits that would undoubtedly result from SDI research would likewise remain in the hands of the US military-industrial complex.

The security benefits of the SDI were also described as devolving mainly to the United States. This would be a function not only of US desires to protect itself at Europe's expense, but of the inability of the SDI to provide defense against missiles targeted on Western Europe. Thus, the technical infeasibility and decoupling themes were combined:

> "The United States suggests the creation of a 'three-tier' ABM system for the protection of its territory....It is believed that even such an intricate system is incapable of ensuring 100 percent interception of missiles that have the flight time of 15 to 20 minutes to the USA. The flight time to targets in Europe for medium-range missiles is

only 8-10 minutes. The likihood of interception will be very slight....This means that trying to hide behind three fences, Washington in advance leaves Western Europe to a semblance of defense." [Ref. 108] (Emphasis added)

Not surprisingly, the theme of general European opposition to the SDI seemed to increase as some of the allied governments expressed qualified support for SDI research. The alleged reason for opposition, again, lay in the fear of the SDI's consequences for European security:

"Representatives of the West European countries, speaking at the spring session of the military policy-making bodies of NATO in Brussels do not conceal fears that the development of a US space-based antiballistic missile defense will seriously destabilize the military and political situation in the world and erode the foundation of the current Soviet-US negotiations in Geneva on preventing an arms race in space and terminating it on earth....They note that Washington is still striving for a situation whereby it would be Europeans, first and foremost, who would have to pay for the consequences of a destabilization of the situation in the world....Despite strong pressure exerted by Washington, not a single West European NATO country has thus far announced officially its consent to participate in the American plans for outer space militarization." [Ref. 109] (Emphasis added)

A government or individual that indicated even qualified support for the SDI was labeled an "accomplice" by the Soviets. The governments and leadership of Great Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany were particularly criticized, with the FRG receiving the harshest attacks. When referring to the West Germans, Soviet propaganda occasionally attempted to isolate the government from the people and other alliance members with claims of militarism and revanchism on the part of the Kohl Administration:

"The results of public opinion polls attest that the majority of FRG citizens oppose the 'star wars' program. However, certain circles in the FRG pin their own revanchist aspirations and plans on the space militarization plans....French President Mitterrand attributed the FRG's 'temptation to participate' in the US program to Bonn's desire

to 'circumvent the bans resulting from the last world war.' The FRG military-industrial complex would like not only to negate the factor of French and British possession of nuclear weapons, but also to gain access to still more sophisticated military technology." [Ref. 110:p. AA7] (Emphasis added)

In their presentation of the consequences to Europe from the SDI, the Soviets made general references to "decreased European security." Such an outcome would be the result of a renewed arms race, increased international instability, and so forth, rather than as a result of specific Soviet actions per se. This approach was consistent with the line that portrayed the USSR as an innocent victim of US militarism. The Soviets thus adopted a reasonable tone toward the West Europeans, urging them to adhere to arms control and a policy of detente as the best means of insuring their security:

"Sober-minded politicians and military experts in Western Europe...are well aware of the dangers connected with these programs. They stress that the United States' space plans lead to a new spiral in the arms race, not only in space but also on earth, to the lessening of strategic stability, to the enhancement of the threat of nuclear war. The only alternative to this dangerous road is the working out of effective agreements aimed at prevention of the arms race in space and its termination on earth, at limiting and reducing nuclear arms." [Ref. 108:p. AA1] (Emphasis added)

"In its line to quell the anxiety of the West European partners the US leadership banks on the application of its policy of confrontation against the USSR and other socialist countries. This stake on the confrontationist goals of Reaganism as a sort of whip in relations with US partners can be traced with increasing clarity to the 'star wars' concept itself, which is the next pretext for undermining an expansion of economic, scientific, and technological ties between Western Europe and the socialist countries. This stake goes so far as to make the West European partners of the United States forget about any alternative. Yet, the alternative does exist and nothing has cancelled out the beneficial experience of this realization during the period of eased tension." [Ref. 111] (Emphasis added)

