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To the National Security Forum
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There are a variety of ways of measuring the military balance. Our topic today gives us an opportunity to explore some of them.

Let us start with the strategic nuclear balance. A common approach is to take the position that the question is inherently meaningless. Both we and the Soviet Union have tens of thousands of nuclear weapons, including weapons with a blast yield equivalent to that of many millions of tons of TNT. In addition, they can produce intense heat and, thus, widespread fires. They also produce radiation of extremely unattractive types. Some types of radiation have long half-lives and take the form of fallout, which can cover thousands of square miles downwind from the explosion. They can also contaminate the atmosphere. Thus, it is argued, an all-out nuclear war would be wholly disastrous to the Soviet Union as well as to the United States and perhaps even to the rest of the world. Under those circumstances, what difference does it make if one side has more or less nuclear weapons?

There are many exponents of this point of view, including my own Senator from Maryland, Senator Mathias. He talks of each side having an overkill capability of fourteen, or maybe forty times.

By many, this line of argument is extended to say that any war between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. is bound to escalate to all-out nuclear war. Therefore, in any war between them, not only the U.S. but the U.S.S.R. would be essentially destroyed. Dr. Kissinger, at least in some of his more important public statements, gave support to this point of view. If one accepts this point of view, the logical inference would be that the state of the conventional military balance and of the tactical nuclear balance in the European theater, the military balance in the Middle Eastern theater, and the balance in the Far Eastern theater would none of them make any significant difference, since any conflict in those theaters involving the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. would be bound to escalate to all-out nuclear war between them.

Furthermore, by extension of the same argument, the Soviet Union would not dare to interfere with any of our ships, naval or civilian, or with our planes flying over international waters or pursuant to agreement with the nation sovereign over the air space in which they are flying. If these chains of logic were in fact sound, it would appear to make little sense to evaluate the strategic nuclear balance, the theater military balances, or the balance of U.S. and Soviet capabilities to maintain and exploit the intercontinental seas and the intercontinental air space.

The operational consequence of accepting this line of approach is that most expenditures for military defense are essentially wasteful to the body economic and politic, and that ways and means of getting out of defense expenditures, including arms control and disarmament agreements, even if patently unequal in their provisions and even if essentially unverifiable, are vigorously to be supported.

But are the various steps in these chains of logic rigorous and independent of the military balance at each of the levels we have referred to so far? Few of the people who advance these positions appear, in fact, to be wholly persuaded of their rigor. Dr. Kissinger used to bolster his basic position by arguing that there really was, in any case, no danger of the strategic nuclear balance becoming unfavorable to the U.S. His point was that, even though the U.S.S.R. was building more ICBMs, much bigger ICBMs, and more SLBMs with longer range missiles than we, we had many more deployed warheads. Also, we are deploying each month more MIRVed reentry vehicles than the U.S.S.R., and we enjoy a substantial superiority in the payload of our heavy bomber fleet. He argued that we will continue such bomber payload superiority for a long period of time, in as much as the Soviet Union has tested no modern generation of heavy bombers, and their BACKFIRE bomber is intended for theater, not intercontinental, missions.

Paul Warnke, the new Director of ACDA, in his confirmation hearings argued that the strategic balance was so important that neither side could conceivably allow the other to achieve a meaningful superiority. He asserted, however, that we are today much stronger than the U.S.S.R. in the strategic nuclear field and that we have many years within which we can cut back on

new strategic development and deployment programs, and test whether or not the Soviet strategic buildup represents an effort on their part to achieve superiority, rather than mere parity.

Now, how do the Russians look at this range of issues. Last week I attended a discussion group including many of those in Washington whose specialty is studying what goes on in the minds of the Soviet leaders as reflected in what they say and write. They concurred in the following propositions. First, that the Soviet leaders think a nuclear war with the United States would result in a "holocaust." Second, that the Soviet leaders do not want a nuclear war with the United States. Third, that a nuclear war is becoming increasingly "unthinkable." And, fourth, that the Soviet leaders believe the Soviet Union must be in a position both to win a nuclear war with the United States and to survive it, were it nevertheless to occur.

My associates at the seminar seemed to take some comfort from these four propositions. I did not, although I agree with all four of them, if the Soviet jargon involved is correctly understood. By the word "holocaust," they mean much physical destruction, but still not such as to make it impossible for the Soviet Union to win, to survive, and still to dominate the world, including any nonparticipants, such as China. When they say they do not want a nuclear war that is correct, but not in conflict with the proposition that they propose to continue to do everything they prudently can to foster the fulfillment of the Communist dream of a world which has progressed from Socialism to Communism under the continuing leadership of the Soviet Communist Party.

When they say that nuclear war has become increasingly "unthinkable," they elsewhere make it explicit what they mean by that phrase. They say that in the last five to ten years, in particular during the era of "detente," the correlation of forces and, most importantly, the nuclear balance, has moved significantly in their favor, and this has made it far less likely that nuclear war could become a thinkable response by the United States to a crisis situation.

Operationally, the most important proposition is the fourth; that the Soviet Union must be in a position to win and survive a nuclear war were it nevertheless to occur.

This is the operative proposition with respect to much of their defense, command and control, and civil defense programs. This is a prime reason why the Soviet military budget has continued to expand year by year and now substantially exceeds that of the U.S., both in absolute magnitude and as a percentage of gross national product. I think it is now generally agreed that the Soviet defense effort, in relationship to other aspects of its economy, is at least twice that of the U.S. and may be three times as much.

Two additional questions arise. The first is whether arms control negotiations, particularly the SALT negotiations, can make all these questions irrelevant. The second is whether this enormous Soviet effort is in any case meaningless and a waste of time, as the original overkill argument would lead one to believe.

It is particularly in the endeavor to find an answer to the first of these questions that much of the work has been done concerned with assessing the current state of the strategic balance and with projecting that balance into the future on various assumptions as to the terms that might be agreed to in a new SALT agreement and as to various possible U.S. weapons development and deployment programs.

It is argued, and I believe correctly, that SALT agreements can contribute to U.S. security by imposing agreed limits on Soviet nuclear deployments, just as they can increase Soviet security by agreed limits on our nuclear deployments. But the contribution such limits can make to our security cannot possibly do the whole job. The essential deterrent function must still be carried by those U.S. strategic forces that are permitted under the agreements and are, in fact, developed and deployed by the U.S.

In other words, before deciding whether a given SALT agreement should or should not be accepted by the U.S., one should attempt to analyze whether the contribution to U.S. security of the verifiable limitations on Soviet deployments, coupled with the military potential of the U.S. weapons programs the U.S. really intends to develop and deploy under the terms of the agreement, are adequate to provide the U.S. with high quality deterrence and crisis stability. In other words, will the balance be such as to assure that the Soviet Union would have no grounds for temptation to execute a preemptive

strike in a crisis and, as such, to deny the Soviet Union any prospect of winning and surviving the resulting war, were it to occur.

This, then, brings us to the question of how and by what criteria to measure the strategic military balance as it has existed in the past and as it may evolve in the future, under varying assumptions as to the terms of various possible SALT agreements and various U.S. nuclear weapons deployment programs consistent with the terms of those agreements.

There are three distinctly different ways, increasing in depth and sophistication, in which various indices, such as number of launchers (strategic nuclear delivery vehicles-SNDVs), number of warheads, megatonnage (EMT), countermilitary potential against hard targets (2,000-psi index), equivalent weapons, or throw weight, can be used to measure relative capabilities and crisis stability. These are:

1. That which each side has before a strike;
2. That surviving to the United States and that remaining to the Soviet side after an initial counterforce strike by the Soviets;
3. That remaining to each side after an exchange in which the Soviet side attacks U.S. forces and the United States responds by reducing Soviet reserved forces to the greatest useful extent.

