



1969-1972

**SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS & UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS/STRATEGIC ARMS
LIMITATION TREATY I
A CASE STUDY**

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At the height of the Cold War, tensions between the US and Soviet Union were running high. The threat of nuclear mutually assured destruction was ever present, and both countries were working on military advances that would help assure their safety. By 1968, the Soviets reached PCBM and SLBM parity to the US. The Soviet's rapid pace in developing ballistic weapons that were increasingly comparable to that of US ballistic weapons was of great enough concern that President Johnson wrote to Prime Minister Kosygin in 1967 in hopes of starting ballistic arms limitation talks. Unfortunately, US popular opinion towards the Soviets would not allow the initiation of talks until 1969, as the Soviets invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Prior to the talks, the typical US approach in such situations was to go for superiority. However, this was not the case in 1969. The US instead chose to target-balance against the Soviet's improved ICBM and SLBM capabilities. This case study looks at what the motivating factors were for the US to use this approach, whether budgetary, popular opinion, or an actual shift in the direction of foreign policy. This paper also looks at what theories of international security best fit the situation, if any.



