

"THE MILITARY ASPECTS OF EUROPEAN SECURITY"

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- (1) Acimovic, Ljubivoje: "Military aspects of european security"
- (2) Bertram, Christoph: "MBFR: different things to different powers"
- (3) Towpik, Andrzej: "Some historical remarks; arms control and disarmament in Europe - the current discussion; doubts as to the motives"

1

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MILITARY ASPECTS OF EUROPEAN SECURITY

INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

B e l g r a d e

## MILITARY ASPECTS OF EUROPEAN SECURITY

The issue of disarmament and arms control measures has been present in the discussion on European security since its beginning in the mid-fifties. This is quite natural, especially nowadays, for primarily three reasons: firstly, the existence of a very high level of concentration of military power along the dividing line of the two blocs reached during the Cold War period; secondly, the fact that military alliances have become a basic security structure as well as an integral part of the system of international relations in Europe; and thirdly, the achieved progress of détente by its virtue raises the question of compatibility of the existing amount of military power with the improved political situation in this region, coupled at the same time with some concerns about potential risks that the changes in the present level of forces and their structure might entail for the stability so far established.

During the period of gradual improvement of international relations in Europe the issue of military restrictions has passed through different stages in which both its form and contents have varied, its context changed and the emphasis shifted from one of its aspects to another. Even more important is the evolution this issue has undergone from the point of view of its role and place in European politics. From its initial role as a subject of diplomatic tactics and propaganda moves it has become the matter of serious international initiatives with a perspective of piecemeal achieving some concrete results. This is primarily true for the present phase of European relations, i.e. the early 1970-s. At this stage the issue of military security measures has been, in operational terms, broken down into three main categories: (1) the limitation of strategic weapons (SALT), which falls within the exclusive competence of the two superpowers, but has a certain impact on European security as well - in the first round of negotiations the impact was essentially an indirect one, and in the second round it will obviously be more direct in character; (2) the reduction of forces - mainly conventional - (MBFR), which has a direct bearing on all-European security but it is supposed to be dealt with by the two blocs or, probably, by a narrower circle of countries -

the two superpowers and some of their central European allies; (3) other arms control or collateral disarmament measures, designed to be negotiated within an all-European framework (Conference on European Security and Cooperation). This obviously shows a hierarchical stratification of European states as to their role in dealing with security matters; indeed, there is a certain logic in this division of labor but it also has some significant political implications.

In this paper the discussion of military security measures will be confined to only those which fall within the second and third above mentioned categories. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind the whole of the security complex.

#### I. The Role and Place of Military Measures in the Process of Promoting Security and Cooperation in Europe

1. In order to make a valid assessment of the actual role and significance of military security measures for intra-European relations it is necessary above all to take an adequate approach. This is a commonplace, of course, but it should be mentioned here because many discussions of the subject fall short of such an approach. Briefly, it means that this issue cannot be properly studied in isolation from other relevant or interrelated issues, nor by using a static analytical model. In other words, regional military security measures in Europe must be considered in their broader context in terms of both the field and level of international relations. As to the field this implies first of all political and then economic components of European development. With regard to the level, in studying security situation of the region one has also to take into consideration both global, sub-regional (intra-bloc) and national plane; in addition, some contiguous areas (like the Mediterranean) ought to be taken into account as well.

The necessity of taking a dynamic - instead of static - approach is another point to be stressed here, since very often the evaluation of possible changes in the military security field is done by putting them within the existing international context projected into the future. The dynamic approach takes a given state of affairs as a moment in a process and therefore looks at it from the point of view of both the preceding developments which resulted into it and the

overall forthcoming changes which are expected to occur on the basis of emerging trends.

There has been an obvious neglect so far of such an approach to security measures in Europe.

2. Another point to be made here relates to the concept of security in our days. It is rather important to realize the fact that in approaching the problem of security in the contemporary world we still operate too much with some concepts that are lagging behind the actual state of affairs. On the one hand, there is a tendency of overstressing and treating onesidedly national efforts, military strength, and the role of the military factor in safeguarding security interests; on the other, international security measures on the international plane tend to be primarily seen either in terms of the existing alliances or as a collective security system of a traditional type.

In fact, the things have changed more than has our way of thinking about them. Namely, national security efforts are, no doubt, still of basic significance, but joint international efforts on regional and global scale are also becoming more and more a necessary, complementary component of national security. Increasing military strength is no longer the only way of improving national security position, and in some cases it has become even meaningless; arms control and disarmament measures appear to be also a useful means of achieving this aim. Military factor does not play as dominant role in the field of security as it used to do, while the role of political factor is growing in importance. In spite of the fact that military alliances are probably going to stay with us for some time now, their significance as security instruments is gradually diminishing. And if they are to be replaced with something else it is not likely that it is going to be a classic type collective security system, i.e. an institutionally unified, integral set of security measures with the central role given to collective sanctions and military measures; it is more realistic to see this system (at least in the foreseeable future) in a less unified form, as a network of a series of interrelated arrangements on various planes, which would be realised in a more functional than institutional way, more de facto than de jure.

3. Military security measures cannot be properly discussed without being put into the context of the security system as a whole within which they are supposed to be implemented. In this respect, however, there are several preliminary questions to be answered: What is actually the system that these measures should be geared to - the existing or a new one? What kind of a new system we are aiming at? Could the existing system be neglected if the new one is going only gradually to develop? What are the basic characteristics of both of them?

Let us start with the last question and try to answer it in a brief, sketchy way.

The present security system in Europe emerged during the cold war confrontation and constitutes an integral part of the global system based on strategic-nuclear balance (the so called balance of terror). Its basic organisational structure consists of two military alliances which correspond to the bi-polar international relations constellation, with the key positions of the two nuclear superpowers.

So far this system has functioned with relative success: there has been no war in Europe and the process of détente scored some significant results. However, it has indubitable shortcomings which make it unsatisfactory, not only in the long run, but already at the present moment.

First of all, the very fact that this system is founded on the risk of self-annihilation is negative by itself.

Secondly, on this basis it, in a given sense, fully guarantees the security only to the superpowers. Not even their allies are guaranteed the same degree of security, since whether they are to be given protection when threatened depends on how the superpower in question assesses its own interests of security at the given moment; they are even more vulnerable to the use of force, no matter on what grounds, within the alliance itself. The crux of the problem of unequal protection for the other countries and incomplete safeguarding of peace in this system of security (not only on the European but on a global scale as well) lies in the fact that, as one of the basic prerequisites for its functioning, local conflicts and wars must be possible within it in the sense that they must not be prevented at the risk of a major, particularly world war, but must only be dealt with by a mech-

anism of crisis management or arms control. In other words, the safeguarding of world peace is achieved at the sacrifice of the independence and vital national interests of smaller nations. In this system this is of course the sole alternative, but for this very reason the system as such is unacceptable - primarily for those who are its potential victims.

It should be added here that in such a system smaller countries especially those outside the blocs, find that their sole option is a complete mobilization of their national resources for defence in the case of aggression and continuous struggle (both conventional and guerrilla) so long as the aggressor is present within their national territory. The greater the capabilities and preparedness of a country in this respect, the less the likelihood that it will be a victim of an aggressor. One version of such an approach is the Yugoslav concept of general people's defence.

Thirdly, this system, by its virtue, engenders inequality in international relations. Fourthly, being based on nuclear-strategic balance in combination with large conventional forces, it absorbs enormous material and human resources. And finally, this system strengthens a great deal the role of the military factor in international relations, what must have distorting effects on them.

It follows from what has been said above that changing the present security system in Europe is a necessity. And the change essentially means a system which does not rest on bloc-type alliances as its main structural pillars but has, instead of bilateral (bipolar), a multilateral pattern; which fully and equally guarantees security to all countries and enables them to participate in it on equal footing; and which puts an emphasis on the political (instead of military) component of security. This further implies that it is not the question of improving or adapting the present security system but of transforming it into a substantially new one; the transformation is bound to be a long term process and very complex one; this process constitutes an integral part of the overall process of transformation of the existing system of international relations.

