

settled. The interesting fact to note about that date is that one week into the NATO bombing of Kosovo, Russia was still negotiating co-operatively in Vienna. Details of the verification protocols are still being negotiated. It is true that in Oslo recently Russian defence minister Sergeyev suggested that CFE negotiations and START II procedures might have to be suspended, but the Russians in Vienna are still negotiating seriously. However irritated Russia is with NATO, it is certainly in their interest to conclude the Adaptation Talks if only to codify limits on NATO conventional forces.

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NATO and the German Question

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1. From the FRG's Accession to NATO to German Reunification

Germany divided and finally reunified remained in the centre of the East-West confrontation in Europe from the beginning to the end. It was at the same time the principal cause, object and concern in the "Cold War" between 1948 with the Soviet Russian blockade of West Berlin and half a century later, 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and its immediate consequences. In this respect the case of Germany was unique in Europe after the restoration of Austria in 1955 by consent between the "Four Powers". The "Struggle for Europe", as the "Cold War" was also called at that time, was about Germany. If Germany were lost, Western Europe would be exposed and put at risk. The new FRG, founded in 1949, had become almost at once the central front-line and the Eastern corner stone of NATO on the continent.

Since the US had changed its German policy in 1947 in favour of creating a new model of American liberal democracy on the ruins of the NS-Reich, the success of this ambition would be exemplary for Europe and become the alternative of the future to the Soviet "social system" which Stalin tried to impose on Europe "as far as his armies could advance", as he had told Tito early in 1945. The role model as alternative to the communist system in post-war Europe made West Germany indispensable for American policy and gave it a value, which it could never have produced on its own. This new significance went beyond the mere "glacis" value of the West German territory for the deployment of allied forces to shield Western Europe and control the situation by containment of Soviet expansion.

After the end of the blockade of West Berlin in May 1949 and the beginning of the Korean War in June 1950, when the "Cold War" really set on,

US reinforcements slowly arrived in Europe to give muscle to NATO. But the mainstay of military security became nuclear deterrence, even if the US "strategic" forces still lacked the range and the nuclear ordinance for carrying "massive retaliation" into European Russia. This unsatisfactory situation lasted into the 1950s and made it necessary to deploy medium-range missile launchers in Turkey, Italy, Britain and some of lesser range in West Germany as well as longer range fighter-bombers for "tactical" nuclear strikes against Eastern Europe and short-range nuclear artillery in West Germany. With the first US nuclear arms, the FRG was upgraded in political as well as in military terms as the second strategic ally of the US in Europe next to Britain.

The US reinforcements in Germany after the second Berlin crisis in 1961 with more "tactical" nuclear arms and more advanced offensive missile systems, the creation of new operational air bases for longer range attack aircraft and the progress of West German rearmament since 1956 further enhanced the FRG's position in the alliance, in Europe and internationally, once its sovereignty was largely, if not completely, restored. From the mid-1950s onwards the distribution of power in Western Europe gradually changed in favour of the FRG, which emerged in the 1970s not only as the strongest economy, but also as the one in-dispensable ally of the US in continental Europe, on par with Britain and France. When France left the military co-operation in NATO in 1966-67 and the US forces along with NATO had to leave France, the FRG was promoted in Washington to the unique first rank among the European allies, since now the US military presence in Europe had to rely on Germany for the essentials, apart from the "strategic" bases for nuclear strikes in Spain and Britain. NATO military strategy with forward defence, flexible response by controlled nuclear escalation and timely reinforcement of US forces was now based mostly on West Germany and remained so until the end of the confrontation. In consequence, the entire security policy of the allies, hence all arms control approaches to the solution of the problems of military stability in Europe were centred on Germany and therefore linked to the German question.

This equation remained valid to the very end of the East-West conflict and beyond in the times of the great change 1989-91. When communist regimes crumbled under the internal pressure of growing opposition and economic decline, Eastern Central Europe, still under Soviet military control within the Warsaw Pact, could open to the West. But it could become part of Western Europe only via Germany. Essential for this, however, was the international status of Germany as a whole: If it were set up as a central power in armed neutrality between the two alliances or even if it were "neutralised", neither Poland nor Czechoslovakia or Hungary could join the Western community. In this case they would remain outside and become at best a "grey area" of security, what Waleša in Warsaw called "a security

void", in the worst case controlled by Russia behind what Havel in Prague called "a second Yalta" line between West and East. Hence, independence after 45 years of Soviet Russian imperial rule and membership in the Euro-Atlantic security system were linked to the situation of Germany and to the relations with Germany. This was the case in political and military as well as in economic terms. The desired reduction of their armed forces and defence budgets depended not only on Russia in the East but at least as much on Germany in the West. The key to arms control as the key to the reconstruction of Europe "whole and free", as President Bush said in May 1989, lay in Germany on the Western side of the opening "Iron Curtain".

While the reunification of Germany was by no means a foregone conclusion in the autumn of 1989 either in Moscow and Warsaw or in London and Paris, not even in the headquarters of NATO and the EC at Brussels, all the members of the North Atlantic Alliance and of the European Community were committed by treaty to the peaceful reunification of Germany as a sovereign and independent country within the integration system of the West European community (at that time the supranational integration of the "Coal and Steel Community" with full regulatory powers above the national authority), as agreed upon in article 7 of the "General Treaty" on the relations between the FRG and the "Three Powers" in 1952, amended in 1954, ending the occupation regime in West Germany, and endorsed on the occasion of the FRG's accession to the Treaty of Washington as an equal member of the Alliance in May 1955 by the North Atlantic Council with a formal statement. The latter expressed the hope that negotiations between the three main allied powers and the USSR on "outstanding issues" in East West relations "would lead progressively to agreements which would remove sources of conflict and contribute to the security and liberty of all peoples", helping "to bring about the peaceful unification of Germany in freedom."¹

The German Question was thus placed within the framework of negotiations with the Soviet Union on European security and singled out as the central common goal of the allies, when dealing with "the security and liberty of all peoples". This privileged rank was reconfirmed and even enhanced on December 16th, 1966 by the North Atlantic Council's statement in its final communiqué (paragraph 4), associating NATO with the "Declaration on Germany" in which the Governments of Britain, France, the US and the FRG stated that "the solution of the German question is one of the essential problems of the relations between East and West", and that it could "only be achieved by peaceful methods, on the basis of the right of self-determination, and through the creation of an atmosphere of détente on the continent, under conditions guaranteeing the security of all countries". By this declaration, "détente", the main theme of the next twenty years, was linked to the peoples' "right of self-determination" in the canon of the

Atlantic Alliance, and "the German question" recognised in this context as one of the fundamental problems, which would have to be addressed and "solved" in the course of negotiations with Moscow on reductions of arms and forces in Europe and on other issues of European security. This was a capital equation both for intra-alliance politics and for the political strategy to be pursued by the NATO allies vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, since it meant that while German unification was not the supreme priority on the time-table of Western policy in Europe, it remained the ultimate objective on the political agenda of the allies.

