

January 13, 1983

## THE STOCKHOLM TALKS : OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WEST

### INTRODUCTION

When the Conference on Disarmament and Security-Building Measures (referred to as CDE) convenes on January 17 in Stockholm, it will receive a high level of public attention. For one thing, it will permit the first meeting between U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko since the two had a tense encounter in Madrid in September 1983 after the Soviet downing of Korean Airlines Flight 007. For another, it will be the only current forum at which East and West discuss arms control, since the Soviets have refused to continue three separate arms negotiations--the talks on strategic and intermediate-range nuclear systems and those on conventional reductions. With this new--and unexpected--importance, the CDE has become a high priority for U.S. policymakers.

Promoted mainly by some Western European nations to demonstrate to their citizens that they are serious about arms issues, and by the Soviet Union as an opportunity to achieve some of its European security goals, the CDE was endorsed somewhat reluctantly by the U.S. government. Now forced to make the best of the situation, Washington should work to ensure that Western positions at the CDE reflect the overall European security balance--a NATO force somewhat inferior conventionally to the Warsaw Pact, dependent upon U.S. resupply, and particularly vulnerable to a surprise attack.

The U.S. must counsel the Western nations to pursue limited confidence and security-building measures (CSBMs). Some of these may improve marginally the security of the West in Europe. Such measures include pre-notification of troop movements above certain levels and unimpeded observation of military maneuvers. The U.S. should insist upon adequate verification wherever required and seek to make any agreements binding under international law. At

the same time, the U.S. should work against proposals that go beyond limited CSBMs or that would impair important security interests.

If Washington conducts skillful diplomacy, it could emerge from CDE having demonstrated correctly that it is the Soviet Union that remains intransigent at the bargaining table and is the major obstacle to equitable arms limitations.

## BACKGROUND

There is no generally accepted definition of a confidence and security-building measure. At a minimum it is any action or measure that provides useful information about the military intentions, actions, or activities of a nation or a group of nations. The political purpose of CSBMs is to provide a barometer of peaceful intentions between nations and to reduce the possibility of unintended conflict; the security purpose is to provide signals of unusual military activity and, in particular, to reduce the possibility of a successful surprise attack. CSBMs either can be used as an adjunct to an arms control agreement or can stand alone.

The main components of CSBMs are: 1) notification measures that require governments to publicize in advance their plans for specified military activity; and 2) inspection measures that call for non-national observers to be present at specified military activities at agreed times or on request by the foreign nations.<sup>1</sup>

Measures that today might be termed CSBMs have been agreed to in the past, but the development of a conceptual framework for CSBMs did not begin until the late 1960s. It now manifests itself in a variety of international forums, including the Final Act agreed to by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (usually called the Helsinki Accord); proposals made at the Mutual Reduction of Force and Armaments and Associated Measures in Central Europe conference (referred to in the West as the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction [MBFR] talks) in Vienna; the CDE conference under review here; and various others.

The Helsinki process mainly focused on human rights issues and the de facto ratification of post-World War II European borders, but also included non-legally binding<sup>2</sup> CSBMs. These were: (1) notification to be given at least 21 days in advance of military maneuvers including over 25,000 troops; (2) voluntary

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<sup>1</sup> For background on CSBMs, see Jonathan Alford, "The Future of Arms Control: Part III - Confidence-Building Measures," Adelphi Paper No. 149, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1979; and Johan Jorgen Holst and Karen Alette Melander, "European Security and Confidence-Building Measures," Survival, July-August 1977, pp. 146-154.

