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SOVIET MILITARY THINKING AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS ISSUES

Susan L. Clark
Robbin F. Laird

May 1990

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Susan L. Clark
Robbin F. Laird

May 1990



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES

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PREFACE

This study was performed by the Institute for Defense Analyses for the Director for Operations, Defense Nuclear Agency. It first identifies many of the issues currently being debated in the realm of Soviet security policy; particular emphasis is placed on the nuclear dimension of these issues. The paper then speculates about the changes taking place as a new European security order emerges. The role of nuclear weapons in this environment is, again, a focal point in the analysis.

This study was conducted under contract MDA 903-89C 0003; task order number T-U6-706, Analyses of Nuclear Weapons Security, Arms Control Issues, and Treaty Resource Requirements.

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ACRONYMS

CFE	Conventional Forces in Europe
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
EC	European Community
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic
ICBM	Intercontinental ballistic missiles
IMEMO	Institute for the World Economy and International Relations
INF	Intermediate Nuclear Forces
ISKAN	Institute for the USA and Canada
MBFR	Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction
MEMO	Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SNF	Short-range Nuclear Forces
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Talks
WEU	Western European Union
ZVO	Zarubezhnoe voennoe obozrenie

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper details the Soviet Union's changing outlook on the role of nuclear weapons in security policy. The role of nuclear weapons has taken on new importance in light of the changes that are taking place in the Soviet Union itself, as well as the revolutionary changes taking place in Eastern Europe. While conventional weapons are increasingly the focus of Western analytic work, nuclear weapons continue to be the subject of heated discussion and debate in the Soviet Union. Changes in Soviet thinking about the utility and importance of nuclear weapons can be expected to have a major impact on the Soviet Union's position in its dealings with the West, particularly in the arms control arena, and with its increasingly independent allies in the Warsaw Pact.

The paper is divided into two main sections: (1) a survey and analysis of the Soviet open-source literature dedicated to security issues (and especially nuclear weapons) and (2) a speculative assessment of what today's changes taking place in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union might mean for future thinking about nuclear weapons issues. With respect to short-range nuclear forces (SNF), the paper underscores that the Soviets have increased incentives for negotiations. First, and most important, they can use the SNF talks as a vehicle for pushing a unified Germany to renounce nuclear weapons. Given the virtual certainty of German unification, possible German access to its own nuclear weapons is a focal concern of the Soviets. If SNF talks move toward an agreement, a key reason for Germany having nuclear weapons is undermined.

Second, Soviet analysts are arguing that if a minimum deterrence posture is adopted, SNF would not be a necessary element of their force structure. All that would be needed would be some small number of nuclear weapons capable of inflicting unacceptable damage on the enemy. With the political and security changes in Eastern Europe, the salience of the minimum deterrence argument has increased and is in line with basic Soviet objectives concerning nuclear weapons: to reduce the importance of nuclear weapons, to help rule out German acquisition of its own nuclear forces, and to avoid proliferation within and beyond Europe.

More generally, it can be anticipated that Soviet nuclear weapons will be largely withdrawn from Central Europe. Nevertheless, it is logical that the Soviets will seek to

maintain a small contingent, of which battlefield weapons could be the key component, in what is now East German territory. In other words, the declared policy would be to use nuclear weapons if the remaining forward-deployed forces were attacked. As East and West conventional forces move toward roughly equal levels, the need for theater nuclear forces in a more mobile battlefield is increased. However, should the SNF talks result in an agreement to entirely eliminate these forces, neither side would then be able to use them as a hedge against a possible conventional failure.

The fluidity of numerous security issues is important to understand; some very fundamental and long-standing Soviet military beliefs have been challenged during the last several years. Moreover, there is no longer a clearly defined center of gravity for military planning and analysis--including on the issue of nuclear weapons in Europe--by the Soviet ministry of defense. As regards Soviet strategic studies, new concepts are emerging such as reasonable sufficiency and minimum deterrence, and old concepts such as parity are being redefined. Soviet policy makers have not yet determined all the nuances associated with these terms and are actually using the discourse with their Western counterparts to help shape their thinking; as a result, U.S. participants have an unprecedented opportunity to affect the Soviet security debate. This changed military and security climate has come about since Soviet military doctrine and security policy have been opened to debate, as have virtually all elements of Soviet life.

The most fundamental change in the security environment is occurring in the Soviet-East European relationship. New partnerships must begin to emerge to replace the old Soviet-dominated approach. As these new relationships develop, it is conceivable that the East European countries may still want some type of nuclear guarantee from the USSR, particularly as a means of leveraging a unified Germany. In order to further undermine any German moves toward nuclear weapons acquisition, the Soviets are likely to pursue the following policies: encourage the provision of continued extended deterrence to Germany (preferably by the United States, but perhaps also by France), propose further conventional force cuts (to reduce the perceived threat), make progress in the SNF talks, and advocate minimum deterrence.

In short, nuclear weapons have a continuing and important role to play in building the new European security order, but traditional approaches must be replaced with more innovative concepts. In particular, it must be realized that the superpowers will no longer automatically be the dominant figures in European security. And whereas before, nuclear weapons were the key element in the transatlantic relationship, now they are a subordinate, albeit still relevant, component in Europe's political architecture.

A. INTRODUCTION

The vast array of changes that have occurred in the Soviet Union since Mikhail Gorbachev became its leader in March 1985 have unleashed a revolution in the Eastern bloc and fundamentally altered not only Soviet-East European relations but East-West relations as well. In particular, the changes that have unfolded in Eastern Europe since the fall of 1989 will have important implications for Western security that policy makers and analysts need to understand. Perhaps the most important change is the virtual certainty of German unification in the near term. As a result of the revolutionary political changes in Europe, it is clear that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Warsaw Pact will alter their basic orientations and reorder priorities they have pursued for the last four decades. Western analysts, policy makers, and practitioners must develop new paradigms and creative approaches for understanding and anticipating the implications of contemporary European thinking on security issues. In the context of all of these changes, the role of nuclear weapons in security policy remains an important focus.

Nuclear weapons have obviously been a cornerstone of security policy in the postwar age, providing the West with a credible deterrent in the face of Warsaw Pact conventional superiority in numerous areas and granting legitimacy to Soviet claims of superpower status. But as the conventional forces become balanced at lower levels and as the Soviet empire crumbles, what then becomes the future for nuclear weapons? This paper examines the evolution of Soviet thinking about military policy and the role of nuclear weapons. It is divided into two basic sections: an overview of the Soviet open-source literature dedicated to these issues followed by a section which speculates on the possible implications of future changes in the international environment for Soviet thinking about the utility of nuclear forces. Thus, while the first section examines what the Soviets have explicitly said and written, the second seeks to move beyond this framework. This approach was chosen partly because Soviet analysts have not (yet) published direct connections between their analysis of the changing international environment and the utility of nuclear weapons. Moreover, the second section concentrates on the world as it has taken shape since the events of November 1989, whereas the literature survey focuses on the Gorbachev era to that point. The section entitled conclusions underscores the most important changes that have occurred in the political and nuclear environment as a result of the revolutionary events of 1989, and their implications for negotiations on short-range nuclear forces (SNF).

B. ANALYSIS OF THE SOVIET LITERATURE

When examining Soviet writings today, one must understand the historical difference between Soviet and Western publications. Until the advent of glasnost', the range and scope of debate evident in the official Soviet press was markedly constrained and narrow. Moreover, these debates were well controlled by the party apparatus. Today, however, numerous and wide-ranging points of view are freely expressed, making it increasingly difficult to determine who may be considered "authoritative" and who is on the fringes. Thus, not only have Gorbachev's policies of glasnost' and perestroika fundamentally changed Western perceptions of the USSR, but also these policies have significantly transformed the quality and content of the Soviet open source literature, including literature on military issues.¹

Gorbachev has distinguished his leadership from that of previous Soviet leaders by allowing military doctrine—as well as all other elements of Soviet life—to become subject to debate. In this connection, new players have begun contributing to the literature on security policy, whose participation has naturally broadened the scope of the debate. Historically, only the Soviet military has had a role in debates about security policy, doctrine, military-technical issues, etc. And while military officers still far outnumber the civilians in these discussions today, the expertise among civilian analysts is growing. Indeed, civilian input into security debates has had a considerable impact, as evidenced by certain political decisions and by some readjustments of the military's own thinking. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the Soviet civilian infrastructure dedicated to military issues is miniscule compared with that of the United States (or many other Western countries), and the few civilians who dominate the field frequently find themselves the object of intense criticism by a well-organized military apparatus.

With these factors in mind, this section of the paper first lays out the changing context in which military issues are raised, and then analyzes recent changes in Warsaw Pact and Soviet military doctrine. Next, it treats the subject of parity, delineating three broad schools of thought called parity, relative sufficiency, and minimum deterrence. A review of the extensive discussions in the Soviet press about sufficiency follows. The section then focuses on the dramatic changes in Soviet thinking--first with respect to the

¹ For a detailed review of many of these sources, see Kent D. Lee, Susan L. Clark, Robbin F. Laird, *The Debate about Soviet Military Doctrine and Forces*, IDA Paper P-2348, January 1990.

role of arms control in the strategic debate and then with respect to the use of nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence. It should be emphasized that the following analyses do not detail each and every element of the particular debate. Instead, this paper seeks to concentrate on the broader trends and issues, using representative citations.

1. The Changing Context

One of the clearest examples of the effects of glasnost' in the Soviet literature can be found in the frank criticisms of previous Soviet foreign policy approaches. In particular, many Soviet analysts now openly discuss not only that relying on military solutions to international problems was an erroneous and detrimental policy, but also that overestimating the value of such an approach cost the Soviet Union both in terms of international prestige and in terms of the economic burden imposed on the Soviet economy by defense priorities. Thus, the West could rightly argue that there was "a serious gap between the Soviet Union's declared political intentions and the development of Soviet military might."² Related to this argument is the belief that security in today's nuclear world cannot be guaranteed through military-technical means alone; rather, such guarantees are more of a political task.

An examination of today's Soviet open source literature reveals a significant shift in thinking about the effectiveness of Soviet foreign policy methods--past, present, and future. The primacy of military solutions to international problems evident in the pre-Gorbachev administrations has come increasingly under fire, particularly in the context of the "new political thinking." One of the leaders in leveling criticism at previous Soviet practices is the journal *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, which is also translated into English (as *International Affairs*) and French. Although the quality of this journal's articles was frequently questioned by some analysts of the USSR before the advent of perestroika and glasnost', since then it has come to be recognized as a serious contributor to discussions of ideas related to new thinking. It is a publication of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs which consciously seeks to represent wide-ranging viewpoints.³ Thus, while the views expressed in *International Affairs* are not necessarily authoritative, the aim of the journal often is to provoke debate on a given subject, something that certainly has been

² Grigori Alimurzayev, "A Shield or a Sword? History of Soviet Military Doctrine," *International Affairs*, No. 5, 1989, p. 108.

³ This is evident not only in the writings of many Soviet authors, but also in the inclusion of articles by prominent Western statespersons and analysts.

accomplished in articles addressing security issues. For example, a critical examination of past versus present policies, including the errors of Stalinism, is provided by Nikolai Spassky, the Third Secretary in the Department for the USA and Canada of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a July 1989 article in *International Affairs*:

One of the most serious distortions of the times of Stalinism and stagnation in the foreign policy sphere was the devaluation of the role of political means in ensuring the nation's security. [A] stereotype gradually established itself, one which prescribed viewing all our ties and dealings with states of the other socio-political system above all through the prism of potential military confrontation and through the correlation of military potentials. A state's military potential was interpreted rather simplistically, being all but equated with its armed forces. The domination of the military component over all others was the most patently manifest in Soviet-American relations.

Today, when the processes of democratization and humanization of interstate relations sparked by the Soviet perestroika are gaining momentum, ensuring national security is increasingly shifting from the sphere of military development to that of political cooperation among states.⁴

It should be noted that such criticisms of Soviet foreign policy have appeared in the military press as well. Although written by a civilian, I. Kulkov, the following analysis was published in the bimonthly military journal, *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*:

The Soviet Union became the first to oppose and persistently fight the threat of nuclear war hanging over mankind, and it is still waging this fight. However, it has not always been consistent and logical in its foreign policy activities. New possibilities for reducing international tension and attaining greater mutual understanding between countries and peoples were not fully realized. While they discussed the enormous threat hanging over the world as a result of accumulation of nuclear weapons and the nuclear arms race, former political and military leaders of the USSR and prominent social scientists still did not exclude the possibility of victory in nuclear war, feeling that it would lead only to the demise of the capitalist system, and not of the whole human race.

As a consequence we observed confrontational approaches to nonconfrontational situations, and a military-political response in place of a purely political one. Responding to the nuclear challenge made by capitalist states against the USSR and all socialist countries, and concentrating enormous resources and attention on the military aspect of opposing imperialism, it was said at the 19th party conference, we have not always utilized political possibilities for ensuring the state's security and for reducing tension between nations--possibilities which became available in connection with fundamental changes occurring in the world. And as a result of this, we allowed ourselves to be drawn into an arms race, which

⁴ Nikolai Spassky, "National Security: Real and Illusory," *International Affairs*, No. 7, 1989, p. 3.

could not but have an effect on the country's socioeconomic development and on its international position.⁵

It is true, however, that there are notable differences in the writings of the military press and the civilian press. Thus, while *International Affairs* and *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya* (MEMO) are more forthcoming in their assessments, military journals such as *Zarubezhnoe voennoe obozrenie* (ZVO) frequently display more restraint and "old" thinking. A May 1989 editorial in ZVO illustrates this point when, on the issue of past versus present policies, it takes a somewhat different approach from civilian analyses, essentially arguing that past Soviet policies were appropriate for the situation at the time even though a new approach is necessary today:

Military-strategic parity remains a decisive factor in not allowing war. Its basis was laid down at the turn of the 1960s By the 1970s, an approximate balance of NATO and Warsaw Pact military forces had been created. *In the context of direct confrontation, military means were practically the only factor for deterring aggression.* But with the Earth's current oversaturation of weapons, ensuring security is increasingly becoming a political matter.⁶

It might be noted that there is also an interest here in emphasizing the United States' confrontational attitude, epitomized by the Reagan administration's official policy of "direct confrontation," a policy frequently criticized in Soviet writings.

As indicated above, another new element of Soviet military thinking is the belief that military-technical means alone can no longer guarantee security. The baseline for such discussions is the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), held in February 1986. An excerpt from its Political Report defines the parameters of this thinking:

The character of present-day weapons leaves any country no hope of safeguarding itself solely with military and technical means, for example, by building up a defence system, even the most powerful one. The task of ensuring security is increasingly seen as a political problem, and it can only be resolved by political means Security cannot be built endlessly on fear of retaliation, in other words, on the doctrines of "containment" or "deterrence." Apart from the absurdity

⁵ I. Kulkov, *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*, No. 7 (April), 1989, translated in Joint Publications Research Service Report: *Arms Control* [hereafter JPRS-TAC]-89-024, "Foreign Policy Aspect of Defense Policy," p. 17.

⁶ Editorial, "Problemy voyny i mira i novoe politicheskoe myshlenie [Problems of War and Peace and New Political Thinking]," *Zarubezhnoe voennoe obozrenie* [hereafter ZVO], No. 5, 1989, p. 4. Emphasis added.

and amorality of a situation in which the whole world becomes a nuclear hostage, these doctrines encourage an arms race that may sooner or later go out of control.⁷

Not only have the civilian analysts mirrored this thinking, but so, too, have military commentaries. For an example of the former, a December 1986 article by Yuri Tomilin published in *International Affairs*, sets forth this point plainly: "The character of modern weapons makes it impossible for any state to protect itself by military and technical means alone, for example by establishing even the most powerful defences. Today, security is a political question that can only be decided by political means."⁸ More recently, the military journal *ZVO* provides an example of the latter, explaining that new thinking "means understanding that force and the threat of force must no longer be an instrument of foreign policy."⁹ The question many Western analysts have, however, is whether such statements will actually be backed up with corresponding actions, or whether Soviet actions will continue to focus on military solutions. In other words, will the political component dominate the military-technical one (in contrast to previous years). The Soviet decision not to intervene militarily as the East European communist regimes crumbled indicates that a real change in thinking appears to have taken root.

As additional "proof" of the Soviets' shift in thinking away from military solutions, current Soviet assessments about the Clausewitzian notion that war is the continuation of politics by other means are noteworthy. Over the years, Soviet references to the viability of Clausewitz and his theory on war and politics, even in the nuclear age, could fill a volume in and of themselves. But now this assessment is changing. As Defense Minister Dmitrii Yazov encapsulated it: "in the present-day situation, . . . nuclear war cannot be a means of achieving political objectives. 'Now,' General Secretary of the CC CPSU M. S. Gorbachev has pointed out, 'it has become crystal-clear to everyone that the old notions of war as a means of achieving political objectives have become a thing of the past.'"¹⁰ Lest anyone still be unclear about the Soviet leadership's position, Gorbachev subsequently

⁷ As quoted in Mikhail Gorbachev, *For a Nuclear-Free World* (Moscow: Novosti Press, 1987), p. 39.