The first method involves so-called "static" indicators. It does not assess how these capabilities might react upon each other in an actual exchange. It tends not to differentiate between those capabilities useful in a counterforce role, i.e., against the enemy's hardened military targets, and those useful in a countervalue role, i.e., holding the other side's population and industry hostage.

The second method, being the first step in a dynamic analysis, is more sophisticated. It reflects the counterforce capabilities of those weapons used in the initial counterforce strike, but does not distinguish between the counterforce and the countervalue capabilities of the forces remaining to each side after that first step.

The third method, which carries the dynamic analysis a step further, most clearly brings out the stability or potential instability of the relationship by making it possible to assess the relative counterforce capabilities of each side and the countervalue capabilities remaining to each side after a two-sided counterforce exchange in which all useful counterforce targets have been addressed.

In the last few weeks, my former SALT associate, T. K. Jones, and I have attempted to bring our analysis of the developing strategic nuclear balance up to date, including an analysis of the probable effects of each of the two alternative U.S. SALT proposals recently put forward at Moscow.

I have a set of charts summarizing that analysis.

They deal with a selection from the possible indices of strategic power: number of launchers, number of warheads, throw weight, megatonnage and E.W., which stands for the number of Equivalent Weapons based upon a formula which takes into account the yield, accuracy, and number of offensive weapons as well as the hardness of the targets they are designed to attack.

In all the analyses, it is assumed that there has been strategic warning and that both sides have optimized the alert position of their force prior to any attack. This assumption was made because of the probability that the Soviet side would wish to implement its civil defense program prior to an attack, and that such action should be detectable and give the U.S. strategic warning.

The first three charts (figures 1, 2, and 3) assume that the second U.S. proposal, the deferral proposal, has been accepted by both sides and that within those limits we carry out our currently approved programs (including TRIDENT and the B-1, but not the MX), and the Soviet side continues with its currently estimated program of further deployments. They use, in sequence, the three methods outlined about; the situation before any attack by either side, the situation after the Soviet Union has attacked the retaliatory forces of the U.S., and the situation after a two-sided counterforce exchange initiated by the Soviet Union and responded to by a U.S. counterforce attack on the unexpended Soviet forces.

Ratio of Deployed Forces (Static or Preattack Levels)

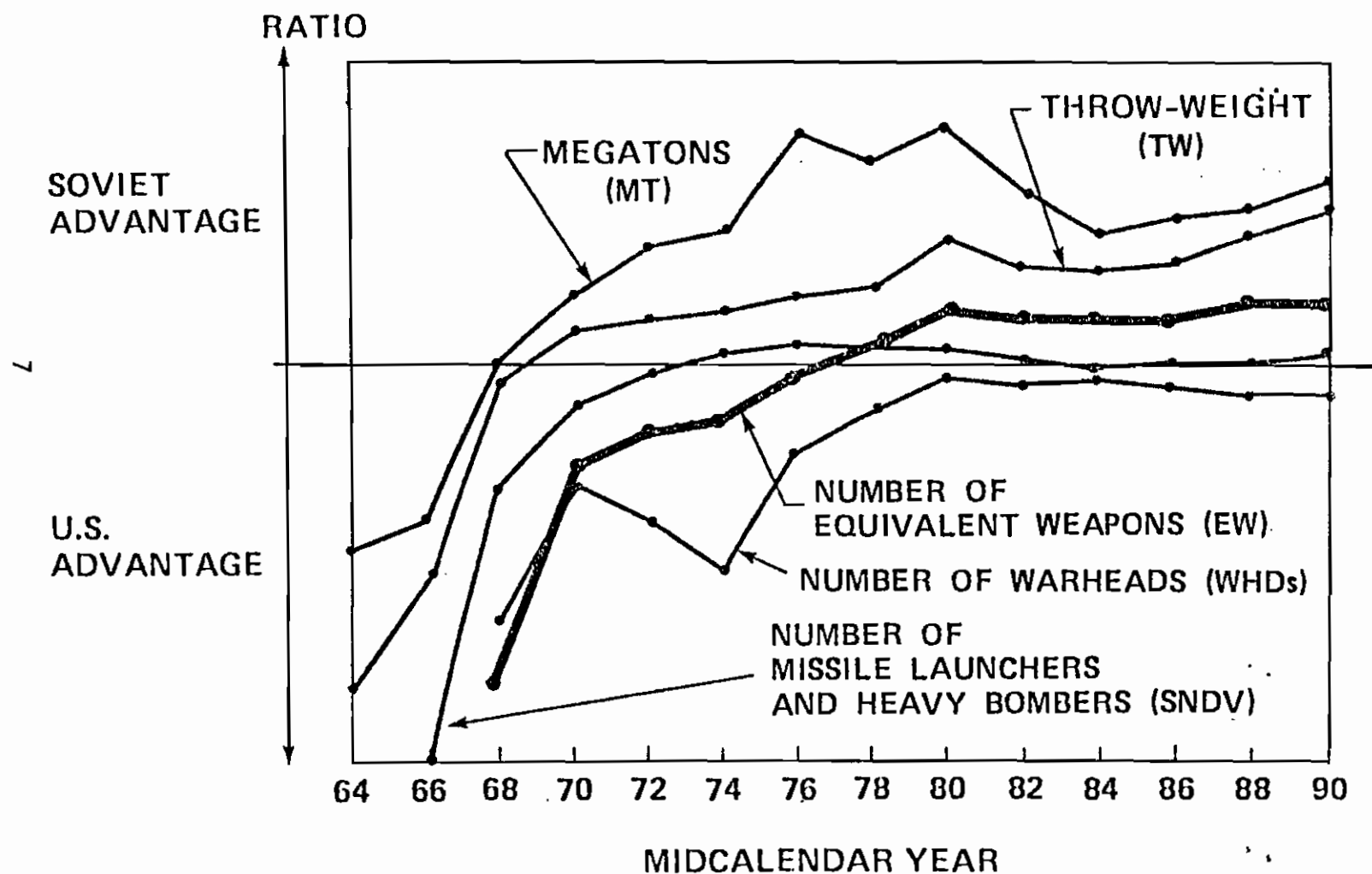


Figure 1

Capabilities After S.U. Initial Counterforce Strike Strategic Warning — Against Fully Generated U.S. Forces