<sup>2</sup> Also known as "politically binding."

notification of maneuvers and military movements involving under 25,000 troops; and (3) Helsinki signatory nations voluntarily to invite each other to send observers to military maneuvers.<sup>3</sup>

At the Vienna talks to reduce arms levels in Europe, which began in 1973, Western proposals at first focused almost exclusively on methods of counting current military force levels and specific force reduction proposals. But in 1979, the West tabled a group of "associated measures." These contained elements that could "build confidence," although they were designed primarily to ensure verification of any force reductions (if and when such reductions were implemented).<sup>4</sup>

The Vienna talks' CSBMs were: (1) pre-notification<sup>5</sup> of out-of-garrison activity; (2) exchange of observers at out-of-garrison activities; (3) pre-notification of major movements by ground forces of direct MBFR participants; (4) right of inspections up to 18 times per year; (5) permanent entry and exit points to observe force movements; (6) exchange of information on relative forces; (7) non-interference with "national technical means" (i.e., non on-site) of verification. While some of these proposals were intended to cover specific areas where force reductions had taken place, the principles involved were clearly applicable to CSBMs. At the MBFR talks, CSBMs are an integral part of actual force reduction issues. Since there has been no real progress on these issues, there has therefore been no significant movement on the CSBM question.

The CDE talks now will provide another forum for discussion of CSBMs. Meeting in Stockholm are 35 nations, including all the NATO states, the Soviet bloc plus eleven of Europe's neutral and smaller nations. They are convening as the result of a number of factors: (1) the longstanding Soviet drive for a European security conference which led to active support for CDE beginning in 1979; (2) the Soviet interest in diverting attention from the Helsinki process, which has emphasized human rights issues; (3) the French proposal of 1978, made under pressure from French leftists, for France to participate in some kind of arms control forum; (4) a feeling by Western European governments that another arms control parley would allay some of the popular fears concerning deployment of the Pershing II and cruise missiles; and (5) a genuine feeling in the West and perhaps by the Soviets that some specific CSBM measure might not be harmful to, and possibly beneficial to, their security interests.

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<sup>3</sup> At the Belgrade follow-up to Helsinki, some limited CSBMs were tabled, but nothing was agreed to.

<sup>4</sup> For further discussion, see Lothar Rudel, "MBFR: Lessons and Problems," Adelphi Paper No. 176, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1982.

<sup>5</sup> That is, notice prior to the initiation of the military activities.

The Western nations in December 1980, after extensive consultation, presented a proposal for a CDE conference at the Madrid review conference follow-up of the Helsinki process. Last September, this proposal was accepted,<sup>6</sup> after the U.S. yielded somewhat on the earlier effort to tightly link improvement in the Soviet human rights performance to a CDE meeting.

#### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MBFR AND CDE

The prime differences between the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks in Vienna and the CDE discussion (which is part of the Helsinki process) include subject matter, geography, and legality. The MBFR talks cover reduction in conventional forces while the CDE, at least in its first phase, is supposed to focus on non-force reduction, confidence-building measures. Geographically, the MBFR covers mainly Central Europe, not including Hungary, while CDE covers Europe from the Western coastline to the Ural Mountains (ten times farther than the Helsinki coverage) and adjacent sea and air. The French are in CDE but not in MBFR. With respect to legality, MBFR would result in a legally binding treaty, whereas CDE is a part of the non-binding Helsinki process.<sup>7</sup>

#### SOVIET INTERESTS AND CDE

Moscow's interest in CDE reflects the Soviets' general interest in European security, the Soviet record with respect to the MBFR and "associated measures," and the Soviet record on Helsinki's confidence-building measures.<sup>8</sup> Soviet general European security goals include: (1) maintenance of the European military balance in favor of the Soviets; (2) maintenance and strengthening of Soviet control of Eastern Europe; (3) Soviet political dominance in Western Europe; (4) recognition of (1), (2) and (3) by the West; (5) lowering of Western military efforts; (6) diminishing or breaking U.S.-Western European ties; and (7) making Soviet-style "detente" irreversible.<sup>9</sup>

At the MBFR talks, the Soviet response to Western "associated measure" initiatives has been tepid. While the Soviets have agreed that "associated measures" are a subject for discussion,

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<sup>6</sup> For the text, see "The Madrid CSCE Review Meeting" (Washington, D.C.: Commission on Security and Cooperation, 1983), pp. 74-75.

<sup>7</sup> The international legal dimensions of the Helsinki Final Act are discussed in Oscar Schachter, "The Twilight Existence of Non-binding International Agreements," American Journal of International Law, April 1977, pp. 296-304.

