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## **SETTING LIMITS ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS: A NEW STRATEGY FOR U.S. NEGOTIATORS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

One the most important issues to emerge from the U.S.-Soviet Iceland summit is how drastic nuclear arms reductions would affect the balance of conventional forces in Europe. It has become increasingly clear that a world without nuclear ballistic missiles would require doing something about the superiority in conventional forces which the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies currently enjoy in Europe. Either NATO would have to build up its conventional forces or an arms control agreement would have to be reached that stabilizes the balance of conventional forces in the European theater.

It could be argued that the way to avoid making hard choices about a buildup of NATO conventional forces would be to find some common ground with the Soviets at the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks in Vienna. But is an MBFR agreement, as it is currently being negotiated, in the security interests of the West? Since MBFR negotiations began in 1973, MBFR has moved incrementally toward an agreement of potentially catastrophic consequences for NATO. That danger is the result of inherent flaws which have bedeviled MBFR from its inception. These are:

- 1) MBFR has mistakenly focused on manpower as the unit of account instead of more destabilizing elements of the military imbalance such as tanks or aircraft.
- 2) Reductions of manpower are more harmful to NATO than to the Warsaw Pact because it would be easier for the Soviets to reintroduce or reinforce troops in Europe than for the U.S.
- 3) Manpower reductions would undermine NATO's ability to defend the central front in Germany because NATO's defenses are currently overextended.

4) Ceilings on manpower levels are unverifiable.

To avoid these problems, the U.S. and its NATO allies should negotiate a new mandate for conventional arms control negotiations. This could capitalize on Moscow's recent willingness to terminate MBFR and open a new negotiating forum. Elements of a new mandate should include: 1) establishing a new unit of account to replace the current focus on manpower; 2) expanding the area of application to include all of Europe; 3) broadening the negotiations to include battlefield nuclear and chemical weapons; and 4) establishing effective but realistic verification requirements.

THE ORIGINS OF MBFR

The Purpose and Scope of MBFR

The purpose of the MBFR talks is to negotiate an agreement to reduce forces and armaments in Central Europe. The area of reductions consists of the territory of seven countries: West Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, in the West and East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia in the East.<sup>1</sup>

The announced Western goal for MBFR has been to reach manpower parity between East and West at the levels of 700,000 ground forces and 900,000 combined air and ground forces. To reach the Western goal, the Soviet bloc would have to eliminate substantially more troops than the West because of current Warsaw Pact advantages in conventional forces in the Central Region.<sup>2</sup> Reducing the Soviet military threat to Western Europe would make it less necessary for the West to drastically increase expenditures for conventional forces. It would also help deter a Warsaw Pact attack by requiring the Soviet Union to undergo substantially greater mobilization and reinforcement before attacking than is now the case. For this reason, verification measures to insure compliance with an agreement would be expected to provide the Allies some additional warning time of an impending Soviet attack, which, in turn, would facilitate NATO's own mobilization and reinforcement decisions.

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1. France has refused to take part in the talks, although NATO has tacitly agreed to count the three French divisions located in West Germany in Western figures. The territory of Hungary also was excluded at Soviet insistence.

2. NATO would reduce 90,000 to 100,000 air and ground forces while, according to Western data, the Warsaw Pact would be required to reduce some 240,000 total troops.

### Western Motivations

The major reason for the West's initial interest in MBFR was to forestall the progressive unraveling of NATO's conventional military defenses.<sup>3</sup> NATO's problems had been demonstrated by: 1) the 1966 withdrawal of France from military participation in NATO, which caused NATO to lose the largest single Western army of the day (338,000 strong), as well as a major part of NATO's logistical infrastructure; 2) the depletion of U.S. forces in Europe as the war in Vietnam expanded;<sup>4</sup> 3) indications in 1967 that England was considering cuts in the British Army of the Rhine; and 4) the threat of unilateral U.S. troop reductions prompted by former Senator Mike Mansfield's series of resolutions, first submitted to the Senate in 1966, that culminated in the Mansfield Amendment of 1971.<sup>5</sup>

