Chapter 7

NEW POLITICAL THINKING AND THE CHANGING SOVIET PERSPECTIVES ON SECURITY AND MILITARY DOCTRINE

'New political thinking' has already brought about a perceptible change in the Soviet thinking on security and military doctrine. In an intense debate underway in the Soviet civilian and military circles on security matters, old dogmas and stereotypes are being increasingly questioned and new ideas are being thrown up.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the current Soviet debate on security matters and highlight the issues which are crucial in the arms control talks between the USA and the USSR, between NATO and WTO countries. This chapter examines (a) the historical development of Soviet politico-military thought related to security and military doctrine; and (b) the important change in military doctrine and arms control approaches brought in the wake of Gorbachev's 'new political thinking'.

Evolution of the Political Aspect of Security Doctrine

The goal of world revolution was speedily jettisoned by Lenin when he realised that no help from outside was forthcoming and that the Russian revolution would have to rely on itself if it had to survive. Thus, right from the beginning, the security of the Russian state came to be defined in terms of the defence
of the revolution. The defence and the foreign policies of the young Russian state were geared to defend the Russian state and the revolution. The 14-nation armed intervention in Russia to "strangle the Bolshevik baby at birth" left a deep impression on the Soviet policy makers. The Western hostility to the revolution became a prime factor in the framing of the Soviet Union's security policies. Stalin, while launching the "building of socialism in one country", also used "capitalist encirclement" as an important psychological argument to instil deep suspicion of the West in the common man. Thus, peaceful cohabitation policies were cloned in the siege mentality. The Soviet military doctrine was shaped on the basis of the enemy image of the Western world.

Both Lenin and Stalin laid due emphasis on military as well as political means for safeguarding security. For instance, Lenin, in his Report to the Congress on December 5, 1919, said that the Russian revolution survived despite its military and economic weaknesses because Russia "won over to its side the workers and peasants of entente countries ... gained the neutrality of small nations ...". In this speech, he stressed the political means to strengthen security. In 1920, delivering his report to the 9th Party Congress, Lenin, sensing that

external intervention was imminent, emphasised the military aspect of security when he said: "... the measures we take for peace must be accompanied by intensified preparations for defence, and in no case must our army be disarmed". At the end of 1921, even when the war against Poland was over, and, Russia was enjoying a "relative respite from intervention", Lenin, in his report to the Congress of Soviets, spoke of "... only one Socialist Soviet Republic ... surrounded by a whole array of frenziedly hostile imperialist powers ..." but regarded the existence of "... a socialist republic in a capitalist environment ..." as conceivable. While exhorting people to "be vigilant, safeguard the defence potential of our country, (and) to look after ... the Red Army like the apple of (their) eye...", Lenin also noted that despite the unstability of the international equilibrium, despite the western hostility to Russia and its non-recognition, the force of "economic world relations (will) compel them (i.e. the West) to establish intercourse with us ...". Clearly, Lenin foresaw peaceful coexistence between the hostile West and the Socialist Russia as inevitable.

Peaceful coexistence with the West was recognised as a necessity right from the beginning. Stalin, preoccupied with the


3. V.I. Lenin, "Report to the Congress of Soviets, December 23, 1921", in Ibid., pp.27-36, especially, pp.29, 31, 33 & 35.
task of building "socialism in one country", was for avoiding the USSR's involvement in wars. Nevertheless, he found it expedient to almost constantly harp upon the inevitability of wars among the capitalist countries in which the USSR might get embroiled. On some occasions, he also spoke of the possibility of the capitalism vs. socialism contradiction leading to a war although he generally held that wars amongst the capitalist countries were more likely. Either way, the Stalinist line was that the USSR had to be strong if it had to deter attacks by the capitalists and also if peace had to be maintained in the world. Stalin developed a "two camp" bipolar view of the world in his report to the 14th Party Congress (December 18, 1925). He clearly stated that although a "period of peaceful coexistence" had set in due to a "temporary stabilisation of capital", this was only a temporary feature and situation in the world would depend upon how the "two camps..." developed. The strength of the socialist camp, he said, was a major factor in the temporary stabilisation in the world. In his report to the 15th Party Congress (December 3, 1927), Stalin, jettisoning the theme of temporary stabilisation, pointed in stark terms towards "capitalist encirclement" of the USSR and

accused the Western countries of "... preparing the conditions for war against the USSR." 5

An unmistakable feature of Lenin's and Stalin's analyses of the world situation and its impact on the USSR was that wars were considered to be the result of structural factors rather than the policies of one country of a group of countries. Thus, so long as capitalism existed, wars would follow, and the USSR should be ready to defend itself if it got involved in these wars. Stalin only infrequently referred to a direct clash between the USSR and any one particular country and continued with what he called the USSR's "peace" policies. During the Stalin years, a direct link in Soviet thinking between peace and the Soviet military might was established.

