

THE CASE FOR FIRST-STRIKE COUNTERFORCE CAPABILITIES

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by

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## THE CASE FOR FIRST-STRIKE COUNTERFORCE CAPABILITIES

### CHART 1

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This briefing argues a Strangelovian case: Why we should learn to love (even lust for) first-strike counterforce capabilities. The words alone, like overkill and megadeaths, have taken on enough emotional cargo to set knees jerking and eyes rolling. Arguing for first-strike counterforce capabilities is a little like arguing for cheap handguns: It runs so squarely against accepted thinking that its impudence is part of the fun. The other part of the fun is that the arguments for first-strike counterforce are so simple and direct as to be astonishing, if not confounding.

This briefing is an outgrowth of several informal seminars on the same subject given at Santa Monica and Washington over the past 18 months. The arguments were formalized in this briefing for the 41st meeting of the Military Operations Society in Washington on July 12, 1978.

## ARGUMENTS

1. STRATEGIC COUNTERFORCE CAPABILITIES
  - CAN BE USEFUL FOR DETERRENCE
  - ARE MORE IMPORTANT FOR US THAN THE SOVIETS
  
2. THE MOST LIKELY FORM OF COUNTERFORCE CAPABILITY NEEDED BY THE U. S. FOR DETERRENCE IS A CREDIBLE FIRST-STRIKE CAPABILITY
  
3. IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT STRATEGIC STABILITY WILL BE DEGRADED BY COUNTERFORCE CAPABILITIES
  - UNILATERAL OR BILATERAL
  - FIRST STRIKE OR SECOND STRIKE

### CHART 2

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These are the arguments I will try to develop during the course of the briefing:

\* I will try to convince you that counterforce capabilities are not just for warfighting; their most important contribution may be deterrence; and as a deterrent, we need them more than do the Soviets.

\* If I can convince you of that, then I want to go on to demonstrate that the counterforce capabilities we need most are for first-strike, not for second-strike.

\* If we get that far together, I want to inject you with some doubt that counterforce capabilities are inherently destabilizing, whether one or both sides have them, whether they are designed for first-strike or second-strike.

If you are already convinced that these arguments are correct, then I regret that I have nothing new for you in this briefing. If you find them preposterous or monstrous, then what follows may be entertaining. I will introduce no new facts; but I do want to give you some conceptual or logical frameworks with which to manipulate the facts you already have. If I can get you to consider these frameworks when thinking about counterforce, then my arguments will advance themselves.

### ADEQUACY CRITERIA ASSUMPTIONS

- NUCLEAR ATTACKS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT SOVIET ACTIONS TO BE DETERRED
- DETERRENCE IS PROVIDED BY THE THREAT OF A RETALIATORY ATTACK CAPABLE OF PRODUCING UNACCEPTABLE CONSEQUENCES
- UNACCEPTABLE CONSEQUENCES SHOULD BE RECKONED BY THE DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETAL VALUES
- SURPRISE FIRST-STRIKE COUNTERFORCE ATTACKS ARE THE MOST STRESSFUL FOR OUR RETALIATORY FORCES
- HENCE, THE ADEQUACY OF OUR FORCES SHOULD BE MEASURED IN TERMS OF THEIR SECOND-STRIKE COUNTERVALUE CAPABILITY

#### CHART 3

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Let's begin with our historical fixation on second-strike countervalue capabilities. For almost two decades the adequacy of our strategic forces has been judged by criteria embodying these assumptions:

\* That strategic forces should be designed to deter nuclear attacks.

\* That nuclear attacks can be deterred by threatening to retaliate with unacceptable consequences.

\* That unacceptable consequences are the destruction of value targets.

\* That our ability to destroy value targets would be most jeopardized by a first-strike counterforce attack.

\* Thus, the adequacy of our strategic forces is to be found in their second-strike countervalue capabilities, in response to a Soviet first-strike counterforce attack.

The logic is beautiful; its grip upon the strategic thinking of this country is a testimony to its elegance (or to our love for simplistic answers).

But these criteria are under increasing attack. Some have questioned the credibility of a threat to destroy the Soviet society when they are perfectly capable of responding in kind. Others have questioned the comparative vulnerability of the Soviet society, given their civil defense program. Still others question whether or not a single, surprise counterforce strike is, indeed, the most stressful scenario for our retaliatory forces.

But such quarrels may only be symptoms of a deeper discomfort: A sense that these adequacy criteria, despite their tight logic, are leading to an inadequate strategic posture and should, therefore, be challenged on their face, wherever weaknesses can be found. However valid such challenges may be, they do not, so far, portend any fundamental change in the character or size of our strategic forces.

My quarrel with these criteria is not with their validity. While they can be challenged and should be refined on the margin, I think they are fundamentally correct and will remain the cornerstone of our strategic policy.

My quarrel is their dominance of our strategic thinking: What was originally intended only as a yardstick for "How much is enough?" soon became the cornerstone of our strategic policy. And the cornerstone eventually became the strategic edifice. These very good ideas have, unfortunately, driven out all other ideas that should be included in judging the adequacy of our strategic forces.