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger tacitly admitted that force reductions themselves were never the objective of MBFR. All the Administration's studies had shown that conventional forces in Europe needed to be increased. The Mansfield Amendment threatened just the opposite. And according to every scenario devised by the National Security Council, reaching an agreement at the MBFR talks actually would increase the imbalance of forces.<sup>6</sup>

### Soviet Motivations

The USSR had no military incentive to engage in the MBFR negotiations, having already achieved a preponderance of conventional military forces in Central Europe which it had no intention of negotiating away. As in the case with the West, its motivation was political. While certainly interested in achieving constraints on NATO's military capability, the Soviet Union was motivated primarily by its desire for a European security conference that would formally recognize post-World War II borders, thereby legitimizing Soviet control over Eastern Europe. The U.S. agreed in 1972 to support the

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3. Jeffrey Record, Force Reductions in Europe: Starting Over (Cambridge, Massachusetts and Washington, D.C.: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1980), p. 36.

4. U.S. troop strength declined from 408,000 to 310,000 between 1962 and 1970 according to Robin Ranger, Arms and Politics, 1958-1978: Arms Control in a Changing Political Context (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada, Ltd., 1979), p. 189.

5. The Mansfield Amendment, which would have cut U.S. force strength in Europe by 150,000 men, was defeated on May 19, 1971, by a margin of 61-36, after a major lobbying effort by the Nixon Administration.

6. Henry Kissinger, White House Years (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), pp. 939, 947.

European security conference (later known as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe--CSCE) in exchange for Soviet agreement to participate in MBFR.

#### THE WESTERN LACK OF NEGOTIATING LEVERAGE

The Soviet drive to achieve military dominance dates from Peter the Great and is founded on the conviction that Russia (and, today, the USSR) should by right be the dominant influence in Europe by virtue of its size, military might, and ideological dominance.<sup>7</sup> To realize this dream, the Soviets have created a first-class military, established a protective empire, and achieved superpower status. They almost certainly have no intention of giving up any part of their hard won status.

Because of the Soviets' acknowledged conventional force superiority, the West has no credible leverage with which to force a significant reduction of Soviet conventional forces. Western arms control advocates have failed to grasp this essential fact. As a result, the West has made important negotiating concessions with potentially serious ramifications for NATO's security in the vain hope that the USSR would agree to reduce its commanding lead. For its part, the USSR has sought an agreement that would codify existing Warsaw Pact military superiority.

#### WESTERN CONCESSIONS

The dynamic of Western negotiating efforts, which is subject to a large degree of public and internal pressure for progress, has led to many serious concessions. NATO has reduced substantially its negotiating demands in terms of both the scope and form of initial Soviet reductions. The West's early attempts to negotiate the reduction of a full Soviet tank army, while a step in the right direction, were successfully opposed by the USSR. In progressively weaker proposals over the years, NATO eventually dropped virtually all conditions that Soviet reductions consist of major combat formations.

The latest NATO initiative (December 1985) proposes a first-stage reduction of 11,500 Soviet troops (down from 68,000 in NATO's 1973 proposal), 90 percent of which would be taken in whole battalions or regiments and ten percent in individual soldiers (as contrasted with a tank army complete with all its equipment in NATO's first proposal).

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7. Malcolm Mackintosh, "The Russian Attitude to Defense and Disarmament," International Affairs, Vol. 61, No. 3, Summer 1985, pp. 391, 394.

This proposal does not require removal of armaments or equipment and does not even specify that withdrawn forces be combat units, thereby allowing Soviet reductions to be taken from service support units. A more serious omission is the failure to prohibit Soviet prepositioning of equipment in Eastern Europe to facilitate rapid reinforcement of the Central Region.

