
I. Introduction

The recent successful conclusion of several negotiations to control and limit nuclear and conventional weapons and equipment has caused attention to be focused anew on possible future reduction and control of military personnel. There is, however, disagreement as to whether personnel reductions can be verified to the same extent as reductions in weapons and equipment. There are also schools of thought which hold that if weapons are adequately controlled, then personnel need not be limited. Others suggest that the world political and military climate has improved so positively that verification is no longer necessary, or perhaps even negotiated arms control itself.

Very little has been written in the open literature about personnel verification. It would appear, however, given the renewed interest in limitations on military personnel such as in the context of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) talks, that this is an area which warrants some research, speculation, and testing. If there is to be any degree of confidence that parties to agreements on the reduction or limitation of personnel are complying with their undertakings, then there must be a capability to achieve an acceptable level of verification. Recognizing this, it is not impossible that the requirements of adequate verification will be judged to be too difficult, too intrusive, or too expensive to be acceptable.

On 7 December 1988, during the course of its 43rd Session, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a set of 16 verification principles¹. These principles were the outcome of a working group chaired by Canada at the 1987 and 1988 sessions of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The first principle affirms that: "Adequate and effective verification is an essential element of all arms limitation and disarmament agreements." Other principles refer to the need to employ different techniques, including on-site inspection (OSI); to the benefits to be derived from greater openness; to the desirability of non-interference in the process of verification; that verification is an activity conducted by the parties to an agreement or by an organization at the request of the parties; and that verification arrangements must provide clear and timely evidence of compliance or non-compliance. Any verification regime designed to verify personnel levels should be constructed bearing in mind these principles.

In the past, considerable international discussion has been conducted regarding personnel limitations. Of most current relevance, however, are developments with respect to arms control in Europe. Article XVIII of the CFE Treaty, signed in Paris on 19 November 1990, refers to follow-on talks and states that: