

## A NEW CONFLICTUAL DETENTE

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During the seventies we saw how closely detente was related to arms control. Indeed, it can be said that in those years detente was identified too strictly with arms control alone. Henry Kissinger was one of the first to point to the unfortunate absence of linkage between arms control and crisis management, especially in the Third World- and in the end this absence proved to be one of the causes of the crisis of detente.

Today the situation is not different. Some problems have remained. Before the Geneva summit meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev, Ronald Reagan announced that he wanted to resume discussion of joint crisis management with the Soviet Union, but he did not make this a necessary condition of possible agreements. In his address of January 15, 1986, Gorbachev explicitly rejected the idea that arms control agreements "could be made to depend on so-called regional conflicts." Actually, the prospect appears to be for possible arms control agreements without detente.

This is perfectly consistent with the ideological nature of relations between the superpowers. Fred Ilke, U.S. Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, in a recent address to the Wehrkunde conference in Munich, accurately summed up the American administration's position in the statement that the Atlantic Alliance must survive a longterm global struggle "against a strong force that seeks ultimate destruction of our political order." For his part, Gorbachev has repeatedly asserted that the United States aims to attain absolute security for itself, in contrast with the security of the rest of the world, that the Americans are developing offensive space weapons ("a shield that can be quickly transformed into a space sword"), and that the U.S. acts as the main protector of what the Kremlin call "state terrorism", clearly alluding chiefly to Israel.

The two superpowers are thus engaged in a bitter international confrontation, in the arms field and in Europe and the rest of the world. Yet both seem prepared to talk about arms control. Not completely negative are the reports from Stockholm, seat of the Conference on Disarmament in Europe in the framework of the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), from the Vienna Conference on mutual, balanced force reduction in Central Europe (MBFR), from the UN conference in Geneva on the possible elimination of chemical weapons, and also from the bilateral U.S.-Soviet talks in Geneva on nuclear arms control, especially as regards intermediate nuclear forces (INF). Nowhere has an actual agreement been reached, but some significant progress has been made in all these forums.

Consiliatory remarks are being made and possible grounds for agreement are also being explored in connection with some regional conflicts. One hears talk of the possible resuscitation of the plans for an international

conference on the Middle East, which Carter and Brezhnev had sought to agree on. A brief 90 minutes meeting, in Finland, between two official delegations from Israel and from the Ussr, mid-August 1986, has revived communications between the two countries, for the first time after 1967. Diplomatic rumors and modest signals from Moscow allude to the possibility of compromise on Afghanistan. Moscow has sent top level diplomatic missions to Tokyo, Beijing and the major West European capitals. The Soviet leader Gorbachev has been particularly forthcoming in the case of China, hinting to the possibility of a sizeable reduction of Soviet troops in Mongolia and to the acceptance of the Chinese position in the Ussuri border confrontation. On the U.S. side, the possibilities for facilitating and expanding economic dealing with Eastern Europe are being explored.

These signals, however, have not prevented the persistence, and in some cases the aggravation, of international tensions. One example is the delicate, dangerous situation in the Mediterranean, with the heightening of the international terrorist menace and the proliferation of military maneuvers and the military presence of the superpowers. But this is certainly not the only case. The unending Gulf war between Iran and Iraq, the Soviet intervention of internal and international conflicts in Central America, the numerous direct and indirect wars in Africa, are all important signs of a persisting crisis in international relations despite the prospects for agreement in some sectors.

Judging by the present situation, then, it is unlikely that East-West relations will soon see a return to the climate and the conditions of the detente years. The superpowers intend to renew a dialogue and perhaps attain some concrete results, but they no longer have the illusions (or hopes) of the past, and both sides affirm the principle that they are essentially different, and counterposed, to one another.

This cannot fail to have repercussions in terms of arms control agreements. The first and perhaps most obvious consequence is the importance taken on by the verification issue, where the limitation to so-called "national means of verification" is more and more strongly questioned. In all negotiating forums, the Western countries are now insisting on the need for local inspections, either national or international, capable of checking, directly and on-site, the national information obtained by satellites and other sources.

The President recently reaffirmed that he would be prepared to submit the Threshold Test Ban Treaty and the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty for Congressional ratification only once the Soviet Union had agreed with the United States on the introduction of a more accurate system of observation and surveillance of underground nuclear explosions.

Moreover, the U.S. administration also stresses the problem of Soviet non-compliance, asserting that the Soviet Union "has violated its legal obligation under or political commitment to: the SALT I ABM Treaty and Interim Agreement; the SALT II Treaty; the Geneva Protocol on Chemical Weapons as it reflects the rules of customary international law; the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention; the Limited Test Ban Treaty; and the Helsinki Final Act."

Actually, these real or presumed violations vary considerably in legal and military significance. Some are of only slight importance, while others (like the Krasnoyarsk radar, the SS-25 ICBM, and, if proved, the violation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the 1925 Geneva Protocol on Chemical, Biological and Toxin Weapons) are of unquestioned strategic importance. All of them, however, both singly and as a group, ultimately produce serious political and psychological effects, making future agreements much more difficult.

Apart from arms control proper, in fact, what counts in relation

between the superpowers and improved East-West relations is the creation of an atmosphere of growing mutual confidence and cooperation. In the strictly military sphere, so-called "confidence-building measures" (CBMs) may not have had much concrete importance, but they have certainly helped improve the political climate and enhance reciprocal willingness to engage in dialogue.

