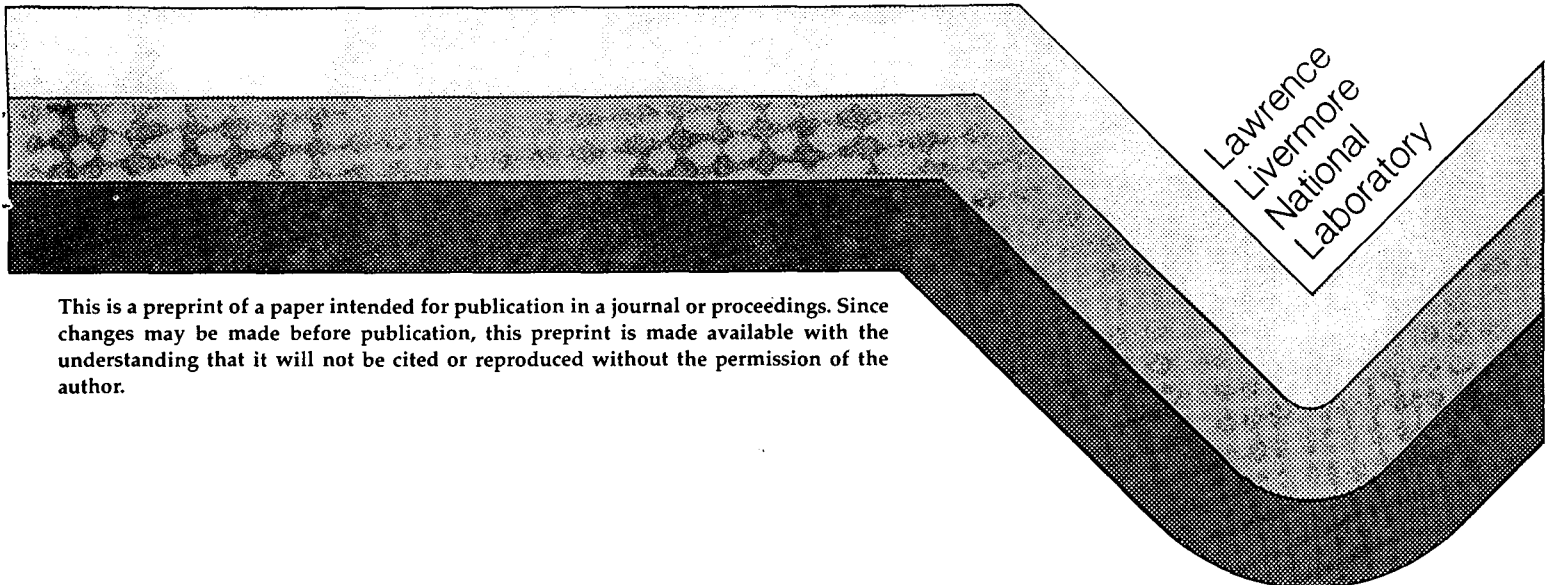


THE RELATION BETWEEN EURO-BASED NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL

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Backdrop for the CFE Negotiations

The social and economic changes currently underway in the Soviet Union and other member nations of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) surpass anything that has happened in that geopolitical region since 1945. These changes will influence all aspects of the East-West relationship in ways that can not be predicted today. There are hopes the result will be an East-West relationship devoid of confrontation. There are fears that instabilities might develop that could lead to armed conflict. The challenge to all nations is to achieve a mutually agreeable future order among nations that is inherently stable. This will require vision and statesmanship on the part of our leaders; it will require understanding and self-discipline on the part of our citizens.

Despite occasional periods of tension between member nations of the NATO and WTO, the East-West relationship has been marked by its avoidance of military conflict. Two elements of this relationship have been major contributors to this enduring coexistence. The first has been the existence of two viable alliances: NATO and WTO. These organizations have largely co-opted the national security agendas of their respective member nations and have preempted the option of unilateral pursuit of national objectives through armed conflict in Europe.

The second major contributor to this stable relationship has been nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons have deterred the two alliances from engaging in any armed conflict - conventional or nuclear. They have added an element of dire uncertainty to the calculus of war that, historically, has not been characteristic of conventional warfighting capabilities. The possession of substantial nuclear capability by both alliances and their well-publicized commitment to nuclear self-defense has actually

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provided these alliances with common, unifying self-preservation interests. These unifying interests are manifested by congruent, independently derived, overriding policies of conflict avoidance in their respective pursuits of disparate political, economic, and military objectives.

Other unifying themes of national and international self-interest certainly exist in the global community of nations. Among these are mutually beneficial economic arrangements, common political, ethnic or cultural heritages, and geographic proximity. However, the development of a stable relationship in the European community based on these factors will require an evolutionary process of many years before the current relationship predicated on the theme of conflict avoidance supported by alliance structures and nuclear deterrence will be supplanted.

Post-CFE Europe

It is not possible to predict how the European political-military situation will develop in a post-CFE environment, in part because of concurrent changes ongoing in the social, political, and economic structures of many WTO nations. It is possible, however, to argue for the need for arrangements, whether new or old, that would contribute to the continued stability of East-West relationships.

One existing arrangement worth maintaining for the time being is block alliances that preempt the unilateral pursuit of armed aggression by alliance partners. The maintenance of block alliances would also mitigate against the proliferation of multilateral partnerships that would tend to generate uncertainty and insecurity either among non-partners or among different partnerships. Block alliances based on mutual security might continue to be valuable until other unifying themes, such as those mentioned above, evolve adequately to become dominant. Until other options become clearly preferable, it would seem prudent to continue the present arrangement embodied in the NATO and WTO block alliances.