In December 1967 the North Atlantic Council adopted the conclusions of the "Harmel Report" on "The Future Tasks of the Alliance", which spelled out the fundamental reality of the European situation in its paragraph 8: "...no final and stable settlement in Europe is possible without a solution of the German question which lies at the heart of present tensions in Europe. Any such settlement must end the unnatural barriers between Eastern and Western Europe, which are most clearly and cruelly manifested in the division of Germany. It was stated in paragraph 12 that "the allies will examine and review suitable policies designed to achieve a just and stable order in Europe, to overcome the division of Germany and to foster European security". The common political objective was underlined by the reference in the final communiqué of the NAC ministerial session (2nd paragraph) of December 14th 1967, which now had become official alliance doctrine on the ultimate goals of "détente" policies. The importance lay in the contradiction to the official declarations on the purpose of reductions of arms and tensions in Europe by the Warsaw Pact, as pronounced since the Carlsbad declaration of the East European governments of 1966, which, of course, based the entire détente process and the objective of disarmament and security by co-operation in all of Europe on the recognition of the East German state, the GDR, and the continued existence of "two German States", i.e. on the division of Germany as a permanent feature on the map of Europe. Therefore, Germany became the criterion of East-West relations both during the actual "Cold War" until the mid-1960s and the lingering "détente" until the Soviet Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979-80, the threat to Poland in 1981-82 and the European "missile crisis" 1979-1983.

Even though the notion of formal and direct linkage between the "German question" and European security with arms control and disarmament had been abandoned early in the game at the "Four Powers Conference" at Geneva in 1955, when the case of Germany was deleted from the agenda of further official East-West negotiations, the management of the East-West conflict in Europe during the entire period until 1989-90 developed, as the "Harmel Report" of 1967 emphasised, against the background of the confrontation between the two alliances and hence of the central situation in Germany.

This was reflected by the proposals made for "mutual disengagement" of armed forces deployed on German territory and in the course of the MBFR negotiations until the very end, when the then French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas proposed in March 1989 that the new mandate for a negotiation on "Conventional Forces in Europe" (CFE) include a separate "central region" of arms control around the two German States with "Benelux" (Dumas' formulation) in the West, Poland and Czechoslovakia in the East, for the envisaged treaty with different ceilings on force levels for different geographical areas. Both parts of such a central area could - in the French view - be enlarged: In the West by Denmark, in the East by Hungary. Such a geopolitical structure for arms control had already been proposed without Hungary by the Soviet government prior to the failed MBFR negotiations and resisted both by the FRG in the West and by Poland in the East, although Warsaw had proposed such a "Central European" configuration for force reductions earlier, in 1955 in the first published version of the "Rapacki Plan" with Hungary, in the second and later official version after the Soviet Russian armed intervention against the democratic revolution in Hungary in the fall of 1956, without Hungary. Two following Polish initiatives, called "Gomulka Plans", had repeated this concept of force reductions and a "freeze" of ceilings on forces in Central Europe. All had been rejected by the NATO allies. Hence, the French suggestion of 1989 was firmly opposed by the FRG and not supported by either Britain or the US. President Bush as his predecessor President Reagan regarded the FRG as the principal American ally in continental Europe and as the main partner of the US in "leadership" in the field of East-West relations, as he underlined in May of that year in his speech in Mainz, offering "partnership in leadership". This offer was, at the same time, of a conciliatory nature, since it was directly related to the intra-allied quarrel about the modernisation of the short range theatre nuclear armament of NATO, which was resisted at that time - spring 1989 - by large sectors of West German opinion and even by influential forces in the government coalition from foreign minister Genscher and the liberal party to the head of the parliamentary party of the CDU/CSU in the Bundestag, Alfred Dregger, formerly a staunch defender of NATO strategy and nuclear deterrence, but since the INF treaty, which had cost the FRG its American "Pershing"-II lower "medium range" missiles, the foremost advocate of complete removal of all nuclear weapons from Germany on both sides.

II. The FRG and the Nuclear Arms Issue at the End of the East-West Confrontation

In fact, there no longer was political support in the FRG for the deployment of new or more modern nuclear-capable short to medium range missile systems and the government was not ready to spend any more political capital on nuclear arms (or chemical arms) on German soil. It had run a tenacious controversy with the French government of Prime Minister Chirac in 1986-88 over the option of a possible forward deployment of French nuclear-armed short range missiles to or near West Germany and entertained a difficult discussion with President Mitterrand since 1984 on a so-called "common strategic space" to be covered by the French strategic deterrence forces with French nuclear-capable artillery missile systems to be deployed in Eastern France close to the Rhine and forward-deployed into Southwestern Germany in case of crisis to give an "ultimate signal" to Moscow for impending escalation into the use of "strategic" nuclear deterrence weapons against the Soviet Union if an attack on NATO Europe were to be launched or did continue through Germany towards France. This "last warning" notion of an emerging French operational strategy with short and medium range theatre nuclear weapons, more or less connected to NATO's "flexible response", but different since Paris did not envisage "controlled" and "gradual" escalation but only one salvo of "pre-strategic" shorter range arms, which would have to be launched either from France on targets in Germany or from the FRG on targets in the GDR, possibly also further east. Neither option was politically attractive to the FRG as the principal European ally of France. In 1984 French defence minister Charles Hernu had linked the proposal to deploy the new French "Rapid Reaction Force" in corps strength to Southern Germany for early participation in "forward defence" close to the Eastern borders of the FRG, which was appreciated by the government in Bonn, to a "strategic cover" of the French forces in Germany by French nuclear-capable artillery missiles on the territory of the FRG. Anyway, in all allied troop exercises in the FRG, in which elements of the II French army corps, based in Southwestern Germany since 1945, participated, the French manoeuvre direction had run a covert separate nuclear combat simulation in a closed circuit, to which neither the Germans nor the Americans had access and about which no information was released by the French.