The CBMs stipulated in the Helsinki Final Act in particular, as well as those currently under discussion at the CDE in Stockholm, directly affect Eastern and Western Europe, as well as the neutral and non-aligned countries. As Stephen Larrabee and Allen Lynch observe in a recent study, "CBMs cannot create confidence or trust among nations, especially among adversary nations... They are designed to stabilize relations between states by providing tangible and verifiable assurances regarding the purpose and character of military activities." Obviously, such a purpose holds special interest for the weaker nations, or those outside the two great alliance that confront one another in Europe, nations which can only gain by more extensive controls, or self-controls, over the military activities of the superpowers.

However, the kind of East-West dialogue that is taking shape in Washington and Moscow, based on mutual mistrust and military competition, may prove particularly insensitive to the prospect of new and better CBMs. By their very nature, in fact, such measures require a certain degree of flexibility and good will on the part of the countries involved. Subjecting CBMs to stricter verification (and with on-site inspections, no less) and making them mandatory means, in practice, turning them into something closely resembling actual arms control agreements, thus increasing their importance while augmenting the difficulty of reaching agreement.

In short, while on the one hand the idea of making CBMs militarily significant, fully verifiable and mandatory is intended to enhance their importance, on the other giving up a more indirect, less explicit approach, not binding in strictly legal terms and less significant in strictly military terms, blocks one avenue of dialogue and makes the search for political compromise between East and West more arduous.

This critique applies equally to Washington and to Moscow. For if it is the United States that is most insistent on the principle of verifiability and on the military significance of any and all agreements, for its part the U.S.S.R. has what can be called a mixed compliance record and would even like to accord the status of confidence-building measures to a whole series of generic declarations of principle or of good will, which instead must be taken for exactly what they are worth.

The strictly military and technical attitude of the one side and the basically propagandistic stance of the other have combined to strip of meaning the European line favoring the progressive construction of a situation of mutual trust between East and West. CBMs in particular have been viewed by the European (especially the countries of Eastern Europe and the neutral and non-aligned nations) as a useful diplomatic tool to limit the risk of the use of force in Europe and moderate the negative effects of the confrontation on their relations with the superpowers, chiefly the U.S.S.R.

The fact that CBMs get harder to negotiate and the effort to give them greater military significance cannot help but limit the negotiating freedom of the countries of Eastern Europe and of neutrals and the non-aligned in general. Gerhard Wetting notes that "the extent to which the Soviet have usurped the sole say over the military affairs of the Warsaw Pact, has led to the emergence in Eastern Europe of a conspicuous interest in the confidence-building measures which the Western, neutral, and non-aligned nations have been proposing at both the CSCE and the CDE." Still, except for

Romania, this has not led to any major independent initiatives by the members of the Warsaw Pact. On the contrary, if we look at what is happening at the MBFR talks, where CBMs with evident, concrete arms control aspects are under discussion, we observe a clear predominance of the Soviet delegation over the other Eastern delegations, which are often apparently unfamiliar even with the position the Soviet representative presents in their name.

If it can be said, then, that the climate of East-West relations has certainly improved, opening the way to new agreements, there is also a strengthening suspicion that at least for now the substance of the confrontation between East and West cannot change. In other words, it is improper to speak of "detente."

Nor, furthermore, does it seem correct to speak of "peaceful competition." For this term presumes the acceptance by all the "competitors" of a common framework, an underlying solidarity, or at least the rules of the game, whereby the victory of one athlete or the other does not change the nature of the game or the design of the playing field. In our case, though, what we have is a confrontation that can be called peaceful simply because it has not reached the level of an open European or global war. Certainly, political dialogue and arms control agreements could produce a quantum leap from the present situation of no war to a new one of structured international peace, but the process appears to be long, slow, and anything but sure.

After this premise, let us seek to offer a more in-depth analysis of the state of East-West affairs.

### The Strategic Relationship

This new phase in U.S.-Soviet relations has been made possible by the end of the long period of uncertainty and instability of the top Kremlin leadership in the wake of Leonid Brezhnev's death. (Actually, it had begun some time before he died.) During this period the United States saw the successful reelection of Ronald Reagan as President, ending a long series of administrations that failed to serve out two full terms (Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford and Carter). For once, therefore, the situation was one of stable leadership in the United States and shifting, unstable leadership in the Soviet Union. For many years, until Gorbachev and his group took power, this certainly encouraged the Kremlin to adopt a prudent, conservative strategy little inclined to take the initiative. With rare exceptions (coming for the most part during the brief government of Yuri Andropov), the West could easily anticipate the Soviet response to Western moves. The Soviet played by the book, accepting the passive role to which they had been relegated by the new activism of the Reagan administration.

Today, all this is changed. That does not mean that in the Gorbachev era the Soviet regime has demonstrated great imagination or attempted to revolutionize the rules of the game. But it does mean that the Kremlin is no longer a passive interlocutor, and that every so often it too is capable of taking the initiative: its moves are no longer so easily predictable.

If, therefore, we are interested in understanding the present nature and the possible future of East-West relations, our point of departure must necessarily be an assessment of just this new element; the international and security policy of the new Soviet leadership.

Precisely because it is new, however, Gorbachev's foreign and security policy is not yet fully clear. The new continues to be mixed in with the old, not yet forming a full, consistent whole. In just a year Gorbachev has

visited Britain and France and met with Reagan. A visit to Italy has been announced. The new foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, and the new Prime Minister, Nikolai Ryzhkov, have also had occasion for numerous international contacts. And virtually all Western leaders have managed to meet the new leaders. Although it gives top priority to the economy, the new leadership is aware of the importance of international relations and of the need to extend the Soviet presence and enhance the Soviet image in the world.

What is still unclear is the set of priorities of the new Soviet foreign policy. The initial concentration of attention on Western Europe and China (followed by a trip to Japan by the Soviet foreign minister), might suggest an effort to improve the Soviet Union's relations with its principal neighbors. During his visit to France, for instance, Gorbachev referred repeatedly to the need for better relations with Western Europe, even going so far as to hint at the possibility of excluding French nuclear weapons from the Geneva arms control talks. The Comecon's willingness to begin overall negotiations with the European Community and Gorbachev's positive assessment (again, during the Paris trip) of the process of Western European integration also point in this direction.

