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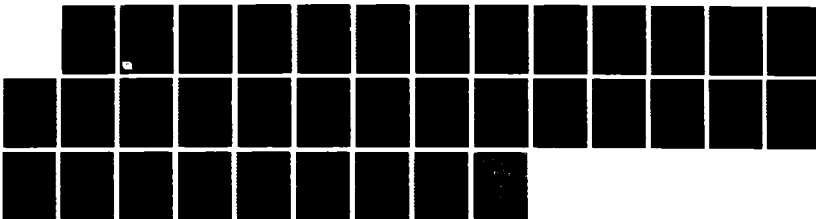
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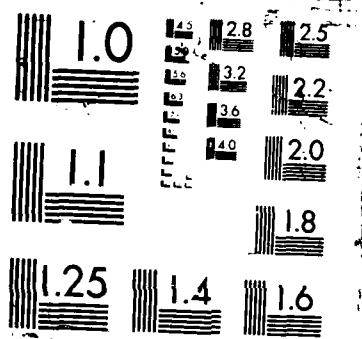
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DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE MILITARY BALANCE:
NATO IN THE NINETIES

Susan Clark

September 1987

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IDA PAPER P-2049

DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE MILITARY BALANCE:
NATO IN THE NINETIES

Susan Clark

September 1987

INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES

IDA Independent Research Program

PREFACE

This paper was prepared under funding from the Institute for Defense Analyses' Central Research Program fund. Its concept originated from work done for the demographics chapter in IDA Paper P-1999, "Non-Military Factors Influencing NATO Decision-Making."

The purpose of this study is to assess the potential impact of impending demographic constraints on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's military manpower levels. It further examines what policy measures might be adopted in order to alleviate future manpower shortages. Finally, it estimates how these demographic constraints might affect Western security interests and East-West relations in the area of conventional arms control.

I would like to thank, in particular, Dr. Robbin Laird and Mr. Brett Haan for their helpful comments and suggestions.

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DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE MILITARY BALANCE: NATO IN THE NINETIES

A. INTRODUCTION

Since NATO's adoption of the strategy of flexible response in 1967, the Western Alliance has relied on a combination of conventional and nuclear forces for its defense. However, in recent years there has been growing emphasis placed on the conventional aspect of this strategy. Calls by then-Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, General Bernard Rogers, to improve the West's conventional capabilities, the evolution of the Conventional Defense Initiative, and the 1982 "Gang of Four's" advocacy of a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons have all contributed to the increased attention paid to conventional forces in the eighties. This has, of course, been primarily fueled by the Soviet Union's achievement of nuclear parity with the United States and by growing concerns about the devastation that could be wrought by the use of nuclear weapons. Finally, the apparent likelihood of a U.S.-Soviet agreement on intermediate nuclear forces (INF) in the near future has further focused attention on the role and importance of conventional forces in Europe.

While the North Atlantic Alliance has made some significant improvements in its conventional forces, most defense analysts and officials--civilian and military alike--are not satisfied with the current trends. Worse still are the prospects for the next decade. A major component of conventional capability is, of course, manpower. There is little doubt that developing a credible conventional capability necessitates substantial manpower contributions by the NATO nations. These contributions will be in jeopardy in the future, however, due to both financial and demographic constraints within many of the western alliance countries. This paper focuses specifically on the latter issue; namely, where will demographic constraints be most severely felt and what alterations to national policies

might be adopted to alleviate some of these impending military manpower shortages.¹ The paper then assesses the potential impact these demographic problems may have on future Western security and intra-Alliance relations. Finally, another element that will be examined are the trends--demographic, political, diplomatic, etc.--within the Warsaw Pact nations that might influence Soviet willingness to reach some kind of force reduction accord with the United States.

There is no doubt that the NATO countries will find it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain their current force levels in the coming decade. The question remains: how willing and able will the alliance members be to adjust their manpower policies in the future?

B. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

An analysis of changes in the numbers of draft-age males (18-22 years old) within the NATO countries provides the foundation for studying the impact of demography on military manpower pools. On a NATO-wide basis, this pool will decline by over 12 percent by the end of this century, from roughly 25.4 million to 22.3 million. If the figures for the European countries alone are broken out, the decline is even greater, amounting to a loss of 18.5 percent. Table 1 illustrates these trends in greater detail for each country, as well as for the alliance as a whole.

Certain geographical regions within NATO will face considerably more severe demographic problems than other regions. Specifically, the central and northern regions will bear the brunt of the problem. In the south, only Italy will have any significant losses in conscriptable manpower, while Turkey will register the only growth among the NATO countries in this population subcategory. The North American continent, while it will encounter moderate losses, will not face severe shortages. All told, seven of the 14 NATO countries examined here--Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom--will see the numbers of their draft-age males decline by over 20 percent by the year 2000. It should be emphasized here that these numbers are not speculative; the males who will make up this category in the

¹ For the purposes of this paper, data for the NATO countries include France but exclude Spain and Iceland. It is the commonly accepted practice to incorporate France into NATO calculations, although it formally withdrew from NATO's integrated military structure in 1966. Spain does not appear likely to join NATO's integrated military structure and Iceland possesses no armed forces.

year 2000 have already been born. Therefore, the projected future declines are based on actual figures.

Table 1. NATO's Conscript Pool (Males, 18-22 years old), In thousands, 1987-2000

Nation	1987	1990	1995	2000	Percentage of Change, 1987 - 2000
Belgium	381	360	318	310	-18.6
Canada	1,054	981	922	944	-10.4
Denmark	208	190	179	149	-28.4
France	2,214	2,179	2,027	1,900	-14.2
FRG	2,626	2,221	1,543	1,524	-42.0
Greece	400	388	360	364	-9.0
Italy	2,417	2,281	2,120	1,677	-30.6
Luxembourg	14	13	11	11	-21.4
Netherlands	634	614	487	455	-28.2
Norway	171	170	148	132	-22.8
Portugal	436	435	433	391	-10.3
Turkey	2,808	2,924	3,087	3,309	+17.8
U.K.	2,394	2,229	1,802	1,788	-25.3
U.S.	9,650	9,522	8,646	9,329	-3.3
Total NATO	25,407	24,507	22,083	22,253	-12.4
Total European NATO	14,703	14,004	12,515	11,980	-18.5

Source: Based on data prepared by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the World Population 1986 project.

The demographic problems in the Federal Republic of Germany have received the greatest amount of publicity, and justifiably so. No other western alliance member will experience as great a drop in its pool of draftable males. When this fact is combined with the geostrategic importance of West Germany, few can ignore or dismiss the negative implications these demographic trends have for the Alliance's conventional force posture.

C. MILITARY MANPOWER

1. General Trends

According to data reported in the International Institute for Strategic Studies' annual publication, *The Military Balance*, the NATO alliance has maintained a fairly steady level of active duty military manpower over the past decade. The 1986 total of 5,177,552 military personnel differs by only 2 percent from the total in 1975. Admittedly, there was a temporary decline in these figures during the late seventies (in good part because of U.S. declines), but increases in personnel during the first half of the eighties have essentially made up for those losses.

