

Conspiracy, Bargaining, Transformation:

Lawrence T. Caldwell

This fall and winter promise to be among the most significant periods in the history of European diplomacy. The divided halves of Europe have locked horns in two sets of negotiations—mutual force reductions (MFR) and the conference on security and cooperation in Europe (CSCE). They may transform European and world politics in fundamental ways.

The parallel discussions in Vienna and Geneva are in several ways the best window on the evolving character of the international environment. If a new, multipolar age is dawning in world politics, it will certainly find its origin more in the complicated diplomacy of European politics during the last three years than in the long overdue and more spectacular visit by Richard Nixon to Peking two years ago. If world politics are to move beyond bipolarity in the short term, the change will be seen first in Europe, where the habit of international power struggle survives and where the energies of the United States and of the Soviet Union are most concentrated in their ambiguous relationship of adversaries and partners. Not even the recent emergence of oil-producing states and rediscovered emphasis on the economic bases of power can detract from the fundamental importance of security relations in Europe. We are, in short, in the midst of a potentially unique historical moment of concrete transition from one system of international relations to another.

Of course the transition must be precarious and gradual. The negotiations themselves are likely to drag on for several years, even if we see a preliminary agreement within the next few months. The stakes are high—the transformation of the European security arrangements which have prevailed since the end of World War II. The direction of change

is clear—reducing American and Soviet involvement in European affairs.

The seriousness of all this was symbolized by the foreign policy cooperation achieved by Common Market countries in the opening stages of both sets of negotiations. An event little observed in the United States was the unanimity with which EEC countries lined up behind the proposals advanced on their behalf by Denmark, Belgium, and Italy in the opening of the second round of the CSCE in Helsinki on January 15, 1973. This cooperation appeared to signal the arrival of another power on the world political scene.

The possibility of West Europe's acting as a major influence in international affairs has already caused considerable anxiety in Moscow. Although the prospects for European political cooperation now seem diminished (by Britain's ambivalence over the terms of its membership in the EEC, and by competition over petroleum), Soviet concern persists. Much can be learned about Soviet and Warsaw Pact policy by examining the diplomatic record surrounding the evolution of MFR and CSCE.

Perhaps more important, the interaction of these two sets of negotiations illuminates the way in which assumptions, perceptions, and politics derived from one international system tend to shape the birth of a new system. The story constitutes, in a way, a slip-fault of our age. Its importance is increased by the presence of major actors fully conscious they are shaping the future of world politics: Secretary of State Kissinger and former President Nixon on the one hand, and the Brezhnev leadership in the Soviet Union on the other.

Before 1971 the Soviet Union had pushed the CSCE idea but largely ignored NATO's call for MBFR. ("MBFR" stood for "mutual and balanced force reductions," which was the original NATO designation of the talks. The Warsaw Treaty Organization [WTO] resisted the use of "balanced" because the term seemed to connote the NATO position that imbalances existed in Europe. President Nixon

LAWRENCE T. CALDWELL is Visiting Professor at the National War College, on leave from Occidental College in Los Angeles where he is director of Soviet Studies. He has written numerous monographs and articles on Soviet foreign and defense policies.

Three Views of Soviet Intentions in Europe

and General Secretary Brezhnev used the mutual force reduction (MFR) formula in their 1973 summit, and the concept of "balanced force reductions" has lost some of its political significance since.) NATO, on the other hand, had pushed MFR and had been cool to the Warsaw Pact's proposals for an all-European conference. These skewed positions permitted each side to interpret the other as dissimulating. NATO accused the WTO of desiring to avoid substantive discussions and of concentrating on diplomatic atmospherics. The Warsaw Pact perceived NATO as mounting a campaign aimed at avoiding coming to grips with the security conference and at deflating pressure for unilateral U.S. troop withdrawals.

During 1971 these skewed lines slowly began to draw together. NATO made slightly warmer references to the concept of a security conference in its Rome (May) and Brussels (December) Council meetings in 1970. But it had also made even preliminary contacts on CSCE dependent on prior progress in other East/West negotiations, principally on Berlin. Thus NATO had *tied* its participation in any security conference to other political issues. The first phase of *skewed policies* merged into a second phase of *tied issues*. Even this degree of movement toward the WTO position reflected an awareness that icy disregard for the CSCE idea hardly fitted the mood of growing détente.

