

SAC general expresses concern about U.S.-Soviet arms imbalance

By Roger Aden

The Soviet Union has built its strategic arms supply at an alarming rate, and the United States has not kept up, according to Gen. Bill V. Brown, chief-of-staff for plans at Strategic Air Command headquarters.

Brown, speaking at a Monday afternoon forum sponsored by UPC's Talks and Topics Committee, said a "serious imbalance has occurred and the U.S. should make it a top priority to correct it."

According to Brown, this imbalance has developed during the last 10 to 12 years during the peaceful co-existence of Khrushchev and the detente Brezhnev.

He said these two Soviet leaders built up more weapons than they needed to defend their homeland.

"The Soviets have built to win a nuclear confrontation, while we have aimed for the rough parity," he continued. "It's like a football team saying 'I sure hope we can tie those guys.'"

Brown stressed the importance of a powerful military force.

"Strong military power maintained our leadership, and our future depends on keeping it up," he said.

"Power politics serves the national ends," he said. "It permits freedom of action and preserves international stability."

According to Brown, there is an urgent need for an improved inter-continental ballistic missile system and a new strategic bomber to help maintain a strong U.S. military.

"Before the cancellation of the B-1 bomber in 1977 we were fairly equal (with the Soviet Union)," Brown said. "Since then we have gone steadily downhill."

"Without improvements it is impossible to absorb a first strike and a strike back in a way that would be entirely unacceptable to the Soviets," he said.

"Force modernization is essential for the U.S. to remain an effective international power," he said.

Brown also said there is a manpower deficiency in the U.S. armed forces. As an example, he pointed out that SAC's forces dwindled from 288,000 in 1962 to 118,000 today. However, the Army's predicament is even worse, he said.

Still, Brown said he preferred not to draft people into the armed forces, although he is not sure the all-volunteer force will solve the current manpower problems.

"I would rather have more people enlist," he said, "but I'm not certain whether this is possible."

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