<sup>8</sup> The Eastern European nations are, of course, a part of the CDE process, but while they may occasionally offer a variation on Soviet proposals, they are not independent actors.

<sup>9</sup> For further discussion of Soviet goals in Europe, see John Erickson, "European Security: Soviet Preferences and Priorities," Strategic Review, Winter 1976, pp. 37-43.

there is little evidence of serious Soviet interest in useful "associated measures," including those most analogous to CSBMs.<sup>10</sup> The Soviets at times also have argued that "associated measures" are merely a pretext for the West to obtain military data.

Although the Helsinki CSBMs are not legally binding, the Soviet record on compliance nonetheless indicates the Soviet approach toward CSBM. While generally following the letter of the agreements, Moscow's observance of the spirit has been questionable. For example, the Soviets have hampered Western observers in various ways, such as giving them defective binoculars. Western observers have been carefully restricted, made to stay in prepared stands, and permitted to watch set piece maneuvers only. Most important, some of the Soviet large-scale maneuvers during the Polish crisis of 1980-1981 were made without the proper notification as required by the Helsinki CSBMs.

#### WESTERN INTERESTS AND CDE

Western interests must first be viewed within the context of current security factors in Europe.<sup>11</sup> Most relevant are: (1) the conventional military balance tilts in favor of the Warsaw Pact over NATO; (2) the Soviet bloc fighting doctrine, training, and force capabilities are oriented toward offensive rather than defensive posture; (3) for primarily political reasons, NATO doctrine spreads out forces along the West German border with the East, thus making the West particularly vulnerable to a surprise attack; (4) a successful Western defense absolutely requires a rapid deployment of U.S. forces to Europe.

Western nations have observed the spirit as well as the letter of the Helsinki CSBMs. Further, Western CSBM proposals at the MBFR talks have not been accepted by the East.

#### CDE AGENDA

The CDE will involve all of the states that are part of the Helsinki process and will occur in two stages. In the first stage, beginning on January 17, the main focus is to be on limited CSBMs. However, there is nothing to prevent other issues related to arms control from being raised. The CDE mandate specifies that any CSBM measures must be "politically" binding, militarily

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<sup>10</sup> In its June 1983 MBFR proposals, the Soviet Union did appear to slightly modify its rigid opposition to all on-site inspection, but its position was that any particular inspection could be rejected, thus negating the purpose of inspections.

<sup>11</sup> For a general review of U.S. policy and CSBMs, see: U.S. Department of State, "Security and Arms Control" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983), pp. 4350.

significant, "provided with adequate forms of verification which corresponds to their content," and applicable throughout Europe to the Urals.

The results of the first stage of CDE are to be evaluated at the Helsinki follow-up meeting scheduled for Vienna on November 4, 1986. If all parties agree, a second stage of the CDE will begin, which will have an official mandate to deal directly with arms control issues. The U.S. has not committed itself to a second stage.

The specific issues to be raised at CDE concern: (1) "transparency" measures, such as the pre-notification of exercises, exchange of military data, improved communications, and inspection/observation; (2) restrictive measures, or limitations, such as limits on aspects of military maneuvers and nuclear free zones; and (3) declaratory measures, a favorite of the Soviets, such as pledges of nonaggression and of no first-use of nuclear weapons. Western proposals will focus on information, notification, verification and communication CSBMs.<sup>12</sup>

#### CDE: PROBLEMS AND POLICIES

Participation in CDE raises some problems for the West, the U.S. in particular. These should be taken into consideration as the U.S. reviews CDE usefulness. These problems are:

- o The CDE will draw attention away from one of the most vulnerable Soviet points--human rights issues. The Soviets consistently have sought to weaken the human rights dimension of the Helsinki process. The convening of the CDE, segregated from human rights issues, which are supposed to be an integral part of the Helsinki process, will divert public attention from a major Soviet vulnerability--its extensive human rights violations.
- o The CDE may serve as a propaganda forum for Soviet proposals intended primarily to persuade the Western European public that Moscow has peaceful intentions.<sup>13</sup> Certain to

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<sup>12</sup> On January 11, 1984, the NATO members stated that the Western proposals at CDE will include: (1) obligatory advance notice of troop movements and exercises; (2) regular exchanges of military information; (3) rights of observation of military activities; and (4) improved communications on military matters.