Similarly, in early 1971 the Soviet Union apparently decided that the emerging atmosphere of détente required some accommodation of NATO's position on MFR. In his speech to the 24th Party Congress on March 30 Brezhnev suggested a willingness to negotiate over reductions in arms costs and raised again the 1966 and 1969 proposals for "simultaneous annulment" of the Warsaw Pact and NATO. He was no doubt disappointed in the Western reaction, since he reiterated Soviet interest in arms reduction in a speech in Tbilisi on May 14 and chided "some NATO countries" for displaying "nervousness on the question." He asked rhetorically: "Do not such curi-

ous people [those in NATO who depreciated his earlier expressed interest in arms reductions] resemble a person who tried to judge the taste of a wine by its appearance alone, without touching it?"

From then until mid-June the General Secretary engaged in very active and direct diplomacy on these questions. On May 26 he picked up a theme that had been advanced by Premier Kosygin the preceding January, criticizing NATO for tying its willingness to engage in preliminary talks about CSCE to other problems. On June 11, addressing the Bauman Election District, Brezhnev again stressed the seriousness with which the Soviet leadership had taken the "proposals" of the 24th Congress. He appeared to move toward accommodating NATO on MFR by saying that the Soviet Union was prepared to discuss reductions in national and foreign troops in Europe. At the same time, Moscow reiterated that troop reduction talks must take place within the context of a general meeting on European security.

During the summer of 1971, then, Moscow had shifted its position in two important respects. First, it indicated a willingness to engage in serious force reduction talks, albeit in the context of CSCE. More important, Moscow began to exert active pressure on the German Democratic Republic to settle its disputes with West Germany over Berlin. These shifts in the Soviet position contributed to the Four Power agreement on Berlin in August and September. But the combination of Western and Soviet diplomacy left a logjam of tied issues: NATO would not move on CSCE until after the Berlin/German treaties had been advanced satisfactorily, while the Soviet Union would not talk specifically about MFR except in connection with CSCE. This effectively meant that no progress could occur on MFR until after a settlement of Berlin. Thus a prolonged period in which NATO and WTO positions on the relationship between CSCE and MFR were skewed was followed by a period (most of 1971 and well into 1972) in which the tying of disparate issues linked the two sets of prospective negotiations.

When it became apparent in December, 1971, that the "two Germanics" impasse would be broken, NATO made its first serious attempt to define an agenda for the CSCE. The agenda should include security questions as well as economic, scientific, and technical ones. In addition, NATO wanted two other items—environmental cooperation and discussion of "freer movement of peoples." At the end of January, 1972, the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee met in Prague to adopt a far more detailed agenda proposal. This included reference to standard atmospheric points such as the inviolability of borders, nonuse of force, affirmation of peaceful coexistence, and expansion of economic relations. But the WTO also returned to the idea of overcoming the division of Europe into military groupings, suggesting a permanent agency to work on security problems.

These several efforts resulted in decoupling the tied issues during Kissinger's visit to Moscow in September, 1972, and in an exchange between Secretary of State Rogers and Ambassador Dobrynin on November 6. At last it seemed that the issues had been separated—CSCE detached from MFR and MFR from Berlin. That opened the third stage of negotiations—the stage of definition. The end of 1971 and the beginning of 1972 ended one reasonably well-defined stage of Soviet foreign policy, bilateralism, and marked the uncertain transition to another.

Moscow's record on both CSCE and MFR leaves the impression of an evolving policy. The Prague Political-Consultative Committee meeting seemed to take CSCE off the back burner. At the same time, Brezhnev altered the substance of Soviet policy toward the EEC in his Trade Union speech in March, 1972, and soon after the first serious discussion of MFR began to appear in the Soviet press. This changing policy evidenced some indecision and perhaps changing priorities.

In this third phase of the CSCE/MFR maneuvering the first substantive issue to receive high-level attention in the Soviet Union was NATO's proposal to discuss "freer movement" in CSCE. Two speeches by Brezhnev and Party ideologist Mikhail Suslov in June stressed the need for ideological vigilance, especially when foreign policy seemed most successful in achieving the goals of peaceful coexistence. (Brezhnev's was made at a reception for Prime Minister Fidel Castro, and could easily have been intended to assure those members of the Communist bloc who were obviously very nervous following the Nixon/Brezhnev Moscow Summit.) This was, of course, a common theme in Soviet foreign policy, one that had been stressed in the general Soviet campaign for tighter integration of the bloc and one which supported the regime's harsh attitude toward dissenting intellectuals. The first direct response to the "freer movement" idea was to come later in the Soviet press. Articles in the summer and early fall

stressed the theme that a sharpening of ideological struggle was the natural companion to détente. They warned explicitly against relaxing vigilance lest imperialist ideologues use détente to penetrate socialism with ideas of proven bankruptcy, such as that of "convergence."

