Reconstructing NATO Strategy for the 1990s

A Conference Report

Richard A. Bitzinger

RAND

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PREFACE

On March 21-23, 1988, a conference on "Reconstructing NATO Strategy for the 1990s" was held in Ebenhausen, West Germany, bringing together government officials and defense analysts from the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. The conference was hosted by the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, together with The RAND Corporation, the Institut Français des Rélations Internationales, and the Royal Institute of International Affairs. The conference was supported by a Ford Foundation grant on International Cooperation aimed at expanding ties between The RAND Corporation and foreign research institutions.

The report summarizes the conference presentations and discussions, concentrating on the main issues raised at the conference concerning the future of NATO strategy. Although much has happened in the world and within NATO since the conference was held, this report should still be of interest to many readers, as the conference's findings presaged many of the security concerns and issues that are currently unfolding.

Although the views expressed are not attributed to specific participants, they should be regarded as personal and not necessarily representing the policies of any government or private organization.

SUMMARY

On March 21-23, 1988, a conference was held in Ebenhausen, West Germany, on the subject of "Reconstructing NATO Strategy for the 1990s," bringing together defense analysts and government officials from the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, and Great Britain to discuss the future of alliance strategy in the next decade. Conference sessions covered such topics as the evolution of Soviet strategy; options and concepts for rebuilding NATO strategy (including a discussion on "discriminate deterrence"); concepts, options, and priorities for nuclear and conventional force structure development, including modernization and arms control and the future role of Western Europe within the alliance.

Several key points emerged from the conference discussion surrounding the future of NATO strategy:

Changes inside the Soviet Union should continue to present a challenge to NATO in reconstructing its defense strategy. The reduction in the minds of many Westerners of the Soviet threat, coupled with a continuing stream of arms control and confidence-building initiatives coming out of Moscow, will probably remain a source of constant pressure on Western leaders as they try to come to grips with the problems of NATO strategy in the 1990s.

There was disagreement over the present state of the alliance. Some participants believed its future was threatened by fiscal and demographic constraints, the post-INF environment, the pressures for further arms control, and the diffusion of alliance security interests. Others thought the present situation less dramatic, that the alliance had weathered similiar crises before, and that it would do so again.

The consensus was that flexible response/extended deterrence was still the best doctrine available to the Atlantic alliance. *Nuclear weapons, furthermore, were still crucial to the defense of the West.* The real future mission for NATO, therefore, was to ensure support for the effective implementation of the flexible response strategy.

Most conference participants favored building up Western defenses before pursuing further arms control efforts. Most nuclear and conventional forces were at critically minimal levels already, and arms control would not be sufficient to cut Soviet strengths to levels at which they would no longer pose a threat to the West. However, many participants appeared resigned to the prospect of further arms

control agreements and were concerned mainly with "limiting the damage."

There was a consensus (especially on the part of the Europeans) that NATO's nuclear forces were ultimately more important than its conventional forces. Since their modernization was more critical to the defense of Western Europe, this was where NATO should concentrate its efforts, especially as there was no realistic prospect of a conventional arms buildup.

Nuclear Forces: There was a consensus on the need to restructure remaining intermediate-range nuclear forces following the INF treaty, in order to strengthen NATO INF capabilities and thereby bolster this element of flexible response doctrine. There was no consensus, however, on whether NATO should proceed with the modernization of short-range nuclear forces, with arms control, or with some combination of the two. Finally, there appeared to be little interest in strategic forces or the prospects for a START agreement, except insofar as it might affect the ability to deploy certain weapons in Europe (e.g., ALCMs and SLCMs).

Conventional Forces: There appeared to be general agreement on the need for negotiations that covered the Atlantic-to-the-Urals and led to deep, asymmetrical cuts in offensive armor. However, there was no consensus as to the best formula to pursue to obtain such cuts. Furthermore, despite a lengthy discussion of emerging conventional technologies and an extensive U.S. proposal made at the conference for upgrading Western conventional forces, no clear consensus was discernible on the issue of conventional modernization. However desirable a major conventional buildup might be, such programs were felt to be out of the question for the alliance at the present time, given their potentially high cost, fiscal and demographic constraints, the problem of burden-sharing, and the fact that they may eventually detract from the nuclear dimension of flexible response, which is considered key to both military deterrence and the political cohesion of NATO.

There was also a consensus, in principle, on the need to integrate arms control (both nuclear and conventional) with NATO's broader strategic requirements. It was realized that the West could not pursue arms control without also giving serious thought as to how this might affect alliance strategy. Also, it was believed that there were cases in which arms control could even greatly contribute to NATO strategy and security. *Despite this overall agreement on the need for a general set of arms control principles, however, none was articulated at the conference.*

Nearly all participants were concerned about indications of an emerging intra-alliance drift between the United States and Western Europe, yet were unresolved as to the potential effect of such a phenomenon. Some worried about a real split inside NATO that could perhaps have serious repercussions for the future of alliance strategy. Others saw a stronger Europillar as ultimately benefitting the strength of the Western alliance. Certainly, however, such issues as the expanding roles of France and West Germany within NATO, the influence of the WEU, and the burden-sharing problem would continue to plague NATO decisionmaking. Whether these will be minor hurdles of the usual variety that the alliance has encountered before or will grow into serious splits could not be decided.

Overall, the conference appeared to raise more questions about the future of NATO strategy than it answered. Nearly everyone present wanted to "save" flexible response and strengthen alliance resolve and unity around this doctrine. However, there were many views about the best way to do this, and conflicting national interests were still very much in evidence.

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I. INTRODUCTION

On March 21-23, 1988, a conference was held in Ebenhausen, West Germany, on the subject of "Reconstructing NATO Strategy for the 1990s." The conference, cosponsored by The RAND Corporation, the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, the Institut Français des Rélations Internationales and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, brought together defense analysts and government officials from the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, and Great Britain to discuss the future of alliance strategy in the next decade. Conference sessions covered such topics as: (1) the evolution of Soviet strategy; (2) "discriminate deterrence" and its implications for European strategy; (3) options and concepts for rebuilding NATO strategy; (4) nuclear force structure development: concepts and options; (5) rebuilding NATO's conventional defenses: priorities and institutions; (6) the role of France in NATO nuclear strategy; (7) nuclear force modernization and nuclear arms control; and (8) conventional arms control: Where to now?

Conference participants generally agreed that significant changes were underway in the strategic arena. The then-impending ratification of the INF Treaty and the emerging possibility of a new phase in East-West relations, the prospect of sweeping internal reform within the Soviet Union, even changes within the alliance itself—all promised to greatly affect NATO's future. Some reexamination of the future of NATO strategy was already going on, such as the U.S. government-sponsored report on long-range integrated strategy (the so-called *Discriminate Deterrence* report).

At the onset of the meeting, several general questions were posed to help shape and guide the conference's proceedings:

- What is the future of NATO long-term strategy? What is the strategic debate in the long run? In particular, what kinds of developments and changes can the West expect or aim for over the next ten years?
- How do Soviet and NATO strategic interests interact? How do Soviet actions constrain the West?
- To what should NATO aspire over the next 10 to 15 years in regard to both political and military dimensions of alliance policy? What requirements does NATO have in regard to

overall political strategy? What are the interactive aspects of this strategy? What force structure changes, both conventional and nuclear, should NATO aspire to? What role should arms control play?
- What changes might one perceive (or desire) in regard to the U.S.-West European relationship?

Overall, the conference could be divided into four general areas of discussion and deliberation:

- The Setting for the Debate
- The Overall Debate on NATO Strategy
- Nuclear and Conventional Forces: The Role of Arms Modernization and Arms Control
- The Role of the European Allies

II. THE SETTING FOR THE DEBATE

The conference proceedings took place in light of the recognition that a new political/military environment for NATO was emerging. Specifically, four general trends were noted at the conference: (1) the prospects for dramatic internal change inside the USSR, (2) the effect of the INF treaty on the future of NATO nuclear policy in particular and of alliance defense strategy in general, (3) continuing fiscal and demographic constraints within the Western alliance, and (4) the diffusion of security interests within NATO.

CHANGE WITHIN THE USSR

Clearly, by early 1988, the Gorbachev "revolution" of *glasnost* ("openness"), *perestroika* ("reconstruction"), and *demokratizatsia* was in full swing. If the secretary general's reform movement had not yet unleashed real change within the Soviet Union, certainly it heralded the *potential* for substantive change sometime in the near future, provided the Soviets can stay the course. Moscow recognized the profound need to do something drastic about the Soviet economy; in turn, this would probably have dramatic repercussions for both the Soviet political system and for Soviet security policy.