3. Interpreting the Soviet Response: The SDI as an Opportunity

The Soviet campaign against the SDI was intended to exploit existing concerns over the program's implications for Western Europe's long-term security and economic position vis-a-vis the United States. As in their anti-INF campaign, the Soviets sought to dramatize perceived differences of interest between the United States, on the one hand, and on the other, those existing between the major West European countries and their respective political parties. The resulting polarization of opinion could be seen as furthering the achievement by the Soviet Union of its broad political objectives in Europe, which include:

- Undermining the military and political cohesion of the Western alliance;
- Decoupling the United States from Western Europe, preferably by means of American and European self-isolation;
- Neutralizing Western Europe politically, not through "Finlandization," but within the framework of a European system of peaceful coexistence,"; and
- Establishing the Soviet Union as the dominant political factor in all of Europe, without necessarily incorporating Western Europe into the Soviet bloc. [Ref. 112]

As in their campaign to forestall INF deployment, the Soviets pursued a twofold strategy to erode European support for the SDI. First, an attempt was made to drive a wedge between the United States and its NATO partners: the SDI was presented as a program that served Washington's militaristic purposes while endangering the interests of the Europeans. Second, the Soviets portrayed themselves as willing to compromise and reach a negotiated solution to the problem, while simultaneously threatening dire consequences if a solution was not

obtained. The intent of this strategy was to draw attention to the condition of "unequal risk" existing between the United States and Europe which would be further aggravated by the SDI. Additionally, the Soviets sought to reinforce the perception of "unequal benefits" derived from continuing US economic and technological dominance. Both aspects were reflected to a greater or lesser degree in the intra-alliance and European national debates over the SDI.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, the debate broke down along party lines, with the ruling CDU/CSU coalition of Chancellor Kohl favoring SDI research and the opposition SPD (Social Democrats) opposed. Kohl defended SDI research as "justified, politically necessary, and serving the security interests of the West as a whole" [Ref. 113:p. J2]. While acknowledging the research program as a necessary hedge against Soviet military activities, the Germans based their support of the SDI on political and economic grounds. Since the United States was likely to proceed with the research phase of the SDI in any case, German opposition could only serve to weaken NATO solidarity. Abstention, moreover, would restrict German influence over US development, deployment, and strategy decisions. Finally, German non-participation would mean forfeiture of the SDI's technological "spin-off" benefits and the probable widening of the American and Japanese lead in high-technology, which threatened the FRG's future economic position.

Conditions imposed by the West German government on its support for SDI research, however, tended to reflect Bonn's concerns over the program's potential for providing "unequal risks" and "unequal

benefits." In the area of security, it was stated that Europe must not be decoupled from the United States; Flexible Response must remain valid as a war prevention strategy (versus a war-fighting strategy--Author); and transitional instabilities must be avoided [Ref. 114]. Furthermore, SDI research should be conducted with a view toward preventing an arms race in space while contributing to the reduction of offensive weapons in arms control negotiations [Ref. 115]. Finally, German participation was predicated on full access to the technical and economic benefits of SDI research [Ref. 116].

These "reservations" on the part of the government were cited by SPD spokesman as precisely the reasons why West Germany should not participate in the SDI. In most respects, the arguments put forth by the SPD reflected the Soviet view, at least in terms of the SDI's consequences for Western Europe. This was probably a manifestation of the Soviet tendency to encourage views which favor their own position. Nevertheless, there was a remarkable similarity between the perceptions of the Social Democrats and the image of the SDI projected by Soviet propagandists.

In contrast to the government's position, SPD spokesmen did not acknowledge the threat rationale for the SDI. In fact, Soviet activities in strategic defense or other military areas was seldom mentioned. Rather, it was the SDI that presented the real threat to West German security.

The SPD appeared to share the government's concern that the SDI threatened to weaken Flexible Response as primarily a deterrent, or war-prevention, strategy. But the argument that the SDI could ever

foster a transition to pure or even predominant defense was dismissed. The SPD's view that the SDI would instead mix offensive with defensive weapons [Ref. 113:p. J6] aligned with the Soviet contention that the program was actually intended to reinforce the war-fighting aspect of US-NATO strategy. By extension, the SPD also indirectly supported Soviet claims of deceptive intent behind the SDI.

Finally, even if the SDI was only partially effective, the SPD was concerned that Europe might not come under its shield. Therefore, a real danger existed of Europe being strategically split away from the United States [Ref. 117:p. J3].

