

BALANCING THE RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF ARMS CONTROL IN EUROPE

by Kim R. Holmes, Ph.D.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Committee, it is a pleasure and honor to be here today. It is a momentous time to be discussing arms control in Europe. I say this not only because the recent U.S. and German disagreements over NATO nuclear modernization. Nor do I say this merely because NATO is about to embark on promising conventional arms talks in Vienna that may, for the first time in post-war history, result not only in deep reductions, but in Soviet acceptance of the principle of military stability based on numerical parity of forces.

I say this because for this first time since the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949, the end of the Cold War may be in sight. How well the U.S. balances the opportunities as well as risks provided by arms control negotiations in Europe will determine whether it ends on terms favorable to us, or favorable to the Soviet Union.

Positive Changes. The opportunities are promising. The Soviet Union's internal reforms, the erosion of Moscow's influence in Eastern Europe, and the promise of unilateral cuts in military forces all bode well for NATO. Moreover, changes in the Soviet negotiating position on conventional arms control are encouraging. For the first time, Moscow has expressed a willingness to remove the asymmetry of forces, reach numerical parity, allow on-site inspections, restructure forces to eliminate the threat of surprise attack, and discuss the accuracy of the data base used in the talks.

But notwithstanding these positive changes, the risks posed by them — to the cohesion of the Alliance and the effectiveness of deterrence — are also new. Empires seldom die quietly, and this will certainly be true for the Soviet Union. Violence already has erupted in the Baltic states, Soviet Georgia, and elsewhere within the great Russian empire. Moreover, the ultimate showdown between Gorbachev and the growing forces of democracy and self-determination in Eastern Europe still lies ahead.

Dangerous Perception. There is also the risk that the Western perception of the Soviet military threat will change faster than the reality, sending NATO defense budgets into a tailspin while the Soviets maintain theirs, and releasing centrifugal forces within the Alliance that could tear it apart. 75 percent of West Germans believe that the Soviet Union poses no military threat to them. This perception exists despite the fact that no Soviet forces have yet been withdrawn. It exists despite the fact that Soviet defense spending was up 3 percent last year, while the U.S. defense budget dropped by 2 percent. Also Soviet tank production in the first quarter of this year rose to its highest level since the end of World War II, reaching an annual rate of over 3,500 of the most modern Soviet tanks (the U.S. will produce about 600 tanks this year).

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Alliance Antagonism. Also new are the risks associated with conventional and nuclear arms control in Europe. The West German position on immediate negotiations on short-range nuclear forces threatens strategic decoupling of Western Europe from the U.S., will add to pressures to further denuclearize Germany, pits the two great poles of the Alliance — the U.S. and Germany — against one another in a great contest over the most delicate of NATO issues — nuclear weapons, and raises disturbing questions about the U.S. troop presence in Europe.

Even conventional arms control, though promising, entails risk as well. Pressures are already mounting to go beyond the current NATO proposal that calls for the reduction of forces on both sides to 10 percent below current NATO levels. Deep cuts up to 50 percent, as suggested by retired General Andrew Goodpaster, Congressman Les Aspin, and many Europeans, could create less military stability. Deep cuts could affect stability by forcing NATO to abandon the principle of forward defense (because of the need to adopt a strategy of mobility and defense-in-depth), and by increasing pressures to eliminate all U.S. tactical and battlefield nuclear weapons from European soil. These tactical nuclear weapons have provided the basis for a mutually shared nuclear risk between Western Europe and the U.S., and removing them entirely, no matter if the Soviets did so as well, would make the threat of U.S. retaliation for a Soviet attack against Europe a promise Americans would be less willing to make, much less keep.

Setting an Agenda. Despite these risks, the prospect of conventional arms control that significantly reduces the conventional threat to NATO allies is too promising to pass up. Gains include a more free Eastern Europe, military stability in Europe, a reduced U.S. military burden, and the security foundation for negotiating a settlement with the Soviets for ending the division of Europe. To strive for these goals, and to manage the risks associated with them, the U.S. needs to provide bold leadership of the Alliance. It needs to take the lead in setting an agenda for bringing the Cold War to an end, and advancing change while safeguarding Western security through meaningful arms negotiations.

NATO's broad agenda for this time of change should be: 1) political liberalization in Eastern Europe leading to self-determination, multi-party democracy, and an end to the division of Europe; 2) unilateral or negotiated reductions in Soviet military forces that would enable the U.S. to begin bringing home many of the 325,000 troops now stationed in Europe; and 3) ultimately a settlement that permanently removes the Soviet military threat to U.S. allies and the rest of Europe.

Five Points for NATO. The U.S. European arms control agenda for Europe should be to: 1) continue support the NATO position tying negotiations on short-range nuclear forces to prior success in conventional arms control, even if this means an ongoing split between the U.S. and West Germany; 2) move the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) talks in Vienna to the top of NATO's agenda by making it officially the key litmus test of Gorbachev's intentions toward NATO; 3) inform the European allies that the U.S. expects the lion's share of any NATO cuts resulting from a CFE agreement; 4) be tough in CFE negotiations and stick to the current NATO proposal for 10 percent cuts below NATO levels; and 5) do not rule out very deep cuts, up to 50 percent below NATO levels, but save them for CFE's second round.

