

In terms of verification, the mandate specified that compliance be monitored through "an effective and strict verification regime," including on-site inspection by right and information exchanges in sufficient detail to allow meaningful inter-force comparisons and verification of compliance. The details of the regime would be determined during the course of the negotiations.

With the mandate concluded, both alliances prepared their opening proposals for presentation at the inaugural meeting of the CFE. For the WTO, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze introduced a three-stage plan for reductions.<sup>19</sup> The first stage, lasting two to three years, would see each side reduce its armed forces and conventional weapons to levels 10 to 15 per cent below the level of the lower side. In addition, a nuclear-free zone of reduced armaments along the line of direct contact would also be established. In the second stage, armed forces — personnel and equipment — would be cut by a further 25 per cent. Finally, in the third stage, the participant's armed forces would be restructured along strictly defensive lines.

NATO's proposal,<sup>20</sup> presented by British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe, called for overall limits on tanks (20 000), artillery (16 500) and armoured personnel carriers (28 000). No one country would be permitted to have more than 30 per cent of the combined total for both alliances in these categories. Active weapons deployed by each side on allied territory would be limited to 3 200 tanks, 1 700 artillery and 6 000 armoured troop carriers. As with the WTO proposal, no detailed provisions for verification, beyond the statement of principles contained in the mandate, were included.

While the two sides elaborated on their opening proposals in Vienna, the West finally gained the public-relations momentum on 29 May when President Bush announced a new four-point initiative in conventional arms reductions at the NATO summit meeting in Brussels. The initiative called for:

- (1) locking in the WTO's acceptance of ceilings on tanks and armoured personnel carriers, and exploring a mutually acceptable limit on artillery;
- (2) reducing attack and assault helicopters and all land-based aircraft 15 per cent below the level of the lower side;
- (3) reducing American forces in Europe by 20 per cent with a resulting ceiling of 275 000 on Soviet and American ground and air forces stationed outside national territory in the Atlantic-to-Urals region; and,
- (4) accelerating the CFE timetable to seek agreement within six months or a year.<sup>21</sup>