## PROPRIETY CRITERIA

- CRISIS STABILITY

OUR FORCE POSTURE SHOULD MINIMIZE THE INCENTIVES  
TO OUR OPPONENT TO USE HIS FORCES IN A CRISIS

- ARMS RACE STABILITY

OUR FORCE POSTURE SHOULD MINIMIZE THE INCENTIVES  
TO OUR OPPONENT TO INCREASE THE CAPABILITIES  
OF HIS FORCES IN PEACETIME

### CHART 4

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While some are worried about the adequacy of our strategic forces, others worry about their propriety. During the last decade, there has been more public concern expressed over the propriety of our forces than over their adequacy.

Whether our strategic forces are naughty or nice is generally a question that focuses on something called stability. Notions about strategic stability are often expressed without adequate definitions, but these two themes are the most common:

\* Concerns over crisis stability are focused on how the kinds of forces may change the incentives for their use.

\* Concerns over arms race stability are focused on how the size and kinds of forces change the incentives for acquiring more forces.

In one instance, the worry is about the risk of precipitating war; while in the other, it is the worry of excessive consequences in the event of war. Both of these concerns are reflected in our efforts at strategic arms control: By controlling both the size and kinds of forces, we hope to reduce both the risks and consequences of nuclear war.

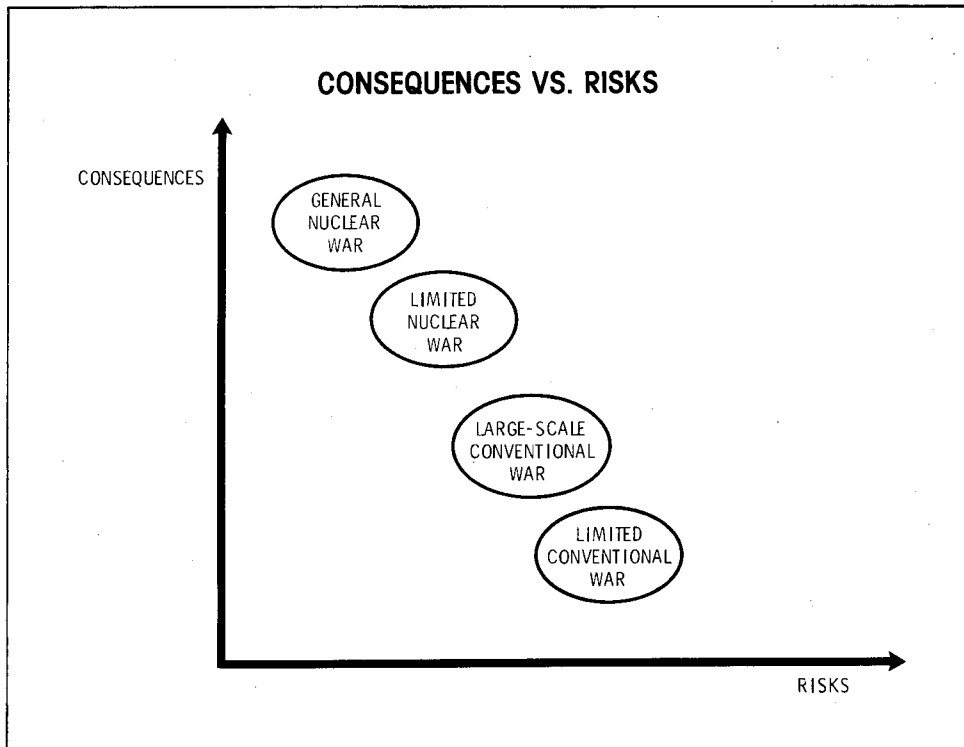


CHART 5

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But the risks and consequences of nuclear war are quite different from, yet related to, the risks and consequences of non-nuclear wars. It is these differences and interrelationships that lead to my quarrel with the dominance of second-strike countervalue thinking and the absence of first-strike counterforce thinking in our strategic policy.

Most would agree with the cardinal rankings shown here for the risks (probabilities) and consequences (damages) in various kinds of conflicts. General nuclear war is viewed as one of the most unlikely forms of conflict, but of such enormous consequences that we should devote considerable effort to reducing both the risks and consequences of that event.