NATO military policy and capability should change only as Warsaw Pact military capabilities decline demonstrably. Thus it would not be wise to offer unilateral military cuts in response to Gorbachev's promise to trim the superiority he enjoys in conventional and nuclear forces in Europe. But arms control policy should be firm, insistent and, as far as

conventional forces are concerned, bold. The U.S. should demand that Gorbachev live up to his promised unilateral cuts, and that he continue to move toward the goal of military stability in Europe through CFE.

CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL

NATO and the Warsaw Pact in Vienna last March began what potentially are the most important arms control negotiation in which the two sides have ever engaged: the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) talks. Their objective is to eliminate overwhelming Soviet advantages in such non-nuclear weapons in Europe as tanks, artillery, and armored fighting vehicles, thereby substantially reducing the military threat to U.S. allies. Success in these negotiations could enable the U.S. to bring home a significant number of the 325,000 GIs in Europe.

The announced negotiating objectives of the two sides are similar: NATO wants mutual cuts in military equipment to equal levels between 5 percent and 10 percent below current NATO levels; the Warsaw Pact is proposing cuts between 10 percent and 15 percent below NATO levels although from a different data base. Either way, the results would be dramatic. Example: a cut in tanks to 20,000 on each side, or roughly 10 percent below current NATO levels, would eliminate 37,300 Warsaw Pact tanks to 2,224 NATO tanks, a ratio of roughly 17:1.¹

Inaccurate Data. Significant differences remain between the two sides regarding the details of the proposed agreement. The Warsaw Pact has provided its own estimates for the quantity of tanks and other equipment on both sides that are not accurate. Example: Pact figures count NATO's Bradley infantry fighting vehicle, a lightly armed troop carrier, as a "tank." Another major sticking point is Moscow's insistence on negotiating reductions in aircraft, a position NATO rightly rejects since aircraft withdrawn from Europe quickly could be flown back to the battlefield from bases in the Soviet Union.

Not all NATO allies fully support Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) negotiations. France in particular has dragged its feet, delaying the start of talks by quibbling over details. Heritage Foundation researchers were told repeatedly in Paris that France is satisfied with the status quo and "deep down" does not want a CFE treaty because it fears eventual U.S. troop withdrawals as a result of the treaty. These withdrawals would mean that France might have to cooperate more with NATO allies and spend more for defense. On the other end of the spectrum, critics of NATO's proposal, including former NATO Supreme Allied Commander General Andrew J. Goodpaster, argue that NATO does not go far enough. Goodpaster and others argue for a dramatic NATO proposal to cut forces on both sides to 50 percent below NATO levels.²

1 Based on official NATO figures. See Michael Gordon, "Crucial Talks on Reducing Conventional Arms Open This Week in Vienna," *The New York Times*, March 5, 1989, p. 18.

2 Andrew J. Goodpaster, "Gorbachev and the Future of East-West Security: A Response for the Mid-Term," *Atlantic Council Occasional Paper*, April 1989.

U.S. Objectives in the CFE Talks

To ensure a verifiable and stabilizing CFE agreement, U.S. objectives should be to:

1) Increase the security of America's European allies through the establishment of a stable and secure level of forces from the Atlantic to the Urals (i.e., improve military stability in Europe).

2) Eliminate military disparities in Europe. From the U.S. point of view, eliminate Warsaw Pact (essentially Soviet) advantages in major conventional weapons, such as tanks and artillery, through asymmetric reductions to equal levels on both sides.

3) Reduce the Soviet capability for a successful surprise attack or large-scale invasion of Western Europe through these reductions.

4) Implement an effective regime of verification measures (including detailed exchanges of information and on-site inspections) and confidence-building measures to ensure compliance with the terms of an agreement, to improve openness and calculability about military behavior, and to ensure the irreversibility of the agreement.

5) Ensure that an agreement maintains the viability of NATO's strategy of "flexible response" and the doctrine of "first use" of nuclear weapons (i.e. that NATO's nuclear options are not adversely affected).

6) Retain a viable U.S. troop presence in Western Europe.

7) Apply measures involved to the whole of Europe but in a way which takes into account of and seeks to redress regional imbalances and to exclude circumvention.

8) Negotiate in a step-by-step process which guarantees the undiminished security of all concerned at each stage.

9) Negotiate an agreement that allows for continued modernization of NATO forces and adjustments in the force structure.

