

Table 7 assumes both that the LRTNF issue can be separated from the reduction of US central strategic forces, and that certain modernization is permitted. It might also be noted that, politically, it will be extremely difficult for any American administration to abandon the MX, the Midgetman (if it proves to be a cost-effective system), and the Trident D-5. All of those systems are included, therefore, in the modernized force structure identified above.

Although there are many plausible alternative formulations, Table 7 adheres relatively closely to the existing pattern of the American triad. (In fact, SLBM forces have been slightly decreased, and ICBM forces slightly increased).

The table illustrates, in effect, that a modernized American force is feasible within the Soviet force level proposals without jeopardising most American concerns about the maintenance of the triad. There are, however, certain issues to be noted. First, the actual number of submarines is reduced from 37 to 17, which may raise issues about the vulnerability of the submarine force if say, only, 50% are at sea at any one time. Second, the warhead total of the B-1B bomber force continues to be lower than the system capability, but it would be difficult to reduce further the number of bombers without seriously depleting this leg of the triad. Third, the US may continue to express concern about the vulnerability of its ICBM force if, after modernization, its 500 launchers are opposed by 3600 counter-force capable Soviet ICBM warheads. To some extent, of course, the problem may be solved by the mobility of the Midgetman, but at this point we turn to an examination of the counter-force problem after reductions.

F. Counter-Force Capabilities After Reductions, But Before Modernization

Table 8 seeks to identify counter-force capabilities assuming the forces posited in Tables 3 and 5 (that is, Soviet and American strategic forces after reductions).