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AIR DEFENSE: PROTECTING AMERICA'S SKIES

INTRODUCTION*

America's skies are almost completely open. After two decades of neglect, U.S. air defense capabilities virtually have disappeared. At the same time, the Soviet bomber and cruise missile threat has grown dramatically. As the U.S., at long last, seems ready to develop a defense that really defends against Soviet ballistic missiles, it becomes equally important to protect America's skies by defending against Soviet bombers and cruise missiles.

U.S. air defense capabilities must be dramatically upgraded. Without all the "legs" of the strategic defense "Triad"--ballistic missile defense, air defense, and civil defense--the effectiveness of any single defense is diminished. Ballistic missile defense and civil defense are not enough: improved air defense is essential.

AIR DEFENSE AND THE STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE

U.S. policy makers, for the past two decades, generally have taken the position that active defenses against bomber attack were superfluous since the U.S. had no protection against Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). This view was reinforced by acceptance of mutual assured destruction or MAD as the only effective form of strategic deterrence.

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*This is the sixth in a series of Heritage Backgrounders examining strategic defense. The others are "The New Case for Civil Defense" (No. 377); "Strategic Defense: The Technology That Makes It Possible" (No. 375); "Space Weapons: The Key to Assured Survival" (No. 327); "Wanted: A Space Policy To Defend America" (No. 311); "Strategic Defense: Avoiding Annihilation" (No. 304).

MAD theorists argued that stable deterrence was based on the assured ability of the U.S. and the Soviet Union to destroy each other, even after a nuclear first strike. Offense, thus, was "good" because it discouraged an attack. Defense was "bad" because it was an attempt to escape the consequences of retaliation, thus destabilizing the strategic balance.

The Reagan Administration's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) attempts to redefine deterrence in more rational and moral terms. Rather than threatening to destroy the Soviet Union, the basis of deterrence would be the assured survival of U.S. society.

The SDI is a long-term effort to define, develop, and deploy a system to defend America against Soviet nuclear attack. The principal SDI emphasis has been on ballistic missile defense, since ICBMs and submarine-launched ballistic missiles appear to represent the most serious challenge to plans for comprehensive population protection. Yet the lack of robust defenses against such air-breathing systems as bombers and cruise missiles could encourage the USSR to alter its present strategic posture away from ballistic missiles to air breathing systems.

REQUIREMENTS OF AIR DEFENSE

Air defense consists of four interrelated tasks: detection, tracking, interception, and destruction. To accomplish all four successfully in an era of jet aircraft and nuclear weapons, an integrated air defense network needs:

1) Radars or some other form of sensor to detect and track hostile aircraft at a considerable distance from their intended targets.

2) Long-range interceptor aircraft and surface-to-air missiles to acquire and destroy the attacking aircraft.

3) A centralized command and control system to sort out threats and efficiently assign interceptors to specific targets according to predetermined criteria.

Air control radars must provide initial warning of a bomber and/or cruise missile attack, confirm and characterize the attack, and guide interceptors to the approaching aircraft. Long-range jet interceptors can meet attacking bombers far from their likely targets. These interceptors provide an area defense that should be supplemented by point defense surface-to-air missiles that intercept and destroy enemy aircraft that survive the interceptors. The radars, interceptors, and missiles must all be linked by a command and control system that can coordinate their functions and effectively manage complex battle situations.

THE RISE AND FALL OF U.S. AIR DEFENSE

After the first successful Soviet test of an atomic weapon in 1949, U.S. intelligence predicted that the USSR soon would begin deploying a large fleet of long-range strategic bombers. In response, the Eisenhower Administration decided to establish an integrated continental air defense system. By the late 1950s, three tiers of early warning radars were being constructed, long range interceptor aircraft were being acquired, and surface-to-air missiles developed in the Army's Nike program were being deployed. Eight computerized regional control centers were to be built to control these forces.

The Soviet intercontinental bomber threat, however, failed to materialize; Soviet decision makers apparently had placed primary emphasis on developing intercontinental ballistic missiles, rather than bombers. This triggered a major change in U.S. strategic defense priorities. Greater emphasis was now placed on warning of missile attacks and research on missile defense. Planners reasoned that in the absence of reliable missile defenses, it made little sense to continue heavy investment in defense against a secondary bomber threat.