By December, 1972, after the first preparatory meeting of CSCE in Helsinki, the Soviet position on "freer movement" began to firm. In his USSR Anniversary speech Brezhnev said the Soviet Union favored exchanges of ideas, but such exchanges could not interfere with the sovereignty of states. The Soviet leadership was apparently suspicious of ideas that seemed to them to raise old bogies based on "cold war" assumptions about the "free world," and designed to force on the Soviet Union traditions of "free press" and dissent which communism had never acknowledged.

Early in 1973 two procedural compromises appeared which, taken together, prepared the way for convoking the Foreign Ministers' round of the CSCE in Helsinki on July 3, 1973. First were the packaging compromises. When the second round of the preparatory meetings convened in Helsinki on January 15, 1973, the whole idea of CSCE seemed to hang in the balance for a time. NATO and the Common Market supported a series of three agenda items advanced on January 15 by Denmark, Belgium, and Italy. The Warsaw Pact hesitated, then came in with its own agenda package a week later. The two packages were not far apart. Then the French brought in a formula on the opening day of the third round of the talks. The French called for organizing agenda items into four "baskets": (1) principles for security; (2) economic and environmental issues; (3) human and cultural contacts; and (4) establishment of a consultative committee to deal with these questions on a permanent basis. This basket notion has persisted right down to the release of the formal agenda on the eve of the Foreign Ministers' conference.

The packaging of issues required compromise from each side. Under the basket of "security" NATO got less than it wanted in terms of "confidence building"; the WTO accepted a basket which made it possible to discuss expanding the flow of people and information. The second compromise related specifically to the issue of "freer flow." In round four of the preparatory talks, which began on April 25, 1973, the Soviet Union dropped its previous insistence that any agenda document must include the disclaimer that expanded flow of ideas take place with "due respect for the sovereignty, laws and customs of each country." These compromises opened the way for a three-stage conference. The first was the eight-day Foreign Ministers' conference which opened on July 3, 1973, in Helsinki at which the foreign ministers of thirty-five participating nations made formal statements of their countries' positions. That stage was followed in the fall by meetings of select committees organized

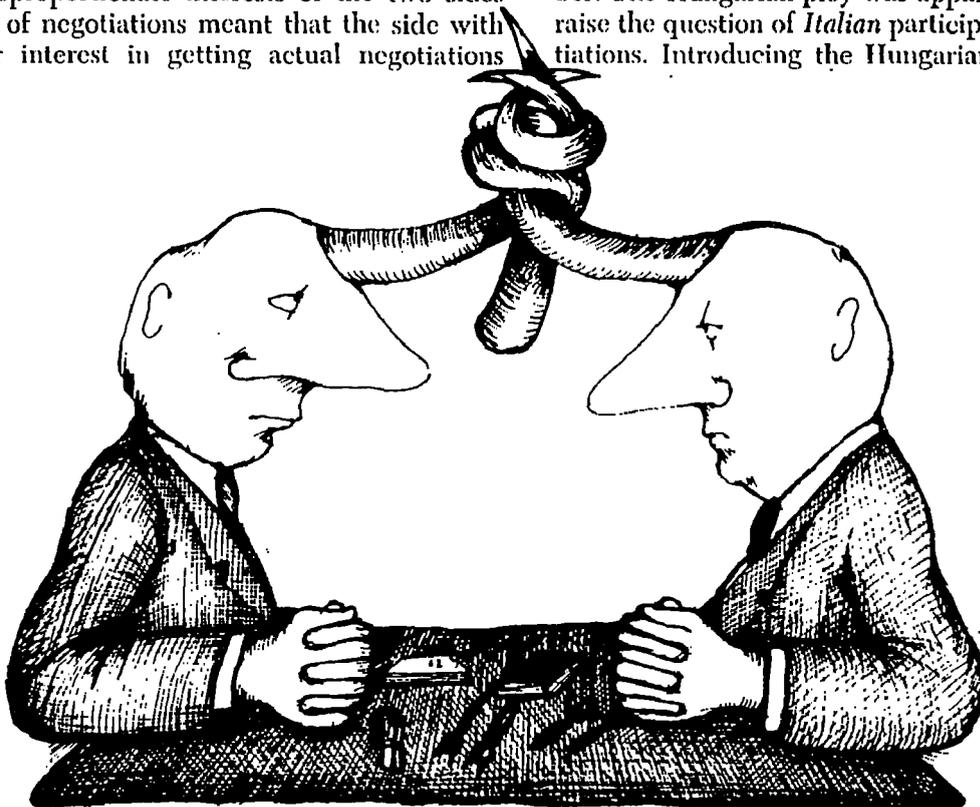
along the subjects of the four baskets. These opened on September 18, 1973, and have continued to the present. The third and final phase will be a large European summit, probably with heads of state.