⁸ Yuri Tomilin, "Soviet Programme for Fully Eliminating Mass Destruction Weapons," *International Affairs*, No. 12, 1986, p. 72.

⁹ Editorial, *ZVO*, No. 5, 1989, p. 6.

¹⁰ D. T. Yazov, "Voennaya doktrina Varshavskogo Dogovora--doktrina zashchity mira i sotsializma [The Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact--A Doctrine of Defending Peace and Socialism]," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 28 July 1987.

stated unambiguously that "Clausewitz's formula about the fact that war is the continuation of politics by other means is already outdated."¹¹

Yet the Soviets are cautious not to discard any option completely. Thus, while they note that political solutions are increasingly the means to guarantee security, until the security issue is resolved, "military force, according to statements by the USSR military leadership, will continue to play the key role in deterring the probable opponent from aggressive actions."¹² Indeed, one article in the May 1988 issue of *International Affairs* argued that in limited or local wars using conventional weapons that were outside the East-West framework, Clausewitz is correct. "Over the 1950-1980 period there have been more than 250 such wars fought 'on the periphery,' and each of them confirmed in general Clausewitz's conclusion, although here we also see the steadily declining opportunities for settling political problems by force."¹³

Within the context of Soviet discussions about guaranteeing security in today's world, the Soviet leadership has argued that nuclear weapons actually undermine security. Writing in his 1987 book, Gorbachev states: "The existence of nuclear weapons is fraught with a permanent risk of unpredictability Evaluating the situation, the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee confirmed the Soviet declaratory leadership's resolute disapproval of the stand which claims that the conducting of international affairs and national security are realizable only through reliance on nuclear weapons."¹⁴ This reasoning is also supported by both civilian and military analysts.

The question naturally arises: how must security be guaranteed in today's world? The current Soviet declaratory answer is that security must be universal, arms levels must be reduced, and nuclear weapons eliminated. Again, the report of the 27th CPSU Congress is cited frequently in these discussions: "In our age, genuine equal security is guaranteed not by the highest possible, but by the lowest possible level of strategic parity, from which nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction must be totally

¹¹ Statement by Gorbachev on 29 September 1987, as quoted in V. P. Abarenkov and B. P. Krasulin, *Razoruzhenie [Disarmament]* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1988), p. 45.

¹² A. Savel'ev, "Predotvrashchenie voyny i sderzhivanie: Podkhody OVD i NATO [The Prevention of War and Deterrence: Approaches of the WTO and NATO]," *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya* [hereafter *MEMO*], No. 6, 1989, p. 22.

¹³ Daniil Proektor, "Politics, Clausewitz and Victory in a Nuclear War," *International Affairs*, No. 5, 1988, p. 79.

¹⁴ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 246.

excluded."¹⁵ Marshal Akhromeev echoed most of these sentiments shortly after the Congress:

[S]ecurity . . . must be resolved by political means, by achieving the relaxation of tension, by arms limitation and reduction, and the strengthening of trust and international cooperation and not by means of arms or doctrines of "containment" or "deterrence." It is irresponsible today to seek security through the arms race, through improving the "shield" and the "sword." It is impossible today to create two kinds of security, one more reliable for oneself, and another for one's neighbor.

But Akhromeev also took care to point out that "the USSR will always be able to match any steps the West takes with commensurate retaliatory measures."¹⁶ The argument that security must be universal is explicitly drawn by Tomilin: "There can be no security for each individual state; security can only be for all, which is why international security cannot be built by taking care of one's own security interests while ignoring those of others."¹⁷

A final point related to changing Soviet views of military affairs, and especially the role of nuclear weapons, is whether nuclear weapons constitute a status symbol. Previously, Soviet analysts have argued that other countries use nuclear weapons to validate their status as a world power. For example, Britain's nuclear forces have been said to symbolize the British desire to preserve its former status as a great power, while some analysts have argued that France seeks to provide a nuclear guarantee for West European security. The difference today is that Soviet writers now admit that such pretensions can be applied equally to their own country. One of the most interesting discussions of this subject is contained in Igor' Malashenko's article published in *Novoe vremya* in 1989 where he outlines some of the obstacles to establishing a nuclear-free world. In examining the Soviet Union's policies, Malashenko writes:

Unfortunately, for us, too, during the stagnant years, nuclear might was practically turned into the main proof of our "superpower" status--this term was officially rejected, but clearly flattered our pride. And we could glance more soberly at our own participation in the arms race and more constructively approach negotiations, having recognized that we will retain

¹⁵ As quoted in Gorbachev, *For a Nuclear-Free World*, p. 41.

¹⁶ Marshal S. F. Akhromeev, "The Lessons of History," *Izvestiya*, 9 May 1986, p. 3; translated in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Soviet Union* [hereafter FBIS-SOV]-86-092, p. R7.

¹⁷ Tomilin, *International Affairs*, No. 12, 1986, p. 72.

the status of a genuinely great power only having moved the socio-economic development of the country off dead-center.¹⁸

The conclusion he reaches is that European security is to be guaranteed not by large nuclear arsenals, nuclear umbrellas and nuclear deterrence, but by greater independence and stronger ties through efforts such as the Helsinki process and the common European home.

2. Warsaw Pact Military Doctrine

As noted above, the major change during the Gorbachev era with respect to military doctrine is that doctrine is now subject to debate, just as are all other elements of Soviet life. Gorbachev has, in fact, sought to place military power *within* the corpus of Soviet foreign policy rather than allowing it to dominate the foreign policy process. It is also important to realize that until the events of 1989, the terms "Warsaw Pact doctrine" and "Soviet doctrine" were essentially synonymous. But as Soviet domination of the Pact has begun to wither, these terms can no longer be interchanged automatically.

Before examining the various dimensions of the doctrinal debate in greater detail, it is first important to understand that Warsaw Pact military doctrine consists of two components: the political and the military-technical. Western military doctrine does not follow this pattern; we would view the political component more as policy statements and propaganda. What we consider military doctrine is seen by the Soviets to be only a part of doctrine--the military-technical aspect. Today the Soviets emphasize that, although the military-technical component remains important, the political element is becoming more significant.

The most authoritative statement to date about the "new" Warsaw Pact doctrine is found in the communique issued by the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact in May 1987. Although the document was proclaimed to be an important milestone and one that proves the defensiveness of the Eastern bloc's military doctrine, many in the West have remained skeptical. Admittedly, much has not yet been properly defined or explained, but it is possible to examine some of the central elements that have emerged as the focus of the doctrinal debate, based on this document and subsequent Soviet writings.

The West has responded with considerable debate to the claim in the May 1987 Warsaw Pact statement that the Bloc's doctrine is purely defensive. The Soviets insist that

¹⁸ Igor' Malashenko, "Trudno rasstat'sya s Bomboi [It is Difficult to Part with the Bomb]," *Novoe vremya*, No. 13 (24 March), 1989, p. 17.

this defensiveness now applies not only to the political component of their military doctrine, but also to the military-technical element. Indeed, Soviet analysts have recognized the West's skepticism and have sought, with varying degrees of success, to explain what is new. For example, Rear Admiral Gulin and Captain First Rank Kondyrev, writing in the naval journal *Morskoi sbornik*, have tried to explain what is new in the defensiveness of Soviet military doctrine and the connection with the task of preventing war. Referring to the 27th CPSU Congress documents, the authors note

... its principal tenet--the purely defensive orientation encompassing both the political and the military-technical aspects [of Soviet military doctrine]. In this connection the question can be raised: what is so new in this? After all, our doctrine has always been defensive. Yes, this is so. However, the very content of the "defensive orientation" substantially differs from what it was in the past. Before the defensive concentration [ustremlennost'] of doctrine was manifested in such a correlation of forces of peace and war under which war was inevitable and was an effective instrument of policy, a means of achieving political objectives. In such circumstances Soviet doctrine had one basic task, one function--a proper rebuff to an aggressor in the event of an attack.

Now circumstances have changed. Its modern defensive character is based on the main premise of new political thinking--rejection of wars and power politics in the nuclear-space age and on the conclusion that world society is united and interconnected and that the confrontation between capitalism and socialism in the international arena can proceed solely in the forms of peaceful competition and peaceful cooperation. In this situation, along with the focus on decisively repelling aggression, the function of preventing an all-annihilating war has emerged and become the leading one. "The military doctrine of the Warsaw Pact, as that of each of its participants," notes the documents of the Political Consultative Committee conference, "is subordinate to the task of not allowing war--either nuclear or conventional."¹⁹

One Polish commentary, published in the newspaper *Zolneirz Wolnosci*, has openly recognized the historical differences between the political and the military-technical components of Warsaw Pact military doctrine, but it argues that this difference no longer exists. "The military doctrine of the USSR and its allies also possessed a defensive nature earlier. Whereas it was the political side to the doctrine that established its defensive nature (the socialist countries were the first to undertake not to start a war against anyone), the

¹⁹ RAdm V. Gulin and Capt. First Rank I. Kondyrev, "Oboronitel'naya napravlennost' sovetskoi voennoi doktriny [The Defensive Orientation of Soviet Military Doctrine]," *Morskoi sbornik*, No. 2, 1988, pp. 9-10.

military-technical side possessed a militant nature (an attack was considered the main way to repel an aggression). This discrepancy has now been removed."²⁰

The foundation for this defensive doctrine lies in two tasks: preventing war and searching for an economically viable strategy (given the serious economic problems of the USSR and its allies). Soviet writings emphasize that, in contrast to previous doctrinal statements, the May 1987 communique identifies the aim of *preventing* war. Marshal Kulikov has underscored this element, as have numerous other military and civilian writers: "the military doctrine of the Warsaw Pact states has an exclusively defensive character. For the first time in history it poses the task of preventing war--both nuclear and conventional."²¹

The claim of a defensive Warsaw Pact military doctrine was only one consequence of the May 1987 statement; new terms, such as reasonable sufficiency and defensive defense, emerged as well. While these concepts have been discussed extensively in the Soviet literature, no one has clearly and precisely defined them as yet. Nevertheless, the Soviets have entered these concepts into the East-West security debate, in part to define them through further interaction with the West. Because these notions have not yet been solidified, the West has an unprecedented opportunity to help shape and influence Soviet thinking on its security policy.

The ongoing fundamental changes in the role of Soviet doctrine is creating substantial confusion in doctrinal discussions today. As noted in the first paragraph of this section, prior to Gorbachev, the Soviet Union enjoyed hegemony in defining Warsaw Pact doctrine. Today, Soviet military doctrine has become a *part* of the debate rather than dictating the entire framework. The numerous recent changes in Eastern Europe indicate that Moscow's Eastern bloc allies are interested in exploring the creation of their own national military doctrines. Before Gorbachev's rise to power any discussions along these lines would have been viewed as heresy, and treated as such. Thus, an entirely new framework is emerging, as the Warsaw Pact member states may begin to confront some of the same challenges that have always faced NATO--trying to meet individual countries' needs and interests while preserving collective security.

²⁰ Anonymous, "The Defense Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact States," *Zolnierz Wolnosci*, 16 June 1989, translated in JPRS-TAC-89-027, p. 16.

²¹ Marshal Viktor Kulikov, "NATO: The Threat Remains," *Narodna armiya*, 13 Oct 1987, p. 4, as translated in FBIS-SOV-87-200, p. 3.

Before turning to some of the more specific issues, it is worth underscoring that the greatest value of much of the doctrinal debate lies in its implications for force structure developments and reforms. It is here that the Warsaw Pact must demonstrate the concrete manifestations of its political proclamations. Other IDA work has identified many of the elements of this debate;²² for the purposes of this paper, it is possible only to emphasize that the final outcome of the debate is far from certain. In the present context such a fundamental change in the Soviet Union as the creation of an all-volunteer force, a territorial militia, or national formations would appear to create more difficulties for the Soviet political and military leadership than it would solve. For the other Warsaw Pact allies, such solutions are perhaps more viable. Whatever the outcome in any and all of the countries, the implications for Warsaw Pact coherence are immense.

3. Strategic Parity and Stability - Three Schools of Thought

The notion of strategic parity (and the related concept of stability) has received considerable attention in the Soviet literature over the past few years. Clearly, an impetus for rethinking parity at the strategic nuclear level came from the imperative of the 19th Party Conference to develop the Soviet armed forces according to "qualitative parameters." Thus, emphasis is to be placed more on quality than on quantity when assessing parity. In line with this move away from quantitative indicators, the 27th CPSU Congress concluded that if the arms race continues, eventually "military-strategic parity will not be able to carry out the function of deterrence. This is why the USSR and other socialist community countries advocate lowering the existing level of parity while nuclear weapons exist and are being reduced to limits of reasonable sufficiency."²³

Yet while discussions and debates about parity have abounded, in truth, much of the discussion is confusing and contradictory. Thus, the volumes of material do not necessarily clarify the problem, and the outcome is far from resolved as analysts wrestle with the notions of qualitative and quantitative capabilities. All involved in the current debate probably would agree at least on certain assumptions. Namely, achieving parity with the United States in the early 1970s was an important milestone; this parity has been vital in maintaining world security and stability to date; parity at ever higher levels of nuclear weapons is more unstable; and, as a result, the future holds considerably more

²² See Kent Lee, Susan L. Clark, and Robbin F. Laird, *The Debate About Soviet Military Doctrine and Forces*, IDA Paper P-2348.

²³ Gulin and Kondyrev, *Morskoi sbornik*, No. 2, 1988, p. 11.

uncertainty. Beyond these working assumptions, the paths of the debate diverge, and a split between some civilian analysts and some military officers is occasionally apparent.

Broadly speaking, three general schools of thought could be said to represent significant points on the emerging continuum of Soviet thinking on this issue. This is not to say that these are the only schools of thought; rather, they demonstrate the wide range of thinking and debate currently underway in the Soviet Union. The first group links strategic parity with arms control, the second school identifies itself with the reasonable sufficiency concept, and the third group consists of those advocating a minimum deterrence posture. Each of these broad categories is examined in turn and some of the key players in each are identified.

a. Parity via Arms Control

The first school of thought believes that strategic parity is defined by negotiated, quantitative limits. Supporters of this thinking see utility in adhering to current arms control approaches in order to effect a negotiated build-down of military forces. The emphasis is on the continued centrality of the bilateral U.S.-Soviet relationship, the continued importance of quantitative indices, and the rejection of any further unilateral Soviet force cuts. This school represents, in sum, a conservative way of thinking--most frequently espoused by certain military officers and conservative civilian analysts--which essentially adheres to the status quo but recognizes the need to reduce current force levels at least somewhat.

Marshal Kulikov has articulated what might be called the classic Brezhnev position on parity, namely focused on the need for quantitative parity:

In order to guarantee the security of socialism it is necessary to have a correlation of military forces equal to capitalism, i.e., military-strategic parity must be preserved

From the military point of view, parity is an approximate equality in the military might of the sides, above all in nuclear and other strategic means of armed combat that are of decisive importance in conducting war and is the main indicator of the correlation of the sides' military forces, which we must take into consideration when resolving political and military issues.²⁴

²⁴ Marshal V. G. Kulikov, "O voenno-strategicheskoy paritete i dostatochnosti dlya oborony [On Military-Strategic Parity and Defense Sufficiency]," *Voennaya Mysl'*, No. 5, 1988, p. 4; emphasis in original.

Yet Kulikov, reflecting at least some of the new thinking on the parity issue, is also careful to mention the idea that this balance could be negotiated because "the continuation of the arms race . . . is capable of taking military confrontation to such a limit that *parity will simply cease to be a factor of military-strategic deterrence*."²⁵ The school does realize that the perpetuation of the arms race (and the inevitable action-reaction syndrome) has actually been detrimental to Soviet security interests. Continuing the arms control process is seen to be the best way of maintaining parity, but at lower levels.

For this first school of thought, the focus of attention clearly remains on the U.S.-Soviet relationship. Therefore, the arms control process would continue along its current lines (particularly with respect to nuclear weapons); that is, it would concentrate on bilateral negotiations between the two superpowers, with little attention paid to the other nuclear powers in Europe. Should this way of thinking dominate the decision-making process, a future Soviet force structure would remain much the same as the current one, but at lower levels. Namely, it would probably maintain the approximate 70-30 split in nuclear land-based and sea-based forces, respectively.

b. Relative/Reasonable Sufficiency

The concept most frequently identified with the second school of thought is "reasonable sufficiency." In point of fact, it might more accurately be called "relative sufficiency," since the aim is to have force levels that are relative to the political and military challenges facing the country. Put another way, it is believed that the political and military situation should determine what a reasonably sufficient force level is. In this context, this school is seeking to redefine the role of nuclear weapons in the new military equation that is evolving. It is evident here that the rejection of the traditional quantitative parameters of parity (which cost too much and did not guarantee stability or security) has made it possible to argue that the USSR no longer needs the same number of strategic weapons as the United States. Thus, nuclear weapons are still seen to be valuable components of a nation's strength, but the relative sufficiency school has not yet determined what their value and role is. This line of thinking falls between the other two schools, rejecting the conservative approach of the first, but also rejecting the fact that absolute, minimum levels of nuclear weapons can be determined and that reductions to these levels can be made unilaterally, as the third school believes. Proponents of relative sufficiency advocate using

²⁵ Ibid., p. 6; emphasis added.

both arms control negotiations and political statements (public diplomacy) as vehicles for helping to shape perceptions and altering current military force postures.