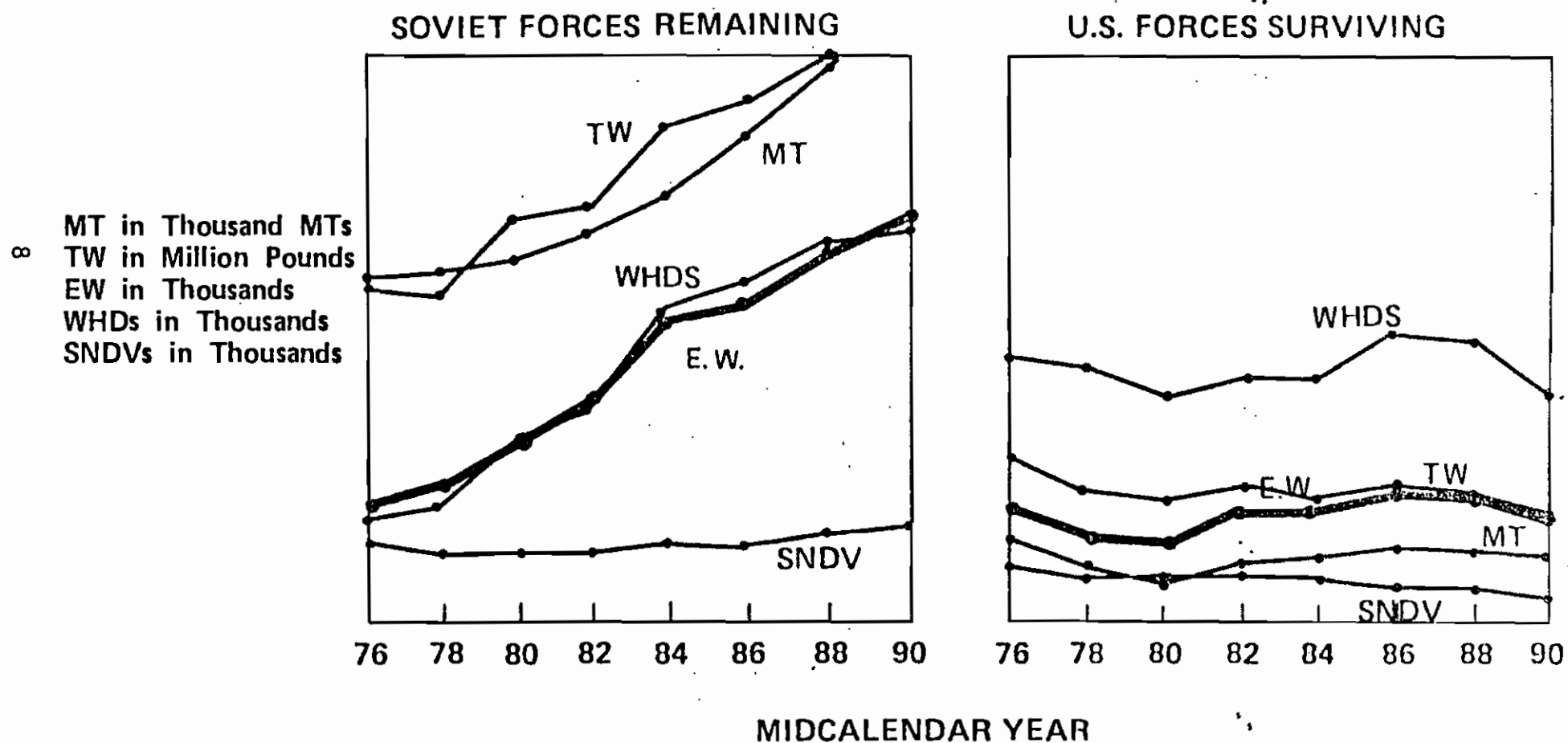


Figure 2

Strategic Balance After Counterforce Exchange Against Fully Generated Forces

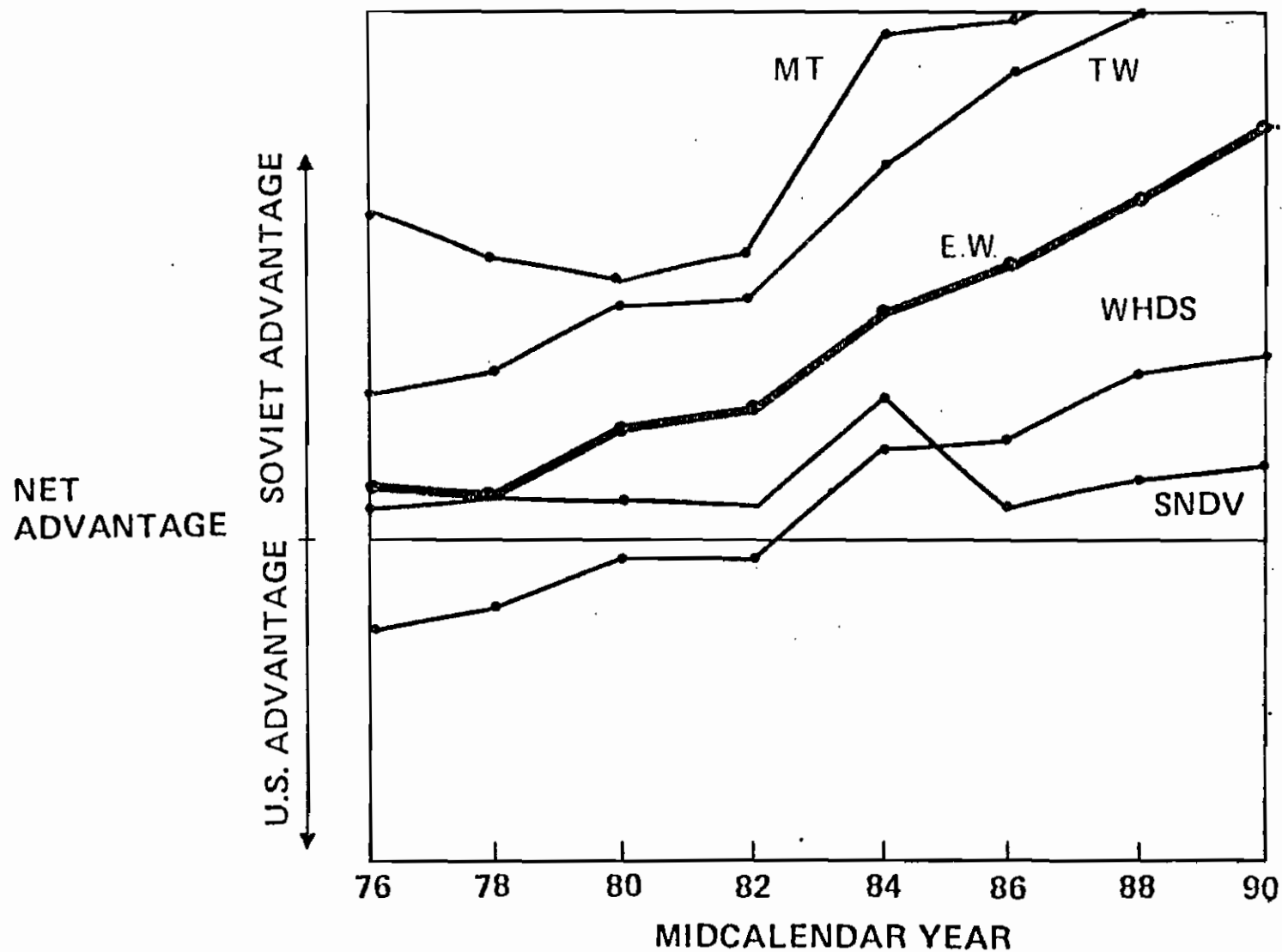


Figure 3

The fourth chart (figure 4) indicates the effect on one representative index, the Equivalent Weapons index, of assuming the U.S. promptly approves a program for the multiple aim-point deployment of some of our MINUTEMAN IIIs and the deployment beginning in 1985 in that mode of the MX missile.

Figures 5, 6, and 7 assume acceptance by both sides of the U.S. SALT comprehensive proposal. They are intended to make possible a comparison of that proposal with the U.S. deferral proposal. It is assumed that the ICBM flight test and modification limitations of the comprehensive proposal delay Soviet accuracy improvements by one year. It is assumed that the Soviet Union does not exploit its inherent reload capability, in particular, that of its cold launch silos.

Figures 8 and 9 illustrate the effect of assuming that the U.S., rather than the U.S.S.R., were to initiate the counterforce exchange.

Figure 10 illustrates the point that, assuming a continuation of presently approved programs, the relationship tends to become not only increasingly unfavorable, but increasingly unstable, i.e., the U.S.S.R. does increasingly well in any but substantially better if it preempts us, rather than letting us get in the first blow.

In dealing with these computations, two other points arise. The first is the question of whether the Soviet civil defense program is of sufficient potential effectiveness to be taken seriously. I note in yesterday's WASHINGTON POST that a majority of Senator Proxmire's Joint Defense Preparedness Committee has come to the conclusion that it should not be taken seriously.