As all this was going on there were also negotiations over MFR. They too generated considerable compromise, although detractors of both U.S. and Soviet policy argue that the compromise here has been largely on the U.S. side. Even if that argument is true, I believe the compromises to date are largely of a procedural nature. But even if the U.S. has given in on more points, the fact is that our compromises on MFR have their parallels in WTO compromises on CSCE. This point has been largely overlooked in the American press. It appears that the disproportionate interests of the two sides in each set of negotiations meant that the side with the greater interest in getting actual negotiations

be limited in membership and precise in agenda.

There followed a bit of deft diplomacy, in which NATO first rejected the Warsaw Pact demand for a widened membership, then Moscow relented, reserving the right to raise the question of membership again. The talks opened as scheduled on January 31 with the last-minute appearance of Soviet negotiator Oleg N. Khlestov, but immediately bogged down again on the membership question. This time Rumania took the initiative, demanding full participation in the conference. NATO insisted that "flank" powers have only observer status.

Procedural skirmishes continued until February 6, when the Soviets introduced still another and far more substantive issue: They proposed restricting Hungary's participation to that of a nonvoting member. The Hungarian ploy was apparently designed to raise the question of *Italian* participation in the negotiations. Introducing the Hungarian/Italian connec-



Janice Stapleton

started would make procedural concessions to persuade the side with lesser interest to go along.

The effort to define MFR has followed an even more tortuous path than that of CSCE. The separate-but-parallel formula which emerged from the Kissinger visit to Moscow in September and from the Rogers-Dobrynin exchange in November of 1972 led to an immediate invitation for the Warsaw Pact to begin MFR negotiations on January 31, 1973. Although the formal Warsaw Pact response did not come until January 18, Brezhnev made at least three favorable references to the idea between November 15 and then. When the Warsaw Pact did respond formally, it suggested that "all interested European nations" be included in the talks. That proposal ran directly counter to the U.S. position that MFR should

tion greatly altered the strategic implications of the talks; it was an attempt to bring the Mediterranean into the negotiations. If that was permitted it would complicate already very complex questions, perhaps beyond any hope of solution. Not until mid-April was any progress reported in breaking the deadlock, at which time the matter was apparently discussed in a meeting of the National Security Council in Washington. The actual breaking of the impasse was not announced until May 10, and the talks began formally four days later, after a lapse of more than three months.

It was widely rumored in NATO that the acceptance of less than full status for Hungary, on which compromise the impasse had been breached, had been won by Washington over stiff objections by its

allies. Things moved forward only after NATO very explicitly reiterated its position that progress in the CSCE would be contingent upon progress in MFR. Thus, in the summer of 1973, after nearly a year of very delicate diplomacy, the two sets of negotiations continued to be linked. The strain inside NATO was intensified by rumors in early June that the USA and USSR had reached substantial agreement on a first-step symbolic reduction of some 26,000 men in Germany from the U.S. Seventh Army and from the Soviet Central Army Group. Also in June the Pentagon revealed a new study which challenged a number of conventional assumptions within NATO. The Pentagon study suggested that NATO's conventional defense posture is more satisfactory than has usually been held in NATO. The definitional phase for MFR ended on June 28, 1973. Little more than the list of participants had been settled.

