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SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD MBFR PAST
HISTORY AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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11 January 1974

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PAST HISTORY AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

by

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ABSTRACT

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Negotiations between NATO and Warsaw Pact countries for a mutual reduction of forces in Central Europe have begun. In view of domestic pressures for a reduction of US forces in Europe, the prospects for agreement upon a mutual reduction are largely dependent upon Soviet attitudes. Some insight into those attitudes is discernible from a review of Soviet policy and pronouncements since World War II. Stalin maintained strong conventional forces to offset US strategic superiority; Khrushchev reduced Soviet forces but not proportionally in Eastern Europe; and Brezhnev-Kosygin avoided the issue until unilateral US reductions were imminent. Current Soviet views are also explored through the published papers of individuals and institutions which, presumably, reflect the Kremlin's viewpoint. They indicate a favorable climate for mutual force reductions but only on the "principle of parity". The future prospects are then reviewed, considering such factors as Soviet strategic parity, Ostpolitik, cohesion of the "socialist" bloc, military political influence, Sino-Soviet relations, Soviet manpower and economic problems, and the progress of detente. The conclusion is that some form of limited force reductions will be agreed upon the current negotiations.

SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD MBFR
PAST HISTORY AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

INTRODUCTION

Negotiations on Mutual Reduction of Forces and Armaments and Associated Measures in Central Europe (MURFAAMCE^{1/}) began in Vienna, Austria, on 30 October 1973.^{2/} Nineteen nations are taking part in the negotiations, eleven as full participants^{3/} (those countries "which are potential participants in possible agreements related to central Europe"^{4/}) and eight others^{5/} having "special" (non-decisionmaking) status. Although the negotiations are closed and supposedly confidential, it has been reported that the "Soviet Union has proposed a three-phased reduction of NATO and Warsaw Pact troops in Europe that would begin with 20,000 men each in 1975 with further cuts of 5 and 10 percent in 1976 and 1977, respectively."^{6/} As reported, the Soviet proposal deals only with ground forces, without mention of tactical nuclear weapons (of which NATO has the greater number) nor armaments (tanks, artillery and tactical aircraft in which the Warsaw Pact has a distinct advantage).^{7/}

At this time, it is difficult to predict what the outcome of the negotiations will be. Soviet leaders have not said much on the subject, other than to state their willingness to enter into serious negotiations.^{8/} Consequently, as usual:

" . . . when assessing Soviet motives, one is limited to assessing plausibility and, what is more, to giving a Western judgment of what would seem plausible to Moscow. It is quite likely that if some Soviet leaders support mutual troop reduction negotiations . . . there are others . . . who might be sceptical and even opposed to it."^{9/}

It is generally recognized that MBFR is an extremely complex problem, and that the negotiations could go on for years.^{10/} It has even been suggested that "the negotiation of MBFR will be . . . so complex that it is difficult to visualize how mutual reductions could be satisfactorily negotiated."^{11/} On the other hand, it is conceivable that a so-called "quick fix" could be readily negotiated. This would involve:

" . . . a modest manpower cut on both sides. It would be really not much more than a token gesture as a start on the broader overall problem of East-West force levels in Europe, setting aside for later negotiations a list of subsidiary questions such as inspection and control, verification, nuclear weapons, the basic imbalance between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and the relative cuts between national troops and troops stationed on foreign territory."^{12/}

Such an agreement would entail very little military or political risk for the Soviet Union while providing an aura of success for the negotiations to counter mounting Congressional pressure in the United States for a unilateral withdrawal of forces.^{13/} It would also provide the Soviets with a means of fostering the spirit of detente in Europe^{14/} without impairing NATO's military security and, thereby, destroying the political confidence necessary for the West to pursue detente.

PAST HISTORY

In spite of the difficulties and uncertainties to be encountered, it does appear that some insight into Soviet attitudes toward force reductions in Central Europe, and the likelihood of negotiating a mutual reduction of NATO and Warsaw Pact forces in that area, may be gained from a brief review of Soviet policy and pronouncements since the conclusion of World War II.

Stalin's Postwar Years

Although the Soviets claimed to have reduced their wartime troop strength very substantially^{15/} during the years 1945-1948, it is evident that large forces were retained under arms. Many Soviet troops remained in Germany and other Eastern European countries, and their presence paved the way for the establishment of Communist regimes, and Russian political hegemony, in those countries. During the years 1949-1953,^{16/} the Soviet armed forces were reorganized and reequipped, with special attention being given to those forces deployed in Eastern Europe and, particularly, in East Germany. At the same time, the armed forces of the East European satellite countries were reconstituted and expanded. Together, the Russian and satellite forces served (1) as a buffer against an attack upon the Soviet Union and (2) as a "spearhead" for a potential offensive thrust through Western Europe to the ocean. Stalin's policy objectives in Europe were to neutralize Germany, impede development of NATO military capabilities, and prevent the defection of any of the East European satellites.^{17/}

Nevertheless, throughout the postwar years under Stalin, there were several Soviet proposals relating to the withdrawal and reduction of forces. As early as 1946, the Soviet Union proposed that all members of the United Nations "submit information about their troops stationed in other countries, including those in Europe, as this would help to solve the problem of their withdrawal."^{18/} Again, in 1948, the Soviets presented similar proposals.^{19/} Later that same year, and in each succeeding year through 1953, the Soviets proposed a one-third reduction in the armed

forces of the five permanent members^{20/} of the UN Security Council, within one year.^{21/}

While all of these proposals, no doubt, were intended, at least in part, to serve propaganda purposes, they also reflected some very real Soviet interests. Obviously, they were anxious to see the US military presence, and political influence, removed from Germany and Western Europe. Furthermore, each of the Soviet proposals also included a call for an immediate prohibition on the use of atomic (and later hydrogen) weapons. This was in recognition of, and an attempt to offset, the initial monopoly, and subsequent predominance, of the United States in the nuclear field.^{22/} Finally, the proposals for withdrawal of troops on foreign territories, and the elimination of foreign military bases, reflected the Soviets efforts to counter the US policy of containment.

