

Soviet Buildup Disputed

Colby Sees No Massive Arms Increase

By Laurence Stern
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Newly disclosed testimony by top intelligence officials contradicts claims by Pentagon spokesmen that steady increases in Soviet military spending threaten to reduce the United States to subordinate power status.

In the current "Battle of the Pentagon Budget" there have been warnings from Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger and other officials of massive Soviet military buildups and "gaps" adverse to the United States.

Central Intelligence Agency Director William E. Colby, in testimony made public yesterday by Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wis.), said Soviet spending was increasing at a steady 3 per cent annual rate it has maintained over the past decade.

Colby also said that a substantial portion of Soviet defense costs was absorbed by defensive missions for which there was no comparable U.S. outlay—such as the 10,000 surface-to-air missiles deployed around Soviet borders as well as the positioning of forces along the Chinese-Soviet frontier.

Summarizing the testimony by Colby and Lt. Gen. Daniel O. Graham, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Proxmire said, "The U.S. leads the Soviet Union in virtually every area of advanced military technology." He acknowledged, however, that the dollar costs of Soviet military programs exceed those of the United States on the basis of estimating techniques used by the CIA.

Colby and Graham testified June 18 and July 21 before the Joint Economic Committee's Subcommittee on Priorities and Economy in Government of which Proxmire is chairman. The sanitized transcript was issued yesterday.

A strong element in Soviet military planning and expenditures, said Colby, was defense against the possibility of attack from aircraft deployed throughout the NATO countries.

"They are very concerned about their vulnerability to aircraft. The Soviets, of course, have a national historical fixation on the problem of invasion..." the CIA director observed. Aside

INTELLIGENCE, From A1

from the deterrent capability arrayed against NATO forces the Soviet Union is deploying 40 divisions along its border with China together with some 1,000 tactical aircraft, half of them nuclear-armed, Colby said.

Colby and Graham agreed that the dollar basis of estimating Soviet military costs tended to inflate Russian expenditures because of noncomparable factors in the U.S. and Soviet economies. Nonetheless the estimated dollar costs of Soviet defense programs have exceeded U.S. expenditures every year since 1971, according to Colby. During 1964-1974 Soviet military costs, in dollar terms, were estimated to be 90 per cent of the U.S. level.

In the course of the hearing Proxmire complained to Gen. Graham that threats of a new Soviet capability seem to blossom "just like the flowers bloom in the spring" whenever the defense budget reaches the Appropriations Committee action stage. "During a debate over a U.S. ABM we begin hearing about a Soviet MIRV or a Chinese ICBM," the senator observed.

Proxmire asked Graham whether he agreed that the United States "leads the Russians in almost every high technology base in terms of

bombers, submarines, computers, missiles and other categories."



WILLIAM E. COLBY
...steady 3¼ increase

Graham answered: "I think that in almost all military technologies we lead them." He added, without elaboration, "I am worried about several that are rather important, such as (deleted) the application of lasers."

Proxmire concluded that it would improve public understanding of defense spending controversies if reports on Soviet military outlays were made at regular intervals by the "civilian side" of the intelligence community.

"It would also help avoid confusion if Pentagon officials would refrain from using the estimates of the intelligence agencies prematurely, selectively, or out of context," he said.