<sup>13</sup> On January 10, 1984, the Soviets proposed a ban on chemical weapons in Europe, but did not include any verification measures. This could well be the opening round of the Soviet CDE propaganda effort. On chemical weapons, see Manfred Hamm, "Deterring Chemical War: The Reagan Formula," Heritage Background No. 272; and Hamm, "Chemical Weapons and Europe," forthcoming from the Institute for European Defense and Strategic Studies, London.

have a superficial appeal are such proposals as "no first use of nuclear weapons and nuclear free zones." Careful and detailed analysis demonstrates the negative impact of many of these proposals on Western security, but this is a laborious and repetitive process while the Soviets have only to offer the ideas in order to create a positive image with some sectors of European opinion. Western governments are vulnerable to public opinion while the Soviets are not.

- o The CDE could exacerbate tensions between the Western allies--a prime Soviet goal--by offering superficially appealing "declaratory measures," such as nuclear free zones, and by repeated condemnation of the continuing Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force (INF) deployment. Pressure could increase for a full European return to a 1970s-type detente with the Soviets and some governments could fall even further behind in meeting the NATO commitment of 3 percent real defense budget growth per year. Not only could there be differences between the U.S. and its NATO allies, there could well emerge tensions among the Europeans themselves over such issues as nuclear free zones.<sup>14</sup>
- o The Soviets may seek to utilize the CDE as a forum for unrelated issues such as the INF or even the Strategic Arms Reduction (START) issues. Because of the great number of nations attending, this could add an unnecessary layer of complexity to the already muddled arms control situation. Further, it could at least implicitly involve the Europeans directly in START talk issues, which are relevant principally to U.S. security.
- o CDE could remove whatever modest pressure currently exists on the Soviets in the now-suspended Vienna MBFR talks for actual conventional force reductions in Europe. Improved warning time is useful (although it can be ignored), but actual force reductions could be more significant.
- o Locating the conference in Stockholm means that the Swedish government of Olof Palme, known for his strong criticism of U.S. policies, may tilt matters slightly against the U.S. and Western interests, although perhaps the recent Swedish experience with intruding Soviet submarines has been a chastening. While the host government cannot determine the outcome, it often plays the role of a conciliator, as Spain did with the Madrid follow-up to the Helsinki accord.

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<sup>14</sup> This process already may have started. On January 10, 1984, Greece announced that it would seek a Balkans nuclear-free zone despite U.S. and NATO opposition.

- o As with all Helsinki Act conferences, any CSBMs must be unanimously agreed to by all 35 participating states, which often means that the least objectionable, least meaningful measures will be accepted, rather than those that could be truly effective CSBMs.

As the U.S. pursues its interests at CDE, Washington should consider the following policy guidelines:

- o "Transparency" measures consistent with U.S. security interests include: (1) lowering of the threshold number for notification of maneuvers from 25,000 to a substantially lower number (10,000-15,000) troops;<sup>15</sup> (2) requiring notification of maneuvers earlier than the 21-day notice called for in the current Helsinki CSBMs; (3) exchanges of information, which should be verifiable, on military force structures and budgets; (4) improved communications; and (5) real verification measures, such as on-site inspections (ground and aerial) and a right to unscheduled inspections.
- o The most serious Western vulnerability is a surprise attack on Western Europe.<sup>16</sup> Any CSBMs that provide more warning time without damaging Western security should be fully pursued. Notification and information measures of the general type described earlier, combined with effective intelligence capabilities, could provide some additional indications of attack preparation, especially since the area covered includes the Soviet Union to the Urals. Such indications include dispersal of aircraft, removal of materials from storage, movement of forces of out-of-garrison areas, and interference with CSBM observers. No amount of information, however, can substitute for informed evaluation and judgment, but this can be enhanced by good information. Should such measures be adopted, the West must review its intelligence evaluation procedures to assure that Soviet actions are correctly interpreted.
- o CDE should establish limitations on the ability of the Soviets to intimidate neighbors with military buildups and troop movements during periods of tension, primarily by means of early pre-notification of maneuvers.