NATO made perhaps its most damaging concession in these talks on December 5, 1985, when it agreed to eliminate the requirement for mutual agreement on current troop levels prior to treaty signature. The Warsaw Pact maintains that its troop levels are some 160,000 men below NATO's estimates.<sup>8</sup> Despite years of insistence that resolving the "data issue" was a prerequisite to accurately determining the number of reductions required to reach parity, NATO finally bowed to Soviet bloc refusals to provide additional elaboration on its forces. NATO thereby accepted the Soviet assertions that it was not necessary to know the number of forces in the reductions area prior to initiating reductions. Instead, once reductions were complete, the resulting levels would be monitored by a variety of verification techniques.<sup>9</sup>

The ability to verify residual force levels, even with National Technical Means and relatively intrusive Associated Measures, is far from assured and perhaps even impossible. Without prior agreement on force levels, verification is greatly complicated.

Although many Western experts were convinced that a Western concession on the data issue would promote movement in the talks, the Soviets have merely pocketed the concession and are now chipping away at the Western verification package. By compromising on the data issue, NATO has lost all hope of achieving asymmetrical reductions leading to parity in the Central Region, which was the raison d'etre for the West entering the MBFR negotiations.

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8. The Arms Control Reporter, December 1982, p. 401.E.1.

9. These techniques are National Technical Means (NTMs) and Associated Measures (AMs). National Technical Means (NTMs) refers generally to photographic reconnaissance satellites and other assets under national control for monitoring compliance with the provisions of an arms control agreement. Associated Measures (AMs) are the "cooperative" measures proposed in the MBFR talks to aid in monitoring and verifying provisions of a treaty. They include on-site inspection, entry/exit points for monitoring troop movements, and exchanges of information on forces.

## IS AN MBFR AGREEMENT IN NATO'S SECURITY INTEREST?

The U.S. has never been able to design a methodology that would make NATO reductions actually desirable. NATO's conventional defenses are already stretched thin, forcing the alliance to depend on nuclear weapons and the doctrine of flexible response to deter a conventional attack by the Warsaw Pact. Even a reduced Soviet presence in Eastern Europe would not appreciably change NATO's basic requirements for defense. NATO reductions, on the other hand, would increase the importance of the two sides' relative capabilities to mobilize and reinforce in a crisis--decidedly disadvantageous to NATO due to geographic considerations.

In the rush to head off the Mansfield amendment, the U.S. and NATO committed themselves to the MBFR negotiations before they had determined their objectives.<sup>10</sup> NATO thus accepted a mandate for negotiations that would have serious security consequences. The specific defects which undermine the current MBFR negotiations include:

### Manpower is the Wrong Unit of Account

The focus of MBFR on manpower has less to do with logic than with politics. It is a direct response to the 1971 Mansfield amendment, which was aimed at the unilateral reduction of U.S. manpower from Europe. Manpower ceilings were fairly easily specified (a 700,000-man ground forces ceiling was initially agreed for each side and, subsequently, a mutual 900,000-man ceiling on both air and ground forces was added). Manpower was also easier to compare than equipment. Soldiers are relatively comparable; tanks and aircraft vary widely in capabilities.

Since its inception, therefore, MBFR discussions have hinged on manpower, despite the fact that a treaty based solely on manpower would have little positive effect on security in Central Europe. In fact, such a treaty potentially could be disastrous because: 1) manpower alone is not an effective measure of combat power and therefore not an effective means of establishing a military balance (armaments and force structure are more effective); 2) manpower is too illusive a unit of account to be verifiable; and 3) there is a wide variance between Soviet and Western positions on the number of Soviet bloc forces in the reductions area, and, in view of the Western concession on data, it is unlikely that the difference will be narrowed. Without a clear perspective on the number of troops being reduced and limited, there is little prospect that real parity can be achieved.

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10. Kissinger, op. cit., pp. 402, 947-948.

## Manpower Reductions Harm NATO more than the Warsaw Pact

U.S. reductions would be more prejudicial to NATO's security than Soviet reductions would be to Warsaw Pact security. The reason is the geostrategic asymmetry which dictates that reinforcement of NATO from the U.S. will be substantially more difficult than Soviet reinforcement of Eastern Europe. In the Soviet case, reinforcements can be moved as little as 400 miles from the USSR, while in the case of the U.S. and Canada, reinforcements would be required to traverse 4,000 miles or more.