These considerations inevitably lead to the conclusion that military restrictions or arms control measures, especially at this stage, are bound to be bivalent in the

sense of the need to be geared both to the existing and to the new i.e. future security system. They must be applicable now, but in the same time suitable for developing the new security system. And more than that, they are expected not only to follow positive developments in the international political and security system but to promote it as well.

4. This brings us to the question of interrelationships between political relations and security, as well as between security and military restrictions. Because of a very high level of their interdependence the question of priorities appear to be a vicious circle. In fact it is not. In spite of the fact that these closely interrelated processes cannot be analysed separately, this is not a "chicken-and-egg" question (i.e. which comes first?). One can actually realize a certain order of priorities (in terms of roles, primarily) and it is the following: promotion of political relationships; increase of security; military restrictions (arms control, force reductions, disarmament).

The main point to be stressed here is that in this political-military complex the center of gravity lies in the political sphere. This has four important connotations. First, genuine international security cannot be achieved without a substantial change of the present system of international relations. Second, progress in the sphere of political relations enables positive steps in the military security field and even needs to be accompanied by them in a corresponding way. Third, measures of arms control and force reductions are not only a function of political relations but, in a specific way, their promoting factor as well. Finally, as a consequence of the preceding, it is clear that in international arrangements political and security issues cannot be divorced neither is this possible in the case of the security system and the above-mentioned military measures.

The last remark does not pertain to technical or procedural matters, of course. It is the question of the decision making power in its broader sense, which in practical terms finds its expression in the dilemma of whether or not to adopt a differential approach as to the rights of the states concerned to deal with particular security issues.

5. If the role and place of the military measures in the field of international political and security relations



stand as it has been suggested above, the next question to be raised is whether or not in the present state of affairs the conditions are ripe to start gradually introducing these measures. An affirmative answer can be given for the following reasons:

Progress in the development of political relations in Europe has reached a very high level as compared with their lowest level in the cold war time. In the military security field, however, there has been actually no corresponding change (level of forces, arms control); moreover, instead of following the process of détente, developments in this field have continued to move in the opposite direction for quite some time. The discrepancy between the political and military field does not seem to be tolerable any longer, especially if the present trend in the former field is to continue.

The interest to do something and the will to act in this field have already been manifested by practically all countries concerned. Despite the fact that in this respect they differ very much (motives, objectives, approaches, emphases), the important thing is this general orientation.

Finally, the very fact that some initial steps along this line have already been taken (MBFR negotiations are scheduled) is very much indicative for the state of conditions for an international action in the field of military security.

So, the real question is not whether or not, but how. And this "how" relates to all aspects of the process. In close connection with this one there is another, no less complex, question of all possible implications of the changes to be introduced in the military field (immediate effects being of particular concern).

6. As far as the possible positive effects of the military security measures are concerned they can be seen in various spheres.

First of all in the military sphere itself it is in the logic of the matter to consider that an essentially lower level of forces, along with valid arms control measures, make the security in the given area more stable and viable.

On the political plane potential positive effects of these measures are to be seen in making this matter an object

of political cooperation; in narrowing the room or making the conditions more difficult for the policy with reliance on force; and in diminishing the role of the military factor in international relations.

Psychological effects are of indubitable importance from the confidence building point of view. An indirect politico-psychological positive result would also be in reducing the possibilities for the governments to exploit their opponents' military measures for propaganda purposes (as an excuse for either stepping up the pressure at home or increasing tensions abroad).

Economically, a rather substantial reduction of forces, for instance, would, no doubt, ease the present burden of defence expenditures.

The points that have been made so far should not be interpreted as suggesting a simplified optimistic view in favour of military security measures in Europe. Recognition of the facts that the process of introducing these measures is bound to take place and that potential benefits for international relations and security are inherent to it by no means imply that this process is going to be an easy, smooth or fast one, without ambiguities and risks, undesired side-effects and difficulties. On the contrary, it is rather clear that it will be a very complex and slow development, with some unforeseeable problems to cope with.

## II. Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR)

1. Suggestions for the reduction of military forces in Europe appeared as early as in the mid-1950s, but it is only in the 1970s that this issue became a subject of genuine international concern. Even in the late sixties when it was launched under the present title of MBFR at the Reykjavik meeting of the NATO council (June 1968), this issue in fact still was in the realm of diplomatic tactics (to avoid unilateral reductions of American forces in Western Europe and to counter the Soviet initiative for a conference on European security by a concrete security proposal), and was treated in the same way by the other side - the Warsaw Treaty countries (to counter the Western initiative for MBFR by accepting it in order not to give them an excuse for rejecting the initiative for the Conference). The situation began to change

early in 1971 and the final step to include MBFR into the East-West agenda was made at the Soviet-American summit meeting in Moscow last May.

Therefore the question whether MBFR is a likely subject for East-West negotiations has already been answered in practice. The questions that still remain to be answered, however, are neither few nor less important: What is the rationale of MBFR i.e. its role and function in the process of promoting political relations and security in Europe? What are the real motives and objectives of the countries concerned? What might be the contents and structure of these measures? How to proceed (approaches, ways and means)? What forum is going to deal with MBFR and how to secure the rights and interests of all European countries?

2. There is a variety of views expressed about the role and function of MBFR. They range from those which essentially deny usefulness and appropriateness of these measures (at the present moment, at least) to those which point out only their potential positive effects. As the time goes on the emphasis is gradually shifting towards positive aspects of force reductions, without diminishing cautiousness or awareness of some uncertainties in approaching this issue.

A rather widespread view about this point, as expressed, for instance, by Robert Hunter, is that MBFR negotiations must be seen "primarily as a political process whose essential objective is to shore up what military stability already exists, at lower cost, while minimizing difficulties that arise in the process."<sup>1</sup>) From the point of view of the authors of a French article published in "Politique Étrangère" (1970) the aim of MBFR would be to stabilize the present situation, establish a new military balance at a lower cost and preclude in the future any unilateral increase of forces. In addition to it they stress that it is not military but political and psychological effects of MBFR that are essential.<sup>2</sup>) Y. Kostko regards the reduction of forces as one of the means of achieving military relaxation in Europe, while stressing in the same time a close inter-linkage of

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1 Robert Hunter, "Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions: The Next Step in Détente?" in International Conciliation, No. 587, March 1972, p. 50.

2 La réduction équilibrée des forces et l'aménagement de la sécurité en Europe dans le contexte politique actuel", Politique Étrangère, No. 5, 1970, pp. 499-516.

security and disarmament questions.<sup>1)</sup> In the view of Karl Tornstensen the reduction of forces in Europe is supposed to lessen the tension, reduce the possibilities of local wars and their escalation, ease the East-West negotiations and enable new initiatives.<sup>2)</sup> In the official communiqué of Tito-Brezhnev talks in Moscow, June 11, 1972, there was expressed the view that "the reduction of forces and disarmament, as well as other measures in this field would constitute an essential component in the process of constructing European security".

Referring to what has been said earlier in this paper concerning the role of the military security measures in general, it should be pointed out here that the reduction of forces, along with other arms control measures, is supposed to produce positive effects in the fields of political relations, security and economic development. Whether it will be so and to what extent depends very much on the ways the reductions will be negotiated and carried out. This, however, is conditioned by the basic trend in the development of political relations in Europe, as well as on the global plane.