Chancellor Kohl's argument that FRG participation in SDI research would enhance German influence over US decision making was rejected by SPD spokesman as "wishful thinking" [Ref. 118:p. J4]. The SPD maintained, moreover, that it was an illusion to assume that the West Europeans could participate in the SDI's research phase without having to jointly bear the military responsibility, the consequences, and the burdens of eventual deployment [Ref. 119]. This was, of course, exactly the case being made by the Soviets.

The SPD's position on the SDI's implications for arms control reflected the concerns contained in the government's conditions for support of the SDI, but flatly contradicted Kohl's argument that the program could contribute to the FRG's long-term security in this area. Rather, the SPD shared the Soviet view that the SDI would prompt the latter's adoption of countermeasures, thereby stepping up the arms race and promoting instability [Ref. 117:p. J2]. Consequently, the SPD supported the Soviet proposal for a treaty banning all space weapons

and a moratorium on space armaments at the start of the Geneva negotiations [Ref. 120].

In short, the "unequal security" aspect of the Soviet campaign against the SDI found a receptive audience in the West German Social Democratic Party as well as among less moderate elements of the German left. As indicated above, however, the governing coalition shared some of the opposition's concerns but concluded that the risks of the SDI could be minimized, if not altogether avoided, by German participation in the program. In addition, it was felt that the German economy stood to gain by active participation in SDI research. Yet SPD opposition to the SDI on economic grounds tended to coincide with the "unequal benefits" thrust of Soviet anti-SDI propaganda.

The SPD maintained that, given the US record on technology transfer within NATO, the government's hopes for economic benefits derived from SDI research were unfounded. First, it was pointed out that for years the transfer of technology from the United States to Europe was hampered for "security reasons"--i.e., out of fear that it would end up in Soviet hands [Ref. 118:p. J4]. Second, it was unlikely that the United States would be willing to jeopardize its competitive position by relinquishing control of this technology in any significant way. Third, there was the possibility of conflict with provisions of the ABM Treaty which explicitly prohibited technology transfer in this field [Ref. 121].

For these reasons, it was considered highly risky to base the technological future of West Germany on the assumption of an unhindered flow of information and knowledge from the United States. Instead, the

SPD believed that the FRG ought to participate in joint West European initiatives for technological and economic self-assertion [Ref. 122]. This naturally led to support for the European Research and Coordination Agency (EUREKA) sponsored by France.

As with the West German government's support for SDI research, French opposition to the program was grounded in a combination of security, political, and economic considerations. First, there was the question of the SDI's impact on the French independent nuclear forces. The socialist government of President Mitterrand largely shares the American view of the Soviet military threat to Europe [Ref. 123:p. 228]. Thus, at least in some quarters, there was an inclination to agree with the Reagan Administration's threat rationale for the SDI. The prevailing opinion, however, was that the SDI would stimulate further Soviet offensive and defensive deployments, and thereby significantly undercut the credibility of the French deterrent. So the SDI was seen as being not only militarily disadvantageous but, to the extent that French nuclear forces ensure the country's independence, politically disadvantageous as well [Ref. 124].

Furthermore, French calls for a coordinated European response to the SDI reflected concern for the program's potentially negative effect on their promotion of increased European defense cooperation, particularly between France and West Germany [Ref. 125].

Finally, the French socialists, perhaps more than their West German counterparts, saw the SDI as representing more of an economic threat than an opportunity. In fact, the French Socialist Party, and Mitterrand personally, apparently consider the Soviet military threat

to be of secondary importance to the threat posed by American "economic imperialism" [Ref. 123:p. 229].

Soviet claims of US intent to exploit Western Europe economically and technologically were designed to fuel European anxieties that the SDI could make them still more dependent on the United States. Specifically, the Soviets sought to create the impression that the United States was bent on fleecing its allies, taking the best they have in science and technology but giving them nothing of its own [Ref. 126]. Such fears were apparent in Mitterrand's objection to the SDI because of the risk of a "brain drain" to the United States and the prospect of Europe's being reduced to playing the role of a "subcontractor" in the research program.