After the Geneva Summit, however, and also in the January 15 speech which announced his proposal for global disarmament, the Communist leader appears to have changed course. Though not abandoning his overtures to the other countries of the West, he now seems resolved to pursue the more traditional course of a direct, prior agreement with the United States. Particularly indicative of this new line is the total omission from the January 15 speech and many subsequent statements of all reference to the Helsinki Final Act and the CSCE, except for certain aspects of the CDE now proceeding in Stockholm. On the contrary, the global disarmament plan proposed by Gorbachev in January, while offering some proposals directly affecting the Europeans, appears designed primarily to soften the clash with the Americans. The issue of the British and French deterrent has been given some attention, with the offer of direct bilateral negotiations. Some consideration has received also the major Franco-British objection: that no reduction of the two European nuclear deterrents will be possible without a prior agreement diminishing the conventional, chemical and strategic nuclear threat against Western Europe. Gorbachev has in fact proposed also an important reduction of conventional forces in Central Europe, without however taking into account the actual imbalances in favour of the Warsaw Pact. The Vienna Mbfr negotiations, moreover, have not made the progress anticipated on the basis of these Gorbachev proposals. The concessions offered with respect to the CDE are also intended chiefly as a response to U.S. objections. Mentioning the possibility of postponing talks on the inclusion of naval exercise among the CBMs under discussion in Stockholm interests mainly the United States. By contrast, there is no mention whatever of some national right to on-site inspections in the territory of another party to the agreement, an innovation that would certainly enhance the role and the possibility for independent initiatives of the various European powers with respect to the superpowers.

Still, it is significant and positive that today several "areas of consensus" can be identified that could give rise to arms control agreements.

These are roughly the following, in order of probability (the first ones being those where agreements seem most readily attainable):

- a) An interim agreement on INF in Geneva;
- b) An understanding in Stockholm on prior notification of military maneuvers and on a statement reaffirming the principle of the renunciation of the use or threat of force in the framework of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act;

- c) Progress in the MBFR talks and in those on the outlawing of chemical weapons;
- d) A U.S.-Soviet agreement on the overall dimensions of an initial cut in strategic nuclear forces (the figures proposed by Reagan and Gorbachev, at different times and in different contexts are not so far apart);
- e) New discussions on a nuclear test ban, on U.S. ratification of existing treaties on the matter, and on a progressive diminution of and perhaps a ban on the tests;
- f) Negotiations on the issue of satellite security and anti-satellite arms control.

It would be mistaken, however, to ignore or underestimate the potential obstacles to the successful conclusion of these talks.

The principal obstacle concerns the strategic talks proper, and it stems from the diametrically opposed position of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. on the issue of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). The Soviet side has repeatedly and explicitly stated that U.S. renunciation of "offensive space weapons" (as the Soviet define SDI) is an indispensable precondition to any agreement on nuclear disarmament. However, the Soviets have suggested that a limited nuclear agreement, an interim agreement of the Soviet government already by the final communique of the Geneva Summit, perhaps covering INF, might be possible even in the absence of constraints on SDI.

The Americans, for their part, have already stated on a number of occasions first that SDI is a strategic priority and can not and will not be a bargaining chip, and second that a present SDI is not negotiable, in that it is still simply a research program, not an operational strategic program.

At least for now, then, both sides declare that SDI in non-negotiable, it must be either accepted or rejected. Obviously, such a position is incompatible with a successful course of strategic arms talks. On the other hand, we must note two factors that might permit both superpowers to take a different stance in the future. The first, on the American side, is the reaffirmation of the U.S. intention not to violate the commitments of the ABM Treaty, hence its stated willingness, prior to the deployment of a defensive system, to open talks on it with the Soviets. A recent American proposal, to extend the validity of the Abm Treaty for 5 to 7 years more, while not very forthcoming in terms of the actual testing of space-based Bmd, is a confirmation of this positive trend.

The second, on the Soviet side, stems from the very choice of the term "offensive space weapons" to describe SDI. The Soviets do not appear to be concerned over the defensive uses of a future Ballistic Missile Defense system (BMD) as much as over the possibility that a BMD system could be used to increase the possibility of a surprise first strike against Soviet nuclear forces and that it could be easily turned from a space shield into a sword (in Gorbachev's words), heightening the American strategic threat to the U.S.S.R.

It would appear, then, at least in theory, that there is some possibility of a compromise aimed at limiting the effectiveness of SDI and some of its technologies and reaching joint agreement, with a mix of defensive and offensive strategic systems, on a new, credible, stable deterrence.

Today, such a prospect is only too easily labeled "wishful thinking", and in any case it would require a great deal of good will, flexibility, and imagination on the part of both superpowers. But the very fact that we cannot exclude the possibility out of hand is encouraging.

The prospects for an agreement on INF are apparently simpler, for

here the divergences are more political than strategic or military. In highly summary fashion, they may be condensed to two:

- 1) The Americans maintain that the negotiations must cover all Soviet SS-20s, both in Europe and in Asia. The Soviets seem to be prepared to bargain over those stationed in Europe (and perhaps over a portion of the Asian ones as well, those that can strike Western territory in depth), but they maintain that in principle the proper negotiating context for their Asian INF is together with the U.S. nuclear forces stationed in the Pacific.
- 2) The Soviets are asking at the same time for a freeze on the tactical and strategic nuclear arsenals of France and Britain, while the Americans claim to have no right to negotiate over those apparently and the two European powers state that they are unwilling at this stage to negotiate over their nuclear forces in the context of the INF talks.