I believe that the evidence is quite persuasive that, if the leading Soviet political and military cadres are provided with shelters capable of withstanding 600 psi (400 kg per sq. cm.), and I believe the evidence is that they have been so provided, and if those segments of the work force that it is planned not to evacuate from the cities or industrial plants are provided with 143 psi (10 kg per sq. cm.) shelters, and if the evacuated population is optimally scattered and provided with fallout shelters with a protection factor of 200, then even an all-out U.S. attack, optimized to

Effect of MX MAPS on Strategic Balance

MX MAPS Means the MX Missile Deployed
in a Multiple Aim Point Mode

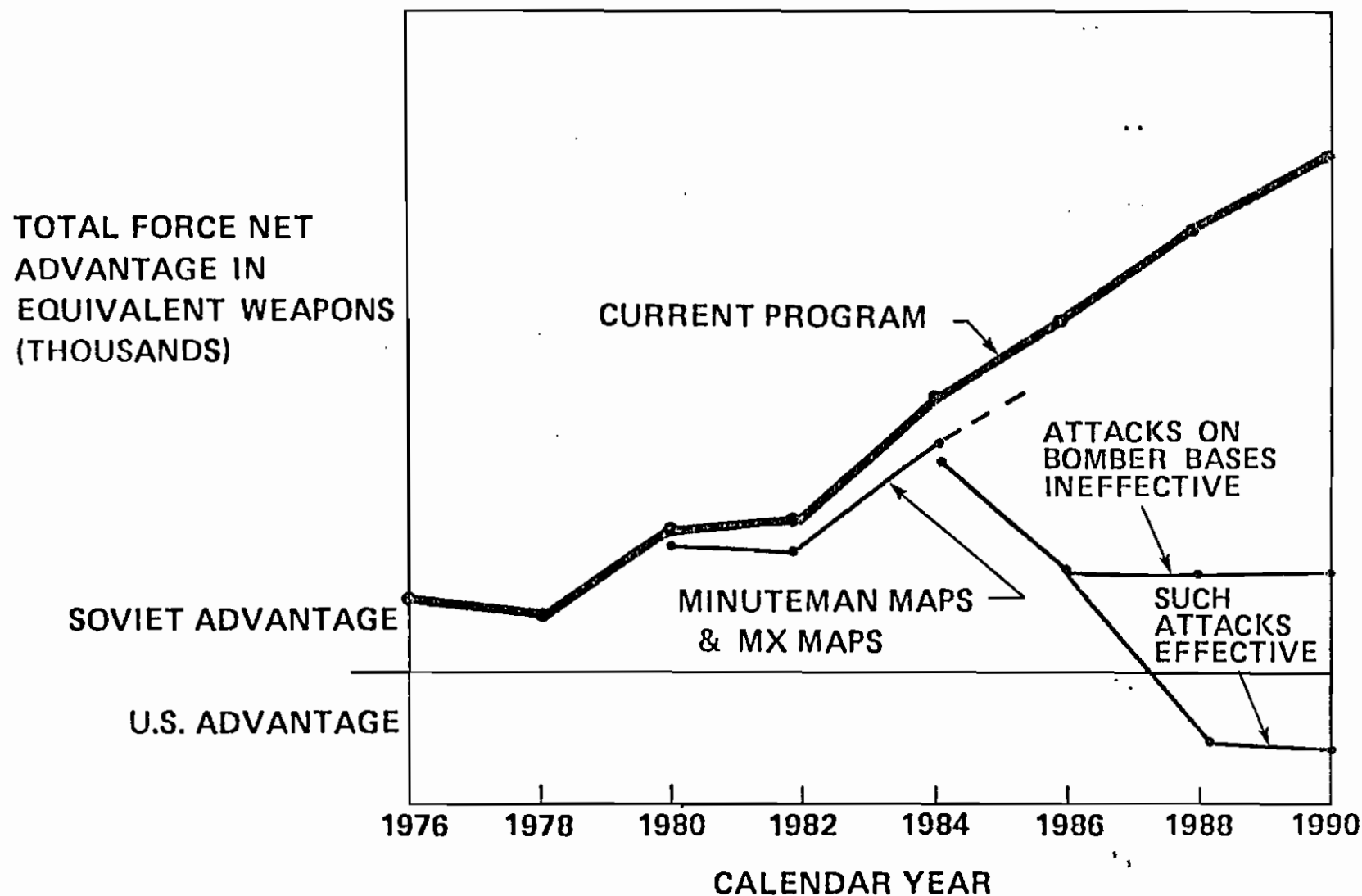


Figure 4

Ratio of Deployed Forces
(Static or Pre-Attack Levels)
1977 Comprehensive Proposal (2000)
Compared With 1977 Deferral Proposal (2400)
RATIO

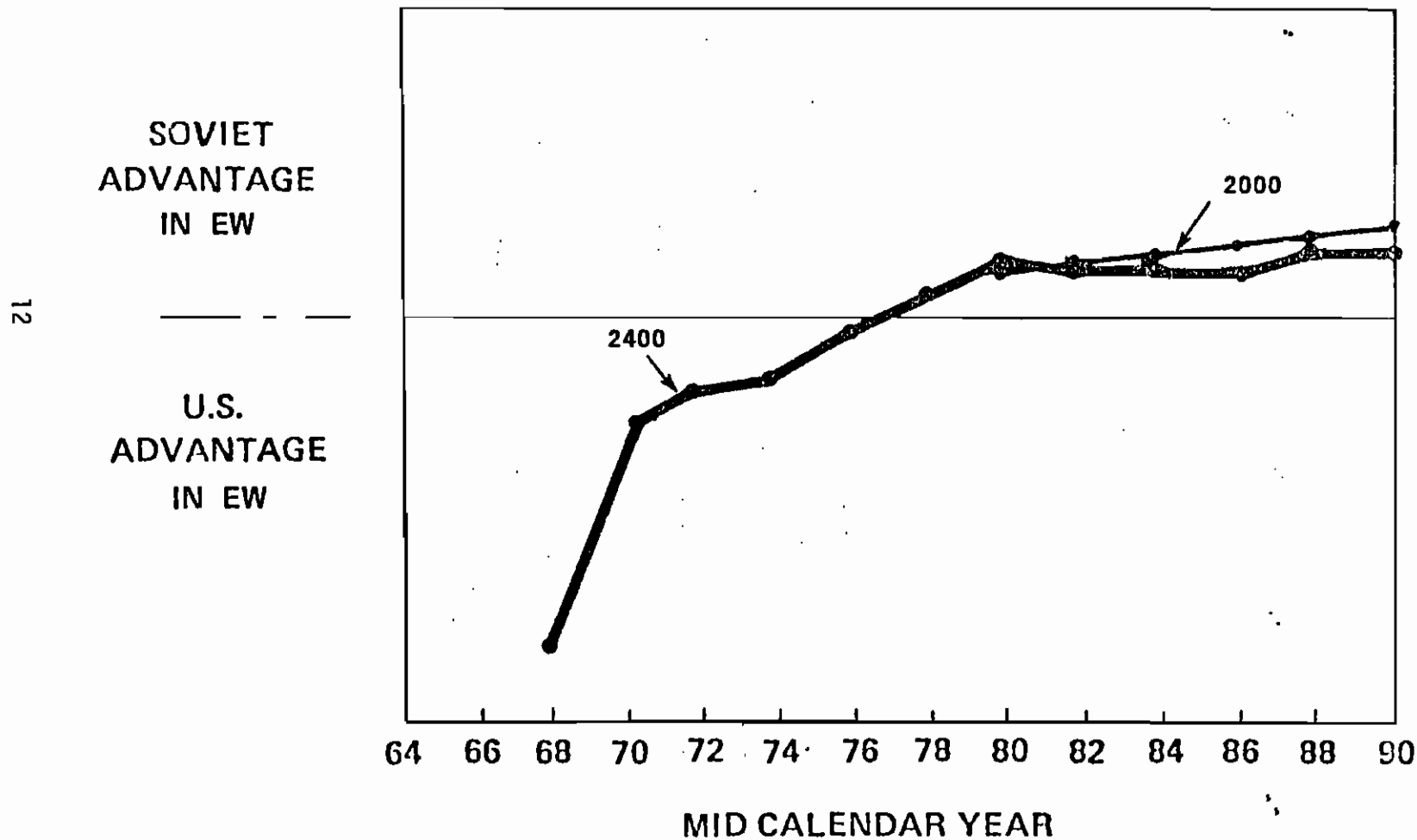


Figure 5

Capabilities After S.U. Initial Counterforce Strike 1977 Comprehensive and Deferral Proposals Compared

