
provide enough men to maintain U.S. readiness, or, in effect, was America again relying on the old "Minuteman" tradition to beef up its forces in time of war? Could diplomacy again be divorced from military power, as it was prior to 1945?

Most of these issues had their antecedents in past American experience. They were inflamed by the chronic tensions between the military's needs on one hand and the values of a liberal democracy on the other. The issues were not likely to fade away.



THE CHANGING OUTLOOK

by Peter Braestrup

Seeking the Presidency in 1976, Jimmy Carter ran on a platform calling for cuts in defense spending of \$5 to \$7 billion. He assailed the Pentagon's "swollen bureaucracy" and the cost overruns of defense contracts. To many, it seemed as if Jimmy Carter (Annapolis '46), with his talk of welfare reform and national health programs, had opted for more "butter" instead of more "guns," that he tilted, on matters of defense, toward his party's doves. Yet today, this pledge to reduce Pentagon spending seems to have gone the way of Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1932 pledge to slash federal outlays as a means of countering the Great Depression. New realities tend to crowd in on the man in the White House.

As President, Jimmy Carter ordered the gradual withdrawal of U.S. ground troops from South Korea, canceled the costly B-1 bomber project, and, last year, vetoed a fourth nuclear-powered aircraft carrier for the Navy. But a major problem became increasingly apparent to him in 1978: For all the energies and hopes he had committed to the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks, the Soviet Union was not relenting in its 15-year expansion of military power that, among other things, threatened to upset the Soviet-American strategic balance by the mid-1980s.

After considerable internal White House debate, the President decided last fall to propose to Congress a 3 percent real increase in defense spending—matching a commitment obtained by Carter from America's NATO allies. Most significantly, the increase was proposed in a fiscal 1980 overall federal budget of \$532 billion that was otherwise restrained to contain "the threat of accelerating inflation" in a time of economic uncertainty.

The post-Vietnam slide in real U.S. defense outlays had been arrested by the Ford administration and Congress in 1976, but last year defense spending was still below the pre-Vietnam level when inflation was taken into account. As Defense Secretary Harold Brown and Carter's other national security advisers saw it, there was no choice but to begin to counter Moscow's steady effort, notably in the field of land-based intercontinental ballistics missiles. Here, Soviet advances in ICBM warhead size, explosive power, and accuracy were seen as endangering the "survivability" of the American 1,000 Minuteman ICBMs in their fixed underground silos in the Western states.

Not to develop a new, hard-to-locate ICBM—the mobile MX missile or some variant—would risk the destruction of a major portion of the U.S. nuclear deterrent force in the event of a Soviet surprise first strike. As Harold Brown viewed it, the risk of such a Soviet attack might be small, but the consequences would be too enormous to contemplate without taking remedial action. Moreover, the very existence of such vulnerability would make the U.S. nuclear deterrent less credible, and hence less effective.

Matters of Perception

"It may be too late if we wait much longer," Brown told Congress as he presented the proposed \$125 billion defense budget in late January. Such talk has a surrealistic quality in an age when both Russia and America already have the power to destroy each other—and the rest of civilization—in a matter of minutes. Yet, to defense planners, perceptions of relative strength and advantage are important, especially when the prime purpose of U.S. military power is to deter the use of military power by the adversary. To the President and his Defense

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Secretary, it seemed clear that the relative decline in U.S. military effort had to be corrected—not only to “redress the balance” with the Soviets but also to reassure allies in Europe and Asia that the United States, however chastened by the 1965–73 Vietnam trauma, was no longer demoralized by it.

Hawks vs. Doves

President Carter’s decision did not occur in a political vacuum. Since 1975, Soviet-Cuban activity in Africa and Moscow’s continuing arms build-up had convinced most Western leaders that the détente of 1972–73 and the SALT talks did not mean an end to Soviet-American competition. Opinion polls and congressional sentiment showed the erosion of the opposition to increased defense spending that had prevailed since the peak of the Vietnam War. Although liberal Democrats sharply criticized Carter’s exemption of defense from his general budget down-hold, their complaints were muted by the generalized “tax revolt” against added government spending seemingly embodied in the passage of Proposition 13 in California.

The strongest attacks on the Carter defense budget came from the “hawks.” Chief among them was Senator Henry Jackson (D.-Wash.), a critic of the impending SALT II treaty and the leading spokesman for those Democrats who contended that, if anything, the President was still too sanguine in his appraisal of Soviet military progress and too indecisive in responding to new troubles abroad. For his part, General David C. Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified that the Carter budget provided “the lowest level [of security] the nation should risk” and hinted that he would welcome congressional increases to “preserve the U.S. power and influence upon which world stability depends.”