The consistency of these overall trends, however, masks important distinctions among the various members of the Alliance. During the past few years, it has generally been the countries in the southern region (Turkey, Greece, and Italy), as well as, to a lesser extent, the United States, that have accounted for any increases in force size, while many of the other countries have tended to reduce their manpower levels. Over the past decade, Turkey has accounted for the most consistent increases in its force size, while less remarkable increases have been evident in Belgium, Canada, Italy and Luxembourg. The most significant declines in force size have occurred in Great Britain (down 10,000 in the past five years alone) and in France, the latter being in the process of implementing a force reduction of 37,500 between 1984 and 1988. The size of the armed forces has also diminished in Denmark and the Netherlands, while the manpower totals have generally fluctuated in Greece, Norway, and Portugal. West Germany's force size remained virtually unchanged until a year ago, when it dropped from 495,000 to 485,800. The United States has slightly more armed forces personnel than it did in 1975, following a decline in the late seventies and early eighties.

Such overall consistent force levels will not, however, be repeated in the coming decade. Unless significant changes in national conscription and/or recruitment policies are implemented to compensate for the impending demographic crunch, there is virtually no possibility of NATO's maintaining the size of its current force through the end of this century. Based on current ratios between the numbers of conscript-aged males and the numbers of active duty personnel, Table 2 is an attempt to project what NATO force levels *could* look like by the end of the century, if no new draft policies are implemented. It should be noted from the outset that the purpose of this table is purely illustrative; it is not designed to pinpoint exactly what the forces *will* look like over the next decade.

Table 2. Projected Military Manpower Levels, 1987-2000, Assuming Constant Policies

Nation	Current Number Active-Duty Personnel per 100 18-22 Year Olds*	Active-Duty Manpower, in thousands				Percentage of Change, 1987-2000
		1987	1990	1995	2000	
Belgium	24	91	86	76	74	-18.7
Canada	8	83	77	73	74	-10.8
Denmark	14	29	26	25	21	-27.6
France	25	557	548	510	478	-14.2
FRG	19	486	411	286	282	-42.0
Greece	52	209	203	188	190	-9.1
Italy	16	388	366	340	269	-30.7
Luxembourg	5	.7	.7	.6	.6	-14.3
Netherlands	17	105	102	81	75	-28.6
Norway	22	37	37	32	29	-21.6
Portugal	16	68	68	68	61	-10.3
Turkey	23	654	681	719	771	+17.9
U.K.	14	324	302	244	242	-25.3
U.S.	22	2,144	2,116	1,921	2,073	-3.3
All NATO	20	5,178	4,995	4,500	4,535	-12.4

*When calculating projected manpower levels, this figure is carried out two decimal places.

Sources: International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1986-1987* (London: IISS, 1986); Data prepared by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the World Population 1986 project.

In fact, changes are already being planned in several countries which will clearly alter these estimated levels, should the changes be implemented. As noted above, France actually intends to decrease the size of its force by 37,500 by 1988. On the other hand, Canada plans to increase its force to 90,000 by 1989. Most significantly, West Germany has already adopted a law, to take effect January 1989, to extend the term of service for its draftees from 15 to 18 months. Estimates indicate that this extension in service will raise the Bundeswehr's force level by an additional 36,000 men.² Finally, the one country with

² This figure is an average of two estimates, the first drawn from Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, Jurgen Kuhlmann and Tjarck Rossler, "The Limits of Conscription: The German Case," in *Armed Forces and the Welfare Societies: Challenges in the 1980s*, ed. by Gwyn Harries-Jenkins (New York: St. Martin's

a growth in its conscriptable pool, Turkey, is considering a proposal to allow some Turks to pay a fee instead of serving in the forces, specifically because the manpower pool is much greater than the requirements of the country's defense commitment. This idea, in fact, underscores Turkey's present dilemma: manpower is plentiful, but sufficient money to modernize the forces it now has is lacking. Other possible alterations in national conscription policies--and their prospects for implementation--will be analyzed more thoroughly in the following section.

In an examination of the projections in Table 2, it is important to emphasize the fact that particular countries and regions will be especially hard hit in terms of their ability to maintain the size of forces they presently deploy. Therefore, before possible solutions to the demographic problem are examined, it is useful to overview briefly country-specific military manpower issues and problems.

2. Individual Country Trends

Federal Republic of Germany. As already indicated, evolving demographic trends create the most difficult problems for the Federal Republic of Germany in maintaining current force levels. At present, the Bundeswehr has a required annual accession rate of 250,000 men. Of those men who reach draft age each year, some 77 percent are judged to be capable of military service, but then of these, another 20 percent obtain exemptions through conscientious objector status (see below), religious exemptions, etc. Adhering to these criteria, 1988 will be the last year in which the FRG has more draftable men than it needs; the pool will remain below accession requirements at least through the end of this century. In fact, by the mid-nineties, there will only be about 150,000 draft-age men available for service.³

This problem is only compounded by the fact that applications for conscientious objector (CO) status in West Germany have steadily increased during the eighties. The government has apparently reasoned that by making conscientious objectors serve longer (20 months instead of 15 months for military service), young men would be deterred from

Press, 1983), p. 120; the second is a government estimate, in Bundesminister der Verteidigung Informations- und Pressestab, "Die Bundeswehrplanung für die 90er Jahre," Material für die Presse (Bonn, 17 October 1984), p. 15.

³ Pascal Boniface and Francois Heisbourg, *La Puce, les Hommes et la Bombe* (Paris: Hachette, 1986), pp. 80-81; see also, "West German Army Officials See Forces Shrinking in '90s," *Army Gazette*, 20 February 1987, p. 4.

applying. This has not proved to be the case. The longer term of service became effective 1 January 1984, but at the same time the procedures for obtaining CO status were actually eased. Instead of having to appear before a county board to apply for this deferment and having to rely on the board to make the decision, the applicant now must only submit a letter requesting such status and it is granted.⁴ Applicants for CO status reached 59,000 in 1986. And while more conscientious objectors (roughly half) are now being forced to serve their 20-month term, the government's policies have clearly not resulted in a decrease in the volume of applications. Extending the service time has not proven to be enough of a disincentive; it is therefore questionable that several additional months' service time is going to have any substantial impact on this problem. As one German article recently noted, in 1986, 12.7 percent of those subject to the draft in West Germany applied for CO service.⁵ In fact, since 1980, the number of potential recruits who reject military service has doubled.⁶ However, according to the Feldmeyer article, "The plans for maintaining the peacetime strength of the Bundeswehr are...based on the assumption that no more than 10 percent of those subject to the draft will opt for alternative service. This limit has clearly been exceeded and the trend suggests further increases."

The reasons for the popularity of conscientious objection in West Germany do not center wholly, or even mainly, on the principle of moral objections to military service. Rather, many young men have discovered that CO service requires fewer personal sacrifices than does military service. Specifically, most COs can continue to live in the same area and do not have to be separated from their families, wives or girl friends. Furthermore, the pay for many CO positions is better than that in the Bundeswehr and the hours are generally shorter. To many young men, these advantages far outweigh the disadvantage of have to serve several months longer than that required of conscripts.