Aleksei Arbatov has been one of the most published and outspoken civilian analysts arguing for a relative sufficiency approach. Indeed, Arbatov laid out a detailed plan for the future in his controversial April 1989 article in *International Affairs*. In it, he reasoned that the Soviet Union's defense could be strengthened through personnel reductions and various alterations in force structure, weapons acquisition and the like, and that these changes could even yield savings of 40 to 50 percent in the defense budget.²⁶ Not surprisingly, many military officers do not look upon these arguments with favor.

Arbatov sets forth a clear argument in favor of sufficiency while rejecting the notion of quantitative parity. He believes that sufficiency must use objective parameters, rather than focusing on "symbolic parity": "Sufficiency as such proceeds from the recognition of the absolute limits of the use of the destructive power of nuclear weapons, above which it is senseless to continue amassing them, just as *it is senseless to try to reach a symbolic parity*, if the other side, guided by some irrational, unrealistic considerations, continues to enhance the level of its nuclear forces."²⁷ In contrast, Rear Admiral Kostev emphasizes that reasonable sufficiency still requires the maintenance of parity, although lower force levels are certainly desirable. The limit of reasonable sufficiency "is determined by the need not to allow an unpunished nuclear attack by an aggressor, as well as by currently existing military-strategic parity. A further increase in the level of parity would bring no one greater security. The countries of the Warsaw Pact proceed from the fact that it must be preserved, but at the lowest possible level."²⁸

Another element of this debate is the idea that the basis of stability must change, including a more noticeable move away from the current reliance on nuclear weapons. Retired Colonel Lev Semeiko, who has taught at the Voroshilov General Staff academy and is now affiliated with the Institute for the USA and Canada (ISKAN), has outlined this argument in a two-part article in *Krasnaya zvezda*. He reasons that

²⁶ See his arguments in "How Much Defence is Sufficient?" *International Affairs*, No. 4, 1989, pp. 31-44.

²⁷ Alexei Arbatov, "Military Doctrines," in *Disarmament and Security: 1987 Yearbook* (Moscow: Novosti Press, 1988; distributed by Westview Press), p. 219. Emphasis added.

²⁸ RAdm G. Kostev, "Dve politiki--dve doktriny [Two Policies--Two Doctrines]," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 26 November 1987, p. 3.

... there can be no talk of absolutely guaranteed strategic stability and absolute security. Here ... lies the tragedy and fundamental paradox of today: in order to survive one must, it seems, provide a guarantee of inevitable mutual destruction.

Common sense demands the provision of another kind of strategic stability. It must be based on a simple assumption: in order to abolish the threat, one must abolish the means which carry it [the threat]. In order not to live under the Damocles nuclear sword, it is necessary to destroy this sword.²⁹

Thus, Semeiko explains, while current stability relies on enormous nuclear weapons arsenals, future stability--based on reasonable defensive sufficiency--will be accomplished without nuclear weapons. This is obviously the ideal solution in some future world; more realistically, the relative sufficiency school in general still deem nuclear weapons to be useful, but has not yet identified their precise role.

Not surprisingly, many in the military argue against the notion that the Soviet Union does not need to have the same number of strategic weapons as the United States, believing that a serious imbalance in the number of these forces could provide the U.S. with opportunities for blackmail, even if there were parity in the two sides' ability to inflict unacceptable damage. This argument underlines where the mainstream official Soviet military diverge from their opposition, namely most civilian analysts: the threat assessment of the United States. These military men believe that U.S. leaders have used nuclear blackmail in the past and that they would use it again if they had the chance, a chance which could arise only in the absence of parity, as defined by the Soviet military.³⁰

Certain Soviet military officials have crafted their arguments about parity carefully enough so that if they should lose the argument on military-technical grounds (e.g., that unacceptable damage could be guaranteed with some kind of smaller force posture), they are prepared to shift the focus of the debate to emphasize societal differences. Lt. Colonel

²⁹ L. Semeiko, "K novoi strategicheskoi stabil'nosti [Toward a New Strategic Stability]," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 21 February 1989, p. 3. Part two appears the following day under the same title.

³⁰ Such military arguments against this school notwithstanding, it should not be assumed that all members of the military ranks are opposed to thinking along the lines of reasonable sufficiency. Indeed, many--including members of the current Soviet high command--appear to be leaning more toward this school than toward the first. And there is no doubt that they are playing an instrumental role in shaping the definition of the concept itself. For more detailed analysis, see Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command, 1967-1989* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990) and R. Hyland Phillips and Jeffrey I. Sands, "Reasonable Sufficiency and Soviet Conventional Defense," *International Security*, Fall 1988.

Andreev has laid out this argument quite clearly: the weapons themselves do not matter. What is of real significance is that imperialism is inherently evil and only imperialists start wars or use nuclear weapons for political blackmail. The Soviet Union has nuclear weapons only to prevent war and impede Western blackmail attempts; it has never threatened anyone, either before parity was established or since. Only parity has constrained imperialism; therefore the current situation of parity must be retained or else the imperialists will revert to their old ways.³¹ This line of thinking clearly reflects the first school of thought.

If the relative sufficiency school comes to dominate the decision-making process, several important results will be evident. First, Soviet forces will be reduced significantly both to alleviate the defense burden on the Soviet economy and to perpetuate the favorable image of the USSR that has developed in the West. The combination of arms control negotiations and public diplomacy efforts will also afford the Soviets considerable flexibility in dealing with the West on a multiplicity of issues. Finally, in terms of the forces themselves, the intention would be to make them look less threatening than the current force posture, while still maintaining a credible range of options.

While there are some differences of opinion between military and civilian analysts about the relative (reasonable) sufficiency concept, such differences are considerably greater with respect to the third school of thought. Perhaps one of the most interesting and spirited debates of the past year has been that surrounding the concept of minimum deterrence. Espoused by a small group of civilian analysts--and ridiculed by the military, this third school of thought goes beyond what the second school advocates, essentially arguing that the Soviet Union should learn to live with nuclear inferiority. While at its extreme, this is not a serious alternative in the current thinking about redefining parity, the minimum deterrence discussions do represent a critical input to the overall debate. As such, they merit a more detailed examination.

c. Minimum Deterrence

For the civilians who have embraced the concept of minimum deterrence, the first and most important assumption is that the West presents no real threat of war as an aggressor; rather, today's vast arsenals of weapons increase the likelihood that war may

³¹ Lt. Colonel V. F. Andreev, in "Voenno-strategicheskii paritet: ob"ektivnyi factor sderzhivaniya agressivnykh sil [Military-Strategic Parity: An Objective Factor for Deterring Aggressive Forces]," *Voennaya Mysl'*, No. 2, 1989, pp. 50-53.

occur accidentally. Therefore, the first step in seeking greater stability and security is to reduce the force posture drastically--to a minimum deterrent posture. Moreover, this school believes that an absolute number of nuclear weapons can be identified that will be able to deter any aggression. In terms of implementation, the minimalists have questioned whether it would not be best to scrap arms control negotiations completely; thus, they would be much more likely than the other schools to focus on additional unilateral force reductions. This potential shift away from resolution through negotiations is arguably as significant as the minimalists' identification of absolute weapons levels. Finally, because of the drastic cuts involved, the role of the other nuclear powers (namely, Britain and France) is increasingly important in the strategic equation.

The current debate about minimum deterrence began in June 1989 with a *Moscow News* article by Radomir Bogdanov and Andrei Kortunov, which was a synopsis of a much longer piece published one month later in *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*.³² The authors argue that the USSR should unilaterally adopt a minimum deterrence posture consisting of 500 warheads deployed on SS-25 mobile land-based single-warhead missiles and Delta-4 submarines. The first step in this process is to unilaterally implement the proposed 50-percent reduction in strategic weapons. The goal is to retain a force posture capable of inflicting "unacceptable damage" on the United States, which the authors believe can ultimately be accomplished with as few as five large warheads detonated over the East or West coast.

In the final analysis, the minimum deterrent arguments will continue to be seriously undermined until such time as the notion of unacceptable damage can be adequately defined and its validity as a criterion for determining sufficiency widely accepted. Moreover, notwithstanding philosophical differences over what constitutes unacceptable damage and the force posture required to inflict it, the Soviet military would reject unilateral adoption of a minimum deterrent posture because such a posture would, in their view, provide no credible guarantee against "nuclear blackmail" by the United States. In fact, Colonels Dvorkin and Korbin make precisely this argument in their scathing rebuttal to the Bogdanov-Kortunov article.³³ What the authors do not specifically articulate but would

³² Radomir Bogdanov and Andrei Kortunov, "Minimum Deterrence: Utopia or a Real Prospect?" *Moscow News*, No. 23 (11 June), 1989, p. 6 and "O balanse sil [On the Balance of Power]," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 7, 1989, pp. 3-15. Bogdanov is the First Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Peace Committee and Kortunov is a section head at ISKAN.

³³ Colonel Vladimir Dvorkin and Velery Torbin, "On Real Sufficiency of Defense," *Moscow News*, No. 26 (25 June), 1989, p. 6.

logically believe, is that to counter blackmail one needs flexible and credible options, and such options are generally found only in a large and diverse strategic nuclear posture, which by definition bears no resemblance to a minimum deterrence posture. Certain civilian analysts, such as Igor' Malashenko, refute the nuclear blackmail thesis by arguing that the value of nuclear weapons lies in statesmen's perceptions about the role and benefits of nuclear weapons. Thus, "militarily meaningless weapons are significant politically only if political leaders believe them to be important."³⁴

Assuming that steps were taken to move toward a minimum deterrent posture, the nuclear capabilities of the other European powers--Britain and France--would obviously be of increased significance and concern, particularly as these two countries modernize their existing nuclear forces. At the same time, the Soviets' previous declarations that they needed nuclear forces equivalent to the nuclear forces of all other nuclear powers combined have been increasingly challenged, not only by the minimalists but also by those supporting relative sufficiency. The Soviets essentially have come to recognize that they no longer can "keep up with the Joneses," especially when these neighbors have much stronger economic bases from which to operate. However, in fairness, it should be recognized that the Soviets have not steadfastly adhered to the goal of equalling all nuclear adversaries combined, as seen in the signing of the SALT agreements which were made on a bilateral U.S.-Soviet basis.

A related problem raised by adherence to minimum deterrence is that of nuclear proliferation. Equally convincing arguments can be made for the idea that minimum deterrence will invite proliferation or that it will reduce the pressures that would drive it. On the one hand, some countries might perceive the Soviet Union's nuclear capacity to be so diminished that they would fear no serious reprisals if they started their own nuclear programs. On the other hand, others might feel less threatened and therefore less in need of their own capability if the Soviet Union no longer maintained large numbers of nuclear weapons.

In terms of the force structure per se, the minimalists would seek to eliminate MIRVs since MIRVs would concentrate so much of the remaining force's capability in only one weapon. As Bogdanov and Kortunov explain, sea-based forces would be preferred because they would be more survivable and flexible. On the other hand, because of the minimum numbers available, the forces may need to appear more threatening (versus the

³⁴ Malashenko, *New Times*, No. 13, 1989, pp. 16-18.

relative sufficiency school which makes them look less threatening) in order to provide an effective, credible deterrent.

In conclusion, it is useful to note Gorbachev's own perceptions of minimal deterrence. During his speech to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 6 July 1989, the Soviet leader discussed bridging the gap between Eastern and Western views on nuclear weapons, arguing that the gap can be reduced "with the USSR remaining true to nuclear-free ideals, and the West to the concept of minimal deterrence." He then asked: "What stands behind the concept of minimal [deterrence]? And where, here, is the limit beyond which the potential for nuclear retribution is converted into the potential for an attack?"³⁵ Thus, Gorbachev himself has raised the issue of trying to determine how low the numbers can go and what, indeed, the absolute numbers are.

4. A Detailed Look at the Notion of Sufficiency

Mikhail Gorbachev first set forth the idea of reasonable sufficiency during his first visit abroad as General Secretary to France in October 1985. Gorbachev himself has defined the concept in the following way: "that the states would not possess military forces and armaments above the level which is indispensable for an effective defense, and also...that their military forces have such a structure which would provide all necessary means needed for repulsing potential aggression but at the same time would not permit [them] to be used for the unfolding of the offensive missions."³⁶ Put simply, the purpose is to have enough military capability to guarantee one's own security, but not enough to threaten others. The problem, of course, lies in defining what is "enough."³⁷

Soviet analysts also have recognized that there are different stages of sufficiency, depending on the types of forces existing. For example, Lev Semeiko has explained that in today's world, it is necessary to have a guaranteed nuclear retaliation capability as well as conventional forces sufficient for collective defense.³⁸ In the future, however, Semeiko sees the possibility of a different kind of reasonable sufficiency; it would adopt a truly

³⁵ M. S. Gorbachev, Speech to the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France, on 6 July 1989.

³⁶ Mikhail Gorbachev in letter to Dr. Albrecht A. C. von Muller, as quoted in Albrecht A. C. von Muller and Andrzej Karkoszka, "A Modified Approach to Conventional Arms Control," unpublished working paper.

³⁷ For a more detailed analysis of splits and convergences between military authors and civilian ones on reasonable sufficiency, see Phillips and Sands, *International Security*, Fall 1988, pp. 169-178.

defensive conventional force posture, limit both sides' military potential to equal security levels, and (eventually) even eliminate weapons of mass destruction entirely.³⁹

It is no surprise that the evolution of the sufficiency concept has produced a great deal of debate within the USSR (and in the West) and has raised fundamental questions about the Soviet military and its doctrine. Most important, the notion of sufficiency has focused attention on redefining the role of nuclear weapons in the new military equation. While nuclear weapons are still valued, the debate has yet to resolve exactly what that value is and how to use them. There are clearly numerous subcomponents of the sufficiency debate, but before some of these are addressed it is more important to examine the debate in its broadest terms.

First, it should be underscored that the sufficiency debate has served to bring military power and the priority the military has enjoyed within the Soviet system under greater scrutiny. No longer is it automatically accepted that the military must have priority access to virtually all goods and services at the expense of the general public. True, the system is still mired in a hopeless bureaucracy, but the emphasis is changing. Procedures are now being established which will force the military to compete for certain resources as the Soviet leadership seeks to place greater importance on consumer goods. Concomitantly, the military must now justify what it does expect to receive. Thus, it must more accurately determine the source(s) and level of possible security threats and identify what equipment and force structure(s) are needed to counter these challenges. These issues are what underlies the debate about sufficiency. But this is not to imply that the scope of the debate has been confined to some theoretical framework; major structural changes already have occurred within the Soviet armed forces, and it is highly unlikely that these changes are now complete.

Another new element in Soviet security policy pertains to their changing assessment of the overall military balance. Previously, Soviet analyses concentrated on nuclear forces. Under Gorbachev, conventional forces are now included in the overall balance. As noted above, within the context of reasonable sufficiency, Soviet analysts have pointed out that

³⁸ Lev Semeiko, "Instead of Mountains of Weapons: On the Principle of Reasonable Sufficiency," *Izvestiya*, 13 August 1987, translated in Isaac J. Tarasulo, ed., *Gorbachev and Glasnost: Viewpoints from the Soviet Press* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1989), pp. 251-252.

³⁹ Lev Semeiko in roundtable discussion published in *XX Century and Peace*, No. 12, 1987, reprinted in Joint Publications Research Service Report: *Military Affairs* [hereafter JPRS-UMA]-88-008, p. 10.

there can be different levels of sufficiency, depending on the existence or elimination of nuclear weapons. As Streltsov, an analyst at IMEMO, explains: "there exist different levels of reasonable sufficiency: both under conditions of existing nuclear weapons . . . and under the conditions of a nuclear-free world. That is why I think that in the long-term struggle for the realization of the principles of new thinking and the reasonable sufficiency concept, there are also reasonable limits of sufficiency, and during nuclear disarmament, with nuclear weapons preserved."⁴⁰

One of the greatest debates surrounding reasonable sufficiency is whether absolute levels of sufficiency can be identified. In other words, how much is enough? Many military officials have stressed that defining any such levels can be done only in the context of maintaining a balance of forces (they belong to the first school of thought discussed in the Section 3a, above). Thus, while it is possible to reduce force levels, these reductions must be implemented on both sides. For example, in speaking about the strategic nuclear forces, Army General Lizichev declared that "we have been maintaining them at a level equal for us and the United States. And until we agree to eliminate nuclear weapons entirely--and we advocate this--we will maintain that parity in nuclear missile forces and that equilibrium."⁴¹ Historically, the arms control process has been used (indeed, by both the Soviet Union and United States) to justify ever higher levels of armed forces; in effect the impetus for some weapons programs development has lain in having something to bargain away at the negotiating table. The unilateral reductions which Gorbachev announced at the United Nations in December 1988 has forced the Soviet military leadership to operate differently. They now must discuss and explain the requirements for the levels of forces they desire.

