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# Changing Northern European Views on Security and Arms Control

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Johan Jørgen Holst

The northwestern region of Europe has traditionally been viewed as an isolated flank area relative to the central front. Limited war and *fait accompli* scenarios dominated security thinking during the 1960s and 70s. However, during the 1980s the north and the center came to be considered as an integral theater for military planning. Developments in military technology, renewed attention to the problems of trans-Atlantic reinforcements, changed maritime perspectives, and the new phase of conventional arms negotiations in Europe have stimulated more holistic approaches. Thus the defense of Norway must be viewed in a European context, and the strategic position of the country in an Atlantic, and increasingly, an Arctic perspective.

From the perspective of the central balance of nuclear deterrence, the northwestern region of Europe provides an important avenue of approach as well as an arena for forward defense and deployment. With regard to the global naval balance, the area encompasses primary routes of access to blue waters for the Soviet Union, while it contains a forward defense zone for the trans-Atlantic sea lines of communication for the Atlantic alliance. It is also an important zone of deployment for Soviet submarine-based missile systems. Hence, the security order in Northern Europe is linked inextricably with the variable geometry of the East-West military competition.

## The Nordic Security Pattern

The Nordic area does not provide a sufficient framework for regional security. It is woven into various dimensions of the East-West military competition. However, in spite of the strategic significance of parts of the region, it has remained on the whole an area of low tension. A central goal

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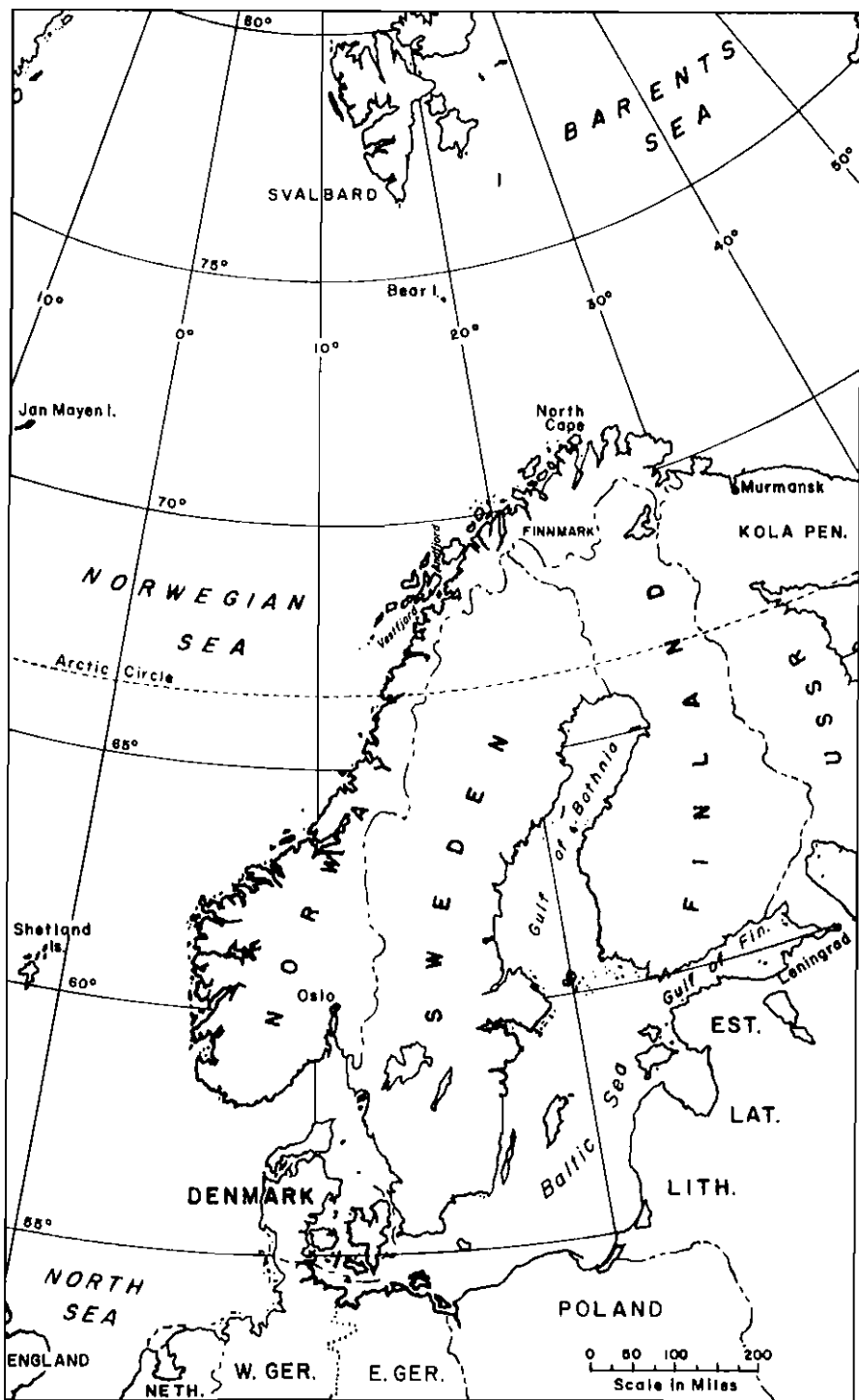
of Norwegian security policy is to maintain that state of low tension, not as an end in itself but as a means to an end: to prevent the outbreak of war; to safeguard our sovereignty, freedom, and right to determine how to develop our own society; and to prevent developments in a sensitive region from jeopardizing East-West stability.

