

on manpower and aircraft, is designed to promote stability. In combination with new NATO proposals on tanks, armoured personnel carriers, and helicopters, the President's manpower and aircraft initiatives move us closer to resolving many of the key remaining differences in the CFE negotiations.

Last week President Gorbachev moved toward our position on manpower, abandoning overall ceilings on all forces. But his response in equating United States' and Soviet forces in Europe does not acknowledge that United States' forces outside this limit would be an ocean away, whereas large numbers of Soviet troops would remain in the European part of the Soviet Union.

NATO also has made a new proposal on aircraft that accepts a number of points in the Warsaw Pact position. So far, however, the Soviet Union has not responded to our efforts to close this issue. Indeed, its position sets a ceiling that would require the West to add about 2,000 new NATO aircraft in order to reach equality. That is hardly a step towards arms reduction. So we have to redouble our efforts on this particular subject.

Disagreements over aircraft limits simply must not prevent us from signing a CFE agreement this year.

To promote predictability, President Bush last spring judged that the time was right to revive and extend the Open Skies idea - a concept that was first broached by President Eisenhower but at that time was rejected by the Soviet Union.

While the CFE negotiations are the primary means to codify strategic stability in the new Europe, Open Skies can, and should, become a key component of our efforts to increase predictability while also supporting stability. Complementing confidence-building measures that we are considering as a part of the CSCE process, Open Skies can make a decisive contribution in creating an open and transparent military and political environment in Europe.

Consider, just a moment, what Open Skies could accomplish. Under the Western approach, states will be able to see more clearly, literally, the actions and even the intent of others, whatever the time of day and whatever the conditions of the weather. A state will not be able to practise an exercise for offensive, aggressive attacks, with the help of a traditional ally, a closed society.

Neighbours will be able to fly over troop movements, lowering the possibility of a surprise attack; and by improving assessments of a potential adversary's capabilities and likely intentions, Open Skies can reduce miscalculations and reduce misconceptions or misperceptions. In so doing, it can alleviate those fears that are oftentimes the source of escalating tension.