

In the American case, there is a critical change with the introduction of the highly accurate Trident D-5 and MX missiles. Assuming only the use of the Trident D-5 (the combination of D-5 and MX is equally plausible), 700 warheads (or 88 missiles) double targeted against the 350 fixed silo Soviet ICBMs give a 95% terminal kill probability - only 18 missiles would survive.

This scenario also is limited, however, since under the modernization posture described, the Soviet SS-25 missiles are mobile, and therefore much more difficult targets for a counter-force attack. The scenario nevertheless indicates the powerful counter-force capabilities of the D-5, and, in the event that it is deployed, the critical need for the Soviets to move to mobile missiles if they continue to place the preponderance of their strategic assets on ICBMs. Since mobile missiles are less accurate than fixed missiles, such a move could also reduce the Soviet counter-force threat against American ICBMs.

Summary

The analysis above has assumed that American LRTNF could be detached from the core proposal. Given subsequent Soviet statements, this appears to be a realistic assumption as far as missiles are concerned (the GLCMs and Pershing IIs vs the SS-20s and SS-4s), but the issue of US carrier and land-based aircraft is still open, since we must presume that the Soviets still define these weapons as "strategic" nuclear charges. It was also assumed that certain American modernization would be permitted. On that basis, the core proposal does not appear to pose intolerable strains on the American triad, and, perhaps paradoxically, certain modernization on both sides offers the possibility of mutually stable deployments at lower levels. However, the exception is the D-5, which, with its presently predicted accuracy, will pose a critical counter-force threat to the Soviet Union. Before drawing substantive conclusions from this analysis, we next consider the American proposal.