But, whether the Soviets were seriously interested in reducing their own forces seems doubtful. "Lacking as yet the means to adopt a strategy of nuclear deterrence . . . Stalin had no choice . . . but to rely on Russia's traditional theater forces as the primary instrument of Soviet military policy . . . [And] the Soviet military posture lent itself to deterrence only if the threat of Soviet invasion and occupation of Western Europe were made to seem credible."^{23/}

The Khrushchev Era

Whereas Stalin's foreign and military policies were oriented primarily upon Europe, under Khrushchev,^{24/} the Soviet Union began to assert its interests and influence throughout the world. To support such a global strategy, Khrushchev began to revamp the Soviet armed

forces, with emphasis on nuclear weapons and missiles. As a concomitant, Khrushchev did effect some reductions in Soviet conventional forces.

According to Soviet sources, their overall troop strength was reduced by nearly 50%, from 5.7 million to about 3 million, during the years 1955-1964. Although these reductions were reflected in some thinning out of Soviet forces deployed in Eastern Europe, those forces were not cut back in proportion to the overall reduction of troop strength.

The first phase of these reductions, reportedly involving nearly 2 million men, was initiated in 1955. At the same time, the Soviets made a major two-stage disarmament proposal, broader in scope than anything previously proposed.^{25/} This proposal would have set ceilings on the troop strength of the armed forces of the five major powers, prohibited the use of nuclear weapons, and abolished foreign military bases. Here, again, the proposal did reflect real Soviet concern about the threat of United States nuclear power and the existence of NATO. While the level of Soviet conventional forces would have been fixed at 1.5 million, that number, along with other Warsaw Pact forces,^{26/} would have been sufficient to preserve Soviets military superiority on the continent.^{27/}

As in the past, the Soviets continued to make similar proposals in succeeding years.^{28/} Perhaps the most notable aspect of all these proposals was the indicated Soviet willingness to accept at least some limited form of on-site inspection to verify compliance with the proposed reductions.

In 1959, the Soviets added a new dimension to their proposals by advocating not only reduction of forces, as an interim step, but also the "disbanding of all armed forces (land, naval and air forces) and

the prohibition of their reestablishment in any form."^{29/} This radical proposal was repeated in the early 1960's^{30/} but, in view of (1) the internal policy debate on the size of the armed forces which began in 1960, (2) the Berlin crisis in 1961, and (3) the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, the sincerity of the Soviets is suspect.

Brezhnev-Kosygin

The Brezhnev-Kosygin regime set out to bring the Soviet Union's military posture more in line with its growing global interests and obligations. They undertook a substantial program to build up Soviet strategic force to the point where, now, they are equal, and perhaps superior, to those of the United States. The Soviets also undertook other programs to develop more mobile and versatile conventional forces with which to project Soviet military presence beyond Europe in support of Soviet policy.

Although the Soviets continued to sponsor various disarmament proposals (e.g., nonproliferation of nuclear weapons), these proposals contained nothing new relating to the issue of troop reductions. In fact, from 1965 on, while the United States was actively engaged in ground combat in Vietnam, the Soviets scrupulously avoided the subject. This was due, no doubt, to their desire not to assist the US military effort, making troops withdrawn from Europe by agreement with the Russians available for deployment in Southeast Asia.

During this period, however, interest in some form of troop reductions in Europe seems to have been growing within NATO.^{31/} In the communique issued following the NATO ministerial meeting in Paris, in December 1966, hope was expressed that conditions would evolve between

East and West "which would permit a gradual and a balanced revision in force levels on both sides."^{32/} A year later, after the NATO meeting in Brussels, the communique reaffirmed the view that, "if conditions permit, a balanced reduction of forces on both sides could constitute a significant step toward security in Europe."^{33/} Finally, at the June 1968 meeting in Reykjavik, the NATO foreign ministers adopted a declaration on MBFR in which they called upon "the Soviet Union and other countries of Eastern Europe . . . to join in this search for progress towards peace."^{34/} Two months later, the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact allies invaded Czechoslovakia, and in the communique following their November 1968 meeting in Brussels, the NATO foreign ministers reported that "prospects for MBFR have suffered a severe setback."^{35/}

Although there had been no Warsaw Pact response to the "Reykjavik Signal," the NATO initiative was renewed in 1970. Following the ministerial meeting in Rome that year, a new declaration was issued inviting "interested states to hold exploratory talks on mutual and balanced force reductions in Europe, with special reference to the Central Region."^{36/} The criteria which were to serve as a starting point for such talks were that:

- "(a) Mutual force reductions should be compatible with the vital security interests of the Alliance and should not operate to the military disadvantage of either side having regard for the differences arising from geographical and other considerations.
- "(b) Reductions should be on a basis of reciprocity, and phased and balanced as to their scope and timing.
- "(c) Reductions should include stationed and indigenous forces and their weapons systems in the area concerned.
- "(d) There must be adequate verification and controls to ensure the observance of

agreements on mutual and balanced force reductions."^{37/}

A month later, for the first time, the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime indicated some interest in discussing reduction of armed forces. Apparently sensing that there would be no European Security conference, which the Soviets anxiously sought,^{38/} without some consideration of NATO's MBFR proposal, the Warsaw Pact foreign ministers, meeting in Budapest, expressed a willingness to discuss "the question of reducing foreign armed forces on the territory of European states," either as part of the security conference, "or in another form acceptable to the interested parties."^{39/} No reference was made to "balanced" reductions, nor to the reduction of "national" troops. Although subsequent Soviet pronouncements referred to "reduction of both 'foreign' and 'national' forces in Europe,"^{40/} they have never accepted the usage of the term "balanced".^{41/}

For about nine months after the Budapest meeting, the Soviets gave no further indication of a willingness to negotiate on armed forces reductions. Then, in a speech to the 24th Party Congress, Brezhnev declared that the Soviets "stand for the reduction of armed forces and armaments in areas where military confrontation is especially dangerous, above all in Central Europe."^{42/} Shortly thereafter, at Tbilisi, Brezhnev made his noted "winetasting" speech:

"In connection with the West's reaction to the proposals advanced at the Congress, I should like to note the following detail. Some NATO countries are displaying an appreciable interest, and in part some nervousness as well, on the question of the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe. Their representatives ask: Whose armed forces--foreign or national--and what armaments--nuclear or conventional--are to be reduced? Perhaps, they ask, the Soviet proposals embrace all

this taken together? In this connection, we too have a question to ask: Do not such curious people resemble a person who tries to judge the taste of a wine by its appearance alone, without touching it? If there is any vagueness, this can certainly be eliminated. All that is necessary is to muster the resolve to 'taste' the proposals that interest you, which, translated into diplomatic language, means to enter into negotiations. ^{143/}

This speech was significant in that it came just five days before the vote in the US Senate on the Mansfield amendment calling for a withdrawal of one half of the US forces stationed in Europe. Brezhnev's words obviously played a part in the defeat of that amendment. ^{144/} Surely, the Soviet leader was aware of the impending vote and, therefore, the timing of his speech seems to indicate that the Soviets are not anxious to see a sudden and substantial, unilateral withdrawal of US forces from Europe.