Another reason for French opposition to the SDI, according to Mitterrand, was because Paris did not want to see itself involved in a system "in which it would not be on an equal footing" with Washington [Ref. 127]. Thus, Mitterrand revived the old debate between "Gaullists" and "Atlanticists," with France attempting to nudge the West Germans away from the latter position by offering EUREKA as another option if not an alternative to the SDI [Ref. 128].

In the French view, the economic challenge presented by the SDI could not be met by dealing with the United States on a bilateral basis. It was argued that the Europeans had no chance of resisting this effort without a concerted and coordinated response [Ref. 129]. EUREKA could provide the focus for such a response. While EUREKA would investigate much the same technological spheres as the SDI, its principal advantage was said to be that it offers a broader field of

applications, particularly for civilian uses. In contrast, the SDI was criticized as being predominantly a military program whose civilian spin-offs would not necessarily be substantial [Ref. 130]. Additionally, EUREKA's civilian-orientation under European control would not be as likely to arouse "destabilization" anxieties as had the SDI.

The viability of EUREKA depended upon active West German participation. When this was not forthcoming, Franco-German relations could not help but be affected. Mitterrand saw Bonn's attraction to the SDI as "filling a void" created by the denial of an indigenous strategic nuclear deterrent to the FRG [Ref. 131]. While Mitterrand was technically correct in his assessment of the Federal Republic's continuing dependence on the US deterrent, this statement served only to provide the Soviet Union with another propaganda theme: Bonn's desire to "circumvent the bans resulting from the last world war" [Ref. 110:p. AA7].

As the SDI and EUREKA are not, in fact, complementary, the Kohl government apparently perceived that resource constraints precluded full German participation in both programs. On the other hand, the interests of continued good relations with France, and Kohl's domestic political position, made some form of German participation in EUREKA inevitable. But as West German security ultimately depended upon the United States--as the French president obliquely pointed out--Kohl continued to voice his support for the SDI while applauding "in principle" the goals of EUREKA. Thus, while encouraging intensified

European cooperation, Kohl asserted that on the SDI "there can be no question of forming a front against the United States" [Ref. 132].

The British position on the SDI reflected elements of those of both the French and the West Germans. The British, like the French, have to be concerned with the SDI's influence on Soviet strategic weapons developments and the resulting effect on their independent nuclear forces. But Prime Minister Thatcher, perhaps more than her counterparts on the continent, appeared inclined to accept the American view that Soviet BMD research had disturbed the strategic balance, and that the SDI was a cautious and necessary response to Soviet activities in this area [Ref. 133]. In any case, verification problems precluded reaching an agreement to prohibit or control research, and the ABM Treaty already covered testing and deployment [Ref. 134]. In Thatcher's view, as long as the Soviets abided by the provisions of the ABM treaty, they had nothing to fear from a breach of that accord by the United States.

The British also had an obvious interest in the economic aspects of the SDI, and in avoiding any negative consequences that might derive from their participation in the research phase of the program. Here again they appeared to accept Reagan Administration assurances that the SDI would not result in a technological "one-way street." If they had any such qualms, they were seldom vocalized. While the British admit the possibility of a "brain drain," they did not feel this was reason enough for refusing to participate in SDI research [Ref. 135].

British ambivalence on this subject was reflected in their agreement to participate in EUREKA in the hopes of encouraging greater European technological cooperation, even while regarding the program as being quite likely a duplication of effort [Ref. 133]. As with Kohl, Thatcher was probably motivated at least in part by domestic and alliance political considerations.

Britain's support for SDI research, like West Germany's, carried a number of "conditions" which were part of a December 1984 agreement between Prime Minister Thatcher and President Reagan:

- SDI-related deployment would, in view of treaty obligations, have to be a matter for negotiation;
- The overall aim is to enhance, and not to undermine, deterrence;
- East-West negotiation should aim to achieve security with reduced levels of offensive weapons on both sides; and
- The United States' and Western aim is not to achieve superiority, but to maintain balance, taking account of Soviet developments [Ref. 136].

The British position on the SDI thus paralleled that of the West Germans and of the French on certain key issues. First, all three powers sought to maintain the emphasis on deterrence and war prevention as the primary rationale for NATO's strategy of Flexible Response. Second, the Europeans viewed progress in arms control as equally important to, and inseparable from, the maintenance of military equilibrium. A consensus exists that the object of the Geneva negotiations should be to work out effective agreements aimed at preventing an arms race in space and terminating it on earth, at limiting and reducing strategic arms, and at strengthening strategic stability. Finally, the European powers expressed varying degrees of

concern over the SDI's potential impact on their future economic positions vis-a-vis the United States.

