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Strategic Breakout as a Soviet Policy Option

Abraham S. Becker

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A report prepared for

U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency

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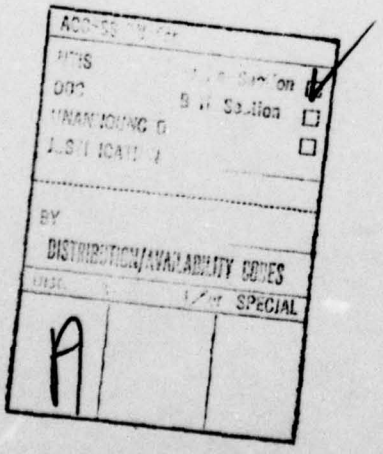
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PREFACE

A critical confidence assumption underlying the bilateral system of control over strategic forces of the United States and the Soviet Union established by the SALT I agreements is, from the U.S. point of view, that the Soviet Union would be unlikely to violate the agreements on cost-benefit grounds. This report, prepared for the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), assesses the validity of that assumption. It discusses Soviet "strategic breakout"--defined as large-scale violation of the SALT agreements--as a set of issues of Soviet policy.

This report was prepared at a time when there appeared to be good prospects for a SALT II Agreement, or at least renewal of the Interim Agreement. At the time of publication, it seems possible that the evolution of the American and Soviet strategic offensive arsenals will, for a while at least, not be constrained by any formal bilateral agreement. In a SALT-less world, strategic breakout would be understood as defined in the Conclusions section of this report--a form of military buildup involving "breaking away" from even informal strategic accommodation with the United States. The author believes his analysis of strategic breakout is fully applicable under these conditions as well.



SUMMARY

This study is concerned with one of the basic assumptions underlying the U.S. approach to SALT--that the Soviet Union is not likely to violate the SALT agreements because any incentive in that direction would be overbalanced by the military and political cost of breaching the agreements and the far greater attraction of reaping the benefits of compliance. This report examines the inverse hypothesis--the case for Soviet strategic Breakout, defined in this study as large-scale violation of the SALT constraints. Although a review of the SALT balance sheet suggests that SALT may not have imposed severe constraints on the USSR nor prevented it from seeking to achieve a measurable degree of superiority within the letter of the agreements, this study suggests that there are Soviet incentives for covert and overt buildup within or without treaty constraints. On this basis, Breakout may appear to the Soviet leadership useful or necessary. In its present form and under present conditions of the strategic dialogue, SALT may even make Breakout inevitable.

This analysis of Breakout is concerned with the objectives for which it would be attempted and the conditions and influences in response to which it would be carried out. Particular capabilities are hypothesized rather than examined. The central concern is motivation, perception of opportunities and costs, and conditions fostering a change in direction. An important preliminary issue, therefore, is an understanding of Soviet military decisionmaking.

The outstanding characteristic of the military decisionmaking network in the USSR is its centralization and concentration. Policymaking on major issues seems to be confined to a small military subgroup of the Politburo and to the Defense Council--a body chaired by Leonid Brezhnev and believed to include the military policy subgroup of the Politburo, senior representatives of the Soviet General Staff, and representatives of other Party and state agencies, depending on the issue discussed. It seems likely that discussions of Breakout would be as much or more concentrated and centralized. The general presumptive

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importance of bureaucratic politics in the military may have limited relevance for Breakout, which is likely to be a major adjustment involving deviation from a rule of adaptive change in a bureaucratic politics model. To the extent that such an adjustment minimizes bureaucratic conflict and organizational routine, the Soviet military decisionmaking apparatus should reflect more homogeneously the basic elements of the general Soviet military belief system.

Fundamental to this belief system is conviction that change in international relations has been brought about by the growth of Soviet power and that continued high rates of military buildup are necessary. This viewpoint regards nuclear war as possible and emphasizes the necessity of Soviet capability to fight, survive, and win it. Inferences drawn from another body of evidence, the evolution of Soviet strategic posture, are consistent with the generalizations about Soviet doctrine drawn from the published military literature. The post-Khrushchev military buildup appears to have been guided by concepts of counterforce and preemption rather than by mutual assured destruction. Soviet military doctrine is based on an appreciation of the multiple real-world uncertainties of warfare, particularly nuclear warfare. In the face of such uncertainties, prudence seems to dictate to Soviet thinking a need for vastly superior forces and the ability to strike first in order to limit damage. For these reasons, the USSR is in the process of acquiring forces intended to provide balanced, multiple-option strategic capabilities. This apparatus of option generation, which has clear political utility in Moscow's eyes, is being bought at relatively low international political cost. Having made such gains during the military buildup of the 1960s and 1970s, the Soviet leadership should be inclined to continue in the same direction.

Three objectives of possible Breakout are identified: deterrence, coercion, and war fighting. As used in this study, deterrence refers to discouragement of an adversary, by threat of an appropriate military response of denial or retaliatory punishment, from launching an attack on oneself or a given third party. Coercion means the act of compelling an adversary, through implicit or explicit threat, to behave in a desired fashion in a context other than launching a military attack.

An important additional distinction to clarify the Breakout process is the mode of military buildup, which may be executed overtly or covertly, for different motivations and with different consequences. Breakout could have preparatory phases in covert strategic buildup, motivated by a desire (a) to hedge against an uncertain future, (b) to put additional forces "into the bank" in a deteriorating international environment, and (c) to counter Soviet failures to achieve technological breakthroughs, contrasted with substantial U.S. progress.

There is a basic asymmetry between the U.S. view of the deterrent function, which emphasizes ability to ride out a surprise attack and still be able to accomplish the assured retaliation mission, and the Soviet view, which seeks deterrence through development of a war-fighting capability. U.S. efforts to make assured destruction more credible could be viewed in Moscow as threatening deterrence by raising the probability of nuclear war. Breakout could occur as a consequence of U.S. attempts to enhance the survivability of U.S. forces, as the United States begins to react to the perceived Soviet ICBM threat of the 1980s through various counterforce and countervalue options other than all-out city busting (e.g., with super accurate nuclear or conventionally armed cruise missiles). A European crisis raising the possibility of NATO escalation to nuclear war after defeat in a conventional first phase would be another possible Breakout contingency. In each case, the possibility of Breakout to establish or reestablish a threatened deterrent capability is inherent in the doctrinal asymmetry of the two sides and in the force posture interaction that follows.

Whereas many American observers view nuclear weapons as politically unusable, it appears that in Moscow military power is seen as having considerable, at least potential, political utility. The coexistence of militancy and conciliation characterizing the post-Stalin period may be affected by changes in the military balance as well as in the international environment. U.S. policy and above all U.S. perceptions are critical variables. A deterioration of U.S. resolve and commitment to NATO along with a conviction of the superiority of Soviet military power would accomplish the purpose of coercive Breakout without requiring the deployment of any additional strategic forces. A

resurgence of U.S. and NATO forces following a period of apparent accommodation to Soviet foreign policy might induce Soviet consideration of Breakout. Breakout would be intended in part for deterrence but also to reestablish the political benefits deriving from a favorable global balance.

Breakout as the prelude to a deliberate, out-of-the-blue nuclear first strike seems unlikely. The most plausible case for Breakout for war initiation is one in which the Soviet leadership perceives such a near-term threat to vital Soviet interests from its enemies that deterrence seems no longer possible and preemption the only alternative. Since accidental war or escalation from lower level conflict cannot be absolutely ruled out, Soviet leaders seem to wish to be prepared for such contingencies by structuring their forces accordingly.

Conditions facilitating possible Breakout are considered in two groups: developments in military technology and force structure, and political dynamics. The Soviets believe the improvement of the counterforce characteristics of their missiles will enhance the deterrent value of their forces. In contrast, such developments on the U.S. side are seen as threatening to the security of the USSR because they provide the United States with a damage limiting capability. Significant improvement of U.S. counterforce capabilities, particularly if accompanied by deterioration of the international environment, could strengthen the inducement for Breakout to restore deterrence. Counterpart Soviet technological developments might increase the likelihood of Breakout for coercion, although it would be more plausible in conjunction with the accession of a hard-line Soviet leadership. Soviet technological failures in offensive system development, against a background of substantial progress on the American side, could be a basis for Breakout for deterrence. Similarly, a Soviet ABM breakthrough could reinforce an argument for Breakout for coercion, whereas signs of a U.S. technological breakthrough in antiballistic missiles might induce Soviet Breakout for deterrence.

There would be great coercive potential in Soviet development of an antisubmarine warfare (ASW) capability, added to the already apparent major threat to the survivability of Minuteman, which might make

Breakout to solidify the political edge of this combination appealing. In response to a U.S. development of an effective anti-SSBN capability, the Soviets could deploy additional submarines and missiles, which would represent a breach of the SALT limitations, although this is an expensive way of trying to swamp an ASW breakthrough.

A response to threats against both SLBMs and ICBMs could be land-mobile missiles, which are currently unregulated by SALT. U.S. deployment of mobile ICBMs on a significant scale would frustrate the Soviet effort to place Minuteman in hostage and would therefore constitute a possible influence toward Breakout for deterrence or coercion. On the Soviet side, the interchangeability of the SS-X-16 and SS-X-20 missiles poses a threat of covert transferability between IRBMs, not covered by any existing international agreement, and ICBMs, which are. Thus, the impending deployment of the SS-X-16 and SS-X-20 may constitute in itself a form of semi-covert Breakout for deterrence or coercion.

Consideration of political dynamics should encompass the main political variables to which Soviet policy is believed sensitive--the cohesion of the NATO alliance, the role of China in Soviet-American relations, the state of Soviet-American détente, and the internal Soviet power configuration. Deterioration of the international environment, from Moscow's point of view, with respect to these major factors, might be expected to weaken the barriers against deployment of ABMs and have a possibly accelerating effect on war survival measures.

The death of Mao Tse-tung raises the question of the future of Sino-Soviet hostility. Should post-Mao China move toward a reconciliation with Moscow, Soviet power directed against the West will be seen as much augmented. Soviet deterrence of the West will be reinforced and Breakout for that purpose would appear less necessary. By the same token, the prospects of a coercive policy and posture may then appear in Moscow as brighter and less risky. So far, however, relations between Peking and Moscow have shown no sign of reconciliation, and China may continue to present a major security problem to Soviet leaders. It seems probable, in terms of weapons and forces in the inventory, that the USSR now possesses a disarming first-strike capability against China--i.e., that Breakout is not necessary for a military

"solution" of the Chinese problem. The inducement to try to "take out" the Chinese might be strengthened if a military tie between the People's Republic of China and the United States seemed to be in the offing. Accelerated development of Chinese nuclear capabilities would reinforce this incentive. Confronted with possible materialization of a two-front nightmare, Moscow might be impelled toward Breakout for deterrence or war fighting (preemption).

The case for taking seriously the possibility of Breakout, therefore, rests on the basic asymmetry of strategic conception and goals of the two sides, and on the incentives inherent in a number of possible military-technological or political developments, particularly in combinations that accentuate threats to major Soviet concerns or, alternatively, appear to offer enhanced opportunities to protect such interests.

Breakout might be prepared for by covert buildup, for the reasons suggested. To keep the risk of discovery small, the buildup may be kept at a relatively slow tempo. Thus, the fact that there may be no evidence of a Soviet effort at large-scale subversion of SALT does not necessarily disprove the reality or viability of low-level buildup. Given the possibility of covert buildup, U.S. detection of elements of covertness may force us to postulate the existence of a buildup "iceberg," with undetected capabilities lying below the level of visibility.

The distinction between overt Breakout and covert buildup should not be drawn sharply. Cumulatively, small-scale violations over a protracted period result in a large-scale breach of agreed constraints. The likelihood that a significant breach of SALT constraints could only be accomplished overtly depends not only on the size of the breach but also on the characteristics, availability, and mode of employment of American "national means" of verification on one hand, and Soviet capacity to frustrate their efficient operation on the other. In any case, whether SALT-regulated or unregulated systems are involved, whether the mode of buildup is protracted-covert or sudden-overt, all these forms of deployment are intended to improve Soviet strategic combat capability in order to alter the global power balance. They all involve *breaking away* from strategic accommodation with the United States.

The question at present is whether the USSR is poised for an attempt to further substantially change the "correlation of forces," comparable to the change that took place between Khrushchev's ouster and the signing of the SALT agreements. Whether Soviet policy will choose this option or the alternative of bilaterally agreed limitations on the strategic competition with the United States will depend heavily on U.S. understanding of the interrelated objectives and conditions of Soviet strategic buildup as well as on the wisdom with which the United States attempts to resolve the attendant problems in arms control negotiation and force posture decisionmaking.

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I. INTRODUCTION

THE MEANING OF BREAKOUT

From the American point of view, a critical confidence assumption underlying the bilateral system of control over the strategic forces of the United States and the USSR established by the SALT I agreements[1] is that the Soviet Union is not likely to violate the SALT agreements because any incentive in that direction would be overbalanced by the military and political costs of breaching the agreements and the far greater attraction of reaping the benefits of compliance. This report assesses, in broadened perspective, the validity of that assumption.

Discussion in the United States of the likelihood or actuality of Soviet violations of SALT has revealed sharply differing views on what is meant by "violation." Logically, the degree of compliance could vary within a broad range. At one extreme, there could be large-scale deployments in explicit disregard of the major limitations expressly stated in the agreements. Somewhere short of strict observance at the other end there could be covert breaching of selected constraints, and on a restricted scale. An issue that has hung somewhere outside of this continuum is the justifiability of full exploitation of treaty allowances and loopholes created by imprecise wording or failure of the parties to agree on particular definitions or exclusions (i.e., the problem of the unilateral U.S. statements in the protocol to the Interim Agreement). The previous administration argued that the legal limits of the treaties were not defied, but sharp controversy arose over evidence that the USSR was pushing the permissible quantity-quality combinations to the maximum.

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[1] These agreements are formally known as the "Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems" and the "Interim Agreement on Certain Measures with Respect to the Limitation of Offensive Arms." They were signed in Moscow on May 26, 1972. A protocol to the ABM Treaty was added on July 3, 1974. Complete texts may be found in U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), *Arms Control and Disarmament Agreements*, Washington, D.C., 1975, pp. 133-136, 139-149, and 151-152.

