

verification nightmare. Nonetheless, the timing features of such a provision might well still mean that significant personnel resources were needed, if only because of the extent of Soviet and Cuban involvement in Nicaragua, and of the United States presence in the rest of the region.

More complicated again would be the other arms control provisions likely to be included in such an accord as listed earlier in sub-paragraph 5. The observer mission, or its headquarters, would at first have to verify, through at least a system of spot checks, and probably more thoroughly, the accuracy of troop levels, their deployment, the numbers and sophistication of their weapons, and similar details on national military affairs submitted to it in order to give base figures both for eventual negotiations on those levels, and for the establishing of the limits proposed.

Subsequently the agreed reductions and eventual levels would have to be verified in some way. Particularly important would be the timings and circumstances of such reductions and the stages for their various implementation features. Since forces are dispersed throughout the region, frequently in isolated locations, and since troops are numerous, equipment varied, and installations widespread, verification will likewise need to be wide-ranging. Its achievement will require significant numbers of personnel to carry it through in a meaningful way, even if complaint investigation is kept to a minimum. It must be stressed, however, that with the Sapoá and Esquipulas II agreements, the only signed agreements to date, there has been no lack of such complaints. It would be optimistic in the extreme to think there will be only a few in such a highly charged domestic and international atmosphere as is present in Central America, and is likely still to exist to a considerable extent once an accord is finally reached. There will thus be a need for a complaints mechanism, as well as a bilateral co-operative mechanism to dispel concerns before they become complaints.

Agreement on the levels of troops allowed to each party, as well as the timings and circumstances of their reduction, will require verification. If the regional states are to have any degree of a real sense of security, these levels of troops must be seen as reasonable and non-threatening where neighbours are concerned. No confidence-building measure (CBM) would be more important than the smooth transition of local forces from their current massive size (see Table 2) to levels more commensurate with peacetime armed forces. No CBM would therefore be more closely watched than this one, and the efficient verification of its provisions would be vital.

One has only to look at recent writings on the size of Central American forces, particularly U.S. statements on those of Nicaragua, to see the room there is for misunderstanding on this matter. The size and dispersal of regional armed forces would complicate efforts to verify reductions in their strength. In addition, the "local" arrangements among security forces not necessarily part of the regular armies of the republics could leave room for doubt among other parties. The existence of large reserve forces in Nicaragua could also render more difficult an observer force's mission although this last issue should be at least partially