The Meaning of Warsaw Pact Proposals

Gorbachev's most recent conventional arms proposal, given to Secretary of State Jim Baker during his May 11 trip to Moscow, fleshes out the longstanding general call to reduce both sides forces to 10 to 15 percent below current NATO levels. Gorbachev said that the Warsaw Pact would be willing to retire or withdraw from Europe 40,000 tanks, 47,000 artillery pieces, and 42,000 armored vehicles. He also said that the Warsaw Pact was willing to withdraw 1 million troops from Europe. In return he demanded that NATO reduce its attack aircraft by 55 percent, cut 1 million troops, and carry out smaller cuts in tanks, artillery, and armored vehicles with the goal of reaching common ceilings by 1997 of 1,350,000 troops, 1,500 "strike" aircraft, 1,700 helicopters, 20,000 tanks, 24,000 artillery pieces, and 28,000 armored personnel carriers.

First of all, Gorbachev's proposed ceilings for tanks and armored vehicles are nearly identical to that proposed implicitly in the Western CFE proposal. The Western proposal would result in reductions to 20,000 tanks, as would Gorbachev's. Likewise, the Western CFE proposal would result in around 28,000 armored troop carriers, as would Gorbachev's. The main difference between the NATO and Warsaw Pact proposals would be over artillery, where the Western CFE proposal would produce cuts to around 16,000 artillery pieces compared to 24,000 wanted by Gorbachev.

What is troubling with Gorbachev's proposal is that it reintroduces the issue of including "strike" or fighter aircraft into the talks, which NATO wants to avoid. For one thing, aircraft withdrawn from Europe could be much more quickly introduced from the Soviet Union than from the U.S. in a crisis. For another, the West is more heavily dependent on tactical air for defense than the East. The Soviets, moreover, refuse to include their medium-range *Backfire* bomber in totals, and they insist on counting "strike" aircraft only, a designation that excludes from the count 1,829 Warsaw Pact aircraft (by the Soviets' own count).³

Also troubling are the data used by Gorbachev for the numbers of tanks, armored vehicles, and other forces does not square with the numbers used by NATO. Gorbachev says that the Warsaw Pact has only 70,330 armored troop carriers, while NATO says it has over 90,000. These different estimates are due to different definitions of what to count, whether, as in NATO, to count the entire inventory of armored vehicles including reserves and stockpiles, or as with the Warsaw Pact, only those vehicles that are deployed with active forces.

The NATO CFE Proposal: A Good Start

The many months of negotiating a mandate for the CFE talks in Vienna produced a good starting point. The CFE proposal is good for NATO because it:

1) **Mandates numerical parity as a goal.** This is critically important to NATO because the Warsaw Pact has such enormous numerical superiority in tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, and other types of offensive forces which can be used to seize and hold territory. This means that the Warsaw Pact will have to reduce proportionately more forces than NATO, which has been a sticking point in conventional arms control negotiations in the past. Numerical parity at 5 percent to 10 percent below NATO levels also implies military stability, which has long been a NATO goal.

2) **Would practically eliminate chance of surprise attack.** The disproportionate reduction of Soviet tanks, armored vehicles, and artillery mandated by the NATO CFE proposal would greatly reduce the capability of the Warsaw Pact to launch a surprise attack against NATO. Unable to concentrate large numbers of forces in a short period of time, the Warsaw Pact would face added risks in attacking NATO with the smaller forces reduced by CFE. It would take 3 to 4 times longer for the Warsaw Pact to mobilize forces large enough to attack, giving NATO plenty of warning to prepare its defenses⁴ Also with smaller forces the Warsaw Pact could not mass along the front for a quick breakthrough without exposing itself to counterattack elsewhere. The result is greater risk for the attacker.

3) **Would produce some savings.** Because NATO would reduce fewer forces than the Warsaw Pact, the former would save far less money as the result of the NATO CFE proposal than would the latter. While the Warsaw Pact would remove some 35,000-40,000 main battle tanks from its inventory, NATO would remove only about 3,000. There would, therefore, be comparatively little savings from force structure cuts for NATO. However, there would be cost savings resulting from a reduced requirement for combat readiness (involving lower manning, operation and maintenance costs), plus less of a need for

³ *Correlation of Forces in Europe*, Moscow, Novosti Press, 1989.

⁴ Testimony by Phil Karber, Senior Vice President, National Security Programs, the BDM Corporation, April 6, 1989, p. 10.

weapons modernization, particularly for strategic lift and the expensive high technology missiles and aircraft used for "deep strike" missions.

Things to Avoid in CFE

While NATO has a good starting CFE proposal, many hard months, or possibly years, lie ahead to turn it into reality. It would be wise to have a checklist of things to avoid during the upcoming CFE negotiations. They are:

1) Very deep first-round reductions without adequate preparation and consensus within the Alliance. Deep reductions beyond the NATO CFE proposal would require a significant restructuring of forces and a West German agreement to relinquish the strategy of forward defense.

2) Discussions of aircraft. This should be avoided because it would likely drive the French from the CFE talks, unfairly degrade NATO air defenses, cause great difficulties in verification, and raise probably unresolvable issues about rapid redeployment. The Soviets are also playing games by excluding such aircraft as the *Backfire* bomber from their definition of "strike" aircraft.

