



Director of  
Central  
Intelligence

~~Secret~~

Soviet Military Production,  
1975-86

Interagency Intelligence Memorandum  
Key Judgments

~~Secret~~

NI IIM 87-10005  
June 1987

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NI IIM 87-10006

SOVIET MILITARY PRODUCTION,  
1975-86

KEY JUDGMENTS

The full text of this Memorandum is being published separately. Information available as of 31 December 1986 was used in the preparation of this Memorandum, approved for publication on 22 May 1987 by the Chairman of the National Intelligence Council.

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#### SCOPE NOTE

This Memorandum is the second in a series—the first was published in 1986—that establishes an interagency data base on the annual production of Soviet strategic and general purpose weapon systems and equipment for the period 1975-86. The weapon systems represented here are virtually all of the most significant items of equipment, measured in terms of both the extensiveness of their deployment and the political and military implications they possess. There is overwhelming interagency agreement on both general and specific estimates, although even so, in many cases we have major uncertainties because of limited evidence. There are, however, systems for which the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency (and on a few ballistic missiles, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State) differ in their estimates of production.

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KEY JUDGMENTS

Soviet defense industries exhibit a stability and momentum that has resulted in levels of weapons production that are extraordinary by any standard. [ ]

This year's Memorandum provides production estimates for over 360 military systems, as compared with the 250 systems found in last year's IIM. It also represents a considerable effort by both CIA and DIA to improve and refine their estimative methodologies. [ ]

[ ] Among other things, CIA and DIA also more than doubled their production estimates for the SS-N-2 (Styx) antiship cruise missile [ ] Both agencies also changed their estimates for tanks and infantry fighting vehicles on the basis of new information and more detailed analysis. Estimates for some armored vehicle programs increased, such as for the T-64B tank as well as for the BMP-2; and for others—the older T-64A—decreased. In general, CIA and DIA, as the result of close consultations over the past year, are in greater agreement than ever before on their production estimates for Soviet land armaments. [ ]

CIA and DIA have agreed upon year-by-year production estimates for over 95 percent of the systems covered in this Memorandum.

[ ] the Soviets during the period 1975-86 produced:

- About 2,050 (CIA) or 2,200 (DIA) intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and about 1,450 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). DIA judges that the Soviets have produced substantially more ICBMs since 1980 than does CIA.

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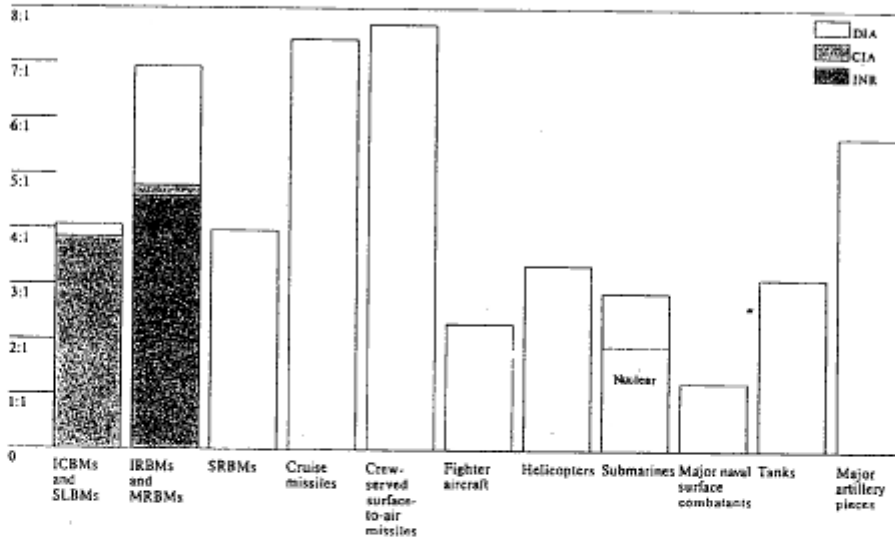
- About 725 (INR), 775 (CIA), or 1,100 (DIA) intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs).
- About 10,700 SRBMs.
- Some 1,000 manned and unmanned military or joint-use spacecraft, and 1,350 space launch vehicles.
- Some 16,000 cruise missiles.
- About 185,000 crew-served SAMs and 225,000 hand-held SAMs.
- Over 26,000 aircraft, including about 425 strategic bombers, 12,600 fighters, and 10,000 helicopters. About 60 percent of the fighter production and some 50 percent of the helicopter production was delivered to Soviet military forces; the rest was either exported or delivered to the civilian economy.
- Over 1,000 new ships and smaller naval craft, including 124 submarines and 123 major surface combatants.
- About 34,500 (DIA) or 32,500 (CIA) modern tanks, about 62,000 other modern armored vehicles, and 37,000 of their most important field artillery, anti-aircraft artillery, and multiple rocket launcher systems. Between 70 and 85 percent of the tanks and artillery produced by the USSR were delivered to Soviet military forces.
- Some 12,800 stand-alone radar systems.
- About 2.4 million trucks for military use, including over 600,000 heavy trucks.