Indeed, the political/military dimensions of this change may turn out to be of great significance for the West. One American participant, a Sovietologist, argued that there was already a noticeable change in Soviet public pronouncements on security policy. Moscow is now placing greater emphasis on the idea of "international interdependence" and on the need to recognize the mutual risk of nuclear war. Concurrently, there is more talk coming out of the Kremlin about the desirability of cooperative East-West efforts at security—for example, Soviet proposals for "common security" measures. There has even been some discussion in the Soviet Union about the need to "correct" the Soviets' current "overreliance" on military capabilities for guaranteeing their security.

In particular, the Soviets have begun to place greater emphasis on "defensive" aspects of security. This is embodied in the Soviets' concept of "reasonable sufficiency," which this same participant described as an "unprecedented" effort by the Soviets to analyze and define their options for security policy. As of yet, however, much of the dis-

cussion surrounding sufficiency remains rather vague and leans toward the idea of superpower parity—that is, the superpower with a greater number of a particular armament (e.g., tanks, artillery, tactical aircraft, etc.) reducing its forces to a level equal that of the other superpower (so that while the Soviets may have to cut its tank force to a number equal to that of the United States, the United States would have to reduce its worldwide number of tactical aircraft to the level of the Soviets). It is also unclear whether this concept of sufficiency applies only to nuclear forces or to Warsaw Pact conventional forces as well. Finally, does it presage some change in the Soviets' offensive/"blitzkrieg" operational doctrine and, in particular, the nuclear dimension of this doctrine?

Turning to arms control, this participant also noted that, with the rise of Gorbachev, one has also witnessed a vigorous "arms control offensive" on the part of the Soviet Union. Several reasons for this were advanced. A new bout of arms control negotiations, for example, would provide a badly needed breathing spell in the East-West arms competition. It would also possibly serve as an aid to perestroika, both deflecting the Soviet preoccupation with its military buildup and permitting a reduction in Soviet defense spending. It could reduce the risk of war and promote a new international security order. Finally, arms control efforts, if handled in a certain way, could advance Soviet political/military objectives while further hobbling Western security efforts.

The Soviets, he went on, are currently pursuing a two-tiered arms control agenda—both a utopian/visionary approach and a pragmatic one. At the utopian/visionary level, the Soviets are campaigning for: (1) a global ban on all weapons of mass destruction (both nuclear and chemical); (2) the reduction and restructuring of NATO and Warsaw Pact conventional forces, together with the establishment of a new security apparatus, based on the principles of common security and defensive defense; and (3) a stringent, intrusive verification regime, possibly based on the principle of unlimited on-site inspection privileges.

However, it is at the pragmatic level—that is, what Moscow believes it can achieve now or in the near future—that the West should be most concerned. The Soviets are calling for deep cuts in strategic nuclear forces, the abolition of all short-range nuclear forces (the so-called "third zero"), severe constraints on strategic defenses (by strengthening the ABM Treaty), and a comprehensive test-ban treaty or treaties. In the realm of conventional forces, the USSR is proposing talks based on an Atlantic-to-the-Urals region, a reduction

in "offensive" armaments and a "modest" level of "restructuring" of forces. The Soviets are also calling for more confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), along the lines of the 1986 Stockholm agreement; for bilateral NATO-Warsaw Pact talks on military doctrine; for negotiations on establishing "zones of peace" (such as in the Nordic region and in central Europe); for a total ban on just chemical weapons (which is more likely than a nuclear ban); and for a more modest verification system, including the acceptance in principle and in practice of a limited number of on-site inspections.

As previously mentioned, the Soviets are in the midst or on the brink of a dramatic and fundamental self-examination of their defense objectives and doctrine, the nature and outcome of which is still unclear. They are keenly interested in securing deep cuts in strategic nuclear forces and in effecting change in both Eastern and Western strategic doctrine. Yet at the same time, they appear to want to preserve their nuclear retaliatory capability, perhaps even their concept of "plausible victory." Certainly, parity remains the basis for all discussions on strategic nuclear reductions. Yet it is conventional forces that are the object of the greatest contentions and deliberations, particularly for the West. It is easy to note the contradiction between Soviet calls for "reasonable sufficiency" and the USSR's current offensive doctrine. Large Soviet forces, geared for attack operations, will probably remain intact for the time being.

In concluding, some conference participants detected two important pieces of political fallout from the Gorbachev program of reform. One was that the West is currently witnessing a rise in internal Soviet debate over defense and security issues and, in particular, seeing much greater domestic difference within the Soviet elite over these concerns. Second, arms control is becoming of ever-increasing importance to the Soviets, and disarmament initiatives have become a major part of the Soviet foreign policy agenda. Overall, it was admitted that the Soviets were perhaps indeed on a new path in regard to security policy.

Naturally, there were some dissenting views to this opinion, and there was a good deal of discussion whether change in the Soviet Union was real, superficial, or even illusory. Some participants, while noting that the USSR needed desperately to do something about the sad state of its economy, wondered if the Soviets were truly willing and able to pursue the kind of dramatic change necessary to turn things around. For instance, although military spending is perhaps a great burden on the Soviet economy, it is its military might that makes the USSR a superpower. Radical perestroika and arms

control, which would reduce this military capacity, is therefore more difficult to achieve. In a similar vein, many found it difficult to believe that the Soviets would ever consider switching over to a truly "defensive defense" security posture and argued that current Soviet pronouncements of reasonable sufficiency were nothing but a "good repackaging job." One participant even went so far as to term defensive defense nothing but a "phony doctrine" (for both East and West).

Yet there was also a general feeling at the conference that the Soviets were certainly in serious need of reforming their domestic situation—economically, politically, and militarily. This, in turn, creates the potential for a dramatic change in the conduct of East-West relations. On the one hand, it presents the Western alliance with new opportunities both to deal with and to challenge the Soviets. The West could use Gorbachev's reform campaign to call upon the Soviets to live up to their rhetoric of *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and *demokratizatsia*; to truly loosen up their society; to promote real reform in their political and economic spheres; and to reduce their military threat to the West.

On the other hand, it was recognized that, if successful, the reform and revitalization of the Soviet system could actually constitute yet another Soviet challenge to the West. A more vibrant Soviet economy could enhance Eastern military potential. In addition, Gorbachev's aggressive foreign policy campaign, symbolized by his many arms control and disarmament initiatives, is directly aimed at weakening Western military defenses.

THE INF TREATY

The then-impending treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF)[1] was, perhaps not surprisingly, a contentious issue at the conference. Basically, the INF Treaty constitutes a global ban on all U.S. and Warsaw Pact land-based missiles with a range of 500 to 5,000 kilometers—the so-called "double-zero option," encompassing both longer- and shorter-range intermediate range nuclear forces. For the Eastern bloc, this means the elimination of all SS-4, SS-12/22, SS-23, and SS-20 ballistic missiles and the SSC-X-4 cruise missile. On the U.S. side, the treaty bans all ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) and the Pershing II intermediate-range ballistic missile. In addition, West Germany, in a unilateral act designed to assist the

[1] The INF Treaty was signed in Washington in December 1987 but was not ratified by the U.S. Senate until May 1988.

conclusion of the INF treaty but outside of its actual framework, agreed to dismantle its 72 shorter-range Pershing Ia missiles. The INF Treaty does not apply to sea- or air-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs and ALCMs) with a range of 500 to 5,000 kilometers, to dual-capable aircraft or to short-range nuclear forces (SNF—i.e., those with a range of less than 500 kilometers), nor does it apply to British or French nuclear forces.

Nevertheless, the INF Treaty was a sensitive issue with many at the conference, for both military and political reasons. Strategically, many believed that it knocked a hole in the middle of NATO's policy of flexible response and extended deterrence. In the minds of several (mainly European) participants, by removing an important and hitherto weak link in NATO's chain of nuclear forces, the treaty took a few rungs out of the West's "ladder of escalation." It also raised anew the old debate over "decoupling"—that is, over breaking the link between a war in Europe and U.S. strategic nuclear forces. The INF Treaty, these people believed, had severely weakened the credibility of standing Western defense strategy.

Politically, the INF agreement was a bone of contention within the alliance, often dividing Western governments and in particular pitting European leaders against their publics. This tended to encourage an atmosphere of mutual recriminations on both sides of the Atlantic, with the United States and Western Europe each accusing the other of failing to understand its motivations for either favoring or opposing the treaty. One French participant, for example, called the INF Treaty a "mutual nonaggression pact" between the superpowers, in which they essentially pledged not to fight the next war against their two homelands (a U.S. participant responded that this was "nonsense").

Some (most Europeans but also some Americans) at the conference, in fact, voiced their regret for the alliance ever agreeing to the 1979 "dual-track" decision, which not only linked INF modernization to a commitment to arms control negotiations but also implied that the stationing of new Western intermediate-range nuclear forces was simply a response to Soviet INF deployments, particularly the SS-20. Western INF modernization, they believed, was too vital to the security of NATO to have been tied to other initiatives, especially to arms control. In addition, by linking NATO INF to Soviet INF, the dual-track decision gave the Soviets an indirect influence over the Western deployments. These participants argued that in signing the INF Treaty, the Soviets gave up little of their capacity to threaten the

West, while the alliance lost much of its capacity to pose a nuclear threat to Soviet territory from West European territory.

