

In brief, Table 12 assumes that the current American concern with the verification of the SS-25, therefore, must be examined very carefully since the single warhead, mobile missile is otherwise a significant element in any resolution to the counter-force problem.

Bomber Ceilings

Unlike the Soviet proposal, which called for a ban on long-range air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs), and did not specify a separate category for bombers, the American proposal establishes a 1500 limit on ALCMs, and a limit of 350 on heavy bombers.³¹ Furthermore, the US considers the Backfire as a heavy bomber, thus abandoning the agreement reached in the SALT II negotiations which removed the Backfire from the strategic bomber count. It is unlikely that the Soviets will agree that the Backfire should be counted.

However, if agreement on the Backfire were reached, there would remain considerable differences in the application of the ALCM and bomber ceilings to the respective sides. In the American case, as Table 14 indicates, the 350 total is likely to have three distinct elements.

American strategic bomber force deployments call for two kinds of heavy bombers: stand-off platforms carrying long-range cruise missiles, and penetrating bombers carrying gravity bombs and short-range attack missiles. Under the terms of the SALT II agreement, the United States may currently deploy up to 120 bombers as ALCM carriers. Although some B-52s can carry 20 ALCMs, most currently carry 12; therefore, the 1500 ALCM ceiling is plausibly arrived at by postulating 120 ALCM carriers.

³¹ The earlier American proposal in the START negotiations of 1983 stipulated a limit of 400 heavy bombers and, by implication, 8000 ALCMs.