Each of the Nordic countries has imposed limits on direct military engagement in the Nordic area by outside powers. The Nordic area does not contain irredentist pressures or aspirations, nor are minorities threatening the social and political framework of the Nordic countries. The area is politically stable. Cooperation is both extensive and intensive among the Nordic countries in all matters of policy, except those of high policy relating to security.

Instead of establishing a Nordic pact, the Nordic states, for a variety of historical, geopolitical and strategic reasons, have chosen different roads to security. However, in charting their courses they have taken into account the impact of their choices and dispositions on each other. Their circumstances and range of choice have been and remain different, but over time their chosen policies have crystallized into a coherent pattern of mutual consideration and restraint. Sometimes the term *Nordic Balance* has been used to depict this pattern. The term is in some sense misleading; no balance has been established among the Nordic states, since they are not poised against one another. The Nordic pattern of mutual consideration and restraint applies most particularly to military engagement in the Nordic area by outside powers. Restraint in respect to one set of outside powers may serve as an obstacle to others. There is, however, no symmetry with respect to external linkages. Norway, Denmark and Iceland are allied with the Western powers in a much more encompassing and committed manner than Finland is tied to the Soviet Union through its treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance. Sweden has chosen a policy of non-alignment in peacetime, aiming for armed neutrality in the event of war.

### Norway's Security Calculus

In many ways Norway has had a decisive impact on the pattern of restraint and mutual consideration in Northern Europe through a policy of prudence that welds deterrence and confidence-building into a composite security posture. In relation to the Soviet Union, Norway's policy of prudence reflects a trade-off between considerations of deterrence and reassurance. Deterrence inheres primarily in making credible the proposition that an attack on Norway will not be confined to a fight with Norway. Reassurance is made up of a series of unilateral confidence-building measures designed to communicate peaceful intentions and avoid challenging vital Soviet security interests during peacetime. They do not amount to concessions, but are rather measures for



the protection of Norwegian security interests, taking into account the net effects of the interdependence which exists in the realm of international security. The policy of not permitting the stationing of foreign troops in peacetime, the rejection of stockpiling and deployment of nuclear and chemical weapons, and the imposition of geographical, quantitative and qualitative constraints on peacetime allied military activities in Norway constitute the main elements of restraint.

This policy of prudence has been pursued by Norway since joining Nato as a founding member in 1949. It is recognizable and predictable, thus contributing to stability. The policy commands broad multipartisan support in Norway, and it has been accepted by her allies. It constitutes an important element in the equilibrium of the local order in Northern Europe, which in turn forms a component of the overall security order in Europe.

The policy of prudence encompasses self-imposed restraints rather than treaty commitments vis-à-vis other powers. Norwegian constitutional authorities will determine at any given time what measures are needed to preserve the security of the realm. The base policy, for example, is a conditional restraint which applies only as long as Norway is not attacked or threatened with attack.

Norway's policy on nuclear weapons does not imply that Norway is excluded from the joint defense strategy and operations plans of the alliance. The approved defense plans for Norway are based on conventional defense and reflect the special conditions obtaining on the northern flank. Direct contiguity with Soviet base areas for central war forces and global naval forces makes the danger of escalation pervasive and special. The geopolitical circumstances produce shared interests in reducing expectations of rapid escalation to nuclear war, particularly because the danger of inadvertent escalation is deemed to be considerable. Many of the nuclear weapons on the Kola peninsula constitute a direct threat against the United States; hence, Norway must expect real behavior in a crisis in the northern areas to be dominated very largely by prudence and restraint. Consequently, Norway seeks through her nuclear weapon policy to raise the nuclear threshold while emphasizing the Nato connection. The strategy of flexible response neither prescribes nor proscribes the use of nuclear weapons. The response has to be tailored to the challenge and circumstances at hand. A significant capacity for conventional defense raises the nuclear threshold and enhances the credibility of resolute resistance in the event of an attack on Norway. The burden of nuclear initiation should be transferred to the adversary.

In addition, Norway maintains the qualification that foreign naval vessels not carry nuclear weapons during visits to Norwegian ports. Similarly, our nuclear-weapons-state allies adhere to the qualification of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons on board their naval vessels (the main reason being one of security). They are therefore unwilling to issue

declarations concerning their weapon loads. In accordance with international law, naval vessels have immunity and cannot be subjected to mandatory inspection. Hence we have a situation which is characterized by a "double qualification," one maintained by the flag state and the other by the port state. It is a situation which is acceptable to both parties. Norway depends on allied assistance in the event of crisis or war. Such assistance must be practiced in peacetime to remain feasible and credible. Hence, Norway will not change her policy in directions which would prevent allied naval vessels from paying visits to Norwegian ports or conducting exercises in Norwegian waters.

Much of the internal discussion in Norway, as well as between Norway and outside powers, has focussed on ways of adjudicating competing considerations in relation to specific issues. A policy of prudence involves avoiding the extremes. Unmitigated pursuit of deterrence could result in provocation, while maximizing reassurance could lead to appeasement. Automatic solidarity could lead to an abdication of responsibility, and a single-minded emphasis on precaution could result in escapism.

### Norway's Strategic Situation

Norway's strategic position is determined by her geographical location in general, and by proximity to Soviet forces and military installations on the Kola peninsula in particular. The military situation in the northern areas is dominated by the strategic forces of the Soviet Union and the increased capacity of the Soviet navy for power projection and interposition. Military units which are operating or based in Norway's immediate proximity may be employed in areas very distant from Northern Europe. Conflicts arising in distant areas of the globe may thus affect Norwegian security directly. Norway can no longer enjoy security as a result of distance from the sources of international conflict or a peripheral position of but marginal significance, nor can she rely exclusively on the protective shield of friendly naval powers.