Thus, as the Soviet ICBM threat grew and the bomber threat remained static in the 1960s, U.S. air defense capabilities were allowed to deteriorate. Nike air defense missiles were almost completely eliminated, many interceptor squadrons were disbanded and air defense radars were selectively decommissioned.

Air defense capabilities declined further in the 1970s, especially after the signing of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which effectively outlawed extensive missile defenses. By the end of the 1970s, the number of U.S. air defense interceptors had fallen from 2,600 in the early 1960s to barely 300. Most long-range air defense radars were no longer functioning. A reorganization of air defense forces undertaken by the Carter Administration confirmed the obvious: henceforth U.S. air defense efforts would be concerned primarily with providing warning and characterization of an attack so as to assure prompt and appropriate retaliation against Soviet aggression. Active defense against Soviet bombers was no longer a major mission of air defense forces.

THE EMERGING SOVIET AIR-BREATHING THREAT

Though U.S. air defenses deteriorated, the Soviet bomber threat remained largely unchanged. In 1974, however, the Soviets began deploying the TU-22/-26 Backfire. This "medium-range" bomber can attack targets in the continental United States on one-way unrefueled missions and could be refueled inflight. The Backfire also can serve as a stand-off cruise missile carrier and has a supersonic dash capability and low-altitude navigation aids that allow it to fly under the U.S. radar screen. By 1984, the

USSR had built over 230 Backfires and was producing new ones at the rate of thirty per year.

Even though the Backfire could strike targets in the U.S., doubts persisted in the defense community as to whether or not it signaled a departure from the Soviet Union's past neglect of strategic aviation. In the early 1980s, the situation grew less ambiguous as Moscow again started producing its Bear bombers in a new variant (the TU-95H) designed to serve as an intercontinental cruise missile platform. The Soviets also began flight testing a long-range jet bomber designated in the West as Blackjack, which in terms of size, speed, combat radius, and versatility is similar to the B-1. Blackjack probably will be deployed in 1987.

Cruise missiles are the most worrisome aspect of the emerging Soviet air threat. They are, in effect, self-propelled, pilotless bombers powered by turbofan jets. In 1981, the Soviet Union began testing a new generation of cruise missiles that were very similar to the most advanced U.S. cruise missile, the Tomahawk. More recently, the Soviets began developing a longer-range cruise missile that has no American counterpart. Western intelligence has identified three Soviet cruise weapons that represent potentially significant strategic threats to the continental United States. They are:

1) The sea-based SS-NX-21, likely to be deployed this year. It has a range of 1,800 miles and will be fitted into the torpedo tubes of existing Soviet attack submarines, which often patrol near the American coast.

2) The AS-X-15, an air-launched cruise missile designed for deployment on the new Bear H bomber and later on the Blackjack. Like the SS-NX-21, the AS-X-15 has a range of about 1,800 miles and is very accurate.

3) The BL-10, a high-altitude supersonic cruise missile of longer range for deployment on the Bear H and Blackjack bombers.

All three weapons incorporate sophisticated guidance capabilities comparable to the terrain contour matching (TERCOM) technology on U.S. cruise missiles. This allows the missile to follow an irregular path to its target by comparing terrain features with coordinates stored in the weapon's computer memory. Using such a system, the missile can achieve great accuracy and can penetrate ground radar by employing low-altitude and evasive maneuvering tactics. The weapon's high maneuverability, combined with its small size, makes it very difficult to detect. This advantage can be enhanced through use of signature reduction (stealth) technologies that reduce the weapon's radar cross-section and heat emissions. The USSR can increase vastly the size of its air-breathing threat to the U.S. simply by building these cruise missiles. For example, there are today 4,000 launch tubes in the Soviet navy potentially suitable for carrying the SS-NX-21 sea-launched cruise missile.

American military planners worry that Soviet bombers and/or cruise missiles could be used in three types of attacks against the United States:

1) Direct strikes against U.S. military and economic targets in conjunction with ICBMs and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). In this role, air-breathing systems would add to the overall destructiveness of the Soviet attack, although the value of this additional capability is doubtful in view of the abundance of Soviet ballistic missiles.

2) Precursor attacks. These are assaults in advance of the main strike. Because of gaps in the U.S. bomber warning system and the likely proximity of the SS-NX-21 to Washington once it is deployed, an undetected air attack could be launched against the national political and military leadership and strategic communications assets with the purpose of disrupting U.S. leadership prior to a larger air attack. Once U.S. command and control capabilities were disabled, it would be very difficult for the U.S. to retaliate effectively or coordinate a defense against the main attack.