If the dominant assumption has been that the Soviets would observe the letter of the treaty limits, there seems nevertheless a need to examine an alternative hypothesis: that the USSR would seek to "break out" of SALT. Although this term has most often referred to the rupturing of SALT constraints, it has also been used in other ways, one of which is suggested by the following passage from Secretary of State Kissinger's Vladivostok press conference:[1]

> *Q. Dr. Kissinger, would you identify for us what the main hangup was in the five earlier options and what mix the President decided upon that was the key to advancing an acceptable proposal?*
>
> *Secretary Kissinger:* The big hangup earlier was the combination of time periods and perhaps the complexity of the proposals; that is to say, when you are trying to calculate what advantage in the number of warheads compensates for a certain advantage in the number of launchers, you get into an area of very great complexity, and when you are dealing with a short, or relatively short time period, you face the difficulty that each side throughout this time period will be preparing for what happens during the *break-out* period. (Emphasis supplied)

Previous portions of the press conference suggest that the Secretary was talking about an interval that would end about 1979-1980 and large-scale strategic deployments that would take place as a consequence of the expiration of the Interim Agreement. Instead of a rupture of SALT limits while the treaties were in force, Kissinger's use of "break-out" conveyed the sense of a sudden release of the restraints maintained by both sides when the treaties expired.

Unless extended or replaced, the Interim Agreement will in fact expire in October 1977, and so far the process of converting the Vladivostok understanding (November 24, 1974) into a formal SALT II agreement has bogged down. Although the ABM Treaty is of indefinite duration, it is scheduled for joint review this year under the stipulated five-year schedule. Article XV of the Treaty provides each party

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[1] U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *Documents on Disarmament, 1974*, Washington, D.C., May 1976, p. 756.

the right to withdraw on six months' notice if it feels that "extraordinary events related to the subject matter of this Treaty have jeopardized its supreme interests." A Joint Congressional Resolution of September 1972 reserved the right of U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty if a permanent agreement on strategic offensive forces was not reached in five years. Such withdrawal would be undertaken if the survivability of the strategic deterrent forces of the United States were threatened as a result of the failure to reach a permanent agreement.

Removal of the SALT framework could then be a deliberate decision rather than an unintended consequence of a negotiation impasse. Theoretically, if SALT I were viewed in Moscow as a net burden, renewal of the Interim Agreement or concessions on SALT II might appear undesirable, especially if Soviet leaders thought they would have a substantial head start in the ensuing race. Preparations might be made even for the abrogation of the ABM Treaty. Thus, in thinking about a possible Soviet decision to "break out" of the SALT constraint, one might also wish to include the contingencies of Soviet denunciation of the existing agreements or refusal to agree to a SALT II follow-on.

In either of these two senses of the term, "breakout" involves buildup of strategic systems. However, the development of gray-area systems--those with dual capability in terms of theater of employment, type of armament, or platform from which launched (e.g., cruise missiles)--has blurred the edges of the issue, since buildup of strategic import may take place in systems so far unconstrained by SALT. In a speech in Los Angeles on August 31, 1976, the then Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Fred Iklé, called attention to a "massive Soviet investment in regional nuclear forces," mainly in two Soviet gray-area systems, the MIRVed SS-X-20 and the Backfire bomber.[1]

Thus, the buildup involved in "breaking out" may take place while SALT limitations are legally in force or afterwards, whether the agreements are abrogated or expire. Both cases relate to systems covered by SALT. The term could also be stretched to cover buildup of unconstrained gray-area systems, but this study will concentrate on the

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[1] "New Threats to the Nuclear Balance--A Challenge for Arms Control," speech to the Town Hall of California, as released by ACDA.

issues of large-scale escape from SALT constraints while they are still in force, on the assumption that they will be renewed or extended before the October deadline. For this usage, the term will be spelled with an upper c[illegible]B--Breakout.[1] However, at the conclusion, the concept of Soviet "b[illegible]kout" will appear to have considerably broader scope than the definition with which this study begins.

WHY BREAK OUT: WHAT'S BAD ABOUT SALT?

In the narrow sense of the term, restricted to the context of SALT constraints, Breakout necessarily implies that compliance is perceived as a liability and that the action of breaking out is regarded as necessary to achieve a desired alteration in the superpower strategic balance. However, many observers of strategic affairs would probably argue that SALT has not imposed severe constraints on either side. A smaller set would also assert, as suggested below, that Soviet efforts to alter the military balance are continuing within the SALT framework, that the Soviets would not have to violate either the 1972 or the Vladivostok agreement (assuming the latter is formalized) to attempt to achieve a measurable degree of superiority:

- As regards the ABM Treaty, neither side's 1972-vintage ABM may have been worth extensive deployment, but certainly there was enough evidence of difficulties in the Soviet system to suggest that Moscow's agreement to the ABM limitation could have been motivated by the desire to restrict U.S. development and deployment at a time when the Soviet system seemed to need much more study and effort.

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[1] For a complete analysis of Breakout, other contractual arrangements between the Soviet Union and the United States aside from SALT should be considered. The main cases are the Antarctic Treaty, Limited and Threshold Test Ban Treaty, Seabed Arms Control Treaty, and Outer Space Treaty. For example, the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 prohibits the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in space. Of special interest is Article 4, which would seem to prohibit the orbiting not only of missiles but also of radar and other intelligence devices, under provisions reserving celestial bodies "exclusively for peaceful purposes." ACDA, *Arms Control and Disarmament Agreements*, p. 49.

- The Interim Agreement supposedly struck a balance between Soviet numerical superiority in ballistic missile launchers, "heavy" missiles, and total missile throw-weight against U.S. superiority in number of weapons, as well as a U.S. qualitative lead in MIRVs and missile accuracy.[1] But, (1) the ceilings on missile launchers, which implied a corresponding limitation on the number of warheads, were elasticized by the permitted latitude for MIRVing in the future. (2) The implicit throw-weight constraints, through limitations on alterations of silo dimensions and the ceiling on heavy missiles, were made porous by the development of the cold launch technique and the Soviet refusal to accept precise definitions of major terms; this enabled retrofitting of SS-11 silos with considerably larger SS-17s and SS-19s, as well as the substitution of the heavier SS-18s for the already heavy SS-9s.
- Terms of the Vladivostok agreement would equalize the number of strategic delivery vehicles on each side and limit each

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[1] The Interim Agreement established ceilings of 2350 ballistic missiles for the USSR and 1710 for the United States. For the Soviet Union, the ceiling was composed of a maximum of 1408 ICBMs and 950 SLBMs in 62 modern submarines, or 1618 ICBMs and 740 SLBMs if 210 second-generation ICBMs (SS-7 and SS-8) or SLBMs (SS-N-5) were not traded in. The United States was permitted 1000 land-based ballistic missiles and 710 SLBMs in 44 modern SSBNs, or 54 fewer SLBMs if it did not wish to trade in its Titan ICBMs or older Polaris systems. The number of "heavy" missiles deployed after 1964, left further undefined except as in the American unilateral statement ("any ICBM having a volume significantly greater than that of the largest light ICBM now operational on either side"), was frozen at existing levels--i.e., 313 for the USSR and 54 for the United States. Thus, the Soviets were allowed an almost 40 percent superiority in launch vehicles--34 percent in land-based and 45 percent in sub-launched. Given the nature of the systems, these limitations implied ballistic missile throw-weights as of 1975 of approximately 3.8 million lb on the U.S. side and about 6.5 million lb on the Soviet side, a Soviet advantage of 70 percent. On the other hand, total warheads in the United States at the same date were probably triple those available to the USSR, about 8300 compared to 2800. (Thomas W. Wolfe, *The SALT Experience: Its Impact on U.S. and Soviet Strategic Policy and Decisionmaking*, R-1686-PR, The Rand Corporation, September 1975, p. 75, and *Report of the Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld to the Congress on the FY 1978 Budget, FY 1979 Authorization Request and FY 1978-1982 Defense Programs*, January 17, 1977, pp. 58, 60.)

to 1320 MIRVed vehicles, thus limiting the potential warhead advantage that the USSR could gain from MIRVing its significant throw-weight superiority. However, that constraint can be eased if the Soviets can increase the number of warheads on their fifth-generation follow-ons to the SS-17, SS-18, and SS-19, or add more reentry vehicles (RVs) to the existing systems.[1] Even with systems not much more advanced in terms of RV numbers and size than the current fourth generation, the imbalance in force loadings still favoring the United States may well be eliminated by the early 1980s: the Soviets could have something on the order of 10 to 12 million lb of ICBM throw-weight on 7000 to 10,000 warheads, compared with the 2 million lb and roughly 2000 to 3000 weapons in the U.S. Minuteman arsenal at the time of Vladivostok.[2]

- o In the meantime, there is a growing emphasis in the USSR on war survival measures--hardening facilities, underground command and control sheltering, civil defense, perhaps even industrial dispersal.
- o As its price for acceding to SALT II, Moscow has been demanding the exclusion of the Soviet Backfire bomber from treaty constraints and inclusion of range limits on cruise missiles, to nullify a potential American advantage.
- o Simultaneously, Soviet theater conventional forces have been sharply upgraded. In the absence of a Mutual Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) treaty, these forces remain unconstrained by any international agreement.

These comments are not intended as a balanced review of SALT; they simply marshal the arguments that SALT has not prevented, and is not likely to do so in the future, a continuing buildup of Soviet strategic power. From this point of view, one may contend that the Soviet

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[1]Wolfe, *The SALT Experience*, pp. 184-185. The Vladivostok understanding, like the Interim Agreement, allows unrestricted freedom for technological improvement within the stated ceilings.

[2]Wolfe, *The SALT Experience*, pp. 96-97.

military should have little incentive to violate SALT treaty provisions, at least in the near future.

Because SALT has allowed the Soviet military considerable latitude for buildup and modernization, there would also appear to be political and bureaucratic reasons for supposing greater likelihood of Soviet compliance than violation of the SALT agreements. Abram Chayes suggests that an arms limitation treaty may be pushed through in a particular country by concessions to opponents intended to "minimize the possibility that powerful opposition groups, disassociated from the treaty, would be favorably positioned after its adoption to promote and exploit any failures."[1] This remark is probably applicable to the politics of SALT in the Soviet Union, since the agreements provided the military with freedom to continue weapon modernization programs in return for going along with the treaty limitations.[2] Moreover, as is ventured below, SALT is part of the general political-military consensus achieved in the Politburo, based on a perception of the change in the military as well as in the general world political balance. The purchase of a SALT consensus,[3] it may then be argued, probably has made it more difficult for particular leadership groups who would desire to do so to seize on difficulties that have cropped up since 1972 (such as the increasing U.S. skepticism on SALT and détente) to promote a pro-violation policy.

Moreover, Breakout could entail significant disadvantages for the USSR in terms of economic and political costs. A calculation of potential economic costs would have to take into account the problem of time horizon. The costs of instantaneous Breakout could be infinite, unless preparations had been made through prepositioning, covert

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[1]Chayes, "An Inquiry into the Workings of Arms Control Agreements," *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 85, No. 5, March 1972, p. 932.

[2]According to Raymond Garthoff ("SALT and the Soviet Military," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 24, No. 1, January-February, 1975, p. 25), there was Soviet military opposition to SALT in the early phases of the negotiations.

[3]Such a consensus may be solidified by inertia. A basic hypothesis of bureaucratic politics is that it tends to produce policy immobilism rather than innovation.

deployment, and the like. The costs would be finite but still high with a time horizon stretched out sufficiently to allow for some preparation, if Breakout involved substantial mobilization of other forces and therefore the diversion of a good part of resources engaged in civilian activities. The costs of Breakout could be identified in terms of the requirements for additional R&D and deployment of particular systems, increases in shares of the budget or total military expenditures by service and mission involved in Breakout, and addition to the aggregate "burden of defense," defined as the value of foregone opportunities.

In the broadest terms, the political costs of Breakout, if the effort were discovered, could involve a shattering of the international image the Soviet Union has been trying to project for about two decades, since the decision by the post-Stalin regime to ameliorate the cold war. It is true that such incidents of Soviet aggressive or militant action as Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, though they were condemned by large sections of non-Communist opinion, resulted in little permanent damage. But the short duration and the relative moderateness of the damage caused by these operations may have been partly because they were viewed as internal bloc concerns and not threats to the outside world. Breakout is unlikely to be viewed in the same way. In any case, Soviet relations with the United States and Western Europe, which, it seems reasonable to assume, are still primary in Soviet considerations, would probably be badly damaged. There would be feedback to the economic costs through Soviet access to Western trade and technology, which would surely diminish sharply under the immediate freezing of the East-West atmosphere.[1]

In these terms, the rationale for large-scale violation of SALT seems weak. It may be maintained that Moscow lost little by acceding to SALT and could incur heavy costs by appearing to subvert the agreements. However, this report will offer other considerations that suggest incentives for both covert and overt activities, within or without

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[1]This assumes that whatever the purposes of the Breakout, the effect did not turn out to be successful coercion. In that case, the political costs to the USSR might turn out to be negative. If the United States and NATO were successfully coerced, it seems doubtful that the third and fourth worlds could be far behind.

treaty constraints. It will be argued that Breakout may be viewed in Moscow as useful or even necessary. In its present form and under present conditions of the strategic dialogue, SALT may even make Breakout inevitable.

STUDY APPROACH

A subject that deals with strategic deployments is usually approached through standard threat analysis. There are studies of what the Soviets could do with given numbers of missiles of particular characteristics, against designated targets, under assumed conditions, etc. However, the present study asks instead, for what objectives and in response to what conditions and influences? In such an approach, the capabilities are not the focus of the analysis; they are hypothesized rather than examined. The central concern is motivations, perceptions of opportunities and costs, and conditions inducing change in direction. For if Breakout means sharp deviation from current or future strategic accommodation, one must ask why the Soviet Union would wish to undertake actions of a sort that pose very grave threats to the stability of the international environment. In this study, Breakout is a problem in understanding Soviet policy and decisionmaking. Accordingly, it is appropriate to begin the discussion by examining certain characteristics of the military decisionmaking system[1] which may be conducive to Breakout.