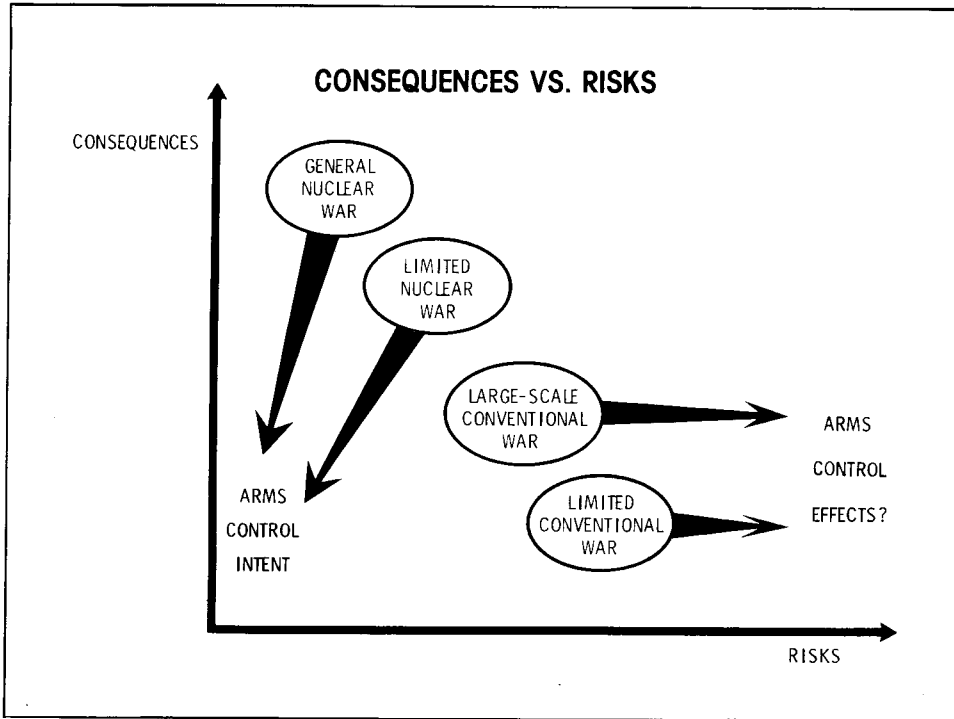


CHART 6

Thus, the intent of our arms control efforts is to move (or at least nudge) nuclear conflicts toward the origin of these coordinates.

But what are the effects of these efforts on the non-nuclear forms of conflict? Is there no linkage between the risks of conventional conflict and the consequences of nuclear conflict?

My thesis is that our adequacy and propriety criteria for strategic forces, while substantially correct, are an insufficient intellectual framework to inform our strategic policy and arms control efforts. If not broadened, they will increase the risks of conventional conflicts and, through escalation, the risks of nuclear conflict. The most difficult intellectual hurdle in the necessary, broader framework is the role of counterforce capabilities in our strategic posture. To attempt that hurdle, we shall need some definitions for counterforce.

### TYPES OF COUNTERFORCE

- SPLENDID  
THE ULTIMATE IN DAMAGE-LIMITING
- PREEMPTIVE  
USE THEM OR LOSE THEM
- PERFUNCTORY  
TRY TO DO COUNTERFORCE WITH COUNTERVALUE FORCES
- LIMITED  
A LITTLE BIT OF COUNTERFORCE ISN'T DESTABILIZING
- OBJECTIVE  
IRREVOCABLY SHIFT THE BALANCE OF FORCES  
CF1: IN A FIRST STRIKE  
CF2: IN A SECOND STRIKE

#### CHART 7

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Counterforce, like clothing, comes in many shapes, sizes, and colors. Here, I have given names and a descriptive phrase to a half-dozen types of counterforce. The types that I most want to talk about are the last ones: Objective counterforce, either in a first or second strike.

But to get a better focus on the last two, let's start out by defining all of them in a common coordinate system.

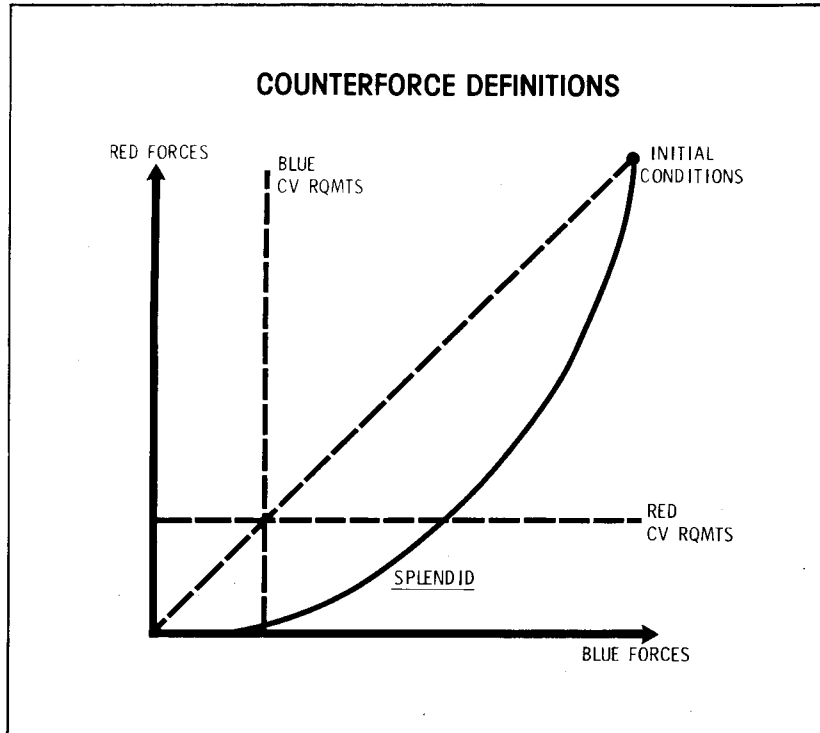


CHART 8

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The principal distinctions between these various types of counterforce can be made in terms of the familiar drawdown curves: Red and Blue strategic force levels form the coordinates within which we can trace the locus of counterforce attack outcomes, in this case, for Blue attacking Red forces.