Soviet forces could be easily reintroduced over a well-developed road and rail network, by Soviet military transport aviation, or by means of the largest civil air fleet in the world. U.S. forces, on the other hand, cannot be easily reintroduced once withdrawn. Sea lines of communications are long and vulnerable, even if sufficient shipping existed. Airlift assets are already fully committed for other essential missions and would not be available for emergency movement of MBFR-withdrawn forces from the U.S. to Europe.<sup>11</sup> Strategic air transport is so overburdened that the U.S. cannot now meet its NATO commitment to have six extra divisions (in addition to the four-plus divisions already in place) in Europe ten days after the beginning of mobilization.<sup>12</sup>

A further consideration is that U.S. forces returned from Europe risk deactivation by a Congress that would otherwise be required to fund the facilities and additional unit equipment necessary to maintain them in the U.S.

If there is a single, overriding reason why an MBFR agreement in any currently envisaged form is not in NATO's interest, it is because it would constrain the U.S. ability to come to NATO's aid. Another reason is the potential political obstacles to mobilization and reinforcement that probably would be erected by West European politicians unwilling to believe ambiguous warning indicators and risk provocative acts by abrogating an MBFR treaty. In an increasingly tense international situation, politicians will more likely be attuned to the political consequences of their acts than the requirements for military preparedness. And an agreement which attempts to account for manpower is unlikely to provide the unambiguous warning that would give West European leaders the confidence to take defensive measures.

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11. While this dilemma is true for manpower, it would be even more difficult by several orders of magnitude to move equipment back to Europe; hence the U.S.'s insistence on the right to store equipment in the reductions area.

12. Caspar W. Weinberger, Annual Report to the Congress, FY 1986 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985), p. 224.

### Manpower Reductions Undermine NATO's Forward Defense Capability

Although it is commonly accepted that reduction in the level of forces facing one another across the intra-German border is a desirable arms control goal, this fundamentally misconstrues the real threat to stability in Europe. It is not the mere presence of the forces which is destabilizing, but rather the nature of those forces. The heavily offensive orientation of Warsaw Pact forces coupled with substantial numerical superiority and an on-going modernization effort of massive proportions are the major sources of instability. Reductions of forces could have the unintended effect of actually increasing instability if they prompt the Warsaw Pact to feel that NATO's military vigilance has relaxed. NATO's capability for defense today is at its absolute minimum. More than token reductions would seriously damage NATO's capability to withstand a Warsaw Pact attack.

The ability of NATO to maintain elastic defense depends, among other factors, on having sufficient front-line forces and operational reserves. NATO is deficient in both. The defensive front of Allied Forces Central Europe (AFCENT) is approximately 450 miles long. Although the force-to-space requirement can vary widely with terrain, quality of equipment, training and leadership, currently, a U.S. heavy division is expected to hold 15 miles of the front line. This standard would require a minimum of 30 NATO divisions to defend the 450 mile front. Current NATO doctrine calls for another 15 divisions in operational reserve to halt penetrations and mount counterattacks.<sup>13</sup> However, NATO currently has only 26 total divisions (including the three French divisions in West Germany) and nine separate brigades and regiments.<sup>14</sup>

Many critics cite the shortage of operational reserves as NATO's greatest deficiency. Operational reserves are particularly important to NATO because of the lack of operational depth and the resulting inability to trade space for time.

### Manpower Ceilings are Unverifiable

The ability to verify treaty provisions remains a critical part of any arms control agreement and is essential in determining the acceptability of any agreement to Western governments and their publics. Not only must NATO verify that agreed levels of reductions are being taken, it must also insure that agreed residual levels after

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13. William P. Mako, U.S. Ground Forces and the Defense of Central Europe (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1983), p. 39.

