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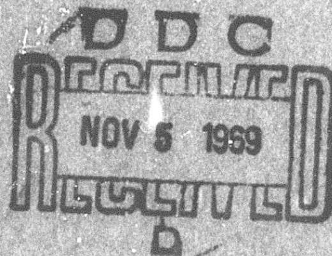

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12

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for inviting me to appear here today.

The Subcommittee has posed some exceedingly challenging questions: What may be the impact of MIRV on the strategic balance; its effects on SALT talk prospects; its long-range ramifications for effective arms control?

I want to make it clear at the outset that I can offer no categorical answers to such questions, for the predictive process is still an art that has not gained much in reliability since the day of the Delphic oracle. At best, I can only offer some observations on Soviet strategic attitudes and policy priorities which hopefully may contribute to an informed discussion of the matters at issue.

Perhaps, for the sake of perspective, it would be useful to begin with a few remarks about the evolution of Soviet military policy; in an important sense, the debate that has been going on in this country over MIRV and ABM deployment and the like is a debate on how to respond to changes in the familiar Soviet-U.S. power relationship brought about in part by military policy decisions of the Soviet leadership in recent years.

Historically, Soviet military policy has tended in a general way to reflect the conceptions which have informed Soviet foreign policy under successive leaderships from Stalin to the present day. In Stalin's time,

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the Soviet Union pursued a foreign policy of essentially continental dimensions, and its military policy remained oriented largely within a continental framework. In the Khrushchev period, by contrast, the USSR began to break out of its continental shell to assert its influence and interests on a world-wide scale. Under Khrushchev, however, Soviet military power was never fully reshaped to support a political strategy of global dimensions. His successors, in effect, picked up this task where Khrushchev left it.

It would doubtless oversimplify things a great deal to say that the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime merely set out in systematic fashion to match the Soviet military posture more precisely with a specified set of foreign policy objectives. Military power and foreign policy can seldom be kept all that neatly in phase; indeed, as I had occasion to suggest recently in testifying before another Subcommittee here on Capitol Hill,* Soviet policymaking is conditioned by many variables -- including the organizational habits of the bureaucracy; the bargaining interplay among various interest-groups; the constraints of resources, technology, geography and tradition; the pressures exerted on Soviet decisions by allies and adversaries, and so on. Nevertheless -- with due caution against ascribing Soviet policy decisions to any single set of determinants -- it would seem warranted to say that the general direction taken by Soviet military policy during the past five years derives from the present regime's efforts to bring the Soviet Union's military posture into better line with its growing global obligations and interests.

In a more specific sense, one can identify several salient assumptions behind the military policy of the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime. These are:

(1) that nuclear war must be avoided;

(2) that deterrence based on Soviet strategic-nuclear power, both offensive and defensive, offers the best guarantee against a general nuclear war;

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*See Statement by Dr. Thomas W. Wolfe at *Hearings of Subcommittee on Economy in Government*, Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, June 23, 1969.

(3) that the Soviet Union must maintain a traditionally strong continental military position, both to back up its interests in the crucial political arena of Europe and to cope with the problems created by the rise of a rival seat of Communist power in Peking; and

(4) that the Soviet Union must also develop more mobile and versatile conventional forces -- including Soviet naval and maritime capacities -- in order to support its interests in the Third World and to sustain its role as a global competitor of the United States.

In essence, much the same set of guidelines underlay Khrushchev's military programs also. What has chiefly distinguished Soviet military preparations of the Brezhnev-Kosygin period from those of the Khrushchev decade, therefore, has been not their general direction, but their more substantial scale. Despite the high priority set by the incumbent collective leaders upon channeling greater resources into economic growth and performance, they have seen fit to make successive annual increases in the military budget, at the expense of investment to meet pressing domestic economic goals.*

The main features of the military programs which have sent Soviet defense outlays steadily upward during the past few years need only be summarized briefly here. In strategic delivery forces, the land-based ICBM force has been built up to about 1050 launchers, the same level of land-based ICBMs maintained by the United States for several years; when launch sites still under construction are completed in the next year or so, the Soviet force will apparently total more than 1200 launchers, including around 250 large SS-9s. In addition, the Soviet research and development program has yielded several new strategic delivery systems which are either in the very early stages of deployment or in a pre-operational testing stage. These include: a solid-fuel ICBM, roughly comparable to the U.S. Minuteman, for silo emplacement; a mobile, solid-fuel ICBM; a Polaris-type 16-tube ballistic missile submarine; FOBS, an orbital or depressed-trajectory delivery system; and the Soviet version of a multiple reentry vehicle, MRV, for which the SS-9 may be used as a booster.

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*For details, see Supplementary Comments by Dr. Thomas W. Wolfe, for *Hearings*, ibid.

