

nuclear plant—decreased by 30 percent in 1979 alone. The only plant for the construction of floating nuclear plants has been closed. Recent industry studies predict that two of the top four producers of nuclear plants will have totally closed their nuclear related facilities by 1985 and a third will do so shortly afterwards.

The impact of this decimation of the most advanced of U.S. industrial capabilities may be measured in its results for manpower availability and the like. But even more mundane facts show how severe the results are.

In a speech given in the beginning of January, Harold Agnew, long-time director of the Los Alamos weapons laboratory, member of the President's Advisory Commission on Arms Control and present head of General Atomic (a large government contractor involved in nuclear research for civilian power production), stated that the U.S. is now suffering from a severe defense weakness due to the total lack of depth in its nuclear weapons production facilities. In the 1960s, he stated, there were duplicate plants for the production, machining, and assembly of nuclear weapons. Now, each of these three functions is performed at a single plant, with no backup capability at all. "Little by little," Agnew stressed, absolutely all our redundant facilities have been closed in the name of cost-effectiveness. The same anti-nuclear and anti-science policies which have destroyed the U.S. nuclear industry have their refraction in the military sphere in the shutting down of military facilities.

*Next week's EIR will contain an in-depth look at the specific weapons systems that have resulted from the shrunken U.S. research and development effort, the lack of new weapons on the country's military capability, and an estimate of the Soviet advances in the areas ignored by the U.S.*

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## References

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## Documentation

### Gen. Richardson: 'Painted ourselves into a corner'

*The following interview was conducted by EIR with General Robert Richardson, presently attached to the American Security Council:*

**Q:** The Soviet Union's military deployment into Afghanistan appears to represent a shift from a war avoidance policy to a war winning policy. What are U.S. military strategic options? What are U.S. capabilities?

**A:** The U.S. today is like the man who painted himself into the corner, and then says, I ain't got no option except to walk across the paint. You ask why you painted yourself in the corner in the first place.

Our options are really quite limited. First of all, we haven't got the capability to sustain a military operation of a conventional attrition type anywhere, at this time, for many reasons, all of which can't be blamed on one particular process. ...

what are you going to do, light another candle? In other words you can scream and rant and rave, and say, your national security interests require that you do something. But outside of a punitive action—and I'm not sure what you buy with that—I don't know too much what you can do.

Certainly even in the strategic field you don't want to get into that kind of hassle. I don't see anyone getting into that kind of hassle for a Middle East grab, and certainly not on purpose. Even assuming the only card we had was absolute strategic superiority I still don't see anybody using it in that context, and we haven't got it!

If you assume we still had absolute strategic superiority, you still don't see this crowd or anybody else shouting in Moscow for a grab in Afghanistan, Pakistan or Iran. And we don't have it. You invite a catastrophe on your own head in return so that on both sides you almost certainly have to say the use of the only systems which are militarily effective today are almost highly unlikely because it doesn't make a lot of sense on either side.

They have the capability and the geography. You can play chicken and this might come about. By playing chicken, what I mean is that, if you really felt you had to do something, you might go in with a local tactical nuclear effort, and see whether that so scares the opposition they want to go back to the conference table.

**Q:** Wouldn't the Soviets call the bluff?

**A:** A lot depends on whether they think they're as good as we think they are, and the odds are they don't. ... They've got to figure out how they are going to cope with our submarine threat. They really can't figure out our intentions any better than we can theirs. The risk factor is extreme, almost impossible....