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[1] In employing this term, reference is to the category of issues decided rather than to the organization making the decision.

II. BREAKOUT AND SOVIET DECISIONMAKING

SOME CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

In attempting an analysis of Soviet policy there is the great danger, which is one basis of the traditional dislike of worst-case analysis, of parading a catalog of "horribles" deduced from the axioms of strategic logic. The results very frequently are sharply divorced from reality even as pictures of the worst cases, because the attempt to develop a pattern of force capabilities in relation to strategic opportunities and enemy intentions is little more than an image of U.S. rationalization imposed on a background of single-dimension Soviet malevolence. Under these conditions, threat analysis may succeed only in making actual Soviet behavior continually surprising.[1] At some point the analyst must ask himself what opportunities and threats are perceived as such by the Soviet leadership, whether Soviet opportunity-threat perception differs from our own, and in what ways. Having thus challenged some of his assumptions, the analyst may proceed to challenge others--most importantly, his model of strategic decisionmaking.

Bureaucratic politics and organizational process models are now much in vogue as alternatives to the unitary rational-actor decision-making model.[2] All of these have been lumped together by Steinbruner as "analytical" models and contrasted with a different paradigm of

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[1] Some years ago, Klaus Knorr distinguished between "technical" and "behavioral" surprise. The latter could be the result of three factors--enemy irrationality, change in enemy leadership or other significant conditions such that a previously well-founded set of expectations was obsolete, or distortion of one's perception of the enemy by inappropriate "national" images. The latter is clearly the most important and most difficult problem. ("Failures in National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Cuban Missiles," *World Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 3, April 1964, pp. 462-463.)

[2] In some part as a result of the influence of Graham Allison's *Essense of Decision*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1971.

decision theory, the "cybernetic."[1] He also distinguishes the pure theory from the "context" of decisionmaking,[2] the latter embracing bureaucratic politics and organizational process but also a broad range of other elements such as culture and national style. Perhaps one of the more systematic approaches to analysis of the decisionmaking context is the set of distinctions developed by George and Smoke.[3] To understand the opponent's idiosyncratic approach to a problem of rational calculation, it is necessary to take account of four contextual elements--ideology, the "operational code" or belief system, organizational and bureaucratic processes of decisionmaking, and personality variables of opponent leadership. Together these four elements make up what George and Smoke call "behavioral style."

What application can be made of this kind of theorizing to the analysis of Breakout? Reviewing the literature on Soviet foreign policy decisionmaking, Horelick and Johnson conclude that the decision-theory perspective has been given little attention in the effort to integrate Soviet studies generally into the social science mainstreams, and these limited efforts of interpretation have had little reflection in studies of Soviet foreign policy specifically.[4] Given the paucity of data in

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[1] John D. Steinbruner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision: New Dimensions of Political Analysis*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N. J., 1974; "Beyond Rational Deterrence: The Struggle for New Conceptions," *World Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 2, January 1976, pp. 223-245. The cybernetic decisionmaker: avoids postulating outcomes, strives to reduce uncertainty by routinizing the decision process, and instead of seeking all relevant information, is sensitive only to a limited range, whose boundaries are established by the simplified decisionmaking procedures adopted.

[2] In Arnold L. Horelick, A. Ross Johnson, and John D. Steinbruner, *The Study of Soviet Foreign Policy: A Review of Decision-Theory-Related Approaches*, The Rand Corporation, R-1334, December 1973, pp. 14-17.

[3] Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1974.

[4] In Horelick, Johnson, and Steinbruner, *The Study of Soviet Foreign Policy*, pp. 47-48. There has been some effort devoted to the study of leadership personality. Studies on the personality of Brezhnev and his entourage seem to agree on a finding of conservative, prudential behavior patterns. See, for example, Archie Brown, "Political Developments: Some Conclusions and an Interpretation," in Archie Brown and Michael Kaser, *The Soviet Union Since the Fall of Khrushchev*, The Free

the field of Soviet military decisionmaking, not much could be expected in application of theoretical constructs. It may be interesting to speculate whether particular decisions reflect a mode of policymaking closer to that of the cybernetic than the rational paradigm, but the evidence is sparse. So too is any *hard* information on current political and military leadership personality, although this may be relevant only in the short run, given the age of those now at the apex of the Party-government pyramid. Somewhat more can be said on elements of the military decisionmaking context, particularly with respect to organization and aspects of doctrine.

SOVIET ORGANIZATION FOR MILITARY DECISIONMAKING

An outstanding characteristic of the military decisionmaking network in the USSR is its centralization and concentration.[1] At the very apex of the pyramid, of course, is the Politburo, in which is reposed the power for ultimate decisionmaking in the Soviet Union. Apparently, however, the plenary meetings do less day-to-day decisionmaking than consensus building on major policy issues; actual policy formulation takes place in the Politburo's subgroups. There appears to be a small subgroup on military matters, surely chaired by L. I. Brezhnev and probably including A. N. Kosygin, the Prime Minister, N. V. Podgorny, the Head of State, and D. F. Ustinov, who is now both the Minister of Defense and a full member of the Politburo. A. P. Kirilenko and M. A. Suslov may be other members of the subgroup.

Press, New York, 1975, p. 245; or Jerry Hough, "The Brezhnev Era: The Man and the System," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 25, No. 2, March-April 1976, pp. 1-17. The current leadership seems relatively unburdened by the "underdog mentality" that possessed Khrushchev, according to T. H. Rigby ("Review of *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 34, No. 3, September 1975, p. 600). Are the leaders also free of the obsession with the Leninist dictum that "the most dangerous thing in war is to undervalue the antagonist and reassure ourselves that we are stronger"? (cited in P. V. Sokolov (ed.), *Politicheskaia ekonomiia*, Voenizdat, Moscow, 1974, p. 117). Such questions have an obvious bearing on the issues of Breakout, but little concrete can be said about them.

[1] The five summary paragraphs are based largely on Wolfe, *The SALT Experience*, pp. 24-49.

Discussions in the military policy subgroup are presumably based on some sort of staff work for which there appear to be several possible sources. (a) Brezhnev has a personal secretariat which may control the flow of material from various parts of the Party and government apparatus. (b) More traditionally, staffing is accomplished by the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Party and the departments that are subordinate to it. One of these departments, headed by I. D. Serbin, deals with defense industry, and would probably be intimately involved with any discussion of matters in which military production or military R&D was involved.[1] Another department deals with international issues and is believed to be under the direct supervision of B. N. Ponomarev, a Secretary as well as a candidate member of the Politburo. There may be other departments of the Secretariat that provide staffing assistance in military policy matters, perhaps on an ad hoc basis.[2]

One of the most important organs of military policy discussion and formulations is the Defense Council, a body that may have had various names and an intermittent existence in the Soviet hierarchy. Chaired by Brezhnev, the Defense Council is believed to include selected members of the Politburo, probably the members of the previously indicated military policy subgroup, along with senior representatives of the Soviet General Staff and representatives of other Party and state agencies, depending on the issue discussed. Thus, the Council links and perhaps mediates between Party, military, and government. This body too may not be concerned with managing but with broad matters of policy, which

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[1] Until Ustinov's appointment as Defense Minister, he was believed to function via his position in the Central Committee Secretariat as a sort of overlord of defense industry and R&D, which involved supervision of the Central Committee Department headed by Serbin but possibly also the Military-Industrial Commission, which will be mentioned shortly.

[2] The staffing work accomplished by the Central Committee's departments may be augmented through ad hoc committees for particularly difficult problems. Wolfe has speculated (p. 32) that an ad hoc committee serving as a link between the Central Committee departments and Brezhnev's personal secretariat might have had a function in SALT discussions and staffing roughly akin to that of the Verification Panel of the U.S. National Security Council.

are discussed among the members of the elite groups most directly responsible for their formulation and execution.

Another mediating body is the Military Industrial Commission, currently headed by L. V. Smirnov, a Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, which probably links the ministries directly concerned with defense R&D and production, on one side, with representatives of the Ministry of Defense or Soviet General Staff, along with other Party and state officials, on the other.[1]

The Ministry of Defense and the General Staff of the Soviet armed forces have major functions in military decisionmaking. To the extent that issues of military policy also involve those of foreign policy, there is presumably an argument for inclusion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an organ of some significance in such discussions, particularly because of the membership of A. A. Gromyko in the Politburo. According to Garthoff, early in 1968 a direct link was set up between the Defense and Foreign Affairs Ministries to coordinate policy for SALT discussions.[2] However, the Foreign Ministry appeared to play a rather circumscribed role in the SALT discussions, more connected with the diplomatic and political functions of the SALT discussions and much less with the substance, which was left in the hands of the military.[3]

Thus, the military decisionmaking network is compressed in size. Policymaking on major issues seems to be confined to the Defense Council and the Politburo military subgroups, with coordination and linkage assisted in addition by the Party Secretariat and the government's

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[1]Although the Military Industrial Commission is in principle subordinate to the Council of Ministers--i.e., to the government rather than to the Party--it is believed that Smirnov reported directly to Ustinov in the Secretariat.

[2]Garthoff, "SALT and the Soviet Military," p. 29. Others participating in this coordination were members of the Academy of Sciences and representatives of the military-industrial production ministries.

[3]Among the bits of evidence is the now classic story about the complaint of then Colonel-General Ogarkov to the Americans that they were explaining too much about Soviet capabilities to the civilian members of the Soviet delegation--this despite the fact that the nominal head of the Soviet delegation was a civilian and Deputy Foreign Minister, Semenev. John Newhouse, *Cold Dawn: The Story of SALT*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1973, pp. 55-56.

Military-Industrial Commission. Even expanded to include elements of the foreign affairs bureaucracy--possibly also the foreign affairs intelligentsia, who are employed primarily in the major institutes of the Academy of Sciences involved in international affairs--the apparatus for military policy discussion is a small group. There is no body of nongovernmental academic or academically related analysts concerned with problems of Soviet military strategy and force posture and equipped to discuss matters of highest national policy.[1] Given also the USSR's extreme secrecy on military matters, it is clear that military policy discussion within the restricted framework sketched above has little or no echo in other institutions of the society.

This description of the military policy apparatus in the USSR is based largely on the SALT experience. One may presume that as sensitive as SALT was as an issue of national policy, the problem of Breakout would be viewed a fortiori as requiring extraordinary secrecy and concentration of information. If the SALT discussions cast a shadow only as wide as this rather circumscribed network of institutions, discussions of Breakout would likely be even more highly concentrated, even more highly centralized. It seems a reasonable speculation, at least, that greater concentration and centralization would be attempted. This consideration may also affect discussion of perhaps the most important qualitative question to be asked about Soviet military decisionmaking--the extent to which it may be explained as the behavior of a unitary actor.

Apart from differences of view that may be ascribed to particular personalities, at least some issues of military defense policy and their national and domestic ramifications are likely to be approached by the various components of the Soviet decisionmaking group with different perspectives and with special interests. It is clear, for example, that there was a general reluctance on the part of the military to enter the SALT talks in the early phases.[2] However, it appears to be difficult

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[1]The closest approximation is contained in the handful of people in the above-mentioned institutes of the Academy of Sciences, who write on foreign, rather than Soviet, policy.

[2]Garthoff, "SALT and the Soviet Military," p. 25.

to pinpoint which particular military organizations balked, which balked more than others, and whether the objections were the same across the board. It seems safe to say that the military as a whole is a major proponent of the view that the world is still an arena of contention between the forces of imperialism and those of socialism, and that while the "correlation of forces" may have shifted in favor of socialism, the socialist countries must remain ever on the alert to thwart the attempts of imperialist forces to reverse the balance. That one may expect from the military a general defense of the importance of maintaining a high level of military preparedness and hence of military expenditures is surely true in most societies. It may be surmised that representatives of the Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces are inclined to see land-based ICBMs as representing the major deterrent force of the USSR. One may expect representatives of the Air Defense Forces to argue that the bomber force of the United States remains an important potential threat to the prelaunch survivability of Soviet ICBMs, which would argue for continued high expenditure on Soviet air defense. It also seems reasonable to assert that the Navy is impressed with the enhanced capabilities that it has acquired in recent years and is probably desirous of establishing a correspondingly broader set of missions and doctrinal roles, including, perhaps, upgrading the place of the SLBM.[1] However, beyond these relatively obvious generalizations, it is difficult to form and test hypotheses about military interest groups because of the scarcity of available evidence. The little we do have relates in part to past controversies about resource allocation and under conditions that may have little bearing on issues of Breakout.[2]

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[1]Cf. Admiral Gorshkov: "Missile-carrying submarines, owing to their great survivability in comparison to land-based launch installations, are an even more effective means of deterrence." Cited by E. T. Wooldridge, Jr., "The Gorshkov Papers: Soviet Naval Doctrine for the Nuclear Age," *Orbis*, Vol. 18, No. 4, Winter 1975, p. 1167.

