

SECRET
TOP SECRETDECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 949645
By LJA NARA Date 4-25-95

Finally, the U.S. has a command and control system which we believe will continue effective under major nuclear attack. We have hardened underground control centers, a continually airborne command post, and a command ship at sea, all of which provide a highly centralized system for control of nuclear weapons. We are confident that our command system gives the President a rapid and secure mechanism for bringing our nuclear power to bear when needed, and that it would remain operational throughout any foreseeable U.S.-Soviet nuclear exchange.

As you are aware, similar measures regarding command and control are under study for NATO forces in Europe.

The net result of all these facts is that a clear Allied military superiority for major nuclear conflict now exists, even if the Soviet Union strikes first. Moreover, this superiority is growing and we are determined that it shall be maintained.

IV. Consideration of General Nuclear War

In light of the relative nuclear strike capabilities of the USSR and NATO, we have developed a number of basic and critical judgements of the probable results of general nuclear war, should these strengths on both sides be put to that test in a near time period.

The first conclusion which emerges is that Allied nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union after a nuclear exchange, measured in surviving strategic nuclear forces, would be even greater than before. This would be the case no matter which side initiated the nuclear exchange. The Soviets cannot attack the relatively well-protected main base of Allied nuclear strength in sufficient force to keep us from inflicting enormous destruction on their delivery systems and on all parts of the civil societies of the Soviet Union as well.

The second major conclusion, however, is that Soviet-inflicted damage to the civil societies of the Alliance could be grave. Even if we attempted to destroy the enemy nuclear strike capability at its source, using all our available resources, some portion of the Soviet force would survive to strike back.

In estimating the civil damage that might result, one must take into account not only numbers of vehicles that would reach their targets, and the size of their warheads, but also the strategy chosen by the Soviet Union.

There would be a high priority to hitting at military forces and in view of the substantial Allied nuclear superiority, it would not seem militarily sound for the Soviets to attack civil targets. To do so would invite prompt, certain and massive Allied destruction to the Soviet Union. Further, the Soviets may avoid nuclear attacks on civil targets in the hope of ultimately controlling a relatively intact Europe. Nevertheless, the rationale of a Soviet attack cannot be predicted, cities may be targeted, and even if this attack aimed primarily at military forces, extensive civil destruction would occur.

SECRET
TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 949645
By LJA NARA Date 4-25-95

The final major conclusion which emerges is, therefore, that leaders on both sides must be aware that the likely results of a full nuclear exchange might be:

Virtual destruction, not only of the nuclear power of the Soviet Union, but of its economic and social fabric as well.

Survival of the NATO nations, but with serious damage to their human and material resources.

V. The Non-Nuclear Balance

The implications of general nuclear war impose restraints on both the East and the West, but the pressures on the Soviet Union, arising from the nuclear balance, are stronger. Despite our best efforts to achieve a solution by political means, we must consider the possibility that we may have to take some kind of military action if we are not to lose our vital interests in Berlin through erosion. The threat of general nuclear war has not been sufficient thus far to deter the Soviets from pressures and other actions designed to erode our vital interests in Berlin. Conflict is inherent in the present situation unless the political course of one side or the other is changed. Similarly, other crises at other parts of the NATO area may occur in the future. Bearing in mind the relative nuclear strength, it therefore becomes important to assess briefly our comparative non-nuclear strength, and some of the implications involved.

In our view, the Russians have superiority in non-nuclear forces in Europe at the present time, but this superiority is not overwhelming. While the USSR can today rapidly mobilize greater non-nuclear strength in Europe than can the Alliance, the portion of this strength which can be effectively applied is limited by geographic, logistic, and above all by political and strategic factors. It is our view that it is within the capability of the Alliance during the course of the present tensions to provide non-nuclear defense of the NATO area adequate at least to hold a Bloc non-nuclear attack for a period sufficient to cause the Soviet Union to realize the gravity of the course upon which it has embarked. In time, the Alliance has the capability to create even ~~stronger~~ stronger non-nuclear forces relative to such non-nuclear Bloc forces as could be brought to bear under the restraints imposed by the nuclear threat.

The respective tactical air strengths which can now be brought rapidly to bear in Western Europe tend to favor the Bloc. Maximum efforts by each side to reinforce might provide the Bloc an additional quantitative edge; however, these increased capabilities could be achieved only at some sacrifice of other strategic considerations. With a concentrated effort the West can probably reduce or eliminate this advantage.

On the ground, there is a rough balance in effective divisions currently deployed in the area immediately critical to the Berlin situation. Within the next several weeks we will be able to count 24 NATO divisions in Central Europe, in comparison

TOP SECRET

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 94962By LJA NARA Date 4-25-95

with the 26 Communist Bloc divisions in East Germany. While the Bloc enjoys a larger total reinforcement capability, the Satellite divisions are of reduced value because of their doubtful reliability. As to the nominal total of some 147 active Russian divisions, over one-third are maintained at only cadre strength. Others are disposed for operations in other areas of the Soviet Union and in low states of readiness. It is therefore our considered estimate that, with due regard to the factors limiting Soviet freedom of action, a total of only 55 or so Soviet divisions would be brought to bear effectively in the first 30 days of hostilities.

Against this estimated ground threat, NATO could, during this coming winter, have on the order of 28-30 divisions deployed in Central Europe, with a capability of increasing this number up to 35-40 divisions within 30 days. These are not unfavorable ratios for the defender, particularly in view of the nuclear forces available to back them up.

VI. Strategic Implications

A number of conclusions concerning general and limited war flow from these basic judgments.

General nuclear war superiority is and must remain a fundamental strength of NATO. The Alliance must maintain the psychological and physical readiness for general nuclear war as a central objective of its military policy in order to defend the vital interests of its members. The effects of general nuclear war, however, could be so grave that the Alliance should engage in such action only when necessary in the defense of these vital interests and only after exhausting all feasible political, economic, and other lesser military actions.

Short of general nuclear war, the relative non-nuclear balance leaves the West vulnerable to the continued aggressive policy of the Soviet Union. The Soviets can attempt to exploit our vulnerabilities, always trying to avoid the threshold of general nuclear war, by a series of minor aggressions or possibly through limited but serious non-nuclear actions, probably followed by a prompt call for negotiations to avoid Western reaction. A NATO capability to defeat Soviet aggression at whatever level it occurred would make such Soviet actions clearly futile. NATO now has superiority in nuclear warfare and at sea. To repeat, in the short term the Alliance can offer a non-nuclear defense in Central Europe capable at least of holding a Bloc non-nuclear attack without significant withdrawal for some period. In the longer run it is within the capability of the Alliance to create still larger non-nuclear forces. In our view, the Alliance should make certain that a future crisis will find us better prepared than the present one.

Deterrence, the prevention of war while achieving NATO's objectives, must remain our principal goal. However, NATO has heretofore not given adequate consideration to the possibility that deterrence may fail and that war may come, in spite of our best efforts to the contrary. It is our belief that deterrence against large

TOP SECRET