The first point might be relatively easy to settle by setting a fairly low ceiling for SS-20s based in the Soviet Far East. However, any direct comparison between the Soviet SS-20s in Asia, and the American tactical nuclear forces in the Pacific, would be unacceptable on various grounds. First of all because the balance is already made between SS-20s, worldwide, and Nato's euromissiles. Second, because there are important technical and strategic differences to be accounted for. The SS-20s, for example, are mobile land-based missiles, while all the American nuclear weapons in the region are air- or sea-based. Control over their deployment would entail limitations on the freedom of movement of the U.S. forces incomparably more restrictive than the limitations that would apply to Soviet forces.

The second point cannot be resolved in the way the Soviets hope. The British and French forces are virtually all classifiable as strategic forces. They cannot be pooled with U.S. forces in the calculation of limitations on overall force levels without putting the United States at a disadvantage in the strategic balance vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. On the other hand, even under Gorbachev's proposed disarmament plan, Britain and France would not have to start reducing their nuclear forces until the second stage (i.e., once the superpower's nuclear forces had already been reduced by about half). Moreover, nuclear arms reduction for Britain and France would begin with their tactical weapons. The elimination of their strategic arms, under the Soviet plan, would not come until the third and final stage of the disarmament program.

Thus Moscow too agrees in principle that the nuclear forces of the two European powers (and those of China) have a specialist status, not perfectly comparable with those of the superpowers. Given their modest dimensions, they cannot be significantly reduced without losing all credibility; hence they can only be either maintained or totally dismantled. The point at issue thus concerns only their modernization. At the end of 1985 the Soviets maintained that French and British strategic forces amounted to 162 launch vehicles with 434 warheads (though the latter figure is held by Western sources to be exaggerated). However, by the turn of the century, while the number of missiles should remain more or less the same (although France has scheduled the entry into service in 1994 of a sixth and later of a seventh nuclear-armed submarine, each with 16 SLBMs), the number of warheads is expected to rise to more than 1200.

On the other hand, it should be observed that a substantial portion of these warheads, mounted on SLBMs, could not be continuously operational, and that a reduction in them still remains difficult, in view of the low number of missiles. Thus the modernization of the British and French forces will not produce any qualitative change in the nature of that deterrent or any transformation of the scope of the threat they carry, and should not therefore entail a basic change in negotiating strategy.

Whether Moscow accepts or rejects this line of reasoning, it is still possible that the Soviets may decide not to tie an agreement on INF to a Franco-British commitment to forgo the modernization of their nuclear deterrent, perhaps reserving the option to take up the issue in the context of the strategic arms talks. In this case an agreement on the reduction or elimination on INF would be possible, and relatively quickly.

This does not completely settle the problem, however. When, in the 1979, the major European NATO countries asked the United States to install Cruise and Pershing-2 missiles in Europe, they were seeking to solve a variety of problems. The principal one was the installation of the SS-20s by the Soviet Union. But there was also concern over a possible decoupling of the United States from Europe. There was an awareness of NATO's conventional and chemical warfare inferiority to the Warsaw Pact in Europe. There was a desire to remove, as far as possible, the threat of tactical nuclear war, geographically limited to European territory alone (and excluding Russia). Today, an agreement to eliminate INF would reopen the debate on all these issues.

This does not mean that an agreement would be a negative thing. In any case, the elimination of a whole class of nuclear weapons is a positive step. It must, however, be accompanied by non-circumvention measures and supplementary decisions in other spheres, so as to preserve the stability of deterrence in Europe and in the rest of the world.

The problems to be dealt with are the following:

- a) The number, role, nature, and deployment of nuclear forces shorter in range than INF. For these forces, if deployed or moved to Eastern Europe, would threaten virtually the entire territory of Western Europe, while similar forces stationed in Western Europe cannot threaten an in-depth strike against Soviet territory.
- b) The number and role of chemical weapons and conventional warheads mounted on medium and long-range missiles. In this regard let us recall that S.F. Akhromeev, Marshal of the Soviet Union, in describing Gorbachev's nuclear disarmament plan, has stated that "some nuclear tactical vehicles, with a range of less than a thousand kilometers, could be converted" into non-nuclear (conventional or chemical) carriers.
- c) The conventional balance in Europe.
- d) The assurance of the continuation and the credibility of the U.S. strategy of extended deterrence for the protection of Western Europe.

Any future agreement on INF, therefore, must be so conceived as not to prevent the solution of these other problems, either through further disarmament measures and CBMs or possibly by the build-up and modernization of conventional forces. To ignore these problems, by contrast, could not but generate a negative reaction of fear in Western Europe, with unpredictable but



probably negative consequences for the future of peace and security.

Some of these problems could be settled if the other negotiating forums (MBFR, CDE, the chemical warfare talks) managed to reach agreements.

Otherwise, the outlook for Europe, too, is for conflictual detente featuring a combination of arms control measures in some areas (especially on INF) linked with an arms buildup in other fields.

### The Worried Europeans

The scenario for East-West relations outlined here creates major political problems for Western European governments. Our countries have a structural interest in detente, for obvious reasons both political and strategic. At the same time, these are also the most militarily vulnerable and the weakest countries of the two blocs. This weakness leads them to fear any and all changes, even apparently peaceful and positive ones, simply because they might upset the fragile existing balance.

All this would be of little importance if we were heading towards a period of real detente, mutual trust and cooperation between East and West in all fields and on a wide range of issues. But that is not the case.