The main forces on the Kola peninsula are elements in the global competition between the Soviet Union on the one hand and the United States and her Western allies on the other. They are not directed at Norway specifically. However, they affect and complicate Norway's position. The global power game could create incentives and needs which would bring Norwegian security into the zone of danger. At the same time, the Soviet Union would hesitate in putting at risk vital strategic interests for the attainment of limited local gains. Thus, a certain amount of paradoxical protection for Norway is inherent in the proximity of vital Soviet central war forces and installations.

The defense of Norway and the central front are closely connected. If Nato were to lose its ability to counter an attack in Central Europe, it would be

extremely difficult for the alliance to extend credible military assurances to Norway. If Norway were to fall into enemy hands, it would be extremely difficult for Nato to prevent or contain escalation of a war on the central front. Norway's coastal position on the rim of the Atlantic Ocean contributes to this predicament. Norway and the central front depend on the trans-Atlantic sea lines of communication for resupply and reinforcement. These vital lifelines could be threatened by hostile aircraft operating from airfields in Norway, or protected by allied aircraft operating from those airfields.

Developments in military technology and strategy cause Norway's security calculus to be influenced directly and tangibly by the buildup and operational deployments of naval forces and submarine-based strategic nuclear forces by the superpowers. Submarine-based strategic missiles have determined to a large extent the predominant strategic interests of the United States and the Soviet Union in the northern areas. The increased range of these missiles now enables the Soviet Union to rely on rearward strategic submarine patrols in the north (and below the polar ice cap) and the United States to rely on rearward patrols south of the Norwegian Sea. These Soviet strategic submarines on rearward patrols are capable of threatening targets in the United States and Western Europe from positions in the north. At the same time, Soviet submarines equipped with missiles of lesser range have been redeployed from patrol areas off North America to patrol areas off Western Europe. The conversion of Soviet ballistic missile submarines to launch platforms for long-range cruise missiles compounds the strategic challenge for Europe. The Old World has not been removed from the danger of nuclear destruction by the conclusion of the INF Treaty, important though that treaty is for the security of the West.

### The Nuclear Predicament

A stabilization of the central balance of nuclear deterrence would tend to reduce the pressures of competition affecting the policies of the major powers in regard to developments in the North. The outlook which prevails in Northern Europe comprises a set of assumptions and assessments which may be summarized as follows:

- First of all, the principal powers have discovered the limited convertibility of nuclear forces into politically useful currency. Their function is confined very largely to mutual denial. Coercion through nuclear diplomacy has not provided credible options. Neither side can realistically expect to acquire meaningful superiority within the system of nuclear deterrence. The principal powers, therefore, share an interest in limiting, rather than expanding, the nuclear competition. They recognize that this very competition harbors the danger of inadvertent conflict, which could result in catastrophe for both sides. Hence, they share an interest in stabilizing the

competition to prevent concerns about the balance from pushing them to points of no return. It is the dangers of August 1914 rather than September 1939 which loom on the horizon.

- Second, the unique quality of nuclear weapons has penetrated the moral consciousness of humankind. They are different from other weapons, not only because of their capacity for instant and extensive destruction, but because of their largely unpredictable genetic and ecological consequences which could involve the destruction of the conditions of life as we know them for future generations. Hence, the consequences of nuclear war would not be confined to the distribution of power and influence among states, but would extend to the very essence of human life. Since nuclear weapons do not lend themselves to disinvention and since nuclear deterrence cannot be made foolproof, nations cannot escape from the imperative of minimizing the danger of nuclear war.

- Third, stability (in the sense of low expectations of first strikes) requires careful effort and cannot be taken for granted. Technological developments create changing requirements of deterrence. The system of nuclear deterrence is not the ultimate means for the preservation of peace but rather a temporary expedient both in regard to moral imperatives and practical opportunities. However, it cannot be transcended by unilateral means or technological manipulation. Such attempts are likely to generate more competition and less stability. Orderly transition to security arrangements beyond deterrence can only be accomplished as a cooperative undertaking, reflecting a shared conceptual framework of common security. Progress is likely to be incremental rather than systemic in this momentous endeavour.

- Fourth, the North will continue to provide the most direct avenue of approach for strategic weapons travelling between the heartlands of the two principal powers. By extension, the North will constitute a forward area of warning and defense against attacks by such weapons. Furthermore, it will provide patrol areas for submarine-based strategic systems. Protection, surveillance and challenge of such patrols will define some of the major tasks for the navies of the principal powers. Rules of engagement and disengagement in that context will impact on the political position of the littoral states.

The nuclear debate in Europe has abated, but it could reemerge on short notice. The consensus is changing under the impact of the mobility in East-West relations, a reduced sense of threat, and a growing recognition of the limited utility of nuclear weapons. Although the North Europeans are less immediately involved than those in Central Europe, these general trends extend to a considerable degree to the north.

The Soviet Union appears to be promoting the denuclearization of Europe. Most West European governments consider that an unequal and destabilizing vision as long as nuclear weapons exist on Soviet territory and Soviet strategic



weapons threaten targets in Western Europe. There is no escape from the nuclear threat except through universal abolition, an idea which still seems hopelessly removed from present political realities. The issue, then, is to fashion arrangements which contribute to overall security, taking into account the interrelation between conventional and nuclear force levels and structures.

Two different perspectives contend in the analysis of the issues involved, one political and the other strategic. Obviously the two are interconnected, but for purposes of discussion it seems useful to maintain the dichotomy. The political perspective is dominant in Northern Europe. This perspective emphasizes the need to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons, while the strategic perspective stresses the need to preserve deterrence by maintaining credible options for nuclear use, including first use. The political perspective is also animated by a concern to maintain broad social support for prudent defense policies. In an era of a declining fear of deliberate attack, attention is focussed on the task of preventing inadvertent escalation. As the threat of Soviet invasion is no longer considered imminent, in the view of many the threat of nuclear war has replaced it.

