

In the above two cases, the Soviets would use 2,000 of 6,540 ICBM warheads or 31% of their ICBM warheads to destroy 51% in the first case and 58% in the second case of the American ICBMs.

Considered from a slightly different perspective, American ICBM warheads constitute 18% of the total American warheads, while the Soviet ICBM warheads make up 67% of all Soviet warheads. This means that the Soviets would use 20.5% of their total warhead force to destroy 7-8% of the total American warhead force.

Although it is impossible here to explore all the implications of this scenario and of the possible circumstances in which it might take place, the advantage of quantifying the exchange in terms of the variables used in the Tables is clear. It is not evident that this exchange - which trades SS-18 and 19s for Minutemen before the Americans have responded at all - is in the Soviet advantage. Nor is it evident that the strike would paralyze the will of the US President, for, as demonstrated above, after such an exchange the U.S. would be left with a significant number of counter-force missiles and warheads. At this point, however, the analysis cannot be taken further without reference to other factors, particularly command and control, which have been excluded from this paper.

The question must also be asked the other way round: could the U.S. launch an effective counter-force strike against the land-based ICBM forces of the Soviet Union?

In this case, it is assumed for the purpose of illustration that the US used 819 Minuteman III Mark 12A warheads (273 missiles) against the 818 Soviet targets. As in the Soviet case, we begin by counting the effect of single warhead targeting.