S. to **the NEWS**

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SOVIET DELTA SUBMARINES

Buried in the back pages of recent newspapers were news items quietly reporting that the Soviets have in operation a multiple-warheaded ICBM that can be launched from their Delta-3 submarines. This weapon system constitutes a revolution in strategic power because it is the world's first submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missile (SLICBM).

The 5,000-nautical-mile range of the new Delta submarine missiles allows them to reach American population centers from Soviet home ports. Unlike the Soviet Yankee-class submarines with shorter-range missiles, Delta submarines will not have to sneak out of their ports, make their way through narrow passages where we might detect them, and then travel thousands of miles to get within range of U.S. cities or missile sites.

This means that a Soviet Delta missile-launching submarine is on station at all times, not 16 percent of the time like the Soviet Yankee-class submarines, or even 60 percent of the time like our Poseidon submarines (which have a base in England).

The SALT I Agreement allows the Soviets to have 950 submarine-launched nuclear missiles as opposed to our 710. However, we have built only 41 submarines carrying 656 missiles, resulting in the Soviet having a 3-to-2 superiority. In addition, the Soviet Delta has twice the range of the U.S. Poseidon.

As Admiral Hyman Rickover has testified, "the Russians already have the equivalent of our Trident." The trouble is, we have no Tridents operational and the Soviets now have a fleet of Deltas.

The range of the Delta missiles gives the Delta submarines about ten times as much ocean area to hide in as our Poseidons.

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It is easy to visualize this with a globe and a flexible plastic ruler or piece of string. First, swing a 5,000-mile radius centered on New York. You will see that the ocean depths for nearly half the globe are available to hide Soviet Delta submarines prowling within range of U.S. targets. No present or prospective antisubmarine warfare techniques can cope with a force of submarines with such a vast on-station area, especially when those areas include the waters of Soviet home ports.

According to the latest evidence, Delta missiles are now equipped with multiple warheads, thus tripling the number of targets that Delta submarine missiles can attack with nuclear weapons. Poseidons carry more MIRVs, but that is a weakness rather than a strength of our SLBM systems. The extreme miniaturization of our warheads is the principal cause for the delays and many test failures we have experienced.

Employed as a first-strike weapon, the Soviet Deltas could launch their missiles from near their home ports, then return to superhardened submarine pens for reloading. The inertial guidance of their missiles would ensure enough accuracy for their first launch to destroy hardened U.S. missiles. Reloads could then be held to threaten our cities and preclude any retaliation by U.S. foseidon submarines.

The Delta submarine with its new long-range missiles is extremely versatile. Because of the inertial guidance of its missiles and on-board digital computer, it can be a counterforce weapon. Because of its survivability, it is a deterrent to both a preemptive strike and a preventive strike, and it is also the most effective weapon system for backing up a counterforce first strike with a counter-population blackmail threat.

The Soviet Delta is a nearly invulnerable weapon system, incomparably more so than our Poseidon force. The Soviet Delta is an ideal first-strike weapon and should serve as conclusive evidence of Soviet intentions to achieve a first-strike capability.

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