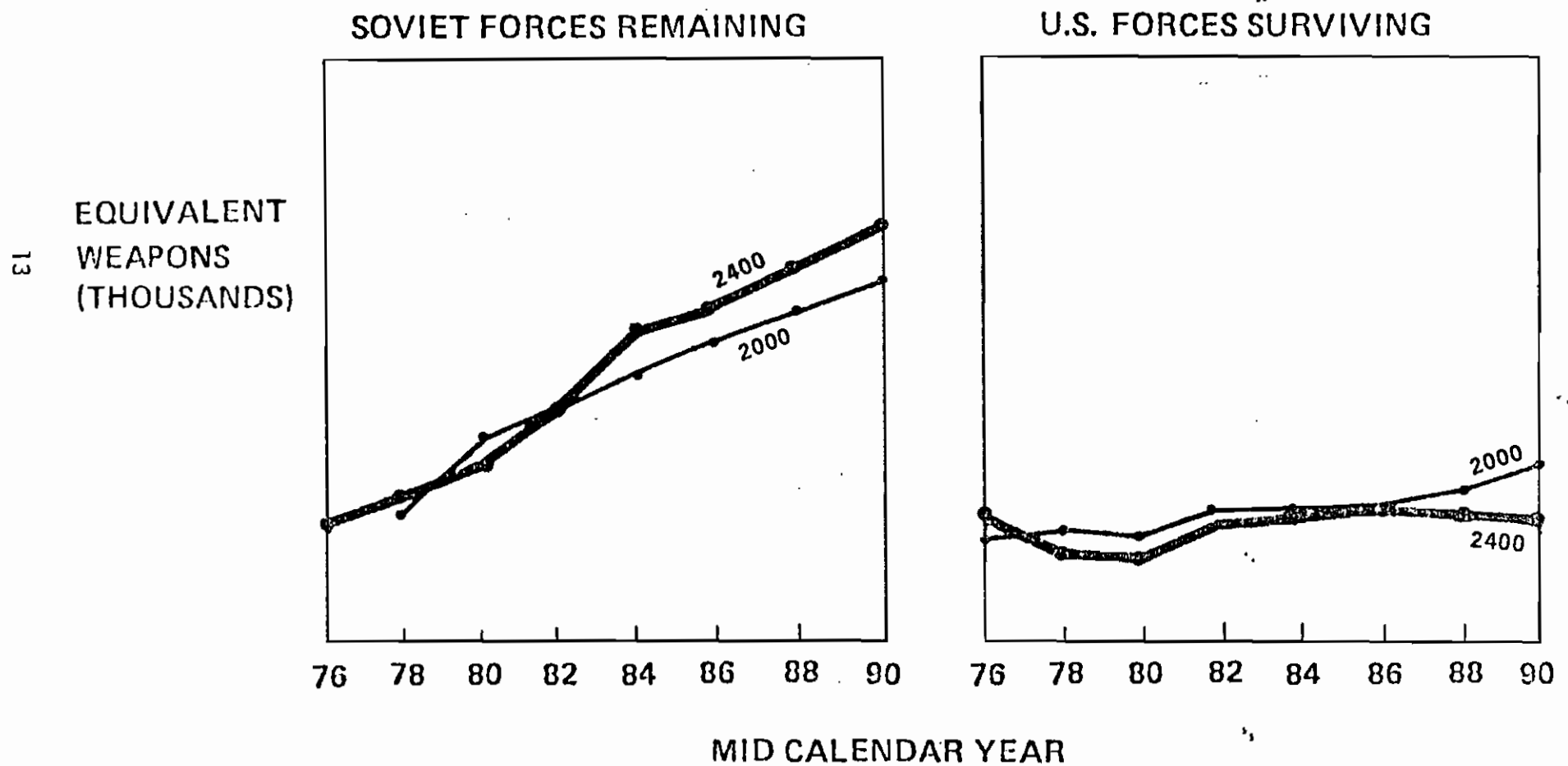


Figure 6

Strategic Balance After Counter Force Exchange

S.U. Initial Counter Force Strike — 1977 Proposals Compared

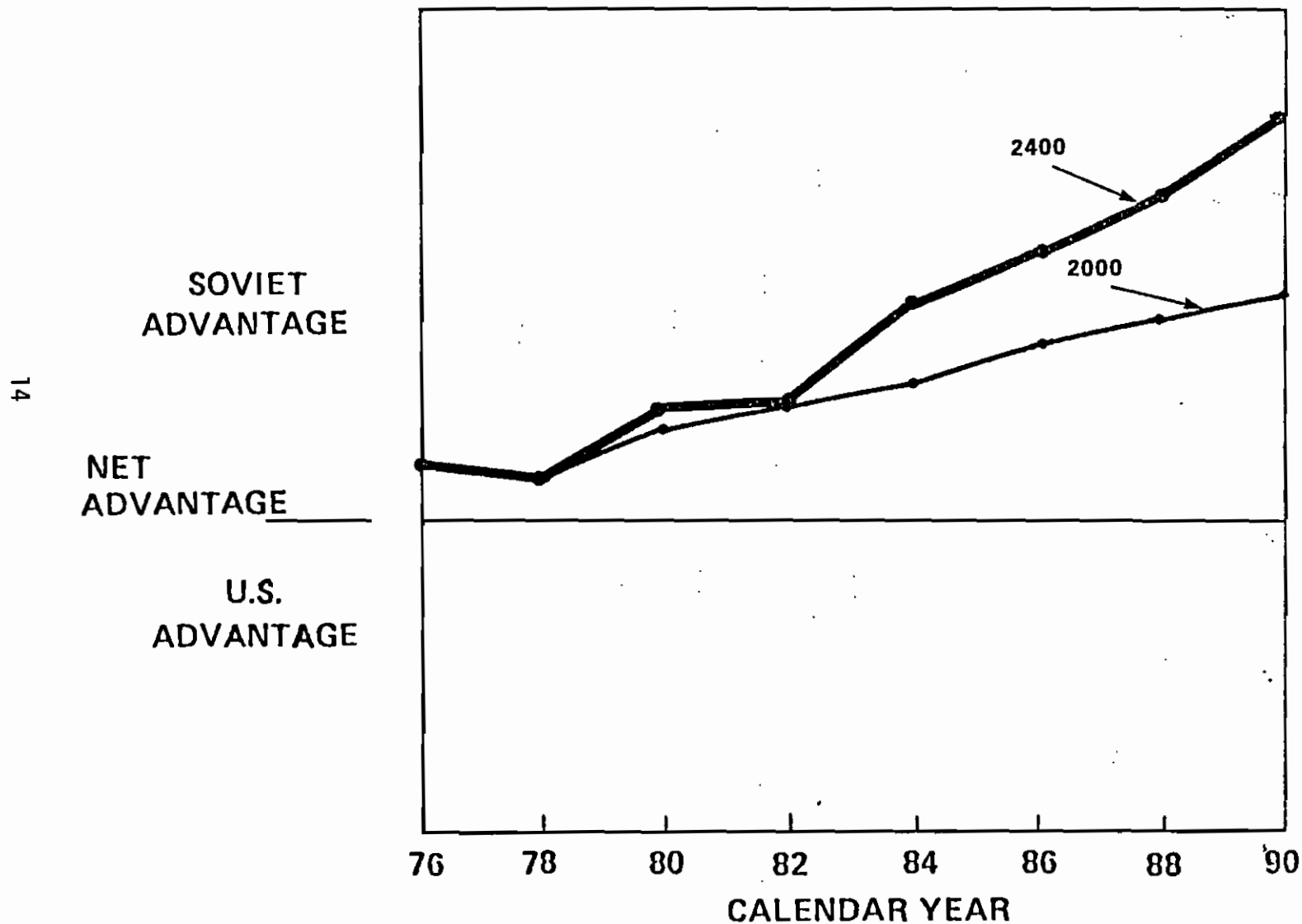