The clearest indication of the limits of the present phase of detente is probably the difference in the superpowers' stances on local conflicts and regional crisis management. In his January speech Gorbachev said that "the Soviet Union opposes making measures in the sphere of disarmament dependent on (resolution of) so-called regional conflicts." In a word, he rejected the concept of linkage, as Brezhnev before him had done. Considering that in the past, under both Ford and Carter, arms control talks and agreements were downgraded or broken off owing to the political impact of local crises (from Angola to Afghanistan), such a position does not appear very realistic.

On the other hand, on many other occasions Gorbachev himself has underscored the importance, indeed the urgency, of ending the numerous local crisis situations. So if he rejects formal linkage between arms control and regional crisis management, that does not mean he is unaware of its importance.

In particular, it is hard to underestimate the potential repercussions of crises that could directly affect Europe in geographically contiguous regions such as the Middle East and North Africa. And it would be utterly impossible to ignore crises breaking out in Europe itself -- in the Balkans for instance. Nor does there appear to be any reasonable likelihood of continuing to ignore the problem of international terrorism, and complicity, connivance, and coverage of it and the possible and/or necessary responses (including military responses).

We are entering upon a period of transformation of international equilibria. The collapse of oil prices, for instance, will redraw the map of power in the Middle East, where some states that until now have played a role out of all proportion to their real social, human, and historical importance may see their influence drastically reduced. This alone will increase the likelihood of serious domestic and international crises and create a situation of strategic uncertainty.

The two superpowers are self-sufficient enough economically and in energy supplies and have the requisite military means to view this sort of development with relative calm and detachment. Not so their European allies. The economic growth and the security of the countries of Europe require a high degree of international stability. Such stability may be ensured either by joint, concerted management of the principal regional crises or (at a higher cost and at higher risk) by a sharpening confrontation between East and West

and the identification of separate spheres of influence". At present the superpowers appear to be wavering between the two alternatives, hesitant to make a definitive choice. The result is general strategic uncertainty, which proliferates the unknowns in the future of detente.

Similar uncertainty appears to characterize the future of the European military balance. The Soviet Union is actively engaged in the modernization and expansion of its nuclear and conventional arsenals, especially aircraft and missiles. The U.S. has announced a future revolution in weapons. Doctrines are being swiftly transformed, bringing into question the equilibria on which European security has been based for the past two decades.

The debate on the future of nuclear deterrence opened by the pacifist and antinuclear movement, and taken up as a theme by President Reagan himself in his speech announcing SDI, will certainly have a profound influence on perceptions of security and international relations in Europe. Such concepts as flexible response, extended deterrence, and mutual assured destruction have been brought into question. But the problem is not a Western one alone, for two reasons. First, a change in the nuclear doctrine and strategy of one nation cannot but affect all the others. Second, within the Warsaw Pact, the change in Soviet conventional warfare strategy (the introduction of the Operational Maneuver Group, for instance) and the apparently enhanced role of short and medium-range missiles, both nuclear-armed and conventional, deployed outside Soviet territory may create problems of adaptation and divergent perception among allies.

In the West, the prospect of an arms control agreement covering just INF, together with the technological and strategic development implicit in SDI, is fueling a difficult discussion on the future of European defense. Indicators are the effort to revive the Western European Union (although so far the achievements of this effort have been modest in the extreme), the discussion on the relaunching and reinforcement of NATO's conventional weaponry in Europe, and the debate that has arisen over the possibility of building a European Tactical Anti-air and Anti-missile Defense System, which could be linked with the American BMD system of SDI (as the West Germans now propose) or else deployed independently (as the French might perhaps prefer).

These are not easy or painless decisions, however, for several reasons:

- a) First, because they entail difficult budget choices, rendered virtually insoluble by the problem of reconciling rising expenditure with a general tendency to reduce and contain budget deficits;
- b) Second, because they can raise delicate problems in international relations between East and West, since the vast majority of Western nations intend to reconcile these programs for strengthening military security with a search for more effective and stable detente.
- c) Third, because the decision must be made in a rapidly changing strategic context, while the operational and doctrinal consequences of the technological transformation that has barely gotten under way are still unclear, as is the effective scope and importance of possible arms control agreements between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

As usual, then, the Europeans may be strongly tempted not to do anything, putting off decision until better times. This time, however, such a

stance may be impossible, partly because the European members of NATO are under strong and continuous pressure from their American allies to make decisions in line with those of Washington, partly because the response to Moscow's overtures cannot be delayed too long.

In this situation, however, it is likely that the Western European response will be much more cautious than the Kremlin would like, stressing defensive exigencies and the need to preserve deterrence rather than readiness to embrace daring ideas of disarmament.

Western Europe could thus find itself in a difficult situation uncongenial to its intense, sincere desire for detente, engaged in polemics with the U.S.S.R., and at the same time unsatisfied with its relations with the U.S.

Such a development would needlessly complicate relations between the countries of Eastern and Western Europe. Though both sides in Europe have an interest in detente, the two groups of countries run the risk of embracing conflicting policies, grounded in their different roles within their respective alliance. The Eastern Europeans, in fact, appear to be convinced that in the ultimate analysis their security depends on decreasing NATO's military potential in Europe. But this belief has not kept them from increasing their own defense spending; the GDR, for instance, increased its military budget by 7.7 percent in 1986, while Poland's 1985 defense budget was 31.7 percent larger than in 1984, at current prices. If we take into account the enormous devaluation of the Polish currency in relation with the US dollar, of course, the increase is greatly inferior (+1.5% in constant prices, according to the figures provided by Sipri). We should not however underestimate the political significance of these current increases, decided in a period of continuing economic crisis, and growing social expectations. Nor does this merely reflect the warning of Soviet Defense Minister Sokolov that the Warsaw Treaty Organization would match any U.S. arms buildup. It also indicates a willingness to maintain and possibly increase the military role of the Eastern European allies (and in particular of the German Democratic Republic), notwithstanding any other civilian priority. This choice has apparently not been a totally painless one, moreover. Previously, for instance, Romania had publicly expressed a diametrically opposed view, calling for a decrease in the Warsaw Pact members' military budgets in the order of 10 to 15 percent. Even the GDR, judging from signals that emerged during Viktor Grishin's Berlin visit in May 1985, acknowledged that up to that time it had not fully satisfied the Pact's military requirements. In committing themselves, that same year, to a twenty-year renewal of the Warsaw Pact with an automatic further ten-year extension, the Eastern European countries also agreed to play according to the Soviet military tune.