In discussing the issue of force reductions in Europe, Christoph Bertram has rightly adopted the so-called political linkage approach.<sup>3)</sup> There should, however, be more stressed the linkage between this approach and the "military balance" and "instrumental approach". In this sense, in fact, the meaning of the political linkage approach ought to be more elaborated and broadened. Namely, the crucial point is that the political linkage approach "regards military forces as a function of political security in the relationship between East and West" and that "reductions must, therefore, be linked to the political process of détente", i.e. "dependent on the political progress of East-West relations". In addition to this, however, it should be recognized that the elements of "the military balance approach" are also going to be involved in the process of reductions, on the one

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- 1 Y. Kostko, "Ravnovesie straha ili obespečenie podlinnoj bezopasnosti", Mirovaja ekonomika i meždunarodnye otnošenija, 6/1972, pp. 87-89.
- 2 Karl Tornstensen, "MBFR" (Mutual Balanced Force Reductions), Internasjonal politikk, Oslo, No. 2-3, 1971.
- 3 Christoph Bertram, "Mutual Force Reductions in Europe: The Political Aspects", Adelphi Papers, No. 84, January 1972.

hand, and on the other, that the reductions of forces as a function of the political process in Europe, are bound to have a feedback effect on this process as well. In other words, without being directly used as an instrument for political change, the force reductions are supposed to serve the purpose of promoting political relations in Europe, including a substantial change of its present system.

The fact that the process of force reductions is rather complicated and permeated with some potential undesirable effects does not warrant a denial of its essentially positive role. The resistance to it could not be justified either on military-strategic or political grounds. There is no magic figure in the present level and structure of forces in Europe, which in fact has been reached in a very pragmatic way. On the other hand, this level of forces is by no means in harmony with the present state of political affairs in Europe and contradicts both the proclaimed political intentions and actual trends in the field.

3. The motives of the states embarking now on MBFR negotiations are rather different. One rough generalization would be that the superpowers are primarily interested in economic aspects and other countries in political and security aspects of the force reductions in Europe. This, however, needs to be more elaborated.

Both superpowers feel their economic burden of military expenditures too heavy and, therefore, would like to lessen it; and the opportunity is seen in positive developments in Europe. In close connection with this are two specific factors: domestic political pressure in the United States to withdraw its forces from abroad and the necessity for the Soviet Union to keep its armed forces deployed along two long front lines - Asia, in addition to Europe. Finally, both of them see MBFR negotiations as complementary to SALT (first of all in connection with the question of American forward based nuclear weapons system and Soviet medium - and intermediate-range ballistic missiles). One should not exclude, of course, the possibility that their motives also involve the hopes that, in the long run, the reduction of forces might bring about some advantageous political changes in the opposite camp.

Other European countries, as stated before; are mainly concerned with political and security implications of MBFR. Their hopes - although differing in degree - are that the reduction of forces would be a factor of promoting positive developments in Europe and, in particular, their own political and military security interests. However, specific international positions and corresponding national interests of each of them make this picture much more complex. Their different attitudes towards MBFR do not simply reflect their different, aligned or nonaligned positions: the differences can also be realized between the members of the same alliance, as well as (but to a lesser degree) between the neutral and non-aligned countries. Some of the countries in which foreign troops are stationed, for instance, would like to be gradually freed of the foreign military presence on their territories. Some others are more or less suspicious that the reduction or withdrawal of the stationed troops within their respective alliance might either jeopardize their security interests or impose on them more military expenditures. The French opposition to MBFR, determined by her particular foreign policy orientation, is quite specific as well. While seeing in MBFR potential advantages for their national political and security interests, the non-aligned and neutral countries are, at the same time, rather anxious about the way this problem is going to be handled, fearing that it might entail some unfavourable consequences. This concern, however, is shared by some other countries too.

4. The issue of the contents of MBFR involves several questions: What forces will be reduced - stationed or both stationed and indigenous? What kind of forces - conventional, or both conventional and nuclear; only ground forces or also air- and naval forces? Will military installations, air fields etc. also be embraced or not? What kind of collateral measures are to be taken (first of all control and verification)? What territories should be included?

It is hard to make in this paper any specific suggestions or forecasts in this respect. Different views, however, have already been expressed,<sup>1)</sup> but neither of them can

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1 See, for instance: Robert E. Hunter, op.cit.; Michael Palmer and David Thomas, "Arms Control and the Mediterranean", The World Today, November 1971, pp. 495-502;

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be given explicit priority. The whole issue is extremely complex and all the above-mentioned elements are closely interrelated. Various combinations are possible but which one will eventually be chosen depends on many factors, first of all on the basic principle of balancing the reductions. This principle, indeed, will be the matter of political decision of the main actors in MBFR negotiations in the given circumstances.

There are only some general observations that might be useful to be made in this paper. First, it is already de facto settled that both stationed and indigenous forces should be reduced; it is still open, however, whether these reductions would be carried out simultaneously or successively. It seems to be well justified to expect to see the reductions realized by the following order of priorities: (1) stationed forces, (2) indigenous forces of central-European states; (3) forces of other members of the alliances; (4) forces of the countries outside the blocs. Overlapping of some of these sequences (especially 1. and 2.) is not only possible but probable.

It is hard to imagine the reduction of forces without nuclear (tactical) weapons being included (into it). The question to be answered is in fact how the timing of the two reductions would be co-related. Moreover, this is one of the components of the balancing complex.

As far as the air and naval forces are concerned, the former are quite likely to be included and the latter are not, especially in the early stages of MBFR. Nonetheless, the view of M. Palmer and D. Thomas on this issue deserves our attention. Namely, they consider that some arms control measures in the Mediterranean (applied on the Soviet and American naval forces) are even easier to be implemented in comparison with the force reductions in Central Europe and suggest a link to be established between these and MBFR negotiations.<sup>1)</sup>

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Hans-Georg Wieck, "Politische und militärische Probleme ausgewogener Truppenreduzierungen in Europa", Europa Archiv, No. 22, 1970, pp. 807-815; Timothy W. Stanley, "Mutual Force Reductions", Survival, No. 5, Vol. XII, May 1970, pp. 152-160; "La réduction équilibrée des forces et l'aménagement de la sécurité en Europe dans le contexte politique actuel", Politique Etrangere, (35<sup>e</sup> année), No.5, 1970, pp. 499-516.

1 Michael Palmer and David Thomas, op.cit.

Military installations, air fields and similar objects would probably be involved in one way or another. However, it does not seem that this issue has been much explored so far, what might be an indication of its not being of primary concern in the early stages of MBFR.

The issue of various collateral measures, verification and control in particular, seems to be overestimated in the discussions so far by being treated as a highly controversial problem, rather difficult to be solved. It is, in fact, a primarily political question, or in other words, it is the matter of confidence, expressed in the sense of either accepting international means of verification and control or not insisting upon them. Any stubborn attitude would mean the opposite. Once the substantial issues are settled, this question will not be the obstacle.

With respect to the territories where the reductions are supposed to take place, the most conflicting issue - if raised - would be the one of including some European parts of the Soviet Union into this arrangement. But this does not seem to be negotiable, at least not in the near future.

5. The question of approaching the negotiations of MBFR and the ways and means of carrying out the reductions has been very widely discussed in almost all writings on this subject. Many suggestions are being made and various models proposed. The central issue that dominates the discussion is the problem of balancing the reductions. It is, indeed, a very complex and important issue. However, one cannot help feeling that the military experts go a little bit too far in stressing the complexity and inextricability of the problem, whereas the political scientists, perhaps, tend to underestimate it. A correct view lies, obviously, between the two extremes. The problem is not simple at all and does require a great deal of exploration and expertise. But, if the political will to achieve an agreement is there the solution will be found. This has been exactly the case in the recent settlements of several East-West political issues which were not less complicated at all.

Closely connected with this is the question of the way of approaching the negotiations on MBFR. The most promising and even probable approach would be to start with general principles, without submitting clearcut proposals, and search



for the solutions of concrete issues in a rather pragmatic way. Robert Hunter pointed out quite rightly that "negotiating MBFR should be seen as less a matter of bargaining on the details of military forces than of searching for mutually acceptable areas of agreement that will give all nations concerned greater confidence about the political understandings that are being sought ..... yet the need to establish the right emphasis is important. If this is not done at the start, there will be a host of perhaps insoluble issues, such as the fact that the Soviet forces will only have to withdraw a few hundred miles as compared with the United States' 3000. But if the emphasis is placed on political problems and political understandings, instead of on bargaining about details, issues like this one may not prove insuperable in the long run."<sup>1</sup>) This sounds most reasonable indeed.