Theater nuclear forces presumably contribute to specific deterrence by imposing on the adversary a need to disperse conventional forces and thus limit their capacity for surprise attack and breakthrough, and by threatening retaliation in kind should the adversary initiate the use of theater nuclear weapons. They are thought to contribute to general deterrence by conveying a threat to lose control since no one can have high confidence in the ability to limit war beyond the nuclear threshold. Finally, they are meant by West Europeans to contribute to general deterrence by coupling the defense of Europe to the American nuclear umbrella.

Concerns about the strategic requirements for specific deterrence lead to the development of selective options and many weapons, while a focus on the political requirements for general deterrence now points in the direction of fewer weapons. The latter is gaining ground in Europe, particularly as the Soviet threat of military attack on the ground is vanishing.

The INF controversy provided an example of how these contending perspectives converge and diverge. The primary concern in the West about the deployment of the SS-20 was not the military capacity of the system in the context of the balance of power between East and West. That capacity was of marginal significance. The primary concern was that the continental range SS-20 missiles provided the Soviet Union with an option for preferentially threatening the non-nuclear weapon states in Europe in the event of a crisis. The SS-20 constituted above all a challenge to the political order in Europe rather than to the balance of military power between the two alliances. The INF agreement successfully resolved the issue and *de facto* established the norm that continental range nuclear strike systems should not

be allowed to challenge the extended deterrence provided by intercontinental systems from the United States to her West European allies.

The strategic perspective focussed on the requirements posited by the strategy of flexible response, on the need for a continuum of strike options, a seamless web of deterrence coupling the option to strike Soviet territory from Western Europe with the central systems in the United States. It was concerned about preserving the integrity of a strategic concept which emphasized selective options. The North European perspective was predominantly political.

The number of theater nuclear weapons on both sides in Europe is very large and seems incommensurate with the concept of nuclear weapons as instruments of deterrence rather than warfighting, even when we concede that there is no clear-cut distinction and that the two are connected through operational considerations. The current arsenals suggest warfighting roles and perspectives, a conclusion which is strengthened by the fact that most of them are short-range battlefield weapons. The emerging political perspective points in the direction of fewer weapons, less reliance on battlefield systems, and withdrawal of nuclear weapons from forward positions in order to lessen the danger of embroilment in the "use them or lose them" syndrome in a crisis. North European governments embrace this perspective.

The Soviet Union has been pushing hard to prevent Nato from going through another round of nuclear modernization, this time of their short-range nuclear forces (SNF), a category in which the Russians command a very large preponderance. Nato has been considering a Follow-on-to-Lance (FOTL) missile with a range which would allow for fairly invulnerable deployment in the rear and for cross-corps targeting. This strategic perspective competes with the political perspective, which considers an emphasis on deep nuclear strikes out of tune with the processes of political change in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and with the priority of political reconstruction across the system barriers in Europe. Instead, negotiations about short-range nuclear missiles are offered as an alternative. Some strategists despair because they see negotiations leading to the consummation of another zero-option and a further dismantling of the strategy of selective options. The political perspective, however, is predicated on the idea of existential deterrence, on the deterrence inherent in the residual uncertainties posed by the nuclear forces remaining even after an SNF agreement and a build-down of battlefield nuclear weapons. It is concerned also about political reconstruction in Europe, about overcoming the confrontation rather than consolidating it. The prevailing view in Northern Europe follows this political trajectory. A comprehensive assessment is needed in order to prevent single-weapon issues from dominating visions. It should encompass the implication for stability of the composition, size and deployment of reduced theater nuclear forces as well as the interrelation

between conventional and nuclear force postures. A stable situation could provide a framework for transition to more concerted and cooperative security arrangements between East and West in Europe in order to preserve common security in a period of prolonged change.

At this juncture Norway believes that the issues must be viewed in the context of the political changes in Eastern Europe and the evolving balance and structure of conventional forces in Europe. We strongly supported the agreement in Nato on a compromise between the contending views concerning negotiations about SNF. The negotiations about conventional forces in Europe should eliminate some of the critical asymmetries which have determined in part Nato's perceived requirements for nuclear forces. Hence, SNF negotiations should start once the implementation of a first agreement on conventional force reductions in Europe is under way. Upon its completion, the implementation of an SNF agreement should start. In this way, a balanced overall outcome can be ensured. In the meantime, the Soviet Union could contribute to mutual confidence and subsequent negotiations by implementing substantial unilateral reductions in her SNF posture, thus emulating Nato's substantial unilateral nuclear reductions during the years when the Soviet Union modernized and expanded her SNF arsenals in Europe.

### Nato and European Security

Cooperation in Nato is predicated on a dual security strategy, encompassing military insurance through the maintenance of a credible defense, and political detente through arms control and disarmament as well as cooperation across the political lines of division between East and West. The two objectives are interlocking rather than competitive. Our military defenses must be capable of blocking important attack options for a would-be adversary, while our efforts to reach agreements concerning arms control and disarmament must aim at ensuring stability and essential equilibrium at the lowest possible level of forces.

In order to ensure military stability in Europe in general and for the frontline areas in particular, it is important to eliminate the capacity for surprise attack and sustained offensive operations. This implies a concerted and comprehensive long-term structural scheme for the preferential build-down of artillery, tanks, armored fighting vehicles, missiles, helicopters and combat aircraft, as well as battlefield nuclear weapons.

