

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since Mikhail Gorbachev came to power, the Soviet Union has adopted a dramatically new approach to arms control and disarmament. Based on cooperation rather than confrontation, and non-zero sum calculations rather than zero-sum, this change in approach has contributed to a situation where both East and West now stand at the edge of radical arms reductions. The present paper examines a number of fundamental principles which have guided the Soviet approach to conventional arms control issues over that past three years.

The primary principle that has formed the foundation of the new defensive military doctrine of the Soviet Union is that of "reasonable sufficiency." The paper highlights both the practical, political, and strategic significance of this concept in the Soviet Union. The principle of reasonable sufficiency is contrasted with policies based on the goal of superiority and policies based on parity. The Soviet differentiation between quantitative and qualitative parity is also examined.

The principle of reasonable sufficiency is also supported by a number of auxiliary principles that impact on Soviet arms control and defence policies. These include the principle of asymmetry, the principle of unilateral action, the principle of reciprocity, and the principle of political means. The acceptance of each of these ideas has contributed substantially to the new Soviet approach to arms reductions.

Turning to the practice of reasonable sufficiency, the paper then explores how these concepts have been applied in three areas. First, in the December 1988 announcement of unilateral conventional reductions by the Soviet Union; second, in the unilateral restructuring of the Soviet armed forces; and third, in the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) negotiations in Vienna. Finally, the "enforced unilateralism" demand of the Soviet Union as a result of the revolutions in Eastern Europe is briefly considered.