There are several reasons for such a Soviet attitude. They may fear that a unilateral US withdrawal would shock Western Europe into greater defensive unity. While the Soviets might try to soften the blow by making some reductions of their own, that might actually aggravate the situation by encouraging the United States to make further unilateral reductions.

The Soviets may see mutual reductions as offering greater flexibility for the redeployment of their own forces. Although, if necessary, they could always unilaterally withdraw some troops from Eastern Europe to reinforce those stationed in the Chinese border, such action would be open to Chinese charges of aggressive Soviet intentions in Asia. Unilateral Soviet withdrawals might also have an unsettling effect upon some East European countries.

Mutual reductions would appear to reflect peaceful Soviet intentions in Europe and, thereby, further the cause of detente. Negotiating mutual reductions would also offer an opportunity for the Soviets to have a direct influence on NATO troop levels particularly the imposition of a lower ceiling on the Bundeswehr. Finally, such negotiations might provide a framework within which to deal with US forward-based nuclear weapons systems (FBS), a difficult issue so far in SALT.

In response to Brezhnev's invitation "to enter into negotiations," NATO representatives meeting in Lisbon in October, decided to send an emissary "to conduct exploratory talks with the Soviets and other interested governments on the subject of mutual and balanced force reductions."^{45/} The person selected was Manilo Brosio, former Secretary General of NATO. But Mr. Brosio was never received in Moscow or any other East European capital. There are at least two reasons for Soviet reluctance to pursue exploratory talks with the "NATO Explorer". First was their concern that the negotiations might move forward too quickly; they wanted to condition their participation in the negotiations upon Western agreement to the convening of a European security conference. Second was their opposition to the idea of negotiating reductions of armed forces on a bloc-to-bloc basis.^{46/}

A breakthrough on exploratory talks came during the Moscow summit meeting between President Nixon and Soviet leaders in May 1972. They issued a joint communique in which both sides agreed "that the goal of ensuring stability and security in Europe would be served by a reciprocal reduction of armed forces and armaments, first of all in Central Europe."^{47/} Later, in September, "Soviet officials proposed

a timetable for beginning exploratory talks and subsequent negotiations on MBFR in parallel with [the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe] CSCE."^{48/} The NATO countries in Central Europe, or having troops stationed there, responded by inviting similarly situated Warsaw Pact countries, including Hungary, to begin "exploratory talks on this matter . . . beginning on 31 January 1973."^{49/}

The preparatory talks dragged on for five months. Again, apparently, summit negotiations were required to break the deadlock. At the conclusion of Brezhnev's visit to Washington in June 1973, a joint US-Soviet communique was issued stating that negotiations on mutual reductions of forces and armaments and associated measures in Central Europe . . . will begin on October 30, 1973."^{50/} Three days later, the preparatory talks were concluded.

CURRENT SOVIET VIEWS

Perhaps the best available source of current Soviet views towards MBFR is to be found in the published papers of individuals and institutions which, presumably, reflect the Kremlin's viewpoint. Since the Soviet approach to MBFR is subject to political as well as military considerations, the Soviet view of likely political developments in Europe in the years ahead is important. A study made recently by the Institute of World Economics and International Relations of the Soviet Academy of Sciences provides some unusual insight into Soviet thinking on this subject. As reported, the study concludes that:

"The EEC is now one of the realities of European economic and political life. The enlarged EEC will have a greater role in international economic relations. But it faces severe problems in creating

economic and monetary union, and in attaining the goal of political union. By the end of the decade progress will have been made towards establishing a mechanism for coordinating the foreign policies of the member countries. The EEC may face financial and production instabilities. . . .

"Two basic trends will characterize military and political relations: 'on the one hand it is probable that processes of detente will unfold, made concrete by agreements limiting the development of certain types of armaments and their utilization, and by a general reduction of the military potential of the European states, without lessening their security. On the other hand, there will take place a subsequent improvement in armed forces and armaments, especially with respect to their quality; the tendency for the military potential of Europe to increase will remain fairly strong.' This will take place against the background of an equilibrium between the military power of the two systems, and above all of the Soviet Union and the United States.

"The possibilities of using military force in a direct way will decrease; the use of military force, and its uncontrolled development, will be increasingly limited by political agreements; but this trend could be upset by Western attempts to create a 'superior force.'

"The Warsaw Pact and NATO will remain, though perhaps with a decline in the importance of their military functions.

"On MBFR: 'the preliminary negotiations, which could take several years, will, if successful, make it possible to reach an agreement on principles and criteria. The process of reduction itself, which will have a comprehensive character, will make it possible to achieve a perceptible decrease in the absolute mass of armed forces, while maintaining proportions which can ensure the same security and the absence of advantage to one of the parties. The negotiations about reducing armaments and armed forces in Central Europe will be conducted, without doubt, in parallel with, and independently of, the efforts to convene the All-European Conference.