The Western Europeans appear concerned above all to ensure the continuity and stability of deterrence, through arms control measures where possible, but with not a priori exclusion of military reinforcement where necessary, though placed in a different political framework. In particular, the Western Europeans do not intend to submit to a situation of joint control or bipolar U.S.-Soviet management of European security that would diminish their political role or bring independence into question. The ultimate objective is the same, but the paths toward it may be different.

It is clearer and clearer that limited disarmament (such as measures affecting only the Soviet SS-20s and the U.S. Pershing-2s and cruise missiles based in Western Europe), while having undeniable political significance, has no equally self-evident military significance and may indeed be viewed with considerable skepticism in Western Europe. it is impossible to ignore, for

instance, that with its new-generation SS-21, SS-22 and SS-23 short-range systems, almost unnoticed, the Soviet Union has already deployed its first highly accurate conventional missiles in Eastern Europe. These weapons, while allegedly a response to the NATO INF deployments, seem in reality to be an integral part of the evolving Soviet-WTO strategy. The development of conventional payloads for the SS-21 through the SS-23 class missile systems suggests a dramatic improvement in accuracy that could contribute to a Soviet military decision to delay the employment of nuclear weapons in the battlefield. The SS-21 reportedly has a range of 75 miles and an estimated accuracy of 50 yards. The SS-22 has a 520-mile range and is being deployed in the GDR. The SS-23 has a range of 300 miles. With this range capability, those missiles will be able to strike most of NATO's highest-value military installations. This would extend Soviet coverage to NATO's rear areas and would enhance strategic surprise.

The prospective ability of the Soviet Union to conduct a fast-moving offensive campaign against Western Europe, without itself necessarily resorting to the use of nuclear weapons, places a greater burden on the credibility of NATO's escalatory options, especially if the Allied members, either for political or for economic reasons, failed to augment NATO's conventional assets.

By the 1990s Soviet theater offensive capabilities can be expected to be supplemented by army-level SA-X-12 brigades, to augment the organic air defense of Soviet ground forces. The SA-X12 reportedly is capable of engaging high performance aircraft, cruise missiles, and even ballistic missiles like the Pershing-2. Together with the development and deployment of a successor system to the ZSU-23-4 air defense gun and to the short-range SA-13, SA-14, and SA-11 surface-to-air-missiles, the SA-X-12 will impose upon NATO even more stringent penetration requirements while rendering the attainment of operational flexibility more difficult.

So if the U.S.S.R. has some reason for concern in the strategic effects of SDI, NATO in Europe has equally serious grounds for concern in the offensive and defensive weapons development of the Warsaw Pact. The enhanced military role of the Soviet Union's Eastern European allies on the one hand and these technical weapons developments on the other must both be somehow included and considered within the detente process and the arms control talks, at least if some response to Western European concerns is desired.

It should not provoke surprise or shock, therefore, if it proves to be the Western Europeans themselves who insist most emphatically on the question of linkage and the complicated problems of non-circumvention -- that is, linkage between the various arms control agreements and between arms control and regional crisis management, in particular crisis management in the regions of special interest to Europe. In particular, there are likely to be long-running, thorny problems of non-circumvention and of extension of arms control from the sphere of INF alone to all conventional and nuclear arms. Moreover, failing adequate arms control measures and satisfactory crisis management, it is likely that Western Europe, like Eastern Europe, will be squeezed ever tighter in an overall arms buildup mechanism, ranging from a new generation of conventional weapons to theater anti-aircraft and anti-missile defense systems, linked closely or loosely to the American "space shield", to the request to maintain both national and allied theater nuclear offensive credibility.

It would all be much faster and easier if the superpowers moved from the present period of conflictual detente to one of closer international cooperation and real trust and confidence. Until then, however, it is

inevitable that the Europeans should be, more than anything else, worried.

#### A Strategy Toward Detente?

New impetus needs to be imparted to the detente process and to arms control. This depends first and foremost on the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. but it would be mistaken to neglect the need for initiatives from the lesser powers of Europe. For it is these latter that have the strongest interest in a rapid improvement of East-West relations, for at least three reasons:

- a) because they are also the countries that are most disadvantaged by the unbalanced development of East-West relations and by the difficult realities of conflictual detente;
- b) because they risk finding themselves in the unpleasant position of having to oppose unbalanced arms control measures or arms control measures that fail to take due account of their particular problems;
- c) because they risk being the first to suffer the consequences of the worsening of and of a number of regional crises in the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Africa.

Everything, then, seems to point to the need for a new, more incisive European political initiative, if possible not restricted to Western Europe but involving the active participation of the Soviet Union's East European allies plus the neutral and non-aligned nations.

It is easy enough, in principle, to reaffirm the central role of European security and cooperation in any real detente and arms control, but it is hard in practice, not only because it could cause difficulties in the relations between the European powers and the superpowers but also because the Europeans themselves are deeply divided, have divergent perceptions of security, different domestic political response times, and so on. Yet it must also be recognized that only if a satisfactory response is made to the express or implicit concerns of the countries of Europe can a true, non-conflictual detente process take root.

