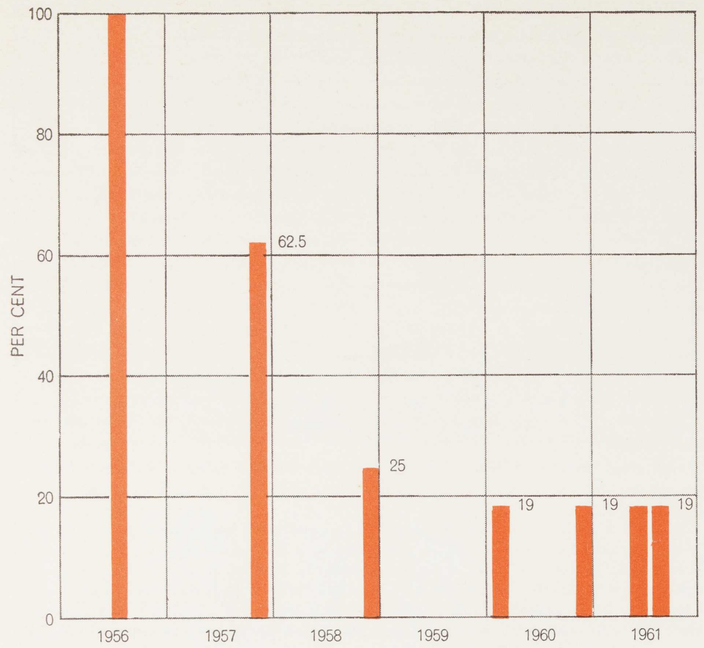
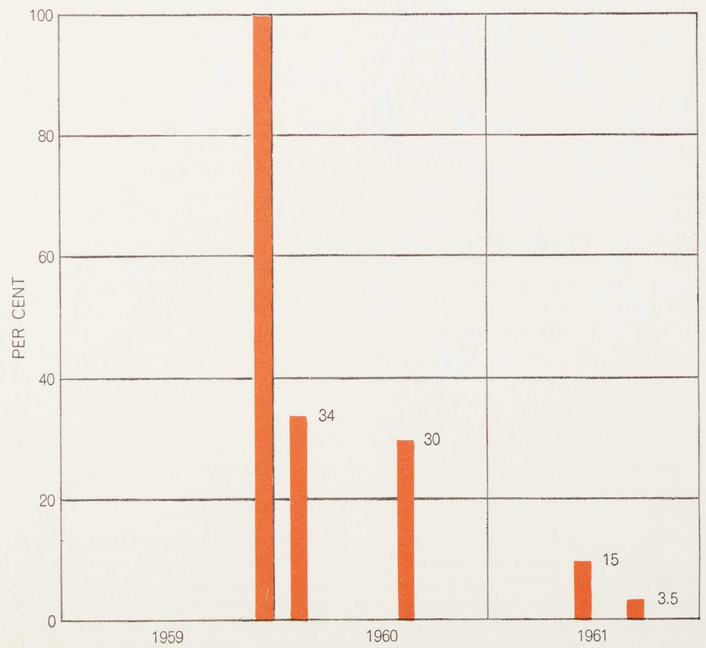


U.S. ESTIMATE OF SOVIET HEAVY-BOMBER STRENGTH by the middle of 1961, according to an article by Senator Stuart Symington in *The Reporter*, decreased by 81 per cent between August, 1956 (*bar at left*), and August, 1961 (*right*). Senator Symington's figures were given in percentages, rather than absolute numbers, for security reasons.



U.S. ESTIMATE OF SOVIET OPERATIONAL ICBM STRENGTH similarly decreased, according to Senator Symington, by 96.5 per cent between December, 1959, and September, 1961.

first stage to low levels such as those suggested by the Anglo-French memorandum of 1954: one million or at most 1.5 million men each for the U.S., the U.S.S.R. and China. When the correspondingly limited contributions to the land forces of NATO from Great Britain, France and West Germany are taken into account, the armies of the Soviet bloc would not have the capability of overrunning Europe in a surprise land attack.

The number of nuclear weapons in existence on both sides, their explosive power and the diversity of the delivery systems are so overwhelming that no small step in nuclear disarmament can have much significance. In a situation in which the U.S. has 10,000 delivery vehicles and a stockpile of 30,000 megatons of explosive (which is said to be increasing at the fastest rate in its history), a first disarmament step involving only a small percentage reduction is not worth negotiating. To justify the labor of negotiating any agreed reduction, and to offset the undoubted strains and disputes that will inevitably arise from the operation of any inspection and control system, the negotiated reduction must be a major one; in fact, of such magnitude as to change qualitatively the nature of the relative nuclear postures of the two giant powers.

The simplest big first step, and the one most consistent with realistic military considerations, is that both giant powers should reduce their nuclear forces to a very low and purely retaliatory role. That is, each should retain only enough invulnerable long-range vehicles to attack the other's cities if it is itself attacked, say less than 100 ICBM's with one-megaton war heads. This is still an enormous force, capable of killing tens of millions of people. A reduction to a level of 20 ICBM's or less would be much preferable. Such a reduction would at once prevent nuclear weapons from being used by sane governments as weapons of aggression or coercion. It would not, of course, prevent them from being used by irresponsible groups who do not calculate the cost. It is only at a later stage in disarmament, when nuclear weapons are completely destroyed, that this danger will be excluded. It has always been clear that the ever present danger of accidental or irresponsible war is a cogent reason for big and rapid steps in the disarmament process.