"The processes of economic integration in the two parts of Europe will not necessarily lead to their isolation from each other."⁵¹

Following these conclusions, the study sets forth, in decreasing

order of likelihood, three possible European models which might prevail at the end of the decade:

/Peaceful coexistence/

- "- general recognition of the principle of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems;
- "- the maintenance of European security will become the main principle regulating relations between the states of the two systems, without modifying their opposition in social and ideological matters;
- "- economic integration in both parts of Europe, but not their mutual isolation;
- "- 'it is possible that ideas of an independent Europe' maintaining friendly relations with the USSR and the US, or having direct links with the US, but not opposed to the socialist countries, will prevail. Political and military integration on the basis of anti-communism and 'atlanticism' [sic] will not represent a dominant aspect of the processes of Western European integration.'
- "- growth of commercial and scientific-technical cooperation and exchanges;
- "- 'if a qualitative evolution of strategic armaments in the world does not lead to a general disequilibrium of forces, a gradual limitation of the military functions of the blocs will be seen, starting with an All-European rejection of the resort to violence and the gradual evolution of the process of reducing armed forces and armaments. An active struggle will begin for the creation of a European structure without blocs.
- "- 'The first important stage on the path of reducing armed forces and armaments will probably be concluded. Evidently this will consist of the withdrawal of some of the foreign troops, the reduction of national forces in the Central European region, and the reduction of military budgets. Agreement will probably be reached on the creation of nuclear-free, disarmed and neutral zones, and on other measures directed towards the demilitarization of Europe. The decrease of war potential in the whole of Europe will be started, without prejudicing the security of any of the

parties, and with strict regard to the equilibrium of armed forces and armaments at each stage of the reduction.

"Following the course of the process of detente, the organ which will have been created after the All-European Conference will gradually take on more and more importance in the field of coordination and control.

"The situation in Central Europe will be normalized . . .

"The Mediterranean will remain without doubt the region least touched by detente. The absence of stability and of a final settlement to the conflict in the Near East, the activity - more forceful than elsewhere - of the military policy of certain Western states, creating a potential threat to the vital interests of the socialist countries and the necessity of counter-measures on their part, the diversity of the political, economic and military interests of the states of the region . . . all that will contribute to maintaining in the Mediterranean a confrontation more rigid than in other European sub-regions. It is possible that at moments there will be crisis situations, but the threat that conflict situations will appear that are capable of turning into global conflicts will diminish."

[Integrated Western Europe]

"- the development of a European security system will be halted;

"- right-wing forces in the West will weaken detente; the final settlement of the Central European situation will not be attained; dangerous instability in the Mediterranean;

"- Western European integration will proceed towards the creation of a closed military-political bloc;

"- strengthening of military blocs, and increase in the level of armed forces."

[All European Security System]

"- A European Security System has been created, and the military blocs dissolved;

"- the threat of force or of its use is made impossible by 'an extensive system of mutual

undertakings;' the All-European institution takes final shape, endowed with rights which guarantee equal security for all and an effective system of control; foreign troops are withdrawn, and national forces are reduced by common agreement. 52/

Several noteworthy points emerge from this analysis concerning Soviet attitudes towards MBFR. To begin with, some progress toward the reductions of armed forces seems probable, although the amount of progress will be determined by developments in East-West political relations. The negotiation of such reductions will take several years, with only the first stage concluded by 1980. Contrasted with the reduction of forces will be an increase in the military potential of those that remain. In the absence of a Western technological breakthrough, military force, as an instrument of foreign policy, will be increasingly limited. NATO and the Warsaw Pact will remain in existence but their military functions may decline in importance.

The extent of West European political and military integration is a matter of deep Soviet concern. They will actively oppose the formation of a West European defense union, although they recognize that West European economic integration is a reality. While the Soviets are anxious to see US presence and influence reduced, they fear that a sudden and substantial US withdrawal could push Western Europe towards greater military integration. Therefore, a gradual US reduction would be preferred. Finally, along with the normalization of relations in Europe, there will be an increasing potential for conflict in other areas, particularly the Mediterranean and Near East. 53/

Another recent Soviet study, 54/ by Anatoly Gromyko (son of the Soviet foreign minister) and an associate at the Institute for the

U.S.A., is also informative. This study "implies that the Kremlin ought to go full speed ahead in improving relations with the United States, in spite of the objections now being voiced by some of Russia's cold warriors."^{55/} As reported, the reason for Soviet optimism is the decline in the power of the US military-industrial complex:

"The implied message is that American corporations now stand to make greater profits from a peaceful world than from arms sales, and that they will, therefore, see to it that the foreign policy of the United States is shaped accordingly. There will, evidently, be peace in time."^{56/}

The views of two Soviet commentators, dealing specifically with issues in the pending MBFR negotiations, are also of significance. Both of them strenuously reject the Western concept of "balanced" or asymmetrical reductions:

"The Western powers also tend to utilise the vagueness of the 'balanced reductions' concept, giving it a twist that would enable them to secure unilateral military advantages. Thus, there was much talk of 'asymmetrical reductions,' which meant that the Warsaw Treaty forces would be reduced by a far larger proportion than those of NATO. The Western powers sought to justify such 'asymmetry', which would infringe upon the security interests of the socialist countries, by various 'arguments', including the 'geographic factor'. "^{57/}

However, in the Soviet view, "the 'geographic factor' on the whole plays no particular part."^{58/} Among the reasons given for this conclusion are:

" . . . that NATO's military command has at its disposal a wide range of transport facilities, an intricate network of airfields, the extensive communications system of Western Europe, all the various NATO transport aircraft and so on. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, has enormously long land frontiers and is obligated to maintain considerable forces not only in the West but also in the East and the South for their defense."^{59/}

Furthermore, the point is made that, if the Soviets were required to redeploy troops westward from the Urals or Baikal, the distance would exceed that between New York and London.

The Soviets also argue:

". . . that the alignment of forces in central Europe cannot be considered in isolation from that in other regions and from the alignment of forces on the global scale, especially taking into account that mobile units, aviation, rocket forces and naval forces now constitute a large percentage of the armed forces, and the sphere of their operation cannot be limited to a narrow region."^{60/}

Thus, in the Soviet view, if the distances from Western Europe to the United States and the Soviet Union are important, so are the distances from Alaska or Okinawa and Vladivostock. In addition, the Soviets point to the number of US military bases around the world, the US aircraft carriers which roam the seas, and the "large troop contingents in the USA . . . [which] are 'Europe-oriented'."^{61/}

Finally, one of those Soviet commentators discussed the question of "balanced" reductions as it relates to the Warsaw Pact's preponderance of armor in Central Europe:^{62/}

". . . comparison of just one arm of the forces provides very little. Whatever the differences that exist in the alignment of forces in, for instance, the armored divisions, for determining the military potential of each side, one must examine the overall correlation of forces in all its aspects."^{63/}

Among the factors to be considered in the "overall correlation of forces" are their structure, military doctrine, appraisals of theaters of operation, tactical and strategic missions and the logistics base. The Soviets acknowledge that, "at the present time it is extremely difficult to make an appraisal of the overall correlation of all types of armaments

mainly because there are still no objective coefficients for comparing various types of armaments."^{64/} Furthermore, they would insist that any such appraisal must include a correlation of conventional and strategic nuclear forces.