(3) Post-attack search-and-destroy missions. These would locate and destroy strategic ground assets such as moving command posts and mobile ICBMs. As the survivability of fixed installations has become increasingly problematical, U.S. planners have given more attention to mobility as a way of preserving or reconstituting strategic capabilities after nuclear attack. As mobile strategic assets proliferate in the future, it is prudent to assume that Soviet bombers and cruise missiles might be tasked with tracking down and destroying those that survive in the aftermath of a missile attack.

U.S. AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITIES

The Air Force defines the "basic requirements" of continental air defense as:

1) Atmospheric surveillance to provide timely tactical warning of a bomber/cruise missile attack so that strategic nuclear forces, communications, and command authorities can survive the attack and execute appropriate retaliatory measures.

2) Defense of U.S. air space so that attacking bombers and cruise missiles can be engaged and destroyed before reaching their intended targets.

3) Peacetime monitoring of the atmosphere to detect and intercept potentially hostile aircraft before they penetrate U.S. airspace.

At present, the U.S. air defense system cannot accomplish any of these tasks. States an Air Force briefing paper: "We

cannot effectively control access to our airspace, warn of an attack or provide a credible level of defense."

What does exist of the U.S. air defense network is operated by the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), a joint U.S.-Canadian entity that monitors all the airspace over North America and its immediate environs. NORAD's major component is the Aerospace Defense Command (ADCOM), an Air Force specified command. Its commander is also commander of NORAD; his Canadian counterpart serves as vice-commander of NORAD. Headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colorado, NORAD is charged with providing tactical warning and attack assessment of bomber and/or ballistic missile strikes against North America; peacetime surveillance and identification of aircraft inside or approaching North American airspace; and control of air defense interceptor forces in the United States and Canada.

To carry out its warning and surveillance functions, NORAD operates an extensive but aging array of air defense radars. The best known is the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line, 31 radar stations stretching across northern Canada and Greenland. In conjunction with other radars maintained by the Alaskan Air Command, the DEW Line monitors air traffic traversing the northern approaches to the United States and Canada, generally considered the most likely corridor for a Soviet bomber attack.

A second radar line called CADIN-Pinetree runs across southern Canada, providing a partial backup to the DEW Line. The Air Force and the Federal Aviation Administration recently have begun operating a network of 60 radars in the continental United States and Alaska and 24 in Canada called the Joint Surveillance System (JSS). The JSS system is designed to monitor in-flight air traffic throughout the North American interior and within 200 miles of the coastlines.

Should potentially hostile aircraft approach the United States or Canada, NORAD can scramble fighters from 19 interceptor squadrons to identify visually and, if necessary, engage the aircraft. Three of these squadrons are deployed in Canada and one in Alaska; the remaining 15 are scattered around the 48 contiguous states. Interceptor squadrons in the contiguous states consist for the most part of Air National Guard units, although the Air Force's Tactical Air Command does maintain five active squadrons of dedicated air defense interceptors. Most of the air defense interceptors are 1950s-vintage F-106s and 1960s-vintage F-4s.

The NORAD air defense system suffers from critical deficiencies that impair its ability to cope with air-breathing threats. Among the problems are:

1) Many NORAD radars are technologically obsolete, lacking the necessary range and low-altitude detection capability to track modern Soviet air-breathing weapons. For example, the DEW

Line has serious gaps in its coverage. Its equipment is so antiquated that spare parts must be purchased in Eastern Europe because the vacuum tubes used in the radars are no longer produced in the West.

2) Much of the NORAD surveillance and communications network is vulnerable to immediate destruction by Soviet ballistic missile attacks. At risk are all fixed radar installations, interceptor bases, and even the NORAD nerve center in Cheyenne Mountain outside Colorado Springs.

3) Most of NORAD's air defense interceptor force is quite old, lacking such essential features as multiple-target tracking and look-down/shoot-down capability. It is not clear, for instance, that F-106 and F-4 aircraft could successfully track and engage cruise missiles.

4) Neither NORAD's sensors nor its interceptor forces are numerous or redundant enough to cope with major air attacks. The North American air defense system today is little more than a tripwire--and a rather loose one at that.

