

verification of such limits is highly problematic and continues to be a principle obstacle to movement in this area.

Soviet acceptance of separate limits on ballistic missile warheads and cruise missiles is evidence that the Soviet Union has made a decision to place new emphasis on the cruise-missile bomber element of their triad. Further evidence is found in the appearance of the Soviet ALCM on *Bear H* bombers in 1985, four years ahead of US estimates. This marks a significant change in the structure of the Soviet nuclear triad.

Three scenarios present themselves for the future. First, it is possible that an agreement on reducing strategic nuclear arms may not be concluded. In this case the Soviet ALCM and SLCM force will continue to increase but the effect of the increase will be lessened by the maintenance of large ballistic missile forces on both sides.

Second, there could be an agreement to reduce strategic nuclear arms to the lower levels already agreed upon without an agreement on SLCMs. The effect of the lower ceilings — 6,000 warheads, 4,900 on ballistic missile warheads — makes it likely that the Soviet bomber leg of the triad will grow, simply as a result of the structure of the limits, from six percent to eighteen percent of the triad, possibly higher. Since there would be no limits on SLCMs, the total air-breathing threat would be considerably higher again.

Finally, agreement to reduce strategic arms could be accompanied by limits on SLCMs. In this case the air-breathing threat would still increase because of the new structure but would be constrained by upper limits.

The third scenario appears the most desirable. But, it would still mean an increase in the raw numbers of Soviet cruise missiles facing Canada and the US. This change in the nature and size of the air-breathing threat may become even more significant if US pursuit of SDI leads to a situation where there is a limited form of ballistic missile defence. Canadian concerns about the cruise missile are likely to increase rather than be abated by these trends.

The preceding study suggests some interesting conclusions about the connections between military development and arms control policies in the US. The modern US cruise missile programme was initiated primarily out of military interest stemming from the successful use of a Soviet-made cruise missile in the Middle East. There were, however, at least two critical points in the missile's early development at which a decision was made to continue

with the programme in order to augment US arms control positions. Within months the situation had changed and the cruise missile was being heralded by the military as too valuable to deal away at the negotiating table. Cruise missiles have become an important element of the US strategic nuclear triad. The Soviets, unable to achieve a ban on the missile at the negotiations, now have their own cruise missile force. Consequently, Canada and the US are faced with a stronger and larger Soviet air-breathing threat.

NOTES

1. Figures from: International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1987/88*, London, 1987; and "US and Soviet Strategic Nuclear Forces, End of 1987," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, January/February 1988, p. 56.
2. *Fiscal Year 1974 Authorization for Military Procurement*, Hearings, US Congress, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1973, p. 1000.
3. Strobe Talbott, *Deadly Gambits*, Vintage Books, New York, 1985, p. 242.

FURTHER READING

- Richard K. Betts (ed.), *Cruise Missiles: Technology, Strategy, Politics*, Brookings Institution, Washington, DC, 1981.
- Charles A. Sorrels, *US Cruise Missile Programs*, Brassey's/McGraw Hill, Oxford and New York, 1983.
- Strobe Talbott, *Endgame*, Harper and Row, New York, 1979.

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