The views of this Soviet commentator conclude with the observation that, "if we are to approach the question of reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe from realistic positions then the only possible principle is the principle of parity reduction."^{65/} The "principle of parity" was endorsed by Brezhnev in a speech just before the negotiations began:

"How are the reductions to be carried out? What method is to be used? Whether it is to be an equal percentage reduction or by an equal number is still to be discussed by the participants of the negotiations."^{66/}

However, even an "equal percentage reduction" means a larger reduction of Warsaw Pact than NATO forces, if that percentage is applied only to troops within Central Europe.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Historically, there have been a number of reasons, from the Soviet point of view, for maintaining a powerful military presence in Eastern Europe.^{67/} With those forces, the Soviets sought to make Western Europe a hostage to restrain the United States, which then possessed superior strategic forces. But now, there has been a marked change in the strategic balance; the Soviets have attained parity with, and may well have surpassed, the United States.^{68/} Furthermore, the focal point of US-Soviet competition has shifted from Europe, and the chances of an armed conflict there now seems remote.

Another function of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe has been to maintain the division of Germany and prevent the resurgence of military power in West Germany. Today, "(t)here is no strong pressure from any quarter for a reunification of Germany; nor does such pressures [sic] seem likely to arise in the near future."^{69/} And, Ostpolitik could provide openings for the Soviets to influence West German policy, and draw the teeth of potential revanchist elements. Also, relations between the two countries have been improved by the treaty negotiated in 1970 in which "the territorial integrity of all states in Europe in their present boundaries"^{70/} was recognized and accepted.

Still another function served by Soviet forces in Eastern Europe is that of maintaining the cohesion of the "socialist" bloc. Several times in the past, the Soviets have used, or threatened to use, military force to maintain Communist regimes, or otherwise control the course of events, in Eastern Europe. And, events could occur sometime in the future which would lead the Soviets to believe that military intervention was necessary again. While the experience with Czechoslovakia in 1968 demonstrated the capability to rapidly mobilize forces in the western military districts of Russia and move them into Eastern Europe, that experience also probably convinced the Soviets of the desirability of retaining troops in Eastern Europe rather than having to reintroduce them in a crisis situation. On the other hand, it does appear that the present number of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe (approximately one-fifth of the Soviets' total ground-combat forces^{71/}) is far greater than is necessary to preserve Soviet political hegemony. "Besides, the Soviet Union appears to be seeking to replace, or at least to supplement the military instruments of domination with economic and political instruments."^{72/}

Present Soviet force levels in Eastern Europe may be explained, in part, simply by inertia; the Soviets have for many years maintained on the order of 25-30 divisions there. Furthermore, the military appears to have gained greater political influence under the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime^{73/} than it had under Khrushchev, and the senior military commanders still have a strong ground force orientation. These aging veterans of World War II seem loath to accept the concept of strategic deterrence, focusing instead upon the need to prepare for large scale ground combat in the event that mutual deterrence fails. However, while the military may be reluctant to give up the advantages offered by the Soviets' strong forward deployment, it appears that there will be growing pressure upon the military to justify that position if the process of detente continues.

Soviet military thinking on force levels in Eastern Europe will be influenced also by future Sino-Soviet relations. The Soviets are obviously concerned about the prospects of becoming embroiled in conflict on two fronts, east and west, at the same time. This concern has probably been intensified by the rapprochement between the United States and China.

The Soviets began building up their forces gradually along the Chinese border in 1965 or 1966. Following the clashes between Russian and Chinese forces along the Ussuri River and the Sinkiang border in 1969, the Soviet buildup was accelerated:

"By 1970, Soviet divisions in the Sino-Soviet border area had increased from 15 to 17 stationed there in 1965 to almost double that number, while three years later the total reportedly came to more than 40. This buildup, it appears, was not accomplished by transfer of forces from the European front, but rather by mobilization which raised the overall number of active Soviet divisions from about 140 to 160."^{74/}

If there is to be a further buildup of Soviet forces along the Chinese border, it may be necessary for the Russians to reconsider the question of redeploying some of their existing forces in Eastern Europe. In fact, even in the absence of any further buildup of Soviet forces, "the criticality of an expanding labor force to attainment of economic growth goals may lead them to resume substantial demobilization of military manpower along the lines of Khrushchev's troop reduction programs."^{75/} Aside from the question of manpower, however, there would not seem to be much of an economic savings in a reduction of troops from Eastern Europe unless the forces withdrawn were demobilized.

In addition to the manpower shortage, the Soviets seem to be experiencing other economic problems as well:

"In brief, while Soviet military technology and the defense production sectors of the economy have managed to compete quite successfully with the West, it has become increasingly evident that the Soviet Union is encountering many difficulties in adapting the civilian sectors of its industrial system to the scientific and technical revolution of the modern era."^{76/}

Much of the impetus behind the Soviets' interest in pursuing the policy of detente with the West has been the pressing need to acquire Western technology and managerial skills. However, although the Soviet leaders seem to be concerned about meeting the rising consumer demands, they do not appear to be under any significant domestic pressure in this direction at present. Furthermore, such economic considerations have not been the dominant motive in Soviet policy in the past, and probably will not be in the future.

The Soviets are also interested in detente as a means of increasing Russian influence in West European affairs. They could see troop

reductions as a means of reducing US influence in Europe, weakening the unity of NATO, and slowing the process of West European integration. At the same time, they would have some concern that increasing East-West contacts could lead some East European countries to attempt to assert greater autonomy in the conduct of foreign and domestic affairs.

While a reduction of forces might tend to lessen Soviet political leverage in Eastern Europe, it would not reduce the Russians' military advantage in the area. A negotiated agreement will not change the geography, and the Soviets are not about to agree to a "balanced" reduction which would take away their present superiority in conventional forces.^{77/} In all likelihood, the Soviets will even object to the repositioning of equipment in Europe for possible future use by US forces which are to be withdrawn.