United Kingdom. While the United Kingdom will not face the same severity in its demographic crunch as will the FRG, its problems are compounded by the fact that it has an all-volunteer force (AVF). Because the British will not return to conscription, there will be fewer options for compensating for manpower shortages, and the cost of those that do

⁴ Karl Feldmeyer, "Many Changes; Little Effect--The Right to Conscientious Objection and the Position of the Bundeswehr," *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 10 March 1987, p. 12, as translated in Joint Publications Research Service, *West Europe Report* [hereinafter JPRS-WER]-87-034, 22 April 1987, p.89.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁶ This is according to a *Die Welt* poll conducted in August 1987, as cited in *Current News*, 17 August 1987, p. 10.

exist will be much greater. To date, recruitment rates have remained sufficiently high, primarily because high unemployment rates correlate directly with the popularity of military service. The problem the U.K. is beginning to face is that there are simply too many demands on an already squeezed defense budget. As the manpower pool declines, military service will have to be made more attractive in order to keep recruiting levels up, but it is unlikely that the defense budget will have the money to pay for these needed added benefits. The total number of service personnel declined by about 1 percent from end-1985 to end-1986; the declines will undoubtedly be greater as the manpower and budget pools shrink simultaneously in the coming years.

In terms of which British forces will be most affected by manpower force reductions, initially, these cuts will probably come primarily at the expense of the Royal Navy. A report in *Jane's Defence Weekly* also indicates that there has been some consideration given to cutting the size of the 15,000-person UK Mobile Force, which is earmarked to defend Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein in northern West Germany.⁷ Although there has been some talk of reducing the British Army on the Rhine (BAOR), the historical and political depth of this commitment make it unlikely that Britain will reduce this force without first trying to cut back other forces. British military and political planners alike certainly understand the implications of maintaining the current BAOR and RAF forces in West Germany; if Britain draws down those forces, many other countries in the northern and central regions will be tempted to do the same.

Canada. In terms of force dedication, Canada has recently elected to withdraw some of its forces committed to the Northern Flank. In a new defense program announced in May 1987, Canada stated its intention to reassign its 5,000-person brigade from Norway to Central Europe, specifically to West Germany. In addition, the government plans to rebuild and upgrade its 7,500-person force already stationed in Germany, so that it will be capable of fulfilling its obligations. However, Canada's Defense Minister Perrin Beatty acknowledged that the net result of the reorganization would yield only about 200 additional permanent Canadian troops in Europe.⁸

France. Among the countries of concern in the central region, France probably poses the smallest problem. Its current annual accession rate of 260,000 can be met under

⁷ Nils Boesgaard, "Britain Reconsiders Future of UK Mobile Force Commitment," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 24 January 1987, p. 95.

⁸ Herbert H. Denton, "Canada's Defense Policy Sees Slow Budget Rise," *Washington Post*, 6 June 1987, p. 16.

present policies until the mid-nineties. Beginning in 1994, France will experience a projected 2 percent to 12 percent deficit in its conscriptable manpower pool, a deficit which can most likely be overcome without having to implement any policy change in the length of conscription.⁹

As previously indicated, France's 1984-1988 defense plan includes a call for reducing French force levels by some 37,000 troops. As Pascal Boniface and Francois Heisbourg point out in their recent book, in the face of these reductions, it was not an easy decision for the French government to resolve to maintain the current level of its forces in West Germany.¹⁰ The decision was likely based on the fact that France recognizes the need to underscore its commitment to Europe's defense, particularly in terms of its conventional force presence. Yet, as the authors caution, while demographic trends in France will not necessitate cuts in French forces in the FRG, at the same time, these trends will not allow for any increases. And, in terms of political costs, "Upholding the [current] absolute value of our manpower in the FRG probably represents the uppermost limit of what is politically tolerable in terms of applying conscription in France."¹¹

In terms of military manpower, what has so far proved to be a success story in France, and might well be applied in other countries, has been the introduction of a "long voluntary service." In 1985, some 10 percent of those men drafted chose to extend their term of service by 6-12 months.¹² If this program continues to be relatively popular, it will probably provide France with sufficient additional military manpower to make up for any demographic shortfalls in the mid-nineties.

Italy. The Italian government has recognized that its country will face problems in maintaining the size of its current force. Yet to date, the government has chosen to place its emphasis on raising the number of volunteers in the service, while actually reducing the number of conscripts. This policy has been developed mainly because of strong popular sentiment against the draft. In 1985, the Italian MoD cut the number of conscripts by approximately 25,000 and it plans to make further reductions. These cuts are allegedly to be offset by increasing the number of volunteers from 3,000 to 70,000 and by seeking

⁹ See, Boniface and Heisbourg, *La Puce...*, p. 87.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 88.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 89.

¹² Ibid., p. 87.

women to fill administrative positions.¹³ In addition, a new military law, but one that had been under consideration for a long time, calls for reducing the conscript time in the Navy from 18 months to 12 months, to match the time of service in the other branches. Clearly, these policy changes are bound to have an impact on the government's ability to meet its current annual accession rate of approximately 300,000 men.

According to one estimate by Italy's Chief of Staff, General Luigi Poli, increasing the number of volunteers and decreasing the number of conscripts in the forces will mean that the Army's current 24 brigades will have to be reduced to 14. Furthermore, if Italy were to adopt an all-volunteer force, he estimates that the number of army brigades would further decline to nine or 10.¹⁴ Finally, the other factor that must be considered in assessing the viability of a more volunteer-oriented force for Italy is the cost of making military service sufficiently appealing to attract the necessary number of recruits. Historically, Italy's problem has been in retaining its officers and NCOs, namely because of low wages and the lack of interest in military life prevalent throughout the population. The only way to remedy the situation is to pump more money into the Services' budgets. While pay has improved within the military, it is uncertain that the government is willing--or able--to meet the increased necessary payments for a force consisting of a significantly higher percentage of volunteers.

Portugal. Portugal, too, has recently moved to reduce the length of conscription. Effective January 1988, conscripts will serve in the Army 12-15 months (vice the current 16 months), while those in the Navy and Air Force will serve 18-20 months (vice the current 24). Naturally, this policy change will mean that Portugal's accession rates will have to be increased in order to maintain current force levels. However, since future demographic trends in this country present no particular problem, the government should be able to meet the current force requirements without any significant problems.

Turkey. Turkey represents the exception to the rule in terms of Alliance manpower trends. At a time when every other NATO nation is facing an impending demographic shortfall in draft-age males, Turkey currently has an annual excess of 200,000-250,000 men; this surplus could even climb to 800,000.¹⁵ Because its military personnel levels are

¹³ Antonio Ciampi, "Volunteer or Conscript? Major Changes Loom For Italy's Forces," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 20 December 1986, p. 1442.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ "Two Views of Payment in Lieu of Military Service," JPRS-WER-87-046, pp. 111 and 113.

and will continue to be more than sufficient, the Turkish government has been examining a legislative proposal to accept payment in lieu of military service. Those arguing against this idea reason that it will be the richer and better educated people who choose this option, leaving the armed forces with less qualified conscripts. Given these considerations, there has also been some discussion about whether Turkey ought to adopt a voluntary system. So, while Turkey will certainly continue to contribute its fair share (and perhaps more) to NATO's military manpower, it cannot be assumed that the force size will expand at the rate demographic trends would allow it to grow. It is in Turkey's interest, as well as all of NATO's, for Turkey to develop a more professional, better equipped and better trained force rather than one designed to handle ever increasing numbers of conscripts.

