# Matching Programs and Strategies to the Threat*

DOV S. ZAKHEIM**

IT is a distinct pleasure for me to be with you this after-noon. Although I have done considerable research into issues affecting this critical part the of world, it is the first time that I have visited the sub-continent. My stay here is a short one—only three days—but it is the start of what I hope will be many future encounters.

The United Service Institution has a long and distinguished history, and I very much appreciate the opportunity to lay before you the conceptual underpinnings of our strategy, policy and programs.

Two years ago, American voters elected Ronald Reagan as their President in part because of his strong Commitment to revitalizing our national defense. Since November 1980, however, economic and political pressures have put the Administration to the test of demonstrating the sincerity of that commitment. I believe that we have done so, because the underlying reasons for that commitment—the ominous trends pointing to a disparity in militray power between the Soviet Union and the United States—have certainly not disappeared. Indeed, if anything, events worldwide demonstrate that no contingency, however small, can be totally dismissed outright, and that readiness and strength are a prerequisite to the successful protection of our own interests worldwide.

I should like, therefore, to outline for you our assessment of the nature of Soviet military developments, our formulation of a strategy to cope with those developments, and the programs that we have supported in order to realize the strategy we pursue.

This Administration perceives that there has been a significant shift in the balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union since the beginning of the 1970s. I can best portray for you the nature of that shift if I can first take you back, for a moment,

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**Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy).

to the period prior to the Vietnam War. At the time the United States enjoyed a considerable advantage in strategic nuclear forces. In the early 1960s, for example, we developed and deployed a force of strategic ballistic missile submarines, all of them nuclear powered and, therefore, able to operate under the sea and in a manner invisible to the Soviets. Our bomber force was relatively modern, while our land-based missile force was considerably superior in accuracy to that of the Soviets.

Our conventional forces, though outnumbered in certain areas, particularly with respect to land forces in Europe and elsewhere, were nevertheless acknowledged to be superior because of the considerable progress that we and our allies had achieved in applying technology to military weapons systems. Our Navy was superior to that of any other, while that of the Soviets was primarily a coastal force, greared to the Defense of the Soviet homeland against a so-called imperialist amphibious attack that, of course, never materialized.

The times have certainly changed, perhaps most markedly with respect to the realm of strategic nuclear forces. We can no longer even seek, much less achieve, strategic superiority. Instead, we are trying to maintain parity with the Soviets' awesome strategic might. Why this change, and how did it take place? The answer is that while we chose to maintain our strategic offensive forces at roughly the level they had reached by the end of the 1960s, the Soviets continued to build and develop the capabilities of their forces and we simply did not keep pace with them. While we refrained from building highly accurate, large throw-weight, land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, the Soviets have increased the accuracy of their much larger missiles. Although we were the first to develop multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles—MIRVs—they developed their own technology far earlier than we had anticipated. Although we were the first to deploy ballistic missile submarines, they quickly followed suit. They have modernized their missile force, their bomber Force, their submarine Force.

They have improved upon what has for some time been the largest, most complex, air defense system in the world, while ours was permitted to decline. They are continuing to improve their anti-submarine warfare capabilities. So we now find that they have the potential to destroy much of our land-based missile force in one premeditated attack; that they can seriously weaken the effect of any bomber attack on their homeland; that we must improve our ability to defend our airspace, and to ensure the timely and sustained operation of our command and control system, if we are to be in a

position to retaliate effectively against what the Soviets might hope would be a strike to end a war in a flash—and in their favour.

It is these concerns that have prompted the President's strategic forces program. Without the MX missile, our ability to counterpunch the Soviets from land-based missile, sites is highly questionable. Without an improved B-I bomber we would be left with an aging B-52 force whose ability to penetrate Soviet airspace, and, therefore, whose credibility as a deterrent, would be highly dubious. Without a revitalized air defense program we would be creating incentives for the Soviets to lay greater stress on the modernization of their bomber force, which in any event is progressing apace. Without improvements in command and control, we could be at a severe loss to identify and respond effectively to an initial attack and to continue to function coherently in its aftermath.

Needless to say, the concerns to which these programs respond render irrelevant an approach, however well-meaning it might be, that emphasizes the freezing of nuclear weapons. For a freeze would stabilize for all time the strategic imbalance that now exists. More damaging still, it would enable the Soviets to pursue conventional defenses against our systems—such as air defense and anti-submarine warfare (and it is our ballistic missile submarines that are least vulnerable to Soviet destruction) —while we could not develop the offensive systems required to offset or obviate those defenses.