The second stage of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe opened September 18, 1973, in Geneva. The three phases of preparation now ended, actual negotiations began. The work was divided into three committees and twelve subcommittees. The meat of the conference was assigned to the first and third committees, those dealing with security and "freer flow" of ideas and people, respectively. Committee two has concentrated on cooperation in trade, science, and economics, where the issues are more easily defined and mutual interests more easily perceived. East and West, however, have clashed repeatedly on the issues of broadening human contact. The idea was first advanced by NATO, and has consistently aroused the suspicions of the Warsaw Pact countries. The disagreement in the first committee has been narrower, but still significant. There the primary interest is the desire of East Europeans and the Soviet Union to multilateralize the *de jure* recognition of the boundaries of a divided Europe. This has long been a Soviet foreign policy goal and is now achieved, in part, by the bilateral treaties with West Germany and by the Berlin agreement.

These are not the only issues. The British in particular have pressed for "confidence building measures," such as advanced notice of military maneuvers and troop movements. The three committees, of course, reflect the French compromise proposal in the preparatory talks for four "baskets." The fourth "basket" called for an institutional means of ongoing consultations, and this idea has persisted with support from both sides. In fact it has been one of the chief agenda items of the talks.

The central issues, however, were "freer movement" and the language on border guarantees. At the Easter recess this year the conference seemed to be stalled on both issues. The issue of freer movement took on greater intensity for the Soviet leadership in February with the exile of Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

Many Western voices suggested that the Solzhenitsyn affair underscored the need for real concessions on the status of intellectual dissenters within the Soviet Union. At the same time, the whole policy of détente had come under sharper attack in the U.S. Congress. Brezhnev held a news conference with French newsmen just before his meeting at Pitsunda with President Georges Pompidou of France, at which he complained that "unessential" issues had impeded the resolution of "the main questions" in the Security Conference. A few days later in Alma Ata the General Secretary spoke of "stubborn resistance from the most reactionary and aggressive circles of imperialism."

This sober mood carried through the Kissinger visit of March 24-28, which failed to achieve a "conceptual breakthrough" in the SALT talks. Then on April 2 *Pravda* printed an article which seemed to confirm the noncompromising nature of the Soviet position on "freer movement"; it attributed the whole idea of free exchange of information and ideas to "reactionary circles" and argued that the notions of "intellectual freedom" and "coexistence of ideologies" were simply subtle means of subversive activity. Thus, despite some indications of compromise on the border question, the mood of the CSCE at the Easter recess was one of apprehension.

Before the CSCE reconvened on April 23 there were many reports that progress had been made and that a gala summit might be held in July which would bring together the heads of the thirty-five nations to sign the document. The Soviets had evidently softened their stand on Committee one, accepting the Western contention that borders could be changed by peaceful means. But there was no change on the "freer movement" issue. On the contrary, the communiqué of the Warsaw Pact Political-Consultative Committee (Party heads) meeting in Warsaw on April 17-18 made it very clear that the "freer movement" issue was still regarded as an "artificial obstacle." Brezhnev took a very hard line on ideological subversion in his speech to the Komsomol Congress on April 23, and *Pravda* reiterated the old positions in an article of the same day. Thus the Soviet position firmed during March and April—some compromise in Committee one, but none in Committee three. It has become increasingly clear that an early resolution of differences over "freer movement" is impossible without Western concessions. The more positive position taken by Chancellor Schmidt during his September meeting with Foreign Minister Gromyko reflected German recognition that the Soviets had compromised on the border issue. Whether the Soviets can turn that recognition into diplomatic capital on the "freer movement" issue remains to be seen.

The discussions of "Mutual Reduction of Forces and Armaments and Associated

Measures in Central Europe" got under way in Vienna on October 30, 1973. Within the first several weeks the positions of the two sides became quite clear. In fact there was some surprise at the specificity of the Warsaw Pact proposals in November, and the Nixon Administration had to hammer out its strategy over the Christmas break in the talks. The issue in Washington was whether to go for a "quick fix" (a small, symbolic reduction in U.S. and Soviet troops as a demonstration of good faith) or to seek an "ever present balance" (a "correction" in the supposed Warsaw Pact military advantages in Europe) or to draw out discussions as a form of strategic dialogue. The last was known as the "protracted parley" option. Although both the Soviet Union and the United States have flirted with the "quick fix" idea, at least as a first step, the negotiations have continued since November of last year to work for a more substantial agreement.