6. Last but not least is the question of the negotiating body of MBFR. It is, in fact, already agreed upon between the Soviet Union and the United States that MBFR will be negotiated in a narrower circle of countries directly involved in the reduction of forces, although a definite list of participants is not yet fixed.

No one can deny the right to the countries whose military forces and territories are in question to negotiate between themselves the arrangements about concrete measures they are supposed to take. However it is also unacceptable to deprive the other countries from their rights to take an active part in securing their own interests. And it is more than clear that MBFR measures would also have an effect on the security of these countries and of Europe as a whole. In addition, they also involve significant political implications.

On the other hand, if the MBFR negotiations are completely separated from those within the Conference on European security and cooperation, in that case the main all-European undertaking will lose its real purpose and function.

Therefore, there is a necessity to have a close link established between the two sets of negotiations - European security and cooperation Conference and MBFR. The

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1 Robert Hunter, op.cit.

most adequate way to do it would be to give the Conference the rights (a) to discuss and adopt general principles and guidelines for the reduction of forces in Europe; (b) to be continuously informed about the development of MBFR negotiations; and (c) to verify the agreements reached on this plane.

If the declarations of intentions of the most influential countries with respect to the Conference are genuine indeed, the link will be established.

### III. Other Arms Control Measures

In addition to force reductions there are some other arms control measures that would be both possible and suitable to be implemented in Europe in the present circumstances. The role and significance of these measures have already been discussed before, in the first part of the paper dealing with the general aspects of military security measures in Europe. It should be added here, however, that all these measures, including the reductions of forces, are mutually interrelated and complementary in many respects. Those of them that are less complex and, accordingly, easier to be implemented would represent the first steps towards farther-reaching arrangements. Security effects of each of these measures are not to be neglected, but if combined together and built into a coherent security system, their joint effect would be much greater; yet, their most important role lies in building confidence and promoting political relations.

A few of these arms control measures seem to be particularly suitable to the incipient stage of developing a new security system in Europe. They might be grouped into two categories: first, arms freezing, and second, restrictions on demonstrations of military power.

1. Freezing the military forces in Europe would imply both stationed and indigenous forces. In terms of priorities this measure is supposed to be applied first to stationed forces, then to indigenous forces of the members of the alliances, and finally to those of neutral and non-aligned countries.

Stopping the escalation of the foreign military presence in Europe is, probably, the most important step

along this line of arms control, and its political effect might be even more important than the security ones. This measure should encompass all aspects of the escalation, both quantitative and qualitative: from the expansion of foreign military presence to new countries, through increasing its volume in the countries where it already exists, to shifting troops and bases to strategically sensitive areas in these countries and bringing in new weapons which upset the achieved balance.

Moreover, it should be pointed out that arms freezing would be a highly conducive first step to MBFR.

2. Europe has experienced enough of military power demonstrations. On this basis one might suggest, among others, the following restrictions on this kind of activities: (a) general commitment of all states not to resort to the demonstrations of military power; (b) restrictions on multinational manoeuvres in strategically and politically sensitive areas, particularly in relations to their magnitude and frequency; (c) obligation to announce and notify neighbouring countries about the manoeuvres, in due time, as well as to let representatives of these countries observe them; (d) preclusion of using international waters and space for any kind of military power demonstrations in the vicinity of territorial waters or the air space of the European states.

By reducing and eventually eliminating these incident-prone and tension-increasing activities, the security and political interests of European states would certainly be promoted; moreover, by the very fact of adopting adequate international restrictions a contribution would be made to further improving the atmosphere of good will and confidence. That is why the whole issue of arms control measures is worth being discussed at the Conference of European Security and Cooperation.

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INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUY ON MILITARY ASPECTS OF EUROPEAN SECURITY  
Belgrade, 15-16 December 1972

Christoph BERTRAM

MBFR: DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT POWERS

INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

B e l g r a d e

## MBFR: Different Things to Different Powers

The governments concerned with European security hold different views on the problems and prospects of MBFR. This need not mean that some are right and some are wrong in their judgement. It means rather that every government pursues interests of its own and that these interests do not necessarily coincide with those of others: opponents, neighbours, even members of the same alliance. This paper will look at the differences which can be attributed to international status, and examine, in a schematic way, conceivable approaches to MBFR for the superpowers, for European members of pacts and for the neutral and non-aligned countries in Europe.

### I. The Superpowers

The United States and the Soviet Union are militarily the most powerful countries in the world. Europe is but one, albeit a very important, area of security concern for them. If one of them is markedly weaker than the other in that region, this does not imply military inferiority - strengths in other regions will offset vulnerability here.

Since force reductions in Europe will not put their basic security in doubt, they can look at MBFR largely as a technocratic problem, divorced from political considerations. The aim of MBFR is simply to maintain the existing level of security while reducing the level of forces. Political ambitions would even be counterproductive: they might unnecessarily delay an agreement. Their unique military power puts the superpowers in the enviable position that they don't have to worry about the political situation when reducing the number of their forces. For them, the relations of their military forces in Europe can be looked at in separation from détente.

What is more, the superpowers are the only powers who can convincingly claim that reducing forces is also reducing confrontation and tension. For the European region it is by no means certain that a decrease in confrontation is desirable

and that reducing forces is a contribution to détente - after all, the existing European security system has worked relatively well, and to dismantle the structures of confrontation in Europe before the political situation is ripe for it could lead, at least for Western Europe, to a loss, not a gain in security. The remark in Mr. Kostko's article "The 'Balance of Fear' or the Safeguarding of Genuine Security" \* that the preservation of the present security structure in Europe would mean "an increase in the present military confrontation which would inevitably lead to a further increase in tension" does not, I believe, reflect the view most West Europeans would hold. But it is a point of view that makes sense for the superpowers. An increase of military strength by either side affects not only their relationship in Europe but their global relationship. The more interested the United States and the Soviet Union are to establish a working relationship with each other, the more do they have to beware that their action wherever in the world does not lend itself to misinterpretations. Maintaining unnecessary confrontation with the other superpower, whether in Europe or elsewhere, would then indeed imply a setback for the working atmosphere between them and could increase tension. The global view that is natural for superpowers also means that neither can allow regional European considerations to determine its relationship with the other; Europe is just one of many factors, although its importance will be weighted differently in Moscow and in Washington. Nor can either superpower want to get entangled in European matters to such an extent that it loses flexibility in other areas of superpower relations.

For MBFR, the consequences of this approach are clear. The emphasis will be on reductions, not on collateral measures. MBFR is not regarded or desired to be an instrument of political change in Europe. Reductions should be negotiated preferably between the two superpowers, but if because of American concern for the reaction of the allies, a purely bilateral arrangement is not possible, then the group of countries participating in the negotiations should at least be small, and negotiations should be clearly separated from large multi-state conferences like the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The verification of agreements on MBFR is not a primary interest to the superpowers; they feel militarily sufficiently secure to trust that the other side will honour the agreements, they have the means for unilat-

\* reprinted in SURVIVAL, September/October 1972, pp. 236-238

eral reconnaissance and they understand that neither side will want to lose its flexibility through too restrictive verification procedures. The area of reductions is not defined by any political concept but by pragmatic convenience.

What would be the ideal result of MBFR for the United States and the Soviet Union? Of course, the ideal result is usually not the obtainable one. Even superpowers do not always have their way, and the United States would certainly not want to alienate its European allies over an issue which, after all, is not the most important one for American foreign and defence policy. Because of their military strength, the superpowers can also be relatively relaxed about the ultimate result of MBFR<sup>\*</sup>. The unknown does not scare them, they trust that it will be manageable. If both superpowers were entirely free from other considerations, their preferred MBFR result would be this: the reduction of their forces in Central Europe to an extent which takes into account their respective sensitivities and interests, leaving a sufficient degree of flexibility for both of them to be able to act if vital interests in the region or outside it are at stake.