How much is enough? The senior military leaders, the Joint Chiefs, have generally wanted “more” as an added hedge against disaster. The civilian leadership has usually wanted “less,” worrying about the economy, congressional opposition, or competing claims on the federal budget. In early 1979, President Carter and Defense Secretary Brown were clearly not embarking on a rearmament effort of the magnitude seen in the Korean War period. Nor were they attempting to match the kind of peacetime build-up sought by Kennedy and McNamara in 1961–63 in a quest for nuclear superiority and a “flexible response” to perceived communist threats.

Rather, Carter and Brown, even as they acknowledged the Soviet advances, seemed to count on having enough time—and

CHANGES IN U.S. DEFENSE FORCES

	1964	1968	1978	1979	1980
<i>Strategic Forces:</i>					
Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs):					
Minuteman	600	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Titan II	108	54	54	54	54
Polaris-Poseidon Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs)	336	656	656	656	656
Strategic Bomber Squadrons	78	40	25	25	25
<i>General Purpose Forces:</i>					
Land Forces:					
Army Divisions	16	19	16	16	16
Marine Divisions	3	4	3	3	3
Tactical Air Forces:					
Air Force Wings	21	30	26	26	26
Navy Attack Wings (aboard carriers)	15	15	12	12	12
Marine Corps Wings	3	3	3	3	3
Naval Forces:					
Aircraft Carriers	24	23	13	13	13
Nuclear-Powered Attack Submarines	19	33	70	72	75
Other Warships	363	385	166	170	181
Amphibious Warships	133	157	64	65	63
<i>Airlift and Sealift Forces:</i>					
Strategic Airlift Squadrons:					
C-5A	0	0	4	4	4
C-141	0	14	13	13	13
Troopships, Cargo Ships and Tankers	100	130	48	48	48
Active Military Manpower (thousands)	2,685	3,547	2,061	2,050	2,050
Defense Outlays (in billions of 1972 dollars)	77	101	67	68	70

NOTES: The strategic bomber force now consists of 348 B-52s, armed with short-range nuclear attack missiles (SRAM) and, come 1981, with longer-range subsonic cruise missiles. The Polaris-Poseidon missiles are embarked aboard 41 nuclear-powered submarines—with the first new Trident missile submarine coming into service in 1981. The strength of Army divisions now varies between 14,000 and 17,000 men; Marine divisions have almost 16,000 men. Air Force, Navy, and Marine tactical wings vary in size between 60 and 72 combat aircraft; all told, the United States has some 2,700 tactical fighter and attack aircraft, including the Air Force's new F-15 and F-16 jets and the Navy's new F-14. Not until 1981 will the Air Force's 26 wings be fully equipped. Three of the Navy's aircraft carriers are nuclear-powered; its amphibious ships can carry one and a half Marine divisions. The long-range airlift force includes 234 C-141 transports and 70 C-5A's (plus 216 civil airliners available in emergencies).

Source: Department of Defense

HAROLD BROWN: THE SOVIET EFFORT

In his 1980 budget statement to Congress, Defense Secretary Harold Brown last January outlined his views of the Soviet military posture. Excerpts:

Most disturbing of all, the Soviets have undertaken a long-term military build-up that still continues. What lies behind this build-up is a subject for debate. There can be no doubt, however, about the fact of the build-up itself.

We have attempted to measure the scale of the Soviet effort in a number of different ways. All of them underline certain indisputable trends. Among the most significant:

— The steady growth of the Soviet defense effort. Over a period of more than 15 years, the growth rate has probably averaged in the vicinity of 3 percent a year in dollars, and between 4 and 5 percent a year in rubles. In other words, this growth has been at about the same rate as the growth in the overall Soviet economy.

— The general magnitude of the effort. We estimate that, on the average, it has accounted for somewhere between 11 and 13 percent of Soviet gross national product (GNP). Other analysts put the level of effort at 15 percent or higher.

— The size of the Soviet effort relative to that of the United States. We believe that when the two programs are measured in U.S. prices, the Soviet effort came to equal ours by about 1971, and now exceeds it by something like 25 to 45 percent (with retirement costs excluded on both sides), depending on whether the ruble or the dollar measure is used.

These trends are consistent with what we know about the growth and improvement in Soviet military capabilities. Military manpower has risen from about 3.4 million in 1964 to roughly 4.4 million in 1978—not counting armed border guards and internal security police. Strategic nuclear delivery vehicles [ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers] have risen from approximately 450 in 1964 to 2,500 in 1978. The ground forces have been expanded from 148 divisions in 1964 to over 170 divisions in 1978, and the Soviet tactical air forces have gone from about 3,500 to 4,500 first-line combat aircraft.