Splendid counterforce capabilities, shown here, would drawdown opposing forces to the point where the threat of retaliatory countervalue attacks was no longer a concern for societal survival. This is the sort of counterforce envisioned in the damage-limitation concepts that came into vogue in the 1960s.

While splendid counterforce capabilities might have been possible at an earlier point in time, they are now believed by many to be unattainable by the superpowers: The weapons can be made sufficiently survivable, numerous, and effective that preventing unacceptable damage, even in a ragged retaliatory attack, is impossible. There are some who would dispute that conclusion, but their arguments pivot on what constitutes unacceptable damage to a society.

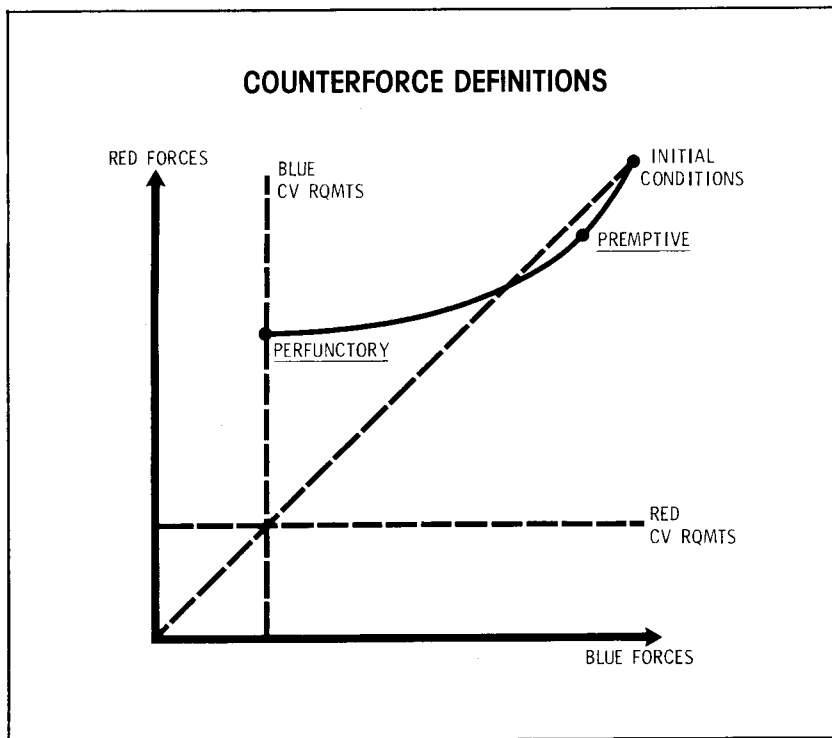


CHART 9

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If splendid counterforce capabilities are no longer possible, perhaps the drawdown curves look more like this.

Even though counterforce capabilities may not threaten to take away an opponent's retaliatory capabilities, preemptive counterforce might be attractive in some crisis contexts, simply to have the more favorable outcome associated with going first.

Of course, one can be perfunctory about this counterforce business and simply disarm himself in ineffective counterforce attacks. One way to do this is to build only countervalue weapons (lots of inaccurate, small-yield weapons) and then employ them for counterforce tasks (like hitting hardened silos, bunkers, and storage sites) because they are the only weapons available for an integrated, spasm attack plan.

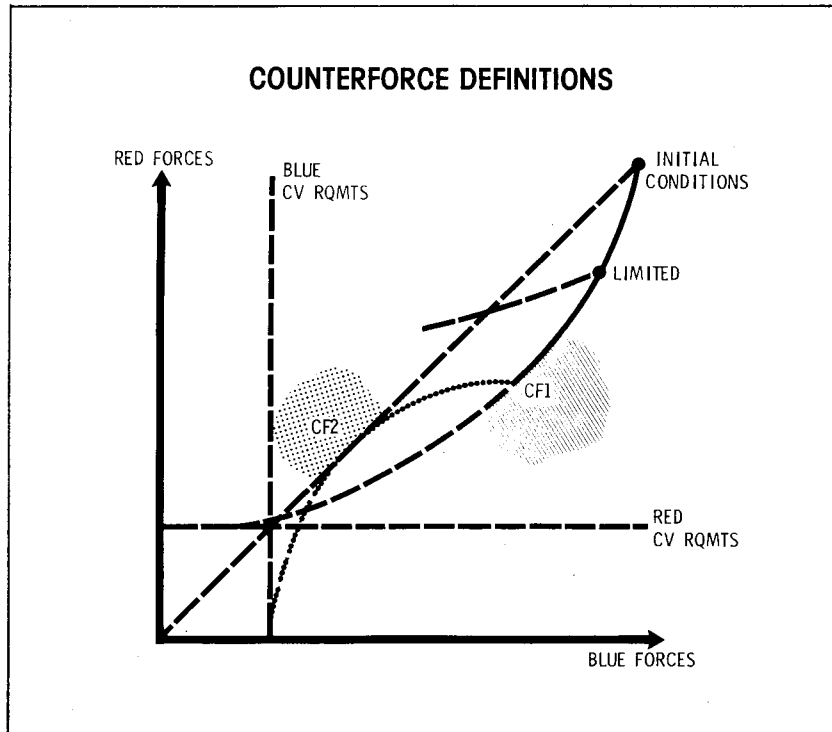


CHART 10

Better counterforce capabilities, while still short of splendid, can probably be devised. The limited counterforce capabilities advocated by some in the early 1970s were represented as no threat to the "legitimate" retaliatory capabilities of the Soviets. Rather, they were argued as an important option beside the increasingly improbable threat of countervalue attacks.