Figure 7

Capabilities After U.S. Initial Counterforce Strike 1977 Deferral Proposal — Fully Generated Forces

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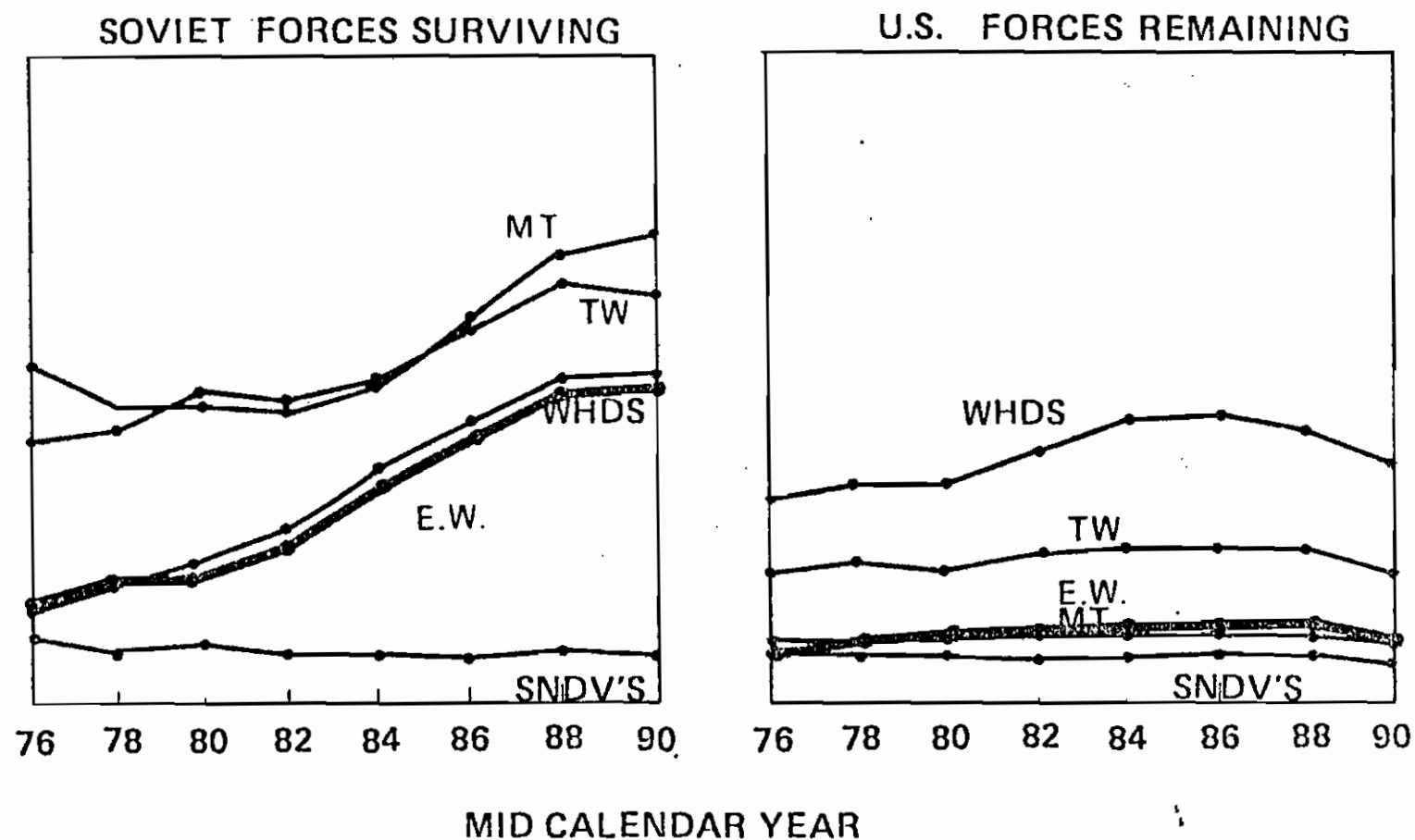