D. POLICY ALTERNATIVES

It is clear that if no changes were to be made in many of the NATO countries' manpower policies, many of them would suffer considerable losses in their active-duty manpower, resulting in a significant weakening of western conventional defense capabilities in the central and northern European regions. There are, however, several methods by which these nations could maintain their active-duty strengths, such as: extending the term of conscript service; allowing fewer exemptions from service, including tightening requirements for conscientious objector status; allowing (more) women into the armed forces; substituting civilians for military personnel in some support jobs; encouraging conscripts to volunteer for longer service times; and changing the active/reserve force mix. Yet such solutions pose their own problems. Specifically, making various substitutions for active-duty personnel will obviously have a negative effect on the nation's readiness postures. This, in turn, will necessitate even greater reliance on national mobilization potential--not one of NATO's stronger points even now. Thus, even though most countries might be able to juggle the numbers successfully, the likelihood of maintaining current capabilities appears uncertain at best.

The following subsections will examine each of the possible policy changes listed above and will discuss the prospects or plans for such changes within individual countries.

1. Extending Conscript Service

The notion of extending the period of conscription service is certainly one of the most obvious policy alternatives and one that could conceivably improve the readiness capabilities of NATO's forces, rather than diminish them. The key difficulty with this

solution is the issue of political costs. In many of the NATO countries, conscription is not popular, so that even though the governments may wish to extend service time, they may find the political costs of doing so much too great. West Germany is a case in point. The conservative government has managed to pass a law extending the term of conscription from 15 to 18 months, effective in 1989. The Social Democratic Party has, however, vowed that should it be reelected, it would return to the 15-month term of service. In general, this 3-month extension should add another 36,000 troops to West Germany's total, thereby making it possible to maintain approximate current force levels, but only until the early nineties.

As already indicated, however, there are some countries, such as Portugal and Italy, that are actually planning to reduce their term of military service. In the case of Portugal, demographic trends are not serious enough to cause concern about the country's ability to meet its defense commitments, even with a reduction in the term of service. The situation in Italy, on the other hand, is more complex. Because of impending demographic constraints, it would be logical to assume that the government would lengthen the term of service for the Army and Air Force, rather than shorten the one for the Navy. However, because military service is so unpopular in the country and because Italy has historically had more difficulties retaining volunteers (i.e., officers and NCOs), the government seems to feel that by making service more attractive through pay increases, etc., it will be able to retain the necessary force levels through higher percentages of volunteers.

For those countries with an all-volunteer force, the corollary to extending conscription time would be to keep volunteers in the service longer by making military service more attractive. Naturally, this requires an even larger portion of the defense budget—one that will be hard to obtain as overall defense budgets continue to shrink. As an example, in Great Britain manpower costs for military personnel have averaged about 25 percent of the entire defense budget during the eighties.¹⁶ Yet as manpower needs compete for increasingly scarce resources with equipment procurements (namely, the Trident and Tornado), the percentage of monies allocated to manpower costs will be strained further.

¹⁶ Secretary of State for Defence, *Statement on the Defence Estimates 1987. Part 2: Defence Statistics* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1987), p. 9.

2. Tightening Exemptions

The possibility of reducing the number of people exempted from military service each year remains a viable and logical one for many of the Alliance countries. Exemptions include, but are not limited to, those for medical reasons and for conscientious objection. As with all the possible policy changes, West Germany has addressed this alternative as well. In terms of medical exemptions, in October 1984 Defense Minister Manfred Wornat decided to liberalize the medical induction criteria for conscripts. The 1985 German *White Paper* notes that, since these criteria were amended, the percentage of those judged "fit for military service" increased from 76.5 percent in 1980 to 81.9 percent in 1984, and that "increases by another one to two percent seem possible."¹⁷ In addition to altering medical exemption criteria, the German government has also extended the age requirements so that men can now be drafted until they reach age 32 (rather than 28), and married men as well are no longer exempted from conscription (effective 1988). According to one government estimate, changes in medical criteria should add another 12,000 troops, while tightening deferments and exemptions should account for an additional 6,000 servicemen.¹⁸

One of the greatest problems for West Germany, however, is the loophole provided by conscientious objection. The government is trying to make CO status a less appealing alternative, namely by further extending the length of CO tours when conscript service is extended in 1989. Thus, when conscripts begin serving 18 months, conscientious objectors will have to serve 24 months (vice the current 20 months). Yet if the past few years are indicative of future trends, this is not going to be the solution to the problem. As already indicated, in 1984 the government actually made it easier for young men to apply for CO status when it concomitantly lengthened the term of CO service from 15 months to 20. Although applications dropped off initially, in 1986 alone they had risen to 59,000. According to West German Ministry of Defense, another 69,000 recruits could be gained if access to conscientious objector status were made more difficult and if recruitment criteria were altered.¹⁹ Given the source, this is probably an optimistic figure. Furthermore, even if the current conservative government were to succeed in tightening all these exemptions, as Boniface and Heisbourg point out, what would be the political cost of such a move?²⁰

¹⁷ Federal Minister of Defence, *White Paper* 1985: *The Situation and Development of the Federal Armed Forces* (Bonn, 1985), p. 244.

¹⁸ Bundesminister, Material für die Presse, p. 15.

¹⁹ As cited in Boniface and Heisbourg, *La Puce...*, p. 84.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Implementing such changes would provide the peace movements and leftist parties with a new weapon with which to fight the incumbent government. For the sake of its political future, the government cannot afford to ignore the likely public opposition to such changes.

In other western countries, conscientious objection does not present as significant a problem. However, the peace movements in many countries certainly have increased their activities and their popularity has risen appreciably since the beginning of this decade. In several of the countries, such as France and Italy, part of the apparent appeal of conscientious objection is the fact that many applicants have not had to perform comparable alternative duty. The alternative service programs in both these countries are now working more efficiently, which may lead to reductions in the number of future CO applicants. In addition, the Italian Ministry of Defense implemented new restrictions in 1986 on exemptions granted to university students. In essence, the government recognized that many university students remain enrolled year after year (not necessarily passing any of their courses), in order to avoid being drafted into military service. Under the new rules, the government hopes to significantly curtail such evasions.

In virtually every nation that will face demographic constraints in the coming years, one universal policy alteration ought to be the easing of physical criteria. For those judged incapable of strenuous physical work, there are certainly positions within the armed forces (such as clerical, administrative, etc.) that would not require as high a degree of physical fitness. Two other solutions could also be used to fill some of these administrative slots: allowing more women into the forces and substituting civilians for military personnel. These alternatives are examined in the following subsections.

3. Women in the Armed Forces

The use of women in the armed forces varies from nation to nation, with some having no provisions for women to serve voluntarily. The United States and Canada have the greatest percentage of women in their forces, approximately 9 percent. In the United Kingdom and France the figure varies between 2 and 5 percent. In virtually all instances, the question of increasing women's role in the armed forces focuses on filling additional administrative and other non-combat positions. At present, only Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Norway theoretically allow women to serve in all military assignments, combat and non-combat. In fact, only Denmark has made serious moves toward observing

this policy, and particularly among the other NATO countries, there are no indications that the "no combat" rule would be altered.