The NATO proposal for reduction was spelled out in a secret memorandum in September, 1973. It called for two phases of reduction in ground forces. Phase one would provide for the withdrawal of 68,000 Russian troops and their equipment from designated armor units and for 29,000 Americans from unspecified units. Phase two would bring the troop levels for both the Warsaw Pact and NATO down to 700,000. The Soviet plan, on the other hand, envisions three phases. Phase one provides for a 20,000 reduction in the forces of the Pact and of NATO. Phase two reduces forces by 5 per cent in 1976, and Phase three reduces forces by a further 10 per cent in 1977. All three phases of the Warsaw Pact proposal include all forces except navies. The NATO plan includes only ground forces.

Different ideas about what forces should be included reflect different strategic and tactical problems faced by the two alliances. The Warsaw Pact no doubt worries about the 7,000 tactical nuclear weapons the U.S. has stationed in Europe and about the F-111 and A-1 nuclear-capable aircraft attached to U.S. forces stationed there. NATO's major concern is the perceived conventional advantage of the Warsaw Pact, especially the supposed Pact advantage in tanks (15,500 for the Pact vs. 6,000 for NATO).

The talks have deadlocked on three issues. First, the Warsaw Pact argues that even the symbolic first-stage reductions must come from all allies, while NATO maintains that the first stage must include only U.S. and Soviet forces. Second, contention persists on the issue of which forces would be included. NATO spokesmen say that including tactical nuclear and air forces would make reductions too complex to negotiate. How, they ask, can one determine equivalencies between tanks and planes, between divisions and tactical nuclear weapons? Warsaw Pact negotiators argue that to exclude these forces would amount to an unfair advantage for NATO, and would run counter to the principle of "undiminished secur-

ity" for all parties established by Brezhnev and Nixon in June, 1973. Finally, the Warsaw Pact opposes identical ceilings on troop levels, arguing that such ceilings would give NATO an advantage. NATO, on the other hand, contends that the Pact now has an advantage it is trying to preserve.

Public sources suggest that no real progress has been made in adjusting these differences. In fact, the real drama in the MFR question has come from the domestic debate in the United States. Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger has proposed a "draw down" of U.S. tactical nuclear forces in Europe. Senator Sam Nunn of the Armed Services Committee has begun to advance ideas argued in the strategic community by Steve Canby; namely, the U.S. forces are inappropriate for the likely military need in Europe. They are designed for a long war, and can be scaled down if one assumes the more probable short war scenario. Thus U.S. forces can be reduced by scaling down support and logistic troops, and their combat effectiveness can actually be increased by changing the "tooth to nail" ratio. The U.S. Congress has also gone through its annual ritual of defeating attempts by Senator Mansfield to force unilateral reductions in U.S. troops, although this year the Administration was worried enough that it had Kissinger make a personal appeal to Congress.

A number of interpretations are suggested by this diplomatic record. They all hinge on the relationship between MFR and CSCF. Any interpretation must incorporate certain apparent "facts" about Soviet policy. First, although the Soviet Union has no doubt used the idea of the security conference to support quite different policies, it has consistently pressed for convocation of the conference. No doubt security conference proposals in 1966 (Bucharest) and 1967 (Karlovy Vary) both reflected Soviet concerns about the nuclear arming of West Germany, but they differed in their assessments of the kind of leverage any Warsaw Pact initiatives might have on events in NATO. The 1966 Bucharest proposal seemed to reflect a far higher expectation that the issues separating NATO and the WTO might be negotiable. In 1969 the Soviet Union was primarily interested in legitimizing the Czech intervention, or at least in diverting European attention from the Czechoslovak question. But the whole thrust of Soviet policy altered in late 1969 and again in early 1972. By 1972 the CSCF had as its objectives promoting access to West European markets for science and technology and containing the effects of EEC enlargement. Soviet persistence in favoring the conference idea throughout these quite different situations demonstrates a readiness to use what is at hand to fit changing requirements.

The second persistent "fact" of Soviet policy weaving its way through the record is Soviet insistence that arms reduction talks be called mutual force re-

ductions (MFR) and not mutual and balanced force reductions, as I've noted earlier. The Soviet Union has been reluctant to concede NATO's interpretation that force postures in Europe are asymmetrical. The term "balanced" seems to Moscow to suggest the NATO argument that geographical factors will require disproportionate reductions to offset the WTO's advantages—in interior lines, in unitary logistical systems, and in closer proximity of reserves to theatre.