Figure 8

Strategic Balance After Counter Force Exchange

U.S. Initial Counterforce Strike

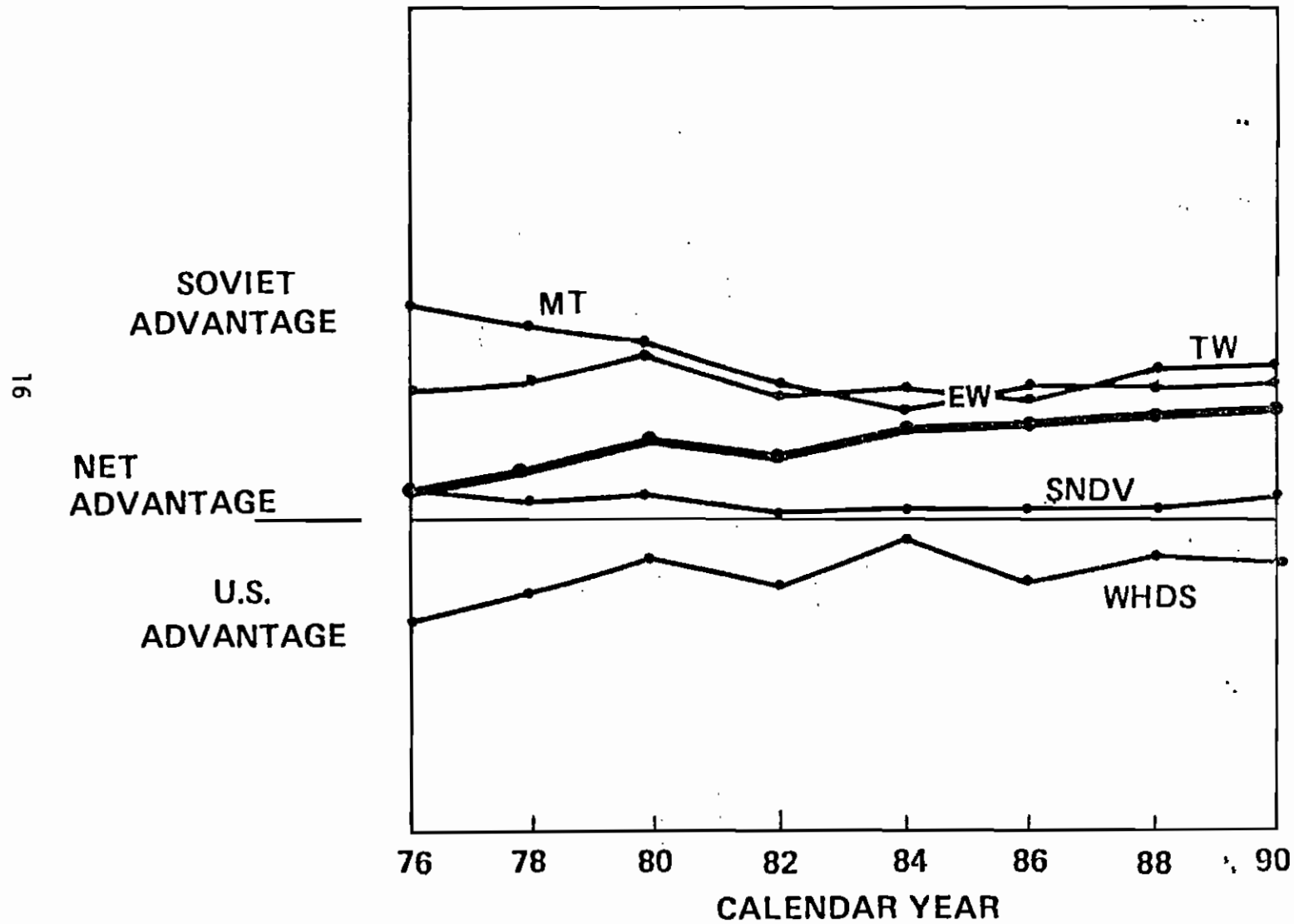


Figure 9

Strategic Balance After Counter Force Exchange

1977 Deferral Proposal — Fully Generated Forces

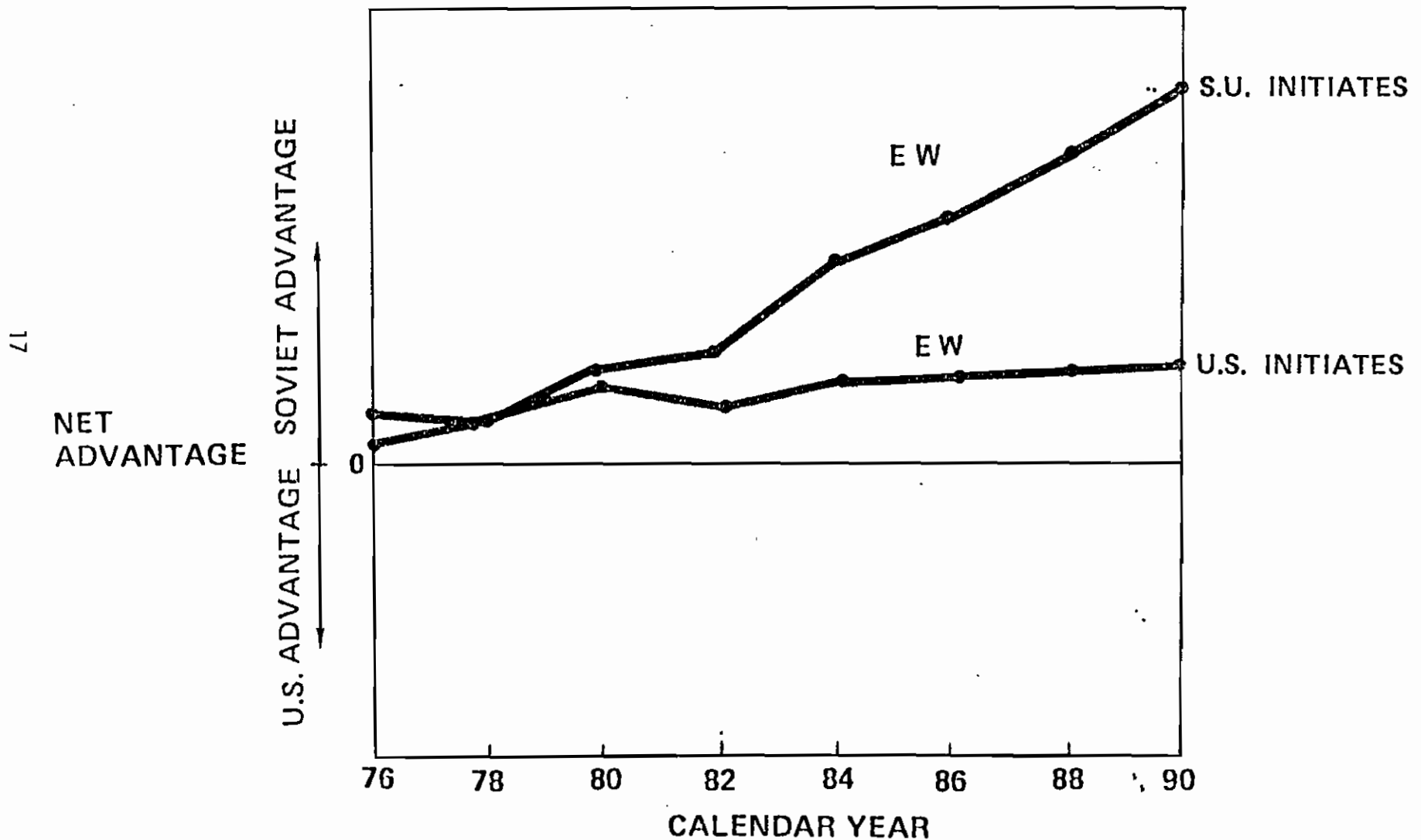


Figure 10

kill people or to destroy industry, would destroy less than 4 percent of their population, either through blast, fire, or radiation. It is argued by some that the Soviets could not evacuate their population without our receiving warning. That is allowed for in the calculations I have shown you, which assume strategic warning and that we have used that warning to fully generate our strategic forces. It is argued by others that if we saw evacuation begin, we could attack while evacuation was in progress and the Soviet population was out in the open. I cannot imagine that any United States President would, in fact, do so. It is further argued that no plan can be perfectly executed; there will always be a substantial percentage of foul-ups. To this, I fully agree. But the Soviets have put an enormous effort into training cadres, and in providing some prior training for everyone. Furthermore, the Soviet civil population under the circumstances of a war alert is quite likely to follow orders to the best of its ability, particularly when individual survival is at stake. Also, the Soviet supervisory cadres are quite capable of shooting those who panic and get out of line. In sum, I am sure their program, in practice, would be imperfect in detail, but overall, I believe it could be highly effective and should be taken seriously.

Earlier we left hanging a question as to whether, even if all we have said about Soviet attitudes toward strategic nuclear war and the trend of Soviet strategic capabilities were true, does it make any difference?

This gets us into the question of what our strategic nuclear forces are for. Are they only to provide deterrence, or are they also meant to fight a nuclear war and destroy Soviet nuclear forces if deterrence were to fail?

There is often confusion as to the distinction between deterrence and military strategy. Deterrence is a political concept; it involves persuading an opponent not to do certain things through military capabilities and indications of will, under certain circumstances, to use those military capabilities. Military strategy deals with how one would actually use those military capabilities, deterrence having failed. The threat of pure destruction makes some sense when related to the concept of deterrence. It makes no sense when

related to military strategy. In military strategy, the object is to defeat the enemy military forces and retain sufficient reserves so as to be in the best position to terminate the war on the most favorable, or least disadvantageous, terms possible.

The threat of pure destruction, even in support of a political concept of deterrence, is not apt to be very effective. It lacks conviction that that is what one actually would do if deterrence failed! I think there is merit in the Soviet view that the best deterrent is the capability to win a nuclear war and survive. My view is that we can and must deny them that capability.