If this view represents one end of the spectrum, there are others (particularly among certain civilian analysts) which advocate quite a radical approach. Analysts in this group discuss the possibility of establishing some absolute number for sufficiency. Their arguments are founded on the belief that it is not only preferable, but indeed necessary, to find political solutions to military problems and that arms control is not the ultimate answer. For example, Aleksei Arbatov, writing in *International Affairs* in April 1989, makes the following argument:

⁴⁰ Yu. Streltsov in roundtable discussion published in *XX Century and Peace*, No. 12, 1987, reprinted in JPRS-UMA-88-008, p. 11.

⁴¹ Interview with General A. D. Lizichev broadcast on Moscow Radio, 12 February 1989, as translated in Leon Goure, "The Soviet Strategic View," *Strategic Review*, Spring 1989, p. 87.

In terms of reasonable sufficiency, targets suitable for retaliation are the aggressor's economic facilities. A mere 400 nuclear warheads of the megaton class could destroy up to 70 percent of the U.S. industrial potential. This number of warheads hardly exceeds 10-15 percent of the Soviet Union's present strategic forces. Defence will be ensured if this many of them survive any attack and reach their targets. All further weapons and operations involving the use of SOFs [strategic offensive forces] would be doubtful in any respect and evidently unnecessary in terms of sufficiency.⁴²

Of course, subsequent arguments have been made for even lower levels, such as Bogdanov and Kortunov's belief that even the survival of five out of 500 warheads (with hundreds of kilotons up to one megaton yield) would be sufficient to inflict "unacceptable damage"; these are the proponents of the minimalist school of thought.

Somewhere between these two extremes lies Soviet mainstream thinking (the second school of thought), which discusses the need for "relative" sufficiency and advances the notion of reasonable sufficiency. In other words, the Soviet Union must strive to have armed forces that are sufficient relative to the military and political situations it faces. But this, of course, raises the question of what forces the Soviet military must be relative to. In any case, there is no doubt that the chosen force level will be lower than it is now. Vitalii Zhurkin, Sergei Karaganov, and Andrei Kortunov have elaborated this argument, even raising the possibility that at some point no nuclear weapons may be necessary. The authors explain that only a fraction of the country's strategic arsenal is required to inflict unacceptable damage; therefore, it is possible "to move along the path of reaching agreements on reducing nuclear (and also other) arms by large-scale blocs, without fearing a restriction of their security."⁴³ They then point out that since reasonable sufficiency is not static, it "will inevitably change according to changes in the strategic situation. Each new step on the path of nuclear disarmament will mean a lowering of the level of reasonable sufficiency, and at a certain stage any--be it even a very modest--nuclear arsenal will be higher than this diminishing level."⁴⁴ This reasoning has generally been supported by the findings of the U.S. and Soviet scientists, which have been embraced by

⁴² Arbatov, *International Affairs*, No. 4, 1989, p. 37.

⁴³ V. V. Zhurkin, S. A. Karaganov, and A. V. Kortunov, "O razumnoi dostatochnosti [On Reasonable Sufficiency]," *SShA: ekonomika, politika, ideologiya* [hereafter *SShA*], No. 12, 1987, p. 14. At the time of this article, all three authors were members of ISKAN; Zhurkin was deputy director, Karaganov a section head, and Kortunov a senior researcher. Since then, Zhurkin and Karaganov have left to head up the Institute of Europe (established in 1988), assuming the first and second positions there, respectively.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

the Gorbachev leadership, that 95 percent of the two countries strategic weapons could be eliminated without upsetting the strategic balance. Gorbachev has also stated that "We believe that the 5 percent should not be retained either," thereby advocating his grand future vision for a nuclear-free world.⁴⁵

Also fundamental to the reasonable sufficiency debate is the connection between the definition of "sufficient" and the arms control process. In essence, Soviet analysts have cautioned that the Soviet armed forces may be held hostage to the arms control process. As the Zhurkin et al. article maintains, the arms control process will directly affect the definition of what is "reasonable sufficiency." From the military's perspective at least, this concern about being "held hostage" has some foundation.

Having examined some of the broader context of the sufficiency debate, it is now useful to examine the relationship between the concept of sufficiency and nuclear forces. A primary debate in this subcategory revolves around those who contend that one must have strategic parity in order to have sufficiency versus those who argue that the race for parity must be stopped. The former also believe that reasonable sufficiency cannot be implemented unilaterally; the latter would take issue with this belief. Of those who adhere to the parity-sufficiency school of thought, Lev Semeiko has perhaps best articulated the argument. Note that it applies to nuclear and conventional weapons.

Sufficiency does not preclude but rather presupposes the presence of strategic parity, that decisive factor in preventing war. It is necessary to have within the framework of parity a reasonably sufficient military potential capable [of] reliably ensuring the security of the USSR and its allies. This means that, under contemporary conditions, we must have a guaranteed potential for nuclear retaliation designed to prevent an unpunished nuclear attack under any, even the most unfavorable, nuclear attack scenarios. In any situation, an answering strike must unacceptably damage the aggressor. The inevitability of this must discourage him from attack. In turn, sufficiency with regard to conventional weapons means the capability to reliably ensure the collective defense of the socialist community countries.⁴⁶

An article by Colonel Strebkov published in the military bimonthly journal, *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*, explicitly recognizes the division of Soviet opinion on this issue,

⁴⁵ As quoted, for example, in Vladimir Konobeev, "Benefits of Converting Arms Production," *International Affairs*, No. 2, 1988, p. 33.

⁴⁶ Semeiko, *Izvestiya*, 13 August 1987, translated in Tarasulo, ed., *Gorbachev and Glasnost*, pp. 251-252.

contrasting the school which advocates abandoning the race for parity with those who caution that no move toward sufficiency can be accomplished unilaterally:

As for our literature, it has different points of view on reasonable sufficiency as an essential criterion of parity. Some authors are proposing the abandonment of the race to maintain parity imposed on us by the West, a parity that is treated as the quantitative equality of the military power of the sides (see A. Adamovich and G. Shakhnazarov, "New Thinking and Inertia of the Process," *Druzhba narodov*, No. 6, 1988). Others assert that because parity is bipolar, the limit of sufficiency is determined by the United States and NATO. It can be raised, which is a countermeasure to the increase in the military potential of the other side. (see P. Skorodenko, "Military Parity and the Principle of Reasonable Sufficiency," *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*, No. 10, 1987).⁴⁷

The second element of the sufficiency-nuclear weapons relationship pertains to the manifestation of the defensive doctrine. Army General Lizichev has explained defensive doctrine as it relates both to nuclear and conventional forces. Published in *Izvestiya* in February 1989, Lizichev writes:

Defensive doctrine--what are the nuances here? It is a principle of reasonable sufficiency, of defense sufficiency. What does it consist of? It consists of our infantry troops, air defense, navy and air forces--that is, conventional forces or general purpose forces--being maintained at the minimum level which will enable us to preserve political stability and make our country safe from the strike of an aggressor. Insofar as the strategic nuclear forces--the whole triad--is concerned, we have been maintaining them at a level equal for us and the United States.⁴⁸

Lizichev further cautions that this parity and equilibrium will be maintained until nuclear weapons are eliminated completely.

A considerable amount of attention has been paid in the West to trying to determine whether there is a difference between "reasonable sufficiency" and "defense sufficiency." Many have concluded that civilians generally use the former term, while the military more frequently uses the latter. The well-known security affairs writer, Lev Semeiko, addressed this particular question in an article in the Party theoretical journal, *Kommunist*.

During the course of discussion in which Soviet experts have participated, our foreign colleagues have frequently asked: is there a difference between the concepts of "reasonable" and "defense" sufficiency?

⁴⁷ Col. V. Strebkov, "Criteria of Military Strategic Parity," *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*, No. 2 (January), 1989, translated in JPRS-TAC-89-028, p. 14.

⁴⁸ Interview with Lizichev, 12 February 1989, as translated in Goure, *Strategic Review*, Spring 1989, p. 87.

Varying opinions have been expressed on this point. It is thought that one should hardly see a principle difference in these concepts. After all, it is essentially a question of two aspects of *sufficiency*: it must be reasonable when determining the minimal scales of necessary military potential and, of course, defensive from the viewpoint of its character and purpose. The ideal of reasonable (defense) sufficiency is an extremely low level of armed forces which ensure military equality, do not have means of destruction, and are focused on nonoffensive defense.⁴⁹

Thus, Semeiko argues that no substantive differences should be seen between the two phrases.

However, two quotes by Dmitrii Yazov deserve at least a passing mention. It is interesting to note the particular differences between them, one describing "reasonable sufficiency" and the other "defense sufficiency." In the first of these two statements, published in *Krasnaya zvezda* on 28 July 1987, Yazov provides the following definition and explanation of Soviet military thinking about reasonable sufficiency in terms of nuclear and conventional forces:

When we speak about supporting the armed forces and its military potential within the framework of reasonable sufficiency, we have in mind that at the present stage for the Soviet Union's strategic nuclear forces, the essence of sufficiency is determined by the need not to allow an unpunished nuclear strike in any, even the most unfavorable situation. For conventional means, sufficiency provides for the quantity and quality of armed forces and arms capable of reliably guaranteeing the collective defense of the socialist community. The bounds of sufficiency are limited not by us but by US and NATO actions.⁵⁰

Semeiko's description of reasonable sufficiency thereby closely mirrors Yazov's statement. Yet when writing in February of the following year, Yazov describes the notion of "defense sufficiency," which contains certain differences compared to the explanation of reasonable sufficiency:

Being guided by its defensive doctrine, the USSR is carrying out the development of its armed forces on the basis of the principle of defense sufficiency. For strategic nuclear forces sufficiency today is determined by the ability not to allow an unpunished nuclear attack on our country in any, even the most unfavorable situation. For conventional forces sufficiency provides for a *minimally* necessary quantity and quality of armed forces and arms capable of reliably guaranteeing the country's defense. The limits of defense sufficiency are also determined by US and NATO actions. Of course, the Soviet Union does not strive for military superiority nor does it

49 L. Semeiko, "Razumnaya dostatochnost'--put' k nadezhnomu miru [Reasonable Sufficiency--The Path to Reliable Peace]," *Kommunist*, No. 7 (May), 1989, p. 118.

50 Yazov, *Krasnaya zvezda*, 28 July 1987.

lay claim to greater security, but it also will not do less and it will not allow military superiority over it.⁵¹

The specific differences between the two statements boil down to the following. First, defense sufficiency specified that no unpunished nuclear attack *against the Soviet Union* would be allowed, whereas reasonable sufficiency did not include that stipulation, implying that no unpunished attack *against the socialist community* as a whole would be allowed. Second, for conventional forces the defense sufficiency statement advocates a *minimally* necessary quantity and quality of forces; the reasonable sufficiency statement does not include the word "minimally." And finally, Yazov's defense sufficiency statement indicated that conventional forces would be sufficient for the Soviet Union, not for the collective defense of the socialist community, as stipulated under reasonable sufficiency. It is entirely possible that these differences simply indicate changes in Soviet thinking about sufficiency over time, a conclusion which Semeiko's May 1989 article would corroborate. In the final analysis, what it is important to underscore is that the trend is to move away from extensive guarantees to many countries. Thus, the Soviets are focusing more on their own security rather than collective security, and they will do this with as few forces as possible.

5. Arms Control

The role of arms control in the strategic debate has changed dramatically over the past two decades. Before Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov became Chief of the General Staff, officers in the General Staff as well as civilian analysts were not generally conversant in arms control issues. Ogarkov sought to develop a new model whereby arms control became a key factor in the development and maintenance of nuclear forces. For his part, Marshal Sergei Akhromeev continued this approach during his tenure as Chief of the General Staff.⁵²

The current survey of Soviet open source literature indicates that this trend initiated by Ogarkov has made the subject of arms control central to the strategic discourse rather than peripheral, as it was previously. Several examples serve to illustrate this point. First, if one examines the publications of the Institute of the World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) during the years of the SALT negotiations, it is clear that the institute

⁵¹ D. T. Yazov, "O voennom balanse sil i raketno-yadernom paritete [On the Military Balance of Forces and Nuclear-Missile Parity]," *Pravda*, 8 February 1988. Emphasis in original.

had little expertise of its own on arms control issues and relied instead on the policy line advanced by the Soviet leadership. During the Gorbachev years in particular, this trend has changed. This institute and others like it have played a central role in the debates surrounding such concepts as sufficiency and defensive defense. The civilians have acquired a greater voice in arguing these issues, including arms control.⁵³

A second example of the increased centrality of arms control to Soviet strategic discourse can be found in some of the works by the controversial Aleksei Arbatov. In his book entitled *Voенно-strategicheskii paritet i politika SShA* [*Military-Strategic Parity and U.S. Policy*] published in 1984, it is noteworthy that only a brief mention of strategic arms control is to be found in his concluding chapter. In contrast, his revised version of this book, *Lethal Frontiers*, translated into English and published in 1988 by Praeger, has at its core the notion of strategic arms control. This shift in emphasis reflects the shift in the strategic debate within the Soviet Union, among both military and civilian analysts.

Soviet assessments focus on the arms control regime to validate nuclear weapons. Within this context, a number of difficulties and problems have been identified in Soviet analyses of how a post-START world might be configured. First, it is uncertain how and when third countries will participate in strategic arms control. Especially as France and Britain modernize their nuclear forces, and if the United States and USSR reduce their own, the issue becomes: when will these third countries be brought into the negotiations? Several articles drawn from the open source literature highlight some of the Soviet thinking on this subject. For example, in discussing Gorbachev's January 1986 proposal (for a nuclear-free world), Andrei Kokoshin, Deputy Director of ISKAN, notes that when the stage of 75 percent reductions in strategic nuclear forces is reached, other countries must be included in the process. Citing work done by a committee of Soviet scientists, Kokoshin pointed out that the committee had "proceeded from the fact that such reductions will not be possible either from the political or the military point of view, if the other nuclear powers do not join the nuclear disarmament process by that time. Calculations show that in order to preserve military-strategic stability, it is necessary for the other states to reduce their

⁵² For an excellent treatment of this issue as well as the overall trends within the General Staff, see, Herspring, *The Soviet High Command, 1967-1989*.

⁵³ As discussed by Jeffrey Checkel at the annual conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, 2 November 1989, Chicago, Illinois.

nuclear arsenals by an amount roughly proportional to the reduction of U.S. strategic forces and to adopt a number of analogous qualitative changes in their structure."⁵⁴

Just one month later, in March 1988, Sergei Vybornov, Andrei Gusenkov, and Vladimir Leontiev addressed the third country issue in considerable detail in their *International Affairs* article entitled "Nothing Is Simple in Europe." The authors note that, once current modernization programs are completed, the combined total of French and British warheads will increase from 400 to 1300, and they question whether these modernization efforts did not factor heavily into the U.S. decision to agree to the INF treaty.⁵⁵ They further conclude that "As a result of the removal of U.S. missiles from Europe, there may occur a 'changing of the guard' in NATO, with its European members assuming 'Eurostrategic' nuclear-missile functions. Their nuclear potentials will not be limited by any treaties."⁵⁶ Vybornov and his coauthors admit that the Soviet leadership paid too much attention to the United States and not enough to Western Europe, including in the area of parity and stability. Given the changing situation, they argue, it is now time to focus more on French and British nuclear capabilities and to develop a new approach. No longer can these forces be viewed strictly as a "last resort" to defend national territory, now that West European military integration has become increasingly dynamic. While they recognize that this integration process is of considerable concern to their country, the authors hold out some hope on this issue:

It seems . . . that the negative tendencies in the processes under way in Western Europe can be neutralised, if due account is taken of the Europeans' growing striving for greater independence in security matters and if the Europeans are offered a chance to begin a search for new mutually acceptable ways of determining their place in the European and world strategic balance. This would give strategic parity a clearer structure and open the door to direct talks with European nuclear countries on a liquidation of nuclear weapons through a mutually agreed lowering of the parity level. In this way Europe could find its place in the general process,

⁵⁴ A. A. Kokoshin, "Sokrashchenie yadernykh vooruzhenii i strategicheskaya stabil'nost' [Nuclear Arms Reductions and Strategic Stability]," *SShA*, No. 2, 1988, p. 7.

⁵⁵ This argument--that the West might be able to compensate completely for U.S. INF elimination (and for possible strategic nuclear cuts) through British and French modernization is also made in Nikolai Afanasyevsky, Eduard Tarasinkevich, and Andrei Shvedov, "Between Yesterday and Today," *International Affairs*, No. 5, 1988, p. 28.

