

very large and accurate SS-18 and SS-19s. The characteristics of these MIRVed missiles, deployed in large numbers, have encouraged US Administration spokesmen to believe that they are counter-force weapons to be used against 'time urgent', hardened targets - namely, the U.S. land-based missile force.

In considering this claim, it might be noted first that although the Soviets have deployed a number of land-based ICBM types of different modifications, only three of them (the SS-17, 18 and 19s) have a CMP and SSKP good enough to make them useful against a certain level of hardened targets. It might be useful also to compare them with the Minuteman, which is an older missile than the SS-17, the SS-18 mod 4 and the SS-19. The table demonstrates that in a comparison of the Minuteman III Mark 12A and the SS-18 mod 4, the Minuteman has a better CEP, CMP per warhead, SSKP and TKP than the SS-18 used against targets with the same hardness. However, the SS-18 warhead is not markedly less efficient than the Minuteman, and there are many more of them (3080 SS-18 warheads compared with 900 Minuteman III warheads and 2124 total American ICBM warheads.)

It is this combination of numbers and accuracy which has led the present American Administration, for example, to claim that the Soviets have the capability to completely eliminate the American ICBM force. The argument is that, in such a case, the President would be placed in a position where his only effective method of retaliation would be against Soviet cities and population. Even after the Americans had carried out the retaliatory strike, the Soviets would still have the ability to counter-retaliate against American cities. Having lost the effective counterforce element of his power and knowing that a second strike would surely bring widespread destruction to American cities and population, the argument runs, the President would be forced to eschew retaliation of any kind, and accept an effective surrender.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> For example, the Scowcroft Commission (op. cit., p. 6) commented: "A one-sided strategic condition in which the Soviet Union could effectively destroy the whole range of strategic targets in the United States, but we could not effectively destroy a similar range of targets in the Soviet Union, would be extremely unstable over the long run."