

MILITARY STRATEGY

Joint Chiefs Chairman Refutes "Team B"

General George Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, publicly took issue this week with intelligence estimate of Soviet military superiority promulgated by "Team B" analysis of the Committee on the Present Danger. In a letter written on behalf of the Joint Chiefs to the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Brown singled out "Team B" spokesman and retired Air Force intelligence chief General George Keegan for advocating "scare tactics" in order to force a short-term military buildup for an immediate confrontation with the Soviet Union. Brown posed a program of technological research and development as an immediate alternative for guaranteeing the nation's security.

Brown bluntly wrote that the Joint Chiefs' evaluations did not have to conform with the views of the Carter administration. He is encouraging the military to provide the public with "maximum information about Department of Defense activities." According to the Washington Post report and the Joint Chiefs have little disagreement with the purely quantitative estimates of overall Soviet military strength, but they "do not agree that the Soviet Union has achieved military superiority over the United States." Rather, "the available evidence suggests that the USSR is engaged in a program (of military research and industrial development) to achieve such superiority, but they have not yet attained this goal."

Asserting their independent evaluation functions, the Joint Chiefs have divorced themselves from both the administration's "arms control" posture and the Committee's war mongering. Their answer to Carter and the CPD follows two highly significant statements issued over the last week, one by General Brown himself, and the other by Aviation Week editor Robert Hotz, sections of which are reprinted below.

The following are excerpts from the letter written by General George Brown, on behalf of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the Senate Defense Appropriations subcommittee:

"Issue 1: That the USSR has achieved military superiority over the United States.

Brown: The Joint Chiefs of Staff do not agree that the Soviet Union has achieved military superiority over the United States. The available evidence suggests the USSR is engaged in a program designed to achieve such superiority but they have not attained this goal.

Issue 16: That the greatest global conflict in history is likely to occur within the next decade or two unless there is a radical change in the U.S. intelligence perceptions.

Brown: The Joint Chiefs of Staff do not agree. In fact, a

range of perceptions exists in the U.S. Intelligence community on Soviet capabilities and intentions. This is a healthy feature of intelligence analysis. However, the avoidance of global conflict is not dependent solely upon intelligence perceptions but depends on other factors, including maintaining the strategic balance.

Issue 19: That a grave imbalance in favor of Soviet military capacity had developed out of a failure over the last 15 years to adjust American strategic thinking to Soviet strategy. American strategy is premised on the principle of war avoidance while that of the Soviet Union is premised on war winning.

Brown: The Joint Chiefs on Staff support the statement about the premise of Soviet military strategy. Although the Soviets seek to avoid war, preferring to attain their strategic objections in other ways, their military doctrine is premised on the notion that war is an instrument of policy and success in war, even nuclear war, is attainable. Soviet strategic policy and force development continue to be based on this military doctrine, which calls for capabilities, to fight, survive, and win a nuclear war.

Issue 20: That today no general officer is allowed to speak on the subject of strategy, doctrine, or threat unless his views coincide exactly with the shifting pronouncements of the Secretaries of Defense and State and the White House.

Brown: The basic policy as expressed in DOD directives is that the American people will be provided with maximum information about DOD activities, and toward that end, general officers are encouraged to speak publicly in areas of their competence. Within the Department of Defense there are ample opportunities for general and flag officers to voice independent views on matters of strategy, doctrine, and threat throughout the process of formulation, implementation, and review of these matters. Likewise, there is no restriction on answering questions before Congress. All commissioned officers must accept the responsibility for statements they make.

Issue 25: That to continue the present course of United States defense policy and strategic diplomacy would be inviting the very thing, the very condition which it is aimed at preventing — gestation of global conflict.

Brown: The Joint Chiefs of Staff do not agree. Recent reviews of U.S. Defense policy, strategy, and posture have concluded that the United States moving in the correct direction. While studies in these areas are continuing, deficiencies which have been identified to date relate more to defense programs than to defense policy.