This situation was clearly unacceptable both for the FRG and NATO. By 1988, the issue of the French ground-based mobile "pre-strategic" nuclear systems of the French army had become an urgent problem since President Mitterrand had to take an overdue decision on the procurement and deployment of the new "Hades" missile with an increased range, but still too short for impact of its warhead east or south of Germany, if launched west of the

Rhine, where these missile systems were to be stationed. By 1988, the political leadership of the FRG had to solve the problem of allied nuclear arms on German territory, since the INF agreement was ready and the lower limit for "intermediary" theatre nuclear systems was set at 500 km.

Chancellor Kohl had in vain insisted in Paris on a binding commitment by France - to be given by the French President as Supreme Commander of the French Armed Forces - to associate the head of the federal government in due time with all decisions on the use of French "pre-strategic" nuclear theatre forces (short to medium range missiles, aircraft and artillery) "on German territory" ("sur le territoire allemand" or "sol allemand"). President Mitterrand had evaded such a comprehensive commitment in Paris in 1988 at the Paris Franco-German intergovernmental consultations by an ambiguous verbal tautology and refused to clearly include in his definition of "German territory" the GDR, as Kohl had demanded, in order to respect the territorial integrity of Germany as a whole, for which the FRG bore a national responsibility even in case of war after an Eastern aggression against itself and Western Europe. The more practical reason for this demand was the intractable French problem for German military security and the inter-allied relations: As long as Paris refused information on operational plans for the use of its own short range INF systems such as "Hades" and the French attack aircraft based in Eastern France, no real co-ordination with either Allied Forces Europe or the FRG was possible. The government in Bonn was under steady fire of criticism of both its policy towards France and its policies on nuclear arms, once INF systems with ranges between 1000 and 500 km would be withdrawn from Germany on both sides and the proper LRINF systems of the USSR and the US would be dismantled world-wide.

But Mitterrand had refused to go beyond giving this assurance for the territory of the FRG only and argued (in a private debate with Kohl, the two foreign ministers and two counsellors present) that he could only follow the logic of "the Brussels treaty" on the WEU, which commits all members "to give assistance and support with all military and other means in their power" to other treaty members in case of "an armed attack in Europe". While Mitterrand's juridical-political logic for an extremely extensive interpretation of article 4 of the treaty in connection with nuclear arms was remarkable, the fact remained that in his view Germany did no longer exist as an international entity and that the GDR was not the FRG's business in terms of collective defence according to the WEU commitments, therefore no Franco-German co-operation was desirable on the use of French nuclear arms against or in East Germany. He would not associate the government of the FRG with target selection for French nuclear arms outside the FRG. This was much less than what the US and British allies had promised the FRG government in the framework of inter-allied nuclear-operational plan-

ning in NATO after France's departure from the military co-operation. It remained unclear - since it could not be tested in peace - whether Mitterrand's promise equalled that of President Giscard d'Estaing to Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in early 1981; Giscard had assured the head of the federal government that he would consult with him on the use of French nuclear arms in Europe prior to any decision, if there was time. Apart from this comparison, President Mitterrand made clear in public on the same day in 1988, that he did not envisage a German say over the use of French nuclear arms, since for the sake of effective deterrence in crisis, no head of state of a nuclear power could share his own responsibility with a foreign partner, even if and when French nuclear arms were made available as "extended deterrence" for a strategic cover of Western Europe. This was about the same what Giscard had argued, when he was president of France. The Franco-German understanding on the French nuclear deterrent, therefore, had not really advanced. In this political respect as in military reality in case of conflict in Europe, the "pre-strategic" French nuclear forces were a nuisance for the FRG and Franco-German relations.

The French incident in 1988, while not known to the public, contributed to the building crisis in the alliance on nuclear strategy and the combined conventional-nuclear posture of allied forces in Germany for "forward defence", because it occurred during the same time as the intra-allied controversy of the "modernisation" of short range theatre nuclear forces in Europe by deploying a "follow-on" system to the "Lance" missile system with increased range up to 350 km and new atomic munitions for the nuclear-capable heavy field artillery on German territory.

The issue was finally disposed of in May 1989 at Brussels on the NATO summit by President Bush, offering a dilatory compromise, which put off the implementation of the "modernisation" of the short range theatre nuclear forces and linked it to a negative outcome of further negotiations with the USSR within a fixed delay. In fact NATO stood on the verge of what in all likelihood would have become the worst crisis of the alliance, with the fate of the government of the FRG and solidarity with the US protector at stake, when the situation of Europe changed in the fall of 1989. Even without this prospect, the now rapidly declining Warsaw Pact and Russian influence on Eastern Europe, the open domestic crisis in Poland, the distance taken by Hungary with regard to Moscow and the progressive undoing of communist control in the country since 1988 and the beginning disintegration of the USSR with a visible power struggle in Moscow confronted the NATO allies with the prospect of loosing their common adversary, "the threat" and their "agent fédérateur" or external unifying force, which had held them together for 40 years, even when they were far apart on central issues of their common policies and strategy.

III. Implications for Arms Control and Force Reductions in Europe: A "Key" Question

The change-over in Vienna in early 1989 from MBFR to CFE and the conclusion of the INF agreement in Washington, signed in the last days of the Reagan Administration at about the same time, marked the successful management of the end of the "Cold War" with a decline of the threat and the political moderation of the still existing forces for confrontation. It can be said, in retrospective, that the symmetrical arms control for INF between the two "super-powers" and the asymmetrical arms reductions of conventional forces in Europe between the member states of NATO and the WP for an approximative balance of forces was the change from antagonistic to co-operative arms control in Europe. The full participation of France closed the ranks of NATO for a historical moment and common purpose. The implementation of the Paris CFE treaty of November 1990 in the following years with several adaptations to new conditions later showed that the military threat potential of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact in Europe had not declined during the last decade of the confrontation 1980-90. Nor had the plans and exercises for offensive war in Europe on the WP's side. Even the proclaimed "no first use" of nuclear arms was not mirrored in WP military exercises even in 1989-9. The use of more than 80 nuclear arms in offensive operations was simulated during a large-scale exercise of an offensive thrust from the border of the GDR towards Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein with a two-pronged attack in depth into Denmark to the North and towards Bremen and the Netherlands to the West.

The elimination of the offensive capability of Soviet/WP forces in Central Europe by CFE reductions, as negotiated in Vienna 1989-90, was imperative for European security. On this capital point all NATO allies were agreed since the mid-1980s, after it had become obvious that the MBFR negotiation on personnel or force levels were going nowhere. Differences remained between them over whether to include or exclude aircraft. But any special reduction or limitation of US forces or in general "stationed forces" in other allied countries (mainly FRG) were finally discarded in the negotiation on a mutual basis with Soviet forces on the other side. Geographical "sub-ceilings" below the general "collective ceilings" for all allies in each group (NATO and WP) were established and on this issue differences appeared between NATO partners, in particular over the definition and delimitation of a "central region" with the two German states in the middle.