⁵⁶ Sergei Vybornov, Andrei Gusenkov, and Vladimir Leontiev, "Nothing Is Simple in Europe," *International Affairs*, No. 3, 1988, p. 35.

for without its participation this process is inconceivable . . . and could only move in a direction harmful to European interests.⁵⁷

Vybornov and his coauthors criticize the 1987 study by the Committee of Soviet Scientists in Defense of Peace and Against the Threat of Nuclear War, which reasoned that stability and parity could be achieved after 95 percent cuts in U.S. and Soviet strategic offensive arms if: the naval and air components of the strategic triad were eliminated completely; each side retained 600 light, single-charge, mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs); and the nuclear forces of third countries were eliminated completely. The authors criticize this report not only for the types of forces it recommends keeping, but also for its inadequate treatment of the motivations behind the continued existence of British and French nuclear weapons; they challenge the Committee's assumption that these forces would simply be eliminated before U.S. and Soviet forces were. Vybornov et al. argue that it is not reasonable to neglect third-power nuclear forces and that a nuclear balance at some minimum level must "take into account the potentials of of all nuclear states."⁵⁸

The authors then advance their own formula as a possible solution to this problem, reasoning that East-West strategic nuclear parity could be divided, at least initially, into two components: the USSR-United States and the USSR-Western Europe. To accomplish this, the authors propose that all countries maintain only their nuclear-missile submarines and that each country be assigned a particular geographic area in which to operate. They conclude that under such conditions (with only nuclear-missile submarines), a first strike would be "practically meaningless" and that strategic offensive arms would be turned into strategic defensive arms.⁵⁹ Finally, in the context of nuclear weapons cuts, they caution that "it is more important than ever that military decisions be motivated by political decisions based on a strict account of the balance of interests."⁶⁰

Needless to say, such a formula has not been embraced universally among Soviet analysts, but it is indicative of the degree of serious attention now being paid to arms control issues in general and to the third country issue in particular.

A second complicating factor in arms control considerations is the link between a START agreement and tactical nuclear weapons. Aleksei Arbatov reasons that an

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 37.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 39.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 41.

agreement on reducing strategic weapons must be worked concomitantly with negotiations for tactical nuclear cuts. Otherwise, he states, U.S. territory could become invulnerable to nuclear attack, but Soviet territory would remain subject to such a threat. He articulates this line of thinking in the following way:

. . . with the liquidation of global-range weapons, the importance of the geostrategic asymmetries of the Soviet and American positions could increase once again. It is completely obvious that it is impermissible that the liquidation of SOF [strategic offensive forces] return the world to the 1940-1950s when U.S. territory was effectively unreachable by nuclear weapons because of the USSR's lack of intercontinental carriers, while Soviet cities were located in the zone of operation of American forward-based nuclear means. Consequently, such types of weapons must be subject to parallel destruction, this pertaining not only to the liquidation of INF and SRINF, but also the medium-range bombers of both powers and airfield- and deck-based operational-tactical strike aviation.

In such conditions one can hardly leave tactical nuclear weapons and battlefield nuclear weapons outside the framework of agreements. Otherwise the concepts of "limited" and "local nuclear war," which are now clearly unfounded because of the inevitable escalation of a nuclear conflict into a global catastrophe, would be seriously reinforced. Especially in the eyes of the power most removed from the intended theater of military action.⁶¹

In truth, the dramatic changes taking place in Eastern Europe, especially in East Germany, since the fall of 1989 may have their own important affect on this issue. Prior to these events, various NATO members exerted a great deal of pressure on the West German government to agree to a follow-on to the outdated Lance missile. The Kohl government argued that it would not accept a nuclear system which could essentially target only other Germans, specifically those living in East Germany. With the topic of German unification now on the agenda, the Allies now widely recognize that the modernization program is effectively dead. However, the possibility still remains that a European-made missile (conceivably of joint British-French manufacture) could fill this gap in the future.

Finally, under the purview of arms control problems, the linkage between a START agreement and conventional forces must be recognized and addressed. For a long time the Soviet position on disarmament was that nuclear weapons should be abolished, but significant conventional forces retained. The 15-year stalemate at the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks underscores the previous Soviet intransigence on

⁶¹ A. Arbatov, "Glubokoe sokrashchenie strategicheskikh vooruzhenii [Deep Reductions of Strategic Arms]," *MEMO*, No. 4, 1988, pp. 17-18.

negotiating conventional force cuts. Today this position has evolved for a variety of reasons, above all because of the pressures of Soviet domestic economic reform, as well as the desire to play the diplomatic game more effectively. V. L. L'vov sums up this change in Soviet thinking in a March 1989 article published in the journal *SShA*. "Whereas before we insisted on the need to immediately and unconditionally abolish nuclear weapons . . . , now we recognize that the path to a nuclear-free world lies in deep reductions of armed forces and conventional arms, in a transition to a defensive strategy, and in fundamental transformations in the political, economic, humanitarian, and ecological areas of international relations."⁶²

6. The Use of Nuclear Weapons

For several decades the Soviet Union has sought to undermine the Western consensus on nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence. Its leadership has used a variety of techniques, which have ranged from advocating the creation of nuclear-free zones in many regions of Europe and its adjacent waters, to declaring a no-first-use of nuclear weapons policy, to proposing the elimination of all nuclear weapons by the end of this century. Laying aside the political and diplomatic incentives the Soviets might have in making such initiatives, it does appear that concrete changes are taking place in the parameters of the debate about nuclear weapons.

This paper has laid out much of the context for the changes taking place in this debate. However, a key aspect of this debate remains to be discussed; that is, how nuclear weapons might be used. There are increasing signs that Soviet analysts are subscribing more firmly and in greater numbers to the belief that nuclear weapon only deter nuclear weapons. As Igor' Malashenko reasons, "The only task that would realistically be accomplished with the help of nuclear weapons and the concept of deterrence is not allowing the use of nuclear weapons by the other side."⁶³ Moreover, some Soviets are arguing that if these forces were a true deterrent, the arms race would have been curbed long ago; instead, they have spurred on conventional build-ups. Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze articulates this line of reasoning:

We believe . . . that nuclear weapons served as a deterrent at one level only, by providing the nuclear powers with what Mikhail Gorbachev

⁶² V. L. L'vov, "Yadernoe razoruzhenie: v poiskakh edinogo podkhoda [Nuclear Disarmament: In Search of a Common Approach]," *SShA*, No. 3, 1989, p. 6.

⁶³ Malashenko, *Novoe vremya*, No. 13, 1989, p. 17.

has called "safe-conduct" and allowing them to be unrestrained towards countries lacking such weapons. In other words, nuclear weapons objectively encourage the use of arbitrary and unlawful methods by members of the nuclear club, now as in the past. Thereby they encourage recourse to similar practices on the part of non-nuclear countries, which want to safeguard themselves against nuclear blackmail and are therefore set on securing nuclear arms.

Had nuclear weapons really been a deterrent they would logically have curbed the race in conventional armaments. Actually the reverse happened. Realising that nuclear war is out of the question, for it cannot be won, countries built up their conventional armed forces because they regarded "conventional war" as permissible even in the presence of the nuclear deterrent.

The arms race which has been going on throughout the past forty-odd years is material and not merely theoretical evidence that nuclear weapons have never performed a deterring function.⁶⁴

The Soviet leadership's current policy is that nuclear deterrence has become obsolete. When asked whether he shared Gorbachev's support for this belief, then-Chief of the General Staff Akhromeev replied: "Such is the opinion of both the political and military leadership of the USSR. One must no longer arm oneself or accumulate nuclear arms. This will objectively create an ever greater threat to peace. But nuclear disarmament has also proved to be a very complex problem. It is necessary for trust between the states to emerge, on the basis of which nuclear arms could be reduced."⁶⁵ Thus, Akhromeev is careful to note that the rejection of nuclear deterrence cannot be too hasty so long as nuclear weapons still exist. The alternative to the concept of nuclear deterrence is (ultimately) the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, according to Soviet statements.

What must be understood in analyzing the debate is the fact that the Soviet Union has rarely, if ever, defined its nuclear requirements in the same way that the United States has. While the Soviet leadership is aware of the value of flexible response and extended deterrence to the United States, because of the USSR's geostrategic location and the nature of its alliance system, it has not required such political guarantees from its nuclear forces. In other words, while the United States has found nuclear weapons to be the most effective guarantee of its commitment to its allies across the Atlantic, the Soviet Union is not bound by these same considerations.

⁶⁴ Eduard Shevardnadze, "Towards a Safe World," *International Affairs*, No. 9, 1988, p. 8.

⁶⁵ Press conference as reported by TASS, "K yadernomu razoruzheniyu--bez ostanovok [Toward Nuclear Disarmament--Without Any Stops]," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 17 January 1988.

To the Soviet leadership, the political and military requirements of nuclear weapons are, in fact, quite similar. In essence, these forces must be capable of carrying out the destruction of U.S. nuclear forces. If they can accomplish this military objective, this may be sufficient for their political objectives as well.⁶⁶ In contrast, the U.S. forces must be able to carry out this military objective, but they must also satisfy the political task of guaranteeing U.S. coupling to Western Europe.

The Soviets apparently see a variety of advantages in engaging in the arms control process. In addition to those discussed above and the genuine military incentives, there are potential political implications of substantial nuclear force reductions which are important to consider. If the Soviets could push the United States to a low enough level of nuclear weapons, they would likely succeed in undermining U.S. and Western support for maintaining and/or modernizing the theater nuclear weapons associated with extended deterrence commitments.

In this context, it becomes easier to see several political advantages for the Soviet Union inherent in deep nuclear weapons cuts. One such advantage can be seen in the enormous impact that the disarmament process has had on the Western publics. Gorbachev's considerable diplomatic skills have clearly contributed to Soviet successes in this realm. Put bluntly, the Soviet leadership believes that the strategic access its nation can obtain to the West through such efforts far outweigh the importance of a few thousand nuclear warheads. Moreover, not only do the Soviets gain better access to the West, they also can influence public opinion to undermine the ability of the Western governments to maintain their own force levels. For example, two of the best known advocates of minimum deterrence, Bogdanov and Kortunov, reason that even if the Soviet Union finds itself numerically inferior in nuclear forces, this inferiority would ultimately lead to further cuts by the West. As Bogdanov and Kortunov explain:

[W]e should take account of the political impact of the Soviet Union adopting a "minimum deterrence" strategy when we stop to think of the possibility of the United States acquiring a capability for a "disarming strike" some time in the future. We do not think anybody would want to finance "Star War" programmes, the development of anti-submarine weapons, and so on, were the Soviet Union to opt for "minimum deterrence." SDI comes up even now against financial problems that are

⁶⁶ For a more detailed discussion of this idea and Soviet policies on nuclear forces more generally, see William Garner, "The Soviets and Denuclearization," in Robbin F. Laird and Betsy A. Jacobs, eds., *The Future of Nuclear Deterrence: NATO Nuclear Forces After INF* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), pp. 141-175.

hard to solve. Every step towards "minimum deterrence" would be a blow to the positions of the U.S. right.⁶⁷

Indeed, on a more general level, it is already evident that public pressure on the U.S. and French governments is undermining support for continuing current levels of defense spending.

Deep nuclear reductions would also benefit the Soviets politically in that the United States is perceived to rely on nuclear weapons to hold its alliances together, whereas the Soviet Union does not. To validate its commitment to its European Allies, it is critical for the United States to maintain a credible nuclear deterrent, that is, one that can be used. Therefore, if the arms control process reduced parity to such a low level of forces that the threat of using nuclear weapons no longer seemed credible, U.S. alliances might well dissolve. Nevertheless, the West still holds some high cards in this game, of which the Soviets are well aware. Their concern is that the European nuclear powers might opt to fill this gap themselves, creating their own Eurostrategic force, one that would actually combine Britain and French capabilities (in contrast to these countries' current emphasis on the national independence of their forces). Such an outcome could prove even more troublesome to the Soviet leadership than the current allied system, so it must play this hand carefully.

A third consideration in negotiating nuclear reductions has been advanced by Bogdanov and Kortunov in their minimum deterrence argument. Namely, the authors believe that a superabundance of nuclear weapons in a time of alliance disintegration can actually increase the level of danger and threat to peace. They explain:

In the prenuclear age, alliances were seen as a means by which a country could build up its national power, thereby strengthening its security. The emergence of nuclear weapons has changed the attitude to military alliances. As matters now stand, a country allied with one or several nuclear countries is less certain of its security and can do less than before to decide its own fate. And while alliances still ensure contacts between member countries and make it more difficult for an aggressor to implement his plans, they have lost their one-time importance. This is because nuclear weapons are a factor tying allies together and uniting them while at the same time accentuating their differentiation and tending to disunite them.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Radomir Bogdanov and Andrei Kortunov, "On the Balance of Power," *International Affairs*, No. 8, 1989, p. 9. This is the translated version of their article published in the No. 7 issue of *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Indeed, it may be possible to witness a convergence of Soviet and U.S. perceptions of the danger, a concern about the risk of countries having too many nuclear weapons. As Bogdanov and Kortunov illustrate this thinking on the Soviet side, Phil Williams has articulated this notion with respect to the United States. Focusing in particular on the school of thought which Williams calls "the reformers," he draws the following conclusion:

The general belief among the reformers is that NATO's dependence on nuclear weapons is excessive and that this priority of nuclear forces in NATO strategy complicates prospects for improving the existing situation. The reformers advocate a significant reduction in the number of nuclear weapons deployed in Europe and a substantial improvement in NATO's conventional forces. Their intent is to redraw the priorities in Alliance force posture by downgrading the role of nuclear weapons and enhancing conventional forces as part of a move towards conventional deterrence.⁶⁹

If such thinking comes to the fore in U.S. policy, serious differences could arise between the United States and its European allies, Williams cautions.

The 1990s could see increased divergence between the dominant American and European assessments of the utility of nuclear weapons. Although no European country has reached a consensus on the nuclear issue, the dominant European attitude has been that nuclear weapons are essentially political tools. While this consensus is unlikely to be abandoned, there could well be a subtle shift towards a policy of existential deterrence and the idea of nuclear weapons as the great constraint If the credibility of the U.S. nuclear guarantee becomes more dubious, major European states could well move towards what is essentially a non-strategic solution in which nuclear weapons are seen as a constraint on Soviet behavior irrespective of the specifics of nuclear posture.

The big danger is that this move towards existential deterrence in Europe will be accompanied by a shift in the United States towards the conception of nuclear weapons as inherently dangerous.⁷⁰

C. IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHANGING INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The preceding section of this report has identified the key factors associated with current Soviet thinking about nuclear weapons, as reflected in the Soviet open-source literature. This section seeks to move beyond these factors as it speculates about many of the fundamental changes taking place in Europe today and the possible connection between

⁶⁹ Phil Williams, "The Western Debate I," in Laird and Jacobs, eds., *The Future of Deterrence*, p. 21.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 38-39.

these changes and future Soviet thinking about nuclear weapons. In this context, November 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the rapid movement toward democratization throughout Eastern Europe, can be viewed as the turning point. At that time, the Soviets must have begun to develop new approaches to many of the elements of the European security equation, but in doing so, the dynamics had clearly changed; the Soviet leadership found its policies being essentially shaped by events rather than shaping them. To assess these changes, this section first details differences in Soviet views of the overall political architecture of the European security system between the pre- and post-November 1989 worlds, and then examines various dimensions of the nuclear equation in this same context. It must be underscored here that this section aims specifically to contemplate emerging trends in the new Europe and is therefore necessarily speculative.

1. The Political Architecture

The following chart outlines the parameters of the security environment and how Soviet views of these dimensions have changed since the revolutionary events of 1989 in Eastern Europe. Each of these dimensions is then addressed in individual subsections, as follows: the European security system, Eastern Europe, the German factor, arms control, and nuclear weapons in the political architecture.

