

that approximately half of the reductions have been carried out,⁶⁸ although the recent events in Eastern Europe have, to a large extent, overridden the relevancy of the December 1988 announcement.

Before the December announcement, little overt support existed for the idea of unilateral reductions, even among civilian arms control and disarmament experts.⁶⁹ While there appeared to exist a consensus about the importance of the idea of asymmetric responses, almost all public statements indicated that any major reductions would have to take place on a reciprocal basis, and/or through negotiated processes. Many in the Soviet military vehemently denied the possibility of any unilateral reductions.⁷⁰

Despite these reservations it is clear that a number of interest groups were involved in drafting proposals for the unilateral reduction as early as the summer of 1988. This process became a watershed in terms of movement towards an acceptance of the idea of unilateral actions. The idea of a large unilateral reduction was discussed for at least a year prior to the announcement. Proposals from different parts of the arms control bureaucracy were submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID) and ultimately to higher levels of the Party apparatus for consideration. Arms limitation experts in academic and scientific institutes, at the MID, and members of the General Staff all put forward different proposals ranging from troops cuts of 1 million, down to

⁶⁸ See the breakdown in: N. Sautin, "*Poibut li russkie k La-Manshu*" (Will the Russians Go For the English Channel?), *Pravda*, 5 November 1989, p. 6. For a Western assessment see: Phillip Karber and Wayne Arner, "The Gorbachev Unilateral Reductions And The Restructuring Of Soviet/Warsaw Pact Forces", Testimony Before The House Armed Services Committee, 13 September 1989.

⁶⁹ For example, as mentioned earlier, the group of Zhurkin, Karaganov, and Kortunov were among the few who were the most consistent advocates of unilateral reductions publicly.

⁷⁰ This was the case almost right up until the December announcement. For example, Col. Gen. Gareyev (a prominent deputy chief of the General Staff) speaking in London in October 1988 vehemently denied any possibility of unilateral reductions. See: Michael Evans, "East's Military Posture 'Depends on NATO Deal'", *The Times* (London), 18 October 1988, p. 6.