In every major military equipment category, Soviet production has exceeded that of the United States. Depending on the system, Soviet production rates are as much as seven times greater than US rates. As shown in figure 1 from 1975 through 1985<sup>1</sup> the Soviets produced about four times as many ICBMs and SLBMs as the United States, and twice as many nuclear-powered submarines. During this period, the USSR produced some 725 to 1,100 IRBMs and about 375 strategic long- and intermediate-range bombers, whereas the United States produced 156 Pershing II medium-range ballistic missiles and only five strategic bombers (three B-1s and two B-1Bs). In addition, the Soviets produced over seven times as many crew-served, land-based SAMs as the United States, three times as many tanks, and over five times as many major artillery pieces.

<sup>1</sup> The estimated Soviet data used for these comparisons run through 1985 in order to be compatible with the US data available at the time of drafting.



Figure 1  
Ratio of Selected Soviet to US  
Cumulative Weapons Production, 1975-85



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Even though we have CIA and DIA agreement on the production estimates for 95 percent of the systems covered in this Memorandum, we emphasize that this agreement should not be taken as an indication that we have high confidence in these estimates. For some we do, for many we do not. Our confidence in these estimates ranges from high—we are confident we are within 10 percent of the actual production figure—for the larger systems that are fixed or take long periods to construct and are easily visible, to low—we could be off by 40 percent or more from the actual number—for generally small, mobile systems.





Although Soviet weapons production rates remained extremely high throughout the 1975-86 period, as indicated in last year's IIM, we continue to assess that there have been significant reductions in Soviet production rates in several areas during the period, as indicated in figure 2. There was:

- A general decline until the mid-1980s in the annual production of ICBMs, and some categories of stand-alone radars.
- A general decline in the annual production of major naval surface combatants.
- A sharp decline in helicopter production from 1976 through 1978 and a leveling off thereafter; a similarly sharp decline in SRBM production through the early 1980s and also a leveling off thereafter; substantial decline in SLBM production since the early 1980s and some upswing beginning in 1984; and substantial decline in yearly production of fighter aircraft, submarines, and armored personnel carriers after 1980.

In contrast, there has been substantial growth in the production of long-range cruise missiles and steady growth in the annual production rates of bombers and heavy trucks. In addition, there was also a steady increase in annual SS-20 production rates into the early 1980s, with differences of view as to the trend in more recent production. Tank production shows no clear trend and production remains at a high level; production fluctuates as model changes occur.

Several factors probably are largely responsible for the downward trends described above:

- The Soviets decided to introduce more complex, sophisticated, and capable weapon systems into production. More complex systems embody substantial improvements in performance and can often replace older systems on a less than one-for-one basis. Thus, the Soviets may have deliberately reduced their quantitative requirements for fielding the newer systems.

- [ ]
- With respect to these more sophisticated systems fielded recently by the Soviets, the most prominent advances have been in the areas of electronic systems and solid propulsion for missiles. In those areas, the Soviets have experienced growing difficulties and delays in development, which have postponed or interfered with intended serial production. One result of these difficulties and delays has been lower production. Programs that should have entered production sooner and begun deployment in this period will not reach their full momentum until later in the 1980s.
  - The advanced weapons fielded during the period also have required greater resources and effort and, hence, have been more costly. In the CIA view, though it has no concrete evidence, the burden of these higher costs in some cases may have contributed to Soviet decisions not to sustain production at historical rates. In the DIA view, while higher unit costs of weaponry no doubt concern the Soviets, all available evidence points to decisions concerning the numbers of weapons produced and the timing of such production continuing to be based on other factors such as military policy, doctrine, and strategy.

[ ]

The Soviets have responded to these technical challenges by modernizing their defense manufacturing base. We have observed a variety of new materials and manufacturing processes being incorporated in the aircraft, missile, shipbuilding, ground arms, and electronics industries. Moreover, a number of programs have recently completed, or soon will complete, their test phases and will enter serial production. Recent growth in defense industry floorspace indicates that production capacity has been increased in anticipation of these and other new military programs. These dramatic increases in production floorspace in the strategic missile, spacecraft, aircraft, shipbuilding, and tank industries all indicate that the Soviets will continue to produce substantial numbers of weapons and other major military equipment over the rest of the decade and into the 1990s. [ ]

EXCLUDED PAGES 8 thru 28

Figure 2  
Soviet Military Production, 1975-86  
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