

## IB 20<sup>th</sup> Century World History

### Cold War: The Arms Race

*This handout is compiled from 20<sup>th</sup> Century World: The Cold War* Keely Rogers and  
*The Cold War*, Joshua Brooman

#### A-bomb/H-bomb

**Strategic bombers** planes capable of carrying and delivering nuclear weapons

**ICBM** Inter-continental ballistic missiles, have a range of over 3000 nautical miles and which carry nuclear warheads

**SLB** Submarine-launched ballistic missile.

**ABM** Anti-ballistic missiles-used to intercept and destroy nuclear weapons

**MIRV** Multiple independently targetable re-entry Vehicle. This device is launched by a missile that allows several warheads to be used, each guided to a different target

**M.A.D** mutually assured destruction

**SDI** strategic defense initiative (Star Wars)

#### What strategies existed for the use of nuclear weapons?

1) Bernard Brodie, a leading US strategist wrote *The Absolute Weapon* (New York, 1946) which posits that prior to the advent of nuclear weapons, the purpose of a military had been to 'win wars' but in the post-nuclear world the purpose would be to 'avert them'. "He claimed that new weapons could have no other purpose. Thus military victory in '**total**' war was no longer possible."

2) **massive retaliation** Eisenhower's idea that the US would fight w/every weapon at its disposal, despite devastating consequences.

3) **counterforce strategy** McNamara's (under Kennedy) idea- like that of strategic bombing of isolated military targets but w/nuclear missiles. The strategy has the similar problems-ie accuracy and the need for the enemy to embrace the same strategy in order for the strategy to succeed

**Extra Credit Binder Writing: (10 points)**

- 1) Compare the films Cold War 12/24 and Atomic Café
- 2) How useful/limited are these films as sources?
- 3) What is the relationship between propaganda and the arms race?

John Gaddis has argued that the arms race exchanged destruction for duration.  
What do you suppose he means by this?

What are some of the financial, military, political and mistaken reasons behind the missiles constructed as part of the arms race?