## II. West European Alliance Members<sup>\*\*</sup>

The approach to MBFR of the West European members of the Atlantic Alliance is determined by two factors: they live in Europe, and they feel militarily vulnerable without American support.

Living in Europe means that the countries and states in the area are directly affected in their security by arms control measures. They have to assess events and negotiations according to a European, not a global view. The European situation determines the definition of issues: whether reductions are symmetrical or asymmetrical depends not on the global

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\* See the open-ended approach proposed by Timothy W. Stanley and Darnell M. Whitt: "Détente Diplomacy: United States and European Security in the 1970s", New York 1970, pp. 63-66.

\*\* The following section deals only with West European attitudes. I find it difficult to judge to what extent these apply to, or are reflected in, the views held by the members of the Warsaw Pact.

arsenal of military force but on the European military balance; the requirement that reductions should be "balanced" cannot be satisfied by a global comparison of forces in East and West but must be related to the European theatre.

Living in Europe means that MBFR cannot be abstracted from the political process. For the past 25 years European security has been a conglomerate of both political and military factors and they cannot now be separated only for convenience sake. Living in Europe also means a much greater concern with developments in the Eastern half of the Continent than would seem normal for a superpower. The question, whether arms control arrangements might be useful to achieve desired political changes in Europe comes naturally to Europeans\*, even if the answer is not that easy, and to separate MBFR from the political negotiating forum, the Security Conference, would seem artificial. It is true that some West European countries are in favour of separating the two negotiations but this applies only to those who are either doubtful about the Conference or about MBFR. Those West European countries who are in favour both of the Conference and of MBFR are quite naturally the strongest supporters of a close link between both negotiations.

The feeling of military vulnerability vis-à-vis the Soviet Union is no less important for defining the approach of European Alliance members. If they felt militarily strong enough, they could more easily accept the superpower thesis that MBFR reduces confrontation and thereby contributes to détente; the division of negotiations between the Conference and MBFR would not pose a conceptual problem. Because the West European countries do feel vulnerable in the military field, the technocratic approach to MBFR - same security, less effort - is not satisfactory to them. The structures of military confrontation have a reassuring affect and, far from increasing tension, they make it possible to the West Europeans to pursue a policy of détente in a mood of confidence and self-assurance - the only way in which détente makes sense. If MBFR is just about a reduction of forces to diminish confrontation, then it is either not necessary at all - European cooperation has flourished over the past years without a reduction of forces in Eastern Europe - or dangerous: the

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\* see Modèles de Sécurité Européenne, Politique Etrangère, 1971, pp. 526 - 35



process of force reductions might be pursued regardless of the political process between East and West as well as inside Western Europe.

There is an additional reason for the European approach to MBFR. Confrontation is not a purpose in itself, it is one way to try and establish in Europe a certain code of conduct between states. But the rule of behaviour that confrontation and deterrence can produce is only: "don't attack me". For peaceful relations in Europe this alone is not enough; the attack must be prevented not by deterrence but by self-interest, the rules of behaviour must not be imposed - who indeed could do it? - but followed out of a country's own accord. This is an aim which the Security Conference might achieve over time. Arms control in Europe should underpin this process, and not make it more difficult by a premature reduction of forces.

The concern that MBFR might create a fait accompli before the political situation is ripe for reductions is a very real one in Western Europe. The timing of reductions becomes important, not every point in time is right. Ideally, West Europeans would want to wait with MBFR until West European defence integration has made some progress, until the trade negotiations with the United States have come to a satisfactory agreement, until NATO forces are structurally more efficient, until Europeans have developed sufficient confidence in détente to risk a weakening of the existing security system by substantially reducing forces.

The differences of view among West European governments on MBFR are not due to differences about the political nature of arms control arrangements in Europe. They are the result of differing assessments on whether the political implications are desirable or not. If the French government is opposed to MBFR it is because it fears that agreed troop reductions would have a politically destabilizing effect. If the British government is reluctant about MBFR it is because analysts see military disadvantages in MBFR which are not offset by political advantages. If the West German government favours MBFR it is because political leaders regard it as a necessary complement to the political process of détente. Unlike the two superpowers, the European governments have to see MBFR in close relation to the political process. This will mean in practice that, for the West Europeans, the political aspects come first, and that progress in arms control

is made dependant on the political desirability in European, not in superpower terms. This will also apply to the definition of the area of reduction and arms control.

The inseperable tie between MBFR and the political process in Europe is the main feature in the MBFR approach of West European members of the Alliance. It has a number of practical consequences. Negotiations on MBFR should take place in a special committee of the Security Conference as suggested by the Warsaw Pact countries in June 1970 in Budapest. All member states of the two military pacts in Europe should take part in negotiations even if this should result in further slowing down progress in the talks; the principle of Alliance that security is indivisible must apply no less when force reductions are being considered. The primary aim of MBFR negotiations are not reductions but a multilateral framework in which both sides can seriously discuss military security matters; reductions may result from it, but need not - they are rather a by-product of MBFR. West Europeans will favour some verification and inspection procedures to accompany arms control in order to test the sincerity of participants in implementing the agreement; but they will be careful not to create highly structured and supervised arms control zones in Central Europe for fear that these might become, over time, political zones and weaken cohesion within Western Europe. Contrary to the superpowers, the West European Alliance members are reluctant to let the process of MBFR define the final result; they would like to know not only where to start but also where to arrive. As long as they don't their attitude will be one of pragmatic caution.

For the West European Alliance members the ideal outcome of MBFR would be: if MBFR is separated from the Security Conference, an agreement on equal force ceilings in East and West Europe so that the arms control agreement does not prejudice the political process in Europe; if MBFR is firmly linked to the Security Conference, however, they could be much more flexible and let the pace of East-West relations and of West European integration define the scope for arms control.

### III. Non-aligned and neutral countries

For the purpose of this paper, a negative definition of non-alignment and neutrality can be sufficient: it includes all states which are not members of either military pact in Europe.

At the peak of the Cold War, and of military confrontation in Europe these states could define their policy by not taking part in the confrontation. Now that the military pacts themselves have embarked on détente, and confrontation has become muted, the difference between pact members and non-aligned states has become less obvious. The non-aligned and neutral countries are, therefore, likely to make special efforts to prevent this distinction from becoming blurred any further. In many respects their analysis of MBFR would coincide with the views held by the European pact members, especially on the primacy of the political process. They, too, will prefer to see MBFR negotiations linked firmly to the Security Conference.

In order to maintain the distinction between pact members and others, the non-aligned and neutral states are unlikely to seek a place at the negotiating table. Nor will they want to have their territory and their forces included in the arms control area. If the non-aligned states were included, they could easily become part of a formal East-West military balance, just what they have always wanted to avoid. This does not mean that, while in the rest of Europe forces are reduced, the non-pact members must remain armed to their teeth. Their reductions, however, depend not only on the behaviour of one side, but of both sides. Non-pact countries who want to retain their non-aligned character should only reduce their forces after NATO and Warsaw Pact have done so\*. (Even then can they not reduce their forces to the same extent as their neighbours since they must maintain enough military force to make their claim of neutrality and non-alignment credible.) This is a real dilemma. The military balance between NATO and Warsaw Pact is just as decisive for the security of pact members as of non-pact members. Yet the latter have to refrain from becoming full participants in

\* see A. Ernst: "Die Schweiz und die europäische Sicherheit" Allgemeine Schweizer Militärzeitschrift, Mai 1972, S. 235

the negotiations. They might consider applying for observer status but it is difficult to see how this could give them any real influence in the negotiations.