Following a successful four-year experiment in Denmark, the Danish parliament has authorized the armed forces to recruit women "for front-line naval assignments on an equal basis with men for all but submarine duty."²¹ Comparable experiments are also underway in the Danish Army and Air Force, with the anticipated result being a recommendation to end most of the assignment restrictions in these two service branches as well. These experiments have been fueled in part by the women's liberation movement and in part by the developing shortage of service-age men. Other NATO countries have been studying these experiments in order to judge better the likely success or failure of similar efforts in their own armed forces in the future.²²

West Germany's decision on this policy alternative is as yet unclear. At the present time, females can serve only in the medical service as officers. One proposal that was considered and rejected by the Defense Ministry several years ago was to allow females to fill more of the logistics and support roles. However, such a decision would require parliamentary action to change the Constitution. Additionally, studies completed at that time concluded "that a maximum of probably 12,000-14,000 jobs could be done by women and that the figure might be as low as 8,000."²³ There has appeared to be a firm political consensus about not including female volunteers in the Bundeswehr. However, in January 1987 the Head of MoD's Planning Staff, Hans Ruhle, indicated that they are considering the possibility of even drafting women for combat support and communication jobs, should demographic trends require such a move.²⁴ Still, the political costs of such a decision make it unlikely that this idea would actually be implemented. It is more likely that statements such as Ruhle's are designed to convince West Germany's NATO allies of the seriousness of their problem and of the government's determination to do everything possible to avoid drastic force reductions.

²¹ Karen DeYoung, "Danish Women Approaching Equality in Armed Forces," *Washington Post*, 21 September 1987, p. A1.

²² "Denmark's Women Soldiers on Front Line Also," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 9 April 1987, p. 27, as translated in JPRS-WER-87-056, p. 66.

²³ "...German Army Looks for Men," *International Defense Review*, No. 2, 1984, p. 119.

²⁴ As quoted in James A. Russell, "Germans Make Plans to Draft More Troops," *Defense Week*, 26 January 1987, p. 12. See also, Stephan-Andreas Casdorff, "Lean Years," *Loyal*, as translated in JPRS-WER-87-076, p. 70.

4. Substituting Civilian Personnel

As in the case for women, civilians could be placed in more support roles within the armed forces, thereby freeing up more male military personnel for combat roles. However, this alternative presents one of the same key difficulties encountered in the option to recruit more women: with a declining emphasis on support roles in many of the countries' armed forces, the number of positions that could be filled by female military recruits or by civilians is relatively minimal, and the number will probably decline in the future. In addition, in the case of West Germany, since "all tasks in the Bundeswehr that are not of a strictly military nature are [already] discharged by the civilian personnel of 176,000 women and men,"²⁵ the potential for increasing civilian positions seems quite limited. To the extent any alterations are feasible within any of the countries, the most likely Service to be affected would be the Army since it always has the highest percentage of conscripts and frequently a lower percentage of civilians.

5. Longer Voluntary Service

One manpower policy recently implemented in France which has met with considerable success has been that of permitting conscripts to *volunteer* for a longer term of service. This option has the advantage of making it possible to retain already-trained personnel, which enhances NATO's defense readiness capabilities. As noted previously, in 1985, roughly 10 percent of those men drafted chose to extend their term of service by 6-12 months. In Italy drafted personnel are given a similar option of two- or three-year terms of service.²⁶ In an effort to attract long-term service personnel, West Germany has already increased its financial allocations and benefits to the armed forces. The government's plan is to increase the number of draftees recruited for extended active duty service from about 9.5 percent to 12 percent.²⁷

6. Changing the Active/Reserve Force Mix

The option that could well have the greatest negative impact on NATO's conventional readiness posture is that of altering the balance between active-duty forces and reserve forces. Not surprisingly, the country that has gone the farthest in planning for such

²⁵ Federal Minister of Defense, *White Paper* 1985, p. 238.

²⁶ Article published in *La Repubblica*, 12 December 1986, p. 2, as translated in JPRS-WER-87-052, p. 92.

²⁷ Casdorff, "Lean Years," p. 70.

a change is West Germany. In addition to already having adopted measures to extend the period of reserve service, the Federal Republic has detailed the reorganization of the Bundeswehr's peacetime organization which will take effect in the 1990s. At that time, the military force structure will contain: 456,000 active-duty personnel; 15,000 reserves filling military training positions; and 24,000 reservists in an improved state of readiness. The total will thereby remain at 495,000 troops.

In 1985, 850,000 reserves were called up by the Bundeswehr; in 1995, the military plans to call up 1,270,000. However, in 1985 approximately one out of every three reservists called up for a military exercise failed to report.²⁸ The question therefore arises: who can say that the reserves will show up in the coming years? Clearly, the Federal Republic wants to send a message to its allies that it will do everything it can to help strengthen the West's conventional defense, in this case by keeping up its force levels. At issue is whether juggling the numbers to keep the totals the same is really going to benefit the Alliance. It can be argued that it is better to do this than to do nothing. But it can also be argued that, particularly given West Germany's geo-strategic location, an increased reliance on reserves to fulfill its defense commitments to NATO may well result in at least a partial abandoning to forward defense.²⁹

For the United Kingdom, the substitution of reserve personnel for active-duty personnel is possible, although likely to be controversial. The British reserve force is separated into two parts: the Regular Reserves (former military servicemen still liable for reserve service but who do not train during peacetime) and the Volunteer Reserves, including the Territorial Army (those men and women who volunteer for three years and serve two week's continuous service as well as undergo some 100 hours of training on weekends or weekday evenings, much like the U.S. reserve system). The problem in utilizing British reserves more intensely is twofold. Substituting Regular Reserves for active-duty would necessitate a change in policy whereby these reserves would now be obligated to serve in peacetime. Given that the military is a voluntary system, such an action would appear difficult to implement and would certainly make military service less attractive to future prospective recruits. On the other hand, the Volunteer Reserves--like their U.S. counterparts--do not possess the military experience and training enjoyed by

²⁸ Lt. Col. Manfred Engelhardt, "Reservist Concept for the 1990's. Thoughts on Outlining Conditions and Objectives," *Truppenpraxis*, January 1987, p. 28, as translated in JPRS-WER-87-036, p. 61.

²⁹ Boniface and Heisbourg, *La Puce...*, p. 86.

active-duty personnel, so that while assigning them to formerly active-duty positions would not require such a major shift in policy, the readiness capability of the active-duty force would clearly suffer. The probability of such an action is as yet unclear inasmuch as the government has not taken a stance on the issue.

E. THE SOVIET FACTOR

1. Demographics and Military Manpower Trends

The trends in NATO's conscriptable manpower pool are clearly a cause for concern. Yet while NATO will face some serious problems in this area over the next decade, it should not be overlooked that the Warsaw Pact has some problems of its own. In order to assess the overall manpower balance, I will now turn to an examination of the trends within the Warsaw Pact countries. Then, given these trends, what, if any, incentives would the Eastern Bloc have for negotiating an arms control agreement on conventional manpower in Europe?

There are several key differences between demographic problems facing the NATO Alliance and those facing the Warsaw Pact. First and foremost, in terms of concrete numbers, the NATO countries will generally experience the greatest declines in their pool of conscriptable manpower between 1995 and 2000; on the other hand, the Warsaw Pact nations have, with the exception of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), already reached the low point in this population category in the early to mid-eighties. Again, with the exception of the GDR, all Warsaw Pact countries will see increases in their conscript pool through the end of the century (see Table 3). In addition, because of the Eastern Bloc's authoritarian political systems, these countries find it easier to field relatively large forces even from shrinking population pools than do the West's democratic governments. However, this does not mean that demographic concerns do not exist in the Warsaw Pact countries.

