

National Intelligence Estimates, which, even in their public form, sometimes offer key insights into the evaluation process. For example, in July 1985 the CIA intelligence estimates altered their previous judgement on the accuracy of the Soviet SS-19 missile, concluding that it was about 100 metres less accurate than had previously been thought.⁵ Although largely unnoticed in the public debate, this revision, small though it might appear, has a critical effect on the counter-force capability of the SS-19, as will be demonstrated later in this paper. Apart from the substantive issue, the C.I.A. revision - disputed, incidentally, by its sister organisation the Defense Intelligence Agency - demonstrates the fragility of even the most sophisticated estimates of the counter-force capabilities of most Soviet weapons systems.

A somewhat different source, also valuable when used discriminately, is Aviation Week and Space Technology (AWST). This weekly journal has excellent sources, particularly in the United States Air Force, and from time to time produces detailed accounts of missile accuracies and other developments in both American and Soviet strategic weapons. AWST tends to hyperbole, however, and there is a fine distinction between access to inside sources and the release of information designed to lead the public debate in a desired direction.

Designed primarily for a military readership, the monthly Air Force Magazine contains remarkably detailed expositions of strategic weapons programmes, generally interspersed with more routine articles about the USAF. Air Force Magazine also provides an annual update on American strategic nuclear forces. Like AWST, it is an excellent 'insider' source which must be used with discrimination.

The Nuclear Weapons Data Book, by Thomas B. Cochran, William Arkin and Milton Hoenig, is billed by the authors as "the most comprehensive and authoritative examination of U.S. nuclear weapons". Their claim is

⁵B. Keller, "US Study Finds a Soviet ICBM Is Less of a Threat to Missile Silos" New York Times July 19, 1985, p. 1