Furthermore, many participants believed that the agreement constituted more than a return to the pre-1979 *status quo ante*. The whole INF process—the dual-track decision, the tumultuous deployment of GLCMs and Pershing II missiles, and the INF agreement—has left its mark on Western European politics. In the opinion of one European at the conference, it has unleashed a "political maelstrom" within the Federal Republic over the future of nuclear forces there. In addition, it has destroyed the legitimacy of all nuclear weapons with ranges less than 500 kilometers and created pressure for an agreement on these short-range nuclear forces (the so-called "third zero"). Its effect could also be seen in the antinuclearism found throughout most of the West European left, particularly within West Germany.

Overall, although the conference was undecided over whether the INF Treaty would seriously hobble NATO defense strategy, they largely agreed that how NATO would respond to the post-INF environment will be a major theme in the 1990s. What, for example, would this mean for the future of flexible response doctrine? How will NATO compensate for the loss of its INF capacity? Finally, how will the alliance deal with the political fallout from this treaty?

CONTINUING FISCAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CONSTRAINTS

It was also generally accepted at the conference that the Western alliance will have to pursue any planned reconstruction in a period of continuing resource constraints. Defense budgets are likely to remain tight, given continuing pressures to hold down public expenditures. At the same time, the demand for social programs provides stiff competition for military spending when it comes to allocating scarce public monies. Little increase in defense expenditures, therefore, can probably be expected over the next ten years. Finally, the fierce interservice rivalry within the national armed forces of the NATO member-countries does not usually leave much room for negotiation. It will be necessary to make tough decisions as to what each country can afford for its defense, and what kind and how many of a certain new weapon system it will get.

In addition, it is common knowledge that birth rates in the West are declining precipitously. This problem is widespread throughout the alliance but is particularly acute for the larger NATO member-countries. In West Germany, for example, the overall population is

actually expected to *decline* in the early 21st century. This manpower factor will eventually translate into smaller Western armies in the future, with the attendant problem of making it harder to maintain troop strengths at current levels.

Both of these issues will affect eventual alliance decisions on the future of NATO strategy and defense policy: Not only must the Western alliance come to some decisions as to what it would *like* to do, it must take into account what it is *capable* of doing.

THE DIFFUSION OF INTERESTS INSIDE THE ALLIANCE

Finally, discussions at the conference bore out the growing variance of security interests within the Western alliance. Of course, differences of opinion within NATO are nothing new, and throughout its history the alliance has often found itself at odds when it comes to priorities in security policy. This can, for example, be seen in the historical debates over nuclear policy and defense doctrine (such as the debate in the 1960s over flexible response).

However, over the past few years, the Atlantic alliance has witnessed a much greater diffusion of interests on the part of its member-countries. The West European allies, for example, are becoming increasingly concerned that the U.S. global perspective is diverting its attention away from NATO and European issues. Growing U.S. concerns and involvements in the Pacific Rim, the Persian Gulf, the Middle East, and Central America, the Europeans believe, are supplanting traditional U.S. priorities in NATO. As a result, the European members of NATO often feel they are being ignored by the United States or else relegated to a lower status of importance in U.S. security concerns. In addition, they sometimes resent or resist U.S. pressures to join with it in extra-alliance security activities.

For its own part, the United States is worried over the apparent emergence of a strong "European interest section" within the alliance. Certainly, the last few years have witnessed the appearance of a much more self-assertive "Europillar" within NATO, which is not reticent about proposing and promoting its own contributions to NATO defense and security policy, and which is clearly less inclined than before to defer to U.S. leadership. The reinvigoration of the Western European Union (WEU) promises that this diffusion of interests between the United States and Western Europe will not only remain but continue to grow.

Many Europeans believe that NATO is still a high priority for the United States, and there are also Americans who believe that a

stronger European pillar would contribute to the alliance, rather than detract from it. However, these anxieties did not exist before and they may grow; that is evidence of a changing internal situation within NATO.

III. DISCUSSION AND DEBATE OVER NATO STRATEGY

One of the main issues surrounding the conference concerned the future of NATO deterrence strategy. Deterrence of a Soviet attack, of course, is the keystone to Western defense, and it, in turn, is based on two doctrines: *flexible response* and *extended deterrence*. Flexible response doctrine, as embodied in the NATO Military Committee document MC-14/3, calls for the selective use of either conventional or nuclear options in response to Warsaw Pact aggression, including the deliberate escalation of nuclear strikes from a tactical to strategic level. NATO must therefore have a "balanced force" of both conventional and nuclear weapons, and especially an assortment of nuclear systems, from nuclear artillery shells to short-range missiles to intermediate-range nuclear forces to strategic nuclear weapons, in order to ensure Western control of graduated nuclear escalation and enhance its credibility. In particular, flexible response depends on the willingness of the West to use nuclear weapons first if the conventional fight is being lost. Finally, flexible response doctrine relies on a deliberate ambiguity as to the exact nature and appropriateness of that first use and escalation, in order to create uncertainty in the mind of the attacker and thus serve as a further element of deterrence.

Extended deterrence, meanwhile, refers to the extension of the U.S. nuclear umbrella over its NATO allies. This doctrine especially applies to the U.S. guarantee to use its strategic nuclear forces in conjunction with a war in Europe.

The link between flexible response and extended deterrence is self-evident; for example, the decision to deploy Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles in Western Europe was seen by many as strengthening both flexible response and extended deterrence, as it provided NATO with the capability to strike Soviet territory with U.S. nuclear forces in Europe.[1]

Recent events, many conference participants noted, particularly in the realm of arms control (e.g., the INF Treaty), constitute a challenge

[1]For a more detailed discussion of the role of flexible response and extended deterrence in alliance strategy, based on a previous RAND/SWP/RIIA/IFRI conference, see Nanette C. Gantz, *Extended Deterrence and Arms Control: A Conference Report*, The RAND Corporation, R-3514-FF, March 1987.

to the current NATO doctrine of flexible response and extended deterrence. Nuclear weapons, of course, were an integral part of Western deterrence strategy, but now many believed that such a strategy was being undermined by growing European demands for "denuclearization." Basically, therefore, the options facing the alliance at the moment appeared to be either to preserve or to somehow alter NATO defense doctrine.

Most conference participants showed little interest in the latter course. Flexible response and extended deterrence, on the whole, were still seen to be "fundamentally sound," and there was a marked lack of desire to radically change MC-14/3. If anything, there was a general acceptance of the need to preserve escalation capability and the "seamless web" between "central systems" (i.e., U.S. strategic nuclear forces) and NATO "theater requirements." Few saw any credible alternative to the current NATO strategy of flexible response, extended deterrence, and U.S. leadership of the alliance.

In fact, when it came down to the whole question of the role of nuclear weapons in Western security policy, the participants were nearly unanimously in favor of maintaining the current priority given to nuclear forces over conventional forces in defense of the West. Nuclear weapons, it was argued, perform vital military and political functions within the alliance that other weapons (e.g., nonnuclear) cannot. Militarily, they form the bulwark of NATO deterrence strategy. In particular, they compensate for Western weaknesses in conventional forces with regard to the Warsaw Pact. Politically, however, nuclear forces are seen as fulfilling an even greater function. U.S. nuclear weapons—and, in particular, their deployment in Europe and the linkage they provide between the United States and Western Europe—are regarded as critical to NATO solidarity. They are, in essence, the glue that held the alliance together. For these reasons, therefore, U.S. nuclear weapons "work better" than do other nuclear forces (such as those of France and Great Britain). In addition, for these same reasons, tactical nuclear forces perform functions that strategic (or non-European-based) weapons cannot.

However, as already mentioned, many conference participants also believed that flexible response doctrine had been severely weakened by recent events—mainly by such arms control agreements as the INF Treaty and by the prospect of future cuts in short-range and strategic nuclear forces. When the INF agreement is eventually fully implemented, the only intermediate-range nuclear forces deployed in Western Europe will consist of dual-capable aircraft, mainly F-111s stationed in Britain and armed with nuclear gravity bombs. In

wartime, however, these aircraft would also have conventional demands placed upon them. Moreover, their ability to penetrate Warsaw Pact airspace has become increasingly doubtful. Many believe that without strictly dedicated intermediate-range nuclear forces, the "seamless web" of nuclear escalation is in danger of becoming unraveled. For these reasons, therefore, there was a good deal of hostility at the conference toward recent arms control initiatives, particularly by the Europeans. As has already been stated, for example, many Europeans came out strongly against the "dual-track" decision of 1979 and the INF Treaty, arguing that the alliance should never have linked "essential" nuclear force modernization plans to arms control endeavors that were, in their opinion, basically political in nature.