Table 3. Warsaw Pact's Conscript Pool (Males, 18-22 years old), in thousands, 1987-2000

Nation	1987	1990	1995	2000	Percentage of Change, 1987-2000
Bulgaria	312	326	346	323	+3.5
Czechoslovakia	547	561	698	644	+17.7
GDR	649	582	465	582	-10.3
Hungary	355	376	438	387	+9.0
Poland	1,279	1,312	1,540	1,670	+30.6
Romania	938	1,107	983	964	+2.8
USSR	10,459	10,476	11,373	12,184	+16.5
Total Warsaw Pact	14,539	14,740	15,843	16,754	+15.2

Source: Based on data prepared by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the World Population 1986 project.

Trends within the Soviet Union are obviously of the greatest significance since the Soviet Union accounts for more than 75 percent of all the Warsaw Pact's armed forces. Evidence of the Soviet Union's concern with its own demographic trends began to appear at the beginning of the eighties. For example, in a book published in 1982, V. D. Kozlov indicates that population trends had already begun to affect declared Party policy. "As a result of the unevenness of demographic processes in various areas of the country and the *over-all reduction in the natural growth of the population*, the XXVI Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has postulated the question about the need to conduct an active demographic policy in the USSR in the coming decades."³⁰ It is clear from this quotation that Soviet demographic concerns pertain not only to the Russian segment of the USSR's population, but to its population as a whole. In terms of the Slavic population, a recent Soviet article underscores the fact that the birthrate in the six union republics is only on the borderline of being at a replacement level.³¹

³⁰ V. D. Kozlov, *Natsional'nosti SSSR: Etnodemograficheskii obzor* (Moscow: Finansy i statistika, 1982), p. 209. Emphasis added.

³¹ A. Antonov, "Should Families Be Small or Large?" *Pravda*, 11 August 1987, p. 3.

Many in the West have recognized the decline in Slavic birth rates and have estimated its negative impact on the USSR's armed forces, primarily based on language and reliability difficulties associated with the increased percentage of non-Slavic peoples serving in the forces. This certainly is a problem which merits attention given the ever-expanding role of high technology within the armed forces and the resultant need for well-educated, Russian-speaking military personnel. In addition, the Soviet experience in Afghanistan has undoubtedly heightened the leadership's awareness of problems associated with having to rely increasingly on non-Slavic forces, particularly Muslims. One published example of Soviet concern with these trends can be found buried within an article that appeared in *Voprosy filosofii* in February 1983. In this article, Admiral A. I. Sorokin dedicates two paragraphs to the impact of the USSR's "unsatisfactory demographic situation" on Soviet combat capabilities. As he details, the results of such demographic trends as lower birth rates, disproportionate age-sex distributions in some regions, etc. affect the Soviet armed forces in terms of the "quantity and location of conscripted and reserve contingents" and the nationalities making up these contingents. Sorokin concludes that "matters must be organized so that the consequences of the unfavorable demographic situation in the country are overcome and compensated for, and do not affect the combat might and combat readiness of the Soviet Armed Forces."³²

An additional factor which the military will have to grapple with in coming years is its increasing competition with the civilian economy. Here, too, demographic trends will clearly have an impact. Whereas in recent history the armed forces have always been assured that they will receive "everything necessary" in order to repel "imperialist aggression," the new leadership under Gorbachev has adopted a new phrase of "sufficiency" in defense. That is, while the armed forces will receive sufficient means to arm themselves against the West, they will not necessarily receive "everything" they want. This change in emphasis has come about mainly as a result of Gorbachev's drive to reform the Soviet domestic economy. The determination to implement economic reforms and restructuring is detracting from the traditional priority accorded the military; and, given the acknowledged problem of a shortage of workers entering the Soviet labor force, future competition between civilian needs and military demands is bound to be keen. While Gorbachev is certainly not going to sacrifice the defense capabilities of his armed forces to

³² A. I. Sorokin, "The Armed Forces of Developed Socialism," *Voprosy filosofii*, February 1983, p. 11.

any significant extent, he may well see an advantage in making certain limited reductions in the size of Soviet forces which would not seriously affect their capabilities.

Several policy changes implemented during the 1980s within the Soviet Union indicate some degree of concern about meeting current force levels. First, in 1980 the Law on Universal Military Obligation was amended "to specify that school deferments applied only to schools on an approved list."³³ The amendment went into effect in 1982, and it was hoped that deferments would drop significantly. This has evidently not proved to be the case. In October 1984, even the prestigious Moscow State University was dropped from the list of schools qualifying for deferment. The controversy surrounding these measures has now reached the pages of the popular newspaper, *Literaturnaya gazeta*; in articles appearing in May and June 1987, the newspaper printed opposing views on the new law.³⁴ The first article criticized the drafting of first and second-year college students into the armed forces, reasoning that the economy and state as a whole were losing talented people, because most of these students would not return to college after serving in the military. The authors proposed exempting particularly bright or talented students, arguing that the economy and Soviet society needed them more as professionals than as soldiers. In response, General Gareev argued that more than 85 percent of the students drafted later return to school. Furthermore, he reasoned, the universities actually benefited by this new law because it succeeded in weeding out those students who attend college simply to obtain a draft deferment. Finally, Gareev pointed out, the technological challenge and threat posed by the West necessitates having talented people in the armed forces as much as in civilian professions.

In Spring 1984 another reform was implemented designed to address the problem that conscripts entering military service frequently did not have the requisite Russian language skills. The educational reforms aim to improve military efficiency both by placing increased emphasis on teaching the Russian language and by training young men in basic military skills before they become conscripts.³⁵

³³ Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott, *The Armed Forces of the USSR*, 3rd edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), p. 322.

³⁴ See, Round Table, "Why Do We Have Few Really Educated People?" *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 13 May 1987; and, Col.-Gen. M. A. Gareev, "One More Time on Education: There is Another Opinion," *Ibid.*, 3 June 1987.

³⁵ "Educational Reform to Boost Military Efficiency," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 31 January 1987, p. 149.

Finally, the Soviets also appear to be turning to the limited conscription of women in order to solve some of their difficulties. As the manpower pool began to decline in the 1980s, the military increased the number of female recruits it admitted. Apparently feeling that the response was not sufficient to meet their needs, on 18 March 1985 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet decreed an amendment to the military draft law which "provides for draft registration of women with 'medical and other [i.e., communication, computers, clerical] specialized training.' Such women between ages of 19 and 40 could be required to undergo military training and be 'accepted on a voluntary basis into active military service'."³⁶ In addition to relieving some of the burden created by evolving demographic trends, the new legislation also appears to be designed to "offset the influx of non-Russian speakers [into the Armed Forces] from less developed republics."³⁷

As previously mentioned, the question of ethnic reliability within the Soviet Union has received considerable attention in the West, and even some within the Soviet Union itself. It is admittedly a difficult quality to measure and one that probably should not be overemphasized in terms of the Warsaw Pact-NATO military balance. In her book entitled *Red Army and Society*, Ellen Jones discusses many of the issues frequently raised in connection with the "ethnic problem" in the Soviet Union.³⁸ Briefly, she argues that the problem of lower educational levels among the minorities is not particularly relevant to the current, younger generation. While recognizing that Russian language capabilities are still not what they should be among many minorities, Jones states that the training in this area is improving. However, she cautions, the increased complexity of military training results in an even greater need for fluency in Russian. In terms of existence of ethnic tensions within military units, the only real source of information is emigres, and their opinions appear to be split on this issue. Finally, in assessing minority reliability as a whole, Jones believes that there are no separate policies for various nationalities; that is, there is no apparent policy for placing "unreliable" nationalities into less "sensitive" branches of the armed forces and/or into non-combat positions.