3) Discussions of naval forces. It has long been the aim of the Soviet Union to reduce the U.S. capability to reinforce Western Europe in time of war. This is why they have repeatedly tried to "capture" U.S. naval forces in conventional arms talks. Another aim is to "capture" Western naval air by including these forces in assessments of the European air balance. Both of these objectives should be resisted because of the unique maritime reinforcement requirements of NATO, and because the U.S. Navy has a need for unencumbered access to the Middle East and Southwest Asia.

4) Constraining West European mobilization capabilities. The enormous size of the Soviet Union will always require that West European members of the Atlantic Alliance be permitted a completely free hand to mobilize its forces. Any attempt to single out or constrain West European (particularly West German) mobilization capabilities should be resisted because the Soviets would end up with an advantage.

5) Constraining Western technology. The West's greatest military edge against the East is its advanced technology. The Soviets would like to find a way to constrain Western research and development of advanced weaponry. Not only would such an agreement be strategically unwise, it would be utterly unverifiable.

6) Including battlefield and tactical nuclear weapons in the talks. This should be resisted not only because the conventional imbalance in Europe should be first rectified before discussions of SNF begin. It should also be resisted because in a game to give up U.S. nuclear weapons for Soviet tanks, for example, NATO would end up with fewer or no tactical nuclear weapons, while the Soviets, although having fewer tanks, would still possess a SNF arsenal untouched by the agreement. The Soviets have, in any event, already accepted in principle the need to make asymmetrical reductions in tanks to equal levels. I am not sure how putting NATO battlefield and tactical nuclear weapons on the bargaining table could improve on this solution.

Recommendations and Proposals

The objectives of U.S. conventional arms control policy should be to: 1) produce a stable military balance in Europe; 2) open up diplomatic opportunities for ending the division of

Europe; 3) reduce the U.S. military burden in Europe; and 4) produce savings in U.S. defense spending. To achieve these goals the U.S. should:

1) Make CFE a litmus test for Gorbachev. Conventional arms control is the ideal issue on which to test Gorbachev's sincerity. If he is serious about reducing the military threat to NATO, CFE is his opportunity. If he fails this test by stalling the negotiations by insisting on false data or resisting strict verification, he also will have delivered an important message to NATO. If the political will is there on the Soviet side and a verifiable agreement if possible, CFE can dramatically improve the security of NATO allies and enable the withdrawal of significant numbers of U.S. troops from Europe.

2) Tell allies that the U.S. expects the lion's share of cuts from CFE. CFE provides a ready framework to begin withdrawing substantial numbers of U.S. troops from Europe without hurting the security of European allies. If CFE achieves reductions in tanks and other offensive equipment to 10 percent below NATO levels, the U.S. should expect to withdraw from Europe at least 75,000 of the 325,000 U.S. troops now stationed there.

3) Stick to NATO's negotiating position. NATO should hold fast to its position excluding aircraft from the talks because they quickly can be flown back to Europe from Soviet bases; insist on accurate numbers of Soviet tanks and equipment; and require monitoring and verification measures strict enough to ensure compliance. If Gorbachev is willing to make the cuts contemplated under CFE, it is because he already has decided for economic or other reasons that a smaller, leaner military is preferable to his present force. It is in NATO's interests to see these reductions made in the context of an agreement that is verifiable and results in a genuine improvement of NATO's military position. NATO's current proposal is sound, and the Alliance should stick to it.

4) Save 50 percent cuts for later rounds of CFE. NATO's current bargaining position would bring Soviet forces down to equal levels in conventional arms and equipment at roughly 10 percent below current NATO levels. Much deeper cuts, such as the 50 percent cuts suggested by Goodpaster and others, would require extensive military restructuring within NATO and force some painful political choices on Germany. Because a NATO front line thinned out by 50 percent cuts could not maintain a "forward defense" all along the border between West and East Germany, Bonn might have to consider the now politically unthinkable option of erecting permanent defensive barriers along the border with East Germany, symbolically dividing the German nation, or moving to a strategy that initially concedes ground while NATO organizes a mobile defense deep in German territory. Neither is a politically attractive option in West Germany. NATO's 10 percent proposal is simple and could be implemented quickly. 50 percent reductions are a good objective for the second or third rounds of CFE.

Fifty percent cuts, if managed properly, could be a good idea for two reasons:

(a) To save money as large numbers of U.S. ground units are removed from the force structure. If, for example, under a deep reductions CFE agreement the U.S. were to bring home and transfer to the reserves two Army divisions of 17,000 combat troops plus supporting and service units, the saving would add up to \$20 billion over the following five years. Approximately another \$20 billion could be saved if these forces were removed entirely from the force structure.

(b) To encourage political change in Eastern Europe. Drastic reductions of 50 percent below NATO levels could substantially loosen Moscow's hold on Eastern Europe.