In addition, the general reluctance to embrace a new debate on the future of NATO strategy could be linked to the concern that such a debate could be disastrous to alliance unity and consensus. A new debate could open the sluice gates of opinion—especially when public awareness and the variety of opinion concerning NATO defense strategy were rather high—and invite all sorts of contending theories. It had been difficult enough, it was pointed out, to achieve and maintain a consensus regarding MC-14/3. In addition, it was admitted that flexible response is itself an imperfect compromise, saved by intentional vagueness and the tacit agreement on the part of its adherents not to probe too deeply into the vagaries of this doctrine. A new debate on the future of NATO security policy would, therefore, only worsen the problem by trying to fix it. It would, for one, entail a microscopic reexamination of flexible response doctrine. It could also unleash a good deal of intra-alliance rancor, such as over each member-country's contribution to NATO and over the function of the United States as the first among equals within the alliance. Finally, such a debate would necessarily be a nuclear debate, at a time when antinuclearism within the alliance—even within many strongly pro-NATO elements—is on the rise. In general, it was believed that a new debate would only be divisive to the alliance, undermining its credibility.

THE DEBATE OVER "DISCRIMINATE DETERRENCE"

If any comprehensive alternative to flexible response was put forward at the conference, it was the so-called doctrine of "discriminate deterrence," which is taken from the title of a report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Defense and prepared by The Commission on

Integrated Long-Term Strategy.[2] Central to the report is an assertion that the current deterrent capability of Western forces has seriously eroded. For one thing, the West's acceptance of "mutual assured destruction" has undermined the credibility of NATO's nuclear deterrent, and the report asks, "Can NATO rely on threats of escalation that would ensure its own destruction. . . if implemented?"[3] In addition, advances in Warsaw Pact conventional weaponry has substantially narrowed the alliance's qualitative advantage in conventional forces. All in all, the report argues:

> To help defend our allies and to defend our interests abroad, we cannot rely on threats expected to provoke our own annihilation if carried out. In peacetime, a strategy based on such threats would undermine support for national defense. In a crisis, reliance on such threats could fail catastrophically for lack of public support.[4]

Therefore, the West "must have militarily effective responses that can limit destruction if we are not to invite destruction of what we are defending." It must have the flexibility and capabilities to react decisively with a varied set of nonsuicidal responses to a variety of Soviet aggressive activities. For one thing, NATO should "diversify and strengthen our ability to bring discriminating, nonnuclear force to bear where needed in time to defeat aggression." In addition, the West should develop the capabilities for "discriminate nuclear strikes to deter a limited nuclear attack on allied or U.S. forces, and if necessary to stop a massive invasion."[5] Finally, both the West's conventional and nuclear posture should comprise a mixture of offensive and defensive systems.

Proponents of these points argue that NATO should, over the long run, pursue several new initiatives (and in so doing, the report was often critical of allied defense efforts and burdensharing). For one, the alliance should improve its conventional forces and greatly strengthen its reliance on its conventional defenses. As part of this effort, it should fully exploit the West's technological advantage in conventional weaponry, particularly in the area of command and intelligence functions, advanced standoff munitions, new target acqui-

[2] Fred C. Iklé and Albert Wohlstetter (cochairmen), *Discriminate Deterrence*, Report of the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, The Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, Washington, D.C., January 1988.

[3] Ibid., p. 27.

[4] Ibid., p. 2.

[5] Ibid.

sition systems, and "stealth" technology. This would both aid NATO FOFA (Follow-On Forces Attack) concepts and enhance the credibility of the alliance's conventional defenses, particularly in providing NATO with the capability for "conventional counteroffensive operations deep into enemy territory." Further, the West should pursue active defenses against both tactical ballistic and strategic ballistic missiles. This would reduce the Soviet nuclear threat to the West while guarding against a loss of Western control over its own nuclear forces in a time of war.

Despite improvements in conventional and antimissile defenses, however, discriminate deterrence adherents recognized the alliance's continued requirement for nuclear weapons, including the basing of such weapons in Western Europe. At the same time, discriminate deterrence appears to call for "less ambiguity" than is currently found in flexible response doctrine. Nuclear weapons would be used "effectively and discriminately," such as in selective attacks on Soviet command centers or troop concentrations. Using new nuclear technologies emphasizing "precision and control," the report says that

> The Alliance's nuclear posture, like its posture for conventional war, will gain in deterrent power from new technologies emphasizing precision and control.[6]

For the most part, there is little to the concept of discriminate deterrence that is radically divergent from current NATO deterrence strategy. The principal proponent of discriminate deterrence at the conference, in fact, stressed the continuity of this proposed strategy with current doctrine in regard to preserving forward-based systems and U.S. forces in Europe and in retaining the U.S. nuclear guarantee to Western Europe. In addition, there is nothing in flexible response that disdains conventional defenses—indeed, far from this, as flexible response was adopted so as to raise the importance of conventional forces to the defense of NATO.

Nevertheless, discriminate deterrence was still a "hot topic" at the conference, particularly with the Europeans, at least in part because of the attention the commission's report received in the European press in early 1988. That puzzled some U.S. participants, as the report received low-key attention by the American media.

Some participants believed that the report was simply incorrect in asserting that the West's deterrent capability had seriously eroded and that flexible response/extended deterrence were still very credible

[6] Ibid., p. 30.

doctrines. In addition, it was posed, how would the search for deep counteroffensive strikes square with Western objectives for conventional arms control?

However, where the report generated its most controversy was its apparently unique prescription for the future use of nuclear weapons—which one of the defenders of discriminate deterrence at the conference argued *was* the principal difference between it and flexible response. The idea of reducing the ambiguity in Western nuclear response and, furthermore, using nuclear weapons "selectively and discriminately" did not please many participants, particularly the Europeans. For many, the idea of mutual assured destruction was the key deterrent factor behind Western nuclear weapons, and anything that made nuclear war look less apocalyptic only increased the chances of one breaking out.

In fact, much of the conference debate surrounding discriminate deterrence appeared to turn on just one sentence, and perhaps even on one supposedly missing word:

> The Alliance should threaten to use nuclear weapons not as a link to a wider and more devastating war—although the risk of further escalation would still be there—but mainly as an instrument for denying success to the invading Soviet forces.[7]

Many argued that this sentence (the by-now notorious "page 30 sentence") was evidence that discriminate deterrence was just another codeword for limited nuclear warfighting on European soil. For one thing, nuclear forces would no longer be used ultimately for their deterrent factor but for their operational contributions (warfighting). Furthermore, nuclear weapons in Europe would no longer be regarded mainly as linking the defense of Western Europe to the U.S. strategic deterrent but as conceivable warfighting options for halting a Warsaw Pact offensive. Finally, discriminate deterrence, it was argued, would decouple U.S. strategic forces from Europe and undermine extended deterrence, since strategic nuclear weapons would now be used only in response to a Soviet *strategic* attack. All this certainly went beyond the deterrence and linkage concepts embodied in flexible response and extended deterrence; in fact, it raised perhaps the greatest specter in the mind of most West Europeans: that the superpowers might use Europe as their battleground for war while their homelands remained "sanctuarized."

[7] Ibid.

One of the report's defenders at the conference attempted to alleviate these concerns. For instance, he argued that the word "only" should have been inserted after the word "not" in the sentence in question—which, in his opinion, and some others, reduced the ominous "limited nuclear warfighting" tone of the sentence—and that it had been left out as the result of a typographical error. This, however, failed to satisfy many participants, who believed that the rest of the report more than substantiated their suspicions. Greater flexibility in alliance strategy is surely welcome, argued one French participant, but this report went too far. And while a U.S. participant agreed that nuclear weapons should not be thought of as just political signalling devices, he also said the alliance should avoid any resort to a "rapid apocalyptic response."

In the end, the conference discussion failed to satisfactorily resolve this question. Indeed, some participants believed that the discussion left the impression the report either was expounding a new strategy for NATO—and was therefore dangerous—or that it ultimately offered little that was new and was therefore unnecessary.

CONCLUSIONS TO THE STRATEGY DEBATE

All in all, there was a general satisfaction among conference participants with flexible response, at least on a conceptual level. An opinion that was voiced several times throughout the conference was that no credible alternative existed to MC-14/3. In particular, nuclear weapons, and the stationing of nuclear weapons in Western Europe, were likely to remain fundamental to the defense strategy of the Atlantic alliance.