What was at stake in all arms control schemes towards the end of the "Cold War" were the situation of divided Germany and, linked to it, a special status for Germany and its immediate neighbours apart from France, Austria and Switzerland outside military alliance structures (the latter two

with a status of neutrality), in a special zone of reduced forces. Such a special treatment for a "central region", where the mass of the opposing forces and their heavy arms were deployed, bore the risk for the countries in this region of reduced security and independence by comparison with the European countries on both sides outside this "central region". What was feared in Bonn as well as in Warsaw in 1989 was a sort of international arms control protectorate over "Central Europe", against which a former French president, Georges Pompidou, had warned Europe in 1973, when he decided not to have France and French forces in Germany be subject to any agreements on reductions of forces or armaments in Europe, which might be the result of the MBFR negotiation. Pompidou had expressed fears that the US and the USSR would jointly use arms control to set up such a "protectorate" (in his words) over all of Europe. As far as "Central Europe" was concerned, the dangerous issue had almost come full circle during the transition from one failed negotiation on force reductions to another one.

However, in 1989, for the first time in the history of post-war East-West negotiations on conventional forces, all of Europe including the European part of the USSR or Russia with its Western sub-states in the Caucasus region, the Ukraine, Moldova, Belo-Russia and the three Baltic States (then all Soviet Republics) were included in the treaty area "from the Atlantic to the Urals". This had originally been a French suggestion, put forward by President Giscard d'Estaing for a disarmament agreement within the general political framework of the CSCE. The government of the FRG had used this geopolitical notion for arms control "in Europe", the treaty boundaries of which would cut through the Soviet Union and set apart "European Russia" from "Asian Russia" for the purpose of European arms control between NATO and the Warsaw Pact: Western Europe and Eastern Europe in geographical terms along the classical divide between Europe and Asia.

Apart from the political significance of including the European part of the USSR in a treaty on European forces for the principle of "equal security" in an area "from the Atlantic to the Urals", this approach offered the possibility to subject all Soviet conventional land and air forces in Europe to the same treatment as all the other forces in this vast area. This, Moscow had never admitted in the past. Gorbachev's acceptance of this principle and the adamant position, taken by the NATO allies in unison, not to negotiate again only on forces west of Russia and to go for the arms rather than for the numbers of soldiers in the armies concerned, represented the breakthrough to real and significant arms control for "enhancing stability" in all of Europe; this was the ultimate goal of the Western allies: stability meaning the consolidation of the territorial status quo and its military protection by a stable balance of forces in the area. On this capital point there was a spectacular ambiguity in the Western position, since the NATO allies were, as a matter of principle, committed to a future reunification of Germany.

This meant a change of internationally recognised borders in the centre of Europe. The artificiality of treating the line of division through Germany as an "internal German border" by not recognising the GDR *de jure* as a sovereign state with international frontiers, was still observed in Bonn as a juridical ritual even after the "Fundamental Treaty" between the two German States had been concluded in 1970. However, all allies of the FRG and all other European countries had established normal diplomatic relations with the GDR, which amounted to *de jure* international recognition. This was unavoidable in view of negotiations and agreements on armed forces on its territory and of its full participation in arms control in Europe as well as in the CSCE with the agreed military Confidence Building Measures (CBM), pertaining to territory such as "border areas". The European partners of the FRG saw the political advantage of preserving two states in Germany instead of German unity. Until late in 1989 this was no immediate problem for the FRG since the Bonn government assumed, as Kohl had put it in 1988, that "the German question was not on the agenda of world politics".

The vital security interest of the FRG in "stability" had the priority over other political considerations linked to the "German question". This corresponded to the security interests of all NATO allies. In dealing with the GDR on mutual security within the international negotiations on European security by force reductions and arms control on the residual force levels to be agreed upon, the political issue of borders and of a possible future reunification of Germany was simply set aside. This had the advantage for the GDR that its international position was consolidated and even enhanced as a "partner in security" by treaty, while it held the advantage for the FRG of limiting Soviet and East German forces across "the inner-German border" at reduced levels of heavy arms and hence with reduced offensive capabilities, and while Germany's ultimate status question remained an "open question".

This arrangement proved its worth only one and a half years after the mandate agreement on the CFE negotiation, when the GDR disappeared by joining the FRG and the East German army NVA was dissolved or rather: was absorbed into the Bundeswehr within one year from reunification. Last hour attempts by the last (and first freely elected, democratic) government of the GDR, presided over by Lothar de Maizière, in May 1990 to preserve both the GDR as a member of the Warsaw Pact and its army as the ally of the Soviet forces in Germany with both German states remaining in their respective alliances, failed in the breakdown of the GDR in the same way as those, made by the last Communist government under Hans Modrow in February 1990 for a "special military-political status" of Germany, amounting to neutrality or rather neutralisation, had failed. The old idea, according to which there could be no unification of Germany unless under the conditions of both parts being neutralised in an all-European system of

"collective security", after having been released from their respective alliance or even after the end of these alliances, was proven irrelevant to the solution of both the German question and the problem of European security.

However, the existence of the treaty on intermediate range theatre nuclear forces between the US and the USSR, which from 1988 onwards led to the progressive elimination of all such ground-based missile launchers and missiles of this category of ranges between 500 and 5500 km with their nuclear warheads from Europe, and the link between East and West by the ongoing negotiations on CFE contributed to the stability of the political relationship and to mutual reassurance against "destabilising" force deployments or reinforcements in armaments in Europe during this critical time of transition. The event of the signature of the CFE treaty in Paris in November 1990 together with the "Vienna Document" of the CSCE with CBM and the "Paris Declaration" of principles "for a New Europe", accompanied by the "Non-Hostility" declaration by the members of both alliances two months after solving the "German Question" by reunification of Germany in full sovereignty and within NATO was significant not only for the fundamental change but also for the full success of Western alliance policy. It also showed that military security and arms control remained a critical element in the still existing East-West relationship in Europe, marked by the presence of allied and Soviet forces in the now reunited Germany and the temporary growth of the German forces under Western control by addition of those, dissolving into the Bundeswehr, of the GDR to those of the FRG. Arms control by the implementation of the INF and CFE treaties with the agreed elimination or reduction of forces, the renewal of the long-standing renunciation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons by the FRG for the united Germany, the obligation assumed by it to reduce its united armed forces to a manpower level at 370,000 within the CFE framework as a special and one-sided German concession, the obligation not to deploy NATO-assigned forces and hence no external allied forces in West Germany or Berlin-West nor nuclear arms on the former territory of the GDR, marked the new status of Germany in the new situation of Europe. The German question had indeed been solved in a context of European security by arms control, which was much more important for the agreement on German unification than the politically vaunted "CSCE process". The agreement with the USSR in the "Two-plus-Four" negotiations for the complete withdrawal of all Soviet forces from Germany within five years after 1990 completed this new central feature of Europe's security as did the ensuing elimination of all ground-based nuclear weapons in Europe on the NATO side in the following years. All this led to a fundamental improvement of Germany's and Europe's security, it laid the ground for the accession of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary to NATO nine years later.