In the strategic defense field, the present regime took the historical first step of deploying ABM defenses (the so-called "Galosh" system) around Moscow. Although the Moscow program appears to have come to a halt about two-thirds of the way toward completion, intensive ABM research activity is continuing. At the same time, deployment of the "Tallin" system for defense against aerodynamic vehicles testifies to ongoing Soviet interest in improvement of strategic defenses against bomber attack.

Concurrently, Soviet submarine and surface naval forces have been modernized and enlarged under the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime, and their zones of operation extended beyond the traditional littoral waters of the Soviet Union as exemplified by the Soviet naval presence now visible in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, as well as regular submarine patrols off the North American continent. Both amphibious and airlift capacities have been steadily improved in the past few years, and in the maritime field, the Soviet merchant fleet has grown from about six million deadweight tons at the close of the Khrushchev period to around 11 million at the present time.

So much in brief, then, for the evolution of Soviet military policy and programs up to this point in time. These developments have contributed, among other things, to a perceptible shift in the American-Soviet strategic balance and to the gradual transformation of the USSR from an essentially continental military power into a more truly global one. Viewed in long-term perspective, these developments might perhaps best be regarded as part of a larger historical process -- still under way -- marking the Soviet Union's emergence as one of the world's two superpowers and reflecting the aspirations of its leaders to share the global stage with the United States.

However, the narrowing of the margin between Soviet and American power also has given rise to many policy-laden questions that will hardly await the outcome of a lengthy historical process. Among the salient questions calling for attention at this juncture is whether the Soviet leaders, after almost five years of strenuous effort, are essentially content to rest on the strategic gains they have already made, or whether they are disposed to press actively for a still more favorable power

position. And how -- in either case -- may the forthcoming strategic arms limitation talks fit into the Soviet policy picture?

At least two alternative assessments of Soviet aims can be argued from the kinds of evidence available. Let me sketch each of them briefly.

The first holds that the Soviet leadership will be satisfied to settle for a situation of parity with the United States rather than seeking the elusive goal of superiority. Economically, the main argument in this case is that growth-investment needs, satisfaction of rising consumer demands, and other claims on Soviet resources are such that without imposing Draconian priorities for additional strategic programs the Soviet Union would be hard put to meet the higher expenditure levels that a further round of strategic arms procurement would entail -- even though several new strategic systems have been funded through the R&D stage and apparently are available for procurement and deployment. Signs of a recent slight slowdown in the rate of industrial growth lend some support to the thesis that the Soviet economy is hurting from the large military programs of the past few years.* A second economic argument is that nonstrategic-force pressure groups within the Soviet military establishment itself are eager to capture more defense resources for their purposes -- both to improve Soviet capabilities for mobile, conventional intervention in distant areas and to bolster the Soviet theater-forces posture in a continental environment complicated by the Czechoslovak problem in Europe and new difficulties with China in the Far East -- and hence that these groups would be amenable to settling for parity with the United States on the strategic level.

Politically, perhaps the most persuasive argument for this case holds that the Soviet leaders would find a climate of acknowledged parity favorable to pursuit of many of their more important foreign policy objectives, and that they would be doubtful whether any margin of strategic superiority attainable by the Soviet Union would last long enough to yield political dividends significantly greater than those to be derived from a parity position.

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*<u>Ibid</u>.

Provided the outlook of the Soviet leadership runs somewhat along these lines, it is plausible to suppose that Soviet interest in entering the SALT talks reflects a genuine willingness to achieve mutual agreement on strategic force levels. From Moscow's viewpoint, negotiations would not only serve to moderate the future course of the strategic arms competition and spare the Soviet Union the economic burden of large new strategic investment at a time when the next Five-Year-Plan is being drawn up; they would also provide a forum demonstrating to the world that the Soviet Union was at long last in a position to deal with the United States as a strategic equal. From this symbolic, if not formal, ratification of parity, in turn, Moscow might hope to derive important political and strategic dividends, such as: the final undermining of European faith in American pledges to defend Europe even at the risk of nuclear war;* the exacerbation of European suspicion, especially in West Germany, that local European interests might be sacrificed to superpower politics between Washington and Moscow; and the fostering of greater reluctance in Washington to intervene militarily against Third World "national-liberation" movements without the backup of a superior U.S. strategic posture to deter Soviet counter moves.

For such reasons of Soviet self-interest as those adduced above -- or, if one prefers, for a variety of other more magnanimous Soviet motives as well -- a credible case can thus be made that the Kremlin leadership is ready and willing to rest on its strategic oars. However, a somewhat more skeptical appraisal of the situation also merits attention -- at least until events shed further light on the Soviet position.