Some of these prerequisites are already present, and could be actively cultivated. Both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. for instance, recognize the importance of regional crises, and already they are engaged in exchanges of information and viewpoints on a bilateral basis. There is a real willingness in both Washington and Moscow to look on these local conflicts in a new light, from the Middle East to the Gulf war between Iran and Iraq, and possibly even the war in Afghanistan and Libya. We have noted the emergence of some possibility of progress in certain negotiating forums of direct interest to Europe, from the CDE in Stockholm to the MBFR in Vienna and the INF talks in Geneva. All of this is still highly uncertain, of course. For the most part the signs are just political signals, at times immediately contradicted in practice, which do not yet appear to have taken on the form, the substance, or the dignity of an overall strategy.

Is a joint European initiative for detente imaginable, one that starts from these signals and develops them positively?

This is not a matter of finding or seeking some strange role as "mediators" for the minor European powers with respect to their superpowers allies. It is clear enough by now that in both Washington and more recently in

Moscow as well there is recognition and acceptance of the existence of specific realities and particular national interests in the individual European countries that differ from those of the superpowers. This does not mean, however, that either Washington or Moscow is prepared to delegate to the Europeans a role of mediation between East and West. The two-sided dialogue between them has been under way for a long time now; it has its own well-defined channels of communication, its own characteristics and procedures; it certainly has not the slightest need of more or less self-interested "couriers".

The problem, rather, is whether it is possible to determine some common European interests, an objective European reality, with which both the superpowers must reckon, within the respective blocs and in pan-European relations.

In a word, the question is whether it is possible to find and lend substance to a collective European interlocutor in the arms control talks and in the detente process.

Obviously, the first forum in which to test this possibility is the CSCE. Unfortunately, however, despite the moderately positive signals coming from Stockholm, one cannot at present be overly optimistic with regard to the success of the future Vienna conference of CSCE, because of the clear imbalance that has arisen between the possible progress at Stockholm and the lack of progress, if not actual deterioration, in the sphere of human rights. This political impasse has to be overcome, and in this the active involvement of the U.S.S.R.'s East European allies would be invaluable, acting if nothing else along the lines suggested by the neutral and non-aligned countries.

But we have to go beyond Stockholm and the first phase of the CDE towards closer cooperation in the political and strategic sphere and towards more militarily significant agreements in the area of CBMs and arms control in general. We shall examine some of these points further on, but we can remark straightaway on the unlikelihood of any immediate emergence of such cooperation in the difficult sphere of arms control, because NATO and the Warsaw Pact will certainly seek to make significant agreements follow, not precede, the stabilization of the ongoing strategic and technological evolution between the superpowers, which would more clearly define their military priorities.

For this very reason, however, the time appears to have come to try to create a climate of mutual trust and better, less conflictual detente using as a point of departure other aspects of the international confrontation between East and West. Some of these aspects, such as economic and technical cooperation, are of great interest, but are outside the scope of the present paper and will be dealt with in another paper at this conference. Here, let me simply remark that true as it is that economic cooperation and trade are not per se a sufficient condition to ensure peace and detente, it appears equally true that trade war, sanctions and embargoes on economic relations are fundamentally incompatible with that objective.

Aside from the strictly economic and commercial aspects, however, in the present paper it is worth underscoring the need for proceeding jointly to the preventive management of a number of economic, political, and military crises touching European interests. This requires, first of all, that those crises be identified, followed by the identification of joint tools for intervention, which at first might well be non-military, i.e. essentially economic and political, in line with the European reality of civilian power repeatedly acknowledged and on which there is no need to dwell.

Taking the initiative in the sphere of regional crises is the more urgent and important, the more the confrontation between U.S. and U.S.S.R.

appears to intensify on this precise issue. Increasingly, the superpowers tend to intervene directly (Afghanistan) and to assist local combatants to upgrade the technological level of their conflict (the U.S. decision to supply Stinger SA missiles to the Nicaraguan "freedom fighters"). This could touch off a most dangerous spiral that could bury all hopes of an East-West agreement. Instead of just deploring it, the Europeans should try to suggest alternatives.

The problem of the economic crisis that is bound to strike some of the Balkan countries, for instance -- might this not be a chance to devise concerted economic and commercial intervention by the EEC and the Comecon? Financial assistance and economic and trade concessions could form part of an overall political plan for stability, to forestall an unnecessary aggravation of international tensions and establish a first, significant sphere of cooperation between the economic blocs and the European members of the two alliances, with the invaluable, indispensable involvement of neutral and non-aligned countries.

The recognition of the importance of peace and security in the Mediterranean could lead to other agreements no less important in the perspective of non-conflictual detente, such as active cooperation against terrorism (or at least against of the regional crises most directly affecting Europe.

Here again, I am not thinking of ambitious, abstract plans to substitute a European presence for the military presence of the superpowers or to neutralize the Mediterranean. Such plans have no practical effect whatever and are incompatible with the smooth functioning of the collective security systems to which the European powers belong. Instead, we need to see whether it is possible to foster the international political and economic strengthening of certain key countries, fundamental to regional stability and open to the prospect of a progressive easing of tensions and defusing of conflicts. Another feasible project is to look into the possibility of joint ways to back the diplomatic initiatives that best correspond to the need to enhance communication between the two blocs and mutual confidence. For instance, in the Middle East, encouraging initiatives to favor dialogue between Israel, the Palestinians, and some Arab countries involved in the conflict without necessarily predetermining the outcome of the contacts. Other initiatives could be more directly economic or humanitarian, though not without their political value, such as assistance for the economic development of the Arab populations of Israeli-occupied territories, or multinational development projects in key areas of the Middle East (irrigation, electrification, communication, etc.).