IV. The Power Constellation in Europe and the German Problem at the End of the "Cold War"

The international power constellation in Europe at the end of the 1980s was one of accelerating transition from bipolarity and the "block" system towards a fundamental change of the two military alliances and an end of the confrontation between them. But the two dominant powers with control of the alliance forces and of mutual deterrence by nuclear arms, the US and the USSR, still controlled the situation in Europe until the spring of 1989, when the Polish Communist military government had to surrender power to the Solidarność opposition of the trade union movement. Britain and France played the role they had assumed in post-war Europe and in the Western alliance, but their privileged position in Germany with their special responsibilities as two of the "Four Powers" for "Germany as a whole" and Berlin did not make them holders of the key to the solution of the German problem. They could not take an initiative alone or together without the US nor could they block a development, if this was promoted by either the US or the USSR, let alone by both. The FRG had almost completely emancipated itself from both Britain and France as "European Power" and had advanced to the first rank of the "strategic ally" of the US in Europe with the strongest position on the Western part of the continent as the anchor-ground for the US military presence in continental Europe and as shield for Western Europe against an attack in war. This had become evident during the INF negotiation, since the FRG had to give up the 104 American "Pershing"-I missile systems in order to meet a Soviet demand, but had to be persuaded to do this by the US administration with President Bush finally offering in return "partnership in leadership" to the FRG for the management of the relations with the East (in late May 1989).

The military thinking in NATO about a possible war in Europe against an attacking Warsaw Pact force with the bulk of the Soviet army and air force centred around Germany. This was the unavoidable strategic consequence of the European situation during the East-West confrontation with the mass of the forward-deployed ground forces, the strongest air forces in Western Europe and a large part of the "tactical" nuclear arms on both sides on German territory. The entire crisis reinforcements were scheduled to go to Germany, where much of the heavy equipment for a third US army corps were stored. It was in Germany, where the "re-forger" and other large scale exercises of allied forces took place. There was a similar pattern on the Eastern side. Germany was the central strategic ground. Therefore, any negotiation on reductions of forces, nuclear arms or war stocks would have to turn on Germany as well. This necessity determined the structure of arms control in Europe and of the negotiations on this subject. It gave the FRG a growing importance in NATO in general, but especially in the MBFR

negotiation 1973-89, in the twice-interrupted INF negotiations 1981-88 on intermediate range (or "intermediary") theatre nuclear forces of the US and the USSR, and a key role during the preliminaries and in the negotiation on CFE in 1989-90. However, in all three arms control negotiations the decisive moves were always made by the US and the USSR in bilateral understandings, for example on including combat aircraft.

NATO governments sought to offer Moscow a real *quid pro quo*, which would compensate for certain structural and force level advantages as well as for the specific geo-strategic positions of strength on either side. For Germany such a vast treaty area held the distinct advantage that it would not permit any discrimination or set of conditions amounting to an neutralisation, as long as no special treaty regime would be negotiated for Germany alone or for a narrow "Central European" zone. It was, however, clear that in the "Central Region", where the hard core of the military forces of both sides opposed each other across the inner-German border in the East-West confrontation, forces would have to be reduced more than in other parts of Europe, further away of the centre. For this reason, next to the Soviet "Western Group" and "Central Group" of forces in Central Europe, Soviet forces, held in reserve in the Western USSR for a swift forward-deployment for a surprise attack on a large scale, were the main object of the Western strategy in the CFE negotiation. For the first time, the entire conventional posture of Soviet land forces in Europe was subject to international scrutiny in a negotiation. NATO at first did not want to negotiate on air forces or combat aircraft in 1989.

In the minds of the West German security managers, the critical problem of "balance" or "parity" could only be solved to the advantage of all of Europe in operational as well as in quantitative terms if and when the entire European territory of the USSR with all the conventional forces deployed and all the operational "heavy" arms stocked therein were included. Only if this were the case, a treaty reducing and limiting conventional forces in Europe could, if loyally implemented by the USSR, eliminate what the German government called "the invasion capability against Western Europe" for a continent-wide "offensive war". In such a war Germany would be the main theatre of operations. If escalation to limited nuclear warfare with "Theatre Nuclear Forces" (TNF) of shorter ranges up to 1000 km (but mostly only to 150 km) were to occur, it would be Germany as a whole which would be devastated. In such a case, there could be no "preferred outcome" in the German national interest. Therefore, the Soviet forces in the GDR and CSSR must be substantially reduced by a combined reduction in their armoured and artillery strength. This again would only serve its strategic purpose of enhancing security by the elimination of the surprise-attack and large-scale offensive capabilities, if the forward deployment forces of the Soviet Army in Eastern Europe including Russia and

the Ukraine could be reduced as well and regional concentrations be prevented by the treaty. Otherwise Soviet Russian superiority in quantity of soldiers and arms would be maintained at whatever agreed residual levels after "balanced" or "symmetrical" reductions (as proposed by Moscow in MBFR). Such reductions, in order to result in a "balance", must be "asymmetrical" and eliminate the existing disparities in Soviet/WP's favour to the advantage of offensive options against Western Europe. This would have to be combined with Soviet force redeployments to the east and a special reduction of the strength of Soviet forces in Germany, which were ready operational forces with a strong offensive capability. In the USSR, about two thirds of the land forces were less ready, less mobile and had to rely for up to 60 per cent of their war-time strength on mobilisation of reservists and on static logistics, based on a much weaker infrastructure than that in the GDR and the CSSR.