[2]One of the few possible exceptions is Andrew Marshall's contention that the U.S. government erred in the SALT negotiations by ignoring the particular form of organization of Soviet strategic forces. In Marshall's view, the U.S. attempt to try to get the Soviets to move to sea and away from increasingly vulnerable ICBMs failed to take into account that the USSR land-based ballistic missiles are the prerogative--the only

However, the presumptive importance of bureaucratic politics in the military may have limited relevance for Breakout. It may be true that the Soviet military is like governments as a whole, which Graham Allison has urged us to view as "conglomerates of large organizations and collections of political actors."[1] Conglomerates and collections imply the sharing of power, and where power is shared, collective action requires a consensus by representatives of different interests. Thus, the motivation for such action must be multiple. The implication of this view is, of course, a style of decisionmaking that diverges sharply from the centralized optimizing action of a unitary, rational, political actor. As Marshall expressed it: "Both the Soviet and U.S. military establishments are clusters of organizations, interconnected as regards perceptions and stimulation to adaptive changes. A picture of either side's adaptation process as rational, centralized planning must be rejected, *except perhaps during a period of major adjustment*" (emphasis added).[2]

Is not Breakout likely to be a "major adjustment" in Marshall's sense, thus implying probable deviation from the rule of adaptive change in a bureaucratic politics model? The departure from the rule would be more likely if the apparatus of Soviet military decisionmaking, relatively circumscribed under ordinary circumstances, should be further centralized and compressed for Breakout planning. If this operated to minimize bureaucratic conflict and organizational routine, it would

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prerogative--of a major bureaucracy, the Strategic Rocket Forces, which could only oppose a plan that would have eliminated (or at least sharply reduced) its place in the Soviet military hierarchy. A sensitivity to Soviet military bureaucratic politics would have foretold the predictable defeat of any such notion. (Andrew W. Marshall, *Bureaucratic Behavior and the Strategic Arms Competition*, Southern California Arms Control and Foreign Policy Seminar, October 1971, p. 3.) On the other hand, it is not clear why such reasoning would not have led to the prediction that the *PVO strany*, the Air Defense Forces, who had over a long period commanded a substantial portion of Soviet military resources, would successfully oppose Soviet acceptance of the ABM treaty.

[1]Graham Allison, "Questions About the Arms Race: Who's Racing Whom," in Robert C. Pfaltzgraff (ed.), *Contrasting Approaches to Strategic Arms Control*, D. C. Heath & Co., Lexington, Mass., 1974, p. 56.

[2]Marshall, *Bureaucratic Behavior and the Strategic Arms Competition*, p. 7.

seem reasonable to expect to see greater reflection of the basic elements of the Soviet military belief system.

SOVIET MILITARY IDEOLOGY AND DOCTRINE

It is clear that there exists an elaborate system of indoctrination and political education, whose components we can see in the published literature, intended to provide a particular form of moral and political preparation (what the Soviets would call "world outlook"--*mirovozzrenie*) of Soviet soldiers and officers. Nevertheless, there continues to be a debate in the West on the precise role that ideology plays in the formation of actual military doctrine and whether there is a substantive difference between the military doctrine reflected in print and the set of principles and operational procedures which in fact guides decision-making in practice. In any case, one must distinguish general ideological principles and the elements of the operational code that concern the "world outlook" of the Soviet military from what is more commonly called military doctrine--namely, Soviet views on strategy and war.

The body of ideological writing in the USSR dealing with the state of international relations and particularly with Soviet-American relations exhibits a general uniformity of overall view. The following statement appeared in *Red Star* but could be matched by many other non-military Soviet sources: "In our era...the correlation of class forces in the world arena has definitely and irreversibly changed in favor of socialism...Imperialism is obliged to reckon with the new correlation of forces...in forming and pursuing...foreign policy and in elaborating practical measures in the field of detente."[1] This fundamental postulate of the change in the "correlation of class forces" is the cement that binds the consensus on the "Peace Policy" adopted at the 24th Party Congress in 1971 and enables the joining together of those elements favoring some kind of arms control with those who are suspicious of U.S. intentions. The change in the U.S.-USSR balance permitted the former group to persuade the "hardliners" that it was safe to attempt

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[1]Colonel I. Sidel'nikov, "Poka sushchestvuiut sily voiny i agressii...," *Krasnaia zvezda*, June 10, 1976, p. 2.

measures of strategic arms control with the United States. Uninterrupted qualitative improvement of Soviet forces guaranteed that this change in the "correlation of forces" would be irreversible and was the concession extracted by the "hardliners" for continued support of the arms control negotiations.[1]

A military-minded rationale for continued vigilance vis-à-vis the West, which would also be generally reflected in political rhetoric, would run somewhat as follows. Although, indeed, there has been a turn away from confrontation in recent years toward peaceful coexistence between socialist and capitalist states--a consequence of the successful implementation of the Party's peace program and of the change in the military balance--there remains a potential for aggressive action in imperialism. Peaceful coexistence is a particular and specific form of the class struggle against imperialism transferred to the sphere of interstate relations. The struggle between the two systems is historically inevitable, because the class aims and world outlook of the two systems are opposite and irreconcilable. Internal contradictions in the capitalist states and fear of Soviet might temporarily limit the aggressive resistance to socialism, but the nature of imperialism has not changed, only its adaptation to altered circumstances. For this reason there is a requirement for continued high rates of military buildup by the Soviet armed forces.

This general reasoning on the nature and trend of relations between the superpowers is supplemented by a view of the potentialities of nuclear war which Americans have found particularly difficult to accept. At least in its published form, Soviet doctrine emphasizes the fighting

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[1] "The constant strengthening of our armed forces is an objective necessity of the successful construction of socialism and communism... As the program of the CPSU stresses, [the Party] considers the defense of the Socialist Fatherland, the strengthening of the defense of the USSR and the power of the Soviet Armed Forces, as the sacred duty of the Party, of the entire Soviet people, as a most important function of the socialist state." Editorial, "Na strazhe mirnogo truda," *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh sil*, 1976, No. 3, p. 5. The article in *Krasnaia zvezda* quoted above continues in the same vein, after denouncing "reactionary imperialist forces" for fanning the arms race, to declare that "under these conditions, the consolidation of the defense capability of the Soviet State is an objective necessity" (p. 3).

and winning of nuclear war. In a well-known article, McGeorge Bundy wrote: "In sane politics, therefore, there is no level of superiority which will make a strategic first strike between the two great states anything but an act of utter folly."[1] A significant segment of American opinion fully supports that dictum, but there does not appear to be a counterpart mutual assured destruction lobby in the Soviet Union. On the contrary, Soviet doctrine seems to be dominated by a belief in the utility of military superiority, even in nuclear general conflict, and expresses its deterrent philosophy in terms of an ability to destroy the opponent's forces, his infrastructure, and his will to survive, even after the initiation of nuclear strikes.

The clarity and frequency of this kind of formulation has been cited as the basis of the contention by one school of American thought--exemplified by the work of Gouré, Harvey, and Kohler,[2] as well as by the recent CIA "Team B" study[3]--that the Soviets are seeking to develop a force posture for nuclear superiority. Other students of the problem are skeptical of the evidentiary value of the Soviet literature. In a review of Gouré, Harvey and Kohler and other work in the same vein, Matthew Gallagher criticized the one-sided nature of this approach for failing to take account of the "functional purposes" of Soviet military writing, which must be concerned about "worst cases" and military morale.[4]

What, then, is the real Soviet doctrine? Garthoff pictures Soviet military views on nuclear war, parity, and strategic balance in terms sharply different from the inferences that are drawn from reading Soviet military literature. "As early as 1968," Garthoff asserts, "the Soviet side had agreed that the main objective of SALT would be to achieve and

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[1] McGeorge Bundy, "To Cap the Volcano," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 48, No. 1, October 1969, p. 10.

[2] For example, Leon Gouré, Foy D. Kohler, and Mose L. Harvey, *The Role of Nuclear Forces in Current Soviet Strategy*, University of Miami, Florida, 1974.

[3] *New York Times*, December 26, 1976, p. 1. See also the interview with General George Keegan, retiring Air Force Intelligence Chief, in the *New York Times*, January 3, 1977.

[4] Matthew Gallagher, "Moscow and Détente," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 24, No. 2, March-April 1975, p. 79.

to maintain stable U.S.-USSR strategic deterrence..." At another point, he argues: "There is strong basis to conclude that the Soviet military leadership sees the current programs to build up the SLBM force and, above all, to replace part of the SS-11 and SS-9 forces with MIRVed SS-19s and SS-18s (and perhaps to produce a strategic bomber as well) as necessary and prudent actions in order to preserve parity by matching the already programmed buildup of U.S. Minuteman III, Poseidon, Trident, and B-1 strategic forces." Finally, he declares that "by 1969, the Soviet military had reached the conclusion that strategic superiority, in the sense of a first-strike option permitting escape from a crushing retaliatory strike was not possible for either side in contemporary conditions."[1]

There is another body of evidence from which inferences may be drawn on the nature of operational Soviet doctrine--namely, the actual evolution of the Soviet strategic posture. It would probably be the majority view of Western observers that the post-Khrushchev military buildup has displayed little evidence of being guided by strategic concepts like those of mutual assured destruction. The buildup of Soviet forces displays characteristics more in tune with a doctrine concerned primarily with counterforce and preemption.[2]

A radically different explanation of the Soviet strategic buildup, particularly in more recent years, is provided by an hypothesis of bureaucratic inertia. Soviet military R&D is performed by specialized research and design bureaus which appear to have an almost guaranteed existence. It is argued that these organizations have a kind of automatic R&D cycle: when development of one system is completed, the issue of other employment of these resources is not raised, and the

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[1]Garthoff, "SALT and the Soviet Military," pp. 26, 32, and 33. Challenged on the validity of a view so strikingly inconsistent with the general tenor of Soviet military literature, Garthoff replied that he could only "regret that I am not in a position at this time to document that assertion on the open record...but I can assure [the reader] that my conclusion is not based on mirror image extrapolation." "Correspondence," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 24, No. 5, September-October 1975, p. 88.

[2]Although it has been frequently noted that the doctrine antedates the arrival of the corresponding forces by at least half a decade.

bureau goes on to a new project in the same general design area. Thus, some observers would see technological automaticity or bureaucratic inertia as one explanation of the continued development and deployment of Soviet forces. There are, of course, weapon system acquisition histories in the United States in which such technological automaticity seems to have played an important role. Allison's review of the MIRV decision suggests that institutional inertia played a very significant role in the continued funding and final deployment of MIRV, despite the significant arms control arguments that were mustered against it.[1] If bureaucratic inertia played so prominent a role with respect to so important a decision as MIRV deployment in the United States, could not a similar process have taken place in the Soviet Union?

Nonbureaucratic factors were not negligible in explaining the U.S. MIRV decision, but the extrapolation of the argument to the USSR is weak on other, organizational grounds. There was considerable centralization of Soviet weapons development in the mid-1960s, reflected in the revival of the Defense Council and the Military Industrial Commission. It is difficult to believe that bureaucratic inertia in a centralized decisionmaking environment was sufficiently powerful to sweep away considerations based on threat analysis and policy objectives.

If few will deny that the post-1962 Soviet buildup is consistent with declared Soviet doctrine, it is important to understand that the doctrinal principles may be not simply products of Bolshevik logic and an elemental hostility to "Western imperialism." The apparent Soviet doctrinal predilection for preemption, mass nuclear strikes, and the like may also be based on an appreciation of the multiple real-world uncertainties of warfare, based on historical experience, and extrapolated in magnification to nuclear war, which no one has yet experienced. In the face of such uncertainty, prudence may dictate to Soviet thinking a need for vastly superior forces and the ability to strike first to limit damage. The issue of uncertainty may be viewed more broadly, in terms of the requirements on political-military policy to deal with a variety of future contingencies, few of which can be

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[1] Allison, "Questions About the Arms Race."

foreseen. The large numbers, types, and qualities of Soviet weapons provide a rich menu of strategic choices answering not only to the inherent difficulties of prediction but also to the evident necessity of planning for possible simultaneous conflict at both ends of the USSR's vast territory. Such reasoning may then be buttressed by the conviction that the stabilization in Soviet-American relations is only temporary, that however clearly the "imperialists" may recognize that the tide is turning against them, they cannot be trusted not to attempt a last ditch effort to change the military balance.

For all the reasons indicated, the USSR is in the process of acquiring forces intended to provide balanced, multiple-option strategic capabilities. This apparatus of option generation is being bought at relatively low international political cost. Thus, we return to the point that in Soviet eyes military power has clear political utility. Détente has come into being because of the West's realization of a change in the "correlation of forces." Having made such gains on the basis of the military buildup of the 1960s and 1970s, the Soviet leadership will be inclined to continue in the same general direction. The next section examines the consequences of the striking asymmetry in perception and doctrine between the United States and the USSR in terms of increasing the probability of Breakout.

III. OBJECTIVES OF BREAKOUT

Breakout involves a substantial buildup of strategic systems whose deployments are regulated by SALT agreement. Thus, Breakout is a form of arms racing that may be analyzed in terms of traditional rationales. Accordingly, three objectives of possible Breakout are identified--deterrence, coercion, and war fighting.[1] The objectives relate not just to the United States and NATO but also to Soviet concerns about Communist China.

It hardly seems necessary to say that in the arms control literature the distinctions between deterrence and coercion are often hazy. They both carry the connotation of influencing through threat. If deterrence is traditionally used to mean discouraging an adversary from using military force, the effort will be more successful if the opponent is forced to desist from developing or deploying forces intended for the attack. Nevertheless, it seems useful to attempt to distinguish two related but separable classes of action intended to influence the behavior of adversaries. As used hereafter, deterrence refers to discouragement of an adversary, by threat of an appropriate military response of denial or retaliatory punishment, from launching an attack on oneself or a given third party. Coercion will mean the act of compelling an adversary, through implicit or explicit threat, to behave in a desired fashion in contexts other than launching military attacks.

These definitions still do not eliminate all the ambiguities of meaning among the three objectives. For example, it has been said that the aggressor never wants war, that war is in effect the choice of the victim by virtue of his resistance. Thus, a military buildup intended for coercion may bring on a war-fighting situation. In the Soviet view, deterrent capabilities are closely linked to those for war fighting, so

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[1] There is no intention here of suggesting that Soviet leaders plan or even think in these categories. What is labelled "coercion" here, for example, will be viewed differently in Moscow. The use of this simplified classification of goals is justified only as a basis for distinguishing Breakout contingencies in the following analysis.

that a Soviet buildup for deterrence may have, in effect, almost the same character as that for war fighting. This characteristic of Soviet thinking will be an important feature of the analysis to follow.

