

III Introduction and Assumptions

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The 1990s are a period rich in contradictions—change seems to be the only constant. The new unstable “multipolar” world contains different challenges than the dangerous old bipolar world, but the greatest challenge may be unpredictability. As James Woolsey, Director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, has noted, we have slain the large dragon, but we find ourselves in a jungle full of a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes.

With the loss of “protectors,” strong central control and long-standing alliances, countries in Eastern Europe and the Third World are moving in two opposing directions at the same time: toward the institution of democratic reforms and into violent conflicts. Regional conflicts abound in which international action is needed, but the conditions of intervention are complex and evolving because the framework of military co-operation, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Warsaw Pact alliances, has been replaced by issue-dependent, loosely formed coalitions. A sustained period of open trade and markets has led to global economic growth, but increasing economic competition, particularly among allies, and economic recession in some parts of the world complicate international politics. The spread of science and technology holds promise for better conditions in the developing world, yet it also leads to development of technologically superior weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, and advanced conventional weapons.

What follows are *assumptions*, not predictions, concerning a period of great uncertainty. The assumptions, which speak to the period between 1994 and 2004, set the context in which this study on the converging roles of arms control verification, confidence-building measures and peace operations will be discussed. The assumptions are not necessarily a “wish list”; rather, they take into consideration certain geopolitical constraints and realities. They do not pretend to predict the unpredictable, for example, tectonic shifts such as the disintegration of the Soviet Union or the recent Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organization accord. Indeed, this study assumes that international events, however uncertain, will unfold without such global upheavals.

The World in 1994-2004: The Realm of International Politics

- While every major power will have the capacity to strike targets from hemispherical to global ranges, major wars will not be likely, and international co-operation will be on the rise. There will be basic unity among advanced industrial/technological nations and many less-developed countries on the rules of international behaviour and the sanctions for violations of these norms.
- Multilateralism will be dominant. There will be less reliance on unilateral or major-power solutions to international problems and greater reliance on the offices of the United Nations. UN resolutions will form the bases of collective security, but the UN will not be able to intervene militarily in unstable regions of the world without the support or acquiescence of the major powers.
- After reviews of its roles and organizational elements, the United Nations will be a more effective, possibly changed, body with expanded authority. The organization will be strengthened, both economically and diplomatically, by the confidence displayed by the major powers in utilizing its capabilities. From time to time, however, there may be serious questions on the part of some countries about the effectiveness of the UN in its peacekeeping role.
- The majority of the republics of the FSU will successfully negotiate the transition from communism to constitutional government, “democracy”—however fragile the concept—and economic reform.
- However, during this period, the dominant trend in the FSU, the other countries of Eastern Europe and certain areas of the Third World will be one of instability, with regional conflicts and ethnic, religious and social violence. New countries will proliferate through the potentially explosive form of fragmentation or disintegration of old borders. North and South Korea could unify (if they get beyond their immediate conflict over North Korea’s nuclear capability), creating a new