Several participants, in fact, argued that the real problem would not be found within flexible response doctrine itself but rather within the Western consensus over flexible response and over nuclear weapons. Any lack of credibility on the part of flexible response and extended deterrence was due more to Western than to Eastern perceptions. What was needed, most participants agreed, was not so much a new strategy, such as discriminate deterrence, but to "get back to basics": to reconstruct the traditional Western consensus and, in particular, rebuild public support around flexible response and extended deterrence, without revisiting, revising, or having to clarify the compromises imbedded in it.

In sum, there was less real debate over *changing* current NATO strategy or defense doctrine that there was an interest in *reconstruct-*

ing the traditional alliance consensus around that strategy in order to strengthen flexible response and extended deterrence. Again, much of the concern here was how to regain the credibility that flexible response might have suffered in light of the INF Treaty and in the face of other current arms control initiatives. This, in turn, mostly meant obtaining the necessary (read nuclear) tools to do the job.

Yet most conference participants also acknowledged the existing limits to rebuilding and strengthening flexible response doctrine. With the prospect of tight defense budgets stretching into the next decade, fiscal constraints must be kept in mind when calling for any reconstruction program. In fact, this led one participant to argue that the real debate over the future of NATO strategy was one of resources, not doctrine. In addition, it was generally acknowledged that the alliance could not ignore public pressures for further arms control, in both the nuclear and conventional realms. The problem here was how to reconcile and integrate arms control with NATO strategy so that it complemented and not hobbled this strategy.

Finally, the participants were asked how the alliance should integrate the growing emphasis on conventional forces—particularly highly accurate, precision-guided standoff munitions with the capacity for replacing many current tactical nuclear forces—with current NATO strategy. Although there was near-unanimous agreement on the statement that there was no such thing as conventional deterrence, the conference left the issue of tying in these emerging technologies largely unanswered.

IV. MODERNIZATION AND ARMS CONTROL: NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL FORCES

In discussions on how best to preserve and strengthen flexible response doctrine, conference presentations and debate tended to follow a "two-track" approach:

• *Modernization.* Essentially, what initiatives were best to pursue in order to modernize NATO forces to counter the Warsaw Pact threat? There was considerable interest in exploiting the West's technological edge in upgrading and enhancing the capabilities of alliance forces, particularly in the area of conventional armaments. At the same time, continuing fiscal constraints, problems in integrating and using this technology, conflicting national priorities, and, perhaps most important, the political problems for alliance cohesion due to reduced reliance on nuclear options presented a countervailing effect.

• *Arms Control.* What initiatives should and could the Atlantic alliance pursue that would constrain the invasion and offensive capacity of the Soviet Union and its allies? In other words, how could NATO use arms control to further its strategic and military goals? A major caveat raised in this regard was that the West should not view arms control as the solution to all its problems and possibly be too quick to enter into agreements that could turn out to be disadvantageous to NATO strategy. Most conference participants noted the Western public's current infatuation with arms control and warned against bowing to public pressure for deals that could weaken flexible response or leave NATO more vulnerable to Warsaw Pact conventional superiority. Many participants (particularly the Europeans) referred to the INF Treaty as an example of such a debilitating agreement. One participant even went so far as to denounce *all* arms control as nothing but a "trap" for the West.

At the same time, it was generally recognized that further arms control agreements were inescapable, and one could no longer regard the future of NATO without also taking arms control into consideration. In essence, arms control had gained a momentum of its own. What was needed, therefore, was to link future arms control to NATO's strategic rationale. In other words, the alliance must first determine its strategic requirements and then pursue (or reject) arms control proposals along these prescribed lines. In particular, NATO arms control or modernization programs should no longer be knee-

jerk responses to Soviet developments. Otherwise, this would only lead to further confusion among allies and distorted strategic results.

NUCLEAR FORCES

Force modernization and arms control arguments could be further broken down into separate discussions over nuclear and conventional forces. Discussion and debate surrounding NATO nuclear forces can, in addition, be subdivided into discussions concerning intermediate-range, short-range, and strategic nuclear forces.

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces

By far the most frequently raised topic at the conference concerned the post-INF environment in Western Europe—not surprisingly, since the state of theater nuclear forces was of greatest concern to the European participants. The reaction of conference participants to the political and military effects of the INF Treaty has already been noted. One of the main concerns here, and one that occupied much of the conference's attention, dealt with the question of how NATO should reinforce and buttress INF capabilities in light of the treaty.

A host of proposals were put forward at the conference regarding the modernization of intermediate nuclear forces, mostly having to do with increasing NATO's stocks of dedicated, intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe that would not be restricted under the present treaty. For one thing, NATO INF would have to put greater reliance on dual-capable, medium-range air systems—specifically, the U.S. F-111s stationed in the United Kingdom. In addition, new INF measures were proposed, including air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) on European-based aircraft, sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) on submarines specifically assigned to Western European defense, and such completely new weapons systems as the tactical air-to-surface missile (TASM).

At the same time, several hurdles to such modernization were noted. Relying on dual-capable aircraft, it was pointed out, meant dealing with the problem of penetrating increasingly sophisticated Warsaw Pact air defenses (indeed, it was in part because of these developments in Eastern air defenses that the deployment of Western intermediate-range missiles had been agreed to in 1979). However, it was believed that their capacity to deliver nuclear weapons deep into Soviet territory could be enhanced by utilizing "stealth" technology and by equipping these aircraft with either ALCMs or some other

standoff nuclear munition. In addition, another participant noted that, before the INF agreement, sea-based intermediate-range nuclear systems (such as SLCMs and SLBMs) had always been unacceptable to the Europeans, both because of the difficulty in establishing that these systems will always be fully dedicated to a theater role and because they are not visibly present on European soil (thus losing a valuable political function). He admitted, however, that these may now be the best the Europeans can hope to expect. Finally, quantitative and qualitative modernization could be restrained by financial constraints and by a subsequent agreement on strategic forces (for example, limiting or banning cruise missiles).

Nearly all participants opposed any further cuts in intermediate-range nuclear forces—indeed, as previously mentioned, many opposed even those reductions agreed to in the INF Treaty. Noting recent Soviet proposals for banning ALCMs and SLCMs and for including tactical airpower in conventional arms control talks, several participants argued that the West should resist these arms control initiatives, as they would further weaken NATO INF capabilities. A few participants specifically stated that no cuts in NATO medium-range dual-capable aircraft should be entertained. Many also noted the difficulties in monitoring limits or bans on and the conventional/nuclear designation of such weapons systems as ALCMs or SLCMs, which are small, dual-capable, and hard to verify through national technical means.

Although there was a broad consensus on the need for NATO to beef up its INF in Europe, U.S. participants generally appeared more comfortable with the INF Treaty and with NATO's ability to compensate for it than their European counterparts. They believed that many of the other participants (particularly the Europeans but not excluding some Americans) regarded the INF agreement from only one angle and failed to appreciate both the value of removing many Soviet intermediate-range nuclear forces and the political goodwill and lowering of East-West tensions that were by-products of the treaty.

It was also recognized that any efforts to implement INF modernization involving additional weapons could be extremely difficult to justify to the Western publics. It would not be easy to go to the people of Western Europe and the United States and argue that, after signing a popular arms control treaty, NATO must now procure new forces that appear, in effect, to circumvent the spirit of that treaty.

Short-Range Nuclear Forces

Another after-effect of the INF Treaty was that it greatly raised the value of short-range nuclear forces (that is, those nuclear weapons with a range of up to 500 kilometers). Currently, NATO SNF consists of nuclear artillery shells, atomic demolition munitions (ADMs) and a handful of increasingly obsolete Lance launchers. In the wake of the agreement, NATO's SNF has come to be regarded as more critical than ever.

The so-called "third-zero" concept, referring to proposals made both in the Soviet Union and in the West for the elimination of all ground-based, short-range nuclear weapons (the two ranges of intermediate nuclear forces banned by the INF agreement constituted the first two "zeros") clearly dominated the conference debate on SNF. Many conference participants were unenthusiastic about a negotiated "third zero." Some were categorically opposed to further cuts in NATO's nuclear arsenal, and the specter of the "denuclearization" of Europe was raised more than once at the conference. Others were reluctant to pursue further nuclear arms control efforts until NATO INF compensation could be agreed on or until conventional force balance issues could be resolved. There was also a reluctance to link SNF reductions with any conventional arms control initiatives; in fact, one French participant argued that it was difficult to visualize any SNF/conventional arms control tradeoff that would be to NATO's advantage.

Still, some participants saw some kind of arms control agreement on SNF, even up to a "third zero," as practically inevitable, in part because of the momentum behind arms control. The most notable pressure came from within the German camp, many of whose participants at the conference argued that a quick SNF agreement was fast becoming a political and military necessity for their country. In light of the INF Treaty, they argued, the vast majority of nuclear weapons remaining in Europe would, in wartime, now fall almost exclusively on German soil (both East and West). As the saying went, "The shorter the range, the deader the German." Hence, it was increasingly seen as politically unacceptable in the Federal Republic for the alliance *not* to pursue SNF arms control, and there was a strong likelihood that West Germany will increasingly pressure the rest of NATO to negotiate on SNF before Bonn will consent to any nuclear modernization program.[1]

[1] See, for example, Sec. V.