In order to create the conditions for a viable and equitable political order in Europe, the capacity for invasion and occupation should be eliminated. As long as the Soviet Union maintains such a capacity, the framework for peaceful change will remain too restrictive for a more cooperative order to emerge in Europe. Consequently, deep cuts in troop levels leading to essential

balance at much lower levels constitute a prerequisite for the political reconstruction to succeed.

Confidence-building measures and increased cooperation and transparency could contribute towards cutting the sharp edges off the military confrontation. However, states ignore the realities of the military confrontation at their peril. Frontline states like Norway and the Federal Republic of Germany can least of all afford to ignore the realities, nor can they cease their efforts to ease and transform a confrontation which contains the seeds of disastrous conflagration.

Some of the essential building blocks are now being put in place for a more stable and cooperative security order in Europe. The Soviet Union has adopted the concepts of "reliable defense" and "reasonable sufficiency" as guiding concepts for the future size and structure of her armed forces. Soviet leaders have announced a deliberate move away from the offensive emphasis in their military structure, deployment and operational doctrine. The new negotiations on conventional forces in Europe (CFE) reflect a structural emphasis on stability by focussing on the removal of capacities for surprise attack and sustained offensive operations. There is agreement about the need for a preferential build-down of some of the force components which contribute most to offensive capacities: tanks, armored fighting vehicles, artillery, helicopters, aircraft, and personnel. However, the parties have concentrated on reaching agreement on the specific definition of the treaty-limited items: on the size of the tanks, the categorization of armored troop carriers, the caliber of the artillery, the exclusion or inclusion of transport helicopters, and the mission characteristics of the aircraft. There is also the question of access to depots containing treaty-limited items and their distribution. But such definitional issues are unlikely to prevent agreement in the end.

Stabilizing the military situation in Europe at lower and essentially equal levels could contribute to reducing the impact of the military factor on the process of political relations, particularly if the residual levels and force structures effectively remove the standing threat of military invasion from the East. Furthermore, it could change some of the strategic requirements generated by the prevailing force postures and lead to more defensively oriented postures, particularly if the force reductions encompass deep cuts.

Agreements on deep cuts could open up new vistas for removing the military pressure on political relations in Europe. The offensive nature of Soviet ground forces (combining an echeloned force structure with highly mobile operational maneuver groups) led to a perceived requirement in Nato for forces which could disrupt the follow-on echelons before they could reach the front. The concept of Follow-on Forces Attack (FOFA) was born and seemed attractive to military planners because the Soviet offensive depended on very tight time tables. From a political perspective, however, the combined

effect of the two strategies was the ominous prospect of high-velocity warfare exercising a momentous pressure on the ability of human beings to retain control. The danger of inadvertent escalation was pervasive.

The negotiations about conventional forces in Europe comprise the area from the Atlantic to the Urals and, we like to add in Norway, from the Barents Sea to the Mediterranean. The principal reason for this amplification is the concern about the coherence and cohesion of the security order in Europe, about the maintenance of the links and drawing rights on the general equilibrium provided by the Western alliance. Regional differentiation by the establishment of special zones for arms limitation could sever these links and expose the peripheral areas to the military preponderance of the dominant heartland power on the Eurasian landmass. Norway, for example, has been concerned about the need to preserve the holistic notion of a single European security region wherein a variable geometry would apply to the regulation of different categories of forces and equipment, rather than constructing fixed zones for arms control purposes within Europe. The issue is one of political equilibrium and stability. Hence, the Western powers have proposed an approach based on concentric, interlocking regions for some of the major treaty-limited items. The Eastern states have proposed fixed regions for all of the six categories of treaty-limited items.

The rimland states of Western Europe share a continent with the Soviet Union. They have a strong interest in developing rules of engagement for managing their cohabitation on the same continent. It is in their interest to develop cooperative relations which reduce the saliency of the military confrontation, to institute confidence-building measures which will protect political relations from being disrupted by routine military activity, and to conclude arms control agreements which will enhance stability by reducing the threat of attack, particularly surprise attack, and military invasion. They have to pay particular attention to the geographical parameters of potential arms control regimes so as to protect their interest in equal security for all of the states in Europe. In order to prevent hegemony, they insist that no state should have more than a fixed share of the residual holdings of any treaty-limited item following a first agreement on conventional forces in Europe. Similar limits should apply to foreign-stationed troops.

### **Nordpolitik and Naval Challenges**

The correlation of ground forces on the northern flank is such that maritime power is likely to dominate a land campaign. It is questionable whether allied forces could hold very long in northern Norway in the absence of forward naval reinforcements. The Striking Fleet Atlantic would double the number of interceptors in northern Norway and increase air defense in the region by a factor of about five. Its presence would prevent the Soviet Union from

employing her local naval superiority in support of ground troops and from cutting Nato's lines of supply by, for example, tripling the number of antiship missiles at sea and increasing the antisubmarine capability by a very substantial factor. Should Nato lose a battle for the control of the Norwegian Sea, it would most likely lose a land campaign in northern Norway. And should Nato lose a land campaign there, its ability to prevail in a maritime campaign for sea control in the Norwegian Sea would be seriously reduced. Should Nato lose such a campaign, its ability to prevail in a land campaign on the central front would be very much degraded. Should Norway fall into hostile hands, Nato's defenses in Europe would be seriously impaired.

The U.S. Atlantic fleet is one of the most important sources of reinforcement to Norway. It exercises in northern waters at irregular intervals. The strategy of Nato presupposes that the common defense extends to forward areas. This principle is also valid at sea. A strategy of forward defense is certainly not synonymous with an offensive strategy.