Detailed studies are needed of possible ways in which both the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. could take such an important first step without upsetting the present strategic balance. A major problem is how to phase the building up of a system of general inspection while at the same time making a drastic reduction in nuclear delivery systems by their actual destruction under international verification. Taking military considerations only into account, I believe that a procedure acceptable to both blocs could be devised.

The difference hitherto between the proposed Western and Soviet first steps in relation to nuclear weapons has been often simplified to the statement that the U.S.S.R. wants disarmament without control and the West wants control without disarmament. It would be more accurate to say that the clash is on the phasing of the stages of disarmament and the stages of control.

In its 1960 proposals the U.S.S.R. suggested that, in the first step, international teams should be dispatched to inspect the destruction of all rocket weapons, military aircraft and other carriers of nuclear weapons. It did not propose the inspection or control of those that remain waiting to be destroyed. Full inspection of a country was to be undertaken only when all weapons had been destroyed. It is clear that the U.S.S.R.'s first steps of disarmament are consistent with its presumed military policy of relying for its safety from nuclear attack on a relatively small force of purely retaliatory nuclear weapons in secret sites.

On the other hand, the U.S. proposals in 1960 envisaged widespread inspection in the first stages and no actual disarmament until the second stage. This proposal might make military sense if put by a weak nuclear power to a much stronger one. But when put by a strong power to a weaker one, rejection must have been expected. If the U.S.S.R. had accepted the proposal, the geographical secrecy of its nuclear sites would have been lost and it would have been vulnerable to nuclear attack from the much stronger West.

Any realistic first stage must start from the fact that the present nuclear balance, such as it is, has a highly asymmetric character: the West's much greater nuclear power is balanced by Soviet geographical secrecy. Since the military balance is asymmetric, so must be any mutually acceptable first step. Concessions must be made by both sides and these must be based on the realities of the military postures of the two blocs.

The U.S.S.R. should accept general inspection not, as in their proposals hitherto, when disarmament is complete but at some intermediate stage on the road to disarmament. Reciprocally, the West should not demand widespread inspection before any disarmament has taken place, as it has done hitherto, but only after substantial destruction of nuclear armaments has taken place under international verification.

In the first stage, therefore, all parties might supply to one another a list of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, together with research and production facilities. The exact location of sites would not be included at this stage. An agreed number of weapons would then be destroyed and their destruction would be verified by on-site inspection by the international control organization. When this destruction has been verified, a general inspection, using some sampling technique, would begin. The object would then be to verify the correctness of the original declared inventories by checking the numbers remaining after the agreed reductions had been verified, and to proceed to the elimination of the armament remaining.

A word must be said about the place of a test-ban agreement in the stages of a disarmament plan. If this agreement did not involve a type of inspection that might reveal the Soviet nuclear sites, it would be advantageous for it to be included in the first stage, or preferably agreed to at once. If, however, it involved widespread inspection that might reveal these sites, Soviet military planners would certainly advise its rejection. It would then have to wait for the second stage of disarmament, when general inspection starts after the destruction of agreed numbers of nuclear weapons in the first stage.

Some such compromise between Western and Soviet proposals would seem to meet many of the reciprocal criticisms made by the two parties of their respective 1960 proposals without compromising the military security of either. The problem becomes more difficult, however, when nonmilitary considerations are taken into account. Since nonmilitary considerations have played a major role in shaping the defense policies of the great powers, they must inevitably also affect their disarmament policies. For example, if it is difficult to find legitimate military reasons for the vast number of U.S. nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles, it is clear that military arguments alone are not likely to be dominant in U.S. discussion of a possible drastic first step toward nuclear disarmament. This is widely admitted in the U.S., where the impediments to disarmament are being seen more and more as economic, political and emotional in origin rather than as based on operational military considerations. A vital aspect of the problem for the U.S. is the effect that drastic disarmament steps would have not only on the economy as a whole but also on those special sections of high-grade, science-based and highly localized industries that are now so overwhelmingly involved in defense work. A valuable step would be for both the U.S. and Soviet governments to produce and publish detailed and politically realistic economic plans for the transition to a purely retaliatory capacity.

It is fair to conclude that a realistic military basis for an agreed drastic first step in disarmament may not be impossible to find. The urgency of the situation was declared with eloquence by President Kennedy in his speech to the United Nations in September:

"Today, every inhabitant of this planet must contemplate the day when this planet may no longer be habitable. Every man, woman and child lives under a nuclear sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by accident or miscalculation or by madness.... The risks inherent in disarmament pale in comparison to the risks inherent in an unlimited arms race."

This great goal of disarmament will be achieved only if the real nature of the arguments against disarmament are clearly identified and frankly faced. The problems of disarmament must not be obscured, as they sometimes have been in the past, by ingenious but fallacious military doctrine applied to false intelligence estimates.

The growing power of China, and the evidence of an ideological rift between it and Russia, provide an added reason for urgency in the drive for disarmament. The U.S.S.R. and the U.S. will be wise to limit drastically their nuclear arms before China becomes a major nuclear power. It is to be observed that whatever influence China may now be exerting on the U.S.S.R. to adopt a harder policy with the West certainly arises in part from the failure of Premier Khrushchev's campaign for disarmament. This failure greatly weakens Khrushchev's argument for the feasibility of peaceful coexistence of the Soviet and the Western worlds. It would seem urgently necessary to attempt to bring China into the disarmament negotiations as soon as possible.