

achieved its objective. In the case of overwhelming conventional attack, the response contemplated might involve battlefield nuclear weapons. In the case where the Soviet Union had already crossed the nuclear threshold, the appropriate response would more likely be a strike on Soviet territory or on highly important Soviet interests in the NSWP. Use of Polaris for these long range limited nuclear options would be unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. First, the UK Polaris force is too small for even a few of its missiles to be committed to selective strikes in this piecemeal way while retaining sufficient national capability for the ultimate deterrent of causing unacceptable damage to the Soviet Union. Moreover, the firing of only a few missiles in this role would expose their parent SSBNs to a much greater risk of detection and possible attack, reducing their survivability as a strategic system. Finally, Polaris is unsuitable for such restrained and closely controlled use because of its high war-head yields and lower accuracies against hardened targets and because of its distinctive strategic characteristics. No decisions have been taken on a UK successor system for Polaris, but if it too were a SLEM force the likely characteristics (Ballistic, long range and MIRV) suggest that the same considerations would apply as for Polaris but to a lesser degree resulting from reduced size and improved accuracy.

#### An Independent UK Contribution

22. It is argued elsewhere in this paper that the threat posed by the UK Polaris force of massive retaliation against cities is credible