The political reasons for including Soviet territory and Soviet forces in an arms control agreement on armed forces in Europe applied to all countries west of Russia as well in a wider international context: For Germany, in 1989 still divided, as for all its neighbours in Central Europe, the political problem of discrimination and neutralisation by international arrangements on force reductions as a group of countries "in between", subjected to arms control by the greater powers in the name of European security, was still a possible threat. In 1992-94 this problem seemed to be posed anew for Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, but also for Romania and Bulgaria, after the end of the Warsaw Pact in the spring of 1991, this time in a different geopolitical configuration with unified Germany inside NATO and them outside, leaving them exposed to dangers from Russia. French and British policies could seem ambivalent both on Germany and on Central Europe, as they had been, at times, during the East-West conflict, especially in the "détente" period with the premature perception of a "declining threat" and a growing opportunity for East West arrangements turning around Germany. While the division of Germany had been perceived above all as its reduction in size and potential, in reality it had become the instrument of the division of Europe and, for the Eastern countries, their enforced separation from the West and from European political and intellectual culture.

This had been felt with particular pain in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, where the historical ties with Western Europe via the Austrian empire of the past had been particularly strong. It was precisely these three countries, which had been occupied by the Red Army at different times from 1945 onwards: Poland since 1944, Hungary again in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. They were the three WP allies of the USSR, which had to bear most of the military weight of the East-West confrontation together with East Germany on the Eastern side. For them, reduction of the Soviet forces within their borders was an object of highest national priority,

as the chief of the Hungarian communist United Workers Party and head of state, Janos Kadar, had made clear in early 1988, when arguing in a televised address to his people that there was no more any need for Hungary's protection by Soviet forces on Hungarian soil. At that time, martial law was still partially applied in Poland under a military dictatorship shielding the communist regime against domestic opposition. Eight years earlier, the head of the communist regime of East Germany, Erich Honecker, had urged Moscow to intervene in Poland and had offered the services of the GDR armed forces for that purpose, to seal off Poland to the West, as the GDR leaders had offered its participation in the military occupation of the CSSR in 1968. The direct implications of the continued existence of the communist regime of the GDR for the independence of its neighbours in the Warsaw Pact had thus been demonstrated twice in the past thirty years as had the complete *inféodation* to and dependence on the Soviet Union of this regime and the GDR itself as the only artificial state without a national foundation in Eastern Europe: The visible political "fault-line" in the structure of the Warsaw Pact was its front-line across Germany.

There was, of course, an ocean-wide difference in perception of the interlocked problems of Germany, Central Europe, arms control and territorial stability in the East-West relationship between Washington and Paris or London. The US, even as "a European Power", as President George Bush had proclaimed America to be in 1989, remained far away and essentially aloof in face of the tremendous upheaval underway in the East, as the new security negotiations started on "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals". For American power in Europe as in the world at large any modification of the uncertain balance of forces with the Soviet Union had to meet three basic requirements, each of which was indeed a *conditio sine qua non* by itself:

- 1) Western Europe and with it its key country on the continent, West Germany with the isolated Berlin-West, must not be put at risk;
- 2) The US military presence in Europe, especially in the FRG, must be preserved, even at a reduced force level and nuclear posture; within the agreed intra-allied limits, the US forces must remain unrestricted in their operational freedom, logistical support, communications with North America and strategic cover by external US forces;
- 3) The European, especially German forces in NATO must remain strong enough, mobile and flexible for forward defence and for their tasks in flanking and supporting the US forces in Europe;
- 4) No multilateral agreement on forces and security with the USSR or the WP as a whole must apply to the territory of the United States, to the US navy, the US air force outside Europe or to US "strategic" forces.

These American "essentials" at the end of the East-West confrontation in Europe corresponded to those of the beginning in 1949-50 when the FRG was created and NATO organised with Allied Forces Europe; they were then expounded by US general Omar Bradley as conditions for US reinforcements and a long term deployment of the US forces on the European continent, mainly in West Germany:

- 1) assured freedom of operational manoeuvre for US forces;
- 2) sufficient European forces on the ground for US forces not to be isolated;
- 3) exclusive US decision over and control of the equipment and supply & support for US forces in allied countries;
- 4) control of the sea-lines of communications between North America and Europe by US and NATO.

Therefore, the creation of the FRG was a strategic move on the central chessboard and a conservative one in the best tradition of European power politics rather than a break with the European pre-war past and historical pattern of war and peace on the continent. It was part of the building confrontation throughout Europe along the East-West divide and both German States were considered "front-line" for that reason from the very beginning.

The three Western allies maintained their special position in Germany and vis-à-vis the FRG even after the abrogation of the "Statute of Occupation" in October 1954 and the conclusion of the "General Treaty" of 1952/54 between the "Three Powers" and the FRG. They had to preserve both the international legality of their situation in Germany with armed forces and special privileges to use these forces in accordance with other agreements, and the foundation of the "Four-Power responsibility" for Germany as a whole and Berlin", in order to keep the Soviet Union bound to the last remaining thread of the agreements between the four victorious powers of 1945, which had assumed the "supreme authority" in Germany based on the "Potsdam agreements" for the joint administration of Germany, concluded by the US, Britain and the USSR.

The security of Berlin-West could not be assured and crisis management for the protection of the city could not be organised without a broader approach, which would have to include the entire "central region" of NATO in the wider strategic-military context of the confrontation (a necessity shown by the crisis of 1958-61). The allied "Berlin Group" gradually developed into a kind of inter-allied political steering committee for crisis management in NATO, without being part of NATO. The FRG gained accession to the supreme political crisis response organism of the West for Europe and to its military contingency planning cell ("Heart Oak") in the Supreme Allied Headquarters Europe (SHAPE) by-passing all other European allies outside

this new Western "Four-Power" consultations. The political career of the FRG, therefore, was intricately and inseparably linked to NATO, US forces and nuclear arms in Germany (well over 3000 warheads of all kinds by the mid-1970s) and the forward defence of Western Europe close to the inner-German border with the GDR and the international border with Czechoslovakia.