Finally, there will be the question of verification, how to insure that agreed reductions of forces have been carried out and adhered to on a continuing basis. The Soviets probably will urge reliance on national means and will oppose any on-site inspection.^{78/} They seem certain to resist any effort to permit outside observers to travel freely throughout their closed Communist society. The public dissent of noted Russian intellectuals is embarrassment enough for the Soviet leaders; they certainly will not want to do anything which could result in further dissidence.

CONCLUSION

In view of discernible Soviet attitudes, it appears that agreement will be reached upon some limited form of mutual force reductions in the current MURFAAMCE negotiations. The size of that reduction will not

significantly reduce the Soviets' combat capability in Eastern Europe nor will it alter the existing military imbalance as between the forces of NATO and those of the Warsaw Pact. Any more extensive reduction of forces will be dependent upon the status of East-West political relations and will require a considerably longer period of time to negotiate. Of primary Soviet concern in such negotiations will be the US stockpile of nuclear weapons in Europe and its FBS.

John R. Davis

FOOTNOTES

1/ Although NATO initiatives for such negotiations have referred to Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR), the term "Balanced" has been dropped in an apparent concession to Russian opposition to the concept to asymmetrical reductions. However, the principle of MBFR has caused concern even among some European members of NATO. See Laurence Griswold, "MBFR, Much Better for Russians," Sea Power, May 1973, p. 21.

2/ Craig R. Whitney, "Formal Talks on Troop Reduction in Europe Open in Vienna," New York Times, 31 October 1973, p. 12.

3/ Full participants are: Belgium, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), Great Britain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United States for NATO; and Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Poland and the Soviet Union for the Warsaw Pact. "The Vienna Talks in Brief," New York Times, 31 October 1973, p. 12.

4/ "Record of May 14, 1973 Plenary Meeting of Preparatory Consultations," US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (hereinafter "ACDA"), Selected Background Documents Relating To Mutual And Balanced Force Reductions, Part II, p. 14.

5/ Countries having special status are: Denmark, Greece, Italy, Norway and Turkey for NATO; and Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania for the Warsaw Pact. The "special" status of Hungary was contested by NATO in the preparatory talks, and may be raised again in the negotiations, because of the deployment of four Russian divisions (two of them tank divisions) in that country. France, technically still a member of NATO, with 58,000 troops in West Germany, is not participating at all in the negotiations. See The International Institute for Strategic Studies (hereinafter "IISS"), The Military Balance 1973-1974, pp. 6, 20.

6/ Richard Homan, "Soviets Leak Troop-Cut Plan," The Washington Post, 18 November 1973, p. A. 16.

7/ Thomas W. Wolfe, Worldwide Soviet Military Strategy and Policy, p. 31.

8/ A similar situation prevailed in connection with the SALT negotiations which did lead to some agreements. However:

". . . several salient differences can be pointed to. Some sort of parity was acknowledged between Soviet and United States strategic forces, whereas no such parity is seen to exist in the military balance in Central Europe. The strategic arms limitations talks were aimed at halting an arms race, while MBFR negotiations would be directed towards the

reduction of existing force levels in a specific geographic area. The economic benefits of an agreement to halt the quantitative [sic] strategic arms race are at first sight more obvious than the economic benefits to be gained from MBFR. Moreover, it is generally accepted in both East and West that the technical issues raised by MBFR are of an unparalleled complexity." David Holloway, "The Soviet Approach to MBFR," _____, pp. 1-2 (see notes to bibliography).

9/ Christoph Burtram, Mutual Force Reductions in Europe: The Political Aspects, p. 3.

10/ See, for example, Burtram, "The Politics of MBFR," The World Today, January 1973, p. 4; Holloway, p. 1; Y. Tomilin, "Problem of Armed Forces Reduction in Europe," International Affairs, April 1973, p. 37; and Wolfe, Soviet Attitudes Toward MBFR And The USSR'S Military Presence In Europe, p. 12.

11/ Herschel E. Chapman, COL. MBFR--Toward A Model, p. 3.

12/ Don Cook, "U.S., Russia Offer Specific Plans In Vienna Troop Reduction Talks," Los Angeles Times, 28 November 1973, Part I, p. 21.

13/ According to "Washington Whispers," U.S. News & World Report, 7 January 1974, p. 8:

"Senate sources predict a major cutback this year in the number of U.S. troops based in Europe. Heavy slashes were authorized in Senate votes in 1973, only to be reversed in subsequent votes. 'But now' says a Capitol Hill specialist in military affairs, 'the balance has tipped in favor of reductions--and the fact that 1974 is an election year makes it almost a sure thing'."

The possible impact of unilateral US reductions upon the Soviet Union is discussed in greater detail at pp. 9-10 ; infra. Interestingly, US forces in Europe actually increased by 18,000 (19,000 in West Germany) in 1973. See "Fewer Servicemen Abroad--But Welcome Mat Still Out," U.S. News & World Report, 32 December 1973, p. 43.

14/ The Soviet interest in detente in Europe is discussed at pp. 21-22 , infra.

15/ No actual figures were reported until 1960 when Khrushchev claimed that Soviet forces were reduced to 2,874,000 by 1948. However,

this allegation "was made in the context of claimed unilateral contributions to disarmament by the Soviet Union" and it appears that "the 1948 figure was set lower than generally accepted Western estimates in order to underscore the Soviet contribution to disarmament immediately after the war. . . ." Wolfe, Soviet Power And Europe, 1945-1970, p. 10.

16/ Stalin died in March 1953.

17/ Stalin's efforts met with rather meager success: he not only failed to block creation of a West German government, but also helped to drive West Germany into NATO; his military programs, together with Western reaction to the Korean War, spurred the West to greater efforts for the defense of the NATO area; and, even in Eastern Europe, the defection of Yugoslavia foreshadowed serious troubles yet to come.

18/ Tomilin, p. 38. See "Soviet Draft Resolution Introduced in the First Committee of the General Assembly: Regulation and Reduction of Armaments, November 29, 1946," US Department of State (hereinafter D/S), Documents on Disarmament 1945-1959, Vol. I. pp. 42-44.

