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Defense Intelligence Memorandum

U.S.S.R. - Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Modernization Continues in Non-Russian Republics ~~(S)~~

Key Judgments

~~(S)~~ Despite the republics' conflicting pronouncements about basing nuclear arms on their territories, the Soviets continue to pursue intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) - road-mobile SS-25 and SS-18 Mod 5 and Mod 6 - force modernization and expansion in the Byelorussian and Kazakhstan republics.

~~(S)~~ The postcoup continuation of ICBM deployment programs in non-Russian republics could be a result of bureaucratic inertia, the Ministry of Defense's assessment that a favorable basing agreement will be negotiated, or (less likely) an agreement that already has been reached.

~~(S)~~ If the Soviets cannot reach a final basing agreement, ICBMs in the non-Russian republics ultimately will be redeployed to Russia or destroyed.

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New ICBM Deployments in Non-Russian Republics

~~(S/NF)~~ While negotiations between the central government and the republics apparently are under way concerning stationing nuclear forces on non-Russian republic territories, intelligence information indicates that two Soviet ICBM deployment and modernization programs are continuing in Byelorussia and Kazakhstan. The two ICBM systems – the road-mobile SS-25 and the silo-based SS-18 Mod 5 and Mod 6 – are expected to be retained by the Soviets under the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks agreement. No new ICBM force modernization programs have been under way in the Ukraine since 1990.

SS-25 ICBM Deployment in Byelorussia

~~(S/NF/AVN)~~ Currently, 72 road-mobile, single-warhead SS-25 ICBMs are deployed at the former Mozyr and Lida SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) divisions. These two divisions began conversion to the SS-25 ICBM system in early 1989 and were completed in mid-1991. In January 1991, the Soviets began SS-25 conversion of a third former SS-20 IRBM division at Postavy. Conversion activity at this division continues at three separate sites: the nuclear payload handling facility (NPHF) and two missile bases. Recent imagery reveals continuing construction of an SS-25 system integration building at the NPHF.

~~(S/NF)~~ The first SS-25 missile base – the former Postavy SS-20 missile base – in the Postavy division is in the mid-stage of conversion. Construction of new, single-bay, sliding-roof garages for housing SS-25 missiles is partially complete and continues. Conversion of older support buildings for mobile command, control, and communications units also is ongoing. At the current rate of construction, this base is expected to be completed by early 1992. The 38th SS-25 ICBM regiment, which was first detected in training at the Plesetsk Missile and Space Test Facility after the abortive coup, most likely will be ready for operational deployment to this base by the end of the year. Preliminary analysis suggests this regiment is associated with the Postavy division.

~~(S/NF/AVN)~~ Tree clearing and footings for support buildings have been observed at a second missile base – the former Smorgon SS-20 missile base 1. Although the Soviets have not declared this base for conversion, construction activity has been noted at this facility since late July 1991.

SS-18 Mod 5 and Mod 6 Deployment in Kazakhstan

~~(S/NF/AVN)~~ Conversion/modernization activity for the 10-warhead SS-18 Mod 5 and single-warhead Mod 6 ICBMs continues at two launch groups in the Imeni Gastello division. Each launch group comprises six missile silos. (Currently, one SS-18 Mod 6 and two Mod 5 launch groups are operational at Imeni Gastello.) Construction at one group is in the mid-to-late stages, with two silos externally complete. Imagery indicates that construction continues at the other four silos as

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well. This activity includes installing a modified door and trenching and grading for antennas and cabling. The group launch control facility also is externally complete, but the launch control capsule probably has not been loaded. Two SS-18 Mod 5/6 missile airframes arrived at the Imeni Gastello division in late July and probably are awaiting completion of construction at this launch group. The group could become operational early next year.

~~(S/NF/AVN)~~ At another launch group in the Imeni Gastello division, construction is in the early stages, with all SS-18 Mod 4 missiles downloaded. Since mid-August, gantry cranes have been erected at four of the six silos in this group. The gantry cranes are used to remove the silo door for modification. This launch group is expected to become operational in 1993.

Outlook

~~(S/NF)~~ Prior to the August 1991 abortive coup, the Soviets were expected to continue their strategic force modernization and deployment programs in those republics already containing such weapons. However, recent republic leadership pronouncements regarding the basing of nuclear arms on their territories have created uncertainty about the continuing deployment of strategic weapons outside the Russian republic. Reasons for continued ICBM modernization and expansion in the non-Russian republics include:

- Bureaucratic inertia stemming from a lack of revised force modernization plans from the Ministry of Defense leadership.
- The "center's" belief that a favorable agreement will be negotiated to maintain strategic forces in non-Russian republics.
- The less likely possibility that an agreement has already been achieved that allows strategic force deployments to continue in non-Russian republics.

~~(S)~~ If the Soviets do not reach a final agreement to continue strategic force deployment in the non-Russian republics, deployment and modernization activities in Byelorussia and Kazakhstan probably will be terminated. However, the slowdown and conclusion of these activities may not be apparent for months. The most likely result would be gradual withdrawal and destruction of some weapon systems, as well as the destruction of the supporting infrastructure in these republics. Such an effort would require a few years to accomplish.

(U) This memorandum contains information as of 3 October 1991.



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5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(3); 10 U.S.C. § 424³

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