Because they cannot sit at the MBFR table nor participate with their forces and territory in an agreement, the non-pact countries have an even stronger interest than the other European states in linking MBFR firmly to the Conference. The closer the link, the more they can hope to be kept informed about the progress of negotiations. The closer the link, the more can they also hope to exert some indirect influence on the MBFR negotiations through general principles for arms control which could be worked out at the Conference with the participation of all states and applied to MBFR.

For non-pact countries an arms control area which covered the total territory of the two military pacts in Europe would be preferable to regional arms control, say, in Central Europe, in Northern Europe, or in the Balkans. For one, arms control in one region could set forces free to move to another region and, while decreasing military confrontation there, could increase it here. Secondly, a comprehensive arms control agreement would make it possible for the non-pact states to reduce the burden of defence, too. They would no longer have to hope for indirect benefits from arms control, e.g. that MBFR in Central Europe might create an atmosphere which is also conducive to détente elsewhere; they could benefit directly if all of the pact territory in Europe is included since this could improve relations with immediate neighbours and with the pacts themselves.

The non-pact countries are likely to attach greater importance to the verification of arms control agreements than either the superpowers or the West European governments. If multilateral verification should be agreed upon, the neutral and non-aligned countries would seem the natural candidates for supervising an MBFR agreement, and verification would bring them into the process of European arms control without prejudice to their neutral or non-aligned states. But also for security reasons would they be in favour of adequate - and perhaps more than adequate - verification of MBFR; they must be even more concerned than the West European pact members, who after all have the military power of an alliance behind them, to learn as early as possible of any imminent dangers to their security.

The ideal result of MBFR for the non-pact countries of Europe would be this: the agreement should include all NATO and Warsaw Pact territory in Europe, although reductions might be limited to a smaller area. If such a comprehensive arrangement could not be reached, the non-pact countries would want to work out the principles of arms control in the Security Conference and leave the regional implementation to MBFR.

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The views attributed above to the different categories of states involved in European arms control are unlikely to be made in practice in these terms. Governments, particularly of the small and medium sized countries of Europe, will seek and find a compromise and, since they cannot get the ideal result, will accept less ideal results in MBFR. Compromises will be relatively easy between the West European and the non-aligned position, much more difficult with the superpower approach. Both the United States and the Soviet Union will be tempted to overrule European objections, and they will probably succeed in getting their allies' support for their policy. This may, however, be short-sighted: unless Europeans themselves believe that MBFR can contribute to their security, superpower claims that it does will not to convince them.

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Conference on Military Aspects of European Security - December 1972

Discussion Paper

by Andrzej Towpik

I

Some Historical Remarks

Post-war proposals in the field of arms control, and limitation and reduction of armaments which were planned to be applied in Europe could be divided, in general, into two categories.

1. First, were the proposals from the category of "classical" arms control measures. They concerned mainly air inspection and control posts schemes. In the course of disarmament negotiations, they were often discussed in global terms, though their practical application concerned first of all the area of Europe.

Apart other questions, the possibility of reaching an agreement on these issues was first of all limited by the difference of viewpoints as to the independent value of these measures for increasing confidence and security in the prevailing at that time conditions. The Soviet Union, while repeatedly accepting or submitting proposals concerning such measures<sup>x/</sup>, believed that their effectiveness as well as possibility of their implementation in general depended on the fact whether they were to be complemented with steps aimed at diminishing or limiting military confrontation,

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<sup>x/</sup> See: Russet and Cooper: Arms Control in Europe, Denver 1967, p.54 "The concept of reciprocal aerial photography, originally put forth by President Eisenhower in his "open skies" plan of 1955 and ridiculed by the Russians then, has appeared subsequently in Eastern proposals more frequently than in Western ones". They admit also that despite the well-known Western emphasis on inspection the language of the Eastern proposals on control, including control posts, seems frequently to be more precise. /Ibidem/.

especially in the area of Central Europe. Thus, realization of the discussed measures was conditioned by a parallel or next agreement on implementation of definite steps in the field of limitation and reduction of armaments and forces in the area of Europe. Measures to limit the danger of an unexpected attack as well as steps of arms limitation or reduction in the European area were thus treated as "two mutually complementing elements of a uniform process of weakening of tensions in the dangerous zones in which forces of antagonistic groupings opposite each other".

/Soviet memorandum of January 28, 1964/. Desire to separate the mentioned arms control measures from disarmament steps - what was a characteristic element of Western attitude - was, on the other hand, treated not as real striving to improve the existing situation but as an attempt to obtain definite intelligence data.

2. Attempts to realize in Europe the second category of measures were also abortive. Unlike the previous ones, the realization of which would not need necessarily mean changes or limitations in arms policy in that area, the common feature of the second group of measures was the desire to increase the feeling of security in Europe through introducing certain changes in the existing military situation or through imposing certain limitations on the future arms policy pursued in that area.

While not attempting to discuss more extensively the wide spectrum of proposals in that category but only pointing out their most significant elements, we can say that they aimed at least at one of the following directions:

- creation of de iure nuclear-free zones through a ban on atomization of respective regions of Europe where nuclear weapons had not yet been introduced;

- creation of denuclearized zones, i.e. withdrawal of nuclear weapons from respective regions, where nuclear weapons had already been introduced and banning possible reatomization of these regions;

-- creation of zones of "frozen" nuclear armaments, i.e. introduction of a ban on increasing the existing level of nuclear weapons in the respective region;

- withdrawal of foreign troops from the territories of Central European States /mainly from both German States/ or reduction in the number of these troops;

- limitation of national armaments of Central European States.

Some of the measures mentioned here were connected with the "disengagement" concept which was widely discussed in regard to the area of Central Europe, especially in the mid-fifties. It should be also mentioned that the "disengagement" concept as well as respective proposals connected with it were at the beginning considered mainly as a part of the settlement of "the German problem" and the liquidation of military occupation; to certain extent they were more a function of proposed political solutions than measures aimed at disarmament.

However proposals in this field put forward since 1956 by the Socialist states have lost their immediate connection with the settlement of "the German problem". It resulted from the changed political and military situation in that region. In 1954 the Federal Republic of Germany became a member of the NATO and the Western European Union. On the other hand, due to those changes in 1955 the Warsaw Treaty was signed and the German Democratic Republic became a party to that Treaty. Thus, "the German problem" in a sense ceased to exist independently and was integrated with the general problem of political and military relations of two military groupings, the NATO and the Warsaw Treaty. Regional measures in the field of arms limitation and reduction in Central Europe ceased also to be a function of the proposed settlements of the German problem, and their aim was first of all to weaken and eliminate the dangers resulting directly from the fact of military confrontation of two military groupings.



This evolution in thinking is also evidenced by the fact that the proposed steps cease to refer only to the area of both German States but are conceived for a broader zone covering neighbouring states as well.

However, in the official attitude of Western states steps from the field mentioned above remained still connected with the proposals of a definite settlement of "the German problem", being in conformity with their demands. As a result of such attitude the proposals concerning the discussed group of means, put forward officially since 1956 /which could be treated as proposals aimed at lessening military tensions in Europe and limiting armaments and not as an element of a regulation of "the German problem"/ were submitted almost exclusively by the Socialist States. These proposals met with a number of vetos from Western States. Arguments advanced against them were based both on certain political and military considerations.

The first resulted from the Western attitude mentioned above; they related to "the German problem" and were connected mainly with the policies of the FRG Governments. They resolved themselves, first of all, to the statement that proposals for the limitation of armaments in Europe can be implemented on the condition of prior or simultaneous definite settlement of "the German problem"; otherwise they would lead to preservation of the status quo in Europe and Western recognition of the GDR<sup>x/</sup>.

