

2025

25a

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NLJ 96-290 ISCAP Appeal

By ica, NARA Date 9-10-98

COMMENT ON DOD DRAFT MEMORANDUM: STRATEGIC STRIKING FORCES (August 31, 1963)

(1) The DOD paper examines the strategic retaliatory force in a somewhat different framework of argument than that of the previous two years. Our 1969 strategic forces other than Minutemen are assumed fixed, and the choice among 3 Minutemen forces is considered: 1200 (of which 920 are improved); 950, and some larger force than 1200. The conclusion is that a force of 1200 Minutemen is adequate; a larger force has little extra usable military power, and the smaller force does not give an appropriate degree of assurance against the possibility of highly unfavorable contingencies.

(2) The 1200 man Minutemen force goal for FY 69 is justified in terms of the concept of "assured destruction", defined as a high degree of assurance that, under pessimistic assumptions and adverse conditions, the programmed force can destroy a sufficient fraction of Soviet industrial capacity and kill a sufficient fraction of the Soviet population to put beyond question a deliberate nuclear first strike on the U. S. as a rationale Soviet policy.

(3) Beyond a capability to achieve assured destruction, we might seek two successively further goals: damaging limiting capability, and full first

~~TOP SECRET~~

COPY LIBRARY

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 2 -

strike capability. As far as first strike capability, the paper argues that by the end FY 1969, Soviet hardened and submarine launched missiles will be sufficient in number so that even a very large increase in our strategic forces (to 1950 Minutemen) combined with a large increase in active and passive defenses (\$80 billion worth), could not prevent the Soviets from causing an unacceptably high level of U. S. casualties; i.e.: 30 million. This would be the case even if the Soviets built the level of forces we now expect. However, so large an increase in our own offensive and defensive programs could be expected to provoke a significant Soviet response, and further increase the expected level of U. S. casualties.

The increase in the damage limiting capacity that is achieved by extra Minutemen beyond the programmed 1200 is so small that the additional forces are not justified. However, the gain in this respect from the force increase between 950 and 1200 is judged worth-while. The figures summarizing these arguments are shown in Tables 1 and 2 which follow.

~~TOP SECRET~~

COPY LIBRARY

TABLE I

U. S. Second Strike Capabilities, FY 1969

(Expected Results With Alternative U. S. Forces vs. Medium Soviet Threat)

	Force I		Force II		Force III	
	(Incl. 950 MM)		(Incl. 1200 MM)		(Incl. 1400 MM)	
	(a) Missiles only	(b) Total Force incl. A/C	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
<u>Urban Industrial Targets</u>						
Number	215	215	215	215	215	215
Fatalities (millions)	60	80	83			90
Industrial Capacity (%)	50	50	50	50	50	50
<u>High Urgency</u>						
Number	433	520	545	649	584	678
% of total	50	60	63	75	68	79
<u>Other Military</u>						
Number	--	268	34	367	38	37
% of total	--	-31	4	43	5	44

Table 2

U. S. Second Strike Capabilities Against the Soviets, FY 1969

Number of Minutemen	Expected Factors		Pessimistic Factors	
	(a) % Fatalities	(b) % Industrial Capacity	(a)	(b)
0	47	57	17	30
600	59	70	18	32
950	68	82	25	45
1200	71	88	30	51
1400	73	90	33	55

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 5 -

(4) The arguments used to support the choice of 1200 Minutemen are not such as to justify that figure with any precision. With small changes of emphasis, the same assignments could be used to justify 950 Minutemen.

How much "assurance" of how much destruction is enough? The difference between 68% and 71% of Soviet population killed under the expected conditions of Soviet defensive capability and U. S. operational efficiency clearly does not justify an increased force. Does the difference between 25% and 30% casualties under unfavorable assumptions? (See Table 2). The unfavorable assumptions on Soviet defenses, (a nation-wide fallout program plus ABM protection for 10-15 cities); Soviet forces (top instead of middle of range of predicted future size; improved reliability, decreased CEP); U. S. forces (decreased reliability and survivability) form a quite unlikely constellation indeed. Each contingency is described as the worst consistent with the available evidence. But if each "worst case" is assumed to be as likely as the expected outcome -- an assumption that gives little credit to our estimates -- for these six factors (treating fallout protection plus AIBN deployment as one factor), then the combination of unfavorable outcomes has a less than 2% probability (1 in 64). How much insurance against this unlikely contingency should we buy?

It is clear that the smaller force would be just as effective as the larger one in causing the Soviets to harden and disperse their own missile

~~TOP SECRET~~

COPY LIBRARY

forces. With a reduction in our Minutemen forces from 1200 to 950, the total ratio of U. S. ballistic missiles to Soviet missile launchers would change from 1967 to 1100 to 1726 to 1100. Certainly this difference would not justify the Soviet decision to stop hardening.

In terms of damaging limiting capability, the difference between 1200 and 950 is fairly small. Under favorable assumptions for us of adequate fall-out protection and enough warning time to enable us to hit the Soviet striking force, the 250 extra Minutemen would reduce U. S. casualties by some 3 1/2 million from 84.5 to 81 million. As for counter-force capability, the proposed force would permit attack on 865 time-sensitive targets (assigning defense suppression entirely to Hound Dogs on alert B-52's). With only 950 Minutemen, this number would be reduced to 685; enough to cover all Soviet missile launchers, bomber bases and sub-bases, but omit fighter bases and targets in the satellites.

The difference between the two programs, namely 1200 (920 improved) and 950, (with approximately the same proportion improved) would be about a billion dollars over the five year period. The saving in FY 65 would, however, be only the \$50 million to be spent in FY 65 on the procurement of the 50 additional missiles authorized for procurement.

(5) The comparison between the missile forces proposed in successive budgets, and the arguments used to support them is instructive. In 1961,

~~TOP SECRET~~

-7-

the strategic force goal (for 1967) was justified in terms of a controlled counter-force capability, somewhat short, however, of a full-first strike. In 1962, counter-force was de-emphasized, in favor of our ability to limit damage to U. S. should deterrence fail. This year, even damage limitation is accorded relatively small emphasis, and assured destruction becomes the keystone of the argument. Yet the changes in the relation of our proposed forces to our estimate of Soviet forces and other major elements in the Soviet target system, as shown in Table 3, do not reflect this change in rationale. Indeed, the little shift there has been is in the opposite direction. Soviet targets have been declining in number while our force goals have remained essentially constant.

~~TOP SECRET~~

CONFIDENTIAL

TABLE 3

Proposed U. S. Missile Forces and Estimates of Selected Elements in the Soviet Target System

	1961 for 1967	1962 for 1968	1963 for 1969
Total U. S. Ballistic Missiles (ICBM & SLBM)	1987	2163	1972
Total Soviet target list	1775	1510	1540
Total Soviet <u>Missile launchers</u> (ICBM, IRBM, SLEM)	1400	1548	1342
Total Soviet <u>high urgency</u> targets	1225	848	750
Total Soviet <u>fixed</u> missile targets	925	612	550

Comments on a Department of Defense memorandum regarding U.S. first strike capability and defense capabilities with its MINUTEMAN missiles. Department Of State, 31 Aug. 1963. U.S. Declassified Documents Online, [tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/4PghA2](http://tinyurl.com/galegroup.com/tinyurl/4PghA2). Accessed 19 Feb. 2017.