14. John M. Collins, U.S.-Soviet Military Balance, 1980-1985 (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1985), p. 127.



reductions are not exceeded. The proposed MBFR compliance standards of 700,000 ground forces and 900,000 combined air and ground forces, however, are too large and nebulous to be verified with confidence and timeliness. This critical flaw undermines any deterrent to Soviet cheating. The U.S. intelligence community consistently has maintained that manpower is the most difficult standard to monitor for arms control violations and, in fact, argued strenuously against adoption of the manpower standard in the early 1970s.

There is major disagreement over whether MBFR's proposed manpower levels can be adequately verified and how. NATO has proposed a comprehensive set of verification measures which, if adopted, should increase monitoring capability substantially, but it is unlikely that the Warsaw Pact would agree to such intrusive measures.

The dispute over MBFR verifiability is not likely to be resolved in the near future. It seems clear, however, that currently no one can confidently make a case that an MBFR agreement based on manpower will ever be verifiable.

#### CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL AND NATO'S SECURITY

The inherent flaws in the MBFR mandate and the current impasse in the negotiations should persuade NATO to disengage from these non-productive talks. The Warsaw Pact's June 11, 1986, "Budapest Appeal" provides the opportunity. This proposal by Warsaw Pact heads of state signals Soviet bloc dissatisfaction with the MBFR talks. The appeal offered to expand the reductions zone to all of Europe, "from the Atlantic to the Urals." Furthermore, the Warsaw Pact expressed its willingness to conduct new negotiations 1) in an entirely new forum, 2) in an expanded MBFR forum, or 3) within the context of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

A new forum is not the whole answer, however. In light of the Warsaw Pact's indisputable superiority in conventional forces and the Kremlin's clear geostrategic advantage, arms control is unlikely to redress the currently adverse conventional imbalance. This is particularly so in light of Soviet refusal to acknowledge that an imbalance exists. Unless NATO is prepared to make a substantially greater commitment to the conventional leg of its defenses, the Warsaw Pact undoubtedly will continue to maintain its current advantage and perhaps even improve it.

Nevertheless, a new forum offers the opportunity to redress weaknesses inherent in the MBFR mandate--the focus on manpower as the unit of account, the too-limited area of application, and the Western lack of leverage to effect needed Warsaw Pact reductions.

### Employ an Effective Unit of Account

Manpower is the wrong unit of account if the purpose of the negotiation is to establish a just and equitable balance of forces. Attention instead should be directed at the most destabilizing elements in the conventional balance--those forces designed for offensive purposes. These include the forward-deployed Soviet tank armies in Eastern Europe, engineer bridging units, airborne forces and other special operations forces, attack helicopter units, and bomber and ground attack aircraft. Nuclear and chemical equipped units also fall into this category. The most threatening Soviet forces are the seven tank and seven motorized rifle divisions and their 6,500 main battle tanks located close to the intra-German border. This force can launch a short-notice, unreinforced attack which could achieve some limited territorial gains before NATO forces even could deploy from their casernes.<sup>15</sup>

Two alternative approaches to controlling these destabilizing forces are: 1) reduction and limitation of specific structural elements which are identified as being primarily offensive in nature, and 2) reduction and limitation of specific armaments. In both cases, the objective would be to limit the capability of military forces in Central Europe to conduct offensive missions.

To restrict a unit's capability to conduct offensive operations, its structure would have to be changed in a way that makes it infeasible for it to mount an attack. In short, this approach would seek to restructure or realign the forces immediately facing one another in Europe into a defensive posture. This would reduce the potential for an unreinforced attack and for intimidation of the political process. Monitoring this type of agreement would be relatively simple, requiring only that units of a prohibited type not be within specified zones. It also would require, however, an exchange of information on the structure and unit equipment of the opposing forces, and monitoring would have to ensure that the nature of those forces did not change.<sup>16</sup>

A similar approach to the same goal lies in focusing reductions and limitations on armaments or major items of equipment, rather than on manpower or force structure per se. Establishing armaments as the unit of account would have several benefits: 1) they are a substantially better measure of combat power than manpower; 2) they

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15. Anthony H. Cordesman, "The NATO Central Region and the Balance of Uncertainty," Armed Forces Journal International, July 1983, pp. 40-41.