The entire defence posture in the Central Region of Allied Command Europe (ACE) against an offensive war by the Warsaw Pact was based on forward defence close-up to the inner-German border since the 1970s and on escalation strategy with the first use, if possible in an urgent case of need, of nuclear arms by NATO, which were mostly American in US possession or under physical US custody in NATO depots and ultimately under US control. By the end of the 1980s, the FRG had become not only the central front state of NATO-Europe, but the country with the strongest military conventional forces within its borders and the most "nuclearised" area in Europe, a dominant strategic quality as the main continental ally of the US, enhanced by the US INF missile deployment from 1983 to 1988 and the US/NATO plans for further modernisation of short-range nuclear-capable ground-to-ground missiles and field artillery, again mostly in the FRG. Most of NATO's essential investments in defence were materialised on German territory, both in ready allied ground and air forces and for support of the bulk of US forces in Europe by a vast network of infrastructure, including most operational air bases closest to Eastern Europe and Soviet forces with combat stores and large quantities of heavy equipment for additional US divisions and air wings, fuel, ammunition and other logistics, for nuclear and chemical arms. At the end of the East-West confrontation in 1988-90, the FRG armed forces were the second largest in NATO-Europe after the Turkish army on the South-Eastern flank, mostly outside Europe proper, but the strongest in modern equipment and conventional fire power even in comparison with the US forces in Europe, with about three times the combat strength in operational divisions. The value of the military logistics and the usable infrastructure in Germany was also proven out-of-area during the Gulf War in 1990-91, when one entire US corps and one British division were transferred to Saudi-Arabia from West Germany; the German ammunition stocks were almost emptied to supply the needed ordnance to the coalition forces for "Desert Shield" and "Desert Storm".

One must consider these facts and their impact on the management of the East-West conflict as well as on NATO and allied politics in Europe over some 40 years. Without this German contribution no defence of Western Europe would have been conceivable, let alone effective. After France's separation from the allied defence co-operation in 1966-67, the entire military posture in Western and Central Europe depended on the continued availability of West Germany as the main deployment country for "forward

defence" to shield Western Europe within the limits imposed by the superiority and offensive capabilities of the Soviet armed forces in Central and Eastern Europe. This availability meant not only German territory, but also German resources, German forces, German morale in a crisis and German political resolve, facing the immediate threat of an attack at the outbreak of war. Moscow had always been aware of this, hence Soviet policies and propaganda had always been directed with a priority both at America and Germany: If either the US forces could be made to leave Germany or the FRG to deny the US its territory as a deployment area, as France did in 1966-67, at least for nuclear and chemical arms, then the entire NATO posture in continental Europe would collapse and NATO strategy would lose its glaciis and the operational forward bases for defence and counter-attack. The US and the FRG were intrinsically linked in the strategic situation, prevailing in Europe over 40 years. All of Europe depended on this American-German connection. At the same time, Germany was the central strategic theatre of operations, both political and military, for both sides in the East-West confrontation. In Germany all could be won and lost, and only over Germany could the decisive compromise be concluded, which would really end the "Cold War". The "German question" then remained the essential political issue as long as the East-West conflict lasted.

1. The Intra-Allied Factors of Complication for Common Strategy and Security Policy vis-à-vis Eastern Europe

For the FRG the security problem in a real crisis was compounded by both the deployments of allied and enemy forces in Germany and by NATO's strategy of "flexible response" by "controlled nuclear escalation", to which there was no realistic alternative since, according to Western policy and NATO doctrine for crisis management, allied forces would not attack first but wait to be attacked before launching their "response" with an option of first use of nuclear weapons in defence against the attacking forces and their bases in Eastern Europe. For Germany this could only mean a latent danger of becoming the target area both of "friendly" and "hostile" nuclear strikes, anyway the main region for the use of nuclear artillery munitions, short range missile warheads and land mines.

Therefore, the FRG was in an ambivalent position in formulating its strategic and arms control objectives: As long as the military threat of an all-out attack of the assembled WP forces with the Soviet army in the GDR across the border as the spearhead and the Soviet forces in the East as back-up, had to be taken as a real physical possibility, a lethal risk existed, and this ultimate risk could not be covered, let alone eliminated by political security measures such as constraints of troop concentrations and large

exercises in border areas, as elaborated and agreed upon between 1973 and 1986 within the diplomatic framework of the CSCE. All expert assessments in the internal planning process of NATO concurred on the one critical point: If Moscow decided one day to attack with all its conventional forces in Central Europe, in order to rapidly overwhelm and defeat the NATO forces in West Germany, force the Baltic Approaches and advance on land and by sea to the British Channel, possibly conquer most of France on their way to the Atlantic coast, there was little that NATO could do to prevent this with conventional forces. Nuclear strikes would be necessary. For German policy, the question of how France would react in a real war contingency, remained without an answer, where French nuclear arms were concerned.

The Franco-British complication of the nuclear-tipped missiles on submarines (SLBM) and of the bomber force, considered by the USSR government as "forward-based systems" (FBS) of the "strategic" category and hence subject to either SALT rules (which do not apply to third countries) or to an enlarged INF agreement between the US and the USSR, could be overcome after ten years of controversy with Moscow, mostly thanks to a political mistake, made by Gromyko and the Soviet military: In demanding the inclusion of all nuclear-capable fighter-bombers of NATO in Europe with a technical range to Soviet territory as "strategic" or at least "intermediate" delivery systems for nuclear warheads on the USSR, while persisting to exclude the same kind of aircraft in Soviet and other WP forces with ranges to Western Europe, the Soviet government confirmed accusations that it did not accord "equal security" under arms control to the European allies of the US in NATO, not even by comparison with its own European allies in the WP; hence it was not serious about its own demand for "symmetrical" arms control (which however, was rejected by NATO countries anyhow on the basis of the existing disparities in the East-West balance of forces in Europe in favour of the USSR and the WP). It could be said that Moscow in fact sought to create three unequal treaty classes of security in Europe - first class the USSR, second class the WP allies of the USSR, third class the European NATO allies of the US.

Soviet diplomacy was left defenceless against the logic of the case and the array of arguments for a strictly bilateral US-USSR treaty on INF and future strategic arms reduction agreements on nuclear systems, eliminating the entire "FBS" controversy from the coming START negotiations. Here, a clear signal of change could be seen in the West, since until 1986-87 Soviet arms control negotiators never shied away from their own contradictions, never officially admitted errors in their arithmetic or false data, even when confronted with the evidence, as had been the case again and again during the SALT, INF and MBFR negotiations. Gorbachev and Shevardnadze recognised the incongruent Soviet positions on these issues and abandoned

the claims. This, however, left the issue of ground-based nuclear-capable weapons systems and combat aircraft for the CFE negotiations, where the Soviet claim for inclusion into conventional arms control was advanced in the preliminaries since 1988. The nuclear complications and the combat aircraft issue therefore remained on the arms control front during 1989-90 until shortly before the conclusion of the conference at Vienna.