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<sup>15</sup> Since the Warsaw Pact tabled a similar proposal in Vienna in 1979, agreement on this measure at CDE is likely.

<sup>16</sup> Since the Soviets have in the past rejected the idea that the West is vulnerable to a surprise attack, the likelihood of effective CSBMs to deal with this problem is not great. See Jeffrey Record, Force Reductions in Europe: Strategy Over (Cambridge: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1980), p. 76. For a discussion of problems related to surprise attack, see Richard K. Belts, "Surprise Attack: Lessons for Defense Planning" (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1982).



- o Exchanges of information should be pursued. Assuming they are accurate (and some verifications measures should be devised), such information should benefit the open West more than the secretive East.
- o The West should avoid any "restrictive measures" or other force capability limitations on the carrying out of maneuvers at this time; given the current military balance in Europe, this could have a negative impact on Western security interests. At some point in the future, however, some such measures might be appropriate, but only with very stringent verification measures.<sup>17</sup> At present, NATO security requires realistic training involving very large numbers of troops; practice is essential to be ready for the possible transporting of thousands of U.S. troops on very short notice and the deployment of forces in a forward defense position. Any weakening of U.S. reinforcement capability would also inevitably lower the nuclear threshold.
- o The West should not agree to include air and naval maneuvers at this time; such activities, alone, simply are no threat to the security of the Warsaw Pact. The U.S., in particular as an essentially maritime power, cannot allow any measures that, even implicitly, would impinge on freedom of the seas, or its ability to operate in the Mediterranean or other waters close to Europe.
- o The West should oppose any Soviet efforts to extend the range of coverage for CSBMs into the Atlantic or the Mediterranean or to include the U.S. East Coast. Such areas are clearly away from direct relevance to European security and would in fact include U.S. military activities totally unrelated to European security.
- o The U.S. should oppose measures that would require reporting or observing forces merely in transit between two non-European points.
- o Soviet efforts to turn CDE into a forum for "declaratory" measures should be resisted. Such measures traditionally raised by the Soviets include the non-first use of nuclear weapons, non-aggression pacts, and the establishment of nuclear and chemical weapon free zones in various parts of Europe. The former would deprive the West of its most significant deterrent and potential response to a Soviet attack on Europe and would psychologically undermine U.S. allies while the Soviets would not believe it anyway. The latter would serve no useful purpose and, most important, almost by definition cannot be verified. Alternatively, imaginative counterdeclaratory proposes that

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<sup>17</sup> Such limitations could be on the size, area of maneuver, or duration.

place the Soviets on the defensive could be offered by the U.S.--such as nonintervention by the Soviets in Poland.

- o As with any agreements negotiated with the Soviets, the terms should be absolutely clear and not subject to differing interpretations, and any terms subject to dispute should be carefully defined within the text of the agreement. It is essential that the Russian translation be carefully scrutinized for deliberate loopholes. Translations must not be viewed as a mere formality.
- o Adequate verification must be a top priority for Western negotiators; the Soviets are vulnerable on their consistent refusal to consider meaningful verification measures, especially on-site inspection. At a minimum, observers should have considerable freedom of movement, be adequately supplied, and free from harassment. Soviet willingness to agree to adequate CSBM inspection would be a first step to such agreement on arms reduction negotiations. Refusal would indicate a lack of seriousness in arms talks as well. Verification is essential to assure observance of CSBMs and to assure that the principal Western interest in them--adequate warning time--is achieved. At the same time, any "intrusive" inspection measures, in the unlikely event that the Soviets were agreeable to negotiating them, should be carefully weighed for their impact upon Western security. Non-intrusive verification is not sufficient because: (1) it cannot detect all that needs to be detected; (2) to do so could reveal U.S. intelligence capabilities; and (3) on-site inspection would be a significant signal of political intentions.
- o An agreement should provide a mechanism for definitively determining that violations have occurred. In devising such a mechanism, the experience of the U.S.-Soviet Standing Consultative Commission of SALT should be reviewed; it has not always been a satisfactory forum for clearly determining whether violations have occurred. At a minimum, the forum should be public.
- o Penalties for non-compliance with a CSBM should be proposed. One possibility would be to require that additional unannounced on-site inspections be allowed for any violation, or to require cancellation by the violating party of an equivalent already announced future activity. Of course, for a serious violation or systematic non-compliance, the reaction should be severe, such as withdrawal from the agreement, military countermeasures, or other appropriate response.
- o In the evaluation of all suggested CSBMs, full consideration should be given as to how they would work in a time of great tension, and what the impact would be on Western

