

*The question of dependable verification at every stage of this process is natural. Both national technical means and international forms of verification, including, if need be, on-site inspection, are possible.<sup>8</sup>*

Accepting the Soviet leader's challenge to pursue new directions in conventional arms control, NATO created the High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on Conventional Arms Control, announced at the foreign ministers' meeting in Halifax, Canada, 29-30 May 1986. The ministers' closing statement explained the objective of the conventional arms reduction process: "[o]ur objective is the strengthening of stability and security in the whole of Europe, through increased openness and the establishment of a verifiable, comprehensive and stable balance of conventional forces at lower levels."<sup>9</sup> The HLTF was to submit an interim report to the Council in October 1986 and a final report to the foreign ministers in December of that year.

While NATO became mired in often divisive procedural and substantive debates within the HLTF,<sup>10</sup> the WTO retained the public-relations initiative. On 11 June 1986 at the WTO Summit in Budapest, Hungary, the collected East-bloc leaders issued an "appeal" to NATO members and all European states. According to their final statement, the objective of the disarmament process was three-fold: (1) eliminate weapons of mass destruction; (2) substantially reduce armed forces and conventional armaments; and, (3) lower states' military expenditures. To achieve these objectives, three stages were necessary. First, each alliance would demobilize 100 000 to 150 000 troops within one to two years.<sup>11</sup> Second, land forces and tactical strike aviation would be reduced approximately 25 per cent from present levels by the early 1990s; this step alone would result in the combined reduction of over one million troops. In the final stage, reductions would continue with other European states (i.e., the neutral and nonaligned countries [NNAs]) joining the process.

The verification provisions included in the appeal did not stray greatly from those in previous proposals. The WTO statement recognized the need for both national technical means and international procedures including on-site inspection. Specifically,

*on-site verification of the reduction of armed forces, destruction or storage of armaments could be implemented, when needed, with the involvement of representatives of the international consultative commission [with members from NATO, WTO and NNA states]. Check-points staffed by representatives of the international consultative commission could be set up for such control at large railway junctions, at airfields, in ports.<sup>12</sup>*

On the question of data exchange, the WTO heads of state agreed to supply data on the total numerical strength of land forces and tactical strike aviation within the reductions area. In addition, data on the units to be reduced — unit designation and deployment, troop strength, and equipment numbers (for