A second aspect of the current arrangement worth maintaining for the time being is the nuclear deterrence that has apparently provided a valuable obstacle to any conflict both between the major nuclear powers and between the two alliances. Whether deterrence is uniquely dependent upon Euro-based weapons is arguable, but the evidence supports the existence of deterrence when nuclear weapon systems are an integral part of the defense architecture. An important element of the current security

structure is extraterritorial military forces. So long as these forces are considered supportive of stability and progress towards the development of a better political-military environment, it seems prudent to continue the maintenance of a Euro-based deterrent nuclear force. In the event that extraterritorial defense forces are eliminated, alternative nuclear capabilities should be deployed that would effectively maintain the present policy of armed conflict avoidance.

Absent Euro-based nuclear forces, there is concern that alliance bonds could weaken to the extent that additional European nations would perceive it to be in their national interest to develop an independent nuclear capability. The maintenance of alliance-derived nuclear capability would mitigate against such perceptions. Until adequate stability is derived from other common interests and objectives, it would seem prudent to maintain NATO and WTO nuclear capability in the post-CFE environment.

Post-CFE Uncertainties and Concerns

Even though a CFE agreement may be predicated on the establishment of military conventional parity between East and West, there will remain uncertainties and concerns regarding the quality and durability of the security such an agreement could provide in the absence of nuclear forces. For example, because of the disparate characteristics of force elements in the East and West, it is possible that residual asymmetries will be institutionalized in a CFE agreement. Additional asymmetries could develop as conventional forces on both sides are unevenly modernized, perhaps through the introduction of new technologies. Another source of potential asymmetry is provided by European geography. Yet another potential asymmetry is disparate readiness conditions of the forces in the various nations. Sufficient numbers of appropriately deployed nuclear weapons will continue to obviate any rational perception that it would be possible for one nation or alliance to capitalize upon such asymmetries.

Moreover, there will be continuing concerns about the potential consequences of conceivable treaty circumvention, cheating, and breakout scenarios. The presence of viable, credible nuclear forces will mitigate against the likelihood that any leader would perceive advantage in such activities.

Finally, there are recurring fears that new leadership might emerge in some nation that would be less adverse to the risks of armed conflict than his predecessor. For example, such leadership might be willing to use conventional military force to resolve a border dispute, or perhaps to attempt recovery from a severe economic problem. The uncertainties associated with the potential of escalation to nuclear conflict would tend to mitigate the likelihood of such behavior.

In short, the current European security structure that contains the deterrence aspects of nuclear weapons as an important element should be maintained until a better arrangement evolves. This framework provides the stability that makes acceptable the risks associated with the uncertainties that might arise in a post-CFE world.

Remaining Issues

Given the need for nuclear weapons in Europe subsequent to attainment of rough conventional parity, at least two important issues require resolution. The most important is the identification of any political-military structure more appropriate for dealing with nuclear weapons in a post-CFE environment than block alliances. The other is resolution of various nuclear weapon deployment issues: Which nations will deploy nuclear weapons in Europe? How many weapons are required? What kinds of weapons are required? Where should they be based? The resolution of these deployment issues will be an important element in the development of the post-CFE political-military environment in Europe.

A consideration of alternatives to NATO for dealing with nuclear weapons in Europe has been provided elsewhere². That analysis concluded that the considered alternatives to NATO were deficient in several respects. A similar analysis from an Eastern perspective of alternatives to WTO would be useful. This issue can not be resolved here; it needs careful and serious consideration by all nations.

The deployment issues identified above can not be resolved here either. These are important questions that require careful consideration of many complex technical issues. Credible scenarios need to be constructed

²Michael M. May, Paul T. Herman and Sybil Francis, "Dealing with Nuclear Weapons in Europe," *Survival*, March 1989.

which will permit identification of the military effectiveness required to thwart an attempt to gain advantage from military aggression. Many relevant factors need to be considered to determine the military forces and weapons needed to provide the required effectiveness. For example, survivability of the required military forces will be an important factor, especially in an environment where there may be fewer weapons than exist today. Survivability considerations will demand a mix of weapon types and a certain amount of redundancy; they will also influence basing schemes and the selection of modernization options. In turn, weapons mix and basing options will be influenced by additional factors, such as weapons systems' responsiveness capabilities. And so forth.

Of course there are numerous political considerations that overlay these technical issues. These include factors such as political perceptions of deterrence requirements. One consideration is maintenance of the linkage of Euro-based systems to US and Soviet strategic systems. Another consideration is the appropriate distribution of risks and burdens among the members of an alliance. Yet another is the political acceptability of alternative basing options to host nations.

Summary

Since 1945 Europe has enjoyed a period of political-military stability unequalled for almost two millennia. The major reason for this stability has been the existence of alliances that preempted the national security agendas of the member nations and derived their conflict deterrence capability from the possession of potent nuclear forces. The reduction of conventional forces pursuant to arms control agreements will not resolve all of the historic concerns in Europe, and it will generate new ones. Given the existence of these concerns, some type of political-military structure will be necessary to maintain stability in Europe, and a substantial number of Euro-based nuclear weapons will be required to provide that structure with a firm foundation. For the present, currently existing block alliances seem to be most appropriate. The architects of any new structure designed to replace NATO and WTO with their Euro-based nuclear weapons would be advised to be absolutely sure that the new structure will be as stout as the old.