Table 1. Political Architecture

	Old Approach	New Approach
European security system	Superpower dominance	European pluralism
Eastern European factor	Soviets defined interests; Protection of ruling communist parties	Emerging partnerships; Democratization process
German factor	Divided; Bulwarks of the two alliances	Unification; Key actors redefining the European security order
Arms control focus	U.S.-centric	Enhanced role for European nuclear powers
Basic nuclear role in the political architecture	Key element in the trans- atlantic relationship	Subordinate (but still relevant) element in the building of the new Europe

a. European Security System

The broadest issue to be addressed is that of the European security system. From the end of World War II until recently, this system was clearly dominated by the U.S.-Soviet relationship.⁷¹ The two superpowers shaped the agenda and were the determining forces in the state of East-West relations. Thus, while the East and West Europeans could certainly make a contribution to the trends within the system, they were not the central players. Even before Gorbachev came to power, Soviet analysts were beginning to recognize that the U.S.-Soviet relationship would be rivaled by Soviet-West European relations as the latter countries emerged to form a new "power center" in the world. Specifically, they saw West European efforts to unify militarily under a revitalized Western European Union, and economically under the European Community, as a significant step in the evolution of a European power center. In effect, the days of a world dominated by the bipolar superpower relationship were on the wane, a fact which the events of 1989 have underscored as never before. Thus, while the United States and the Soviet Union will certainly have a role to play in the new European security order, their role will be a less pivotal one as the age of European pluralism comes to the fore. The clear concern for all is that the two Germanies not acquire full reign over this process in general.

b. Eastern European Factor

Certainly nothing has changed so dramatically in recent months as have the role of Eastern Europe in international affairs, and Soviet relations with these former satellite countries. Until recently, the Soviet Union dominated the decision-making process in this alliance of states, especially with respect to Warsaw Pact military issues. Thus, while some of the East European members might occasionally make recommendations, it was clear that their proposals had actually been defined by the Soviets, with the framework and details all worked out in advance. In the postwar era, a key purpose of the Warsaw Pact has been to ensure the survivability of the ruling communist parties in Eastern Europe.⁷²

⁷¹ Many of the points in this discussion have been developed further in: Robbin F. Laird and Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet Union and Strategic Arms* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984); Robbin F. Laird, "Soviet Perspectives on French Security Policy," *France, the Soviet Union and the Nuclear Weapons Issue* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 89-124; and Erik P. Hoffmann and Robbin F. Laird, *The Scientific-Technological Revolution and Soviet Foreign Policy* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982). More recently, see Phillip A. Petersen, *The Emerging Soviet Vision of European Security*, Working Paper.

⁷² See, for example, Christopher Jones, "Of Reasonable and Unreasonable Sufficiency: The Brezhnev Doctrine in the Gorbachev Era," IDA working paper, June 1989.

This is confirmed if one examines the history of the Pact's military actions; in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, the bloc acted solely in order to preserve communist rule in these countries. In addition, it was certainly established and maintained for the purpose of creating a "coalition strategy"; here, too, recent events call into question the viability of this purpose.

In the new world taking shape in Europe, the USSR's relations with its "satellites" are being radically transformed as the democratization process unfolds in these countries. No longer are the Soviets able to dictate policy, with the East Europeans obediently acquiescing. Today's situation can best be characterized as one of "emerging partnerships" as the Soviets seek to redefine their relations with now-independent allies. And while the Warsaw Pact may still have some function in serving as a counter to the NATO Alliance, several fundamental reasons for its existence--including the protection of ruling communist parties and the maintenance of a coalition strategy--have been or are being eroded. In effect, the Warsaw Pact is now dead; what will replace it still remains to be seen, but it is likely that any security system that might emerge would seek a broader framework incorporating neutrals and other European nations, probably similar to the membership composition of the participants in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

Whatever security system eventually does emerge, the question of Soviet relations with its allies must be addressed on several counts. First, as the democratization process continues, new elites will emerge within the East European countries, elites that will not share the opinions of the old guard. For one thing, these people will certainly place greater emphasis on the representation of national interests. Thus, the trend toward greater assertiveness among the West European countries not to have their soil become a nuclear battlefield may well be mirrored in Eastern Europe.

Yet greater assertiveness on the part of these countries does not necessarily mean that they would reject the utility of nuclear weapons out of hand. In fact, an argument can be made that the only security guarantee the East Europeans may desire from the Soviet Union is to be included under a Soviet nuclear umbrella.⁷³ First, such a guarantee would be useful in assuaging Eastern European fears about becoming a battlefield--conventional or nuclear--in the new Europe. Moreover, particularly in light of German unification and

⁷³ It should be noted, however, that members of the USSR's "minimalist" school reject the notion of extending nuclear guarantees to Eastern Europe "since their security is inseparable from that of the Soviet Union." Bogdanov and Kortunov, *International Affairs*, No. 8, 1989, p. 11.

continuing concerns about future challenges to the postwar border agreements, the East European countries would want an extension of a nuclear guarantee to their countries to counter possible threats emanating from Germany. As Hungary's Foreign Minister stated in January 1990, he does not believe a nuclear-free Europe is possible and therefore advocates the retention of a small number of nuclear warheads in Europe by the alliances.⁷⁴

Given the volatility of recent changes in the Eastern European countries and the numerous questions associated with their future development, it is also important to consider the possibility of long-term instability in some of these countries. Faced with serious instability, the question then becomes: what will the Soviet Union do and what types of forces might it need to deal with the situation? More specifically, what would be the relationship between the remaining Soviet forces in this region and nuclear weapons? In this connection, it is necessary to consider how secure nuclear weapons are on Eastern European soil. On the one hand, if the Soviets cannot guarantee secure protection of their nuclear weapons, they will want to redeploy them on Soviet territory. The effects of possible terrorism cannot be dismissed under conditions of such instability. On the other hand, the Soviet leadership may see certain benefits to be derived from keeping nuclear weapons stationed in Eastern Europe, namely to deter challenges to their own remaining forces there.

c. German Factor

Of all the changes that have unfolded in Eastern Europe, the most dramatic and most important (certainly from a security perspective) have been those in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). When the East European communist parties first began to fall, led by Poland, many assumed that the Soviet Union might allow some of its satellites to effect their own reform processes (after all, reform within the USSR itself virtually invited parallel efforts elsewhere), but that the GDR would not be permitted to experience the same degree of freedom and change. The Soviets might even have to intervene militarily, it was speculated, in order to protect the East German communist system. In the postwar order, it was commonly accepted that Germany would remain divided; any discussions of German unification were dismissed as manifestations of German revanchism, and the most the Soviets were willing to allow was that the issue could remain on some undetermined "future agenda." Both East and West came to see the two

⁷⁴ Quoted in Jim Hoagland, "Soviets to Negotiate Troop Withdrawal From Hungary, Budapest Official Says," *Washington Post*, 23 January 1990, p. A21.

Germanies as the bulwarks of their respective alliances.⁷⁵ Changes in the level of security commitment might be tolerable in the case of other countries, but the two Germanies represented the very core of the alliance systems, located as they were in the center of the potential future battlefield.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall--another event which many thought would never happen without Soviet military intervention, but which instead was sanctioned by Gorbachev--the drive toward unification is no longer just a dream for the future but has rapidly accelerated to the point where all countries accept it as a certainty (albeit with varying degrees of support). In this context, the East and West Germans find themselves the key actors in redefining the European security order. Chancellor Helmut Kohl has perhaps summarized this change in the Germanies' role best, pointing out that before they were the objects of their respective alliance structures, whereas now they are the subjects for creating the new European structure.⁷⁶

Germany's pivotal role in this process raises a host of associated questions, particularly in the realm of security policy. One of the fundamental questions is, of course, what will be Germany's relationship to NATO and the Warsaw Pact? The official Soviet position is that a unified Germany must be neutral, while the Western powers insist that NATO membership be retained. For their part, many of the East European nations appear, in fact, anxious about the possibility of a neutralized Germany emerging, preferring to see the unified country remain closely integrated with--and influenced by--NATO.

If the new Germany is to remain in the Alliance (or at least retain some meaningful affiliation), then NATO (primarily the United States) must be prepared effectively to guarantee the unity of the new German state. A logical precondition on Germany's part would therefore be that defense guarantees be extended to all of its territory, i.e., to include what was once the GDR. The NATO members must identify and evaluate the trade-offs involved in extending security guarantees to a unified Germany for the sake of retaining Germany as a member of the Alliance.

⁷⁵ On this point and more general discussions of German security policy, see Hannes Adomeit, "Soviet Security Perspectives on Germany," in Robbin F. Laird and Susan L. Clark, *The USSR and the Western Alliance* (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1990) and Robbin F. Laird, "The Soviet Approach toward West Germany," IDA Working Paper, August 1989.

⁷⁶ Helmut Kohl, "Europe--Every German's Future," *Statements and Speeches*, German Information Center, 1990.

This scenario also raises the question of a Soviet response. As noted above, their official position stipulates a neutral unified Germany, but it seems more probable that the Soviet leadership will have to accept continued German membership in NATO, for which it would likely impose certain preconditions. First, most would agree that the size of Germany's armed forces should be reduced from their combined present levels. Second, the Soviets could insist on maintaining a small military presence in what is now GDR territory for leverage purposes.⁷⁷ Indeed, Poland has explicitly called for Soviet troops to remain in the GDR as a guarantee against German militarism. The Soviets could therefore further argue that their presence is necessary as a security guarantee to its allies as well. Third, in the mid-1980s, the Western European Union lifted the last restrictions imposed on Germany in the postwar settlement against its having long-range forces; as a gesture of good faith and in the interests of stability, the Soviets might decide to press for a guarantee that Germany would not build any kind of long-range, "strategic" weapons. Finally, while the Soviets would hesitate to admit it openly, they might also understand that a neutral Germany could, in fact, pose a greater threat to stability in Central Europe than one that is held in check by an alliance system. Moreover, the Germans would be more likely to agree to certain restrictions (such as a pledge not to build strategic weapons) if they were protected by Alliance security guarantees. Most important, it must be understood that the entire European security dynamic no longer can be viewed as a strictly "East-West" issue.

Lest anyone doubt the high degree of importance the Soviet leadership attaches to future developments in Germany, a review of Gorbachev's recent speeches quickly erases any such uncertainty. In February 1990, Gorbachev specifically addressed the topic of German unification in an interview published in *Pravda*. While he acknowledged Germany's "right to unity," he cautioned that a united Germany should not threaten or harm the national interests of other states, not to mention the inviolability of the postwar borders. Speaking specifically about the USSR, Gorbachev proclaimed that "it has an inalienable right to expect and the possibility to exert efforts to insure that our country should not sustain either moral or political or economic damage from German unification."⁷⁸ Germany and the future Europe were also a central element in Gorbachev's

⁷⁷ The Secretary General of NATO, Manfred Woerner, has argued just this point: that the Soviets probably would agree to NATO membership for Germany if they kept troops in GDR territory. See his statement in R. C. Longworth, "NATO Chief Predicts Accord on Germany," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 March 1990, p. 15.

⁷⁸ "Excerpts from Gorbachev's Remarks on German Unification and Europe," *New York Times*, 21 February 1990, p. A11.

first speech after he was elected President of the USSR, a speech most would expect to be dedicated to the numerous domestic problems facing his leadership. Here Gorbachev articulated the following line: "The time has come to talk about replacing military pacts with a system of collective security and cooperative bodies that take into account the emergence of a united Germany in the center of Europe."⁷⁹

A final point needs to be underscored concerning the Soviet position on German unification. Few have paid much attention to the Soviets' insistence that the new Germany develop a new constitution. If the new Germany complied, it would not automatically be a member of the Western organizations in which the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) has played such an important role, including NATO, the European Community (EC), and the Western European Union (WEU). It also would abrogate Germany's standing as a signatory of the non-proliferation treaty. Given the potential negative effects on stability that would result from terminating some of these memberships, it would seem that the Soviets ultimately would want the memberships to be renewed but would hope that certain concessions could be obtained in the process.

d. Arms Control Focus

The fourth element to be considered in the political architecture of European security is that of arms control. Throughout the long and rather tortuous process of arms control negotiations between East and West, from SALT to MBFR to INF to START, the Soviet focus during these talks has been on the United States.⁸⁰ This orientation is certainly not surprising since, as discussed above, the entire European security system was seen to be dominated by the superpowers, and legitimately so in the case of nuclear capabilities. In general, the stagnation that characterized East-West relations during this time also was reflected in the notable lack of progress in the arms control arena. But over the last several years, this trend has begun to reverse itself, both in conventional and nuclear force reduction talks. In the case of nuclear forces, it should be noted that the specialized Soviet literature identified even before Gorbachev's tenure the increased importance of the European nuclear forces, especially as they undertook their modernization efforts.⁸¹

⁷⁹ As reported in David Remnick, "Gorbachev Pledges to Use Powers for Economy, New Security Plan," *Washington Post*, 16 March 1990, p. A1.

⁸⁰ Alan Sherr, *The Other Side of Arms Control* (Boston, MA: Allen & Unwin, 1988).

⁸¹ See Robbin F. Laird, "Soviet Perspectives on French Security Policy," and Robbin F. Laird and Susan L. Clark, "Soviet Perspectives on British Security Policy," in Laird and Clark, *The USSR and the Western Alliance*.

Assuming progress continues toward a START accord, and given the dynamics of the new European security environment, the degree of Soviet attention focused on British and French nuclear weapons is bound to increase, a fact discussed below under the rubric of extended deterrence.

Turning to conventional forces, the current negotiations, Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), clearly hold much greater promise of an agreement than did the precedent MBFR talks. Indeed, it is now widely accepted that a conventional agreement will be obtained in the near future and a CFE-2 process begun almost immediately. The impetus behind much of this rapid progress appears largely due to the cuts already being planned in many of the countries. In fact, some of the Warsaw Pact countries may have decided that they cannot afford to wait for a successful conclusion to the talks, partly because there is not a sufficient threat to justify delaying the cuts. Given present trends, if a CFE agreement is reached, the West will find itself without the primary rationale that has until now made the retention of (and reliance on) nuclear weapons politically tolerable. In short, the West has long argued that it has been forced to counter the Warsaw Pact's conventional superiority in certain areas with nuclear weapons; absent such superiority, the West's current rationale is undermined.

At the same time, in this new world, the Soviet leadership will find itself faced with a fundamentally different military equation: one of conventional parity, which could alter the Soviets' own thinking about nuclear weapons. The Soviet literature has been replete with discussions about strategic nuclear parity, but it has generally dismissed efforts to identify conventional parity, arguing that there are too many factors to be considered and it is "too complicated."⁸² Logically, Soviet analysts and policy makers would see the need for greater dependence on nuclear weapons in a post-CFE world, now that they could no longer rely on conventional advantages to overwhelm the enemy. Thus, while the West may feel greater pressure to justify its reliance on nuclear weapons, the East may reluctantly come to recognize that its own need for nuclear forces has increased. The other, perhaps more likely alternative is that the Soviets will continue to see conventional high-technology developments as the key to future security requirements.

Should there be a CFE agreement (and therefore conventional parity), the Soviets will find themselves in a predicament of their own about policy alternatives: trying to

⁸² See, for example, Alexei Arbatov, "Parity and Reasonable Sufficiency," *International Affairs*, No. 10, 1988, p. 79.

undercut Western support for nuclear weapons but simultaneously recognizing their own need to rely more on these forces and/or high-tech conventional weapons. In their public diplomacy efforts the Soviets might seek to advance initiatives that would further diminish the Western public's support for maintaining nuclear weapons. One source of such pressure could involve their no-first-use of nuclear weapons commitment, adopted under the Brezhnev leadership. At the time, it was possible to dismiss this claim as a propaganda move, but with cuts in conventional forces that eliminate Soviet conventional superiority, this pledge takes on greater significance. Pressures would thereby increase for the West to follow the USSR's example and make its own no-first-use pledge.

Assuming that liberalization and economic reform in Eastern Europe continue, as well as East-West political cooperation, the possibility of additional conventional force reductions is enhanced.⁸³ If, indeed, a phase-two CFE agreement is reached, the pull between military and political considerations vis-a-vis nuclear forces will become quite apparent. From a military standpoint, the importance of a nuclear first-use threat will increase because the conventional battlefield will be much more fluid than the one we would expect today. But from a political point of view, the perceived need for nuclear weapons will virtually disappear because, first, a Soviet attack will no longer be credible. Moreover, even if the Soviets did attack, the West should feel more optimistic about the outcome because conventional forces would be at equal levels (parity).

The question logically arises whether there are other compelling reasons for keeping nuclear weapons. Certainly one such reason is that nuclear weapons can temper the Soviets' willingness to consider using military might to resolve some future issue. Thus, given the continued utility of nuclear weapons, the argument then centers around the "wartime/crisis value" versus "peacetime cost" of these forces. To use a metaphor, nuclear weapons provide an umbrella for a rainy day; just because the days are now sunny, should not the umbrella be safely stored in the closet rather than discarded completely? Can we safely assume it will never rain again? In the end, some argue that the peacetime cost of retaining nuclear forces (namely in terms of the political costs associated with supporting something the public generally opposes) is too great, while others believe that the value of these weapons during a crisis situation outweighs their peacetime costs. One safe conclusion is that in a world where the international environment continues to improve, it

⁸³ Future reductions might be constrained, however, by heightened tensions *between* Warsaw Pact members, thereby complicating any inter-bloc agreements.

will be extremely difficult to maintain public support for nuclear weapons, and especially their modernization.

e. Nuclear Weapons in the Political Architecture

Finally, within the political architecture of East-West relations, it is necessary to define the basic role of nuclear weapons. Until recently, the Soviets saw nuclear weapons to be the key element in the transatlantic relationship. These forces were, in fact, designed to provide the vital guarantee to the West Europeans that the United States' security was inextricably linked with their own. In other words, nuclear forces provided the means to couple the transatlantic partners. This link was particularly apparent in the U.S.-West German relationship. Today, while nuclear weapons remain an important element of the transatlantic dynamic, the focus has shifted away from the U.S.-West European relationship. Given the new focus of attention--that of building a new Europe--nuclear weapons are now a subordinate element in this new scheme.⁸⁴ This is not to say that they are unimportant, but rather that their relative importance has declined because of the change in emphasis in East-West relations.