But where does one stop with limited counterforce capabilities? Might it lead to what I have called objective counterforce capabilities: The ability to irrevocably shift the balance of strategic forces?

Objective counterforce capabilities in a first-strike, CF1, would drawdown opposing strategic forces to a point or region where recovery of the force balance by a counterattack would no longer be possible.

On the other hand, objective counterforce capabilities in a second-strike, CF2, would recover (or even improve) the force balance by a counterattack, even after absorbing any counterforce first-strike.

Thus, the CF1 and CF2 lines shown here define two theoretical boundaries: If first-strike counterforce capabilities can be made to produce outcomes to the right of the CF1 line, or if second-strike counterforce capabilities can be made to insure outcomes to the left of the CF2 line, then they represent objective counterforce capabilities, even though they may fall well short of being splendid.

What possible useful purpose could be served by these capabilities to irrevocably shift the balance of strategic forces? They would, by their existence, threaten to foreclose any advantage to an opponent in subsequent counterforce exchanges. They would threaten an opponent with the alternatives of either desisting from further counterforce exchanges or being the first to resort to his reserves for countervalue attacks. Why one would want to pose such awesome alternatives to an opponent remains to be shown.



**DEFINING OBJECTIVE COUNTERFORCE CAPABILITIES**

- CF1: ● THE CAPABILITY TO STRIKE FIRST AND THEREBY FORECLOSE TO AN OPPONENT THE POSSIBILITY OF ADVANTAGEOUS FORCE RELATIONSHIPS IN ANY SUBSEQUENT COUNTERFORCE EXCHANGES
- THE CAPABILITY TO DENY CF2 TO AN OPPONENT
- CF2: ● THE CAPABILITY TO RESPOND TO ANY COUNTERFORCE FIRST STRIKE AND THEREBY FORECLOSE TO AN OPPONENT THE POSSIBILITY OF ADVANTAGEOUS FORCE RELATIONSHIPS IN ANY SUBSEQUENT COUNTERFORCE EXCHANGES
- THE CAPABILITY TO DENY CF1 TO AN OPPONENT

**CHART 11**  
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We can formalize these definitions for objective counterforce in words, as shown here.

Note that CF1 and CF2, while compatible if jointly held, are mutually exclusive if separately held. Thus, the existence of these capabilities depends upon properties of both opponent's strategic forces to absorb and deliver counterforce attacks.

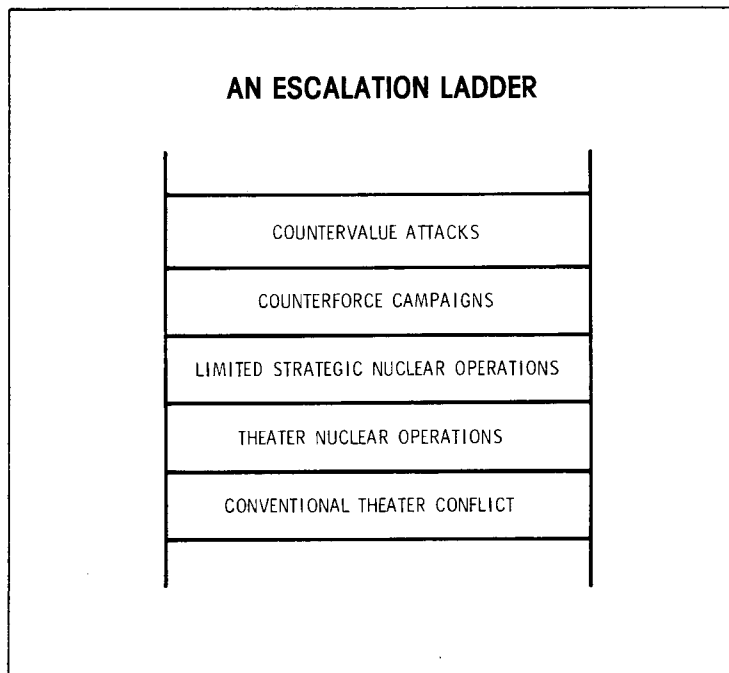


CHART 12

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Why should one be interested in acquiring such counterforce capabilities? Let's look at a simple escalation ladder for the answer.

The steps in this ladder are arbitrary and incomplete. We could add steps above and below the ones shown; you might choose to distinguish different levels than I have. But that shouldn't affect the arguments I want to make, using this ladder only as convenient conceptual framework.