On the other hand, the second kind of arguments, based on military considerations, were included both in the attitude of the FRG government as well as in that of other NATO member states. They were confined first of all to a general statement

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x/ "Under Chancellor Adenauer, the CDU Government vigorously denounced any proposal /or even incipient proposal/, whether originating from East or West, that neglected to specify immediate German reunification" /Russet and Cooper, op.cit., p. 9/.

on the possibility of infringing, in one or another way, the existing military balance in Europe as a result of any of those means being implemented. Supporting that opinion objections were raised that implementation of the discussed steps could lead to the creation of an unfavourable situation for the NATO, or that they could contribute to the originating of an objectively dangerous situation in a respective region of the continent by forming a kind of military vacuum, which in turn would be encouraging for a potential aggressor.

The mentioned reproaches were directed against all proposals in that field, both against those which - while aiming at taking into account the suggestions and demands put forward in the West - strived to include in one proposals a number of elements and planned their realization in stages<sup>x/</sup>, as well as against those which provided for an undertaking of the most limited steps from the discussed category and by no means disturbing the currently existing military systems in Europe.<sup>xx/</sup>

The Western attitude presented above not only made it impossible to realize in Europe the mentioned measures but also did not even allow to undertake proper negotiations on the problem of European disarmament.

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x/ E.g. Polish comprehensive proposal of March 1962. It provided for a freeze of nuclear weapons in Central Europe, to be followed by their elimination accompanied by an agreed reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons both of states within the zone as of foreign forces on their territories. It was suggested also that the control system to supervise the implementation of the proposed measures could perform the role of a system of control posts to prevent a sudden attack, which was the matter of special interest for the West.

xx/ E.g. Polish proposal on the "freeze" of nuclear weapons in Central Europe.

II.

Arms control and disarmament in Europe - the current discussion

Taking into account the discussion on arms control and disarmament in Europe conducted up to now, the NATO proposals on mutual and balanced force reductions /MBFR/ in Europe /not connected with definite political conditions/ constituted undoubtedly a new positive phenomenon in their approach to the question of European disarmament. It can, finally, create conditions - combined with still expressed interest of Socialist states in that problem - for undertaking negotiations on that so important problem.

After noting that chance, it should be stressed however that there exist also some doubts which emerge from a closer analysis of the NATO states' attitude on MBFR. These doubts refer both to the content of that proposal, as well as to the motives behind it and aims it could serve.

1. Doubts as to the content follow both from a considerable vagueness of the proposal contained in official documents as well as from the discussion being currently conducted on it in Western states.

The MBFR proposal - based on the official NATO documents - despite the fact that it has been put forward for more than four years - has remained rather a general concept than a concrete programme for disarmament. It lacks a strict definition of its territorial scope /the most commonly met formulation is that reduction should have place: "particularly in the Central part of Europe" - Reykjavik; "in Europe, with special reference to the Central Region" - Rome; or "in the Central Region of Europe" - Brussels 1970; in a considerable number of documents there is only a general statement about "Europe"/. Similar difficulties are met with while attempting to define its subject scope. Most commonly the term "force reductions" is being used. Sometimes the term "signifi-

cant reductions" is being introduced /Brussels - 1969/. More precisely the scope of reductions is defined by the Rome Declaration which says that "Reductions should include stationed /why not "foreign" - AT/ and indigenous forces and their weapons systems in the area concerned". At the same time in the documents of the NATO states there are remarks on "measures which could accompany or follow agreement on mutual and balanced force reductions. Such measures could include advance notification of military movements and manœuvres and possibly the establishment of observation posts" /Brussels - 1969/. It seems that in similar direction goes the suggestion included in President Nixon's Report on foreign policy /February 1972/ on the possibility of a "more comprehensive agreement". Besides the problem of the very reductions, provisions concerning adequate control and effective limitation of troop movements would constitute important elements of such an agreement.

Officially put forward MBFR proposals are at the same time accompanied by a number of voices pointing to significant military and political risks and problems which could face the Alliance in case the MBFR take effect. Conclusions resulting from these considerations, underlining NATO's risks and difficulties connected with force reductions, fall mainly into three directions:

First, they resolve themselves to questioning the purposefulness and the reason of putting forward and maintaining the MBFR concept by the NATO;

Second, stressing - as the only possible reductions - the reductions based on the principles of asymmetry as well as pointing out the necessity to undertake parallel and resolute steps by Western allies to "strengthen the defense" of the West and gradually integrate Western Europe in the military field;

Third - what now seems to become more and more commonly shared opinion - it is believed that the problem of force reductions in Europe should be connected with a number of other moves or be included into a framework of a broader

design in which force reductions would be one - of its elements though not the most important one.

If we assume that the last opinion corresponds as well with the official attitude of the NATO, we can state that the MBFR concept underwent a significant evolution. In its initial phase - and that unequivocally suggests the term chosen to define it: Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions - the concept concentrated on force reductions. Characteristic feature of its further evolution is a decrease of interest in reductions /especially reductions in national forces/. Though the perspectives of a probable reduction of American troops in Europe makes it imperative to still include in that concept the element of reduction, it has been complemented, however, by a number of other postulates. In a result, we can assume that the interest of the NATO States more and more tends towards the complementing the probably necessary reductions of foreign troops by a number of measures of the "arms control" character, designed above all to limit the possibilities of troop dislocations of the Warsaw Treaty. It seems that these measures are treated as a kind of alternative to the concept of asymmetrical reductions /which also in the West are now being more frequently considered as having little practical value/and like them they are supposed to be used as a means to achieve certain military and political advantages.

## 2. Doubts as to the motives.

Evolution in the attitude of the FRG and the NATO in the "German problem" has undoubtedly made it more easy to adopt by the NATO States a new viewpoint towards the disarmament problem in Europe as well. It does not explain, however, the reasons of this change.

It can be presumed that a number of various factors contributed to the MBFR proposal being put forward by the NATO. While not going into details of a whole range of different motives and reasons, it is worthwhile to stress at

least two general categories of them:

/i/ To the first category one can include probable actual interest in undertaking mutual reduction measures. This was combined first of all with an immediate aim to avoid possibilities of unilateral force reductions - especially of American troops in Europe /such a possibility appeared mainly as a result of internal pressures in the US Congress/. On the other hand, interest in possible mutual reductions, in longer perspective, can also follow from a general trend towards 'structural reorganization' of Western armies /towards less numerous but better trained and equipped armies, mainly of professional character/ and from the desire of the USA to limit their "military presence" in various parts of the world and to replace it with a higher "strategic mobility" of the US and NATO forces.

/ii/ The second main category of motives behind the MBFR proposal seemed to have a more "tactical" character, and not being so much a reflection of a true interest in the problem of reductions. The MBFR proposal was conceived also as a means to solve some of the current NATO problems /first of all - the lack of a "positive" European programme/ and was based on the assumption of a negative attitude of the Socialist states whose main efforts <sup>at</sup> that time were directed in other direction: the European Security Conference and political steps leading to a system of security in Europe. In such an apprehension the MBFR proposal appeared as a fundamental element of the NATO's "positive" programme as far as the question of East-West relations is concerned, programme competing with the peaceful proposals of the Socialist states and above all with the idea of the European Security Conference. It was also supposed to serve the additional purposes of the co-ordination of the "Ostpolitik" pursued by respective members of the Alliance and certain "steering" of their attitudes on the ESC.

It seems that in favour of attributing to that kind of "tactical" motives a significant role in formulating the MBFR

proposal stand as well the further developments, and first of all:

- The MBFR proposal put forward in 1968 remained still a very general one and did not live to see a more significant official concretization. The lack of such concretization seems to confirm that it was neither thoroughly worked out at the moment of its proclamation nor were the NATO States able in subsequent years to achieve unanimity as to its basic elements. This could corroborate the fact that "signal from Reykjavik" and also further statements on the subject followed rather from definite political considerations and were not thought as a possible basis for working negotiations.