Naval forces are mobile and not tied to specific areas. This ability to redeploy has led to discussion of a potential for horizontal escalation, wherein a naval power would attempt to apply pressure on an adversary in areas where it has the upper hand in order to counter or distract the employment of his forces in a conflict elsewhere. It is unreasonable, in our view, to claim that the United States would engage in such action in the northern waters. It would be politically inadvisable to suggest such options. The Soviet Union enjoys local superiority in the areas close to the Kola peninsula. Furthermore, the risks of escalation are substantial in an area comprising a large number of nuclear weapons and installations vital to the Soviet central war posture. It should be recalled also that the Norwegian Sea is one of the harshest and most difficult environments for naval operations. Hence, horizontal escalation hardly seems like a realistic American option in the northern areas. On the other hand, Norway depends on the ability of the U.S. Atlantic fleet to extend protection to Nato's northern flank to deter horizontal escalation should the Soviet Union attempt to exploit her inherent comparative advantages in the region.

The periodic presence of allied naval forces in northern waters, including Keflavik-based maritime air forces, contributes to general deterrence as well as to the direct defense of northern Norway. Such a presence has to be of sufficient magnitude and frequency to ensure and demonstrate a credible capacity to operate in northern waters, to counter impressions of Soviet naval preponderance, and to provide incentives for mutual restraint. Although a permanent surveillance effort is being undertaken in the Norwegian Sea, the permanent presence of allied naval surface patrols is neither practical nor desirable. Norway is interested in preserving stability and a state of low tension in the sensitive northern areas.

Norway depends on allied reinforcements in the event of war, as does the central front. Such reinforcements depend on Nato's ability to protect the sea lines of communication. Such protection can be extended most effectively by countering the threat against the sea lines of communication as far north as possible. Should Nato lose the ability to protect the sea lines of communication in forward areas, Norwegian airfields would be rendered more vulnerable to attack or conquest. Should enemy forces be able to neutralize or operate from Norwegian airfields, a battle of the Atlantic would be much harder to win for Nato, and its ability to prevail in a long war in Norway and on the central front would be seriously degraded. The air threat against Nato forces in the United Kingdom would increase significantly. The total effect would also entail serious disadvantages in a crisis short of war, and it would involve a higher dependence on early resort to nuclear weapons because of the degradation of the capacity for conventional defense.

Hence, an allied capacity for forward defense at sea in the north contributes to stability and credible conventional defense in an area where the Soviet Union enjoys conventional superiority. Such a capacity does not imply a first-strike threat against the Kola peninsula. Attack against the Kola peninsula would involve serious risks of explosive escalation due to the intermingling of nuclear, conventional, strategic, and theater forces and installations on the peninsula. The area is heavily defended, particularly against air attacks. However, in the event of an attack against Norway from the Kola peninsula, the Soviets could not expect that area to become a sanctuary. An allied capacity for forward defense in northern waters conveys this message and thereby contributes to deterrence.

One aspect of Nato's strategy for forward defense in the northern areas which has been criticized is the use of aircraft carriers. The concern has been that it constitutes an offensive threat to vital Soviet military installations and forces on the Kola peninsula. The questions raised are important and need to be carefully considered, lest the strategy be perceived as constituting a threat to the condition of low tension by introducing preemptive instabilities. For Norway the problem is familiar: How can we ensure that our plans for reinforcement are properly orchestrated so as to preserve a harmonious balance between the themes of deterrence and reassurance?

Deterrence in this instance inheres first of all in the substantial military capacity of carrier task forces. They constitute potential force multipliers in an area where the Soviet Union commands significant advantages in terms of stationed aircraft, airfields and capabilities for rapid air reinforcements. They have to exercise in the area in order to demonstrate an ability to operate effectively under the very special conditions which prevail in the north. Furthermore, aircraft carriers constitute enormous concentrations of value in terms of the size of their crews and the number of weapon systems.

Attacking them therefore involves crossing a significant threshold on the escalation ladder.

Reassurance involves the further removal of incentives for preemption. This is in many ways the most challenging of the tasks at hand. It must be taken very seriously indeed. First of all, careful attention must be paid to eschewing provocative behavior during peacetime maneuvers. This includes operating at a *reasonable distance* from Soviet national territory. Second, peacetime operations must be conducted in a manner which provides *maximum protection* against attacks by aircraft and missiles. The choice of the Vestfjord and Andfjord areas behind the protective shield of the leads appears to meet these two criteria. Third, the peacetime pattern of operations should emphasize the *defensive mission* in terms of the orientation and frequency of the exercises in which aircraft carriers participate. Fourth, public presentation should emphasize *prudence and caution*, avoiding resounding and pretentious claims of prowess and capacity which could give rise to fears of aggressive intent. Planners should pay careful attention to the delicate problems of crisis management in the sensitive region of the north by recognizing the need for caution and avoiding inadvertent escalation in periods of tension. Finally, in the years ahead, peacetime stability and public acceptance of prudent defense measures will require the exploration of arms control and confidence-building measures at sea to further reduce the fears of preemptive instability in northern waters.

Our strategy has to be flexible in order to adjust to the profound changes which are now under way in Europe, in the Soviet Union and in Soviet-American relations. The Soviet naval threat could change in the years ahead. It must be assessed in conjunction with the build-down and restructuring of Soviet ground and air forces. In a period of political reconstruction, the political and military utility of particular naval dispositions must be under continuous review. Accordingly, budgetary constraints could cause the United States to reassess the size and role of carrier task forces.

