

So far, in both the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, the determination to reduce military burdens has not flagged: budget and troop strength reductions are moving ahead and the production of major weapons has begun to slow. Here, too, there is a risk that this disruption and diminution of the military sector could trigger military rebelliousness which, if coalesced with other anti-reform interests, could threaten internal backlash and reversion to confrontational foreign policies.

With all these factors in flux and a huge variety of politico – military scenarios in play, Western planners are clearly perplexed, and inclined to caution. The traditional scenarios of war being triggered by a Soviet invasion into Western Europe seem more and more fanciful, although it will take the successful conclusion and implementation of the Conventional Forces talks next summer to start finally putting this fear to rest. How will the Soviet Union deal now with its large contingents of troops stationed in other Warsaw Pact countries (some 600,000 in all) when it has been assumed that a large part of their *raison d'etre* was to assure stability of the Communist regimes and Soviet hegemony, goals which have now been effectively abandoned by Moscow? Once again, while the Soviet Union may no longer consider it affordable or necessary to maintain its ring of client states, it must be assumed that Moscow will still perceive a vital interest in preventing any of those neighbours from taking on a hostile military posture or alignment. There is no Western interest in encouraging any such provocative development.

While there is still a long way to go in conventional arms negotiations (and a practical problem on all sides in dealing with the specific negotiating questions as fast as the political momentum would now permit) – and while even less progress has yet been made on nuclear disarmament and practically none on naval arms control – it is clear that the management of East-West relations can now move, as NATO ministers have recognized, much more to the political and economic arenas.

Whether we like it or not, the “building-down” of the two alliance structures in Europe is going to be a relatively slow and carefully balanced process. Paradoxically, both the disarmament process and the remaining structures may provide a modicum of stability against some of the more dangerous eventualities emerging from destabilizing change and painful adjustment in Eastern Europe. For the rest, practi-