- Rejection by the US Senate the Mansfield's moves /May and November 1971/ as well as promises of the US President to maintain the present level of American forces in Europe deprived the MBFR proposal of its element of urgency and diminished the degree of a probable actual interest in its implementation. At the same time, studies of political and military character showed both the complexity of the reductions problem and their real or alleged risks for the NATO States. It weakened - as well as the positive reaction of Socialist States - the initial attractiveness of that proposal for the NATO /at least in the form suggested at the beginning, namely reductions/. It could also explain the mentioned before evolution of Western attitudes towards the problem which expressed itself, as it seems, in a considerable weakening of interest in reductions /especially when the unreality of asymmetrical reductions is recognized/ and directing these interests towards arms control measures aimed at maximum "binding" of the Warsaw Treaty troops.

Reasons of certain putting aside of the problem of actual reductions of forces and disarmament can be also looked for in the still unfinished process of reorganization and modernization of the NATO armies /first of all - as it is well defined by P. Joenniemi - towards more capital-intensive and less manpower intensive military systems/,

as well as in the lack of clear picture of the perspectives of military integration of Western Europe.

With such an assumption - the stage of introductory agreements within the framework of the MBFR, limited to the arms control measures, could be used to make further progress in the domains mentioned above. Possible measures in the field of actual reductions would be postponed till the future and would be determined by the results of the mentioned process of army reorganization and progress towards the military integration of Western Europe.

At the end of remarks concerning reasons which seemed to motivate the MBFR proposal it is impossible to forget about the role it has played for the NATO States up to now. Though it can seem paradoxical the proposal of force "reductions" has in fact become a stimulus for accelerated armament efforts of the European NATO members. The MBFR proposal combined the widely spread propaganda campaign in NATO countries on the dangers of any reductions for the West at the present moment brought about, in fact, a number of decisions and undertakings aimed at the improvement of efficiency of the NATO military potential in Europe, and primarily a number of decisions on considerably increased contributions of the NATO European members /eg. additional pledges within the framework of the European Defense Improvement Programme: 1970 - 1 billion \$, 1971 - 1 billion \$, 1972 - 1,5 billion \$/. And what is more important, a considerable increase of the NATO European forces seems to be treated as a condition to undertake the MBFR negotiations. According to Mr. Laird's statement "chances for success in /SALT and MBFR/ negotiations would be minimized unless there is an adequate buildup of conventional forces by European members of NATO/ IHT, Oct. 28-29, 1972/. To say nothing of the indefinite term "adequate" it is impossible not to note the logic of that approach to the self-submitted proposal. Tersely and concisely this logic is rendered by R.E. Hunter who writes that "the paradox of seeking force reductions through increases is obvious" /International Conciliation, No. 587, p.43/.



3. The doubts mentioned above concerning both the content and the motives and aims of the Western MBFR proposals do not mean, of course, rejection of the need or lack of the possibility to discuss the problem of arms control and disarmament in Europe. Readiness to discussion over this question was clearly restated in a number of documents and official pronouncements of statesmen from Socialist states. It goes without saying, however, that these doubts as well as <sup>the</sup> experience of previous discussions must create certain scepticism as to the degree of real interest and the direction of that interest among the NATO States in the problem of disarmament in Europe. And it is from these doubts as well that certain scepticism can result both as to the possibilities of reaching solutions acceptable to both sides and to the aims for which negotiations can be made use of by the other party.

4. From among many problems connected with potential future negotiations on arms limitation and control in Europe let us consider the question of mutual interrelationship between the being prepared European Conference on Security and Co-operation and the European disarmament negotiations.

During the recent period the problems of military confrontation and arms race in Europe have considerably lost their prominence. The new political atmosphere has to some extent pushed these difficult and complicated problems into the background. This fact has undoubtedly made it possible to concentrate efforts on liquidating a number of sources of political tension in Europe and to achieve significant results in that field. One of these results in a relatively close perspective of the European Conference on Security and Co-operation.

In these circumstances achievement of solutions in the field of arms control, and limitation and reduction of forces in Europe - independently of liquidation or lessening of certain dangers connected with the present state of armaments on our continent - would be of great significance making the process of political détente "more credible" and giving it

a further momentum.

At the same time, however, one should be aware of the fact that there exist certain dangers in undertaking simultaneous efforts in these two fields.

Beginning of talks on the question of arms control and disarmament would mean an introduction to the European discussion a one of the most difficult elements. This is a commonly shared opinion that the MBFR problem can, in fact, be the problem more complicated than the SALT and negotiations on the problem of reductions could be both long and difficult. More significant, however, is the fact that negotiations on the MBFR "would increase the attention paid throughout the continent to questions of forces and strategies at time when progress in détente has been making those seem less important and when attention has been turning optimistically toward political and economic matters" /Hunter, p.43/.

In fact, this statement proves to be right even before undertaking of actual negotiation over the MBFR problem. As it has been already mentioned, the mere fact of putting forward by the NATO of the reductions proposal caused a considerable enlivening of discussion and military pressures in the West as well as a significant increase of military budget spendings of the NATO European members. And the desire for "adequate" growth of their forces - not connected with any increase of the feeling of "threat" whatsoever - is difficult not to treat otherwise than as a striving to attain "a position of strength" in the possible future negotiations. Consequences of such an approach to the possible future disarmament negotiations for the process of détente in Europe could only be highly negative if not destructive.

On the other hand, we may also have to do with a purposeful use of the MBFR postulate in order to achieve definite political or military aims. In the situation when the idea of the European Security Conference has been almost commonly accepted, the role of the MBFR proposal as a competitive one has lost its importance. Nevertheless, it can retain the role of a factor which can be used to impede the progress on the

road to the ESC. Possibility of establishing junctim between acceptance of the proposal of definite military solutions within the framework of the general MBFR concept and agreement to the conference seems to best show the essence of that danger. The result of such junctim of the two questions is easy to predict: it will make it impossible to make progress both on the road to political détente and on the road to realization of disarmament measures in Europe. In a sense it would be a repetition of experiences, mentioned at the beginning of the paper, from previous discussions on the problem of European disarmament. The policy of making disarmament discussions dependent on realization of definite Western postulates concerning the German problem did not produce any success for the latter; it only made it impossible to achieve any agreement on arms limitation in Europe.

Nevertheless, it would be difficult to exclude the need or possibility to undertake discussions on disarmament problems parallel to the ESC or even before the Conference. /Some authors, while expressing similar concerns, are of the opinion that it is even too late not to start negotiations on arms reductions and limitations in Europe/. Nevertheless, the undertaking of these negotiations should be accompanied by clear understanding of the aforementioned dangers and a strong willingness of their participants to contribute to deepening of the process of political détente /which in turn can make further negotiations more easy/ as well as abandonment of any other aims which can be served both by these negotiations and by proposals submitted during the talks. When this kind of approach is taken, the negotiations started eventually should concentrate on undertakings comparatively easy to agree upon and acceptable to both sides, or on an acceptance by all sides of a firm commitment to proceed in the direction of reduction and limitation of armaments after the Conference /for example in the organ which could be established possibly by that Conference/.

5. To conclude these observations it seems worthwhile to emphasize the possible significance of the Conference and its results for the perspectives of arms control, limitation and reduction <sup>of armaments</sup> in Europe. Especially, when the results of that Conference would contribute to the increase in the degree of international confidence and would introduce new /even formal/ security guarantees. It can be stated, that irrespective of other problems, as long as the maintenance of international peace and security in an area so politically, militarily and economically important as Europe is approached solely in terms of preserving the military balance, and there do not exist any other security guarantees /or at least a much higher degree of mutual trust/, any attempt to introduce measures affecting factors adding up to the existing balance /by means of their control limitation or reduction/ have to face serious difficulties. This must be recognized not only as the general problem of almost all disarmament negotiations /what should come first - strengthening international security or disarmament measures/. Though abstract and academic consideration of that problem is certainly sterile, the link in theory and practice of these questions can not be ignored and any practical attempt to solve the disarmament problem should take into account this interdependence. It seems as well that we should take it especially into account in European conditions.