

From a verification perspective, however, the most interesting element of the Bush initiative was mentioned in a speech he gave at Mainz, West Germany two days after the Brussels summit. In his address, Bush reintroduced the "open skies" policy,²² calling upon the Soviet Union and its allies to "open their skies to reciprocal, unarmed aerial surveillance flights, conducted on short notice, to watch military activities."²³

Building upon the Bush initiative, NATO completed its comprehensive arms package and submitted it to the negotiations on 13 July, two months before the scheduled 7 September deadline. The proposal established ceilings on aircraft and helicopters alluded to in Bush's speech at the Brussels summit. Each side would be limited to 5 700 combat aircraft — aircraft designed for air-to-ground bombing and air-to-air combat — and 1 900 combat helicopters. According to NATO figures, the Warsaw Pact would have to eliminate 3 900 aircraft while the Alliance would destroy 1 000 aircraft or 15 per cent of its inventory.²⁴ Again, attention focused on the nature of the proposed reductions; few details of an associated verification regime were discussed.

The second round of talks ended on 13 July. During the two-month summer recess, the HLTF prepared a position paper outlining measures for information exchange, stabilization, verification and non-circumvention. The proposal was scheduled for release at the opening of the third round on 7 September. However, its completion was delayed by differences within the Alliance. Greece, for example, rejected the 40 000-troop-limit for prior notification of force concentrations, maintaining that it did not adequately constrain the activities of its eastern Mediterranean rival, Turkey.²⁵ France and the United Kingdom were concerned that measures to monitor production of treaty-limited items might leave their defence industries open to industrial espionage.²⁶ Finally, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic were uneasy over restrictions on armed helicopters. West Germany feared these restrictions would frustrate their efforts to build an air cavalry, while Britain worried they would thwart plans to purchase American Apache attack helicopters.²⁷ These obstacles were overcome, or at least sidestepped, in the following two weeks. On 11 September in Washington, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and British Foreign Secretary John Major reached a compromise on the buildup of arms along the Atlantic-to-the-Urals (ATTU) periphery, while dodging the production monitoring issue.²⁸ Eight days later, Greece withdrew its opposition to the stabilization package. With the last Alliance hurdle removed, NATO introduced its proposal in Vienna on 21 September.

This proposal represented the most extensive package of supporting measures officially presented to date.²⁹ They were separated into four categories: exchange of information, stabilizing measures, verification provisions and non-circumvention measures. From the verification perspective, the information exchange and verification packages were of particular interest.³⁰