

ANALYSTS ADDRESS GORBACHEV

10 October, 1987

Mikhail S. Gorbachev, General Secretary
CPSU
Moscow, USSR

Dear General Secretary Gorbachev,

We are a group of scientists from Western countries who have been working on the problems of easing both the nuclear and nonnuclear military confrontations in Europe. We have noted the statements, made by you (most recently in Pravda) and by the Warsaw Treaty Organization (from Budapest and Berlin) that the doctrine of WTO and NATO forces should be defensive and that a stable balance should be achieved by reductions in offensive forces rather than by build-ups.

We are very much interested in these statements. We have reached similar conclusions. We would like to share them with you and ask you to respond with an elaboration of your ideas.

Current fears of war in Europe are due primarily to the offense-capable structure of the military forces on both sides. These structures give forces the capability for surprise attack and conquest. They feed the fears which are used to justify very high levels of military spending and a continued technological arms race after more than 40 years of peace in Europe. These same fears are also used to justify reliance on nuclear weapons as a deterrent to nonnuclear aggression.

Reductions of the current forces without changes in their composition would preserve their offensive structure and the associated fears of aggression and therefore would perpetuate the justification for relying on nuclear weapons in Europe. We believe that there should be reductions in non-nuclear forces designed so as to simultaneously cut drastically their offensive capabilities and preserve the defensive capabilities on each side. That would implement the doctrine of defensiveness and lead to a stable condition that we would term "mutual defensive sufficiency." At that point, we believe that the popular willingness to maintain large armed forces and to sustain the risks of the nuclear confrontation would rapidly erode.

We would suggest the following approach: from the Atlantic to the Urals, reduce the numbers of strike

aircraft, tanks, armed helicopters and long-range artillery on each side to equal levels well below the current levels of the lower side; and ban ballistic missiles in Europe with ranges greater than approximately 50 km.

Although the reductions required to reach equality will be unequal, the security of both sides will be increased. Reducing long-range strike capabilities would reduce incentives for preemptive strikes in time of crisis. Reducing numbers of tanks and artillery available for massed attacks relative to decentralized defensive forces would reduce the capability for capturing foreign territory. And, with the fear of conventional aggression reduced, "battlefield" nuclear weapons could be withdrawn from Europe and destroyed, thereby reducing the danger of nuclear war. Then the technological resources of both East and West could be freed to concentrate on the social, economic and environmental improvement of Europe and the rest of the world.

We would also urge that, as part of the new extension of glasnost to the military area, the Soviet government publish its own numbers for Soviet weapons systems in different categories. Otherwise, independent analysts will continue to have only NATO estimates—which are often biased upwards by worst-case assumptions.

We would be interested in your reactions to these thoughts and in your own ideas for implementing your proposals for reducing the continuing senseless and dangerous military confrontation in Europe.

Sincerely,

Anders Boserup
University of
Copenhagen
Denmark

Frank Von Hippel
Federation of
American Scientists
Washington, D.C.
U.S.A

Robert Neild
Cambridge University
United Kingdom

Albrecht von Mueller
Max Planck Society,
Starnberg
Federal Republic
of Germany

(Members of the Pugwash Study Group on
Conventional Forces in Europe.)

GORBACHEV'S REPLY

16 November, 1987

Dear Messrs von Mueller, von Hippel, Boserup and Neild,

I was interested in your letter, in which you laid out some ideas on the complex and very poignant problem of how most effectively to lower the level of military confrontation in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, in order to limit the possibility of a new war on the European continent.

You approach this in conceptual and practical terms which might well provide the basis of a solution to the problem.

In practical terms, as far as I understand it, the question concerns the realization of measures to limit and restructure the armed forces and conventional weapons with which the two sides confront each other in Europe, in such a way as to keep on both sides the basic capability for non-offensive defense.

This is very close to our understanding of the problem. The Soviet Union abides by the principle of reasonable sufficiency of armed forces and armaments. This reflects the strictly defensive orientation of the military doctrine of our country and our allies in the Warsaw Pact. The path towards the realization of reasonable sufficiency we see in governments not having more military strength and armaments than is necessary for their reliable defense, and also in their armed forces being structured in such a way that they will provide all that is needed for the repulsion of any

possible aggression but could not be used for offensive purposes.

We are actively engaged in preparing for negotiations in the near future on the limitation of armed forces and conventional weapons in Europe. As you know, at the moment a mandate is being agreed for such negotiations at the CSCE in Vienna.

In this preparatory work, we are basing ourselves on the known proposals of the Warsaw Pact concerning real and radical reductions, and the elimination of asymmetry and imbalance by reducing accordingly the arms of the power that is in the lead, by removing from a zone between the Warsaw Pact and NATO the most dangerous offensive weapons, and by reducing to a minimum agreed level the concentration in this zone of armed forces and armaments. In the course of this work we will pay great attention to the concrete ideas laid out in the memorandum attached to your letter.

I want to underline again that we attach great significance to the active participation of learned people in seeking solutions to what are the most pressing military-political and international problems. We are all doing one thing directly connected with the central problem of the contemporary world—the problem of how to ensure the survival of mankind.

With respects,

Mikhail Gorbachev