

th general marine potential of NATO, as well as international testing of the first Soviet "mini-er", or "through-deck cruiser", a small control. It potent carrier designed for vertical-proportioned short-takeoff planes.

duced emphasis  
Soviet emphasis on missile-defence plan-tered ing was reduced about 1967, when required as single-warhead missile was overtaken s to check the U.S. development of multiple Progressively-targeted re-entry vehicles (IRVs). A small missile-defence capacity er their is left in place around Moscow, as e achievement "worst-case protection" against potential mmer of rd-power enemies, and research con-ued with reduced funding (indicating nical weak least a limited degree of expectation), blems re t the main effort shifted to MIRV de-velopment, to match the U.S. advantage time mu this field. With the development of ese prob this field. With the development of of Stat viet MIRVs by the mid-1970s, there e UN Ge s some evidence of renewed emphasis 29, 1976 Moscow's favoured pursuit of defence air tradit d reports that Soviet strategic-defence e accou ding was accelerating. But, while there ners and re observers who thought that basic e action munity against third-power (China) e states ack might be perpetuated, there were a disarm who could conceive of defence tech- e in 1978 logies that would drastically affect the per-power balance.

The same years saw an expansion of air-lift capabilities of the Soviet Union, d a notable strengthening of its non-ategic forces' capacity to fight in both clear and conventional environments. ncomitant with this came, in 1972, a vel treatment of interventional wars. eviously these had been seen as socio- litical phenomena attributable to the ntradictions inherent in capitalism and need for captive markets, and thus enomena from which socialist states re, by definition, excluded. A prominent viet author now allowed for the possi- ity of secular (military) rationales for ervention, thus giving theoretical lee- y to potential "socialist" engagements. vo years later, Defence Minister Grechko w the first time spoke of a commitment to ity aims ist "imperialistic aggression" in "what- y of their distant region of our planet it may resulting ur". By 1975, the Soviet Union had oved able and willing, with its allies, to n 1961 to ovide extensive, effective assistance to bal reach e liberation movements of southern merging rica.

While the Soviet Union may have ained a degree of parity with U.S. pabilities (a process accelerated, iron- ically, by U.S. involvement in Vietnam and e relative diversion of resources that it ailed), there is no question of either

existing or foreseeable U.S. inferiority. Two Republican Presidents with impeccable "anti-Communist" credentials, both noted as champions of defence requirements and defenders of "the military-industrial complex", have asserted their continuing confidence in U.S. military might; the most recent example was provided by Gerald Ford's scathing rebuttal of Ronald Reagan's contention that the U.S. might have slipped to a "No. 2" position. "Neutral" support for Mr. Ford's confidence was provided by the quasi-private journal *Military Balance* of London's International Institute of Strategic Studies.

#### Offset

On the strategic level, Soviet superiority in missile-booster numbers and "throw-weight" is clearly offset by the continuing U.S. lead in MIRV deployment and MARV (manoeuvrable MIRVs) development, and by the American bomber superiority (the advent of "stand-off" missiles that can be fired from beyond the reach of enemy air-defences re-establishes the bomber as a cost-effective, feasible warhead-carrier).

On the conventional level, U.S. global capabilities still exceed those of the Soviet Union. There is no doubt of the continued capacity of the United States to intervene in the Third World, by means of both air and sea action (the carriers might be *Edsels* where *Volkswagens* would suffice, but they are powerful!). And even the European force would appear more potent than it is sometimes depicted if account were taken of all force elements, quantitatively (i.e., if NATO dropped such anomalies as including reserve tanks in its estimate of Warsaw Pact capabilities while excluding them from its own balance-sheet) and qualitatively (i.e., if NATO de-emphasized crude air-number comparisons and looked rather at the degree to which the greater sophistication of its air components might offset the numerical advantage of more Spartanly-designed Soviet planes).

The basic fact of the strategic balance lies in mutually-offsetting second (third, fourth...!) strike capabilities, and as-

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*Continued  
capacity  
to intervene  
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