

The US and USSR Strategic Technologies and Nuclear War Fighting: A Comparison

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THE U.S. AND U.S.S.R. STRATEGIC TECHNOLOGIES AND NUCLEAR WAR FIGHTING: A COMPARISON

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Negotiations between the Soviets and Americans in the SALT II Treaty talks to limit strategic nuclear arms were coming to a close. The U.S. nuclear policy towards the Soviet Union was deterrence through the possession of an "assured destruction" capability. The American government believed that no side could win in nuclear war, but the Soviets believed that if nuclear war should happen, they would be able to fight and win and survive as a nation. There was a direct contrast between the two doctrines- one of nuclear war-fighting and one of deterrence.

This report examines the differences between the U.S. and Soviet nuclear doctrines under the limitations of SALT II. It also emphasizes the development of a broad range of strategic capabilities in order to build a fully comprehensive nuclear war-fighting doctrine based on Soviet abilities.

"If the Soviet strategic doctrine is in fact nuclear war-fighting, then a good argument could be made that they would not waste warheads on the relatively innocent general population. However, they may want to target U.S. industrial centers which negate any U.S. war fighting and survival capability." (p 14)

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