If 50 percent cuts were accepted by NATO in a second or third round of the CFE talks, the following conditions, however, would have to be met:

(a) The West Germans accept moving away from a forward defense strategy to one based on mobility and defense-in-depth, involving the necessity of possibly ceding German territory in the early stages of war, almost a token U.S. conventional presence in Europe, the deployment of highly combat ready motorized (mostly European) infantry armed with antitank weapons in West Germany, and, if possible, the erection of antitank minefields and barrier defenses along the inter-German border. Barrier defenses are, however, highly unpopular with the West Germans, and would likely become even more so if deep reductions of Warsaw Pact forces were made. Barrier defenses would be ideal for a restructured, defense-in-depth strategy, but not absolutely necessary if the West Germans accepted moving away from forward defense.

(b) The Soviets accept a "defensive" restructuring of their forces in Eastern Europe. This would involve such "defensive" measures as restricting Soviet forces to operating areas and bases far from the East-West border to prevent quick mobilization or concentration of forces against a NATO force thinned out by deep cuts. Because of the penalties caused by U.S. reinforcements having to cross a vast ocean to reach Europe in time of war, NATO should not agree to such restrictions (although it, too, because of the imperatives of the defense-in-depth strategy, would not want to concentrate troops close to the inter-German border).

(c) The Soviets accept other measures to impede relatively quick massive mobilization of forces. This would mean that Soviet equipment removed under CFE would have to be destroyed and that at later stages some restrictions might also apply to Soviet equipment stationed east of the Urals. It makes no sense for the U.S. to withdraw large numbers of ground forces from Europe unless the Soviet Union has given up the capability to create large armies relatively quickly. Once U.S. troops are out of Europe it will be very difficult to get them back unless a war is already underway. U.S. forces may have been taken out of the force structure entirely, or put into the reserves. Airlift and sealift capabilities, already inadequate, could deteriorate even more after deep reductions are made. If all this happens, while the Soviet Union pulls large numbers of forces back behind the Ural Mountains, or puts them into the reserves, the U.S. will have largely been driven from Europe, and large, quickly mobilizable ground forces likely a thing of the past. Under these circumstances the Soviets could launch a slow but massive mobilization that would eventually pit a huge Soviet army against a weakened Western Europe, and a strategic umbrella likely folded up as tactical nuclear weapons are removed from Europe as the standing or active Soviet conventional force threat recedes.

NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL

An important U.S. objective in these fluid times of East-West change should be to maintain the credibility of nuclear deterrence while pressing for a verifiable conventional arms agreement creating stability in Europe. It makes no sense to weaken NATO's nuclear deterrent while the existing imbalance of conventional forces remains. Throughout NATO's history battlefield and tactical nuclear weapons have existed to offset Soviet conventional superiority. Until that superiority is removed, NATO should maintain a modern, survivable, flexible short-range nuclear force. To weaken that deterrent while the Soviets still have a conventional force edge would be a blow to the NATO doctrines of flexible response and forward defense.

Gorbachev's SNF Cut Proposal

During Secretary of State Jim Baker's May 11 trip to Moscow, Gorbachev proposed small unilateral cuts of Soviet short-range nuclear forces (SNF) in Europe. He said Moscow plans to cut 500 weapons from the Warsaw Pact arsenal of roughly 10,000 nuclear bombs, short-range missile warheads, 166 air-launched bombs, and 50 nuclear artillery shells.

Gorbachev's motivation was clearly to capitalize on NATO's agony over the SNF issue. He knows that this will be welcomed in Bonn but not in Washington. Coming on top of a recent Soviet offer to begin negotiations on SNF, this most recent Soviet offer was meant to drive a wedge between the U.S. and West Germany.

I believe that Gorbachev's proposal to reduce unilaterally Soviet SNF is long overdue. Since 1979 NATO has removed about 2,500 short-range nuclear weapons from its arsenal. It has unilaterally cut nuclear artillery and phased out the nuclear-armed *NIKE* air defense system, plus atomic demolition munitions, without any compensation whatsoever from the Warsaw Pact.

Why NATO Needs the Follow-On to *Lance* (FOTL)

Pending the removal of the current conventional imbalance in Europe, NATO will need the Follow-On to *Lance* missile:

1) **To maintain the credibility of flexible response.** NATO's flexible response doctrine requires nuclear options short of all out strategic confrontation between the U.S. and the USSR. The credibility of this doctrine rests on having survivable short-range nuclear systems capable of deterring a Soviet attack and defending against it if deterrence fails. FOTL will increase the credibility of flexible response doctrine by responding to Soviet improvements in air defense and offensive air capabilities, and by reaffirming NATO's commitment to nuclear modernization and strategic extended deterrence. This reaffirmation is necessary to strengthen NATO resolve in the face of a Soviet campaign to denuclearize Europe and decouple Europe strategically from the U.S.