Meanwhile, nearly all participants, including the Germans, were in favor of pursuing substantial SNF modernization to enhance the numbers, range, and accuracy of NATO short-range nuclear weapons, and many pointed out that the 1983 Montebello decision committed the Atlantic alliance to just such a course. A modernized, expanded SNF was also regarded as at least partially offsetting the losses incurred by the INF agreement. Many particularly supported the development and deployment of new missile systems (such as the Army Tactical Missile—ATACM—and air-to-ground munitions), armed with nuclear warheads to strengthen NATO SNF. Here again, the Germans were quick to call for a major SNF modernization program, albeit in conjunction with arms control endeavors. One German suggested that the alliance unilaterally pursue disarmament of its shortest-range nuclear forces (mainly artillery weapons) in exchange for a qualitative and quantitative buildup of its longer-range SNF (e.g., missiles), as a way of satisfying desires for both arms control and modernization. This basic approach was also supported by at least one U.S. participant, who strongly argued for a "package deal" involving both SNF modernization and negotiations designed to reduce the Soviets' preponderance in short-range nuclear weaponry.

Strategic Nuclear Forces

In general, what discussion and debate there was at the conference concerning Western strategic forces and the START negotiations tended to get lost in the overriding European concern over theater nuclear weapons. The effects of strategic nuclear forces and the possibility of an agreement on controlling these weapons appear to be of little direct interest to the European participants, so long as the U.S. strategic triad and its linkage to the defense of Western Europe is maintained. However, it was also stressed that strategic forces were no substitute for theater nuclear forces.

At the time of the conference, the chances for a START agreement sometime before the end of the year appeared to be good. Yet, as pointed out by a U.S. participant, even a START agreement based on the principle of 50 percent cuts in strategic nuclear weapons would have little real effect on the present strategic environment. It would not, for example, inhibit the qualitative modernization of strategic forces. It would still be theoretically possible to build the MX and Midgetman ICBMs, to place MX missiles on railcars, and to deploy the D-5 SLBMs in Trident submarines. Neither would it constrain Anglo-French nuclear forces, which would remain outside the treaty.

Nor would such a treaty have a tremendously deleterious effect on the ability of the United States to carry out its strategic mission, because of the large number of warheads it already has in its strategic arsenal. In fact, the idea of a 50 percent reduction is actually illusory, as it would not greatly restrict the deployment of ALCMs in strategic bombers (only the number of bombers would be cut in half, not their payload). The vulnerability of U.S. strategic forces would either increase minimally or decrease from present circumstances, depending on the types of basing modes adopted and the amount of warning time available in the particular situation. All in all, he concluded, such a treaty would constitute neither a disadvantage nor an advantage for the West.

However, a few concerns were raised in conjunction with strategic arms control prospects. One participant argued that a START Treaty, while not directly affecting theater nuclear operations, could "spill over" into other areas of alliance security considerations. For example, such an agreement could affect NATO's intermediate nuclear force posture if it restricted those forces (particularly ALCMs and SLCNs) that could be used to compensate for the loss of land-based INF. This could have much more disadvantageous consequences for the alliance.

CONVENTIONAL FORCES

The consequences of the INF Treaty have breathed new life into the issue of conventional forces in Europe and of the conventional balance. Accordingly, it was recognized at the conference that conventional balance issues and the contribution of conventional forces to the defense of Western Europe promise to be the "hot topics" of the 1990s.

There was an overwhelming consensus among conference participants that there is no such thing as "conventional deterrence." Conventional weapons could only buttress, not replace, the role of nuclear forces in flexible response. Nuclear weapons, therefore, were still considered central to NATO deterrence strategy.

The critical issue surrounding NATO's conventional forces was that the current East-West conventional balance overwhelmingly favored the Warsaw Pact. How to respond to this situation, therefore, occupied a good deal of the conference's attention. One U.S. participant noted that two options faced the alliance: either to raise NATO conventional capabilities or else to seek reductions in the Pact's conventional forces.

An extensive U.S. proposal was put forth at the conference for modernizing the state of Western conventional forces. This proposal argued for the addition of several divisions to NATO to increase the size of its operational reserves. It recognized the difficulty in achieving this goal, however, and it proposed that the alliance inaugurate certain force enhancements of its weapons platforms. In particular, rather than expecting to procure greater numbers of certain kinds of weapons, NATO should strive to raise the existing firepower of individual weapon systems, for instance, taking full advantage of high-technology standoff weapons currently under development in the West. Two examples singled out were new antiarmor, precision-guided munitions for NATO tactical aircraft, such as the modular standoff weapon (MSOW), and the outfitting of the multiple-launch rocket system (MLRS) with the ATACMs. The proposal also called for NATO to obtain "real-time" reconnaissance and targeting capabilities through the use of such systems as Joint Surveillance and Targeting Radar System (JSTARS). In addition, the alliance should develop the capacity to rapidly emplace defensive barriers through such techniques as air-scatterable mines.

Perhaps more important, this proposal also called for a major reorientation in NATO defense philosophy, arguing that the alliance must move away from a corps-oriented defense posture to a more unitary, multinational, *front-oriented* approach. Much of NATO's problem lay in the weakness of its forces along the Northern Army Group (NORTHAG) of the central front and in the fact that each member-country often had its own priorities for utilizing national tactical airpower, leading to gaps in air support of NATO ground forces. In this regard, particular emphasis was placed on obtaining a front-wide NATO command and control system to better direct resources to where they are most needed. It was also suggested that the alliance use some of its Central Army Group (CENTAG) forces as an operational reserve to support NORTHAG defenses.

Furthermore, advocates of the proposal warned that the alliance should not put all its eggs into one basket. NATO should develop a combined air/land package of force enhancements, with a proper mix of close-in systems and standoff munitions. In addition, they argued, any modernization program should be aimed at strengthening the forward defense of the Federal Republic.

Whereas few participants opposed the idea of conventional improvements in principle, this proposal nonetheless triggered a good deal of dissent. At least one participant voiced his skepticism as to the "techno-fix" approach, while others pointed out the failure of pre-

vious efforts to enhance conventional defenses—such as the conventional defense initiative (CDI), interoperability and standardization campaigns, etc.—to live up their original intentions. Ironically, it was pointed out, NATO already has a technological advantage over the East and spends more on its conventional forces, yet it is still inferior to Pact forces. Some participants also viewed the criticism of current conventional deficiencies as particularly unfair to NORTHAG, which, they argued, had actually made a good deal of progress in building up its defenses. And, in general, few believed that NATO would be able to muster the willingness and resources necessary to undertake such a massive, obviously expensive qualitative and quantitative buildup, especially given doubts about its ability ever to match the Warsaw Pact's conventional forces.

Finally, it was evident that the "nuclear bias" of several of the participants came out during discussion on the conventional modernization issue. There appeared to be an overall feeling that conventional defenses, while important, were still not as crucial to the flexible response doctrine and the defense of Western Europe as were nuclear weapons. Moreover, it could be inferred that this reluctance to embrace conventional force buildups was related to a fear that such programs would increase the pressure on NATO to reduce its primary reliance on nuclear weapons, perhaps ultimately leading to the denuclearization of Europe and the adoption of a no-first-use policy.

Conventional arms control proposals proved to be equally contentious. Like the conventional force balance in general, conventional arms control has been receiving a good deal of attention lately. The prospects for a new forum for conventional arms control negotiations (to replace the mutual and balanced force reduction—MBFR—talks) are quite good. It is also likely that these talks will be based, at least for NATO, on two broad concepts: an Atlantic-to-the-Urals geographical scope, with special emphasis on the central region; and deep, asymmetrical cuts, to reduce the overwhelming Soviet superiority in conventional forces and to blunt the Warsaw Pact's invasion capabilities.

Several approaches to conventional arms control were laid out and discussed at the conference, including such formulae as corridors, ratios, percentile cuts, ceilings, and straightforward numerical cuts. Corridors generally refer to a strip of territory (in most cases, a band along the inter-German border) in which certain kinds of weapons either would be prohibited or strictly limited (e.g., a tank-free zone). Ratios usually refer to fixing the level of one country's forces in relation to the level of another by means of a proportion (for instance,

country X could have twice as many forces as country Y) and could also include limits on stationed forces in a particular geographical area (country X could have no more than a certain number of its forces based in country Z). An example of percentile cuts could be a 50 percent reduction in the numbers of tanks and artillery on either side. Ceilings limit either side from having more than a certain overall number of a certain weapon, while numerical cuts simply reduce the number of weapons by a particular number. All these approaches can be asymmetrical and can vary in their applicability to different geographical zones.