16. John G. Keliher, The Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions: The Search for Arms Control in Central Europe (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980), pp. 157-158, 161.

are more easily monitored than manpower; 3) the focus on armaments would effectively bypass the manpower data issues (although it might be supplanted by a data issue of its own); and 4) armament reductions would translate directly into reductions of offensive capability.

Potential drawbacks to this approach include: 1) the difficulty in classifying and equating the many different systems, 2) the likelihood that the rapid pace of technology would make many of the systems obsolete and perhaps replace them with systems not covered in an agreement, and 3) the likelihood that such an approach would adversely affect both sides' modernization and restructuring options.<sup>17</sup>

Because the Warsaw Pact superiority over NATO in virtually every class of conventional weapons and, increasingly, for the class of short-range nuclear weapons is greater than it is for manpower, changing the unit of account would appear to be a desirable option. However, it would require a substantially new mindset and the painful breaking with current bureaucratic inertia.

To the extent possible, forces reduced or limited in this way should be restricted to offensive forces. No treaty should restrict either side's ability to defend itself from attack. Thus a substantial capability for self-defense is no cause for alarm as long as it is not accompanied by a capability for significant offensive use. Because of the multifaceted capabilities of modern weapons, such a distinction may prove difficult. But it is a distinction worth making.

#### Expand the Area of Application

Completely excluded from the MBFR reductions area is any part of the Soviet Union, thereby making the USSR a convenient sanctuary from the provisions of any MBFR agreement and sharply accentuating the geostrategic asymmetry between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Also excluded from the area are Hungary and France. Hungary was excluded after Soviet demands that Italy be included on the Western side as a quid pro quo. France has refused to play any role in MBFR.

On April 18, 1986, Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev inexplicably called for a new East-West negotiation to reduce the size of conventional and tactical nuclear forces in Europe. He specified the area as "from the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains." The Warsaw Pact formally accepted this proposal at a meeting of heads of state in Budapest on June 11, 1986.

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17. Ibid., p. 157.

The exact motivation for the Soviets' sudden willingness to include the European USSR is not known, but NATO should seize this opportunity to rectify a serious flaw in the original MBFR mandate.

The Warsaw Pact did not specify a precise forum, leaving open the options of an expanded MBFR forum, a forum under the umbrella of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) or an entirely new forum. Although the Soviets, as well as a number of NATO members, have leaned toward linking the proposed new negotiations with the 35-nation CSCE, there are strong arguments against this solution. The presence of the neutral and non-aligned nations in CSCE has significantly complicated efforts to maintain alliance unity, and they have sometimes pursued their own national agendas apart from the security considerations under discussion. Member nations also operate independently in CSCE rather than as members of a bloc as in MBFR. This creates ample opportunity for Soviet wedge-driving and is detrimental to NATO solidarity. Finally, CSCE requires periodic review conferences which have placed artificial time constraints on the need for progress. This was particularly evident in the November 1986 conclusion of the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (CDE), which operates under the auspices of CSCE.

Regardless of the exact forum, however, it is highly desirable that NATO approve an expansion of the area for conventional arms control to include the European territory and forces of the two alliances.

#### Expand the Focus of the MBFR Forum

The focus of MBFR has been too narrow. It has concentrated on conventional forces (and predominantly manpower, at that) to the exclusion of other related security concerns. For example, a whole new class of short-range nuclear systems is growing up which is included in neither the negotiations on nuclear forces nor those on conventional forces. Negotiations continue in Geneva on chemical weapons, seemingly unrelated to the negotiations on the general purpose forces which would employ them. Each area of potential warfare has its own bureaucracy and interest groups. Little cross-feed of information occurs, as if a future war in Europe would be limited to one or another of these types of warfare, but never all together.

