

At the same time 22 of these governments ratified the largest arms control agreement in history, which, in turn, eliminated the traditional scenarios of surprise attack and conventional invasion in Central Europe. These agreements will demand massive reductions and destruction of weaponry. Similarly, the Summit launched new institutions and approaches for managing the political relationship and limiting security risks under an overarching framework of the CSCE. All of the "baskets" of the Helsinki Accords will be covered, and national "ceilings" on military equipment will be carefully observed. Confidence and security-building measures will be implemented, together with conflict prevention, in the new Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna; an Office for Free Elections will be set up in Warsaw; Foreign Ministers and Heads of Government will meet regularly; human rights machinery will be developed further, as will economic and environmental cooperation.

This new approach to a post Cold War Europe, ratified in Paris, stands a very good chance of limiting the classic dangers of European history in which the inevitable localized conflicts escalate to major ones through the intervention of major powers. It will be very important to seize every current opportunity to reduce the levels of armaments as far as possible and as quickly as possible on a balanced and verifiable basis, since the remaining levels, even after the Conventional Forces agreement and unilateral reductions, are still at historic highs. It is also sobering that the verification provisions of the first conventional forces reduction agreement are not yet as intrusive as many people had been led to expect, and that the concept of "Open Skies", championed by Canada and Hungary, is not an immediate prospect.

Another major source of encouragement is the withdrawal of the superpowers from many of their past investments in political and military confrontations in other regions of the world, thus reducing the dangers of the exacerbation and escalation of those conflicts.

However, at the global level it must be stressed again that existing nuclear arsenals remain huge and will still be so even after a START agreement. Furthermore, modernization in these systems is proceeding on both sides, with the potential for destabilization. Deterrence, and particularly the extension of the US strategic deterrent to Western Europe through NATO, remains legitimate and necessary as long as these capabilities exist in Europe or elsewhere. At the same time, while the present climate of political opportunity exists, there is a strong possibility of pushing forward a rapid and massive "build down". This new Europe, from Vladivostock to Vancouver, is still far from being what