

Regional conventional arms control (proposed by Pakistan at the UN in 1982) is a proposal well worth considering. Conventional weapons reduction negotiations have so far concentrated on Europe, where potential East-West conflict presents great dangers, yet has never yet exploded into actual violence. Meanwhile, areas of chronic or periodic violence, so-called "protracted (or intractable) conflict", such as the Middle East, India-Pakistan, Cambodia, Lebanon, Iran-Iraq, Chad, Western Sahara, Angola, Mozambique, or Timor (to name only a few) have been ignored. Perhaps each of these separate conflicts needs and deserves "MBFR talks" of its own.

Another hopeful way to proceed, which has been much discussed at the UN, is through military budget reductions. These, too, would need to be "mutual and balanced." The advantage in proceeding through the financial management of the war economy is that this method would "liberate" the negotiators from having to decide how many machine guns equal one tank, or how tanks on different sides compare in quality and effectiveness. By allocating money limits to opposing armed forces, the burden of deciding which arms to scrap would be shifted from the negotiators to the military planners, who presumably (on both sides) would get rid of the least effective weapons first. The result may not be an exact balance between tanks or between numbers of soldiers, but an over-all balance determined by each nation's own considerations of using its allocated money to its best effect.

The sticking point in this plan has been the determination of how much each nation actually spends on its military needs. Accounting methods differ, and also there is much distrust, with accusations (especially by the West of the USSR) of trying to hide most of the military expenditure in parts of the civilian budget. The UN has commissioned a study