On the whole, participants agreed on the need for NATO to address the Soviet advantage in conventional forces, and they naturally welcomed the idea of large asymmetrical reductions in the the massive numbers of offensive weapons (e.g., tanks and artillery) in the Soviet arsenal. One U.S. participant stated it was a relief for the West to finally get away from its "one-sided" obsession with nuclear weapons, especially in the realm of arms control.

At the same time, however, many were also dubious about the prospects for radical conventional arms control efforts. For example, there was disagreement over the best approach (corridors, ratios, ceilings, etc.) for handling the negotiations. The French camp appeared particularly hostile to any formula other than one involving ratios (presumably because it would least affect their armed forces or their independence of action). An American participant wondered what incentive was there for the Soviets to bargain away their conventional superiority, and what the West could afford to give up to bring the Soviets to the bargaining table?

This, in turn, raised other concerns. A participant worried whether initial steps at conventional reductions would lead the alliance down a "slippery slope" toward weakening vital NATO conventional defenses, especially since he believed that conventional modernization was more crucial to the West than conventional arms control. For this reason, the entire conference generally agreed that any conventional arms control must be limited in scope to just tanks and artillery, even though some wanted to expand it to include infantry fighting vehicles and other armored equipment. Another participant insisted that no conventional arms control agreement should seriously affect the deployment of U.S. troops in Europe (although, he argued, such an agreement should address the stationing of Soviet forces in the German Democratic Republic, as these constituted an immediate offensive threat to Western Europe).

Still others voiced their concern that the Soviets might use these talks to split the alliance. For instance, they may try to direct negotiations to get at areas where the West holds a substantial edge in conventional forces. Tactical air power was singled out as such a possibility, and many vehemently rejected the idea that aircraft should be included in any conventional arms negotiations. Finally, some participants warned that conventional arms control could undercut NATO nuclear policy, given the pressures from several quarters to link conventional arms control initiatives with the elimination of short-range nuclear forces. Any attempt at conventional arms control, they believed, was potentially divisive to the alliance.

In the end, despite a general agreement that the Atlantic alliance desperately needs to link its goals for conventional forces with its overall strategic requirements, no clear-cut consensus emerged from the conference discussion as to the best course for either conventional modernization or arms control. One participant even went so far as to argue that the idea of "conventional parity" was a useless or even harmful concept, especially if it undermined Western nuclear capabilities. Moreover, it was apparent that while there was a general reluctance for any more arms control that could further reduce Western defenses, there were grave doubts that the alliance would ever be able to follow through on the kind of comprehensive conventional buildup proposed at the conference. It was equally apparent that despite the greater attention being paid to conventional forces in general, nuclear weapons—their preservation and their modernization—were still considered to be the more critical element of NATO strategy. In fact, some participants believed the whole discussion on conventional forces to be irrelevant.

V. THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN ALLIES

The role of the European NATO allies with regard to the future of NATO strategy and security policy was also discussed. Several participants noted the growing awareness of an emerging European pillar within NATO. In particular, this "Europillar" was more conscious of its own particular security needs and was more assertive in promoting its own interests. Its members appear to be increasingly predisposed to stress their contribution to NATO, which many had felt had been neglected by the United States. This, in turn, led to discussions as to whether there was a growing diffusion—and even differing—of interests within the alliance. If so, what effect might this have on the future cohesion of NATO and on its unity of action, particularly where agreement on strategy is concerned? How might the future of the U.S. leadership of the Atlantic alliance be affected?

FRANCE: A LARGER ROLE WITHIN NATO?

A French participant noted that there was a growing realization within his country of how closely bound French security was with the rest of NATO. Hence, there was of late much more interest in ongoing activities and developments within the alliance and a desire to become more actively involved in these events. This constituted a radical departure from the days of President de Gaulle, particularly in the type of role France can play inside the Atlantic alliance and the type of contribution France can make to NATO defense.

This new approach to NATO was manifesting itself in a growing pattern of French cooperative efforts with other alliance members. A wide scope of increased French involvement could be detected: Anglo-French cooperation on nuclear weapons (e.g., in the possible codevelopment and coproduction of a medium-range, nuclear-tipped ALCM); French efforts to reactivate and reinvigorate the Western European Union (WEU); France's sudden interest and desire to be a major player in conventional arms control efforts (Paris, for example, has taken the lead in advocating an Atlantic-to-the-Urals approach to conventional arms control negotiations, based on the Conference on Security and Confidence Building in Europe [CSCE] process); and in its renewed interest in NATO policymaking and day-to-day administering of the alliance structure (for example, for the first time

in years, the French president recently attended a major NATO summit meeting to discuss alliance nuclear policy).

Signs of renewed French interests in alliance affairs have nowhere been more evident than in bilateral Franco-German defense cooperation. The establishment of a Franco-German brigade, although small, and of a joint command to run this unit has received a great deal of attention, as have recent joint maneuvers on German territory. Recent statements by French officials alluding to the indivisibility of French and German defense have also not gone unnoticed.[1] This has led other NATO countries also to express interest in forming joint military units with France.

Naturally, such developments have generated a good deal of excitement about the possibility of more direct French involvement in NATO military activities. One U.S. participant called the renewed French cooperation with the rest of the alliance "synergistic," and argued that NATO should appreciate any developments that strengthen Western defenses and enhance deterrence. Others, particularly the French participants, warned against overoptimism about the extent of France's contribution to NATO. One should not, it was stressed, expect that France will reintegrate itself into NATO's military command. Furthermore, some French participants believed that too much was now expected of their country, and they argued that one should not think that closer French participation within the alliance will solve all its problems.

In addition, so long as France remained outside NATO's integrated military command it would remain difficult to consult with the French political/military leadership and coordinate French activities with the rest of the alliance's. Some were worried about the effect increased French involvement might have on alliance unity and strategic cohesion, so long as France remains a "free agent" outside NATO's integrated command. Ultimately, France would continue to follow its own particular national interests, limiting the extent to which it can cooperate with other NATO countries. For example, in the area of French nuclear forces and nuclear policy, Paris will still pursue its traditional independent line on nuclear strategy, deployment, and use.

Finally, some U.S. participants stated that many Americans were suspicious of this recent French activity, concerned that it may be an attempt by the French to strengthen NATO's Europillar at the

[1]For example, then French Prime Minister Chirac stated that there could not be separate defenses of France and the Federal Republic.

expense of the United States. Certainly many recent events (e.g., the rebirth of the WEU) exclusive to Western Europe often have had Paris as its axis.

Most of these concerns appeared minor, however, and, in general, conference participants were realistic about the limits to increasing French involvement within NATO. One French participant asserted that since 1966 France had always believed that it could play a more important and productive NATO role outside the alliance's integrated military structure. Furthermore, while this barrier to reintegration was nationally sacrosant, he argued that the "line could be moved"—and actually *had* been moved—to permit greater collaberation with the rest of NATO. Franco-German cooperation, for example, is likely to continue and grow. One must expect French cooperation by degrees, one British participant stated; to push too hard would be to risk France's retreat back into Gaullism. And, so long as greater French involvement in NATO's day-to-day affairs did not adversely affect U.S. leadership of the alliance, most conference participants seemed to be content with France's new cooperation as strengthening Western deterrence. However, many Americans present at the conference came away unsatisfied as to whether the French had no such designs to undermine U.S. preeminence in NATO.

THE WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

The potential effect of the WEU was mainly discussed in the context of France's changing role within the alliance. However, it deserves to be treated as a separate issue.

Following the failure of the Pleven Plan (which called for the establishment of a unitary West European army), the WEU was founded in the mid-1950s to help coordinate defense efforts among the major West European nations. Until the mid-1980s, however, the WEU had been moribund. Now, with an interest toward more actively involving France in alliance affairs, the WEU has been reactivated and reinvigorated.

Although it is quite separate from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, all of the WEU's member-countries are also in the alliance. Therefore, its activities are often of great interest to NATO. Overall, three attitudes toward the WEU emerged out of the conference: pro-WEU, skeptical/negative, and neutral.

Many European participants generally regarded the reinvigoration of the WEU as a positive development for the West. They argued that it strengthened European security cooperation and helped bring

France closer into Western defense efforts. The WEU, said one French participant, created a "second base of support" for NATO. In their opinion, anything that enhanced Western defense should be welcomed, and at least one European participant took pains to stress that the Americans should not necessarily take it that the rest of NATO was "ganging up" on the United States.