Third, the Warsaw Pact has viewed with suspicion NATO's reluctance to join the security conference. The Pact has been slower to take force reductions seriously because it sees force reductions as a diversionary tactic to avoid the security conference—or to deflect domestic U.S. pressures for unilateral reductions. That suspicion has been reinforced by Moscow's uneasiness over the whole idea of "freer movement."

Fourth "fact": Since early 1972 the Soviet Union has been more accommodating about entering discussions of force reductions. This accommodation has related primarily to the procedural questions, but it has also been reflected in numerous statements of partial and cautious support for the idea.

Given persistent Soviet commitment to the idea of a European conference on security and cooperation, their hesitation about the use of the term "balanced," and their suspicion of NATO's dilatory attitude toward the conference and relative eagerness for MFR, the record described above still lends itself to several interpretations. Roughly, these interpretations fall into three categories: "conspiracy," "bargaining," and "transformation."

The "conspiracy hypothesis" perceives a high Soviet interest in CSCE and low incentive for MFR. It is suggested that the Soviet leadership seeks a multilateral legitimation of the status quo in Europe as it was bilaterally negotiated with the West German Government from the fall of 1969 to the winter of 1971-72. According to the conspiracy hypothesis the Warsaw Pact's slowness in responding to MFR proposals simply confirms the suspicion that the Soviet Union has no real interest in reducing its military advantages in Central Europe. The January, 1973, attempt to broaden participation and the February-April effort to reduce Hungarian participation in the Vienna talks both suggest a design of delay on the part of Moscow. Moscow, it is alleged, hopes to delay progress on MFR past the point where NATO becomes so committed to particular conclusions in CSCE that the linkage between the two, on which NATO has insisted, will be diluted beyond any real meaning. This hypothesis interprets the Warsaw Pact insistence on equal percentage cuts in forces for 1975 and 1976 as an attempt to preserve advantage. The failure of the Soviets to compromise on "freer movement" since April 1 of this year and the pressure

Soviet diplomats have exerted for an "early conclusion" to CSCE are viewed as efforts to break NATO's CSCE/MFR linkage and to achieve the Soviet's original objective—legitimation of the status quo in East Europe without paying any price in relaxed controls on East-West dialogue.

Many statements by NATO leaders attest to the influence of the conspiracy hypothesis on official thinking. The hypothesis rests on dual assessments of military realities in Europe: (1) a sense in NATO that its force posture is quite vulnerable and that NATO will have to employ nuclear weapons quite early in most European conflict scenarios; and (2) an understanding of WTO posture which perceives a conscious choice by the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact of tactical superiority and disposition of those forces in a way to achieve theatre dominance in a very few days. The second of these assessments no doubt owes something to cold war perceptions of Soviet intentions, but calculations of sheer division strength, together with comparisons of armor and fighter aircraft in Central Europe alone, do suggest WTO preponderance.

Accepting those calculations as meaningful, it is not difficult to attribute conscious design of superiority, or even aggressive intent, to the political leaderships which created those forces. That inference of intention, then, reinforces the sense of vulnerability in NATO and argues for increased NATO capabilities in Central Europe. Why should the Soviets be very interested in MFR, which, if localized to Central Europe, has the calculated intention of reducing Soviet superiority? This line of reasoning supports the interpretation that the Soviets procrastinate in responding to NATO proposals for MFR negotiations because they have a low incentive to negotiate. It follows then that WTO actions since the agreement to begin MFR negotiations in the fall of 1972 are consciously designed to obstruct substantive talks in Vienna. Both the January 18, 1973, attempt to broaden participation and the reluctant agreement six days later to go to Vienna are among the actions that fit into the conspiracy hypothesis.

The second, or "bargaining hypothesis" starts from the assumption that, given the diplomatic record, the Warsaw Pact has primary interest in the CSCE and that NATO has primary interest in MFR. Although the hypothesis can be made to fit any number of reasons for these skewed interests, it does not depend on resolving questions of motivations. It assumes a you-scratch-my-back-and-I'll-scratch-yours approach to negotiating. The Soviet Union and its WTO allies can be induced to go along with MFR if NATO plays its cards cautiously with respect to CSCE.