When the Reagan Administration took office, it began considering ways to remedy the most critical air defense system weaknesses. Its recommendations were in a revised Air Defense Master Plan submitted to Congress in 1982. The $7.8 billion in proposed improvements to surveillance and interception capabilities became part of the Administration's overall strategic modernization program. Although the Air Defense Master Plan remains classified, enough is known to provide a general description of the contemplated improvements in air defense capabilities.

Most of the planned improvements concern modernization of surveillance assets. Under two programs called North Warning System and Seek Igloo, obsolete DEW Line and Alaskan Air Command radars are being replaced with state-of-the-art sensors capable of tracking Soviet air-breathing weapons more reliably. Because the North Warning System/Seek Igloo radars are sophisticated, low maintenance sensors, they result in major operating cost reductions for the northern air defense perimeter.

A second improvement envisions constructing over-the-horizon backscatter (OTH-B) radars on the east and west coasts to provide 180 degree distant coverage of approaching air-breathing threats. OTH-B radars bounce their signals off the ionosphere and thus are not limited to line-of-sight detection. This means they can track low-flying weapons such as Backfire bombers many hundreds of miles away. The Air Force would like eventually to deploy a 120 degree OTH-B radar system to cover southern approaches to the United States, because of concern that Soviet aircraft and submarine cruise missile carriers might begin operating routinely in the Caribbean region.

OTH-B is a major advance in sensor technology, but it has some drawbacks: (1) it tracks targets in a band stretching from

500 to 1,800 nautical miles from the transmitter, and therefore does not detect threats less then 500 nautical miles away; (2) it cannot operate reliably in the Arctic region, due to ionospheric interference caused by the aurora borealis; and (3) its ability to track cruise missiles, particularly those incorporating stealth features, is not yet demonstrated.

Another suggested improvement in the air defense system would acquire twelve airborne warning and control aircraft (AWACS) to provide survivable air defense surveillance and battle management functions. Although Air Force spokesmen have frequently asserted that AWACS is the key to a more flexible and enduring air defense capability, the proposal seems to have been dropped due to budgetary limitations. The twelve AWACS would cost $2.2 billion, more than the price of all the other air surveillance improvements combined. In theory, existing AWACS could be diverted to the air defense mission in a national emergency, but this assumes they will not be needed elsewhere.

The Air Force and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) also are investigating possible use of space-based infrared and radar sensors for tracking air-breathing threats. One promising example is DARPA's Teal Ruby infrared staring sensor, scheduled to be tested this year using the space shuttle. Space-based sensors might solve many of the problems currently associated with ground-based radars.

The Air Force is proceeding with plans to modernize NORAD's American interceptor forces with F-15 and F-16 fighters. Current plans call for converting all of the Tactical Air Command's active interceptor squadrons to F-15s by the late 1980s, and possibly adding two additional squadrons of F-16s. Air National Guard units will also be upgraded. The F-15, with its large radar search volume, extended range, and look-down/shoot-down capability, will improve air defense capabilities greatly. The F-16, though less capable than the F-15, also represents a major improvement over existing air defense fighters. Since Canada is replacing its own interceptor force with the modern CF-18, by the late 1980s, NORAD's interception capabilities may be much more sophisticated than they are today. The threat, regrettably, promises to be much more sophisticated too.

AIR DEFENSE INITIATIVES

Even if all the improvements in air defense capability now under way are carried through to fruition, the U.S. still will not possess air defenses able to degrade substantially a major attack by the current Soviet arsenal of nuclear air-breathing weapons.

One key problem with the planned air defense system is that it would not survive a ballistic missile or bomber/cruise missile attack. Virtually all NORAD long-range radars and interceptor

bases are fixed installations vulnerable to even very limited Soviet precursor attacks. In the case of the OTH-B radar, a single, well-placed warhead could eliminate all distant detection capability for air-breathing threats on the east or west coast. Clearly, a U.S. air defense system must be much more resilient.

The best means of accomplishing this is to deploy the mobile AWACS, which has on-board facilities for detecting and tracking airborne threats, directing interceptors to engagement points, and managing the resulting battle. AWACS, to be sure, is not invulnerable: its dependence on long runways and aerial refueling for protracted flight time are significant weaknesses. But these can be corrected; redesigning the aircraft with more powerful engines would permit it to use smaller airports, and the in-flight refueling problem could be dealt with by adding a larger fuel-carrying capacity and organizing a more vigorous tanker dispersal program. But failure to fund the AWACS system in FY 1985 will probably lead to a production line shutdown in 1986. The Air Force should reexamine its funding priorities in this area.