2. Nuclear Weapons in European Security

Having laid out the political architecture of East-West relations and European security as the Soviet Union might see it, this paper will now examine several components of the nuclear equation from the Soviet perspective. Table 2 outlines six factors for consideration and identifies how Soviet thinking has changed in the context of the new environment. These factors are public diplomacy, extended deterrence, the German factor, strategic arms control, negotiations on short-range nuclear forces, and the role of Soviet battlefield nuclear weapons.

a. Public Diplomacy

The first and perhaps broadest issue among the six factors identified here is that of Soviet public diplomacy. Prior to Gorbachev, Soviet diplomatic efforts were characterized by heavy-handedness and were targeted primarily at left-wing forces within the Western countries. In particular, the Soviets sought to undermine Western cohesion on nuclear

⁸⁴ These points are addressed in greater detail in: Robbin F. Laird and Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet Union and Strategic Arms* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984); Robbin F. Laird, "The Soviet Union and Western Europe: Alternatives for the Future," *Cahiers de Fondation de la Future*, February 1990; Laird presentation at the Kennan Institute, 16 January 1990.

issues by issuing nuclear-free zone initiatives (such as in Northern Europe), pledging no-first-use of nuclear weapons, and the like. The Soviet leaders' ultimate declaratory objective was to establish a nuclear-free world.⁸⁵

Under the Gorbachev leadership, the effectiveness of Soviet public diplomacy has increased dramatically. And the Soviet Union's standing in the international community has benefited greatly from this diplomatic style that more closely mirrors the West's style. As long as the current leadership (or a future one that is like-minded) remains in power, the Soviets will likely be interested in maintaining their enhanced prestige, and their diplomatic efforts should continue apace. They have, in fact, embraced many Western methods as a

Table 2. Dimensions of the Nuclear Equation

	Old Approach	New Approach
Public diplomacy	Nuclear-free world	Minimum deterrence
Western extended deterrence	Opposed	Rethinking
German factor	Dependent on U.S.; Signatory of NPT	Status and posture unclear
Focus of strategic arms control	START (U.S. - Soviet)	Four-nuclear power arms negotiations
Focus of SNF talks	Undercutting extended deterrence	Defining Europe's nuclear future in the post-super-power security architecture
Role for Soviet battlefield weapons	Forward-deployed against NATO	Key component of remaining Soviet forces in Germany (?)

guide for developing new Soviet techniques and substance. For example, the Soviets now use their public diplomacy machinery to work within existing Western structures, rather than seeking to undermine them as they have done in years past. They accept institutions such as NATO, the WEU, and the EC, but at the same time they also wish to prevent the development of any new structures that would seek to unify only the Western nations. This change in style has meant a change in emphasis in Soviet declaratory priorities. Thus,

⁸⁵ On this broad point, see William Garner, "The Soviets and Denuclearization," in Robbin F. Laird and Betsy A. Jacobs, eds., *The Future of Deterrence: NATO Nuclear Forces After INF* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989). For a discussion of Soviet efforts in Northern Europe specifically, see Susan L. Clark, "A Nuclear-Free Zone in Northern Europe," in Laird and Clark, *The USSR and the Western Alliance*.

while they still maintain a nuclear-free world to be one of their declaratory objectives (as seen in Gorbachev's oft-cited January 1986 proposal to eliminate all nuclear weapons by the end of this century), the focus of their public diplomacy effort will continue to shift away from overt discussion of such aims and toward discussions of such issues as the advantages of minimum deterrence.⁸⁶

In the post-November 1989 world, many of the Soviets' objectives with respect to nuclear weapons can conceivably be met through support of the minimum deterrence concept. First, the Soviets want to reduce the importance of nuclear weapons partly in an effort to maintain the favorable image they have cultivated in the West. Second, their adherence to the minimum deterrence concept would help to obviate Germany's acquisition of nuclear weapons (see further discussion on this point below). And finally, the Soviet leadership wants to avoid proliferation of nuclear weapons, including in Europe. Soviet supporters of minimum deterrence could argue that if the USSR rejects nuclear weapons (keeping only a miniscule fraction of its current forces), other countries also could be inclined to reject them, thereby limiting the perceived value of these weapons. This trend, in turn, could undermine nuclear proliferation efforts by other countries.⁸⁷ Finally, a minimum deterrence force structure would render short-range nuclear forces unnecessary, thereby reducing the likelihood that they would be maintained.

b. Extended Deterrence

The concept of extended deterrence is a key element of NATO strategy. Specifically, extended deterrence means that the United States would use its nuclear forces to protect West European territory. This coupling of the transatlantic partners has been particularly important in the U.S.-West German relationship. Historically, the Soviets have opposed the West's commitment to extended deterrence and have sought to undermine the credibility of the U.S. guarantee in the eyes of the West Europeans. Indeed, among some elements of the West European publics, these efforts have had some degree of success. This approach has come to be recognized as a key element of the Soviet anti-

⁸⁶ Robbin F. Laird, "The Soviets and the Minimum Deterrence Debate," Briefing to OSD/Policy, December 1989.

⁸⁷ It should be pointed out, however, that there is another side to this argument, which makes equal sense. If the Soviet Union kept only a minimum deterrent force, this posture would seriously undercut the credibility of the Soviet nuclear threat and would thereby seem to invite proliferation. Not only must the Soviets take into account U.S., French, British, and Chinese systems, as well as any German aspirations in this field, but all countries must consider the potential nuclear capability of Pakistan, India, Brazil, Argentina, Israel, etc.

coalition strategy (i.e., the attempt by the Soviets to "drive wedges" between the United States and its West European allies).⁸⁸

Although Soviet opposition to extended deterrence has focused primarily on the U.S.-European dimension, the issue of France extending its own nuclear guarantee to West Germany has engendered considerable Soviet angst as well. In fact, the evolution of Franco-German security cooperation during the 1980s received a great deal of attention in the Soviet open-source literature. One topic raised time and again was the notion that West Germany wanted to obtain access to nuclear weapons through this partnership, and that France might be willing to agree. Several statements on the subject serve to illustrate this point. Back in 1986, an article in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* by Gusenkov explained that the emphasis on military cooperation between France and the FRG and the creation of a bilateral commission that discusses "strategic coordination" matters clearly put the nuclear issue on the agenda:

It is known that Bonn long ago sought pledges from Paris concerning the possible use of French nuclear weapons on West German territory. These are the Pluton tactical missile and the Hades missile, which is under construction, as well as the Mirage and Jaguar aircraft, with which France has equipped its Air Force. According to press reports, the French government has agreed to hold consultations on these questions with the FRG. It is true that Paris immediately declared that agreement to hold consultations by no means meant agreement to FRG participation in adopting a decision on the use of nuclear weapons. The right to use it, they said, remains as before the exclusive prerogative of France's supreme political and military leadership. A question arises in this connection: Will not French-West German consultations be a prelude to the admission that "France's vital interests" also extend to FRG territory? After all, there is only one step between this admission and the pledge to expand the French "nuclear umbrella" to the other side of the Rhine.⁸⁹

Another Soviet commentary published in June 1987 drew an explicit connection between the Pershing issue (i.e., the Soviet insistence that these forces deployed in the FRG be included in the U.S.-Soviet INF agreement) and a French nuclear guarantee for Germany: "This is not the first time Bonn has shown its nuclear ambitions, and there is thus no surprise on that score. What is surprising, however, is the exceptional readiness with

⁸⁸ See Phillip A. Petersen and Notra Trulock III, "Soviet Views and Policies toward Theater War in Europe," in Laird and Clark, *The USSR and the Western Alliance*.

⁸⁹ Gusenkov, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 15 February 1986; as translated in FBIS, 20 February 1986, pp. G2-3.

which Paris wants to satisfy the nuclear appetite of the West German military."⁹⁰ Finally, Nikolai Afanasyevsky et al. wrote in May 1988 in *International Affairs* that "Paris speaks more and more often of France and the FRG having a 'common strategic space,' of the desirability of drawing Bonn into choosing targets for French tactical nuclear weapons or even of supplying the FRG with a 'second key' to them."⁹¹

In today's environment, Soviet analysts have begun to rethink their long-standing position on extended deterrence.⁹² First and most important, extended deterrence is now perceived to be a valuable tool in attempts to ensure that Germany does not obtain access to nuclear weapons. If another country is willing to continue to provide nuclear protection to the new Germany, the basic argument for Germany having its own nuclear force is undermined. Moreover, continued adherence to extended deterrence perpetuates a certain degree of stability in today's rather ambiguous and unstable situation. The second shift in Soviet assessments of extended deterrence would relate to differing degrees of emphasis placed on U.S.-European versus intra-European guarantees. It is likely that in future years the Soviets will focus increasing attention on extended deterrence among the European allies, with decreasing attention on the United States' role. But in contrast to previous Soviet assessments which considered Franco-German cooperation to be a negative--even dangerous--phenomenon, future Soviet analyses (albeit not likely to be published in the open literature) might be more prone to point out the advantages of France's extending nuclear guarantees to Germany and thereby undermine German interests in and support for their own nuclear forces.

c. German Factor

The idea of extended deterrence logically raises the broader issue of Germany's overall relationship to nuclear weapons. Until the events of 1989, the Soviets perceived the FRG to be essentially dependent on the United States for nuclear protection. Also significant for the Soviets was the fact that the FRG became a signatory of the non-

⁹⁰ As reported in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, 29 June 1987, p. H1.

⁹¹ Nikolai Afanasyevsky, Eduard Tarasinkevich, and Andrei Shvedov, "Between Yesterday and Today," *International Affairs*, No. 5, 1988, p. 28.

⁹² See Lee, Clark and Laird, *The Debate about Soviet Military Doctrine and Forces*, IDA Paper, P-2348.

proliferation treaty in November 1969.⁹³ Prior to that time, Soviet analysts paid considerable attention to the possible nuclear threat that the FRG could present. Following West Germany's signing of the treaty, such discussions have been used mainly in an effort to undermine Western cohesion (e.g., during the debate about Pershing weapons stationed in the FRG being included in the INF agreement) and for propaganda purposes.

But the radical changes in Europe have heightened concerns among the Soviets about the position of the new Germany vis-a-vis nuclear weapons and its security policy more generally. It seems clear that the one point on which the Soviets would permit no compromise or dispute in the German unification process is that Germany not be allowed to have nuclear weapons. In truth, the probability that Germany's non-nuclear status will change remains low--particularly if one assumes that a unified Germany will try to continue to assuage other countries fears about its emergence as a strong and threatening military power--which might explain why the Soviet leadership has not seriously raised the issue. But it has been the subject of attention among Soviet (and other European) security analysts.

There are essentially two scenarios for the evolution of the new Germany's security policy, both of which entail the withdrawal of most or all of the USSR's forward-deployed nuclear forces. First, a neutralized Germany might emerge. In such circumstances, it is highly unlikely that Soviet and American nuclear weapons would be allowed to remain on German soil. From the perspective of a neutral Germany--no longer a recipient of Western nuclear guarantees--there could be definite incentives for considering the creation of its own nuclear force. The ultimate decision taken on this issue would apparently depend not only on world public opinion and governmental pressures (from East and West) but also on the USSR's own nuclear options and the threat of their use.

The second scenario would see a unified Germany remain a member of NATO (or at least retain some type of affiliation). While the official position of the Soviet leadership currently is that it would never agree to this, the realities of the situation may dictate otherwise. Moreover, should this come to pass, the Soviets could still work the situation to their advantage. Namely, by accepting a German-NATO link, the Soviets could use this connection as a way of undermining some of the Alliance's cohesion, especially

⁹³ See Hannes Adomeit, "Soviet Security Perspectives on Germany" and Robbin F. Laird, "Soviet Public Diplomacy toward West Germany under Gorbachev," in Laird and Clark, *The USSR and the Western Alliance*.

undermining support for nuclear weapons. To accomplish this aim, the Soviets would be likely to withdraw most of their own nuclear forces from Central Europe, at a minimum as a gesture of good will. Through such efforts, the Soviets would try to shape a consensus in the West that would be favorable to their own interests. For a Germany integrated with the West, as this scenario postulates, the West's current nuclear powers would provide any necessary nuclear guarantee, so Germany's need for its own nuclear weapons would be eliminated.

Finally, in addition to playing their roles in the above scenarios, how else might the Soviets seek to guarantee that Germany does not acquire nuclear weapons? One possibility would be to use the SNF issue as a means of forcing Germany to renounce any nuclear weapons for itself, an argument articulated below. Alternatively, the Soviets may begin to foster talks among the four nuclear powers (who are also, of course, the victorious Four Powers of World War II) in Europe. Such talks would serve as a means of reminding the Germans that they are not, and should not consider becoming, a nuclear power. Nor are the Soviets alone in seeing a utility in underscoring this point to Germany.

d. Strategic Arms Control

Looking at the Soviets' focus on strategic arms control negotiations, it is clear that the START framework--one which includes only the United States and Soviet Union--has dominated Soviet thinking.⁹⁴ Indeed, this approach has been a logical one since the nuclear capabilities of the two superpowers dwarf all others in comparison. But, if the USSR and United States reach a START agreement to reduce their strategic nuclear forces by 50 percent, as currently seems likely, British and French nuclear forces figure more prominently in the strategic equation, especially as they continue their modernization plans. Although the Soviet leadership finally dropped its insistence that the British and French forces be included in calculations for an INF agreement (a shift that made this agreement possible), the West should anticipate renewed Soviet calls to place these forces on the bargaining table.⁹⁵ Indeed, the legitimacy of Soviet insistence on the inclusion of Western Europe's nuclear forces is significantly enhanced given their modernization, given a START agreement, and in light of the reduction in the conventional threat the Soviets will pose. In sum, the focus of strategic arms control will have shifted from a bilateral

⁹⁴ Sherr, *The Other Side of Arms Control*.

⁹⁵ Interviews by Robbin Laird in West Germany in December 1989 and in France in January with senior diplomatic officials, including the British ambassadors.

relationship to negotiations among the four nuclear powers. Certainly one topic on the Soviet delegation's agenda in such discussions would be the preservation of Germany's non-nuclear status.

e. Focus of SNF Talks

Turning to short-range nuclear forces, it is clear that the Soviet Union's traditional approach has been to try to undercut extended deterrence.⁹⁶ By placing SNF on the negotiating table, the Soviets sought to derail the Lance modernization program in NATO. This arms control approach was combined with an effective public diplomacy campaign, aimed at the West German public, designed to raise doubts and foster anger. The Soviets argued that the Germans were being effectively exploited by their allies--only Germans would be put at risk if these forces were allowed to be modernized and, ultimately, used. Today, the dramatic changes taking place in Europe have far surpassed anything the Soviets could have hoped to achieve, with the result that the Lance modernization issue is almost certainly dead.

The focus of SNF negotiations now will be to help define Europe's nuclear future in the post-superpower security architecture. There is good reason to believe that the Soviets might decide to make Germany the focal point of their efforts in these negotiations. More specifically, they could use some of the same tactics they used during NATO's INF deployment debate, but with much greater success because they would have learned from past mistakes and because the international environment today is more conducive to such an approach. By using subtle public diplomacy techniques, the Soviets would try to create virulent opposition to SNF among the German public and politicians. Such an approach would necessarily raise the SNF debate to the level of a high-visibility issue and would put Western proponents of maintaining these forces on the defensive. But perhaps most important, the Soviets would be striving to minimize the basis for the new Germany to have access to its own nuclear weapons. In sum, the Soviet leadership could use the SNF debate and negotiations to eliminate such forces as a symbol to compel the new Germany to renounce officially its possible future aspirations for its own nuclear weapons. Moreover, by placing the onus on the Germans to renounce nuclear weapons, the Soviets could avoid having to make any broad assertions themselves that nuclear weapons serve no useful purpose, an argument that is not in the Soviet interest.

⁹⁶ See Dennis M. Gormley, *Double Zero and Soviet Military Strategy* (London: Jane's Publishing Company Ltd., 1988); Laird, *France, the Soviet Union and the Nuclear Weapons Issue*.

f. Role for Soviet Battlefield Weapons

Finally, it is necessary to examine the changed role of Soviet battlefield weapons. Historically these forces have been forward-deployed in Eastern Europe and designed to counter any possible NATO actions.⁹⁷ Today the role of these forces requires reexamination as the Soviets must consider the implications of Eastern Europe's changes for the military situation, namely for its now isolated forward-deployed forces. The Soviet military leadership is facing a situation wherein its conventional forces are being cut (unilaterally and through arms control negotiations) and its infrastructure in Eastern Europe is crumbling. If East and West conventional force levels are reduced to roughly equal numbers, the need for a more mobile battlefield and mobile forces is increased. Yet a more mobile battlefield creates greater uncertainty for military planning. Therefore, nuclear battlefield weapons assume a more important role as a hedge against a conventional disaster in this more uncertain environment.