Because the Geneva negotiations on nuclear and space weapons are bilateral negotiations dealing with the forces of the U.S. and USSR on a global basis, the immediate regional concerns of Europe often are not fully accommodated. To rationalize regional arms control talks in Europe, it may be advisable to enlarge the subject matter of MBFR, along with the geographic area of application, to include more than just conventional forces. The most credible addition to the MBFR

mandate would be the short-range nuclear forces which are not now specifically covered by an ongoing negotiation.

The Soviets are currently deploying short-range tactical ballistic missile systems which will be used by general purpose forces and which can maintain the Soviet tactical nuclear capability even if an arms control agreement on Longer-Range Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (LRINF) limits or eliminates SS-4s and SS-20s.

West German Defense Minister Manfred Woerner has warned of a potential new threat from the Warsaw Pact in the form of a massive "conventional fire-strike" by conventionally armed missiles. The new tactical missiles being deployed by the Warsaw Pact can deliver conventional or chemical munitions, as well as nuclear warheads, in a devastating first strike of great accuracy and suddenness.<sup>18</sup>

The goal is not to enlarge and further complicate an already complex negotiation. Rather, it is to centralize discussion of regional concerns without artificial barriers. This could have the desired effect of focusing attention on the more comprehensive European security situation and enabling tradeoffs to occur between different types of capabilities.

#### Establish Effective But Realistic Verification

Effective verification has been the bane of all arms control agreements to date. The U.S. generally has insisted on stringent verification measures which would require substantial administration and a high degree of intrusiveness. The Soviet Union, in keeping with its tradition of secrecy, has consistently rejected this approach.

The verification requirements in the West's December 1985 proposal, if examined closely, would require a massive bureaucratic apparatus. Changing the unit of account from manpower to either force structure or armaments, however, would simplify monitoring and enable verification to be achieved largely through National Technical Means and with existing military attaches. These means already have reliably established the order of battle of Soviet bloc forces. Associated Measures would be required to update the data base and resolve disputes, but their scope and intrusiveness could be reduced.

Verification will not be an easy task, even under the best of circumstances. NATO and the U.S. Congress must recognize that there is no such thing as absolute verification and strive to make the compliance standards unequivocal and meaningful. There will undoubtedly be disputes between the sides, and the role of the

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18. Manfred Woerner, "A Missile Defense for NATO Europe," Strategic Review, Winter 1986, pp. 13-18.

consultative commission proposed by NATO would be to resolve these disputes, either through dialogue or by authorizing an inspection.

In some instances, however, it is unlikely that they will be resolved. It then will be incumbent on NATO to determine if a violation of the treaty has occurred. This will be a political decision rather than a strict monitoring judgment, and it will depend in large part on explicit compliance standards which are capable of being monitored with an acceptable level of confidence.

## CONCLUSION

There is no military-security benefit from continuing to pursue the MBFR negotiations in their current form. From the outset of the negotiations it was clear that the geostrategic asymmetry would be disadvantageous for NATO in terms of restricting its ability to mobilize and reinforce to meet a Warsaw Pact threat. Manpower has proved an ineffective unit of account with the added disadvantage of being unverifiable. The Soviet advantage in virtually every aspect of the conventional balance has deprived NATO of negotiating leverage necessary to achieve an agreement on favorable terms, and the restricted area of application has made the USSR a sanctuary from treaty provisions. After thirteen years of negotiations, the trend of Western concessions is decidedly unnerving.

It is therefore time the U.S. exerted its leadership within the North Atlantic alliance to change the parameters for negotiating conventional force reductions. Elements of a new approach should include:

- 1) establishment of a new unit of account--either offensive force structure, armaments, or a combination of both;
- 2) expansion of the area of application to include all of Europe, including the European USSR;
- 3) expansion of the focus of negotiations to include short-range nuclear and chemical weapons, which are purely regional in character; and
- 4) establishment of effective but realistic monitoring requirements.

Since the Soviets have themselves indicated a willingness to consider a new arms control forum, the way is clear to begin exploratory discussions. It would behoove the U.S. and NATO to seize this opportunity to refocus the discussion of European security in a more productive direction.

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The views expressed in this study are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. government.