

rejected by Washington in the past, a good case can be made that they would be in the mutual interests of both sides. For example, as concern has grown in the West in recent years about the vulnerability of American strategic command, control, communications and intelligence (C³I) facilities to surprise attack, especially by Soviet SSBNS close offshore, many defence analysts have proposed that such “forward basing” be prohibited. The United States is particularly vulnerable to attack from the sea, given the close proximity of so much of its population and industry, as well as its national capital, to the coast (a much higher proportion than in the case of the Soviet Union), together with the scale of the Soviet submarine-building programme which far outstrips that of the US.

Richard Ned Lebow estimates that “fully half of the four hundred primary and secondary C³I targets in the United States could be struck within five to eight minutes by missiles fired from offshore Soviet submarines on routine patrol,” while “C³I could be disrupted even sooner by EMP [electro-magnetic pulse] produced by SLBMs detonated at high altitude during the upward portion of their trajectories.”¹³⁰ As for the National Command Authority (NCA), according to Lebow “the White House, the Pentagon, and Andrews Air Force Base in suburban Maryland could all be destroyed with fewer than five minutes warning by missiles fired from an offshore Soviet submarine.”¹³¹ Nor do the “fast-flying” SLBMs represent the only danger. The development of long-range submarine-launched cruise missiles by both superpowers has aggravated the problem, by transforming every submarine into a potential strategic weapons platform. Bruce Blair has pointed out that cruise missiles, while much slower than ballistic missiles, are also much less susceptible to detection and could therefore be used in a “decapitation attack” (against C³I installations), especially if launched from delivery systems in close proximity to their targets. In his view, such missiles “represent the most serious emerging threat to U.S. C³I systems.”¹³²

130. *Nuclear Crisis Management: A Dangerous Illusion*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987, p. 44.

131. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

132. *Strategic Command and Control: Redefining the Nuclear Threat*. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1985, p. 301.