A central concern for Soviet military planners now must be whether they can maintain forward-deployed forces and if so, how effective these forces would be. The Soviet military historically has relied on the East European satellites, especially the GDR, for forward basing areas and also for providing lines of communication back to the Soviet Union. The probability of non-communist East European governments allowing these arrangements to continue currently seems to be rather low. Moreover, the Soviet military in these countries frequently find the local armed forces hostile to them as well, as the latter seek to establish a role for themselves in their changing countries and realize that affiliation with the Soviet military is not necessarily in their interest. The situation adds up to one where Soviet troops find themselves in isolated outposts--in enclaves similar in some ways to the situation of Western forces deployed in Berlin.

From a political point of view, it makes sense for the Soviets to withdraw a large number of their forces from the GDR, but not all of them. The remaining troops would, in effect, become a "large Berlin brigade," which the USSR would seek to use as a means of leverage. The survivability of such enclaves could be ensured by connecting their survival to nuclear weapons. In other words, the declared policy would be to use nuclear weapons if these troops were attacked.

⁹⁷ See Ilana Kass, "Gorbachev's Strategy: Is Our Perspective in Need of Restructuring?" *Comparative Strategy*, Volume 8 (1989), pp. 181-190.

For the several reasons articulated in the above paragraphs, battlefield nuclear weapons could play a significant role in protecting against conventional military disasters in the European theater.

3. Future Trends in the Soviet Union

Aside from considering all of the changes in the European security environment and how Soviet policy has changed, or seems likely to change, it is equally important to examine at least two factors within the USSR that also will contribute fundamentally to its decisionmaking processes. One is the changed status of the defense budget within Soviet spending priorities and the other is the potential for political change in the Soviet Union.

a. Defense Resources

In the first regard, recognizing the serious difficulties facing the Soviet economy, the Gorbachev leadership has implemented several changes to reduce the burden of the military on the economy. The two most well-known changes, are Gorbachev's December 1988 announcement at the United Nations to cut unilaterally the Soviet armed forces by 500,000 personnel and the commitment to reduce the defense budget by some 14 percent.⁹⁸ The latter move was initially greeted with considerable skepticism by many Western analysts, in part because the Soviet figures on their defense budget are still incomplete and unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, even U.S. intelligence sources now agree that defense spending is being reduced, and the trend is expected to continue.

This combination of cuts in defense expenditures and in conventional forces has shaped a new environment for the Soviet military. The unilateral troop reductions and a likely CFE agreement to further reduce Soviet force levels in Europe seriously erode the USSR's long-held conventional superiority in many areas. As a consequence, a dilemma may emerge with respect to reliance on nuclear weapons. On the one hand, the Soviet military may have to rely more heavily on nuclear forces to provide a viable deterrent since nuclear weapons generally represent only a small share of defense budgets.⁹⁹ On the other

⁹⁸ The 14 percent cut is planned for 1990-1991. It is further planned to reduce defense expenditures as a percentage of the national income by one-half to two-thirds of its current level by 1995. Aleksei Kireev, "Secret Article: In the Dossier of the USSR Supreme Soviet," *Literaturnaya gazeta*, No. 42 (18 October), 1989, p. 11.

⁹⁹ While the Soviets may well have spent a greater percentage of their defense budget on nuclear weapons (given the greater technological drain on their economy to create these forces and the lower manpower costs for conventional forces) than has the United States, it still can be safely assumed that the cost of their strategic force represents a relatively modest percentage of their total defense expenditures.

hand, because budgetary and force cuts are coinciding with the Soviets' reevaluation of their threat assessment, there may not be a need to increase reliance on nuclear weapons. In effect, if the level of forces required for security were reduced, then the Soviets would not necessarily need to increase their reliance on nuclear weapons. This latter course would seem more likely since the Soviet military does not see nuclear weapons as the central area of future competition; instead, it is most concerned about developments in high-technology conventional weapons.

There are also several political reasons why the Soviets are unlikely to rely more on nuclear weapons in the face of defense budget reductions. First, the dramatic improvements in the international environment (i.e., East-West relations) bring with them a natural inclination to oppose defense efforts, especially controversial ones such as the maintenance and modernization of nuclear forces. Indeed, Soviet opposition to continued high levels of defense spending could fill volumes as this debate has exploded in recent years under Gorbachev's policy of glasnost'. In particular, the Soviets (the public and analysts alike) are disgusted with the severe drain that they now see defense spending has had on the level of civilian goods production and the overall quality of life. Second, and most important, the framework for Soviet discussions about such subjects is undergoing significant alterations. Whereas previously only top-ranking military personnel participated in the debate, now a broader elite has emerged and more organizations have become responsible for providing input into military issues.¹⁰⁰ The appearance of these new players in this arena provides more freedom for the expression of non-military views. For example, among the sentiments being expressed is a dispute over threat perceptions. Before the events of November 1989, the only threat Soviet analysts paid serious attention to was the traditional threat from the West, i.e., NATO. Today, in contrast, many consider this particular threat to be diminishing while other threats--such as that from a unified Germany or the East European countries--are seen to be on the rise. Taking all these factors into consideration, in the public discourse, it would be increasingly difficult to place greater emphasis on nuclear weapons, assuming the military leadership wished to do so, which is not currently the case.

¹⁰⁰ This is seen, for example, in the newly created defense oversight committee of the Soviet government.

b. Future Political Leadership

Speculation continues to abound regarding Gorbachev's longevity as leader of the Soviet Union. If he were to be replaced, who would assume the reigns of power and which policies would be continued, which abolished? What would be the domestic, foreign, and defense policies of possible future leaders? And in this context, what role would nuclear weapons play? The first scenario discussed here assumes that Gorbachev, or someone of similar orientation, remains in power. The two alternative scenarios assume that either a conservative or a reformist replaces the current moderate leadership. No attempt is made to identify individual people who might emerge as leaders in any of these groups. While such discussions are certainly highly speculative, they are useful for providing some general framework for thinking about the future.

Under a moderate or centrist leader, such as Gorbachev, it can be assumed that many of the USSR's current policies will continue. For example, on the domestic scene, priority would continue to be given to economic modernization, consumer goods production, and the like, while the military would rate lower on the priority scale. In Soviet foreign policy, emphasis would be placed on the Soviet Union as a member of Europe, and Gorbachev's well-known concept of a common European home would be a key theme in this effort. Moreover, today's successful public diplomacy style would continue, with the leadership striving for a solid balance between superpower relations and the increasing importance of Europe to the Soviet Union's plans and future development. This lays the groundwork for a defense policy that would use arms control negotiations to maintain a balanced force structure. The leadership might also conclude that the political benefits of continued negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons may be even more important than the actual deterrent functions and military capabilities of the nuclear weapons. In this case, the numbers of nuclear weapons would be reduced, and the arms control process continued. It should be noted that a moderate leader would be most sympathetic to the concepts espoused by advocates of the relative sufficiency school, discussed in Section 3b of this report.

In an alternative development, a conservative leader might assume the reigns of power, a possibility that becomes less likely the longer Gorbachev remains in control. Should a conservative leadership assume control in the USSR, it could be expected that many of the current policies would be either frozen or even reversed. For example, the country could once again become predominantly inward-looking. The Soviet (and Russian) state has been subject to a long-standing tension between isolationism/nationalism

(xenophobia) and Europeanism. In the latter case, the USSR is more open to being considered a member of Europe, a theme which Gorbachev has widely embraced under his notion of the "common European home." A conservative leader would tend to lead the country away from Europeanism and toward xenophobia. In its foreign policy, such a leadership would be likely to emphasize political revanchism of the new Europe (and also of China). Fears about a resurgent Germany would certainly be a key theme as well. In terms of defense policy, the conservatives would seek a robust parity (that is, they would be members of the parity school of thought). They would clearly and resolutely reject any unilateral reductions, and, indeed, may cite the lack of a Western response to Gorbachev's initiatives in this area as a sound reason to repudiate such methods. The probability of any further arms control agreements beyond the first START accord would be reduced, specifically because such leaders would value relatively high levels of nuclear weapons and would seek to maintain the most robust mix of forces possible. In addition, the conservatives would tend to be less concerned about making a deal with the United States on more arms control agreements. In the end, while the arms control process could certainly continue, the concrete progress made would tend to be limited and the overall process probably would be slower than it is today. Moreover, current defense spending trends would most likely be reversed; the military would once again receive top priority, and a new build-up in forces could occur.¹⁰¹ The conservatives would move away from the current public diplomacy efforts--designed to create a favorable image in the West--because they would not be so concerned about negative perceptions abroad and because they would increasingly channel their energies to domestic issues (perpetuating the isolationist trend). Under these conditions, greater emphasis on maintaining and modernizing nuclear weapons is quite possible, although this is not to say that nuclear forces would actually be raised quantitatively. Everyone is discussing the need for lower levels of nuclear weapons; the dispute centers on how low those numbers should go.

The third type of leader is a reformer. Unlike a conservative, a reformer would be more likely to come to power if Gorbachev remained in power for at least several more years. By this time, reform efforts will have become well enough entrenched that those who would seek to accelerate the process would be in the best position to assume power. In terms of their domestic priorities, reformers would seek to accelerate the perestroika

¹⁰¹ Not surprisingly, those belonging to the minimalist school are some of the sharpest critics of this thinking. See, for example, Bogdanov and Kortunov, *International Affairs*, No. 8, 1989, pp. 3-13, especially p. 5.

process, probably seeking help from Western businesses and technology to an even greater extent than the moderates. The reformers criticize Gorbachev for proceeding too slowly and believe the only alternative is to effect the necessary changes more rapidly. In the foreign policy arena, reformers would seek to perpetuate the positive image the Soviet Union has acquired over the past several years and probably would place greater emphasis on the notion of a multipolar world, particularly focusing on the growing importance of Europe.

In defense policy, and particularly for the issue of nuclear weapons, the reformers may face a dilemma. On the one hand, they could argue that the Soviet military as an institution is a serious impediment to reform and that the only way to curtail the military's ability to impede the reform process is to reduce its weight within the Soviet system, which would be accomplished by considerably cutting the size of the armed forces. In light of significantly smaller conventional forces, the reformers would tend to see a need to rely on nuclear deterrence for providing a credible defense posture. On the other hand, retaining nuclear weapons could foster a negative image in the West, a factor that the Soviets would need to consider seriously in their attempts to build a "greater Europe." Particularly in this category, it is clear that there are different subcategories among the reformers. At the extreme, some would argue that nuclear weapons are only useful for deterring a strategic nuclear strike; such is the argument of the minimalist school of thought. The two most well-known proponents of the minimalist school, Radomir Bogdanov and Andrei Kortunov, specifically address their critics' argument that third countries become more important if minimum deterrence is adopted and that the strategic balance therefore becomes more complex and less stable. They argue:

Of course, in terms of cold war logic, a bipolar structure is preferable to a multipolar one. But whether we like it or not, the bipolar structure is disintegrating. Seeing that the Soviet Union advocates pluralism in world politics and rejects the "superpower" status imposed upon it, there is no point in clinging to military bipolarity. As regards the "credibility" of deterrence, the strength needed to reliably deter the United States would be more than enough to deter France or Britain. A further circumstance to be borne in mind is that the Soviet Union's unilateral renunciation of its status of nuclear "superpower" and a transition to "minimum deterrence" would undoubtedly lead to increased public pressure on the French and British governments aimed at making them wind down their nuclear modernisation programmes.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Bogdanov and Kortunov, *International Affairs*, No. 8, 1989, p. 10.

In terms of the future of short-range nuclear forces, the authors make an important point. They argue that because a nuclear war could never be limited to Europe, "there is no need to preserve the material means of fighting such a war, including tactical nuclear weapons."¹⁰³ More moderate reformers would see the need to move toward a significantly reduced nuclear force posture, but one that would be at higher levels than those espoused by the minimalists. They would clearly see the same types of benefits to be derived from such a posture as those argued by Bogdanov and Kortunov.

All three of these types of Soviet leaders would be inclined to continue to cut back the size of their nuclear forces; the difference among them would lie in the extent of the reductions contemplated and implemented. In the context of parity (conventional and nuclear), nuclear weapons acquire greater utility as a hedge against future threats, with a unified Germany a focal point for Soviet policy makers, even if this is more of a long-term than immediate concern.

D. CONCLUSIONS

It is clearly important to understand the evolution of Soviet thinking on various security issues as reflected in their literature and policy statements, an effort undertaken in the first section of this report. Over the past year or two, many in the West who were seriously skeptical of Soviet talk about reforming their military thinking and doctrine have become convinced that a significant number of changes are being effected. But what has now succeeded in replacing this subject as a main focus of attention are the revolutionary political events taking place in Eastern Europe and their fundamental implications for the European security order.

The first, and perhaps most important, point to comprehend is that a new landscape has begun to emerge in Europe, and as it does, a new political architecture is also beginning to take shape. No longer is it sufficient to make slight adjustments to old thinking about security issues in the hopes of responding to change; entirely new approaches are necessary. Above all, the current state of affairs is characterized by a great deal of fluidity, which must be reflected in the new approaches. The creation of this new landscape has meant that while the concepts and basic elements of the debate remain essentially unchanged, the relative value of some of these elements (including nuclear weapons) is shifting.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 11.

Thus, as the preceding section detailed, a number of issues that were subordinate themes in the context of the European security order prior to November 1989 have now been propelled to the forefront by events. The most striking example is, of course, the role of Germany. While the two Germanies have long played central roles within their respective alliances, today they have assumed the leading position in formulating the new European security order. In the matter of nuclear weapons, the question of German access to these weapons has become a focal concern for the Soviet Union. In the eyes of the Soviets, no longer are supposed German "nuclear aspirations" merely an instrument for fostering Western alliance disputes and cleavages. Today, the Soviets face the urgent task of ensuring that the Germans do not gain access to nuclear weapons. In the near term, they probably will seek to accomplish this task primarily through the SNF negotiations and expanded contacts with the other nuclear powers in Europe. In the case of the latter, it can be expected that the Soviets will now look more favorably on the provision of extended nuclear guarantees to Germany than they have in the past. As long as the West's existing nuclear powers supply such guarantees, the rationale that Germany--or any other non-nuclear state--might have for acquiring their own nuclear weapons as the new Europe evolves is undermined. It is also entirely possible that the Soviets would opt to make additional cuts in their conventional forces, further diminishing the perceived threat from the East and, consequently, weakening any German sense that it needs its own nuclear weapons.

Looking at the broader framework of the development of a new European security order, it is clear that the events of the last year have begun to erase the traditional East-West divide. Instead, new patterns of shifting coalitions can be expected to emerge, coalitions that will change depending on the matter being addressed. Thus, the Germans and Soviets will likely combine efforts in economic cooperation, while on security matters many countries throughout Europe (East and West) probably will join together to prevent the emergence of German militarism and the Four Powers might find themselves in a condominium to prevent nuclear proliferation, etc. In this new environment of a unified Germany and a new security order, nuclear weapons will certainly continue to play a key role, but it will be a different one. The role of U.S. nuclear forces is likely to diminish while the importance of the British and French nuclear arsenals will increase.

From a military point of view, the utility of nuclear forces (at least their ability to deter other nuclear weapons) will be preserved, but the political environment will dictate that reliance on these weapons be made a low profile issue in the diplomatic and political

arenas. There will definitely be no greater predilection for talking about the military use of these forces than there has been historically; indeed, the opposite is much more likely. For the Soviets, the concept of minimum deterrence has become increasingly salient in their attempts to formulate an approach to the new European security environment. This concept provides the Soviets with a considerable range of options in their dealings with West European powers and in shaping their own role in Europe, but it does not necessarily require the maintenance of short-range nuclear forces. For example, Soviet adherence to minimum deterrence would help to undermine any of Germany's arguments for its own nuclear weapons, while it also would provide a nuclear umbrella for Soviet conventional forces that remain stationed in East German territory.

With respect to short-range nuclear forces, for the Soviets, the time for negotiations is now. Several factors have served to increase Soviet incentives to negotiate on SNF. First, as the Soviet Union's interest in a minimum deterrence strategy grows, SNF becomes less important, because the Soviet Union does not see SNF as necessary for such a strategy. Second, while these weapons are useful as a hedge against conventional failures (especially on an increasingly mobile battlefield), NATO will be unable to use them in this way if the systems should be eliminated completely through negotiations. Most important, the Soviets can use the SNF negotiations as a means of preempting German nuclear ambitions. Gorbachev has stated that he will not allow German unification to threaten or damage Soviet interests, something which German nuclear weapons clearly would do. The tasks of holding the Germans in check and contributing to the shaping of the new European security order present the most significant and difficult challenges Gorbachev has had to face in his foreign policy to date.

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