While space-based sensor systems are not without their own survivability problems, they are now much more likely to survive the early stages of a nuclear war than fixed ground assets. The Defense Department should consider accelerating the languid pace of current programs to achieve early operational capability of survivable space-based sensors for tracking bombers and cruise missiles.

An adequate defense also requires using the data gathered by sensors to destroy hostile aircraft. The quantity and quality of current interceptor forces are hopelessly inadequate for coping with a major Soviet bomber and cruise missile attack. Interceptor forces, especially in the more demanding threat environment of the future, would have to be far more numerous than they are today to be reasonably effective. The Air Force has blurred this issue by claiming that non-dedicated fighters could be assigned to air defense in an emergency, but it is very questionable whether sufficient numbers of fighters would be available given other demands on Tactical Air Command assets in wartime.

It is also necessary to improve the quality of interceptor aircraft. The best air defense fighter is neither the Air Force's F-15 nor its F-16, but the Navy's F-14. It has a large radar search volume, and has the unique capacity to track twelve targets simultaneously, prioritize them according to preprogrammed criteria, and then intercept half of them using its Phoenix (AIM-54) air-to-air missile. Neither the F-15 nor the F-16 carries the Phoenix, and neither now has a capacity to track multiple targets simultaneously. The Sparrow (AIM-7) and Sidewinder (AIM-9) missiles carried by the F-15 and F-16 lack the long-range of the Phoenix and thus are not as well suited to the interceptor role. Air Force plans to equip its fighters with the sophisticated Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM)

will reduce the disparity in interception capabilities, but not eliminate it.

It is unlikely that the Air Force could be persuaded to buy the Navy's F-14s for the air defense mission, even if Congress supported such an initiative. But plans should be formulated for exploiting existing F-14 assets in the event of an air defense emergency. For example, Naval Air Reserve and active forces deployed in the Caribbean area might make a vital contribution to continental air defense in wartime if workable plans existed for employing them in this role.

A more exotic but still sensible way to improve interception capabilties would be to develop space-based beam weapons for destroying high-altitude airborne threats. Orbital weapons are generally not well suited for destroying low-altitude threats because their energy is distorted and dissipated through interaction with the denser layers of the atmosphere. However, Soviet bombers flying in both the penetrator and stand-off cruise missile roles would probably traverse most of the distance between Russia and America at higher altitudes to conserve fuel. There they might be vulnerable to beam weapon attacks from above. This should be investigated.

Other proposals have languished for lack of a clear commitment to effective strategic defense. Yet while the Strategic Defense Initiative is still in its infancy, the Defense Department should begin compiling useful ideas for revitalizing America's air defenses.

CONCLUSION

The Strategic Defense Initiative is potentially the most revolutionary transformation of American strategic doctrine in a generation. SDI's revolutionary quality derives not from some radical new views about strategy, but from a return to traditional and common-sense ideas about the proper mission of the armed forces. Throughout most of the period that human societies have been organized as nation-states, it has been believed that the supreme duty of military establishments was actively to defend the homeland against aggression. Only recently has shared vulnerability come to be regarded as a worthwhile objective in structuring a stable peace.

There is a growing awareness in the West, however, that Moscow probably does not consider shared vulnerability a virtue. More fundamentally, there is a growing dissatisfaction in the West with a defense that offers little hope of survival in nuclear war. The Strategic Defense Initiative is, at bottom, a simple recognition of this fact. For such an initiative to succeed, it must address the full spectrum of potential challenges to national security.

Ballistic missile defense is a vital component of any nuclear strategy based on moral values, but it is not enough. Air defense is essential. Without air defense, America will never escape the danger into which its own technology has delivered it. With air defense, at least there is basis for hope.

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Sources

A wide variety of sources were used in preparing this report. What follows is a list of those sources that seemed to be most helpful or authoritative in understanding the intricacies of continental air defense.

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1) Achieve Security Through Arms Control.

Many Europeans take issue with the need to station more capable nuclear weapons in Europe. They stress the need to enhance security through U.S.-Soviet arms control agreements.