This alternative view begins with recognition of a long-standing Soviet doctrinal commitment to the goal of quantitative and qualitative

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*In this connection, the talks might be expected by Moscow to produce a "surrogate" for a ban on first-use of nuclear weapons. Such a ban had long been closely linked to the Soviet Union's European diplomacy, for it would in effect cancel out the guarantee of U.S. nuclear protection to Europe. The Soviet position outlined in advance of the SALT talks (see, for example, *Pravda*, July 2, 1968, and *Izvestiia*, January 21, 1969) continued to call for a ban on nuclear use. But even if a ban were not to be specifically adopted, it seems likely that any agreement on strategic arms levels marking the end of the historical U.S. strategic advantage would be regarded as tantamount to a no-first-use pledge.

superiority, a goal often pushed into the background by stubborn realities, but never forsworn. Given the fact that the USSR's missile expansion programs have continued unabated in the first half of 1969 after having passed what was generally expected to be a leveling-off point, the supposition follows that the Soviet strategic buildup has gathered a momentum which the present generation of Kremlin leaders, or at least its hardline elements, may be loath to check before seeing whether it may bring the Soviet Union a clear margin of superiority over the United States.

As in the parity case, this appraisal also draws on economic and political arguments, but it interprets the evidence somewhat differently. On the economic side, it is held that Soviet concern about being outweighed by the United States in the matter of resources probably is less of a brake on Soviet competition in strategic arms today than in the past, for at least two reasons: first, because Soviet industrial output, despite some decline in rate of growth, is still increasing, according to Soviet figures, at a respectable rate of more than 8 percent annually; and second, because the United States itself, beset with meeting domestic economic needs and the costs of the Vietnam war, has appeared reluctant to restore its own strategic arms expenditures to the levels it was willing to accept in the past.

Politically, the principal argument in support of this view is that the Soviet leaders would feel more confident of achieving their foreign policy objectives in a climate of recognizable Soviet superiority than in one of mere parity. Although its exponents differ as to whether the Soviet leadership entertains any realistic expectation of achieving a strategic posture so predominant that the Soviet Union could count upon initiating war with impunity, this view holds that the Kremlin leaders may have set their sights on reaching a position in which they could approach crisis confrontations with the United States with high assurance that the latter would swallow diplomatic defeat rather than risk a military showdown. The Soviet Union's need to calculate its strategic requirements in terms of an emerging nuclear rival in China, as well as with an eye to America, is another incentive, in this view, for aiming at something more than parity with the United States.

Should the prevailing Soviet outlook run along the lines posited in this second case, then presumably the Kremlin would be less interested in bringing the strategic competition to a halt than in manipulating it to Soviet advantage. In negotiations that could be expected to stretch out inconclusively for a considerable time, Moscow might hope, for example, to inhibit the United States from funding any major new strategic force improvements while unilateral Soviet programs were being quietly pursued -- hopefully without early and unequivocal detection.*

Although a Soviet approach of this kind might be explained on grounds of short-term advantage, such as increasing the Kremlin's bargaining leverage or leaving the Soviet strategic posture temporarily stronger if the talks should break down, it would certainly involve the risk of provoking a major renewal of the U.S. strategic effort, not to mention the damage done to the prospect of negotiations in other areas. Therefore, any transient advantage to be gained would hardly seem to make sense unless the Soviet leaders were, in fact, prepared to engage in an unlimited contest for strategic superiority. And as to their willingness to do so there is, of course, no conclusive evidence. At best, there have been only tenuous signs of some misgivings within the leadership, especially in military circles, about the desirability of entrusting Soviet security to arms limitation agreements rather than to further strengthening of the Soviet armed forces.**

Needless to say, it will remain for the actual negotiations to indicate which of the contrasting cases sketched here comes closer to the mark. Meanwhile, against this background, let me offer a few comments addressed more directly to the MIRV issue.

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*Whether the USSR could expect to make major changes in its strategic posture without detection is a moot question, though it is generally conceded that new technology would complicate the task of keeping track of Soviet strategic programs. Some programs, such as the installation of missile silos, the building of ABM sites, and the construction of missile-launching submarines, doubtless would be difficult to conceal; but others, such as deployment of mobile missiles and refitting of emplaced missiles with multiple warheads, could well escape detection for a rather long time.

**For discussion of these signs, see Supplementary Comments for *Hearings*, op. cit.

MIRV was originally conceived, one may recall, as a means for penetrating ABM defenses and thus preserving the deterrent value of strategic missile forces. Historically, the United States pioneered in multiple warhead or MRV technology which evolved into MIRV, while the Soviet Union was pursuing ABM development which led several years ago to the world's first operational deployment of an ABM system. This pattern of U.S. pioneering in MIRV and a Soviet headstart in ABM did not remain fixed, however. The United States for its part went into ABM development, while Soviet military men as early as 1963 were speaking of the future possibility of using "maneuverable warheads" against Western defenses.* Although the Soviet multiple warhead program has lagged behind that of the United States, Soviet testing of MRV since August 1968 has given grounds for supposing that the Soviets too are on the way to development of MIRV.