The Soviet naval building effort still continues at a substantial pace, however, peacetime operations have been reduced in space and time. The trend in the Soviet navy is toward fewer but larger and more capable units, with more firepower, more sophisticated weapons, and new sensors. The *Kirov*-class cruisers and the *Sovremenny* and *Udaloy*-class destroyers have entered the Soviet fleet since 1980. Two aircraft carriers of the *Tbilisi* class are currently being fitted out at the Nikolayev shipyard in the Black Sea, and a third carrier of a new class is reportedly under construction. Typhoon and Delta IV-class strategic nuclear submarines are in serial production. The Sierra, Akula, and Victor III-class nuclear attack submarines provide the Soviet Union with a fast and quiet submarine force. The SS-N-21 sea-launched land-attack cruise missile can be installed in a variety of general purpose ships and attack submarines. The supersonic naval cruise missile, SS-N-24, is



approaching initial operational status. A large part of the Soviet inventory of naval vessels is approaching block obsolescence and may provide a temptation to propose deep mutual cuts in naval forces.

### Perspectives on Naval Arms Control

In the current phase of intensified negotiations about arms control in Europe, the issue of naval arms control has also been raised. The West cannot retain a reactive and negative stance on this issue if it is to protect vital interests, exploit emerging opportunities, and maintain public confidence and support. Before the potential for naval arms control can be properly assessed, several observations need to be made about the essence of naval forces.

- First, naval forces constitute mobile military capabilities. Their reach is global. Hence, they do not lend themselves to regional limitation. Regional naval limitation regimes are likely to prove unstable as they would be inherently vulnerable to disruption by naval forces from outside the region.

- Second, naval forces constitute multi-mission military capabilities. They can be used in a variety of roles: to fight other ships for command of the seas; to chase and destroy submarines or surface vessels, including merchant vessels; to bombard targets on land; or to provide protection for forces on land.

- Third, naval forces constitute instruments for political influence. Enjoying freedom of navigation on the high seas, they cast political shadows before them, particularly onto the shores of the littoral states. They are flexible instruments for exercising influence: they can be intrusive or out of sight; they can be present without being committed. However, since the dependence of nations on supplies by sea varies considerably, symmetric limitations on access to particular ocean areas could have asymmetric political effects.

- Fourth, naval forces constitute military instruments which are deployed and operate largely outside the area of jurisdiction of the nation state. Therefore the regulatory powers of the coastal states constrain the freedom of maneuver of the flag state, but in rather marginal ways. Through the centuries sailors have had to develop "rules of the road" to reduce the danger of incidents at sea and their possible escalation to armed conflict.

Several conclusions suggest themselves concerning approaches to naval arms control which are consistent with the essential character of naval forces.

- First, as a general rule, limitations should be *global* rather than regional in scope.

- Second, limitations should focus on the *inventories* of specific types of naval forces rather than on missions, since the latter are typically conducted by a variety of forces in a multiplicity of combinations. In many instances

complete elimination, rather than limitation by agreed ceilings, could provide more stable regimes, particularly from the point of view of verification.

- Third, naval arms control must be considered in a *comprehensive strategic context*, taking into account the relative dependence of nations on the sea lines of communication.

- Fourth, confidence-building measures at sea should take into account the specific nature of naval operations, the navigational traditions which have developed over the years, the principle of the freedom of the seas, and the perspective of mutual advantage.

Nato is a maritime alliance which depends on exterior oversea lines of communication and supply. The Warsaw Pact is a continental alliance which depends on interior overland lines of communication and supply. Symmetric reductions in naval forces could therefore have asymmetric implications for the two alliances. Under conditions of reduced standing forces in forward positions in Europe, the importance of naval forces could increase for protecting the sea lines of communication, providing depth to the European theater, and for connecting the flanks of Western Europe to Nato's center—indeed, for preserving the integrity of Nato's defenses. However, deep cuts and substantial withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe would also reduce the need for rapid reinforcement. The relation between the evolving military situation in Europe and maritime requirements is a very complex one indeed.

Soviet proposals for naval force reductions to equal levels could suggest an interest in exploiting geographical asymmetries to her advantage, in possibly circumventing a future system of essentially equal security in Europe established by negotiation, and in weakening the umbilical cord of the Atlantic alliance. Negotiations on naval forces should be approached from the perspective of overall stability and should focus on a preferential build-down of those components which constitute the principal offensive threat to the trans-Atlantic sea lines of communication, which contribute to sustaining the balance of military power on the continent of Europe. In this connection, limitations should be considered on oceangoing attack submarines and naval bombers with stand-off weapons.

Norway has rejected Soviet proposals for arrangements which would limit naval access to northern waters on a symmetrical basis. Since the Soviet Union borders on these waters, since the most powerful of the Soviet fleets is homeported in the area, and since the U.S. Atlantic fleet is homeported in Virginia, the strategic consequences of such an arrangement would be asymmetric and in favor of the Soviet Union. Arrangements which would weaken or curtail the ability of the United States to project countervailing naval power into the northern waters would not enhance mutual confidence and could, in fact, weaken the tissue connecting Northern Europe to the overall security order in Europe.

More attention should be devoted to confidence-building measures at sea. Such measures should be tailored to the special conditions which apply at sea rather than be transposed from the system developed on land. In fact, established practice contains important confidence-building measures. Navies from East and West have observed each other's exercises for years, and "observer" ships frequently join the exercise formations. This suggests that observation at sea may more fruitfully be conducted from the ships of the observing party rather than by observers on the naval vessels of the potential adversary, particularly since it is much easier for the host party to control and limit observation on board his own naval vessels than if observation is conducted from the vessels of the observing party. Similarly, for many years naval exercises have been announced publicly before they take place.