security were they to be suddenly ignored at such a time. Further, consideration should be given to other CSBMs which would be triggered at the time of a crisis, although these should be approached with some skepticism as the measures would also likely be non-binding, and a nation that has violated binding treaties would not likely observe such measures in times of crisis. Actions for consideration as subjects of crisis CSBMs include calling up of reserves, placing units on alert, and marshalling of supplies.

- o The West should use the CDE as an educational forum for European publics, including the smaller and neutral nations that will be involved in an arms control forum for the first time, to point out that Soviet conventional capabilities have increased substantially beyond those needed for self-defense, and that their planning and exercises are based on an offensive strategy including integrated use of chemical weapons.
- o As with any treaty negotiation, the U.S. should not enter into preemptive concessions; that is to say, the U.S. should know what it can and cannot accept and should not go beyond that for any reason, be that to keep the Soviets at the table, to placate sectors of public opinion, or merely to reach an agreement for the sake of reaching an agreement.
- o The Western position at CDE should be coordinated with ongoing MBFR interests (assuming the Soviets return to Vienna). A concession or compromise made at CDE will no longer be available as a bargaining chip for actual force reductions, although the likelihood of the Soviets agreeing to such reductions with adequate verification is minimal. Alternatively, the substance of Western MBFR positions could eventually be transferred to Stockholm since there is considerable overlap.
- o The West should propose that any CSBMs agreed to be separated out and put into the form of a treaty, binding under international law. Of course, this does not assure Soviet compliance, as existing covenants have been violated, but it nonetheless removes the argument that the agreements do not require obligatory observance. Labeling an agreement negotiated within the Helsinki context as "mandatory" does not make the agreement binding under international law. It is perhaps better than nothing but falls far short of the best result.
- o The West should not allow the CDE and Soviet public relations exercises in arms control to divert attention from the Soviet human rights record. The West should also point out that it would be more confident about the Soviets were they to allow for human rights and political freedoms.

## CONCLUSION

A well-thought out and executed U.S. policy at CDE could achieve the following: (1) agreement to a small number of CSBMs that could marginally enhance Western security; (2) the preservation of alliance unity on security issues; (3) the maintenance of continued pressure on the Soviets on the human rights issue; (4) the encouragement of even modest political independence by the East Europeans; and (5) the blunting of Soviet propaganda initiatives and efforts at declaratory CSBMs with clear presentations of the Soviet military buildup and its impact upon the East-West balance along with the offering of imaginative counter-propaganda where appropriate.

The West, of course, should be realistic about the likelihood of Soviet compliance with any measures agreed to in view of Moscow's record on such matters. This Soviet record also makes verification measures even more important as part of an overall package. Certainly, if the Soviets will not agree to the minimal on-site requirements of CSBMs, there is little hope that they will accept them for more significant negotiations on nuclear and conventional force reductions.

A realism should inform expectations about the CDE. Under present circumstances, only two things could significantly improve the West's security positions: first, genuine, balanced and truly verifiable arms reductions, or, second, a strengthening of Western military capabilities to assure deterrence or the ability to counter the Soviets militarily if necessary. With respect to CSBMs, the most important actions that would create confidence would be for the Soviet Union to renounce expansionism, end its quest for overwhelming military predominance in Europe and to respect human rights. Without such measures, the West must remain vigilant regardless of whatever CSBMs may be adopted at the CDE.

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