2) **To make forward defense work.** NATO's doctrine of forward defense envisions holding a Warsaw Pact invasion at the East-West border. As little West German territory as possible is to be relinquished in a battle. This has been a political requirement for West German participation in the Atlantic Alliance.

This doctrine would be threatened if NATO were to give up the FOTL without first rectifying the conventional imbalance in Europe. FOTL and nuclear artillery force the Warsaw Pact to take countermeasures that degrade their capability to prosecute a *blitzkrieg* strategy against NATO. Specifically, the mere existence of NATO short-range systems would force Soviet armor to avoid the kind of huge concentration of forces needed to punch through NATO's front line along the inter-German border. The Soviets could get force ratios of 25:1 if they could mass their forces on a single point in the line. Dispersal of forces would be required in order to avoid becoming an easy target for nuclear attack by NATO short-range nuclear forces.

3) **To counter growing Soviet air defense strength.** Over the past ten years the Warsaw Pact has modernized its air defense missile and aircraft interceptor systems. Currently the Warsaw Pact enjoys a 4 to 1 numerical advantage in air defense systems over NATO and a 2 to 1 advantage in combat aircraft. The growing strength of Warsaw Pact air defenses degrades the capability of such NATO nuclear offensive aircraft as the F-16 and F-111 to

penetrate enemy airspace. Hence the need for a ballistic missile system like the FOTL, which can circumvent Warsaw Pact air defenses.

4) To enhance SNF survivability. The Warsaw Pact has radically changed the battlefield and tactical nuclear balance in Central Europe over the past ten years. According to Phil Karber, over the past decade the Warsaw Pact has increased its nuclear-capable strike aircraft by 163 percent, its nuclear-capable nuclear artillery by 392 percent, and its surface-to-surface nuclear-capable missiles by 17 percent, with 81 percent of the SSM force modernized with the SS-21 and SCUD B missiles. These weapons pose a grave danger to NATO airfields with their nuclear-capable aircraft.

The FOTL would be more survivable than these nuclear-capable aircraft against Warsaw Pact preemptive ballistic missile attack. The FOTL launcher will be mobile, even over open terrain. This capability would make it exceedingly difficult for Soviet missiles to find and attack once the FOTL systems are dispersed. The FOTL would certainly be more survivable than aircraft on the runways of a relatively small number of NATO air bases.

5) To tie up Soviet conventional forces. Soviet doctrine calls for holding conventional forces in reserve to counter a nuclear attack by NATO. Also the Soviet Army is outfitted with special *spetznaz* forces designed to seek out and destroy NATO nuclear weapons facilities during a war. If NATO's tactical nuclear forces were to disappear entirely, these forces would be added to the Warsaw Pact's normal conventional operational forces.

Unconvincing Case for Immediate SNF Negotiations

There have been a number of questions raised about the Bush Administration's position on SNF negotiations which I would like to address. I disagree with these objections and would like to take them one at a time. They are:

(a) Should NATO negotiate on SNF now because Soviets will give up more? It makes little sense to justify immediate SNF negotiations because the Soviets enjoy a 2.5 to 1 advantage over NATO in short-range nuclear warheads. *Lance*, nuclear artillery, and even dual-capable aircraft systems in Europe do not exist to offset or even deter Soviet short-range nuclear systems. That is not NATO doctrine. Rather, they exist to provide nuclear options below the strategic threshold, and to offset Soviet conventional superiority, particularly in tanks, armored vehicles, and artillery.

NATO cannot afford to give up any SNF until the conventional imbalance in Europe is rectified, hopefully through the current CFE negotiations. Whatever might be gained from removing all Soviet SNF systems, in terms of improved survivability of NATO airfields for example, would be lost many times over if all or even most comparable NATO SNF systems were removed through negotiations without first getting a more stable conventional arms balance. A weakened tactical nuclear deterrent would increase pressures for the complete denuclearization of West Germany, undermine the strategy of extended deterrence, and expose NATO to the conventional superiority of the Warsaw Pact.

(b) Will negotiations lead to the denuclearization of West Germany? Some have argued that opening immediate negotiations on SNF would not necessarily lead to a further denuclearization of West Germany, or even to a "third zero" encompassing the total elimination of ground-based missiles. I disagree. The very same pressures in Germany that forced the Kohl government to fall off previous promises not to call for immediate SNF negotiations, and not to include nuclear artillery in these talks, would drive them to ask eventually for a "third zero" and to accept Soviet demands that the two sides include

dual-capable aircraft and their missiles in the talks. Once these systems are included in SNF negotiations, the Soviets will outbid the West by proposing zero solutions which the Germans will be unable to resist.

Some have also suggested that SNF negotiations could go in tandem with CFE negotiations without leading to a "zero solution." I disagree. Once SNF negotiations begin, all political pressure will focus on them because of the unique sensitivity of nuclear weapons issues in public opinion. The inevitable result will be to push SNF negotiations faster than CFE negotiations, which would very likely lead to a "zero solution" on SNF before the conventional imbalance is rectified.

