
Defense Report

AUSA



The Battle of Technology

Many Americans take comfort in the thought that today's parity between the United States and the Soviet Union in strategic nuclear weapons provides the absolute potential for vast mutual destruction in a nuclear war and therefore makes such a war "unthinkable." The feeling is that U.S. technological superiority will retain parity; the USSR may get more weapons but those of the U.S. will be better.

Actually, the U.S. is losing the battle of military technology to the Soviets. Dr. Malcolm R. Currie, the director of Defense Research and Engineering is seriously concerned about the matter. He said recently, "The Soviet Union can achieve dominance in deployed military technology in the 1980's." He added, "The United States continues to hold a technological lead over the Soviet Union in most areas critical to our national security. But that lead has been diminishing. In some important areas it is gone; the Soviets are ahead."

In other words, the trends are against U.S. retention of qualitative strategic superiority unless we do something about it. Currie points out that Soviet technological improvement has been surging in recent years and, although the U.S. has not stood still in the military technology field and DOD is still backed up by the efforts of U.S. industry, U.S. technological progress is declining relative to that of the USSR.

Dr. Currie points out that even our sea-launched ballistic missile submarine fleet, hitherto considered practically invulnerable because of the difficulty of finding the "needles in the haystack," may become more vulnerable due to Soviet technological progress. He advocates, "Keep the same number of needles but enlarge the haystack" by producing the Trident submarine. Its 4,000 nautical mile range will tremendously expand the "haystack." Similarly, he feels that the B-1 Bomber is a "must" if we are to stay ahead of Soviet technology.

Currie believes that the technological trends can be reversed in the U.S. favor and that the FY '77 DOD Budget request for \$11 billion for R&D is a step in the right direction. But he adds that reversing the trend "will inevitably require investment. With guidance and support from Congress, we will be able to minimize the impact of the Soviet challenge to our national security."

What he means is that the Congress must fund the increased R&D effort and approve the timely entry of improved U.S. weapons systems into the U.S. arsenal or nuclear war may well become "thinkable" to the Russians.