These critics argue: first, that arms control can be an adequate substitute for NATO force modernization; second, that the Soviet military buildup is less menacing than NATO alleges, and its implications, less significant for NATO's deterrence posture; third, that the U.S. is not negotiating in earnest and is responsible for the stalemate at the negotiations; fourth, that Soviet insistence on counting British and French nuclear systems against the NATO ceiling is legitimate; fifth, that NATO deployment at least can be postponed to allow additional time to reach an agreement; sixth, that even if no agreement can be reached, NATO should cancel deployment.[29]

These critics fail to acknowledge that the Soviets, not NATO, started and sustained the arms buildup that tilted the military imbalance in Central Europe. They ignore that during NATO's de facto 1979-1983 moratorium the Soviets tripled the number of warheads targeted against Western Europe (while maintaining that a nuclear balance still existed). Critics also ignore the concessions and innovative new proposals made by the U.S. at the negotiations. Most fundamentally, they forget a cardinal lesson of history: that appeasement invites aggression.

2) U.S. Foreign Policy Is Contrary to Europe's Interests.

The steep deterioration of East-West relations after a deluding spell of detente has heightened concerns that U.S. determination to resist Soviet aggression on a global scale might result in a military conflagration that could spill into Europe. This danger, it is argued, will grow when INF enables the U.S. to strike Soviet territory with nuclear weapons from Europe. Therefore, according to this argument, stationing INF in Europe will solidify the U.S. "stranglehold" over Western Europe and perpetuate the inability of Europeans to exercise control over their own security.

This charge rests on the myopic belief that Europe can insulate itself against the global ramifications of Soviet expansionism.[30] It is also predicated on the assumption that the U.S.

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29 This general line of reasoning is shared to varying degrees by the diverse groups comprising the peace movement.

30 This new "Eurocentric" worldview was best illustrated by European reluctance to react forcefully to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It is also expressed by the unwillingness of the European NATO allies to join the U.S. in countering the Soviet threat in regions outside NATO's defense perimeter, such as the Persian Gulf. However, it is unlikely that Europe could escape a U.S.-Soviet confrontation elsewhere in the world. Philip Towle, Europe Without America: Could We Defend Ourselves? (London: Institute for European Defense and Strategic Studies, Occasional Paper No. 5, 1983), p. 25.

is embroiled in a global power struggle with the Soviet Union akin to that among the great powers of the 19th century. Finally, it is based on the conviction that military instruments of policy have lost their utility in the nuclear age.

Coupled with this reasoning are deep suspicions about U.S. motives in foreign policy, which place the U.S. in the same category as the Soviet Union. Such thinking discounts the U.S. role as the guardian of the Free World; it repudiates the common values shared by all democratic societies which are worth defending--if necessary by force. It is imbued with a strand of pacifism and neutralism and poses a fundamental challenge to the Atlantic Community.

3) INF Deployment Sets Back Europe's Denuclearization.

This argument is predicated on the assumption that NATO should reduce reliance on nuclear weapons. The first step in this direction should be a renunciation of NATO's doctrine of nuclear "first-use" in response to Soviet conventional attack followed by progressive nuclear disarmament. The eventual outcome would be a so-called European nuclear free zone. INF deployment by NATO, goes the argument, would increase NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons and complicate efforts to negotiate such a zone for Europe.

While it is very desirable to decrease reliance on nuclear weapons by strengthening NATO's conventional forces, proponents of this argument do not necessarily support the increased military outlays called for in NATO's 1978 Longterm Defense Program.[31] Even if conventional forces are substantially bolstered, they would still be far inferior in numbers to the Soviet juggernaut. As a result, NATO could not renounce the right to use nuclear weapons without jeopardizing its deterrent, which is founded on NATO willingness to escalate a conventional conflict to the nuclear level. This instills the uncertainty into Soviet war-planning upon which successful deterrence depends. Nor would a nuclear-free zone in Europe increase stability on the continent. Increased cooperation between East and West notwithstanding, stability on the continent is fundamentally a political problem unrelated to a particular military force posture. And as long as the Soviet Union does not relinquish its control of Eastern Europe and disavows its ideological commitment to extinguish democracy by brute force, NATO cannot let down its defenses, including reliance on nuclear deterrence.

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31 In fact, most opponents of INF deployment are also ardent critics of stronger conventional defenses modeled on the "Rogers Plan" or the proposals advanced by the European Study Group. See Report of the European Study Group, Strengthening Conventional Deterrence in Europe, Proposals for the 1980s (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983).