To go back to the subject assigned to us for discussion, The Military Balance Today, the preceding discussion and analysis would indicate that we probably can today deny the Soviet Union the capability to win and survive a nuclear war. However, there has been a change over the last ten to fifteen years. As my friend, General Danny Graham, puts it, ten years ago only a madman in the Kremlin would have recommended a course of action where the Soviet Union did not have a wholly reliable escape hatch to be used if the situation resulting from the action evolved in a way that might otherwise escalate to nuclear war. Today, quite sensible men in the Kremlin might be arguing that it is the United States, not the Soviet Union, that should be making certain that it can be sure of finding an escape hatch in such situations.

Let me now turn to the military balance in Europe. At no time since the end of World War II has the conventional military balance been favorable to the West. The geography tends to favor the Warsaw Pact countries, the Soviet Union has worked harder at the problem than have the European members of NATO, and for many years they enjoyed and came to rely upon the deterrent shield of U.S. strategic nuclear power. In addition, during the period when U.S. theater nuclear weapons greatly exceeded the capability of Soviet theater nuclear weapons, this contributed to making a Warsaw Pact attack on NATO highly unlikely. Over the years, however, NATO conventional capabilities, particularly its tactical air capabilities and its antitank weapons, did improve. Five years ago it appeared that the Warsaw Pact forces

could attack only if significantly reinforced and moved forward. This would take a number of days and would be known to the West. That time would permit the NATO forces to make the transition from national chains of command to a NATO command structure, to move forces forward, to disperse vulnerable weapons, and in general put NATO in a position effectively to resist.

Today the situation is different in important particulars. Soviet tactical air capabilities have been substantially improved. The fire power and mobility of the Soviet divisions has been beefed up and their logistic support rounded out. But more importantly, there are grounds to believe that the Warsaw Pact forces could now strike with little or no prior warning. In addition, the quality of the NATO theater tactical nuclear shield is much less convincing and promises to become even less so as the Soviets expand their deployments of BACKFIRE bombers and SS-20 missiles.

At present the only way we can offset those deployments is by assigning some of our strategic nuclear systems, in particular a number of our POSEIDON missiles, to the direct support of NATO forces.

In the Middle Eastern theater, the geographic position has always been relatively unfavorable to the United States in the contingency of a direct conflict with the U.S.S.R.

The territory of the U.S.S.R. is not that far away. Planes operating from bases in the U.S.S.R. can cover all of the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean, the entrances to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. It would not take too long for Soviet forces thrusting down from Azerbaijan to reach Suez.

However, ten years ago Greece and Turkey were firmly in the NATO camp, the Soviet Union could not count on Yugoslavia giving her overflight rights, and the threat of direct Soviet military action in the theater was not considered substantial. The U.S. Sixth Fleet represented the predominant projectible power in the area. Today, on the other hand, it is not clear that the Russians would, in a crisis, be denied overflight rights by either Yugoslavia or Turkey.

The Soviet fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean, supported by land-based air from bases in the U.S.S.R., with the potential that a number of parachute divisions could be quickly introduced into the area, today probably represents the dominant projectible force in the area. Should Syria and Iraq decide to request Soviet assistance and work in close collaboration with her, the position in the Middle East theater could be difficult indeed.

In the Far East, Soviet forces have in the last ten years increased many fold while U.S. forces have substantially declined. But the Sino-Soviet split continues to dominate the strategic situation in the area. The direct U.S./U.S.S.R. military balance in the Far Eastern theater, therefore, appears to be of less importance than the evolution of the political alignments there.

During the quarter century after the end of World War II, the worldwide military balance was dominated, on the one hand, by the superior power of the U.S.S.R., by virtue of its size, organization, and interior position on the Eurasian land mass, and its ability to concentrate superior force at any point on or near its borders, and, on the other hand, by the superior capability of the United States to project power out from its continental position to any point on the edges of the Eurasian land mass, as was required to support its evolving foreign policy. An important aspect of this ability to project U.S. power forward was the structure of alliances, treaties of navigation and friendship, base arrangements, and forward deployed military units which was developed over the years. The cutting edge of this projectible power was our superior blue water navy, a unique amphibious warfare capability, and long-range air capabilities.

What the Soviet Union has today is still not comparable, but they are working on it. They are putting together step by step their own widespread interlocking system of alliances, treaties of friendship and navigation, base rights, overflight and landing rights, and an increasing naval and naval air capability to do more than coastal defense. In Africa, this system is developing rapidly. It includes, among others, Guinea, Guinea Bisau, Angola, Mali, Mozambique, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Libya. In the Middle East it includes South Yemen and Iraq. In South Asia it includes,

at least to a degree, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. It now appears that the Soviets are negotiating for base rights as far away as the Fij Islands in the Pacific and Gurano on the north coast of South America.

Let me pick up again the question of what this is all about. A year or so ago, I was asked to give a talk in London on SALT and the strategic balance. During the course of it I mentioned the Soviet civil defense program. During the question period, a retired British civil servant, who was for many years the principal Sovietologist in the British Foreign Office, asked me a question. He said that he had long been impressed with the dogged persistence with which the Soviet Communist leaders pursued their goals, but he was at a loss to understand why they were putting such intense effort into their strategic nuclear program and, in particular, into their civil defense program; could I explain?

In reply I said that I also had been impressed with the persistence with which they pursued their broad objectives. However, I did not believe that they followed any single strategy. I thought they kept in mind a variety of strategies and pressed one or the other as their continuing review of the situation indicated to offer the greatest opportunities and the least risks. Among those strategies I thought that one must concern itself with eventually achieving hegemony over the Middle East. This had been an objective of the Czars even before the Communists took power. The Middle East lies at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa, and today whoever controls it and the oil resources of the Persian Gulf controls Europe and Japan.

If one were looking at this problem from the Kremlin, how might one analyze its military aspects? In the first place, the military capabilities of the countries in the area, singly or all together, are no match for Soviet forces. Massive support from outside the area would be necessary to give the Middle Eastern countries any chance. Who outside the area could give such support? Not Europe, or Japan; only the United States. How could the U.S. bring its support to bear?

The most convenient way for the U.S. to support an operation in the Middle East would be to use its forces in Europe and its base structure

there as a staging area for reinforcement. Looking at the problem from Moscow, how would one make that difficult? By building up Warsaw Pact capabilities to a point where the European countries would not dare let bases on their territory be used in such a contingency. How else could the United States bring its power to bear? One way would be through the Indian Ocean up through the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. This could be made dangerous or impossible by Soviet facilities along the edges of East Africa and the Indian Ocean, or by dominating the entrances to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Another route might be through the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean. This could be made difficult through Soviet facilities along the coast of West Africa, dominating the Straits of Gibraltar, such as Portugal or Spain, or on the northern coast of Africa, such as Libya or Algiers.

But again supposing we were successful in doing all this, the United States, seeing its truly vital interests at stake, might go on a strategic alert as Secretary Kissinger ordered in 1973. The answer to that would be a superior Soviet strategic nuclear posture to deter the U.S. from doing so. But the U.S. still might do so and, in fact, being desperate, might well not back down, and the situation could then escalate to an actual nuclear war. Under those circumstances, those in Moscow must try to put the Soviet Union in a position to win such a war and also to survive it.

I said I thought it might be because of some chain of reasoning that the Soviet Union was making such a large strategic effort, including civil defense preparations. My British friend said he agreed.

In conclusion, just one further point. More and more people in the world recognize what the Soviet Union is up to. Most do not want to be dominated from the Kremlin. Granted that many are afraid and favor accommodation, still the general political atmosphere seems to me to be shifting against them, despite the intensity of their propaganda campaigns.

The situation is obviously full of danger, but, if we keep up our will, it can still be turned around.