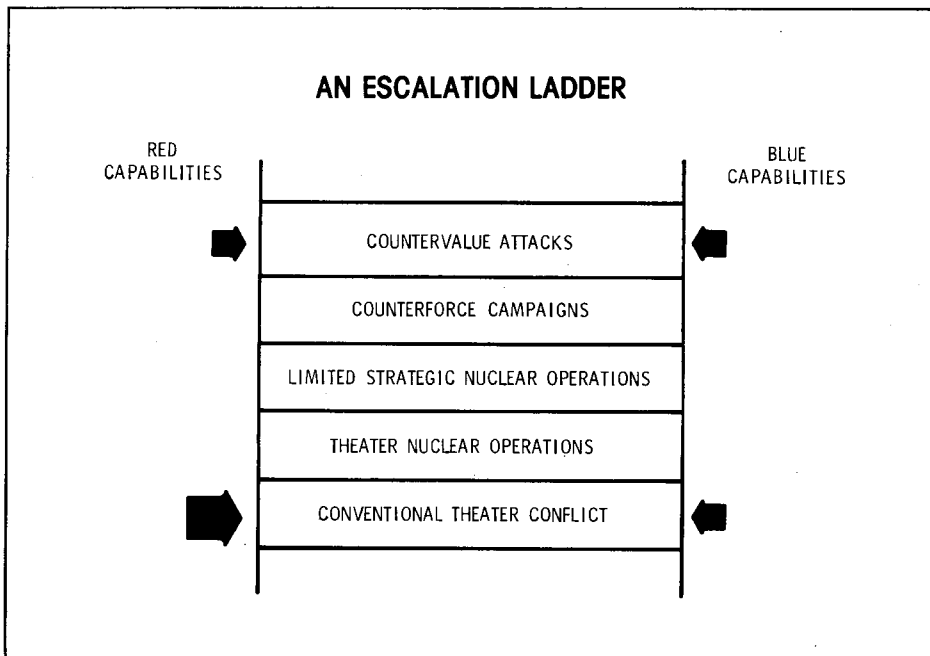


CHART 13

Let's use some symbols on each side of the ladder to portray the balance of forces on several levels between the Soviets and the United States. I have portrayed the balance of capabilities at the countervalue attack level to be roughly equal. Some would argue that I have been too optimistic, but that is a separate quarrel and not central to the argument I want to advance here.

I have skipped the next three levels of nuclear conflict for the moment because they are the ones we must discuss in greater detail.

At the level of conventional theater conflict, I have portrayed the Soviet's as enjoying a preponderance of capabilities. This too is open to argument, depending on context, locale, time period, etc. But, in this case, the quarrel is central to my argument.

Ever since World War II, the dominance of the Soviet army for any conventional conflict in Europe has been an uncomfortable fact of life. At first, the atomic bomb was to be our equalizer if we had to fight the Soviets in a war over Europe. We were never too clear about how these bombs would be used to offset the Soviet ground advantage in Europe, but the threat of their use was credible and without a Soviet response in kind.

By the time the Soviets also had atomic bombs, we had the preponderance of strategic forces for credible, disarming counterforce campaigns and for massive retaliation in countervalue attacks. We could credibly threaten "to bomb them back into the Stone Age," to use the phrase of the times.

With the prospect of an eventual balance in strategic forces between the Soviets and the United States, we relied upon our technical virtuosity to maintain the nuclear advantage. First, we sought the leverage promised by theater nuclear weapons against the weight of the Soviet army. Then, when the Soviets acquired theater nuclear weapons as well, we began to flirt with the idea of limited nuclear operations.

For more than three decades we have tried to find ways of counterbalancing or offsetting the preponderance of Soviet conventional warfighting capabilities in Europe (and elsewhere). While we may have had temporary successes at several of these levels, the permanent feature of the balance in capabilities has been this imbalance portrayed at the level of conventional theater conflict.

Currently, the United States appears to be trying to correct the imbalance in conventional force capabilities in Europe. Although I laud the intent, I'm not optimistic about our chances: We shall be trying to do what we gave up on immediately after World War II, and the Soviets have, if anything, opened their lead over us in conventional warfare capabilities. Much is in their favor: Geography, political control for raising and maintaining large standing armies, the pace of modern warfare when compared to democratic decisionmaking and mobilization, etc.

What, then, is to be done? Can any offset be found higher up on the escalation ladder to deter the Soviets from exercising their preponderance of conventional power for coercive purposes? Where is the counterinitiative to give them pause and us strength?

Theater nuclear weapons don't provide any promise of substantial unilateral advantage. True, the threat of escalation to theater nuclear weapons raises the prospective level of pain, but it wouldn't seem to confer any particular advantage to the United States or its allies. The Soviets, given their advantage at the conventional force level, would surely prefer not to see escalation to nuclear weapons; but if we choose that level, are they at any disadvantage? A case could be made that we would only hasten the inevitable by escalation to theater nuclear weapons.

Much of the same would seem to apply to a threat of escalation to limited strategic nuclear operations. This, again, is a threat of increased pain. Do we really believe that the Soviets are at a disadvantage when it comes to a test of pain? Do we believe that we can gain some advantage over the Soviets by picking-off tender targets? Are we somehow less vulnerable, more stoic, more capable at this sort of thing than they?

Is the threat of countervalue attacks any longer a credible counterweight to the Soviet threat to use its conventional forces? The Soviets may see our behavior as strange, but I don't think threatening to blow up the world, ours as well as theirs, is a highly credible counter to coercive movement of the Red Army.