**Q:** Isn't it clear that the Soviet Afghanistan deployment is a prelude to a strategic nuclear deployment?

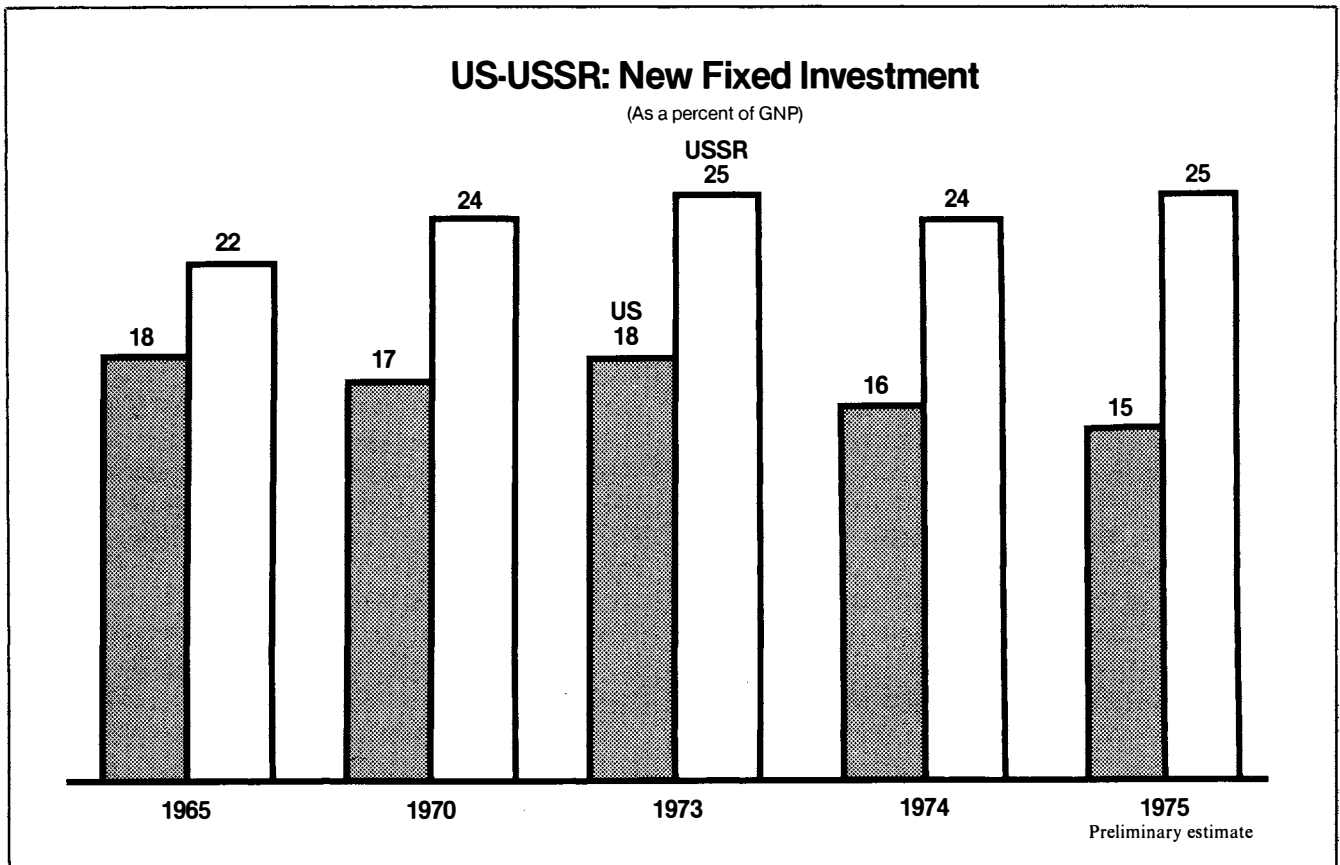
**A:** Yes, I have a hard time believing they need all that junk just to keep a few natives down.

**Q:** It appears that U.S. defense capabilities have steadily declined since 1967 following cutbacks in research and development projects. Could you comment on this situation?

**A:** It started in 1961. If you turn the water off in 1961, the pipe doesn't start to reduce its flow until about 5 or 6 years later. The lead time in a system would be 5 to 10 years. So while a lot of systems were cancelled in 1961 and 1962 for arms control and unilateral disarmament, a lot of throttling back took place. A lot of stuff on back order and purchased in the 1950s was being delivered in the early 1960s, and actually, statistically, the force grew out of sheer momentum well into the Johnson era. Then it started falling off as the impact of the shutoff occurred. You have to look at the lead time in these things.