(c) Is the FOTL a new system that violates the "spirit" of the INF Treaty? Some West German advocates of immediate SNF negotiations argue that FOTL is not acceptable because its longer range of 450 kilometers (as opposed to the 110 kilometers range of the *Lance*) would make it a qualitatively new weapon. A new weapon is seen as a provocation to the Soviets, as adding a new dimension to the "arms race."

First of all, it was the West German government which pressed NATO for a longer range for the FOTL, concerned as it was about implications of short-range nuclear systems exploding on German soil. The U.S. government agreed to West German demands. Secondly, the FOTL may be a qualitatively new system, with greater range, accuracy and survivability, but the requirement for these improved capabilities grew out of NATO nuclear modernization studies and plans that began in the 1970s as a response to projected improvements in Warsaw Pact air defenses and offensive air capabilities against NATO airfields. Thus, the FOTL is a long-planned response to Soviet conventional improvements, not an attempt to escalate the nuclear "arms race."

(d) Would negotiations toward a "third zero" be acceptable because deterrence could still be guaranteed by nuclear-capable aircraft? Some proponents of immediate SNF negotiations argue that NATO does not need the FOTL, that it can live with dual-capable aircraft such as F-16s and F-111s armed with nuclear bombs and missiles, or even with off-shore systems such as sea-launched cruise missiles. If the conventional imbalance in Europe were rectified, it may be true that dual-capable aircraft could be adequate to maintain extended deterrence because the nuclear threshold would be raised and targets less numerous. But barring that, the *Lance* missile and nuclear artillery cannot be effectively replaced by aircraft. Dual-capable aircraft will not be as survivable as the FOTL to Soviet air attack. Also there would not be enough dual-capable aircraft to cover targets already assigned for conventional missions plus the new nuclear-mission targets assigned as the result of losing FOTL.

(e) Is there a need to make a FOTL modernization decision soon? The West Germans do not want to make a decision to deploy FOTL until after their 1990 elections. This is an understandable request given the political difficulties the Kohl government is currently facing, and Bush reasonably acceded to it. But a delay cannot be too long because the *Lance* is facing obsolescence; its electronics and nuclear weapons package are aging and will be obsolete by 1995. The *Lance* has already undergone one service-life extension plan (SLEP), otherwise it would have been obsolete in 1991. As of 1991, FOTL development funds jump to \$129 million. This is a steep price to pay for a missile allies may not deploy and the price will get steeper year by year.

(f) Doesn't SNF modernization increase Germany's nuclear risk? This assertion is simply untrue. First of all, the West Germans are not alone in deploying the *Lance* missile on their

soil. The Dutch, Belgians and Italians, too, have *Lance* launchers targeted by Soviet forces. These countries would be involved as well deploying a follow-on to the *Lance* missile. Secondly, what risk exists for the West Germans has already existed for years. Also, the 1985 NATO nuclear modernization plan would allow the reduction of several hundred nuclear artillery shells which otherwise would not be removed if *Lance* is not modernized.

What the West German government is asking of the United States is not to avoid increasing the nuclear risk to West Germans, but to reduce the nuclear risk to itself while increasing it for Americans. The removal or even significant reduction of SNF from West Germany would further limit U.S. options below the nuclear level. This means that in the event of war in Europe the U.S. could be forced to consider the use of long-range strategic weapons earlier than would otherwise be the case if West Germany had a robust SNF deterrent, including the FOTL.

The consequence of a diminished SNF capability, coupled with the continuation of the current conventional imbalance in Europe, could be not only to make the first use of nuclear weapons less likely, thereby weakening the credibility of deterrence, but to push an unfair share to the risk of the failure of deterrence back on the American people. The intentions of the Germans were made very clear to me in a recent trip I took to the Federal Republic. While there I was told frankly by a Social Democratic member of the *Bundestag*: "What we want to do is to put the nuclear risk back on you."

(g) Does Follow-On to *Lance* represent NATO "bad faith" given Soviet unilateral reductions and moratorium on nuclear modernization? The Soviet Union has repeatedly made this charge. However, it is the Soviet Union that exhibits "bad faith." Over the past decade the Soviets have increased their surface-to-surface missile force by 17 percent, while NATO has not deployed a new short-range missile since 1976. Despite Soviet claims to the contrary, battlefield and tactical nuclear modernization continues, with continued SS-21 entry into Soviet forces, accelerated introduction of nuclear-capable artillery into the Soviet arsenal, and the addition of an extended range SCUD/air-to-surface missile.⁵

Avoiding SNF Negotiations Until After CFE Agreement

West Europeans rely for their security on a U.S. guarantee to retaliate with its own nuclear weapons against a Soviet nuclear or overwhelming conventional attack on West Europe. This guarantee is backed up by 325,000 U.S. troops permanently stationed in Western Europe, 250,000 of them in West Germany. By agreeing to help defend West Europe with nuclear weapons, the U.S. risks the survival of its troops in Europe and ultimately millions of American civilians subject to Soviet nuclear retaliation. In return for this risk, the U.S. rightly has required that its forces stationed in West Germany and elsewhere in Europe be equipped with modern nuclear weapons. This concept has been accepted by NATO and Bonn for decades. According to U.S. and NATO doctrine, these forces must be capable of a range of attack options against the Soviet Union and Soviet military targets in Europe.