Others—mostly Americans—however, were more skeptical or even hostile toward the WEU. One U.S. participant, for example, observed that some Americans see any actions taken by other NATO states without the United States as potentially centrifugal for NATO cohesion, while leading others to be overly optimistic about increased European willingness to uphold its defense commitments. Another American even went so far as to term the WEU a potential alternative organizational structure that could become a distraction from NATO and divisive for the alliance. For example, given the union's interest with arms control matters, it would serve as a pressure group *outside* NATO for arms control *inside* NATO. All in all, the WEU would not constitute so much a "second base of support" for NATO, he argued, as a competing security organization, with Paris as its center. (A French participant argued that this was nonsense and that the WEU actually had a core composed of France, West Germany, and Britain, with an overriding emphasis on consensus within its ranks; at least one European admitted, however, that the WEU indirectly strengthened NATO's Europillar.)

Finally, some believed that simply far too much attention had been given to the WEU. Ultimately, they argued, the union's effect was limited and that it was basically a "paper-generating machine." If anything, it should be welcomed for finding a way, however limited, for France to become more involved in West European defense efforts. One U.S. participant largely agreed with this view, stating that the WEU has done neither any great harm nor much good, although it was a politically useful organization.

WEST GERMANY: A SPECIAL CASE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

In the course of general conference discussion, it became clear that the vast majority of participants believed the security of the Federal Republic would continue to be fundamental to the security of NATO as a whole. This recognition of West Germany as the "front line" of NATO and as the key to the defense of Western Europe has been "rediscovered" in the wake of recent debates over nuclear and conventional force modernization and arms control. German territory

and German cooperation were essential to future modernization and arms control efforts, particularly with regard to nuclear forces.

At the same time, many Germans argued that national security policies in the Federal Republic, as defined domestically, are likely to loom larger within overall alliance affairs. The "dual-track" furor and resulting INF agreement—which will leave the majority of remaining nuclear weapons deployed inside the Federal Republic—has exacerbated traditional German sensitivities about being the alliance's waterbearer. West Germany, therefore, is likely to be increasingly disinclined to defer to other Western nations on security issues or to take its cue from NATO headquarters. The Federal Republic promises to be both more vocal and more self-assertive in pressing its own particular security interests.

This, in turn, means that the domestic German defense debate—and increasing German anxieties about its security—will probably grow in importance for the rest of the Atlantic alliance. For example, with regard to the debate over the future of short-range nuclear forces, a potential split is developing between the Federal Republic—increasingly leaning toward the "third zero" option—and the rest of the alliance, generally reluctant to pursue any further theater nuclear force reductions at this time. Its calls for a *gesamtkonzept* embracing alliance strategic requirements, and NATO arms control goals are likely to be closely watched. West Germany's strategic position in Western Europe and its essential contribution to the defense of the West make its opinions hard to ignore. Although some may view these German anxieties over security as overwrought, NATO is likely to be increasingly distracted by them.

BURDEN-SHARING: AN EMERGING BONE OF CONTENTION

Although the issue of burden-sharing was not discussed at length during the conference, it was specifically mentioned as a problem that NATO would have to grapple with, and what little was said indicated that it would increasingly preoccupy intra-alliance concerns.

It was evident that U.S. and European participants were split on this subject. Several Europeans believed that the United States was making too big an issue out of burden-sharing while underestimating Western Europe's role in NATO. The Americans, one British participant argued, need to get away from comparing inputs and look instead at comparing outputs. Some Europeans pointed to statistics showing that, in terms of standing forces in Europe, the European members of the alliance contribute an overwhelming majority of

NATO's troops, tanks, artillery, combat aircraft, and major fighting ships.[2] More appreciation, they argued, should be shown for the level of European commitment to and participation in the Atlantic alliance.

For their part, most American participants believed that the United States was justified in requesting greater European defense efforts in the future. One American noted, for example, that many in the United States believed that it had overfunded European defense and, despite statistics showing a high level of European contribution (which at least one U.S. participant argued was exaggerated and misleading), the European allies had still done too little for their own security. Moreover, the issue of burden-sharing is likely to grow as an issue in American politics. In the future, it was further noted, Europe would have to be prepared to take more responsibility for its own defense as U.S. defense capabilities become increasingly stretched, because of both fiscal constraints (a shrinking U.S. defense budget) and expanding U.S. security interests outside of Europe (such as in the Pacific, Central America, and the Persian Gulf). As the United States increasingly pursues the West's out-of-area goals, the Europeans would have to count less on the U.S. ability to contribute to the defense of Western Europe proper.

Although hardly a new topic, the burden-sharing controversy will probably continue to grow within the alliance. And because it encapsulates such other problems as resource constraints and the diffusion of Western security interests, it is likely to affect the debate over the future of NATO strategy for some time.

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[2]According to a publication put out by the Eurogroup, European members of NATO provide 90 percent of NATO's manpower in Europe, 95 percent of its divisions, 85 percent of its tanks, 95 percent of its artillery, and 80 percent of its combat aircraft. (The Eurogroup, *Western Defense: The European Role in NATO*, Brussels, 1988, p. 6.)

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Several key points emerged from the conference discussion surrounding the future of NATO strategy:

- Changes inside the Soviet Union should continue to present a challenge to NATO in reconstructing its defense strategy. The reduction in the minds of many Westerners of the Soviet threat, coupled with a continuing stream of arms control and confidence-building initiatives coming out of Moscow, will probably remain a source of constant pressure on Western leaders as they try to come to grips with the problems of NATO strategy in the 1990s.

- There was disagreement over the present state of the alliance. Some participants believed its future was threatened by fiscal and demographic constraints, the post-INF environment, the pressures for further arms control, and the diffusion of alliance security interests. Others thought the present situation less dramatic, that the alliance had weathered similar crises before, and that it would do so again.

- The consensus was that flexible response/extended deterrence was still the best doctrine available to the Atlantic alliance. *Nuclear weapons, furthermore, were still crucial to the defense of the West.* The real future mission for NATO, therefore, was to ensure support for the effective implementation of the flexible response strategy.

- Most conference participants favored building up Western defenses before pursuing further arms control efforts. Most nuclear and conventional forces were at critically minimal levels already, and arms control would not be sufficient to cut Soviet strengths to levels at which they would no longer pose a threat to the West. However, many participants appeared resigned to the prospect of further arms control agreements and were concerned mainly with "limiting the damage."

- There was a consensus (especially on the part of the Europeans) that NATO's nuclear forces were ultimately more important than its conventional forces. Since their modernization was more critical to the defense of Western Europe, this was where NATO should concentrate its efforts, especially as there was no realistic prospect of a conventional arms buildup.

- Nuclear Forces: There was a consensus on the need to restructure remaining intermediate-range nuclear forces following the INF treaty, in order to strengthen NATO INF capabilities and thereby bolster this element of flexible response doctrine. There was no consensus, however, on whether NATO should proceed with the modernization of short-range nuclear forces, with arms control, or with some combination of the two. Finally, there appeared to be little interest in strategic forces or the prospects for a START agreement, except insofar as it might affect the ability to deploy certain weapons in Europe (e.g., ALCMs and SLCMs).

- Conventional Forces: There appeared to be general agreement on the need for negotiations that covered the Atlantic-to-the-Urals and led to deep, asymmetrical cuts in offensive armor. However, there was no consensus as to the best formula to pursue to obtain such cuts. Furthermore, despite a lengthy discussion of emerging conventional technologies and an extensive U.S. proposal made at the conference for upgrading Western conventional forces, no clear consensus was discernible on the issue of conventional modernization. However desirable a major conventional buildup might be, such a program was felt to be out of the question for the alliance at the present time, given their potentially high cost, fiscal and demographic constraints, the problem of burden-sharing, and the fact that they may eventually detract from the nuclear dimension of flexible response, which is considered key to both military deterrence and the political cohesion of NATO.

- There was also a consensus, in principle, on the need to integrate arms control (both nuclear and conventional) with NATO's broader strategic requirements. It was realized that the West could not pursue arms control without also giving

serious thought as to how this might affect alliance strategy. Also, it was believed that there were cases in which arms control could even greatly contribute to NATO strategy and security. *Despite this overall agreement on the need for a general set of arms control principles, however, none was articulated at the conference.*

- Nearly all participants were concerned about indications of an emerging intra-alliance drift between the United States and Western Europe, yet were unresolved as to the potential effect of such a phenomenon. Some worried about a real split inside NATO that could perhaps have serious repercussions for the future of alliance strategy. Others saw a stronger Europillar as ultimately benefitting the strength of the Western alliance. Certainly, however, such issues as the expanding roles of France and West Germany within NATO, the influence of the WEU, and the burden-sharing problem would continue to plague NATO decisionmaking. Whether these will be minor hurdles of the usual variety that the alliance has encountered before or will grow into serious splits could not be decided.

- Overall, the conference appeared to raise more questions about the future of NATO strategy than it answered. Nearly everyone present wanted to "save" flexible response and strengthen alliance resolve and unity around this doctrine. However, there were many views about the best way to do this, and conflicting national interests were still very much in evidence.

Appendix

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