THE MODE OF BUILDUP

One additional distinction relating to the mode of military buildup must be made to clarify the nature of the Breakout process. A buildup may be executed overtly or covertly, for different motivations and with different consequences. Both a positive and a negative impulse may be given for *overt* buildup. On the positive side, overtness might be desired to produce a particular effect (e.g., shock and disorganization) on the enemy, or to communicate clearly a particular message; the objective would be either deterrence or coercion.[1] A negative reason could be that speed and large scale were urgent in the buildup being considered but are simply incompatible with covertness, which would otherwise be desired. Here the objective may be any of the three--deterrence, coercion, or war fighting.[2]

A *covert* mode is useful for the buildup of superior forces and the achievement of surprise. Speed and large scale may appear desirable on military grounds, but overtness may threaten to exact high cost--e.g., political-military, if the adversary responds by racing alongside, or if there is significant risk of the crisis escalating out of control.

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[1] An historically interesting special case is the Soviet simulation of overt buildup in heavy bombers in the mid-fifties and Khrushchev's rocket rattling a few years later. Such simulation with respect to major strategic systems depends on the weakness of the antagonist's intelligence capabilities and seems of little interest for contemporary superpower relations. An attempt to make coercive use of a boast of concealed strategic forces is a logical possibility of a SALT-less world but does not seem otherwise plausible.

[2] Overt buildup based on the urgency of speed and scale is in some respects akin to what Kahn and Schneider meant by "mobilization warfare" --frantic mobilization after intense political crisis. In the Kahn-Schneider concept, this mode of conflict may be thought of as involving a cycle beginning with a political crisis leading to limited confrontation, then to mobilization, which leads in turn to political crisis and either some sort of settlement or a full-scale confrontation. Herman Kahn and William Schneider, Jr., *The Technological Requirements of Mobilization Warfare*, The Hudson Institute, HI-2237-RR, May 1975.

The resource costs may be seen as excessive to the level of threat (or opportunity) perceived in the current international environment. Necessarily scaled down and decelerated, the buildup may then be preferred in the covert mode for political reasons. Again, depending on particular circumstances, deterrence, coercion, or war fighting may be the objective of covert buildup.

Superiority over actual or potential adversaries also may be sought in covert buildup as a hedge against uncertainty--that is, without articulated military plan or purpose.[1] Speed and scale in this case are not deemed important enough to overbalance the costs of overtness, and capabilities are covertly "banked" for future use. One class of scenarios for covert "banking" involves gradual but perceptible deterioration of international relations, raising the midterm probability of war, but secret augmentation of military capabilities to avoid accelerating the process of deterioration.

Finally, covert buildup may be pursued even if security is partially compromised, because the adversary may appear to be unsure of the scale or pace of the buildup, or politically incapable of reacting to anything but the most blatant indications. Here a degree of covertness prevents the adversary from obtaining the explicit and unequivocal evidence which alone is capable of triggering a negative reaction. A close watch is kept on his "decision stairway" and buildup preparations are maintained to the extent possible at such a level as to keep the enemy on the stairway's lower steps.

A special case of covert buildup is covert *preparations* for buildup: to maximize buildup potential the military leadership moves technology in directions that may be converted in short order to actual buildup. An interesting case for present purposes might be the infrastructure and R&D for ABM systems whose major elements have already been extensively tested to assure reliability.

As preparation for overt Breakout, covert buildup may be concentrated on measures designed to expand forces rapidly once Breakout is

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[1] See above, pp. 22-23.

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initiated. This could include acquisition of long-lead-time hardware, investment in major elements of infrastructure not readily identifiable by the adversary's "national means" (e.g., R&D and production facilities), or even prepositioning of forces, depending on the circumstances and the Breakout objective.

Related to the mode of buildup is its duration: buildup may be sudden or protracted. To keep protracted buildup covert requires tight security. Overt buildup may be protracted if it does not escalate to war or is otherwise terminated. Protracted covert buildup may be followed by sudden overt buildup, as noted earlier. The Soviet strategic buildup of the 1960s and early 1970s may be looked on as a case of protracted buildup, which remains to be terminated by agreed international limitation.

Covert buildups must be intended for eventual, if only partial, disclosure. Deterrence and coercion both require communication of one's punishment potential, at least in some form, whereas a buildup for war fighting will be "revealed" in military strikes. The major function of covertness in buildup is to prevent the adversary from becoming alerted and attempting a counter buildup (or perhaps even preemption), but covert buildup may also be part of continuing effort to conceal vulnerabilities (as well as strengths) which might be exploited by an enemy in coercion or an actual military attack.

Soviet military buildups have been both covert and overt. In the 1930s, budget increases and major force changes were relatively unconcealed, but the postwar period provides much evidence of a Soviet penchant for covertness in military planning--e.g., the heavy emphasis on surprise in the "Manchurian Model" of Soviet conventional but also theater nuclear warfare, and the attention paid in Soviet tactical and strategic doctrine to the concept of *maskirovka* (literally, "masking"--cover and deception). On the other hand, the major elements of the post-Khrushchev buildup were visible *ex-post*, although precise characteristics and functions of systems were not always identifiable. Was the buildup overt only because the Soviets could not help disclosing it? Or do we know about the strategic deployments of the recent past in some part because the Soviets wanted us to know? That which is

successfully concealed cannot be described, by definition, although it is possible to speculate on what it may be desirable to conceal. Suppose then that the United States detects some elements of covertness with regard to important systems. Failing assurance that the national verification means are capable of penetrating all Soviet cover and deception, it would seem necessary to postulate the existence of a build-up "iceberg" with undetected capabilities below the level of visibility.[1]

It has been suggested that the probable scale and tempo of Breakout make it unlikely that it can be executed covertly. For whatever objective undertaken, Breakout may have covert preparatory phases or even overt ones--e.g., in gray-area systems outside the framework of agreed constraints, or in "pure" general purpose forces, where the objectives of Breakout dictate requirements for capabilities in both theater and central war, for both nuclear and conventional arms.

DETERRENCE

Traditionally, deterrence has been viewed as having several major requirements:

1. *Communication between deterrer and deterree.* The extent of this communication, of course, can vary significantly. Deterrence does not require that all aspects of one's military capability be communicated to the enemy. It only requires that he be informed sufficiently for the other elements of the formula to operate. Soviet leaders have traditionally tended to minimize the amount of information communicated, even to the point of using only U.S. intelligence estimates of Soviet strategic forces as basis for the SALT negotiations. Apart from any explanation that may be sought in "national character" or the like, the Soviet penchant for extreme secrecy may also be viewed as reflecting a broader concept of deterrence than that of the West. Faith in the "balance of terror" would dictate much greater openness; first-strike or preemptive doctrines require stringent security controls.

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[1] The extent to which the shape and size of the "iceberg's" submerged portion can be estimated is obviously a matter of some importance but cannot be dealt with here.

2. *Capability of imposing unacceptable costs on the enemy.* This seems a straightforward requirement since it deals with traditional military balancing and accounting, and in strategic matters the calculations are particularly (perhaps misleadingly) susceptible to quantification. However, it is also assumed that the deterree acts on the basis of rational principles and an ability to weigh the costs, so that he can perceive when they become unacceptable. Thus, understanding the opponent's value system and perceptions becomes critical to the deterrence process. The Soviet leadership often gives evidence that it regards Western behavior as unpredictable in particular cases, although not, of course, in the large. This adds an additional ingredient of uncertainty to Soviet calculations which leads to augmented force requirements.

3. *Credibility of the threat to impose unacceptable costs.* It is not enough to have the capability to impose unacceptable costs, assuming that the enemy perceives the capability in the same way; one must also convince him that the capability will be exercised, if he is not deterred. This requirement, in the Soviet view, reinforces other rationales for a capability not just to launch spasm strikes but to engage in a nuclear war.

These considerations suggest again how significant are the differences between Soviet and American views of the deterrent function. The dominant U.S. view has placed heavy emphasis on residual capabilities to accomplish the assured retaliation mission and therefore on survivability. U.S. doctrine called for the ability to ride out a surprise attack and still have the capacity left over to inflict unacceptable damage on the aggressor.[1] But Soviet deterrence is based on demonstrating capability and preparedness to fight a nuclear war, to survive, and even to win it. The U.S. strategic objective is to deter, and if deterrence fails, to stop the war and hold down the scale of damage. In the Soviet perspective, if deterrence fails the apparent goal is to win quickly and at reasonable cost. Given also the elements of uncertainty, this dictates the necessity in the Soviet military mind of

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[1]The alternative, regarded as dangerous because it made for crisis instability, was a credible threat of launch-on-warning if survivability could not be assured.

preparing overwhelming war-fighting forces. As we will see, a particular strategic development or deployment may, consequently, have sharply different significance for each side and may alter asymmetrically the respective images of balance and deterrence.

The prelaunch survivability of U.S. ICBMs is now regarded as potentially problematic, but assuming survivability of elements of the triad in sufficient quantity to accomplish the assured destruction mission, does that provide adequate deterrence of Soviet nuclear attack? This question has been debated in the United States since the 1960s and in 1974 led to a revision of U.S. targeting doctrine and associated development objectives. The classical problem of strategic nuclear planning is a distinction between *ex-ante* and *ex-post* incentives. It may make sense to threaten Armageddon to deter the enemy from initiating large-scale nuclear attack, although this seems increasingly doubtful. However, it has long been recognized in the strategic literature that if an attack actually occurred on the United States, the full SIOP is a suicidal, thus incredible, response, because the USSR would probably have the residual capability to retaliate in kind. Hence, the development of a variety of sub-SIOP options.

Implicit in this planning is the hope that the Soviets, having a scale of costs associated with their objectives, will react to a U.S. limited response by considering the potential lethality left in the U.S. arsenal and will desist from an attempt to accomplish objectives that are less than vital to the survival of the Soviet state. However, an important element of the Soviet view of deterring nuclear war, in any form, is the assertion that there are only two rungs on the nuclear escalatory ladder: he who mounts the first rung is inevitably forced to all-out nuclear war on the second. To prevent that catastrophe, the Soviets seem to be saying, they would be forced to preemption. Thus, U.S. development of limited nuclear options (LNOs) may be seen as threatening Soviet deterrence by postulating the existence of several rungs on the nuclear escalatory ladder.

In American discussions, LNOs have also been viewed as part of the solution to the problem of extended deterrence--that is, of protecting

NATO allies as well as the United States.[1] In Moscow this aspect of LNOs is associated with the threat that the United States would go nuclear first in the defense of Western Europe. Soviet military writings reflect the belief that if war should break out in Europe and begin with a conventional phase (an innovation that seems to be increasingly accepted), NATO forces would face certain defeat. Soviet writings assume then that NATO would inevitably escalate to tactical, and possibly even strategic, nuclear war.[2] To the extent they place credence in this type of scenario, the Soviets would want to have the force for an appropriate response, which would probably include nuclear preemption. A European crisis could therefore set the stage for Soviet Breakout for deterrence (or even for war fighting).[3]

However, survivability of U.S. forces also poses a difficult problem for Soviet deterrence doctrine. The Soviet military instinct is to seek overpowering (disarming?) force for quick victory. This is a posture that is capable of deterring. But to achieve that posture, it is necessary to secure the opponent's cooperation. Without it, it is costly and even dangerous (in terms of crisis instability) to build up to the required degree of military superiority. Herbert York had U.S. planners in mind when he declared that the attempt to build a force for damage-limiting inevitably creates a roughly equal force on the opposing side that is damage-producing, but the problem threatens to become more acute for Soviet planners. For a while the Soviets may have had implicit U.S. cooperation in narrowing or eliminating the gap of American

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[1] Rosecrance has seen this as a basis for a strategic arms race. Strategic equality, he suggests, has been found insufficient for extended deterrence. "Some degree of superiority was required. But this superiority would challenge the capacity of the other superpower to deter attack upon itself, and thus was bound to set off an arms race tending to reestablish equality." R. Rosecrance, *Strategic Deterrence Reconsidered*, Adelphi Papers No. 116, International Institute of Strategic Studies, London, 1975, p. 3.

[2] Some Western observers now believe that the Soviets take more seriously the boundary between theater and general nuclear war. See Joseph D. Douglass, Jr., *The Soviet Theater Nuclear Offensive*, Studies in Communist Affairs, Vol. I, Washington, D.C., pp. 5, 99-104.

[3] Breakout measures that may be related to European conflict include deployment of mobile MIRVed IRBMs and covert deployment of ABMs.

superiority, but recent developments indicate a possible change in attitude. The central U.S. strategic concern is that by the early or mid-1980s, the MIRVing of the Soviet fourth and follow-on generation ICBMs, even under Vladivostok ceilings, will produce a force constituting a potent threat to U.S. fixed land-based ICBMs. Largely in anticipation of this threat, the U.S. strategic budget began to increase in real dollars after many years of monotonic real decline. Until the recent change of administration, the U.S. government appeared to be intent on developing counterforce options and countervalue options other than all-out city busting (e.g., with super-accurate nuclear or conventionally armed cruise missiles) to cope with the emerging Soviet strategic threat.[1]

If the Soviets seem to require a war-fighting, perhaps even disarming, capability to feel confident about deterrence, it is not surprising that the superpowers have had difficulty reaching understanding on reciprocal quantitative and qualitative limitations on strategic forces. The constraints on strategic arms that have been instituted may have secured Soviet acceptance only because Moscow saw in them the possibility of developing strategic forces that were at least potentially capable of achieving a level of superiority deemed necessary to assure deterrence. Whether that level of superiority is intended only for deterrence or for more hostile goals will, one hopes, remain a matter for speculation. In any case, it seems clear that the U.S. government did not succeed in achieving a conceptual breakthrough on the necessity of and requirements for stable *mutual* deterrence. There remains a discordance of concept between the two sides.[2] While each side

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[1]This development rationale helps explain why cruise missiles, though evidently second-strike weapons because of their slow speed, can be viewed in Moscow as a threat to the deterrent power of Soviet forces. Also, cruise missiles will add rungs to the strategic escalatory ladder.

