

doctrine of flexible response. (NATO will still be able to attack targets in the Soviet Union with its F-111 bombers based in Britain. US submarine-launched ballistic missiles committed to NATO also provide an invulnerable retaliatory force.) But at the level of perceptions, the treaty does matter.

Nuclear weapons are in the process of being de-legitimized and some view the recent agreement on European missiles as further confirmation that nuclear weapons are not viable instruments of military force. It is unprecedented to see former American secretaries of state and defence, and former national security advisers saying that no president would ever authorize a first-use of nuclear weapons. Ronald Reagan's strategic defence initiative is, among other things, an attempt to develop a technological fix to this dilemma.

All of this has made some Europeans very nervous. Traditionally, Western Europeans have placed great stock in nuclear weapons because they have made up for perceived deficiencies in

process of nuclear disarmament to go even further.

In Germany, a variety of politicians, including Christian Democrats and right-wing leaders, would like arms control to extend to the third category of nuclear weapons, the short-range systems under 500 kilometres. Others, especially moderates, are saying "enough is enough"; NATO should keep its short-range nuclear forces (like the Lance missile) and deploy new missiles in the 300-400 kilometre range.

The British are divided along party lines. Labour would like to rid nuclear weapons from British soil. The Conservatives want to halt nuclear reductions.

Among the smaller NATO countries, Denmark is actively flirting with a policy that would ban visits in peacetime by ships carrying nuclear weapons. Both the UK and the US have warned Denmark that this would undermine the unity of the Alliance. A similar step two years ago taken by New Zealand caused the United States to sever its defence relations with New Zealand enshrined in the ANZUS (Australia-New Zealand-US) agreement.

The French are openly hostile to current developments. President Mitterand was cautiously favourable about the treaty, and only former President Giscard d'Estaing has openly embraced it. France worries deeply that the super-powers will make further deals behind Europe's back. The French are perhaps the only unconditional believers in nuclear deterrence. They maintain that conventional deterrence never has and never will work; nuclear weapons have preserved the peace in Europe and as they see it, the only way to keep the peace in the future is to have more.

On the conventional forces side the picture is not much clearer. There is a lot of talk on both sides of the Atlantic about improving conventional forces and combining this with reductions in nuclear weapons through arms control, as a solution to perceived Soviet superiority. But where will the money come from for more tanks, aircraft, and soldiers? With the existing American budget deficit any sort of ambitious conventional force

modernization programme led by the US is simply unaffordable.

In Europe, in addition to budgetary problems, declining birth-rates will mean less manpower for defence as we go into the 1990s. Measures to increase short-term volunteers, lengthen terms of enlistment, and extend the time of conscript service will be politically and fiscally troublesome. The demographics are better in the United States, however, the policy of the all-volunteer army makes it difficult to expand the size of forces beyond current levels. In short, conventional forces are part of the problem not the solution.

The failure of fifteen years of mutual and balanced force reduction talks to produce an agreement does not augur well for a coherent NATO policy on conventional forces. In the absence of new ideas, the danger grows that Gorbachev will seize the political (and propaganda) initiative with his own proposals.

WITHOUT A RENEWED VISION FOR NATO what fundamental changes brought on through sheer political inertia can we expect to see in the Alliance? First, some reduction in the American troop commitment to Europe is inevitable. American elites and the public increasingly believe (rightly or wrongly) they are being taken for a ride by the European allies. Under growing budgetary pressures it will become increasingly difficult to maintain US forces at their current levels in Europe unless Americans are persuaded that Europeans are doing more for their own defence.

Second, the old trans-Atlantic consensus will be profoundly tested by growing economic protectionism in the United States and the possibility of trade restrictions. In the past, the political and military coherence of the Alliance in the face of the Soviet threat, moderated economic grievances and tendencies to mud-slinging. With this political glue cracking, economic stresses and strains will only make these cracks bigger.

Third, American interests and priorities are shifting toward the Pacific. The recently released report of a high-level US commis-

sion on long-term strategic planning (*Discriminate Deterrence* by Fred Iklé and Albert Wohlstetter) emphasizes the growing importance of US national interests in the Pacific and other regions outside of Europe. It reflects a broad consensus among US foreign-policy elites that the risks of war in Central Europe are no longer what they once were and that the arena of East-West competition has shifted elsewhere.

Fourth, trans-Atlantic divisions are bound to be accentuated as a new generation comes to power in Europe. The best and brightest of Western Europe's "Vietnam generation" are much less enamoured with America than their parents. In recent polls taken in West Germany about fifty-five percent of highly educated West Germans under the age of thirty-five held a low opinion of the United States while this unfavourable opinion was shared by only fifteen to thirty percent of all other age groups and educational levels.

Fifth, the levels of co-operation on defence matters among the European allies will grow as they lose confidence in American leadership. The Alliance is not about to disintegrate. But we may well see the so-called European pillar strengthen while trans-Atlantic ties fray and weaken.

FOR A COUNTRY LIKE CANADA THIS will create special problems. If the US begins to reduce the size of its ground forces in Europe, there may well be public pressure in Canada to do the same. But this is only one of several possibilities: we may want to keep things the way they are; or perhaps even increase the size of our commitment. Another option – especially if we increase the size of our reserves as contemplated by the government's White Paper on Defence – would be to dedicate a portion of those reserves for Europe and NATO. But if we do that we will have to think about how we could get them over there quickly in times of crisis.

Whatever we do, it will matter. And it will matter more in the current environment because of increasing tensions and sensitivity on both sides of the Atlantic about NATO's future. □

PLAY BALL -



Mike Constable

the conventional balance of forces, and now they see the nuclear rug being pulled out from under them.

With the intermediate-range missiles out of the way, sights are once again turning to the balance of conventional forces in Central Europe and how the rest of NATO's nuclear forces fit in. It is striking how little consensus there is on this issue. Some, like the NATO defence ministers, favour continued modernization of NATO's remaining nuclear assets. Others challenge modernization on the grounds that it will create more domestic political trouble than it's worth. Some would like the pro-