Avoidance of war was regarded as "peaceful" policy. To prevent war, it was considered necessary to isolate any aggressive country or group of countries even if it meant forging temporary alliances for reasons of pure and simple expediency even with fascist states. Thus, the declared policy of peaceful relations with capitalist states did not exclude pursuing good relations with fascist Italy or with Hitler's Germany where the German Communists had been decimated. Thus, in his report to the 17th Party Congress (January 26, 1934), Stalin made it clear that Soviet diplomacy was not ideologically committed and that the

important question was not whether Germany was a fascist state, the significant thing was whether Germany was against the USSR or not. He said:

"Of course, we are far from being enthusiastic about the fascist regime in Germany. But it is not a question of fascism here, if only for the reason that fascism in Italy, for example, has not prevented the USSR from establishing but relations with that country .... Our orientation in the past and our orientation at the present time is towards the USSR alone .... And, if the interests of the USSR demand rapprochement with one country or another which is not interested in disturbing peace, we adopt this course without hesitation." 6

Thus, Stalin's foreign policy, committed to safeguarding the country's security from anti-Soviet alliances, was geared in the thirties to signing neutrality and non-aggression pacts with a number of countries, including Hitler's Germany. Pragmatism cloaked in ideology was the hallmark of the Soviet foreign policy. Of course, ideology was used to create images of enemies and to explain the trends in the world situation.

Following the Second World War, a new world order was created. However, Stalin retained his thesis of the inevitability of wars. He also hinted that relations between the Soviet Union and the remaining victorious powers would be hostile in the future. Thus, delivering his election speech on February 9, 1946, he said "war was the inevitable result of the development of world economic and political forces on the basis of modern monopoly

6. J.V. Stalin, "Report to the XVII Party Congress, January 26, 1934", in Ibid., pp.72-84, p.82.
capitalism..." and urged for a "mighty upsurge in the national economy" which could guarantee the USSR "against all possible accidents".

Zhdanov's speech of September 22, 1947, signalled that the cold war had begun due to the division of the world into two irreconcilable, mutually hostile camps as a result of the new arrangement of forces in the world. Zhdanov said:

"The fundamental changes caused by the war on the international scene ... has entirely changed the political landscape of the world. A new alignment of political forces has arisen. The more the war recedes into the past, the more distinct became two major trends in post-war international policy, corresponding to the division of the political forces operating on the international arena into two major camps: the imperialist and anti-democratic camp, on the one hand, and the anti-imperialist and democratic, on the other."

The USSR was now a major power with world wide interests. Its future security concerns were viewed in this Cold War, bipolar framework.

The most important effect of the Second World War on the security perceptions of the USSR was that not just the physical security of the USSR, but also the physical security of the newly formed East European countries and the political survival of these Communist regimes became the responsibility of the USSR. The German question became the most important one in the security


Calculation of the Soviet Union. Similarly, the development of atomic and thermonuclear weapons by the USA came to be regarded as a threat to the USSR which had to be met by political (i.e. disarmament proposals, etc.) and military-technical means (i.e. development of similar weapons in the USSR). However, the limits of this approach were recognised by Malenkov, after Stalin's death. Malenkov, speaking on August 8, 1953, at the Supreme Soviet, called for a détente with USA, adding that "great-power negotiations" could contribute to "the settlement of international disputes" in a big way and that "... there are no objective reasons for clashes between the USA and the Soviet Union". 9

Significantly, Malenkov's advocacy of détente came only after the USSR had acquired atomic and thermonuclear weapons. Thus, Malenkov's approach to détente was inseparable from the well entrenched view that peace could be guaranteed through military might. Malenkov's advocacy for détente was not well received and he himself became a victim of the power struggle.

Khrushchev, at the 20th Party Congress, not only began the de-Stalinisation process but also sought to change the Stalinist world view in a significant manner. He declared the end of capitalist encirclement, and said that wars were no longer "fatalistically inevitable" and elevated the "peaceful coexistence" line from mere tactics to that of a principle of international

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relations. He also tried to correct the Soviet image abroad, declaring that the Soviet Union did not believe in the export of revolutions and that all nations were free to choose independently the path of development. The perils of a nuclear war and uncontrolled arms race were highlighted. Improvement of relations with the great powers and the elimination of "breeding grounds" of war from the various parts of the world and "adjustment" of relations with a number of countries in Europe, establishment of "collective security" in Europe and disarmament were declared as the objectives of Soviet foreign policy. 10