The bargaining hypothesis may share with the conspiracy hypothesis a pessimistic evaluation of the military relationship between the Warsaw Pact

and NATO. It also shares the judgment that Soviet incentives to negotiate are low, and it may even share the judgment that Soviet actions with respect to MFR have been dilatory. At the same time, it posits that NATO has real leverage on the Warsaw Pact by which it might bring the Pact to some kind of agreement on reducing forces in Europe. This leverage is seen in two ways. First, it is thought that the Pact wants the CSCE badly enough that it can be induced to bargain over MFR by NATO's refusal to go forward in Geneva without progress in Vienna. Second, a higher evaluation of NATO capabilities in Europe (provided by a slightly different definition of relevant forces, such as weighing more heavily French forces or the Southern theatre) supports the judgment that the Soviets, too, might have a security interest in adjusting the balance. However one sees NATO's leverage on the European security negotiations, the problem is one of designing mutually acceptable trade-offs. In this hypothesis Soviet actions are bargaining maneuvers rather than a conspiracy to avoid discussions altogether.

The third, or "transformation hypothesis" combines all these elements in a slightly different manner. It is by far the most tentative interpretation, but in some ways also the most satisfactory.

The transformation hypothesis rests on the understanding that the winter of 1971-72 constituted an important firebreak in Soviet policy. Because Moscow had opted for bilateral means to achieve its basic security objectives in Europe between the fall of 1969 and late 1971, and because it had only begun to define where a policy would head after the consolidation of the "Ostpolitik" period, Soviet foreign policy responses in late 1971 and early 1972 acquired a tentative, probing, and experimental character.

CSCE constituted a natural starting point. It had the advantage of appearing to represent a continuum with the past. But the upgrading of scientific and technical exchanges on the CSCE agenda proposed in January, 1972, suggested that the Soviet conception of the purpose of the conference had altered. The alteration fitted conveniently with the redirection of Soviet internal policy which had appeared at the 24th Party Congress.

The evolving nature of Soviet policy toward the EEC during 1972 supports the impression that Moscow's European policy was in a process of defining itself. During these same months of evolving Soviet policy, the first real responses to MFR were made. The notion that the whole of this policy was in flux argues against the conspiracy hypothesis. It holds open the possibility that Moscow upgraded its interest in MFR across the months when the idea still seemed linked to the CSCE in Soviet minds.

An evolving Soviet view of the connection between MFR and CSCE takes account of the fact that there

were no doubt differing views within the Soviet leadership about the questions posed by MFR. Quite possibly Moscow had its own versions of the conspiracy and bargaining hypotheses. Some elements would interpret the whole NATO drive for MFR as dissimulation to avoid the CSCE, while others thought NATO might be persuaded to agree to a European security conference by a variety of means. Such leverage might include traditional tactics of mobilizing popular pressure on the NATO governments, and offering some concessions in MFR in return for progress in the CSCE. Although we have no conclusive evidence, it seems likely that forces in the Soviet Union unsympathetic to détente favored the CSCE precisely because it was safe. Far from threatening the status quo, it promised a symbolic confirmation of it.

One can also postulate that some in the Soviet leadership may have experienced a growing interest in MFR. Three kinds of arguments in Soviet sources might combine to support such an interpretation. First, there was the general impetus of détente. Brezhnev himself became increasingly identified with the success of détente, and MFR, after all, represented an extension of the détente mood. Brezhnev's personal identification with nearly all of the favorable references to force reductions supports the impression that he found at least some reductions consistent with his general détente posture. Second, there was a reference to reducing the costs of arms in Brezhnev's address to the 24th Party Congress, and it was repeated in some of the literature following that speech. Arms reductions in Europe are an additional way to reduce defense costs. Finally, among the purposes of détente is acquiring access to trade as a source for science and technology. Some kind of MFR agreement may have seemed an inevitable price in exchange for Western compliance on trade.

Thus, according to the transformation hypothesis, the slowness of Warsaw Pact response to NATO's MFR proposals is not enough to dismiss substantial Soviet interest in force reductions in Europe. The favorable references to MFR which appeared first in 1971 corresponded with a real shift of gears in Soviet foreign policy. The WTO's move toward negotiations in 1972 corresponded with changing Soviet attitudes on CSCE and the Common Market. Timing is important. The record of what happened and when it happened permits the interpretation that Soviet and Warsaw Pact diplomacy may not reflect a low incentive to negotiate force reductions in Europe. Obviously, we do not have all the pertinent evidence. No one knows what has been going on in the heads of Soviet and Warsaw Pact leaders. We do have the records, however, and our own heads to interpret it. My belief is that the transformation hypothesis is at least as plausible an explanation of the negotiating record as either the conspiracy or bargaining hypotheses.