The best way to develop a system of naval confidence-building measures might be to build on the framework and foundation provided by the bilateral incidents at sea agreements concluded between the Soviet Union on the one hand and the United States, Great Britain, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Canada and Norway on the other. Similar agreements could be concluded between other pairs of interested nations.

Norway has negotiated an incidents at sea agreement with the Soviet Union along the lines of the agreements concluded between the Soviet Union and each of the powers with major reinforcement roles in Norway and the ocean areas off Norway. This agreement also includes provisions obliging the parties to inform each other in the event of an accident or emergency at sea. Recently we have had several incidents of Soviet nuclear submarines in distress in northern waters where Soviet authorities failed to inform Norwegian authorities about the situation and the measures undertaken to deal with it, responding only to Norwegian requests for information.

A dialogue among the major naval powers about naval doctrine, strategy and peacetime naval deployments would seem to constitute a necessary step in preparation for possible future negotiations about naval arms control.

### **Strategic Arms Control and Northern Waters**

When we consider the current agenda of strategic arms control and how it could affect developments at sea, several propositions may be advanced.

A strategic arms reduction agreement, based on a 50 percent cut, would likely result in a reduction in the number of strategic nuclear submarines operating in the Arctic and near-Arctic oceans. However, specific constraints on destabilizing heavy land-based missiles and an emphasis on survivability could cause a relative shift from land-based systems to sea-based systems, and from large strategic submarines with many missiles to smaller submarines with fewer missiles. Stability could be enhanced by reducing the ratio of warheads

to launchers, thus moving away from multiple-warhead systems and towards single-warhead systems.

A strategic arms reduction talks (START) agreement would affect both the size and the structure of the strategic nuclear forces maintained by the two principal powers. It would in all likelihood cause the Soviets to retire their strategic submarines with intermediate range missiles, presently patrolling the Norwegian Sea and presumably covering targets in Western Europe. The Soviet choice of a northern patrol option in or near the Arctic for their long-range strategic submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) force creates a situation in which they threaten targets in Western Europe and North America from the same positions and with the same systems. Paradoxically, they thus contribute to forging the strategic unity of Nato. However, a Soviet choice of short-range/short time-of-flight depressed SLBM trajectories could require forward patrols off the coasts of North America. This choice could constitute a potential first-strike threat against the land-based components of the U.S. strategic deterrent. In order to enhance stability, testing and deployment of such SLBMs could be prohibited in a START agreement. The long-range Soviet northern patrol option is more consistent with stability.

Long-range, nuclear-tipped, sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCM) are operational with the navies of both of the principal powers. From a Norwegian perspective this development is a matter of concern. It threatens to redirect the nuclear arms competition to northern waters and may constitute a challenge to the condition of low tension which has prevailed in the European north. The impact might be particularly cumbersome in the context of progress in detente and arms control on the ground in Europe.

Many more potential targets for attacks with nuclear-tipped SLCMs are near the coasts in North America and Western Europe than in the Soviet Union. They are vulnerable because of the short flight times from Soviet surface ships and submarines. Norway has a very extended coastline and an extremely shallow territory relative to the coast. The general geographical asymmetry suggests a Western interest in limiting nuclear SLCMs.

Furthermore, SLCMs could introduce preemptive instabilities in a conventional crisis to which naval forces were committed, as nuclear cruise missiles are dispersed on a variety of ships. This in turn could reduce the flexibility of the U.S. Navy in extending conventional deterrence to the exposed areas of the European north, since vessels with SLCMs might be withheld for political reasons. Strategic systems presumably will be subject to tight central command and control. A ban on nuclear-tipped sea-launched cruise missiles will probably depend to a large extent on whether the principal powers are able to conclude a START agreement and develop force postures with survivable land-based and sea-based ballistic missiles. In the absence of such a regime, SLCMs may seem necessary in order to dissuade attacks by

multiplying the targets which an opponent would have to eliminate in a first strike. Furthermore, Norway's interests here are at potential variance with those of some of her continental Nato partners, who may view SLCMs as a substitute for land-based nuclear forces. However, in the event of substantial reductions in conventional forces on the continent of Europe and the reduction of their capacities for surprise attack, sustained offensives and occupation of territory, the presumed requirement for such nuclear strike options would diminish.

A total ban on nuclear SLCMs presumably would be easier to verify than a higher ceiling. A more radical solution, which has also been suggested, would involve the elimination of all nuclear weapons at sea, except on missiles in dedicated strategic submarines. Such a radical solution could enhance strategic stability by eliminating a naval nuclear threat to the survivability of strategic missile submarines. It would be consistent with a growing preference for existential deterrence rather than nuclear warfighting postures.

The idea of sanctuaries for strategic missile submarines has sometimes been suggested as an arms control measure. However, the monitoring of such sanctuaries would be extremely difficult. It would require extensive cooperation between the two principal powers, and such cooperation could easily translate into claims for preferential rights in the ocean areas in question. It would also affect the littoral states, whose security and sovereignty would become closely entangled with the management of the central balance of nuclear deterrence between the two principal powers.

### **A Broader Perspective**

In closing, let me return to the northern areas after this excursion into the complexities of the strategic competition between the major powers. For in the high north, genuine security involves a much broader agenda of cooperative undertakings to protect and preserve a fragile environment, promote a sustainable and equitable exploitation of natural resources, and increase our understanding of our complex ecology. Progress in these areas could spin a network of cooperative threads across the divisions which have stimulated and sustained the military competition. Increased cooperation in the high north could reduce the saliency of military conflict and its impact on the conduct of our international relations. At the same time, arms control could gradually move the military effort away from the framework of competitive security to one of common security.

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