These are not new ideas, and they may still be overambitious. In any case, they do not preclude other, more innovative or more modest ones; nor do they preclude a more pragmatic, open-minded attitude. If I have chosen to mention them in this forum, it is only to underscore the potential of a different path to European cooperation, an avenue more ambitious than the present one, not conflicting with the policies of the superpowers but aimed at emphasizing the presence of a European interlocutor permanently interested in advancement of true detente. In sum, a greater European role in the detente process could try to insert some political cooperation in the superpower's world of conflictual relationship. This will not be easy. The Usa and the Ussr are both bound to look suspiciously to European West-West initiatives. There is a risk of misperceptions between allies, as well as a risk of diminishing the cohesion of the Alliances and the credibility of their defensive postures. It is difficult however to ignore the enormous benefits that the Europeans could draw from well balanced and imaginative political initiatives. It is very

likely that the idea of coupling together Eastern and Western European countries, supporting the same initiative, might be overambitious. In this case, the Western countries should try to increase their international presence and role, leaving a door as open as possible for latecomers from the East. A greater consideration for European perceptions and interests is a necessity, for detente. But such a necessity has to be demonstrated by the Europeans themselves.

#### Arms Control for Europe?

We return, finally, to military problems proper. It has been said that arms control agreements in themselves do not ensure detente, but we have also seen that incomplete agreements or, worse still, the outright absence of agreements are in the long run incompatible with closer East-West cooperation.

The climate is not of the best. The two superpowers are engaged in massive arms modernization and development plans, both nuclear and conventional. The main feature of the arms control plans offered so far seems to be their inflexibility - take it or leave it. A strange sort of public, declamatory diplomacy appears to have supplanted the more reserved diplomacy of bilateral and multilateral negotiations. What is more, the negotiations themselves often seem to be the last to know about the public initiatives announced by their leaders; they have no explanatory instructions and they lack the negotiating flexibility to be able to concede something to the other side.

Exerting some influence on these strange pseudo-negotiations (which could even yield sudden, unexpected results but could also collapse, equally suddenly) is no easy matter. Trapped in the political vice of the conflict between the opposed propaganda of Moscow and Washington, the government of Western Europe too are driven toward declamatory attitudes and public proposals. However, this heightens the tensions within the NATO alliance and produces additional political complications in domestic and international politics. For instance, when the West German Foreign Minister says that the two superpowers should agree on a cessation of nuclear tests, he tries to distinguish his position from that of Gorbachev, but he inevitably produces political effects in Washington and Moscow that do nothing to strengthen hopes for new arms control agreements.

Here again, I feel, we need to pay more attention to the problems and priorities of the European countries taken all together. In a recent interview granted to Humanite, Gorbachev criticized the United States, stating that America was set on going ahead with the SDI "to achieve absolute security for itself and put everybody else in a condition of absolute insecurity." This is an important statement, not only in the context in which it was made but in general. The quest for absolute security by one side cannot be pursued if its condition is the absolute insecurity of the other. Some middle ground, some meeting point must be found, of relative security and insecurity. And this is precisely Europe's problem. Today, the two alliances -- NATO and Warsaw Pact -- offer no guarantee whatever of absolute security for Europe. They do not even offer the European powers security equivalent to that enjoyed by the superpowers (which in turn is not absolute). Arms control agreements must not upset this delicate equilibrium but instead strengthen it, must make European security permanently better than it now is.

This will not be easy, but if two ingrained ways of thinking about the European countries continue to prevail, it will be impossible. These are:  
-- that European powers are mere extensions of the superpowers whose allies they are, whose military potential is mechanically added to that of their respective superpower;



-- that Europeans are destined to live in limited security, without the right or the responsibility to guarantee their own security independently, as far as possible, or else jointly with others (a thesis that directly implies that these are countries of limited sovereignty).

The problem is especially serious with respect to the Soviet Union, if only for reasons of geography (backed by bitter historical memory). The fact that the U.S.S.R. is itself a European country (at least in part), while the United States is on the other side of the Atlantic, on a different continent, makes perfectly symmetrical arms control agreements very difficult to devise and forces the Soviet Union to bear the brunt of this imbalance. On the other hand, if Moscow does not acknowledge Europe's right to selfdefense in the end it places the burden on the Europeans, heightening their insecurity to unacceptable levels.

Overcoming this dilemma is not easy, especially, as we have observed, in a situation of conflictual detente. Still, it is possible to try to reach limited agreements that can gradually bring into being a situation of stability and mutual confidence capable of offering sufficient guarantees of European security without excessive damage to the superpowers, especially the Soviet Union.

Such arms control measures are very unlikely to be able to drastically change the basic components of the European military balance, at least at first. Against such a possibility weigh too many military imbalances, too many European insecurities and weaknesses, the constant threat of misperception of the other side's intentions. A gradual, step-by-step approach appears more suitable, an effort to construct something starting from the possible areas of agreement between the superpowers mentioned earlier.

In conclusion, to offer a concrete example, if an agreement on INFs is reached, the Western Europeans will probably want such an agreement not to provide for the immediate elimination of all INF but only a first step in that direction, linked to subsequent talks in the relatively near future on the entire complex of tactical nuclear weapons and short-range missiles. In this case a series of CBMs could also be devised, in terms of deployment and operational integration of such system with the front-line forces.

Inevitably, from a European perspective the Stockholm, Vienna, and Geneva talks tend to be closely interwoven. Though there is no formal linkage (which could be counterproductive), there is an evident politico-strategic linkage which cannot be ignored. Moreover, there is an unavoidable political linkage, which we mentioned earlier, between arms control measures and other detente measures, ranging from the full application of the principles laid down in the Helsinki Final Act to some kinds of cooperation in the crisis areas most directly affecting European interests.