



preparedness, levels of transparency and confidence, warning and reaction capability (e.g., the ability to detect and successfully resist surprise attack), force-to-force and force-to-space ratios, and so on. The process of conventional arms control is therefore highly complex, in that it must take into account and interrelate a great many diverse factors and considerations.

In recent years there have been two major conventional arms control forums. The Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks ran into numerous difficulties from the very outset in 1973. These difficulties involved, among others, issues such as differences over prior agreement on data, refusal by the East to accept intrusive verification, disagreement on definition of what factors constitute a fair balance of forces, the concept of asymmetrical reductions, and failure to agree on what types of forces would be involved. Nonetheless, the process itself has been seen as a useful instrument in the management of East-West relations at the conventional force level.

The Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament (CCSBMDE) (more widely known as the CDE), conducted under the auspices of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), was successful not only as a process, but also in reaching an agreement (contained in the Stockholm Document). The gradualist approach (as adopted in Stockholm) for such a highly complex and important undertaking as conventional arms control proved in practice to be the more sensible. This approach proceeded on the premise that the building of confidence should precede any negotiations aimed at constraining military activities or at reducing the numbers of forces deployed. In the MBFR talks there has been no attempt to build initial confidence so as to create a less confrontational climate which might then be more conducive to further discussions on more substantive aspects such as troop and armament reductions.

Encouraged by the progress then being made at the Stockholm negotiations as well as in Geneva at the USA-USSR

bilateral talks on nuclear and space defence questions, the NATO Foreign Ministers, at their meeting in Halifax in May 1986, created the High Level Task Force (HLTF) to study wider options for the Alliance for future conventional arms control negotiations with the East. The HLTF was tasked to report to the North Atlantic Council on the feasibility of negotiating force levels and deployments on a greater scale than was being done in the MBFR talks, taking into consideration a zone extending from the Atlantic to the Urals. The Warsaw Pact followed up with a proposal of its own — the "Budapest Appeal" of June 11 — which called for large-scale reductions of forces in a similar zone.

The HLTF began in June 1986 to work in earnest on its ambitious and highly complex task. After much painstaking internal research and considerable discussion among the Allies, the HLTF produced its first report, which resulted in the Brussels Declaration on Conventional Arms Control.

The Brussels Declaration contained the main elements of what has become the essence of the new Western approach to conventional arms control. It invited the Warsaw Pact to enter into discussions with NATO concerning a mandate for a new conventional arms control negotiation which would apply to the whole of Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. The situation in Europe was described as being "marked by asymmetries and disparities..." which were detrimental to Western security and which were "...a source of potential instability." The relevant factors were listed as:

- the armaments, equipment types, deployments, numbers, mobility and readiness of the armed forces involved;
- the information, predictability and confidence about them; and
- consideration of geography.

Recognizing the enormous complexities involved in dealing effectively with such factors so as to enhance security at the conventional level, the HLTF agreed upon a set of objectives as the basis for the Alliance position for future conventional arms control:

- the establishment of a stable and secure level of forces, geared to the elimination of disparities;
- a negotiating process which proceeds step-by-step, and which guarantees the undiminished security of all concerned at each stage;
- focus on the elimination of the capability for surprise attack or for the initiation of large-scale offensive action;
- further measures to build confidence and to improve openness and calculability about military behaviour;
- the application of the measures involved to the whole of Europe, but in a way which takes account of and seeks to redress regional imbalances and to exclude circumvention;
- an effective verification regime (in which detailed exchanges of information and on-site inspection will play a vital part) to ensure compliance with the provisions of any agreement, and to guarantee that limitations on force capabilities are not exceeded.

It was decided that the best way to achieve NATO's objectives would be to propose two *distinct* negotiations. One of these forums would build upon and expand the results of the Stockholm Conference on confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) among the 35 members of the CSCE. The other, recognizing that the forces of the two Alliances were the most immediately involved in the essential security relationship in Europe, would focus on eliminating the existing disparities and, eventually, on establishing conventional stability at lower levels between the 23 countries of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. During the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting at Reykjavik in June 1987, it was decided that the stability talks among the 23 could be conducted within the *framework* of the CSCE process, but that these negotiations would retain autonomy as regards subject matter, participation and procedures.

Following the publication of the Brussels Declaration, representatives of NATO and of the Warsaw Pact began to