

ner (i.e. to the flanks) forces withdrawn from the reduction zone. Agreement in principle has been reached to establish a consultative commission to guide and review implementation. There has also been agreement not to interfere with national technical means of verification. The negotiations appear to be deadlocked on the "data problem" and the issue of residual forces. The extent to which the Soviet Union and its WTO allies will accept intrusive Associated Measures is not clear and may become a major negotiating hurdle, although recent WTO positions suggest a growing acceptance of at least constrained on-site inspections and observers.

Further progress in Vienna will probably be difficult to achieve until the Conference on Disarmament in Europe (CDE) has begun. The potential for overlap between the MBFR negotiations and the CDE discussions is great and the participants in MBFR may opt to transfer their deadlocked talks to a new forum. In any event, they will likely defer any major decisions until the nature of the CDE talks is clarified. That process is likely to take at least one year.

MBFR Negotiating Obstacles

A frequently overlooked problem plaguing the MBFR negotiations has been the inherent geographic asymmetry of the two major alliances. Because the United States has significant military forces stationed in Western Europe (both conventional and nuclear), there is an intrinsic asymmetry that is bound to stymie any effort to negotiate arms control agreements. There can be no obvious equality of forces or effects because similar weapons and forces *cannot* produce similar results or threaten similar targets. However unlikely it may be, American troops can cross into Soviet territory and American battlefield tactical weapons can attack Soviet targets. The Soviet Union cannot similarly threaten the United States. However, the Soviet Union can threaten American troops and allies without attacking the United States directly. This fundamental asymmetry is purely a result of the Soviet Union being a part of Europe while the United States is not.¹⁵ The

consequences of this geographic fact of life are plainly visible in the MBFR context when discussions turn to the withdrawal of Soviet and American forces from and the reduction of German forces within the Central European reduction zone. Soviet forces need only traverse a distance of 600 or 700 kilometers while American forces must cross the Atlantic Ocean. The principal concern is the time necessary to re-introduce those forces into the European theatre if relations should deteriorate and war appear imminent. A secondary concern is the potentially destabilizing effect that *re-introducing* such forces might have in the midst of a crisis and the resultant reluctance of decision makers to respond to a genuine crisis in a timely fashion. These fears find their fullest expression in planners' scenarios that hypothesize no- or short-warning attacks by the Warsaw Treaty Organization. To be sure, there are ways to minimize this concern but it is and must remain a major underlying problem. A number of Confidence-Building Measures have been formulated in order to reduce concerns of this type but they can only address such concerns imperfectly.

An associated feature of geography influencing the MBFR negotiations is the significant difference in physical space available for manoeuvre should war occur. NATO forces would have little room for manoeuvre and would have to constantly guard against thrusts designed to split their forces in two. Much of West Germany is within 150 kilometers of Soviet Forces. The Warsaw Treaty Organization, on the other hand, has a massive space in which to manoeuvre and Soviet territory lies far to the rear. This geographic reality is also an important consideration in evaluating NATO and WTO negotiating positions. Because of the potential threat associated with Soviet reinforcement and the extensive inter-German border, NATO cannot afford to reduce its forces beyond certain limits regardless of reductions to nearby WTO forces. We will return to this concern when we look more specifically at the prospects of Confidence-Building Measures in Chapters Six and Seven. Part of that discussion will include a brief assessment of the structural and doctrinal asymmetries separating NATO and the WTO (specifically the Warsaw Pact fascination with "blitzkrieg" and "operational manoeuvre groups"). The discussion will also examine the

¹⁵ This fundamental asymmetry lies at the heart of the Soviet-American Intermediate Nuclear Force impasse. It could be argued that the bulk of Soviet and American security problems flow directly from this unresolvable asymmetry.

