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# Defense Report

AUSA



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## Aspin: Wrong Again

On April 4th, Representative Les Aspin (D-WI) issued a by-lined press release which claimed that "nearly half" of the 4.8 million man Soviet armed forces are engaged in essentially civilian work or are assigned to military missions not truly threatening the United States. He attempted to prove that the U.S. and the USSR are about equal from the standpoint of military manpower with which each can threaten the other.

This release had considerable pickup in the U.S. press, but the rebuttal which has surfaced since April 4th has been little noted in the media, even though the rebuttal has shot gaping holes in much of Aspin's rationale.

Examples:

—Aspin ruled out 600,000 Soviet general support forces, stating that U.S. Intelligence in reporting this increase had concurrently reduced its estimate of civilians doing the same types of jobs by an equal 600,000. Lt. General Daniel O. Graham, former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency has stated flatly that Aspin's information is incorrect and that there was no such civilian estimate; hence, the 600,000 must be counted.

—Mr. Aspin subtracted 430,000 troops of the MVD and KGB security agencies stating that they equated to our National Guard and Border Patrol. General Graham pointed out that these forces were not included in the 4.8 million estimate except for the border guards, who must be counted as they are organized into fully equipped military units with tanks and artillery and can and have operated as part of the Army.

—Aspin pointed out that the Soviets have 475,000 more troops devoted to air defense than the U.S. and deducted them. General G. V. Underwood, former commander of the Army's air defense command says that Soviet air defenses provide a threat to SAC sufficient to require extensive and expensive countermeasures. Thus, deducting the entire 475,000 is not valid.

—Rep. Aspin discounts 250,000 apparent washouts from basic training who are uniformed members of Soviet military construction forces. DIA counters with the fact that these troops are the equivalent of Army engineer construction troops and could certainly be used to support combat troops in wartime.

There are other rebuttals, but these four add up to about a 1.7 million man error in Mr. Aspin's calculations. The conclusion must be that, although all of the Soviet's 4.8 million military may not threaten the United States, the Soviet edge in threatening military manpower remains frightening.