[2]This discordance is reflected in the following passage from Unilateral Statement A of the SALT I agreements, which deals with the U.S. concern that failure to agree on more complete strategic offensive arms limitations would jeopardize U.S. "supreme interests":

> The U.S. Delegation has stressed the importance the U.S. government attaches to achieving agreement on more complete limitations on strategic offensive arms, following agreement on an ABM Treaty and on an Interim Agreement on certain measures

regards the other's acquisition of counterforce capabilities as destabilizing and there are powerful voices in the United States arguing against further U.S. counterforce developments, Soviet military thinking uniformly looks on Soviet counterforce as desirable and beneficial. So long as the United States accepted the Interim Agreement asymmetries with all their potential for Soviet buildup, the SALT framework could be viewed as firmly in place. But as the United States begins to react to the perceived Soviet ICBM threat in the 1980s, it becomes apparent that the possibility of Breakout to establish, or reestablish, a threatened deterrent capability is inherent in the doctrinal asymmetry of the two sides and in the force posture interaction that follows therefrom.[1]

This does not necessarily mean that the Kremlin is now girding for an overt strategic deployment surge. American strategic programs are still "fluid," as President Carter's recently submitted budget message makes clear, and Moscow may want to probe this administration's intentions. However, a "wait and see" approach does not preclude covert buildup in the meantime. Paul Nitze has argued that clandestine increments to the Soviet ICBM force would add little to their threat to U.S. ICBMs, considering the levels of throw-weight, the number of RVs, and their yields that the Soviets will soon command.[2] He is probably right about the early or mid-1980s, after the Soviets complete their present MIRV program. Currently, the USSR would need clandestine

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with respect to the limitation of strategic offensive arms. The U.S. Delegation believes that an objective of the follow-on negotiations should be to constrain and reduce on a long-term basis threats to the survivability of our respective strategic retaliatory forces. The USSR Delegation has also indicated that the objectives of SALT would remain unfulfilled without the achievement of an agreement providing for more complete limitations on strategic offensive arms.

ACDA, *Arms Control and Disarmament Agreements*, p. 146.

[1]The Breakout contingency might be even more dangerous if it takes place in what has been called the "Huntington Scenario" (cited in Paul Nitze, "The Strategic Balance Between Hope and Skepticism," *Foreign Policy*, No. 17, Winter 1974-75, p. 139), in which U.S. attempts to regain parity after the Soviets achieved superiority brings on a crisis and the risk of war.

[2]Paul Nitze, "The Strategic Balance Between Hope and Skepticism," p. 149.

increments to emerge with a recognizably superior nuclear force. The Soviet Union may need many more missiles or launchers than now for deterrence if the United States proceeds with the development of a shelter-based land-mobile system.[1] Since such systems are not now bound by SALT constraints, large-scale deployments by both sides would threaten the complete irrelevance of SALT.

Apart from the central or theater war contingencies discussed here, how much extended deterrence would the Soviet Union try to get out of its strategic forces? Deterrence of an Israeli march on Damascus in a new outbreak of Middle East fighting? A replay of the U.S. nuclear alert of October 24, 1973? A U.S. reaction to another Angola in which the United States would intervene rather than stand back? Are general purpose forces insufficient and how much strategic weaponry is needed for this? Is Breakout an answer? So far, these third-area objectives seem to have been far less than primary for the Soviet Union, and there is no indication yet that the Soviets have viewed their strategic forces as capable of extending deterrence to such secondary objectives of Soviet policy. Whether this will change in the future may partly depend on the political conditions discussed later in this report. However, political conditions could also be affected by observed Soviet efforts to develop military superiority in various dimensions. In any case, this is a part of the spectrum where deterrence shades over into coercion.

COERCION

It is important to distinguish military buildup for coercing from buildup seen as necessitated by adversary reaction to a previous act that was interpreted as coercive. In the latter case, adversary reaction may appear to threaten the continuation of one's coercive power or, perhaps even more fundamentally, one's deterrent/war-fighting capability. Buildup then may appear necessary not just to restore coercive power but even to strengthen deterrence. The Soviet buildup post-1962 may have had an important element of this second case. A combination

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[1] See pp. 48-49.

of events in the middle and late 1950s--the "bomber gap" scare, nuclear threats during the 1956 Suez affair, Soviet priority in testing an ICBM, Sputnik and the ensuing "missile gap" scare, the Berlin crises--led to an accelerated U.S. missile development and deployment program. Moreover, the termination of the Cuban missile crisis involved a major humiliation for the USSR. Had the Soviets possessed an inventory of several hundred ICBMs, the outcome of the crisis might have been significantly different. If the actual outcome inspired a Soviet determination never again to be caught in such a dilemma, as has often been suggested, the strategic buildup of the 1960s may be ascribed in part to the coercion failure of October 1962. More generally, the failure of Soviet coercive foreign policy under Khrushchev, which led to a reassertion of American nuclear superiority, was probably a significant influence on the Soviet buildup of the 1960s. This case is not necessarily only of historical interest, as suggested by the analysis of the previous section. Increases in U.S. military capabilities intended as counters to current or future Soviet military developments could induce Breakout in the USSR.

The notion of Soviet Breakout for coercion may strike many Americans as absurd on the face of it. These observers of the strategic competition regard nuclear weapons as politically unusable. McGeorge Bundy stated the case forcefully:[1]

> The neglected truth about the present strategic arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union is that in terms of international political behavior that race has become almost completely irrelevent. The new weapons systems which are being developed by the two great powers will provide neither protection nor opportunity in any serious political sense.

Since the end of clear U.S. nuclear superiority, this view is surely an accurate reflection of American foreign policy perspectives. However, controversy persists as to whether Soviet leaders share that view. Certainly, the display of military force has in the past been regarded by the Kremlin as capable of exercising coercive power. Examples

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[1]Bundy, "To Cap the Volcano," p. 9.

abound: It is hard to understand Stalin's policy in 1945-1946 towards Turkey and Iran except in terms of inferences that he drew with respect to the USSR's new relative power position after World War II. Khrushchev's activism in Berlin, the Suez War, and Cuba was flamboyant and based on a large admixture of bluff, but it relied on the effects of the outside world's perception of major military developments in the USSR. By the early and mid-1970s, the Soviets appear to have drawn optimistic inferences about the political values that were obtained from large and growing forces, not only with respect to warding off threats to the USSR and Eastern Europe, but also in regard to the global balance. The Soviets perceive the change in the military balance as one which has "sobered the U.S. imperialists." U.S. "decisions" to terminate the cold war and embark on détente are ascribed in the Soviet Union to the change in the "correlation of forces." In Moscow, military power is viewed as having considerable political utility, at least potentially.

Soviet militancy during the postwar period appears to have been limited by three factors. The first is certainly the military balance with the United States. On the strategic side, Soviet inferiority compared to the United States was marked until the late 1960s. In conventional forces outside the European theater, Soviet blue-water fleets are growing in numbers and quality but are believed still deficient as coercive instruments where U.S. counterpower can be exerted. The effect of a clear reversal of the military balance in the Soviet favor is touched on below.

A second factor is the behavior of Soviet leaders. They have generally displayed a degree of caution in international affairs which, while surely affected by the military balance, may have constituted an important independent restraint preventing various crises from blowing up over the last two or three decades. Khrushchev's behavior over Cuba in 1962, at least with respect to the first part of that episode, may be an outstanding exception. It can be argued, however, that he was misled into underrating the U.S. reaction. In any case, examples of prudent behavior are more numerous, particularly in relation to Middle East crises: e.g., Soviet reluctance to intervene in June 1967 and again during the September 1970 Jordanian Civil War; Soviet caution in response

to the U.S. nuclear alert in October 1973. The single most important deviation from this pattern is the buildup of Soviet forces in Egypt in the first half of 1970. However, this episode is not so much an exception to the rule as a demonstration of the degree to which such Soviet involvement in third world affairs is conditioned upon U.S. acceptance of the legitimacy of Soviet intervention in the defense of what Washington perceives to be major Soviet concerns.[1]

A third factor is Soviet belief that certain international trends may be reasonably seen as leading ultimately to the realization of Soviet goals, making risky and adventurous behavior unnecessary.[2] The "correlation of forces" in Soviet parlance is defined more broadly than just relative military power; the concept includes political, economic, and social factors. Thus, the Soviet view asserts that political impact depends on superiority in not only military but other international balances as well. This conclusion is underscored by Goldhamer, whose comprehensive survey of the question detects no simple correlation between military power in the USSR and Soviet aggressiveness. On the other hand, when the definition of power was broadened to include other elements of an international balance, the correspondence seemed much closer.[3]

In the sweep of the past twenty years, there appears to be a pattern of coexistence of Soviet militancy and conciliation, whose changing

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[1]See Abraham Becker, "The Superpowers in the Arab-Israeli Conflict: 1970-1973," in A. S. Becker, B. Hansen, and M. H. Kerr, *The Economics and Politics of the Middle East*, American Elsevier, New York, 1975. Whether the Angolan episode presages future acceptance of Soviet involvement in the third world remains to be seen.

[2]According to William Beecher, early in 1973 British intelligence informed the U.S. government of a report that in a secret meeting of Eastern European Communist Party leaders in Prague, Brezhnev assured his listeners: "Trust us comrades, for by 1985, as a consequence of what we are now achieving with détente, we will have achieved most of our objectives in Western Europe...a decisive shift in the correlation of forces will be such that, come 1985, we will be able to exert our will wherever we need to." *Boston Globe*, February 11, 1977. Former Secretary Kissinger is said to have regarded the report as untrustworthy.

[3]Herbert Goldhamer, *The Soviet Union in a Period of Strategic Parity*, The Rand Corporation, R-889-PR, October 1971, pp. 32-35.

mix may be traced to variations in the combination of the three factors suggested. Such coexistence should continue to operate in rough balance unless drastic change occurs in Soviet elite personality or in the international environment. A brief examination of possible changes in international affairs and their relation to Breakout follows.

With the elimination of U.S. strategic superiority in the European theater, Western Europe began to worry about the threat of "Finlandization"--accommodation to Soviet interests without conflict through weakness. Presumably, the threat is advanced by overt buildup--by the demonstration of increasing Soviet intercontinental and regional power as, for example, in the deployment of MIRVed IRBMs. However, the reality of the threat depends heavily on the degree of U.S. commitment to European defense. Western perceptions are almost equally important, since the effect of military power is in considerable measure a matter of perception.[1] If Soviet military power is partly what we say it is, if we say it is overwhelming and come to believe it, and if we decide on the need for accommodation in the light of that perception, the purpose of coercive Breakout may be accomplished without requiring the deployment of a single additional missile.

The dominant American belief has been that Soviet aggressiveness could be contained by credible demonstration of Western readiness to resist. Continued Soviet buildup could, therefore, lead to strengthening of Western forces and resolve with possibly stabilizing results. However, if the Western reaction followed a period of apparent accommodation to Soviet policy, the effects could be highly destabilizing.[2] The SALT agreements appeared to promise the USSR an opportunity to "catch up with and surpass" the United States in a meaningful sense. Nullification of that opportunity by U.S. actions, when the prize seemed within grasp, particularly if accompanied by other developments (in military technology or international relations) damaging to major Soviet interests, might induce consideration of Breakout. Should it occur

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[1] Paradoxically, this point is made by both proponents and opponents of assured destruction strategies.

[2] See footnote 1 on p. 33.

under these circumstances, Breakout would be intended partly for deterrence but also to reestablish the basis for deriving political benefits from a favorable global balance.

An analogous development might be related to a change in U.S. military doctrine and posture. Suppose, as has not been the case in the past, that Soviet deterrence comes to be viewed as extending to U.S. intervention in third country areas.[1] Such extended deterrence would then be eroded if the United States began to toy with the notion of "the utility of nuclear forces as a political-military instrument."[2] This suggests a change in the U.S. view of its role in the world that is sharply different from the self-imposed limitations that have developed in the wake of Vietnam. The likelihood of such change may be judged small, but if it should occur, the challenge to the Soviet Union would be clear.

The prudence exhibited by Soviet leaders in foreign policy may be seen as reflecting elements of their operational code that stress the predominant importance of protecting the motherland and the bastion of world socialism. This ordering of priorities is especially useful in a situation of military weakness. How much more venturesome Soviet policy might become with a clearly favorable global balance probably cannot be forecasted. But Goldhamer cautiously concluded, in a review of post-World War II Soviet foreign policy, that "when we view the Soviet strategic position in the broadest sense to take account of political factors favorable to the Soviets,...Soviet aggressiveness appears associated with a by no means unsatisfactory strategic position."[3] If Soviet leaders should perceive Soviet military superiority and a

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[1] As a consequence, perhaps, of a successful effort to eliminate the inferiority of Soviet conventional forces outside the European theater. In principle, there is no particular reason why this should be impossible, and if the Soviet naval buildup proceeds at a rapid pace and is matched by deterioration of Western forces, the recognition of inferiority, which may have been a restraining influence on the extension of Soviet deterrence in the past, will fall by the wayside.

[2] Lynn Davis, *Limited Nuclear Options: Deterrence and the New American Doctrine*, Adelphi Papers No. 121, International Institute of Strategic Studies, London, 1976, p. 8.

[3] Goldhamer, *The Soviet Union in a Period of Strategic Parity*, p. 35.

favorable international position, there might be a resurgence of Soviet militancy. Whether Breakout would be part of this development would probably depend heavily on the reaction of the USSR's major antagonists.

As suggested above, a component of Soviet restraint was the expectation that world political trends would ultimately be favorable to the realization of Soviet goals and therefore risky adventurism was unnecessary. One may then ask, what if the expectation is undermined and the ultimate victory of socialism seems seriously in jeopardy? Under present conditions, it is probably difficult to foresee any concatenation of international relations that is likely to provide the Soviet leadership with a clear and uniformly pessimistic prognosis. The Soviets have had their ups and downs at various times and in various parts of the world, but in most cases the ultimate outcomes are sufficiently ambiguous to be subject to alternative interpretations. There seems no reason to believe that this situation is likely to change substantially.