This complex set-up on the Western side complicated defence planning, operational planning and arms control negotiations on the forces of both sides in Central Europe between 1973 and 1989 on MBFR and between 1981 and 1987 on INF ("Intermediate Nuclear Forces" or theatre nuclear forces of medium to longer range between 500 and 5000 km), since France refused to subject its forces to arms control agreements and all NATO allies refused to negotiate on their non-strategic nuclear arms in Europe within the framework of bilateral US-USSR negotiations on "strategic" nuclear arms with ranges above 5000 km on land or in nuclear-powered submarines. Before 1989 in the CFE negotiation with the WP countries, NATO allies also refused to subject their air forces and combat aircraft to arms control, arguing reasonably, that the high mobility and long range of aircraft with air-refuelling made it all but impossible to count and control their whereabouts at any given time in such a narrow geographical area as Central Europe. Only after the USSR had finally agreed to the CFE negotiation for all of Europe including European Russia to the Urals, could the negotiation on arms control include aircraft. With attack aircraft and missiles, nuclear arms come into play. NATO refused to negotiate on nuclear arms in CFE. This was the essential condition for the US, Britain and France to take part in the negotiation, while the USSR tried to influence the "non-nuclear" NATO allies for including "nuclear-capable" weapons systems of conventional forces, knowing that most of the West European countries wanted the nuclear arms out of their boundaries, above all the FRG.

On the other hand, nuclear arms were operational "equalisers" to offset disparities in conventional force balances to Eastern advantage thanks to the numerical superiority of the Soviet and WP conventional forces. As long as parity had not been achieved, nuclear arms on NATO's side remained indispensable. This was not a numbers game: The use of even one nuclear weapon would change the entire equation and the situation in Europe. The NATO allies were faced with a dilemma over nuclear arms with conventional forces on both sides from the early 1960s to the end of the 1980s. The refusal of the Soviet government to even discuss Soviet force levels and capabilities, to even envisage the inclusion of Soviet territory in any arms control treaty area until late in the 1980s, made any serious negotiation on arms control for Europe extremely difficult and unrewarding. This was shown in MBFR over more than 14 years and even at the beginning in the new CFE negotiation in the first half of 1989, although Gorbachev had

indirectly admitted the superior numbers of Soviet conventional arms and forces in Europe and announced a first unilateral reduction of these forces in his December 1988 speech to the General Assembly of the UN at New York.

The issue of superiority by quantitative measures, the often derided "numbers game", was not the main concern of allied governments and NATO authorities in the arms control negotiations with the USSR and its WP allies, as has been pointed out above. At the core of substantial arms control as well as of operational strategy and force planning are not numbers as such but options, and force structures and force postures which offer these options for the offensive and the defensive on a given territory and its topography.

This consideration was underlying all Western arms reduction proposals between 1973 and 1990. NATO always sought to reduce Soviet/WP offensive options in Europe, beginning with Central Europe, by "balanced" force reductions. Its early error was the ambiguous term "balanced", which was disingenuously understood by the WP to mean "symmetrical" or "equal" reductions on both sides, which would leave the disparities or imbalances of the pre-existing force levels intact at the lower levels of residual forces after the reductions. NATO, of course, meant a "balanced" East-West force level as result of an agreement on "balanced force reductions". This is why the numbers played a central role as they did in SALT and START and later in INF and finally in CFE. The counting does not necessarily mean counting the last few hundred battle tanks. Orders of magnitude are fair enough, but even "magnitude" has to be quantified and verified, if only approximately with a margin of error between five and ten per cent. When the last Soviet defence minister, Air Chief Marshal Shapochnikov, replied in 1991 to his British counterpart's question about the number of Soviet nuclear warheads and their safety with the offhand remark that he thought that they had "about" 30,000 left, "give or take five per cent", he did not reassure his host. Five to ten per cent of 30,000 is an unknown of 1500 to 3000 nuclear warheads or explosives on the equation of security versus proliferation.

This unknown about Soviet forces was the core concern for arms control and still is within the reduced limits of Russia. For the NATO members towards the end of the confrontation, when change had become obvious in the East, especially after 1985 with Gorbachev at the oscillating helm of Soviet governance, it was clear that the challenge was to "manage the decline and fall of the Soviet empire", as the task had been named in a US-German High Defence Officials consultation in March 1986 prior to the NATO Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) ministerial session at Würzburg. This was about the same time, when FRG foreign minister Genscher demanded in his famous speech at the Davos World Economic Forum "to take Gorbachev by

his word" and said that the evolution of Soviet policy towards co-operation instead of confrontation was "irreversible".

Both assumptions were proven right only a few years later. But the essential question was about the reality of "the declining threat". This was a vital question for Germany as a whole: Even if it were true that Soviet military power, superior in forces by all quantitative standards over NATO in Europe, would not be used in an international or East European crisis any more, as it had been since 1979 in Afghanistan and indirectly used as a threat for political pressure on Poland as late as 1980-82, it had yet to be ascertained that the Soviet Union was ready for co-operative arms control and common security, that it would abide by agreements and implement treaty obligations loyally instead of only seemingly as in the case of the ABM treaty, limiting anti-ballistic missile defences, or in the case of SALT itself, in many an aspect by unilateral arbitrary interpretation of agreed technical details for the limitations on missile and silo modernisation, to prevent the deployment of larger intercontinental ballistic missile launchers with increased thrust and throw-weight for multiple warheads in older underground silos for the start of SALT-limited ICBM. The same case could be made for false data given by the Soviet government at the highest level until 1986 on Soviet INF missiles, their number or the number of the warheads per missile, the famous "SS-20" case since 1976.

Where was the reality of "the declining threat"? It was in the politics of the East West relations, characterised by the gradual relaxation of tensions and the gradual internal change in Eastern Europe against the stalwarts of the communist dictatorships, the policies of limited co-operation, the slow transition from antagonistic via competitive to co-operative arms control with finally asymmetrical reductions of arms for balanced results at reduced force levels in 1990, which created relative stability both of arms control and of European security. Germany was the main and central theatre of this process and its international status remained as the main challenge until its reunification just before the signature of the Vienna agreements. In this sense, too, the evolution of the linked problems of European security, arms reductions in Europe, effective arms control on residual forces for crisis stability, the organisation of the CSCE process into a stable international forum for co-operation on security, the necessary political change in Eastern Europe and the solution of the "German problem" had come full circle after 40 years. "Europe whole and free" had come about in Central Europe from Hungary and Poland to Germany and Czechoslovakia, but was only consolidated when the "German question" was finally answered and put to rest.

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