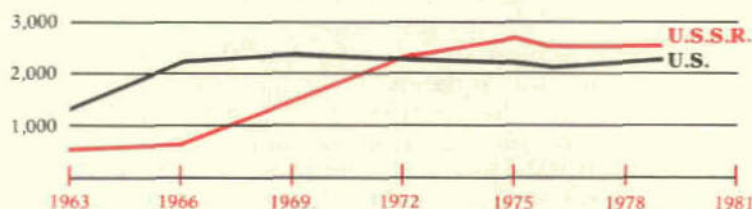
The seriousness with which the Soviets have undertaken—and give every sign of continuing—this effort is as impressive as its magnitude. One reflection of that seriousness is the emphasis in Soviet military doctrine on the achievement of balanced war-fighting capabilities in *both* nuclear and non-nuclear forces. Another has been the steadiness of purpose evident in the build-up. The

enough technological superiority—to restore the “strategic balance” without recourse to expensive crash programs. A SALT treaty with Moscow, Brown told Congress, would not end the arms race or lower its costs; but it would put certain constraints on total numbers of ICBMs and permit the Pentagon to develop new ways to make its land-based ICBM force less vulnerable to surprise attack.

Apparently, Carter and Brown were also banking on being

U.S.-U.S.S.R. STRATEGIC DELIVERY VEHICLES

(Bombers, Missile Launchers)



Source: Department of Defense

Soviets expanded their effort as our own grew in the 1960s. But, then, theirs *continued* to expand as ours began to decline [in the 1970s].

Whether the Soviet efforts in [the strategic nuclear] realm have been worth the cost remains problematic. The United States did not find its numerical nuclear superiority particularly useful or usable when it had it. The Soviets, of course, are different. Should they somehow obtain a perceived nuclear superiority, they might mistakenly try to use it for political advantage. But it seems doubtful that they would be any more comforted by nuclear equivalence than we were by nuclear superiority in the past.

Differences in force deployments, and in the contributions of allies, are part of what make U.S. and Soviet military capabilities so hard to compare. [For example], they must carry a burden with their Far Eastern deployments—a burden amounting to between 11 and 20 percent of their total defense effort—that we no longer find necessary to incur on anything like a comparable scale.

The Soviets must add a host of other difficulties. It would seem plausible that some portion of the Soviet force in Eastern Europe has at least one additional mission: the need to watch Soviet friends. As far as we can tell, the slowdown in [Soviet] economic growth has been sharper than the Soviet leadership had anticipated. Nonetheless, all of the evidence available to us on Soviet defense programs under way and planned suggests that the long-term trend in allocation of resources to defense is likely to continue into the 1980s.

able to avoid any sustained combat by United States' non-nuclear ("general purpose") forces in Europe or the Mideast for the next few years—until serious post-Vietnam weaknesses were corrected. The Navy, General Jones noted, was no longer big enough to cope with a two-ocean war; a NATO emergency would require all its efforts in the Atlantic. The readiness for combat of many Army and Marine units was a matter of dispute. All the services, Brown observed, were short on training, equipment

maintenance, stocks of ammunition. Thanks to its post-Vietnam reliance on volunteers, the armed services had shrunk since 1972 by 300,000 to just over 2 million people in uniform, the lowest level since before the Korean War; and the Carter administration made no proposals that would increase this active-duty strength, revive the draft, or provide what the Joint Chiefs considered adequate Army ready reserves.

Aside from its (inherited) no-draft policy, the Carter administration's approach was squarely in the mainstream of peacetime U.S. policy since the mid-1950s: (a) trying to maintain a strategic nuclear force (now a "triad" of bombers, missile-firing submarines, and ICBMs) as a deterrent to Soviet attack; (b) deploying most overseas ground and tactical air strength to Western Europe to support NATO; (c) sustaining a Navy strong enough to protect wartime supply lines to Europe and Japan; (d) keeping at home both back-up forces for NATO and Asia and a "fire brigade" of Marines and Army paratroopers for use in the Mideast or elsewhere; (e) deploying the Navy's Sixth Fleet (two carrier task forces, a Marine amphibious team) in the Mediterranean and the Seventh Fleet (of like size) in Far Eastern waters; (f) basing a Marine division in Okinawa plus air units in Japan's home islands as back-up forces for Asia.

President Carter, under heavy criticism from all sides in Congress and the military, stretched out his timetable for withdrawal of all U.S. ground troops from Korea.

The administration's heavy emphasis on Europe, its thinning out of forces committed to Asia, and its resistance to (costly) Navy ship-building have provoked congressional criticism. The volunteer force is a matter of debate. So is the rate of growth in defense outlays. Opinions differ on Soviet intentions. Yet the U.S. policy of global deterrence is generally accepted. Once again, the question in Congress is how much effort is now required, in fact, to sustain it.