WAR FIGHTING

A previous subsection discussed Breakout for deterrence in which the strategic buildup involved forces whose deterrent power was based on their capability to fight and possibly win a nuclear war, if the USSR found itself forced into one. At issue now is Breakout not for deterrence but for the near-term prosecution of nuclear war. A deliberate, out-of-the-blue decision seems unlikely.[1] The most plausible situation is one in which the Kremlin perceives its enemy bent upon a set of actions posing such a near-term threat to vital Soviet interests that deterrence is no longer possible and preemption seems to be the only alternative. Intervening between the perception and the preemption, the required buildup would be presumably frenzied and overt.[2]

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[1] Cf. Colin Gray ("The Urge to Compete: Rationales for Arms Racing," *World Politics*, Vol. 26, No. 2, January 1974, p. 213): "A rational-actor assumption such as 'a state will go to war because it believes it will win,' is pure historical fiction. The political leadership of a state may choose to fight because it feels that it has no better alternative, or--as Fred Iklé has persuasively argued--a state may elect to wage war without having given significant attention to events beyond the initial phase (for example, Germany in 1939 and 1940, Japan in 1941)."

[2] As in the "mobilization warfare" scheme of Kahn and Schneider. See footnote 2 on p. 25.

Since this interval also presents heightened risks of enemy attack, its duration should be minimized. This suggests the great attractiveness of a reserve of strategic forces and therefore of covert buildup over a protracted period as a hedge against uncertainty.

In part because Soviets are aware of the acute uncertainties of superpower conflict, they seem inclined to try to develop massive power--in the first instance to deter the enemy, but if deterrence fails, to overwhelm his forces, render him incapable of effective and timely action, and prevent him from launching damaging counterstrikes. Accordingly, the Soviets may be highly motivated to target the enemy's command and control function, an hypothesis that has implications for building up particular types of capabilities which would be most useful in this regard.

Soviet behavior indicates that the dangers of central war are fully recognized and, especially since the Cuban missile crisis, adventures that risk the destruction of Soviet socialism have been avoided. However, no one has proved the negligibility of the chances of accidental war or of escalation from lower level conflict. Soviet policy has demonstrated a desire to be prepared for such contingencies.

IV. CONDITIONS OF BREAKOUT

As indicated in the Introduction, this study approaches Breakout as a problem of Soviet policy to be analyzed in terms of both objectives and conditions fostering change in direction. Having discussed objectives of Breakout, the paper now examines various condition-sets viewed as possible triggers of Breakout. These are considered in two major groups: developments in military technology and force structure on one hand and in political dynamics on the other. The military technology/force structure developments of interest are those that may occur in the United States and in the Soviet Union. These are further subdivided by whether or not they affect offensive forces, defensive forces, or verification-intelligence.

There are a number of assumptions relating to the verification[1] subset of the military technology developments that should be made explicit:

1. It is assumed that there are no major "Potemkin villages" in the Soviet strategic force posture. Soviet concealment and deception in principle could include simulation of nonexistent capability, but the practical significance of this is considered small. Hence, verification breakthroughs that enable the United States to detect less capability than it thought existed are ignored here. The verification developments of concern here are those enabling the United States to remove any screens that may conceal real Soviet capabilities.

2. Soviet verification or intelligence breakthroughs are ignored on the assumption that Soviet information on the United States is already sufficiently accurate for most of the contingencies discussed here.[2] On the other hand, identification of Chinese strategic nuclear

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[1]This term is used interchangeably with "verification-intelligence," although there are obvious differences between the two components which are potentially significant.

[2]The flow of information on U.S. defense is, of course, copious. One area where protection is still attempted is U.S. verification-intelligence capabilities, and this bears on possible Soviet consideration of Breakout for war fighting.

force targets probably constitutes a significant problem for Soviet military planning, as is mentioned below. The capability of concern is passive and active Soviet defense against U.S. verification--Soviet ability to damage, degrade, or prevent the operation of U.S. verification-intelligence mechanisms.

3. No allowance is made for Chinese intelligence breakthroughs, since it is assumed here that the basic Chinese problem is that of a survivable second-strike capability. The appearance of a Chinese counterforce capability could alter this appreciation and such a capability would certainly provide a significant new challenge for Soviet planners, but the contingency seems remote.

On the subject of political dynamics, the study distinguishes (a) developments within the NATO framework--that is, relations between the United States and its NATO partners, (b) changes in relationships between the United States and China, as well as (c) between the United States and the USSR, and (d) changes in internal Soviet politics.[1] Thus, an attempt is made to encompass the main political variables to which Soviet policy is believed sensitive--the cohesion of the NATO alliance, the role of China in Soviet-American relations, the state of détente, and internal Soviet power configurations (with a view particularly to the anticipated change in Soviet leadership).[2]

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The major changes in technology considered are at least significant evolutionary developments and in some cases constitute technological

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[1] A variable bearing on Soviet internal dynamics that is not dealt with here is changes in Soviet economic growth prospects. Although this is not a trivial issue for Soviet policymakers, in itself or in its bearing on resource allocation to defense, it is thought not likely to have direct influence on Breakout decisionmaking.

[2] An interesting secondary issue of condition-set classification is military doctrine. In principle, it might be considered as an element of the dynamics of military technology and forces. On the other hand, it might also be viewed as a problem of political dynamics: for example, changes in the détente relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union might reflect alterations in U.S. military doctrine. This was at least one of the undercurrents of threat in the Soviet reaction to the "Schlesinger doctrine."

breakthroughs. Unsuccessful attempts to achieve technological breakthrough may also be pertinent for Breakout analysis.

That change in military technology affects arms competitions is a truism, but discussion usually concentrates on the issue of technological breakthrough because of the fear of substantial discontinuities in actual and perceived power relations. Kahn and Schneider give a hypothetical example of a tactical air-to-ground missile whose range has suddenly been increased by an order of magnitude, "so that quite suddenly every U.S. tactical fighter-bomber would have to be counted a strategic delivery vehicle."[1] Such discontinuities are extraordinarily rare, but this does not prevent them from remaining the staple nightmare of military planners.[2] When they do occur, they may produce shock waves whose short- or long-term outcome may be quite unpredictable. In the analysis of Breakout, the development of military technology should certainly not be restricted to breakthroughs in the sense of Kahn and Schneider's dramatic example. There is, of course, a continuum of technological change in which discrete points that have discernable impact on perceptions of alteration of the military balance are difficult to trace. The discussion below will deal with weapon systems that can now be foreseen and can be viewed as having a readily perceivable impact on the strategic balance. An attempt is made to distinguish offensive, defensive, and verification systems, although the lines between these categories are often blurred.

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[1] Kahn and Schneider, *The Technological Requirements of Mobilization Warfare*, p. 167.

[2] An interesting expression of a Soviet military man's dream is contained in the following excerpt from an article by Colonel V. Bondarenko in *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil*, No. 17, September 1966, p. 11: "Creation of a basically new weapon, secretly nurtured in scientific research offices and design collectives, can abruptly change the relationship of forces in a short period of time...An important factor, especially under present conditions, is the suddenness of the appearance of one or another new type of weapon. Suddenness in this realm not only affects the morale of an adversary, but also deprives him for a long time of the possibility of applying effective defensive measures against the new weapon." Quoted in Benjamin Lambeth, *The Argument for Superiority: A New Voice in the Soviet Strategic Debate*, Institute for Defense Analyses, N-419(R), January 1967, p. 12.

Soviet fear of the effect of technological breakthroughs has been a major target of their public campaign in the last few years on "weapons of mass destruction."

In offensive systems, interest is in counterforce technology. Counterforce-relevant R&D--in electronic countermeasures, warhead design, and ballistic missile guidance, all designed to enhance penetration, yield, and accuracy--is a continuing process on both sides. From Moscow's point of view, improvement of the counterforce characteristics of Soviet missiles enhances their deterrent value. On the other hand, such developments in the United States appear threatening to the USSR because they provide the United States with a damage limiting capability, disrupting its situation of hostage to Soviet nuclear operations.[1] Of course, a hard-target kill capability would be particularly upsetting. Soviet forces may already be deploying mobile land-based missiles in both intercontinental and regional variants.[2] More intensive development of U.S. counterforce capabilities could accelerate the Soviet deployments. Whether this should be identified as Breakout depends on whether future SALT agreements incorporate mobile missiles; currently they escape SALT regulation.

If significant improvement of U.S. counterforce capabilities were accompanied by deterioration of the international environment, the inducement to Breakout to restore deterrence could be strong. Counterpart Soviet technological developments might suggest Breakout for coercion, although this would be more plausible in conjunction with the accession of a hard-line Soviet leadership. Breakout for war as the consequence of Soviet offensive breakthrough seems considerably less likely, unless preceded by expectation of a U.S. attempt at a disarming first strike. Soviet technological failures in offensive systems development,[3] against a background of substantial progress on the American side, could make Moscow anxious about deterrence and might strengthen the argument for Breakout.

In defensive systems, the most interesting case is the ABM. The ABM Treaty bars neither modernization of existing ABM systems nor the

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[1] As indicated, this is one reason why the strategic cruise missile, though apparently a second-strike weapon, is sharply criticized in the USSR.

[2] See pp. 48-49.

[3] Not necessarily contravening SALT: an example might be in RV accuracy.

development of esoteric weapons based on other physical principles.[1] Both sides are engaged in research on ABM systems in terms of both conventional and exotic physical principles.

The importance of the ABM is, of course, two-fold. First, a truly effective ABM system would provide protection from retaliation, from the enemy's second strike, and therefore perhaps would be the most effective and important means of satisfying the damage limitation prerequisite of a disarming first strike. Second, such an ABM would shield first-strike forces from enemy preemption; it would prevent the enemy from forestalling what he may regard as preparation for a potential surprise attack. For both reasons, ABMs may be viewed by either side as a potential threat to the deterrent capability of the strategic forces. It is especially the second element, that an ABM could ward off preemption of a first strike, that was the basis of expressed Soviet unhappiness with the U.S. Safeguard system.[2]

The United States has expressed much concern over the upgrading of Soviet air defense missile and radar systems. In principle, every

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[1]Article V, Section 1 prohibits the development, testing, or deployment of sea-based, air-based, space-based, or mobile land-based ABM systems or components, as well as of MIRVed ABMs or automatic or semi-automatic reloading systems. But Article VII states that, "subject to the provisions of this Treaty, modernization and replacement of ABM systems or their components may be carried out." As regards exotic ABM systems, Agreed Interpretation E of the SALT agreements simply declares that:

> "...the parties agree that in the event ABM systems based on other physical principles and including components capable of substituting for ABM intercepter missiles, ABM launchers, or ABM radar are created in the future, specific limitations on such systems and their components would be subject to discussion, in accordance with Article XIII and agreement in accordance with Article XIV of the Treaty."

(Article XIII is the provision of the ABM Treaty establishing the Standing Consultative Commission and Article XIV provides a procedure for amendment and for review of the Treaty at five-year intervals.) ACDA, *Arms Control and Disarmament Agreements*, pp. 133-36, 143.

[2]An effective U.S. system would also be capable of frustrating a Soviet disarming first strike, but this was not reflected in Soviet statements.

ATBM (tactical) system has a potential ABM capability, so that upgrading is at least in theory a viable way of developing a true ABM capability. The counter to an ABM system is proliferation of MIRVs, so that the defense would have to multiply its ABM network accordingly to prevent saturation. The most effective alternative development direction of ABMs is apparently air- or space-based lasers.[1] Soviet ABM breakthroughs in these (or exotic alternative) directions could strengthen an argument for Breakout for coercion. As long as the ABM Treaty is in force, the United States probably will not deploy an ABM system. However, since Moscow is likely to be less confident on this score and to be concerned about lead times to match a U.S. capability, signs of a U.S. technological breakthrough might induce Soviet Breakout for deterrence.

Deterrent forces may also be threatened by the development of anti-submarine warfare (ASW) systems capable of pinpointing precise locations of ballistic missile submarines.[2] Soviet development of such a capability, threatening the survivability of Poseidon and Trident SLBMs would, of course, alarm U.S. policymakers, because there is already visible on the horizon a major threat to the survivability of Minuteman. The coercive potential of such a combination is clear, but Breakout to solidify the political edge could be appealing.

It is possible, however, that the Soviets will first have to worry about the American threat. According to Malcolm R. Currie, Director of Defense Research and Engineering, "We are on the threshold of vastly improved anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capability to counter the growing number of Soviet nuclear attack and fleet ballistic missile submarines." Pointing to a number of specific systems, Currie said they "will--in the aggregate--enormously enhance our ability to detect and localize

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[1]Ground-based lasers require a large expenditure of power to penetrate the lower atmosphere, with little left over for useful output.

[2]There has been some discussion of employing a barrage attack to cripple submarines that have been localized only within x square miles of sea, where x is a fairly large number, but this seems of doubtful utility, and pinpointing of location, more or less, seems to be required. Of course, ASW is not regulated by SALT.

enemy submarines."[1] U.S. development of what Herman Kahn might call a "splendid" anti-SSBN capability would threaten a less highly developed arm of the Soviet strategic forces, but would surely also be viewed with alarm in Moscow.[2] Moreover, a possible matching U.S. threat to the survivability of Soviet land-based ballistic missile forces is probably somewhat farther off in the future than a counterpart Soviet threat, but it is not inconceivable or invisible to Soviet planners now. One possible Soviet response is many more submarines and missiles, although this is an expensive way of trying to swamp an ASW breakthrough; in any case, it would represent a break of the SALT limitations.

A response to threats against both SLBMs and ICBMs could be land-mobile missiles, particularly IRBM-ICBM combinations. Unable to secure Soviet agreement in SALT I to ban deployment of mobile ICBMs, the U.S. delegation could only express its opposition in a unilateral statement.[3] The United States is now developing Missile X (MX), which is considerably larger than Minuteman III and designed to be fired either from the air or from a number of different types of more or less mobile ground deployments. On the Soviet side, there is a disturbing, close relationship between the SS-X-20 and the SS-X-16. The SS-X-20 is an IRBM about to be deployed in mobile mode against Western Europe and represents two stages of the three-stage SS-X-16 ICBM. Thus, there is posed the threat of a covert transferability between IRBMs, which are not covered by any existing international agreement, and ICBMs, which are. U.S. deployment of mobile ICBMs on a significant scale would frustrate the Soviet effort to place Minuteman in hostage and erode the Soviet ICBM edge in various dimensions. It would, therefore, constitute a possible influence toward Breakout for deterrence or coercion. In view of the possible difficulties of locating, identifying, and counting mobile

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[1] *Commanders' Digest*, Vol. 19, No. 13, June 17, 1976.