That's why, if they go get all geared up today, you are not going to have a substantive impact before 1984-85. You need a major R-and-D effort. You have to get rid of these silly constraints. You have to go out and do high-risk research and development. One of the things the McNamara crew did was to kill that in 1961 and 1962 and introduce low-risk.

When you introduce low-risk then you ordain inferiority, because low risk is the building-block approach, where the government says: look, I don't want you to build any fancy weapon system until you show me you have all the technology in hand, so we have no waste, no overruns.



Now, if you have all the technology in hand when you start and it takes five years from start to delivery, that means by definition any technology that comes in hand in the next five years ain't going to be in it.

If you go the route we went, from everything from Polaris to Minutemen to space, and scientists say, I've never done it but I think by 1985 I can put the Rayburn Building in orbit, O.K., you fellows think you can do it, but have never done it, let's set up a program to put it in orbit; here's the money. Everybody puts their shoulder to the wheel to do it. Then, if they succeed, that's great. But since they've never done it, there's going to be a very good chance they are going to have slippage, overruns, failures and changes.

That's high risk, but the payoff is also high results. The Soviets never had the problems of failures and overruns to cope with. Nobody blows the whistle on them when cost escalates and when somebody hits a technology problem.

**Q:** Has there been total stagnation in U.S. R-and-D and defense capabilities?

**A:** Yes and no. We have not been pushing the state of the art as much as we could have been, had we proceeded as we had in the 1940s and 1950s. The incentive to pull it all together into really advanced new systems was denied.

That is, there is a lot of talk now about reinventing the wheel over there. Talking about space concepts and systems. Christ almighty! Dinosaur was ready to fly in 1961 and that was a space boost glide system. Imagine if they had flown Dinosaur in 1961 and it had been a success. We would have ordered a few. It would have been in units in 1967 and the outfit would have been 10 years old and we would be talking about replacing it with a space bomber today. Same with the fancy cruise missile. It's nothing more than Skybolt updated.

We are victim, then, of the philosophy of the Jerry Weisners, the technology plateaus, technology is bad. If you were to do that, they say, you will start an arms race...

### **'They didn't undercalculate'**

**Q:** Can you say something about the differences between U.S. and Soviet strategy?

**A:** The political conception of the U.S. has been geared to the notion that the Soviets would consider nuclear war dangerous and wouldn't do it. It could be *deterred*. They never bought those premises. Take Carter's Olympic

threat. I think Carter is lighting another candle. Either the Russians have something big in mind, in which event all these other events are like sticking rosettes on the bull's ass to entertain the crowd before the main act. That's not going to change the bull fight. If they were so concerned about these events, they would not have done what they've done now. I have heard pronouncements that, Oh well, these guys undercalculated. ... Bull shit. They didn't undercalculate god damn it! The same guy over in state who will tell you that they undercalculated the naughty, naughty reaction to their action will also tell you that they are such excellent and thorough planners that they would never make the mistake of antagonizing us by using nuclear weapons or something. I say you can't have it both ways. Either they're smart or they aren't.

## **Defense specialist: 'The risks are just too great'**

*EIR interviewed John M. Collins, Senior specialist in National Defense at the Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress.*

**Q:** The Soviet military deployment in Afghanistan does not appear to represent a mere limited operation, but signals a shift in overall military strategic posture, from that of war avoidance to war winning. Would you agree with this assessment and what are the U.S. strategic or conventional options?

**A:** That's an accurate assessment. But I feel the U.S. has no strategic nuclear options at this point. The risks are too great. Taking that option any leader would risk total destruction.

**Q:** Are there any conventional options for the U.S.?

**A:** I think you can sum that up very nicely by saying that the Soviet Union has a much larger, uncommitted reserve of ground and tactical air forces than we do. Our uncommitted reserve is tiny. That is also true of our uncommitted seapower assets. So the capability of the Soviets playing games along the European and Asian perimeter is significantly better than our own ability to respond. These are the two points I would like to stress at this point.