At the countervalue attack level, we now have a stalemate. The game is not to threaten to "pull the chain," but to leave one's opponent with the choice of moving to that level or desisting. We must insure that we are not stuck with that choice; rather, we must look far enough ahead in the escalation game to be sure that we will be able to force that choice upon our opponent. That means we must control the next lower step, at the counterforce level.

I believe that first-strike counterforce capabilities are the only option now available to us as an advantageous counter-initiative. CF1, as I have defined it here, does confer a military advantage. It could be a credible threat to shift the strategic balance if the opposing preponderance of conventional forces is unleashed. The choice of escalating to countervalue attacks or desisting would be left to our opponent.

Is CF1 really an offset for a preponderance of conventional forces? How would CF1 capabilities stop the Soviets from taking Europe? Perhaps Europe in exchange for some of their strategic forces would be an attractive bargain to the Soviets. These are warfighting, not deterrence, arguments. To be sure, deterrence can fail, be it in the form of counterforce or countervalue capabilities. Whether we would want to exercise CF1 capabilities if the Soviets unleashed their conventional forces is a warfighting question, as is the question of whether or not to invoke "assured destruction" if the Soviets started busting our cities. The question should not be whether CF1 could fail as a deterrent (it can), but whether it is a deterrent and worth its costs.

Why not seek the less truculent CF2 capabilities instead? CF2 is a responsive counterforce capability; it isn't a response to a conventional attack, by definition. Thus, it isn't a counter-initiative that will deter the coercive use of the Soviet preponderance of conventional forces.

What if the Soviets also had a CF1 capability? Couldn't they exercise that capability preemptively as a prelude to the use of their preponderance in conventional forces? Yes, but now the price of admission, the threshold, has changed. To use their advantage in conventional forces for coercive purposes, the Soviets would first have to initiate a major nuclear war. It is one thing to find that war is, regretfully, escalating; it is quite another to initiate war deliberately at such a destructive level.

### SOME PROPOSITIONS AND COROLLARIES

- MINIMUM DETERRENCE POSTURES (ASSURED DESTRUCTION ONLY) ARE CREDIBLE ONLY WHEN ONE ENJOYS SUPERIOR NON-NUCLEAR OPTIONS WHEREVER VITAL CONCERNS MAY BE THREATENED.
- GIVEN THE EXISTING PREPONDERANCE OF SOVIET CONVENTIONAL FORCE, OUR ABILITY TO "RESTORE THE BALANCE" WITH AN EFFECTIVE COUNTERFORCE SECOND-STRIKE OPTION MAY BE LESS IMPORTANT THAN OUR ABILITY TO SHIFT THE BALANCE WITH AN EFFECTIVE (CREDIBLE) COUNTERFORCE FIRST-STRIKE OPTION.
- RESTORING THE BALANCE BY MEANS OF A COUNTERFORCE SECOND STRIKE IS A COMPATIBLE STRATEGY WITH CONVENTIONAL FORCE SUPERIORITY.
- SHIFTING THE BALANCE BY MEANS OF A COUNTERFORCE FIRST STRIKE IS A COMPATIBLE STRATEGY WITH CONVENTIONAL FORCE INFERIORITY.
- WHEREVER WE LACK CREDIBLE NON-NUCLEAR OPTIONS, OUR ABILITY TO RESIST COERCION WILL (AS IT HAS IN THE PAST) NECESSARILY REST ON A CREDIBLE FIRST-STRIKE COUNTERFORCE OPTION.

#### CHART 14

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From this kind of reasoning, I come to the following propositions:

\* Those who hold that countervalue capabilities are enough must believe that our non-nuclear capabilities are sufficient for the protection of any vital interest short of national survival. That implies something interesting about their assessment of U.S. conventional force capabilities or about the extent U.S. vital interests.

\* Those who embrace counterforce only for "restoring the balance" would provide us with nothing to offset the coercive threat of the Soviet preponderance in conventional forces.

Several corollaries follow logically:

\* CF2 makes a better Soviet than U.S. strategy.

\* CF1 makes a better U.S. than Soviet strategy.

\* We seem to have forgotten, in our efforts to control strategic arms, that our conventional and nuclear capabilities have been and will remain linked. Our conventional capabilities have never been good enough to give away a credible, advantageous nuclear initiative. The only advantageous nuclear initiative left to us as a deterrent is the credible threat of striking first with an effective counterforce strike.

### SUMMARY OF ASSUMPTIONS

- THE RISK OF CONVENTIONAL CONFLICT IS SUBSTANTIALLY GREATER THAN THE RISK OF NUCLEAR CONFLICT
- THE SOVIETS ENJOY A PREPONDERANCE OF CONVENTIONAL FORCE
- THERE ARE VITAL AREAS WHERE THE SOVIETS MAY CONFRONT US
- THE SOVIETS MIGHT CREDIBLY THREATEN THE USE OF THEIR CONVENTIONAL FORCES FOR COERCION
- WE DO NOT ENJOY ANY SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGES OVER THE SOVIETS IN THE CONTEMPLATION OF TNOs OR LNOs
- ADEQUATE COUNTERVALUE CAPABILITIES ARE ASSURABLE FOR THE SOVIETS AND OURSELVES
- OBJECTIVE COUNTERFORCE CAPABILITIES ARE FEASIBLE
  - Technically
  - Economically
  - Politically

#### CHART 15

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To arrive at those propositions, I have made a number of assumptions. I may not have recognized all of them, but all I could think of are listed here.