19/ "Supplementary Soviet Proposals Introduced in the Working Committee of the Commission for Conventional Armaments, July 26, 1948," D/S, Documents on Disarmament 1945-1959, Vol. I. pp. 173-74.

20/ China, France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States.

21/ See, e.g., "Soviet Draft Resolution Introduced in the General Assembly: Reduction of Armaments and Prohibition of Atomic Weapons, September 25, 1948," D/S, Documents on Disarmament, 1945-1959, Vol. I, pp. 176-77. For subsequent years, see pp. 191-93 (1949), 248-50 (1950), 330-33 (1951), 340-41 (1952) and 390-91 (1953).

22/ The first Soviet atomic test, known to the West, occurred on 9 August 1949. As late as 1962, at the time of the Cuban missile crisis, the United States "still had a 7- to - 1 advantage in strategic arms. . . ." By way of contrast, following SALT I, "the over-all throw weight--the size of the missile permitted--was 4 to 1 in their favor." "'A Risky Time For Bargaining' Interview With Senator Henry M. Jackson," U.S. News & World Report, 18 June 1973, p. 37.

23/ Wolfe, Soviet Power And Europe, 1945-1970, p. 34.

24/ Khrushchev came to power when Malenkov was deposed in early 1955. Khrushchev, in turn, was deposed in the fall of 1964.

25/ See "Soviet Proposal Introduced in the Disarmament Subcommittee: Reduction of Armaments, the Prohibition of Atomic Weapon, and the Elimination of the Threat of a New War, May 10, 1955," D/S, Documents on Disarmament 1945-1949, Vol. I, pp. 456-67.

26/ The Warsaw Treaty was signed on 15 May 1955 by Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, and the Soviet Union. East Germany joined the Warsaw Pact in 1956 while Albania ceased to be an active participant in 1961.

27/ United States forces would have been fixed at 1.5 million also and would be withdrawn across the Atlantic. French and British troop strength would have been limited to 650,000 each, and they would have been separated by the English Channel.

28/ See, e.g., "Soviet Proposal Introduced in the Disarmament Subcommittee; Draft Agreement on the Reduction of Conventional Armaments and Armed Forces, March 27, 1956," D/S, Documents on Disarmament 1945-1959, Vol. I, pp. 603-607. For subsequent years, see Vol. II, pp. 752-57 (1957) and pp. 1132-42 (1958).

29/ "Declaration of the Soviet Government on General and Complete Disarmament, September 19, 1959," D/S, Documents on Disarmament 1945-1959, Vol. II, pp. 1460-74.

30/ See, e.g., "Proposals by the Soviet Government: Basic Principles of a Treaty on General and Complete Disarmament," D/S, Documents on Disarmament 1960, pp. 100-11. For subsequent years, see ACDA, Documents on Disarmament 1961, pp. 167-69, and Documents on Disarmament 1962, Vol. I, pp. 103-27.

31/ Actually, there does not appear to have been much enthusiasm for the withdrawal of US forces, per se, among the European members of NATO. Their interest was directed more towards obtaining some concessions from the Russians for what they saw as the inevitable, in view of US domestic pressures, concerning the withdrawal of US forces.

32/ "North Atlantic Council Communique, December 16, 1966," ACDA, Selected Background Documents Relating to Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, p. 25.

33/ "North Atlantic Council Communique, December 14, 1967," ACDA, Documents on Disarmament 1967, p. 677.

34/ "Communique and Declaration of the North Atlantic Council, June 25, 1968," ACDA, Documents on Disarmament 1968, p. 450.

35/ "Communique of the North Atlantic Council, November 16, 1968," ACDA, Selected Background Documents Relating to Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, p. 74.

36/ "Communique and Declaration of the North Atlantic Council May 27, 1970," ACDA, Documents on Disarmament 1968, p. 229.

37/ Ibid.

38/ Among the objectives which the Soviets hoped to achieve from such a conference were: (1) recognition of the territorial status quo in Europe, including the existence of two German states; (2) a relaxation of tension and return to detente in the wake of the Czechoslovakian invasion; (3) a weakening of NATO unity and reduction of US influence in European affairs and (4) an increase in the prestige of the Soviet Union and its influence, particularly upon the security arrangements of Western Europe.

39/ "Budapest Memorandum of Warsaw Pact Foreign Ministers on European Security, June 22, 1970," ACDA, Documents on Disarmament 1968, p. 247.

40/ Wolfe, Soviet Attitudes Toward MBFR And The USSR's Military Presence In Europe, p. 22, n. 16.

41/ Soviet distaste for this term antedates NATO's MBFR proposals. Arguing in favor of Soviet proposals for general and complete disarmament in 1964, their representative asserted that "(a)ny attempt to subordinate actual disarmament to the concept of military balance would lead to a bog of endless unproductive disputes, arbitrary judgments and subjective conclusions." "Statement by the Soviet Representative (Tsarapkin) to the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee: Gromyko Delivery Vehicles Proposals, February 4, 1964," ACDA, Documents on Disarmament 1964, p. 27.

42/ "Address by General Secretary Brezhnev to the 24th Congress of the CPSU [Extract], March 30, 1971," ACDA, Documents on Disarmament 1971, p. 196.

43/ "Address by General Secretary Brezhnev at Tbilisi [Extract], May 14, 1971," ACDA, Documents on Disarmament 1971, p. 293.

44/ In the debate before the vote, Senator Nelson stated:

"If Mr. Brezhnev had not spoken on the subject, I would have been prepared to vote on Wednesday to cut our forces in half in accordance with the Mansfield Amendment."

US Congress, Congressional Record, 17 May 1971, p. S7107. For the vote on the amendment, see the Congressional Record, 19 May 1971, p. S7439.

45/ NATO Facts and Figures, p. 71.

46/ "The USSR proceeds from the fact that considering and determining the ways to solve this question [armed forces and arms reductions in Europe] should not be the prerogative of the existing European military-political alliances." Tomilin, p. 42.

47/ "Joint American-Soviet Communique [Extract], May 29, 1972," ACDA, Selected Background Documents Relating To Mutual And Balanced Force Reductions, p. 168.