In turning to an assessment of the Warsaw Pact as a whole, the issue of reliability is one which must concern the Eastern Bloc more than it does NATO. Again, this is a factor

³⁶ Dusko Doder, "Soviets to Accept Women as 'Volunteers' in Military," *Washington Post*, 1 April 1985, p. A1.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. A12.

³⁸ For greater detail, see Ellen Jones, *Red Army and Society: A Sociology of the Soviet Military* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985), pp. 189ff.

which is virtually impossible to quantify, but certain generalizations can undoubtedly be made. As John Mearsheimer points out, "there is reason for the Soviets to have serious doubts about their allies' loyalty. The Pact's numerical advantage takes on a different light when one considers that slightly more than half of the Pact's standing divisions in Central Europe are non-Soviet."³⁹ The degree of reliability will obviously depend upon the type of threat and the interests involved; if the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact nations perceive a developing conflict to be in the Soviet interest, but not in their own, there appears a strong likelihood that the Soviet Union would not be able to count on their support. In their summary of these nations' reliability, Dale Herspring and Ivan Volgyes conclude that "the Czechoslovak army must be regarded as unreliable under almost any circumstances.... Against NATO, the Bulgarian army is the only one which could be relied upon in almost all circumstances. The Germans are partially reliable, and under some circumstances, the Poles would fight." Hungary's reliability "can be considered minimal at best" and Romania would seem unlikely to get involved against the West.⁴⁰

2. The Arms Control Dimension

It is evident, then, that the Eastern Bloc countries find themselves faced with demographic problems, albeit of a different sort and dimension. As a general rule, the question is not so much one of lacking substantial numbers of conscriptable men, but rather a question of quality. Their authoritarian political systems will allow the Warsaw Pact nations to field the necessary forces much more easily than NATO will be able to do. Nevertheless, this does not rule out completely the possibility of their interest in some kind of bilateral conventional arms control agreement.

Many in the West would argue that there can be no realistic hope for such an agreement between East and West in the foreseeable future. And if the past is any indication, there can be little prospect of success. Yet recent events indicate that new life may be breathed into conventional arms control negotiations. In an attempt to establish new talks to replace the moribund MBFR talks, discussions among the "Group of 23" nations have been ongoing since February 1987. The purpose of these talks has been to work out an agreement to hold such negotiations in the framework of the "Atlantic to the

³⁹ John J. Mearsheimer, "Nuclear Weapons and Deterrence in Europe," *International Security*, Winter 1984/85, p. 31.

⁴⁰ Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, "Political Reliability in the Eastern European Warsaw Pact Armies," *Armed Forces and Society*, Winter 1980, pp. 290-291.

Urals," thereby expanding the zone previously encompassed by the MBFR negotiations. In this context, the diplomatic skills of the new Soviet leadership under General Secretary Gorbachev should not be underestimated. At the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee meeting in Budapest in June 1986, Gorbachev proposed a phased troop reduction of up to 500,000 men by the early nineties, beginning with a reduction of 100,000-150,000 within two years. If the framework for future conventional arms negotiations can be established, the West should anticipate additional, innovative proposals from Gorbachev in this area. Based on the experiences of the first two years of his tenure, it should be expected that Gorbachev will continue to generate new ideas and proposals which will likely pose serious challenges to the West. And if there is any doubt about Soviet willingness to discuss conventional arms control, including manpower reductions, a recent article published in the military newspaper *Krasnaya zvezda* should dispell some of these doubts. According to Major-General V. Tatarnikov, "Only radical reductions in *armed forces* and armaments can lead to the attainment of stability in Europe."⁴¹ The fact that this statement comes from a high-ranking military official implies not only that the Soviets are willing to talk about conventional arms control, but also that the military will play a role in these negotiations.

Particularly in light of the constant Soviet emphasis on the need to concentrate on internal economic improvements, the economics of cutting the size of a costly standing army could also hold some appeal to the Soviet leadership. But the greatest incentive for the Warsaw Pact to engage in serious military manpower reduction efforts lies in the propaganda gains to be derived from such a move. One of the West's prevailing criticisms of the Gorbachev leadership has been that fact that, although the *style* of Soviet actions and diplomacy has unquestionably changed in the past two years, little has been witnessed in the way of *substantive* changes, i.e., where are the concrete deeds to prove the new Soviet approach and "new thinking." Entering into serious negotiations on conventional forces in Europe--the present assymetry of which is a constant source of concern to the West--would, in fact, serve as proof of changes in the *substance* of Soviet policy.

While the underlying reasons for interest in working toward mutual manpower reductions are not necessarily identical, the fact remains that, over the next decade, it is in the interests of both East and West to reach such an accord. Particularly in light of the

⁴¹ Major-General V. Tatarnikov, "A Phase of Responsibility Lies Ahead," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 2 September 1987, p. 3. Emphasis added.

recent agreement on intermediate-range nuclear forces and the fact that strategic nuclear weapons are now the forces on the bargaining table, a viable balance of conventional forces in the European theater will become that much more important to the security of this region and the world as a whole.

F. CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATO'S FUTURE

The next decade does not promise to be an easy one for NATO. Assuming that the NATO command will continue to place increasing emphasis on strengthening the Alliance's conventional capabilities, the maintenance of current force levels will become even more critical. Yet, retaining these force levels may hinge less on the willingness of the European nations to seek adequate conventional strength (as has historically been the case), and more on the real demographic trends that will constrain the European contribution.

West Germany unquestionably faces the most severe future losses in its "conscriptable population," and measures which the government has already adopted will help maintain force levels, but it must be recognized that, by the mid-nineties, the numbers will be maintained only through a juggling act, primarily by relying on more reserves to fill active-duty slots. And while the present conservative government has already proven its willingness and determination to sacrifice some political popularity for the sake of maintaining manpower levels, it must be kept in mind that, should a socialist-led government come to power in the 1990s, many of the measures already adopted might well be reversed, including a return to the 15-month draft (something the Social Democratic Party has already vowed it will do if elected). Given West Germany's crucial role in NATO's Central Front--its army represents 43 percent of the peacetime manpower in this region--the importance of retaining a large active-duty force cannot be overestimated.

Of course, West Germany is not the only country to face demographic problems. As indicated in previous sections, much of the shortfall in future manpower will occur in the Central and Northern regions in Western Europe. In the South, Italy is the only country facing any significant future problems in population trends. For the United States, and particularly for the United Kingdom, an additional factor that must be taken into consideration is the added economic burden of having an all-volunteer force (coupled with population declines). In times of economic stagnation, the military has had little problem in recruiting sufficient numbers of volunteers. But under present circumstances, with the armed forces feeling increasing pressure to tighten their budgetary belts, the difficulty of

making military service suitably attractive to potential recruits (through better wages, benefits, etc.) will only become greater.