Soviet commentary on these issues provides clear indications of a concerted effort to convince the West Europeans that support for SDI research was neither in their security nor economic interests. From the Soviet perspective, the SDI presented another opportunity for widening existing cleavages within NATO.

C. SUMMARY

The Soviet response to the SDI during the period March 1983 through November 1985 was aimed at undermining political support for the program within the United States and in NATO Europe. The positions assumed by Soviet leaders and other commentators were heavily weighted toward maximizing the propaganda effects of their statements. However, analysis of these statements provided indications of actual Soviet perceptions of the SDI. In the Soviet-American context, which dominated Soviet media attention prior to 1985, indications of the Soviet view of the SDI as a threat were revealed. Subsequently, the Soviet view of the SDI as an opportunity to widen the political rift between the United States and Western Europe appeared to receive relatively greater emphasis.

The hypothesis of the Soviet view of deception was supported in their commentary relating to the SDI as a threat. In the Soviet view, deception is a function of both capability and intent. Capability deception was indicated by the nature of the SDI's probable technical limitations. With occasional references to Western "experts," the

Soviets argued that the SDI's ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons was technically unachievable. For the Reagan Administration to maintain otherwise was considered a misrepresentation of reality for the purpose of generating political support for the program. The Soviet conceded, however, that some form of limited defense was feasible and militarily useful, and found support for this contention among statements by sources in the United States both within and outside of government. The Soviets cast the capability deception largely in terms of its perpetration on Western public opinion.

Deception of intent was expressed in terms of Western opinion and as an attempt to deceive the Soviets themselves. According to Soviet spokesmen, the true aim of the SDI was to enhance the credibility of existing US strategic doctrine, which presumes the continued existence of large quantities of nuclear weapons, rather than creating the conditions for movement to a new strategy, which envisions the elimination or at least large-scale reduction of these weapons. Support for this view was found in the Soviet assessment of trends in US strategic doctrine and weapons development oriented toward maximizing the military effectiveness of nuclear weapons thereby restoring some measure of their political utility. As seen by the Soviets, limited defenses could play a useful role in such a strategy, as indeed they do in Soviet strategic doctrine.

The Soviets dismissed as a ploy the scenario which foresees the sacrifice of the bulk of Soviet deterrent forces as a necessary precondition for the mutual transition to reliance on strategic defenses. It would be highly uncharacteristic of the Soviet leadership

to so place its security in the hands of a hostile power. In their commentary, the Soviets sought to remove all doubt that they considered the SDI as essentially motivated by hostile intent and seemed convinced that such a reaction must have been anticipated in the United States.

The Soviets seemed ambivalent about the actual military utility of the SDI in a limited defense role. Their assertions concerning US intent to achieve strategic superiority partly by means of the SDI were balanced by an apparent confidence that the system could be overcome by a variety of countermeaures, however expensive such countermeasures might be. Still, both party and military commentators appeared deeply disturbed by the SDI's potential role of countering a ragged Soviet retaliation following a first strike by the United States.

As much, if not more, disquieting was the SDI's potential effect on the accomplishment of certain Soviet foreign policy objectives. Though less forthcoming on this subject, the Soviet leadership is undoubtedly aware of the political benefits that the appearance of military superiority has provided, particularly with respect to Western Europe. To the extent that the SDI contributes to the reinforcement of US strategic posture, the political leverage of Soviet posture is proportionately reduced. It is out of such concern that Soviet accusations of US hegemony-seeking arise. More likely, the Soviets viewed the SDI as a measure that could provide the United States with a marginal military advantage, but considerable political advantage in the on-going Soviet-American strategic competition.

Soviet commentary on the SDI in the context of Western Europe was obviously aimed at exploiting the political discord within NATO, which

had intensified with US efforts to enlist European support for the research phase of the program. As in their earlier campaigns against improvements in NATO defenses, the Soviets sought to highlight existing divergences of interest between the United States and the allies, and to reinforce European concerns over the SDI's potential for contributing to a condition of "unequal security" and "unequal benefits." Such concerns were shared not only among political elements opposed to the SDI but, to a considerable degree, among those governments that expressed qualified support for the SDI as well.