We do have an arms control policy, however, and it complements our strategic forces program. Our approach to arms control is that we seek to achieve agreements that diminish the risks of war and help to reduce the threat to our security and the security of our allies. Cosmetic agreements—those that merely legitimate a further build-up of Soviet military power—are not in our national interest. In sharp contrast, an agreement that reduces substantially the weapons on both sides—particularly the most threatening and destabilizing ones—in an equitable and verifiable manner would constitute a major step down the long road to diminishing the likelihood of conflict at all levels of violence. That we remain unalterably committed to this was confirmed by the President's announcement of our far-reaching "START" initiative, and of the subsequent negotiations that we have undertaken with the Soviet Union.

It is unrealistic to believe, however, that the Soviet Union will ever agree to equal limits at lower levels unless its leaders are first persuaded that the United States is otherwise determined to maintain

equality at higher levels. Only which they are convinced beyond doubt that we are truly committed to rebuilding our strength in this vital area will they have any incentive to negotiate seriously on strategic arms reductions. We believe that our strategic modernization program will provide the Soviets strong incentives to make impending discussions meaningful. But, if we terminate our efforts unilaterally, we will never get the Soviets to engage in real arms reductions. Thus our strategic program not only boltsers our ability to deter war, it also enhances our ability to negotiate agreements that will diminish the threat to our security.

The situation is no less pressing, and the dangers of policy error no less rife, with respect to that other realm of nuclear weaponry, intermediate nuclear forces. Here, too, we find that Soviet developments have placed Europe in a particularly vulnerable position via-a-vis Soviet missiles, especially the SS-20, a mobile missile with three warheads and with the range to hit every Western European capital quite accurately even when fired from behind the Ural Mountains. We currently have no equivalent whatsoever to the more than 300 SS-20 missiles that the Soviets have already deployed. We are developing cruise missiles and the Pershing II ballistic missiles. When deployed in Europe, these missiles threaten the Soviet Union's homeland from European territory, thereby correcting the imbalance that now effects our European allies, and, by a not very long extension, ourselves.

We recognize that it would be in the best interest of all if we did not have to deploy our new systems to Europe. The President has therefore offered not to deploy them, if the Soviets dismantle the Missiles that are the primary cause for the current imbalance. No number is better than zero where the control of arms is concerned. If the Soviets are as serious about controlling arms as they keep telling us they are, they will agree that eliminating the missiles that threaten Europe, as well as those which they feel will threaten them, is the only way to go.

I have been quite grim about the current state of nuclear balance, and have pointed to the urgent need for implementing our strategic program in particular. The problems are no less awesome, and the need to implement our solutions no less urgent, in the conventional sphere.

Let me turn first to the nature of our problem, and then discribe the strategy and programs that we hope will go a long way to solving it.

We no longer have the luxury we once did of assuming that we could defeat an adversary anywhere we might have to take him on. Perhaps in the past we didn't have that luxury either. But now we know we do not have it. We confront a Soviet Union that has not sacrificed its superiority in manpower and in quantities of equipment while, at the same time, it has significantly improved upon the effectiveness of that equipment. Whether one discusses tanks such as the T-72 and T-80, (whose armor and firepower at a minimum matches those of Western tanks) personnel carriers such as the BMD (which is air transportable, carries anti-tank missiles, a gun and a small complement of troops), the BRDM, which is like the BMD but can be *dropped* from the air, anti-air guns such as the ZSU-23, a host of air defense missiles, or more mundane items like engineering equipment, one is stunned by the tremendous advances in quality that the Soviets have realized. With it all, the Soviets maintain their quantitative advantage – for example, the Warsaw Pact has a 3 to 1 advantage it takes over NATO.

These qualitative advances have perhaps been most significant in the spheres of maritime forces and tactical aviation, for they have permitted the Soviets to assume new military missions that previously were beyond their capability. Soviet development of swing-wing bombers such as the MIG-27 and SU 24 with larger payloads, and longer combat radii, enables them to focus not merely on air defense in Europe, but on the sorts of interdiction missions that Western air forces previously had reserved for themselves. Soviet development of missile armed helicopters such as the MI-24 has allowed them to perfect their own tactics for air mobility in a field that, again, had once been the sole province of the West. Soviet warships such as the nuclear powered Kirov—the world's largest and most powerful battlecruiser, and the Kiev class carriers, which deploy fixed wing aircraft that take-off vertically—now provide the USSR with far more than a defensive posture against American aircraft carriers, or with a token presence in far off seas. To be sure, the threat to our carriers has grown as well, given continued Soviet development both of capable cruise missile submarines such as the Charlie class variant and now the Oscar, and of attack boats—also nuclear powered—such as the Victor. The blue water fleet that the Soviets have developed means that they can—and have—used their Navy to support adventures by their surrogates in areas such as Africa, raising the stakes for the U.S. if it hoped to intervene. Finally, the Soviets have developed the large and capable air transport fleet that was so prominent in the

attack upon Afghanistan and the lift of supplies to Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa War of 1977-78.

