

'Operation Alert' Accused Of Scare Tactics by Scientists

By Michael Getler
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An assessment of U.S. and Russian strategic military power compiled by the American Security Council and mailed to more than 1.5 million people in recent weeks came under sharp attack yesterday from a committee of the Federation of American Scientists.

The scientists charged the ASC evaluation was made on "a fallacious premise" and was designed to "scare or stampede" the public into voting dovish legislators out of office and to pave the way for new weapon programs.

In mid-September, the ASC, a generally conservative organization that favors a stronger military posture, published a document called "Operation Alert." Included was the voting record of all senators and representatives on what ASC considered to be 10 important national security issues.

The report also contained an analysis of the nuclear balance between the two superpowers that showed the United States trailing the Soviets in both the number of missiles and bombers able to carry nuclear weapons and the amount of megatonnage that each nation could drop on the other.

The cover of "Operation Alert" shows a Soviet missile roughly 10 times larger than a U.S. missile to dramatize the alleged megatonnage gap.

The ASC claimed that the Russians were ahead in delivery vehicles by 3,500 to 2,260 and in megatonnage by 10,330 to 1,730.

At a press conference yes-

terday Dr. Herbert Scoville Jr., a former deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency and now chairman of the FAS strategic weapons committee, charged the ASC with making numerous errors in its analysis.

"We hate to see the American public misled," Scoville said. "There is no question that by any standard the U.S. is not behind the Soviet Union."

Among the key points made by the scientists' group:

- Total megatonnage as a measure of a nation's nuclear striking power is "an outmoded concept, discarded by U.S. military leaders many years ago." The number of individual weapons and the ability to deliver them accurately "are much more significant criteria."

At the moment, the scientists claim, the United States has 2,260 missiles and bombers able to reach Russia, while the Soviets have 1,668 able to attack targets in this country.

- Included in the strategic striking power attributed to the Soviets by the ASC are 700 intermediate and medium-

range ballistic missiles which the scientists point out cannot reach targets on the U.S. mainland.

- Similarly, the ASC total includes 700 medium-range bombers which could only get to the United States on one-way missions.

On the other hand, the scientists group points out that the ASC does not include, as a plus for U.S. powers, any of the tactical U.S. aircraft based in Western Europe and on aircraft carriers that can reach Soviet targets.

- The ASC, the scientists claim also omit from its charts the actual amount of megatonnage carried by bombers of both sides. Each of 550 U.S. B-52s, carries a far greater bomb load than the 150 to 200 Soviet long-range bombers.

If the actual bombloads had been included, the FAS maintains, even the megatonnage picture "would have been quite different since the U.S. B-52s can deliver more megatonnage than all the other strategic systems put together."

The 1,500-member Federation of American Scientists has generally opposed any expansion of U.S. strategic forces in recent years, and has strongly opposed deployment of the Safeguard ABM system and multiple independently-targeted re-entry vehicles (MIRVs) for ICBMs.

The ASC, in its report, stressed that the U.S. strategic force had remained constant for several years while the Soviets continue to add both land-based and submarine-based missiles.