48/ "Foreign Policy Report by Secretary of State Rogers [Excerpt], April 19, 1973," ACDA, Selected Background Documents Relating To Mutual And Balanced Force Reductions, Part II, p. 6.

49/ "Statement by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization at Brussels, November 16, 1972," ACDA, Selected Documents Relating To Mutual And Balanced Force Reductions, p. 185.

50/ "Joint Communique by President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev [Excerpt], June 25, 1973," ACDA, Selected Documents Relating To Mutual And Balanced Force Reductions, Part II, p. 31.

51/ Holloway, pp. 3-4.

52/ Ibid, pp. 4-5.

53/ Subsequent events, i.e., the June War between Egypt, Syria and Israel which provoked a Soviet threat of unilateral intervention, proved the wisdom of this prophesy.

54/ Gromyko, "U.S. Foreign Policy Strategy in the Seventies," International Life, _____ (see notes to bibliography).

55/ Zorza, "The Direction of Detente," The Washington Post, 2 October 1973, p. A. 19.

56/ Ibid. The view expressed in this study is in sharp contrast with Anatoly Gromyko's recent book on the United States, which prompted the noted political scientist, Professor Morgenthau, to observe that, if the Kremlin believed the author "'detente can be no more than a breathing spell in an ongoing struggle for total stakes.'" Ibid.

57/ Tomilin, p. 39.

58/ Kostko, "Mutual Force Reductions in Europe," Survival, September/October 1972, p. 237.

59/ Ibid. The Soviets have long advocated their need for larger forces than the United States:

"The Soviet Union has a territory much larger than that of the United States, and lengthy frontiers, the protection of which requires proportionately numerous armed forces. Allowance must be made for the vitally important fact that the Soviet Union is threatened in the west by the North Atlantic bloc, in the south by the Baghdad Pact grouping, and in Asia and the Far East by the Baghdad Pact grouping and the SEATO military bloc."

"Statement by the Soviet Representative (Zorin) to the Disarmament Subcommittee, July 19, 1957," D/S, Documents on Disarmament 1945-1959, Vol. I, p. 820.

60/ Kostko, p. 237.

61/ Tomilin, p. 37. At one time, the Soviets were advocating consideration of geography:

"In establishing the size of the reduction in the armaments of States . . . simple agreed criteria including demographic, geographic, economic and political factors shall be taken into account"

"Soviet Proposal Introduced in the Disarmament Subcommittee: the Prohibition of Atomic Weapons and the Elimination of the Threat of a New War, May 10, 1955," D/S, Documents on Disarmament 1945-1959, Vol. 1, p. 467.

62/ Recently, some of the Soviet Group of Forces in East Germany (GSFG), and some other Warsaw Pact forces, were reequipped with hundreds of new battle tanks. The older model tanks which have been replaced, however, have not been withdrawn. ". . . some of this additional armor could be traded off . . . in any MBFR negotiation and still have GSFG in a very powerful position." Erickson, "Soviet Military Power", USSI Report 73-1, p. xiv.

63/ Kostko, p. 238.

64/ Ibid.

65/ Ibid.

66/ "Speech by General Secretary Brezhnev to World Conference of Peace Forces [Excerpt], October 26, 1973," ACDA, Selected Background Documents Relating To Mutual And Balanced Force Reductions, Part II. p. 48.

67/ Currently, that force consists of 31 divisions (20 in East Germany, 5 in Czechoslovakia, 4 in Hungary and 2 in Poland), sixteen of which are tank divisions. All 31 of these divisions are among the best equipped and trained in the Soviet Army. They are fully combat-ready.

68/ It has also been suggested that increasing Russian naval capabilities "are one factor influencing the Soviets new willingness to discuss the reduction of land-based forces in Europe." Griswold, p. 19.

69/ Holloway, p. 7.

70/ "Treaty Between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany, August 12, 1970," ACDA, Documents on Disarmament 1970, p. 404.

71/ In all, the Soviets have something like 600,000 troops in Eastern Europe, of which 430,000 are in Central Europe and the bulk of those are in East Germany. See Erickson, "Soviet Military Power," USSI Report 73-1, p. xiii; IISS, The Military Balance, p. 93.

72/ Holloway, p. 8.

73/ Marshal Grehko, the Soviet Minister of Defense was recently made a member of the Politburo.

74/ Wolfe, Worldwide Soviet Military Strategy and Policy, p. 30. This buildup, no doubt, was responsible for the increase in the strength of Soviet armed forces by more than one million men since 1969.

75/ Wolfe, Soviet Interests In SALT: Political, Economic, Bureaucratic And Strategic Contributions And Impediments To Arms Control, pp. 10-11.

76/ Wolfe, Soviet Interests In SALT: Political, Economic, Bureaucratic And Strategic Contributions And Impediments To Arms Control, p. 3.

77/ "Any 'favorable' outcome to these troop reduction talks -- favorable in the sense of reducing an obvious imbalance and reducing Soviet conventional superiority -- seems to be remote." Erickson, "MBFR: Force Levels And Security Requirements," Strategic Review, Summer 1973, p. 42.

78/ Even the Soviets' own proposals for on-site inspection, made back in the 1950's, were limited principally to fixed control posts at ports, railheads and airfields. See, e.g., "Soviet Proposal Introduced in the Disarmament Subcommittee: Reduction of Armaments, the Prohibition of Atomic Weapons, and the Elimination of the Threat of a New War, May 10, 1955," D/S, Documents on Disarmament 1945-1959, pp. 466-67.

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A survey of worldwide Soviet military policy which draws upon other recent papers by the same author.

55. Zorza, Victor. "The Direction of Detente." The Washington Post, 2 October 1973, p. A. 19.

A secondary source for additional insight into Soviet thinking about United States foreign policy in the 1970's.

*The primary source of this paper, the Moscow journal "International Life," could not be obtained. Therefore, reliance upon a secondary source was necessary. See bibliography item number 55.

**This paper was found in a binder with a reprint of another in the Army Library at The Pentagon. There was no indication whether it had been published and, if so, where and when. When brought to the attention of library personnel, they were unable to further identify the paper.

***This paper was reported in another (bibliography item number 15) with a citation to Le Monde, 18 November 1972, p. 6. Although the latter reference could not be obtained, it would appear to be only a secondary source.