

## Theatre Nuclear Force (TNF) Modernization and Arms Control

The achievement by the Soviet Union of strategic parity with the United States has focussed attention on the military balance in Europe and here, too, the Soviet Union has made great advances. NATO has identified a growing imbalance in favour of the Soviet Union in the longer-range element of theatre nuclear forces, aggravated by the recent introduction of much more advanced and threatening weapons including principally the SS-20 multiple-warhead mobile ballistic missile and super-sonic "Backfire" bomber. At the same time, NATO's nuclear forces have remained static, and some of them are aging and are reaching the end of their useful life.

NATO has, therefore, prepared a plan to modernize the longer-range element of its nuclear forces by the deployment of new intermediate-range ballistic missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles in a number of Allied countries. These will help to preserve the credibility of the allied nuclear deterrent in Europe, by at least partially countering the new Eastern threat. Actual deployments will not begin for several years, and an offer to negotiate limits on these systems during this period will be made to the Soviet Union.

Theatre Nuclear Force Modernization and Arms Control will be the subject of the Special Meeting of NATO Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers, which will take place in Brussels on December 12.