

US Nike Hercules. Other missile systems being developed reportedly include a smaller surface-to-surface missile, a lightweight anti-tank missile, and a multiple rocket launch system.

## EPILOGUE

The exigencies of publishing necessitated the preparation of initial drafts of portions of this report as early as the summer of 1983. Although the information presented in the volume was brought up to date continually through the end of the year, careful readers may have noted how the general tone of the text sometimes lags behind the impact of specific events that are reported therein.

In the autumn of 1983, the overall texture of relations between nations seemed to deteriorate markedly. During the last four months of the year, the community of nations was rocked repeatedly by grave events: the destruction of the Korean airliner, the car bombings in Beirut and subsequent escalation of violence in the Middle East, the US-led intervention in Grenada, and the Soviet suspension of the Geneva negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear missiles. These and other lesser incidents seemed to have had a synergistic effect, broadly raising the level of international tensions and, for the most part, adversely affecting Western security interests.

The tentative exploratory steps toward a less hostile US-Soviet relationship that had become evident during the summer were, of course, the primary victims of this rise in international tensions. At the end of the year, the strains on US-Soviet communications had reached new and worrisome levels. But other important international relationships were also strained. There were new difficulties in US-European relations, and the European Community itself was badly divided. Although the more aggressive US stance in the Third World may have pleased some nations, it caused others to put greater distance between themselves and US policies and, in some cases, opened new opportunities for the USSR.

Not that the Soviet Union seemed to benefit from the events, at least in the short run. The systemic difficulties in the USSR's position in the world, recounted at the beginning of Chapter 2, were greatly aggravated during the latter half of the year by Andropov's apparently grave illness. The rigidity and ponderous quality of Soviet policy were only reinforced by the lack of a firm hand at the controls of power.

The year 1983, as we said in the opening pages of this report, was an extremely troubled one. One can only hope that the world's statesmen have learned from the mistakes of the past – and that the future will accordingly contain greater promise.