\* You may not agree that conventional conflict is more likely than nuclear or that the Soviets enjoy any advantage at it.

\* You may not agree that we have any vital interests outside the United States or that the Soviets would try to coerce us with respect to those interests.

\* You may believe that we do, contrary to my view, enjoy significant advantages in the conduct of limited or theater nuclear operations.

\* You may believe that the retention of "assured destruction" capabilities by the Soviets or the United States is in jeopardy by the developments in arms or civil defense.

\* And you may believe that the kinds of objective counterforce I have been talking about are impossible to achieve for any of several reasons.

### STABILITY IN MUTUAL COUNTERFORCE POSTURES

CASE	SIDE				STABILITY	
	BLUE		RED		CRISIS	ARMS RACE
	CF1	CF2	CF1	CF2		
1					✓	✓
2		✓		✓	✓	✓
3		✓			✓	
4				✓	✓	
5	✓		✓			✓
6	✓				✓	
7			✓		✓	
8	✓	✓			✓	
9			✓	✓	✓	

CHART 16

The political feasibility of objective counterforce capabilities raises the important question of stability. How would such capabilities square with the propriety criteria discussed earlier (on Chart 4)?

All of the possible combinations of CF1 and CF2 in Red and Blue postures are listed here for our consideration. There are nine possibilities consistent with the earlier definitions of CF1 and CF2. For each case, we can make some judgment about the stability of the postures.

The first combination, with no counterforce capabilities on either side, would appear to be the favored direction in our arms control efforts. It is stable, we assume, on both counts: crisis and arms race stability.

If counterforce capabilities were to be permitted, the less truculent form would seem to be CF2. None of the next three CF2-only combinations should be crisis unstable. Rather, by definition, any CF2 capabilities should have a stabilizing effect, since they would effectively deny advantageous first use by an opponent. The unsymmetrical CF2 combinations (Cases 3 and 4) might be unstable from the standpoint of arms race incentives, but the symmetrical case (Case 2) should be stable on both counts.



But none of these first four combinations offer any counterinitiative against coercive threats lower down on the escalation ladder. So I have argued we need postures containing CF1 capabilities, at least for Blue.

There are three combinations for which Blue would possess CF1 capabilities (Cases 5, 6, and 8). Those which are unsymmetrically favorable to Blue are stable in crises, because Blue has no incentive to use those capabilities except as a contingent threat without time-urgency. Crisis stability would be of greatest concern with symmetrical CF1 capabilities (Case 5), but the arms race stability of that posture might be fairly good. Moreover, from the arguments developed here, the crisis instability incurred by symmetrical CF1 capabilities might be acceptable to Blue if that is the price of having a credible nuclear initiative to offset Red's conventional force advantage.

An attempt by Blue to acquire unsymmetrical possession of CF1 capabilities would seem to create incentives for Red to acquire the same. That is, wouldn't Case 6 lead to Case 5? Perhaps. It might as easily provide incentives for Red to acquire a CF2 capability, thereby extinguishing Blue's CF1 capabilities. Thus, Case 6 could lead to Case 4.

In sum, all CF1 postures are not clearly unstable simultaneously on both propriety criteria. Nor is it clear that the adoption of crisis-stable CF1 postures will lead to arms races or toward crisis-unstable postures. These issues need illumination, but the prevailing attitudes toward the consideration of counterforce postures has brought more smoke than light.

### HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

1. ARE CF1 OR CF2 POSTURES TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE ANYMORE?
2. ARE CF1 OR CF2 POSTURES UNILATERALLY ENFORCEABLE?
3. DO CF1 POSTURES PROVIDE PEACETIME INCENTIVES TOWARD CF2 POSTURES?
4. IS THERE A TRADEOFF BETWEEN CF1 AND GPF POSTURES?
5. WOULD WE REALLY BE HAPPIER IN A MUTUAL CF2 WORLD?

#### CHART 17

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Once the mind opens up far enough to consider the arguments for (as well as against) counterforce capabilities, a great number of questions are confronted. I will pose some of them here as "homework" questions, for I have certainly not addressed them in this briefing.

I think CF1 and CF2 postures are technically feasible, but I haven't tried to configure any. The burden of proof undoubtedly lies with those who would advocate such postures. If they are possible, are they fragile to the responsive actions of an adversary? Can we demonstrate that those responsive actions lead toward more stable postures?

There is the suggestion of a tradeoff between general-purpose forces and strategic forces in the arguments developed here. Are those tradeoffs to be made on the margin; or are they mutually exclusive approaches to the problem?

The haunting question for me in this argument is whether or not we really want the world we seem to be striving for in our arms control efforts. Do we really want to deny, to ourselves as well as to the Soviets, a credible nuclear first-strike option? If so, we need to rethink our whole concept of national security: What are our vital interests, and what is our strategy to secure them?

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Builder