In this situation, the factor which seems to have aroused most concern recently in this country is that deployment of accurate MIRV systems could greatly reduce the survivability of fixed, hard ICBM sites, making first-strike planning once more possible. Thus, ironically, what was originally meant to bolster deterrence could have the effect of undermining the stability of deterrence based on a strategic balance wherein neither side could realistically count upon having a first-strike capability. If MIRV deployment were combined with possession of a large ABM system, the destabilizing threat to mutual deterrence might become still greater, for this combination theoretically would enhance the prospect of being able to strike first without having to fear retaliation of "unacceptable" dimensions. This concern about the destabilizing effect of MIRV deployment, it may be noted, does not generally extend to MRV to the same degree, on the grounds that MRV -- multiple reentry vehicles without an independently targetable feature -- probably would not be accurate enough to afford high confidence of destroying hardened silos, and hence would not pose a first-strike threat that could erode deterrent stability.

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*See, for example, Major General I. Baryshev, "Nuclear Weapons and PVO," *Krasnaia zvezda (Red Star)*, November 13, 1963.

A corollary concern voiced in this country about MIRV deployment is that it would complicate the prospects of attaining agreement in the SALT talks on strategic arms limitations and would tend to lead to a new upward spiral in strategic arms competition that would be essentially uncontrollable because of the inspection difficulties inherent in MIRV systems. That is to say, detailed on-site inspection presumably would be required to keep track of MIRV once deployment had started -- and since neither side could be expected to accept such obtrusive inspection, the dynamics of the situation would tend to push each side into multiplying the number of warheads at its disposal as insurance against the other.

Again, it should be noted that professional opinion in the United States is not unanimous as to the inherent uninspectability of MIRV. For example, Dr. Harold Brown, now president of Cal Tech, in an article earlier this year,* suggested that it might be possible by unilateral intelligence means to determine from missile size and payload roughly how many MIRVs an opponent could have, and hence to establish an agreed ceiling on numbers and size of ICBMs somewhere below the level that would be needed for a true first-strike capability.

The debate in this country over MIRV, as in the ABM case also, has no counterpart in the Soviet Union, where any policy deliberations or differences over these matters remain largely closed to the public. Unfortunately, this means among other things that there is no way of knowing whether Soviet thinking as to the effects of MIRV deployment parallels that expressed in the United States -- although it is often assumed that this is so. Similarly, it is often assumed that Soviet response to U.S. initiatives is the critical variable in the shaping of Soviet policy decisions on weapons systems such as MIRV, although this too is perhaps an overly facile assumption. At any rate, when speculating on how the MIRV issue may bear on the SALT talks, it is probably wise to keep in mind that the Soviet viewpoint does not necessarily mirror American thinking, nor are Soviet programs necessarily turned on and off in response to American actions.

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*"Security Through Limitations," *Foreign Affairs*, April 1969, pp. 429-430.

Coming now to some specifics, one question frequently asked in recent months was whether continuation of the U.S. MIRV program in advance of the SALT talks might be regarded in Moscow as grounds for boycotting the talks. Indications that the talks are to begin sometime next month seem to have answered this question. But at no time, so far as I am aware, had the Soviet Union given any sign that it regarded a halt in the U.S. MIRV program as a precondition for convening the talks. Nor was the Soviet Union apparently disposed to set an example by suspending unilaterally, in advance of the talks, its own multiple reentry vehicle testing program.

It is a good deal less clear, however, what position the Soviet Union will take on the MIRV issue once the talks commence. If, as generally believed, the United States holds a lead in MIRV technology, the Soviets may well consider it advantageous to press for a ban on further MIRV activity in order to forestall American deployment of these weapons. On the other hand, it can also be argued that Moscow would have a strong incentive to avoid or postpone MIRV limitations in order to give the Soviet Union a chance to catch up in this field. Such factors as bureaucratic momentum and the tendency of Soviet military-industrial organizations to acquire stakes in established programs might help to tilt things in the latter direction.

Without further speculation on what sort of approach the Soviets may take to the MIRV issue, I think it is fair to say that the question of controls upon MIRV and the means of inspecting them will be among the knottier problems with which the SALT negotiators will have to deal. But I do not think the talks will stand or fall on the MIRV issue alone. In my own view, what will count most is whether the Soviet collective leaders are now satisfied to settle for putative parity with the United States, or whether they are bent upon pursuing still further the process by which the Soviet Union has gradually whittled down the strategic margin of its main Western adversary. And this, as I suggested earlier, is a question to which the answer may be found in the Soviet-American dialogue that develops in the forthcoming SALT talks themselves.