Economic considerations are destined to play a central role in determining future manpower levels in Western Europe. Only modest economic growth rates are anticipated in both the U.S. and Western Europe through the next decade; given this trend, no real growth in these countries' defense budgets can be expected in the nineties, a fact which is already being reflected in current defense budgets on both sides of the Atlantic. At the same time, political strains and tensions are increasing in many of the European nations. These two factors combined will make it even more difficult for the countries to resolve such issues as how to maintain military manpower levels. Robbin Laird has succinctly elucidated the dilemma: "Hard choices in the security area will be avoided for political reasons. The preoccupation with economic development and political stability will decrease [the] focusing [of] attention on security issues. The various budgetary and demographic downturns in key Western European countries will create pressures for making choices and trade-offs to ensure that most effective defense posture possible. But political and economic pressures will reduce the desire to make such tough choices."⁴²

The resulting dilemma is that, if NATO's conventional forces are reduced in the next decade (primarily because of demographic problems), the viability of the Alliance's conventional deterrent will also be decreased, and this will occur at the very time when NATO needs to be able to rely on that option more than it ever has before. Now that the United States and Soviet Union have signed an INF agreement, and attention has begun to focus on the prospects for a strategic nuclear arms accord, the importance of conventional forces is augmented all the more.

In addition, the problem of conventional manpower is not just one of numbers, but also one of force mix and force orientation. With impending shortages, it is entirely probable that more Western countries will resort to solutions such as the West German government has adopted, placing greater reliance on reserve forces to fill positions currently staffed by active-duty personnel. While this solution may maintain the numbers at the desired level (in the case of West Germany, even this assumption is open for debate), there is no doubt that increased reliance on reserves will decrease the readiness of NATO forces, and therefore the viability of the conventional deterrent posture.

⁴² Robbin F. Laird, "Ten Decade Ahead for the Western Alliance," *American Foreign Policy Newsletter*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (August 1987), p. 4.

Finally, in terms of force orientation, the one region that will not experience particular demographic constraints--the Southern Flank--is, at the same time, probably the least focused on the Soviet threat in Western Europe. It is evident that Italy has been shifting some of its attention away from Western Europe and toward the Mediterranean. Also, tensions between Turkey and Greece continue unabated, with no prospects for a solution in sight. Given these circumstances, the Alliance cannot realistically hope to have its manpower problems solved through reliance on the region that will experience fewer difficulties in terms of demographic constraints.

The key problem, then, for NATO in the next decade lies in the likelihood of conventional force reductions by one--or even many--of the NATO countries. There is no doubt that there will be domestic pressures on both sides of the Atlantic to reduce forces. On the U.S. side, it is quite probable that calls for withdrawals of U.S. troops from Western Europe will be renewed in the near future. In Europe, arguments will be made that the political and economic costs of maintaining current forces is prohibitive and that cuts must be implemented. Such movements on both sides must be rejected if NATO is to maintain a viable conventional deterrent.

From the U.S. perspective, two factors--the controversial issue of burden sharing (i.e., the need for all members of NATO to do their "fair share" in contributing to the West's defense) and budgetary constraints--may well combine to lead to troop cuts. The U.S. will face its own demographic problems: in the early nineties the U.S. will need to recruit 60-75 percent of its eligible men (versus the current need for 50 percent of all eligibles) in order to meet current force level needs *and* staff the new positions created by recent procurements during the "defense build-up" of the Reagan years.⁴³ Yet the greatest constraint for the U.S. will lie in economic restrictions. Given the long-held belief in many U.S. circles that the U.S. has been overburdened by NATO responsibilities, while the Europeans have "gone along for the ride," as defense budgets become even tighter in the coming years, the pressure is bound to grow within these circles to decide that it is time to change this imbalance. Coupled with the probability that no NATO country will continue to meet the commitment of an annual 3 percent real growth in their defense budgets, there is likely to develop a groundswell of public support in the U.S. to "bring the boys home" from Europe.

⁴³ Boniface and Heisbourg, *La Puce...*, p. 91.

One of the greatest dangers to the Alliance is that a reduction in intermediate nuclear forces combined with even a partial withdrawal of U.S. troops will inevitably lead to the conviction among Europeans that the United States is, in fact, beginning to decouple from Western Europe. Thus, any such movement to effect a partial withdrawal of U.S. troops from Europe must be examined carefully and with trepidation. First, the economic facts: if the U.S. government decides to withdraw troops from the continent but wants to maintain them as active-duty forces, the initial *and* long-term costs of such a move will prove greater than leaving the troops in Europe. Clearly, there would first be the costs of transporting the troops and their dependents back to the United States. There would then be a need to increase the entire infrastructure support system in the U.S. in order to keep the troops on active-duty status. Finally, there would be the additional costs of having to improve and augment transport capabilities to be able to return these troops to Europe in the event of hostilities. Thus, unless the government decides to decommission these forces, there will be no foreseeable economic savings, and, given the trends in the arms control arena, it would seem unlikely that the U.S. government would chose to completely decommission these forces. As a recent article in the *Christian Science Monitor* queries, "Can NATO remain secure if INF systems in Europe are eliminated and there are large, unilateral reductions in U.S. troop levels? The likely answer is 'no'."⁴⁴

As difficult as it may be, the U.S. government also needs to understand the arguments from the other side of the Atlantic. In many of its "burden sharing" calculations, the U.S. fails to take into account the hidden costs--both economic and political--to the Western European countries of having conscripted forces.⁴⁵ The United States is also not faced with the same degree of political tensions that many of these countries have recently been experiencing. Although conservative governments have been returned to power in both the United Kingdom and West Germany in 1987, and all the governments of the key countries are firmly committed to NATO and to maintaining a strong defense, this picture may well change in the next decade. If socialist parties should come to power in some of these countries, two possible changes in their security policies might result: first, a reversal of any steps taken to avoid unilateral conventional force reductions and second, a general drift toward neutralism in their foreign and security policies. In an era of heightened and

⁴⁴ Lee H. Hamilton, "Policy Review Needed: Why U.S. Troops in Europe?" *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 August 1987, p. 12.

⁴⁵ For an excellent treatment of this issue, see David Robertson, "Fair Shares in NATO: Problems of Assessing Defence Burdensharing," *Brassey's Defence Yearbook 1986* (London: RUSI/Brassey, 1985).

improved Soviet diplomacy, the West cannot risk such a drift among any of its NATO partners.

Ultimate U.S. actions with respect to troop withdrawals are likely to depend heavily upon the measures adopted by other Western Alliance countries to maintain the size of their forces. Here, to use an often-abused phrase, the Alliance must adhere to a policy of a "two-way street." Demographic constraints coupled with arms control developments in the nuclear field make the need for U.S. troops in Europe greater than has been the case since the end of World War II. At the same time, the West Europeans must do everything in their power to maintain the size and readiness of their own conventional forces. If it is not clear already, it soon will be: if the U.S. government perceives Western European governments to be failing in their commitment to this obligation--by failing to show sufficient political and/or economic resolve--proponents of U.S. troops withdrawals will almost certainly seize this as a pretext to implement a partial withdrawal of U.S. troops.

As is evident, in either case--a U.S. troop withdrawal or force cuts in one or several European nations--the ripple effects will be significant. If the European countries do not do enough for their own defense, the U.S. will probably retaliate through troop withdrawals. If the United States withdraws troops, prevailing sentiment within many of the European countries will be that their demographic constraints compel them to make reductions of their own. And particularly in the case of a West German reduction in forces, it is a virtual certainty that other European countries (mainly in the northern and central regions) would follow with their own force reductions. The result in either case is a reduced viability of NATO's conventional option.

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