The nuclear modernization plan approved in 1985 by NATO includes: 1) replacing old U.S. nuclear artillery shells with new and safer ones; 2) replacing the nearly obsolescent *Lance* missile with a new, longer range and more accurate missile; and 3) deploying a roughly 250-mile-range tactical air-to-surface missile (TASM) that would be launched from

5 Karber, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

aircraft such as the F-15E *Strike Eagle* and would be able to destroy such targets as rail yards and command posts in Soviet territory.

In recent months, the West German government, led on this issue by Foreign Minister Genscher, has mounted a frontal assault on the NATO nuclear modernization plan, first refusing a firm decision on modernizing NATO's short-range nuclear forces and now advocating negotiations that could eliminate a follow-on to the *Lance* missile and nuclear artillery as well. The West German position on the tactical air-to-surface missile (TASM) is unclear, but The Heritage Foundation has been told privately by a West German official that TASM deployment also may be in jeopardy.

Genscher and other West German officials justify their position by claiming that nuclear artillery and short-range missiles "single out" Germany since they would explode primarily on German territory, East or West. While this is true, it always has been true. U.S. nuclear weapons, including very short range artillery, have been on German soil for decades. These weapons have contributed to the deterrence that has given Germany its longest period of peace in centuries. These weapons, moreover, "single out" Germany no more than do the tens of thousands of Soviet tanks which, for decades, have been poised to overrun Germany. In all these decades, the U.S. has been willing to station great numbers of U.S. troops between those tanks and their German targets — and Washington never once talked about the GIs being "singled out."

Protecting U.S. Troops. Modernizing NATO's nuclear force has nothing to do with "singling out" Germany for nuclear attack. The modernization of nuclear artillery and *Lance* are considered essential by U.S. (and British) political and military leaders to protect U.S. troops in Europe and to provide nuclear options below the level of an all-out nuclear war that would destroy the U.S. This is why Bush has told the West Germans that he cannot agree to eliminate these weapons, even through negotiations with the Soviet Union, until Moscow agrees to reduce its conventional military threat to Western Europe and the U.S. troops stationed there.

If Soviet conventional force superiority disappears, then the need for SNF systems by NATO recedes. Under the current imbalance of conventional forces, I would argue for the need of SNF even if the Soviets had no such nuclear forces at all. A CFE agreement, on the other hand, would likely produce the kind of military stability that would allow the removal of possibly all ground-based short-range missiles and nuclear artillery through negotiations. Under these circumstances NATO would need retain only dual-capable aircraft armed with long-range air-launched missiles and gravity bombs capable of hitting the Soviet Union itself. These systems would be needed to provide strategic coupling to the U.S. because, as history has shown repeatedly, a conventional force balance alone is not enough to deter war.

In the meantime, however, I recommend that the U.S.:

- 1) Reaffirm the official NATO position opposing immediate negotiations on short-range nuclear forces, even if it means an open split between the U.S. and West Germany at the upcoming NATO summit.**
- 2) Continue to support NATO nuclear modernization, including nuclear artillery, a Follow-On to *Lance*, and the tactical air-to-surface missile, while giving Bonn until after its 1990 election to make a firm deployment decision on *Lance*.**

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Committee, put simply, this is a time to be bold in conventional arms control and cautious in European nuclear arms control. The relationship in Western strategy between these two kinds of forces is delicate and should be treated as such. If we get out too far ahead in eliminating the nuclear deterrent that offsets Soviet conventional forces, we could end up with no nuclear deterrent (or at the very least a weakened one) and an unsatisfactory CFE agreement which leaves Soviet conventional superiority intact. This would be very unwise.

No opportunities will be missed by resisting Soviet pressure to negotiate a nuclear-free Europe. In the end we can get around to reducing nuclear forces in Europe, but not until the conventional imbalance, on the account of which NATO nuclear forces exist, is first removed.

Thwarting Moscow's Goal. Above all, we must remember that a nuclear-free Europe, or even a Europe where extended deterrence is weaker than it now is, has long been an "old thinking" kind of strategic goal for the Soviet Union. It was part of the old game to drive America out and dominate Europe politically with military intimidation. Moscow knows the strategic advantage of a conventionally weaker Europe devoid of nuclear risk. It means a Europe more pliable and susceptible to the military power of the Soviet Union.

Ultimately, I believe that the risk of taking an irreversible strategic misstep in negotiations on short-range nuclear weapons is, at this time, far greater than the risk of nuclear war. That is why I advise in favor of serious negotiations on conventional forces and against immediate negotiations on short-range nuclear systems.

