

250,000, with the final figure of 500,000 essentially reflecting a compromise figure between civilian and military proposals. There were also suggestions by some civilian analysts, for cuts in armored tank divisions of up to fifty percent, although these did not appear to be given serious consideration.<sup>71</sup>

The December announcement was first and foremost a political act intended to demonstrate to the West the practical application of the concept of reasonable sufficiency, and the intention to move towards more defensively structured forces.<sup>72</sup> In this sense, the exact structure of the proposed reductions was important. It was necessary for these be of a size and type to convey the seriousness of the new Soviet approach to security and a willingness to reduce systems perceived as posing an offensive threat to the West. For these purposes, the inclusion of large numbers of tanks, as well as bridging and assault landing equipment and units was especially important.

The political intent of the reductions were confirmed by Army General Lobov (the new chief of staff of the WTO forces) several months after the announcement:

The socialist community countries have undertaken to reduce their armed forces because they consider it important and necessary to prove by deeds the sincerity of their intentions and their adherence to the new political thinking. They are convinced that political measures take priority in

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<sup>71</sup> This information comes from interviews that the author conducted with a number of the experts who constructed these proposals at IMEMO, the Institute of the USA and Canada, and also with officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 1989, Moscow.

<sup>72</sup> Individuals interviewed by the author stressed the idea that the reduction was in the final analysis a political decision made by the political leadership (mainly Gorbachev). Although a wide variety of interest groups contributed to the process, almost no one knew, until the final announcement, the precise nature of the reductions. Interviews, September 1989, Moscow. Even the WTO allies were not notified until one day before the announcement of its exact proportions. Andre Brie, an East German conventional arms control expert at the Institute for International Relations in Potsdam made this point to the author in an interview in East Berlin, 5 December 1989.