As a result of these developments, and of clever Soviet use of Cuban and East German surrogates, not to mention the invasion of Afghanistan and the massing of about 25 divisions along the borders of Soviet Central Asia, we have been forced to reevaluate both our strategy and our programs in order to respond to the demands that the protection of our Allies, interests and citizens abroad place upon us.

As many of you may know, for many years we have pursued a strategy that assumed that we could compartmentalize the conflicts we might become involved in. We called it a one-and-one-half war strategy. Of course, one cannot fight a half war. What was really meant was that we would have the capability to fight in a less demanding conflict somewhere outside of Europe and not necessarily involving the Soviets, as well as a worldwide conflict against the Warsaw Pact with Central Europe as the primary, but not only, battle theater. Growing Soviet capability worldwide, and the requirement that we protect our interests in the Persian Gulf, a region that is roughly half-way around the world from us, has forced us to reevaluate that strategy. We have reached a number of conclusions:

—First, and most obviously, whatever our strategy we must build up our forces in both quality and quantity beyond their current levels.

Second, we can no longer be rooted in a fixed, easily predictable strategy that on a grand scale virtually telegraphs to Soviet planners what our every move might be.

—Third, we cannot permit the defensive posture from which we operate in peacetime to color our wartime operations. We will never start a war. But if the Soviets do want to start one, they cannot expect us to remain on the defensive throughout the campaign. We certainly will do everything we can to stop their initial thrusts, but we reserve the right to counterpunch, when and where it might be to our advantage.

—Fourth, and following upon the preceding points, we must be more flexible in our ability to cope with threats worldwide. The Persian Gulf region is NATO's soft underbelly. We must defend it if we are to ensure Europe's economic viability and political cohesion. But we cannot isolate the Persian Gulf as some sort of half war. A conflict there could spread to Europe. On the other hand, such a local conflict could by itself be a

very demanding contingency, given the massive Soviet deployments along the borders of Iran and Turkey, as well as in Afghanistan. Moreover, there is no guarantee that were we required to commit forces in the Persian Gulf, other potential adversaries would sit by and await its outcome before they acted against our interests elsewhere. It is not at all obvious that North Korea, or Cuba, or other unfriendly states plan their strategies on the basis of what might or might not happen in the Gulf—indeed, they might be encouraged to act at a time when they perceived us to be preoccupied by another contingency. Only a more flexible strategy can enable us to maintain a deterrent that is credible in all regions to which we might have to commit forces.

—Fifth, Europe must remain the centerpiece of our strategy. It is a common misperception that for some reason we are downgrading our commitment to defend Europe. This motion is patently absurd. Why should we be so concerned about the Persian Gulf, whose petroleum is far more vital to Europe's economies than to ours, if Europe has become less important to us? In fact, flexibility, solidly grounded in our current commitments—notably that which calls for our reinforcement of Europe so as to achieve a total of ten divisions and sixty squadrons within ten days of mobilization—would only enhance those commitments.

—Sixth, we cannot tolerate the erosion of our maritime strength. For years what we termed our margin of superiority, measured not on a simplistic ship by ship basis—because we never outnumbered the soviet fleet—but on an aggregate qualitative basis, became slimmer and slimmer. There is no margin now. What we must have is the ability to dominate those waters—and not every ocean or sea—that are of vital importance to us. I should add that I mean not merely warships, but the sealift that many of those warships would be expected to protect.

What has recently taken place in the South Atlantic reinforces many of the principles of our strategy that I have just outlined. The requirements placed upon the British—in addition to all the other commitments they had—clearly demonstrated the futility of positing a strategy on the basis of a neat compartmentalization of conflicts more appropriate to the musings of an analyst than to the real world in which we live. Flexibility is the only means by which we can respond to the demands of the moment without vitiating our ability to cope with longer term concerns elsewhere in the world that could at any time erupt into other, simultaneous contingencies.

The South Atlantic crisis has also vindicated our approach to sea power. Many pundits have overly focused on the loss of surface

ships to cruise missiles. Such losses are to be expected in combat. The central question is whether the probability of those losses is magnified because surface ships have to operate without the benefit of adequate early warning, or minimized through a combination of size and defense in depth. Our concept of naval warfare stresses the latter concerns, precisely because we have been aware for years of the potency of the cruise missile and of the need to defeat it through both active and passive defenses. While the pundits ponder the implications of the Sheffield, serious naval observers already drew those implications and acted upon them nearly 15 years ago, when a Soviet Styx missile sank the Israeli destroyer Eilat. A number of small countries, Israel included, responded to that event by building small, short range torpedo boats. The United States, with greater resources, far-flung commitments, and the ability to provide air cover for its surface forces, responded in its turn by refining its concepts of defense in depth and enhancing its naval electronic countermeasures capabilities. Our current program furthers our efforts of the past decade.

How are we realizing our strategy? We are fielding new land systems—the M-1 tank, the M-2 Abrams and M-3 Bradley armored fighting vehicle systems. The Patriot air defense missile, the Apache attack helicopter—to name just a few. These systems, coupled with the improvements that we anticipate in the forces of our Allies and friends, will enable us to offset the quantitative advantage that the Soviets have in land forces systems, and to cut into the ratio of production in areas such as the fielding of new tanks, which currently favors the Soviets by about 2.5 to one.

We are planning to build two additional aircraft carriers, and to reintroduce four battleships to the fleet. By the way, the battleships are not ancient at all, as some claim, they all have about 12 or fewer years of service life. They will have 32 Tomahawks—they may ultimately get V/STOL. We will then be able to bring to bear significant sea based firepower against onshore targets in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans, and the Mediterranean Sea. At the same time, we will be able to maintain important deployments without subjecting our crews, and the systems they man, to impossible strains that arise from overworking in stressful environments far from home.

We are continuing the modernization of our tactical air forces, and seeking economies in the process of doing so. Again our goal is to cut into Soviet production advantages that, with respect to what we call "Tac Air", currently are as great as 2.3 to 1 in the fighter production category.

Finally, and critically important to a strategy that emphasizes flexibility, we are enhancing our ability to lift forces to remote areas both by land and sea as quickly as possible. Lift is the key to the effectiveness of our Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force. We have recognized that we need considerable lift sooner, rather than later, if we are to mount a credible deterrent both to the Soviets and to others who might threaten our interests and those of our allies in the region we term southwest Asia.

Our answer to the demand for lift to ensure the timely arrival of the RDJTF in the Gulf region has been a manifold one. First, we have cancelled the CX—which was meant to increase our airlift capacity, but was only going to become available in 1987. Instead, we are asking for additional procurement of the world's largest airlifter—the C-5—whose capability was most demonstrably underlined during the airlift to Israel in 1973. By producing the C-5, we not only acquire a giant airlifter whose problems have all been worked out over the years, we also get 17 more of them by 1988 than we would have had if the CX were procured. At 100 plus tons capacity per plane, 17 aircraft is a lot of lift. In addition, we are also planning to acquire over 40 KC-10 tanker planes. These aircraft are military versions of the DC-10, and they can carry a considerable amount of fuel. Because larger airlifters can be refueled in the air, the acquisition of the KC-10s means that C-5s and the somewhat smaller C-141s needn't land on their way to the Middle East. Landing is time consuming, and can often result in unexpected breakdowns. On the other hand, if aerial refueling is possible, airlifters can load up with more cargo, relying on refueling rather than on the capacity of their own tanks. The net result of all this is more airlift and faster airlift—available to the United States sooner for the support of its interests and those of its friends and allies in Southwest Asia.

But I am not finished yet. We are also proceeding apace with improving our ability to reinforce by sea. The problem with sealift is that while ships can carry more, they move more slowly. We cannot create ships that fly. But are buying—at bargain prices—eight ships that can move at 33 knots—some 40 land miles an hour. These ships could carry equipment for an entire U S. mechanized division to the Persian Gulf in about two weeks. In addition, we are increasing the number of ships in our Ready Reserve Fleet from 27 to 40. These slower moving ships would be ready for deployment 5 to 10 days after an order to deploy, and would provide our forces with timely support and reinforcement.

We are also continuing our efforts to secure better enroute access to the Gulf region. We have asked our European allies for their support, and are actively examining ways to improve facilities between the continental United States and the Middle East. We hope that our arrangements with our NATO allies, particularly those along the Mediterranean, will further enhance our rapid deployment capability to southwest Asia.

I have spoken at some length, and in some detail, about our program and why we have framed it the way we have.

There are of course, many more aspects that I would be pleased to touch on during the discussion period. Let me conclude by saying that we certainly recognize the magnitude of the expenditures that the strategy I have described to you implies. We have scrutinized each and every program, and made difficult decisions. The Soviets do not have the dilemma we face; totalitarian societies do not worry about the domestic welfare of their citizens, nor do they view defense as insurance for the protection of that welfare. We do, and it is for that reason that we have attempted to put a halt to the relative decline in our defense capability. For it is nothing other than the security and welfare of our citizens—which is the prime concern of our democratic system—as it is of yours and of all democracies—that ultimately is at stake.