In the security realm, European interests include maintaining equilibrium between the opposing military alliances while reducing international tension and instability through arms control. The Soviets attempted to erode support for the SDI by demonstrating that the program served neither aspect of European security. The SDI was portrayed as part of bid for military superiority which could disrupt the "existing strategic equilibrium" and would lead to an intensified arms race in all spheres.

Soviet emphasis on the SDI's "war-fighting" qualities was intended to raise European fears of "limited nuclear war," the consequences of which would be felt mainly in Western Europe. At the same time, the Soviets stressed that the SDI in a partial defense role would limit damage to the United States while providing little or no coverage of Europe, thus stimulating anxiety over strategic decoupling.

Countermeasures which the USSR would be "forced" to adopt in response to the SDI would probably be even more effective against the small nuclear deterrent forces of Britain and France. The Europeans

would then be left with the worst of both worlds: the SDI could increase confidence in the United States in lowering the nuclear threshold without adequately protecting the allies, while the deterrent effect of the latters' strategic forces became less and less credible.

The Soviets also sought to exacerbate widely-held fears that the SDI could further strengthen America's technological and economic positions vis-a-vis Western Europe. Rather than promoting European competitiveness, the United States was accused of attempting to exploit the allies through their participation in SDI research. A similar argument against participation was advanced by the European left, particularly the West German Social Democratic Party and the socialist government of France. However, reservations on this issue were also expressed by officials in the German Federal government and, to a lesser extent, the British government.

V. CONCLUSION

The Soviet response to the Strategic Defense Initiative has provided some indications of their view of the program as a threat to their security and as an opportunity to weaken NATO. This view has been conditioned by a strategic culture that mandates the appearance, if not substance in all respects, of overwhelming military power, at once to deter attacks and to intimidate hostile powers and coalitions.

The Soviets fear the SDI not only because of the potential physical threat to the Soviet Union, but also because it could undermine the military basis of their strategy that seeks above all to politically separate Western Europe from the United States. This strategy has been successful to the extent that confidence in the American security guarantee has been reduced on both sides of the Atlantic. The Soviets therefore see the SDI as a means by which the US strategic nuclear contribution to European defense may be insured indefinitely rather than as a measure designed to permit the mutual transition to wholly or predominantly defensive postures.

Reagan Administration assertions on the latter are seen as an attempt at deception on technical grounds and because its accomplishment would serve neither American nor Soviet interests. For one thing, progress made toward the elimination of nuclear weapons would still leave intact Soviet conventional superiority in Europe. Secondly, the United States cannot realistically expect the Soviet Union to sacrifice the level of security achieved through years of strenuous effort. In

any case, the Soviets reject the idea that a political accomodation between the superpowers can be attained through military pressure and seem convinced that the Americans must be aware of this. It is the fact that this view is widely held in Western Europe that presents the most promising opportunity for the Soviets to counter the SDI and weaken NATO simultaneously.

Rather than bolstering alliance solidarity, the SDI has had a divisive effect on NATO. The program has tended to highlight differing views between Western Europe and the United States on the definition of security and the best means of attaining it, while aggravating European fears of American economic and technological dominance. The old debate has been revived over continuing West German and general European dependence on the US security guarantee and French efforts to lessen that dependence. In West Germany, the political discord generated by the SDI threatens to polarize society in a manner similar to that which occurred during the INF modernization debate.

Paradoxically, US efforts to improve the military defense of Western Europe, as well as of the United States, once again have caused the allies to wonder whether their long-term security interests are in fact being served. It is just such concern that the Soviets have sought to aggravate in their response to the SDI.

How the Soviets will respond to the SDI in the future remains, of course, an open question. One option is to submit to compellant pressure in the arms control arena as some in the West have already claimed to see indications of. Another is to continue their political-military program as they have in the past, or perhaps to accelerate

certain aspects of it, and so run the risk of realizing their worst fears from the SDI "deception." Whichever path is chosen, the Soviets have little to lose and a great deal to gain by continuing to encourage the political fragmentation of NATO over the issue of the Strategic Defense Initiative.

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