[2] By the fall of 1977, the USSR is expected to have 60 percent as many SLBM as ICBM launchers. The ratio of warheads at sea to those on land will, however, be much smaller. *Report of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld*, January 17, 1977, p. 58.

[3] "Unilateral Statement B. Land-Mobile ICBM Launchers," in ACDA, *Arms Control and Disarmament Agreements*, p. 147.

missiles, their deployment by the USSR may be in itself a form of semi-covert Breakout for deterrence or coercion.

Not often discussed and even less well understood are mechanisms of verification and intelligence. In an era of increasingly high accuracy of weapons (assuming their penetrability), determination of location is almost coterminous with ability to destroy a target. Thus, there is a powerful incentive to develop "antiverification" means, if prelaunch survivability can be assured only by covertness. Moreover, the issues of verification are increasingly concerned with qualitative change--for example, differentiation between MIRVed and non-MIRVed missiles, or between nuclear armed and conventionally armed or between strategic and tactical cruise missiles. The problems of making such distinctions with "national technical means" are difficult enough in themselves; they become extraordinarily complicated when the opponent takes a variety of active and passive measures to frustrate the verification operation. Such measures include not only elementary security precautions involving denial of access but also a variety of deception measures designed either to conceal a military capability or to provide misleading, false, or manipulated information about it. Although the right to use "national technical means" for verification is enshrined in both the ABM and Interim Agreements, there is no definition of these "means." Perhaps more important, the scope of coverage of the verification task is nowhere spelled out, and thus the legitimate range of information which verification should cover is, presumably, still debatable.

In addition to passive systems, there are also active systems of antiverification, which are either available, may be in the process of development, or are at least conceivable. Use of the active systems (e.g., satellite killers) in peacetime could cause an international crisis, unless their effect could be cloaked.[1] To avoid disruption of détente, Soviet antiverification breakthroughs might not be deployed as soon as obtained but be "put in the bank" for future use.

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[1]Partial cloaking might be employed with a form of "salami tactics" to gradually erode the U.S. verification capability, but this requires U.S. acquiesence.

In any case, a significant breakthrough of this kind would substantially enhance the deterrent-coercive capacity of Soviet strategic forces, insofar as they could blind or deafen U.S. warning systems and thereby render the United States less capable of responding effectively to Soviet strategic moves. A U.S. verification technology breakthrough with respect to the deployment patterns of Soviet mobile missiles would undermine the rationale of such deployments and could induce an effort to recoup through Breakout in other strategic systems.

DETERIORATION OF THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

A second major change is deterioration (from the Soviet point of view) in the political environment: for example, the hardening of NATO as an anti-Soviet coalition, the development and solidification of an alliance between the United States and China against the Soviet Union, or an end to Soviet-U.S. détente and reversion to a cold war environment, perhaps accompanied by control problems in Eastern Europe. It is difficult to believe that these changes would not also result in the accession of a much harder-line leadership within the USSR.

Such developments might have a significant impact on the thinking about Breakout for deterrence or perhaps even coercion. Such a change might be expected to weaken the barriers against deployment of ABMs. To the extent possible, it probably would have an accelerating effect on survival measures--hardening, dispersion, and civil defense. In this environment, it would be harder to sign a SALT II agreement, or if one had already been signed, to maintain it or to proceed to SALT III.[1] This would not necessarily lead to Breakout for war fighting, unless the ABM or ASW problems had been solved. However, a deterioration that led the Soviet leadership to believe that a strengthened, two-front alliance against the Soviet Union was in the making might lead to desperate behavior. This raises the question of Sino-Soviet relations and the link to Breakout.

The USSR deploys an armed force of some 400,000 men, with planes, missiles, tanks, and guns to match, along the Chinese frontier. Facing

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[1] A deterioration post-SALT III would be particularly conducive to Breakout if SALT III involved a substantial reduction of strategic forces on both sides from the Vladivostok level.

them is an even larger body of soldiers, though far less well equipped. That Red China and the Soviet Union should regard each other as potential enemies in large-scale war--having already drawn blood in border skirmishes--was obviously not foreseen in the classical Marxist-Leninist model of relations between socialist states. Long reluctant to accept the fact of a split in the apparently monolithic communist world, the West now tends to assume the split permanent. But China must finally deal with its succession problem and it remains to be seen to what extent Peking's anti-Sovietism was a function of the personality of Mao.

Should post-Mao China move to a modus vivendi with Moscow or even attempt to effect a socialist reconciliation, the global strategic picture will surely be affected significantly. Speculation on the nature of the changes that may be expected is outside the mandate of this study, but it seems appropriate to draw the implications for Breakout against the United States and NATO of such an enormous improvement in the USSR's political-military environment. With the Chinese distraction much reduced, if not largely eliminated, Soviet power directed against the West will be seen as much augmented. Soviet deterrence will be reinforced and Breakout for that purpose should seem less necessary. By the same token, the prospects of a coercive posture may then appear brighter and less risky in Moscow. Unless Soviet-American relations are substantially improved (from the Kremlin's viewpoint), Breakout for coercion might find influential Soviet advocates.

So far, however, relations between Peking and Moscow have shown no signs of this. According to some sinologists, reconciliation is by no means a likely outcome of Mao's death. If Sino-Soviet hostility should continue at the Maoist level, China would continue to present a major security problem to Soviet leaders, particularly if Chinese nuclear capabilities are substantially improved. Military reasons have been offered in support of the conclusion that a major Sino-Soviet war is rather unlikely. Large-scale, protracted conventional war with China is probably one of the least desirable contingencies the Soviets can picture. Though Chinese nuclear capabilities are still limited, they can inflict damage. Therefore, it has been assumed that the Soviets would, other things equal, contemplate the use of nuclear weapons only

if a disarming first strike could be achieved. It hardly seems likely that the USSR does not now possess such a capability, considering the weapons and forces in the inventory. However, target identification in China may be quite another matter. This may be a nontrivial problem for Soviet strategic planning. The inducement to try to "take out" the Chinese might be strengthened if a military tie between the People's Republic of China and the United States seemed to be in the offing. Soviet restraint with regard to China has probably been based in part on unwillingness to jeopardize Soviet-American détente, but if the United States were about to develop a military connection with China, it hardly seems likely that détente will have been blooming.

None of this necessarily requires Breakout. As indicated, Soviet forces arrayed on the Chinese frontier are surely adequate for the tasks envisaged. Accelerated development of Chinese nuclear capabilities might alter this picture somewhat, particularly if reinforced by a Sino-American military alliance or its equivalent. Confronted with possible materialization of the two-front nightmare, Moscow might be pulled to Breakout for deterrence or war fighting (preemption). The prospect of such deterioration in the Soviet eastern position would also strengthen the case for Soviet deployment of an ABM, assuming successful development.

Is improvement in the international environment (again from Moscow's viewpoint) a guarantee against Breakout? The weakening of Western resolve might make Breakout unnecessary, but it might also loosen the barriers within the Soviet Union against developing and deploying treaty-constrained systems. Such conditions may be most favorable for the "ripening plum" theory of strategic racing, where development and deployment are dictated by technological possibilities. Even in an improved environment, the Soviet Union may be unable to dispense with the hypothesis of a potent external enemy. In Gray's acerbic comment on all military establishments, "From a point of view of institutional health, the armed forces are organizations in search of external enemies so as to overwhelm domestic enemies."[1]

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[1]Gray, "The Urge to Compete," p. 216.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study has attempted to examine the network of relations between objectives for which Breakout might be undertaken and the conditions which could induce such actions.[1] The goal has not been to elaborate a set of worst cases but to try to apply more systematic analysis to a problem that has been the subject of acute controversy.

It has been suggested that adherence to the SALT framework has brought the USSR considerable rewards, whereas violations could exact high costs. The case for taking seriously the possibility of Breakout--a substantial Soviet strategic buildup in defiance of SALT constraints--rests on the following main considerations:

1. Probably the most important factor in making Breakout more than a theoretical possibility is the basic asymmetry in strategic conception and goals of the two sides. To assure the deterrent power of its strategic forces, the USSR appears to require the United States to tolerate the buildup of a Soviet force sized and structured to fight and, if possible, win a general nuclear war. U.S. countermoves aimed at assurance of prelaunch survivability or development of capability to respond to Soviet attacks at less than the full-SIOP level appear in Moscow to jeopardize Soviet deterrence. Despite the limits it imposed, SALT marked an inability to secure agreement on the need for and conditions of stable mutual deterrence. The United States, accordingly, is induced to seek correctives to the Soviet buildup that the USSR sees as threatening. Thus, the possibility of Breakout for

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[1] In effect, the approach suggests a matrix of Breakout possibilities. The matrix itself has not been presented because at best it could only serve as a device to aid more systematic consideration of intersections. The matrix would otherwise present major problems of analysis and presentation. It would be difficult to provide either cardinal or ordinal measures of the objective-condition relations. Hence, cell entries would indicate only that a Breakout contingency of some minimum plausibility could be identified. Moreover, the entries could reflect only pairwise linkages of conditions and objectives. Many Breakout contingencies are likely to involve combinations of conditions if not also of objectives and objects. Any attempt to picture that would result in an impossibly complicated table.

deterrence (or perhaps also coercion, to impose a more limited posture on the United States) seems inherent in the asymmetry of the two countries' doctrinal positions and of the SALT provisions.

2. Breakout may be induced by a number of military-technological or political developments, particularly in combinations that accentuate a threat to major Soviet concerns or, alternatively, appear to offer enhanced opportunities to protect such interests. Emphasis has been placed on developments in counterforce, ABM, and ASW technology, as well as on the role of Soviet-U.S., U.S.-NATO, and Sino-U.S. relations and the U.S. perception of its global role.

At a number of points, the study noted the utility of covert buildup that might serve as the preparatory phase of Breakout. Such a buildup might be occasioned, for example:

- o By concern for hedges against an uncertain future. While the balance sheet of SALT may suggest that the near-term Soviet posture should be reassuring to Soviet leaders, the future is inherently uncertain and covert buildup--or, for lowered risk, covert preparations for buildup--can provide a significant hedge. Moreover, the uncertainties of war, if deterrence should fail, dictate in the Soviet mind a requirement for surprise and overpowering force, thus reinforcing the value of covert buildup.
- o Under a related rationale, to "bank" strategic forces in a deteriorating international environment--e.g., hardening of the NATO alliance and of U.S. attitudes toward the USSR or development of quasi-alliance relationships between the United States and China (accompanied perhaps by acceleration of the Chinese nuclear buildup).
- o By significant Soviet lagging behind the United States in weapons technology development (e.g., ABM or ASW). Soviet suspicion of U.S. intentions toward the SALT treaties or appreciation of the large lead times required to match U.S. achievements could supply additional rationale.

Although covertness can never be totally assured and the cost of discovery can be high, small breaches of the security curtain need not be fatal, especially if the opponent is not eager to make a federal case of the scattered signals he does perceive. This argument has an important corollary: To keep the risks of discovery manageable requires a relatively slowly developing program; high speed and grand scale are the enemies of cover and deception. The fact that there may be no evidence of a Soviet effort at large-scale subversion of SALT therefore does not necessarily disprove the reality or viability of low-level covert buildup. Given the possibility of covert buildup, it has been argued that U.S. detection of elements of such an apparatus may force us to postulate the existence of a buildup "iceberg" with undetected capabilities lying below the visibility level.

Defined as substantial breaches of SALT, Breakout seems to imply high-visibility surge development and, as such, it has been distinguished from other forms of strategic buildup, including those which may be protracted, small-scale, and covert. Yet, in the end, it is doubtful that sharp differentiation between different forms of contemporary Soviet strategic buildup is merited. First, protracted small-scale violations of SALT can obviously cumulate to large-scale breaches. Second, the extent to which Breakout requires overtness and therefore speed of execution depends not only on the size of the breach but also on the characteristics, availability, and modes of employment of American "national means" of verification on one hand, and Soviet capacity to frustrate their efficient operation on the other. The American press has reported recent U.S. government concerns about the continued effectiveness of American verification means.

Whether they involve SALT-regulated or unregulated systems, whether the mode of buildup is protracted-covert or sudden overt, deployments in all these forms are intended to improve Soviet strategic combat capabilities and thereby to alter the global power balance. The pursuit of one form or another depends on the state of military technology, comparative force postures, and various aspects of international relations. What is common to all the forms of buildup is that they involve "breaking away" from strategic accommodation with the United States.

Considering the then widespread assumption in the United States that the USSR had decided not to match U.S. strategic force levels, "breakout" as a general phenomenon may have said to have been taking place from the mid-1960s to the present.

The question now is whether the USSR is poised for an attempt to further substantially change the "correlation of forces," comparable to the change that took place between Khrushchev's ouster and the signing of the SALT agreements. It does not seem worthwhile to speculate whether the Soviet Union cherishes such ultimate objectives as "domination" or "hegemony." It is sufficient to recognize that the acquisition by the USSR of military forces viewed in Moscow and elsewhere as clearly superior to those of its adversaries would necessarily have profound consequences for international relations.

Breakout, with an upper or lower case b, is not the only option the Soviet Union has in coping with changing conditions and basic uncertainties. The alternative is new agreed limitations on the strategic competition. However, a meaningful SALT II or III treaty will be difficult to achieve unless the two powers come to an understanding on the need for and requirements of *mutual* deterrence that was not attained in SALT I. Such an understanding probably cannot be attained only by U.S. "jawboning" inside or outside the negotiating chambers. It will most likely require as well changes in U.S. and allied military forces--nuclear and conventional, strategic and theater alike. Whether Soviet policy will choose Breakout or its alternative will then depend heavily on U.S. recognition of the problem and on the wisdom with which we pursue its resolution in negotiation and force posture decisionmaking.