The Khrushchevian framework of foreign policy was different from that of his predecessors, but the cold war atmosphere, characterised by a lack of trust, took away from the potential of significant doctrinal changes. Although Khrushchev realised that the rivalry between the two camps should be restricted to the economic and ideological spheres, yet he initiated a revolution in the military doctrine in the Soviet Union following the introduction of nuclear weapons in the Soviet armed forces. The problem of adjusting to the nuclear age became a cardinal security issue for the Soviets. That war was not "fatalistically inevitable" was obviously the reflections of the thinking that nuclear war should be avoided. And yet, the Soviet military doctrine of these years worked on the assumption that nuclear war was possible and it ought to be won. Khrushchev also

relied more on "quality" than on "quantity" of weapons and soldiers. Khrushchev hinted implicitly to use the threat of nuclear option by the USSR during the Suez crisis when an official Soviet memorandum to Britain warned, "We are fully determined to crush the aggressors by the use of force and to restore peace in the East," by taking resort to, if necessary" .... other means, for instance, missiles". 11 At the 21st Party Congress in January 1957, Khrushchev while proposing a ban on the testing, production and use of atomic weapons, glorified at the same time the fact that the USSR could launch "powerful rockets with pin-point accuracy to any place on the globe...". 12 It was clear that while nuclear disarmament was a high priority item on the USSR's foreign policy agenda, the Soviets also sought to make political use of nuclear weapons at the same time. Despite his fascination for high quality nuclear and other weapons, Khrushchev also recognised that these weapons alone could not guarantee security and that the arms race and high military expenditures could economically undermine the prospects of socialism in the USSR. Khrushchev's famous proposals on drastic defence cuts in January 1960 were motivated by this recognition. 13

13. For Khrushchev's speech on defence cuts, see Ibid., pp.206-26.
The ouster of Khrushchev led his successors not towards economic competition with capitalism as Khrushchev had wanted but a purely military competition - i.e. the arms race - with the West. Seeking strategic nuclear parity with the NATO became the sole aim of military policy. The international situation came to be seen in terms of ideological struggle. Once again, the siege mentality which Khrushchev had tried to jettison, came to the fore. The confrontation with Beijing had the impact of accentuating the arms race with the West. It is only after an "approximate equality of military forces between East and West" and the "equality in nuclear and other weapons" was ensured, that the USSR began to address itself to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. The crippling consequences of this arms race for the Soviet economy were overlooked. A policy of meeting any threat based on the worst possible scenarios was adopted. This meant that every weapon in the West had to be matched with a similar Soviet weapon in even double or triple the numbers. The detente of the mid-seventies proved fragile as political declarations of peace did not rule out on either side the feverish preparations for a possible nuclear war. Once again, it was overlooked that the increase in nuclear weapons was not leading to any corresponding increase in the USSR's security. Although there was no imminent danger of war in the seventies, the pace at which nuclear stockpiles were built in the name of "equal security" was feverish. This was indeed the paradox of the nuclear arms race; nuclear weapons did not provide additional security and yet they were built in the name of security.
By 1977, it came to be realised that strategic parity at high levels was having a destabilising influence on international relations, thereby endangering the security of all nations. Thus, the USSR defence expenditure growth rate was scaled down. In an important speech delivered in Tula in January 1977, Brezhnev spelt out clearly the elements of new Soviet military doctrine. He laid down the following elements: (i) The USSR's defence build up would not go "beyond what is sufficient for defence", (emphasis added). (ii) The Soviet Union was not "striving for superiority in armaments with the aim of delivering a first strike." (iii) The USSR's efforts were directed at preventing both first and second strike and at preventing nuclear war altogether. (iv) The Soviet defence potential would be "sufficient to deter anyone from disturbing our peaceful life". (v) The USSR would never be the one to commit aggression against other people. Brezhnev also defined detente as "a certain trust and the ability to take one another's legitimate interests into account". 14 (emphasis added).

In his Tula speech, Brezhnev was making the important point that Soviet defence build up would be guided by the needs of "defence sufficiency" and Soviet policy would be geared towards the prevention of a nuclear war, parity at low levels, balance of interests approach and a defensive military doctrine. The Tula speech contained the germs of the ideas which under Gorbachev's

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political thinking are now being developed further. Unfortunately, these ideas were not pursued further.

By the 26th Party Congress (1982) the "equal security" approach of the USSR had essentially become a beans counting approach. Although in Tula, Brezhnev had propounded the ideas of sufficient defensive military doctrine, these new elements were not implemented in the sense that sharp increase in the US defence budgets in the seventies and up to the mid-eighties did not afford a respite to the USSR from the arms race. Parity at low levels remained unachieved despite SALT-I and SALT-2.

Evolution of the Military Doctrine

In the West, while the political statements of the Soviet leaders have been noted, it is the military doctrine at the political as well as military-technical level that has been paid greater attention.

The Soviet military strategic thought development during 1917-45 was substantially revised following the introduction of nuclear weapons in the world's Armies. In the mid-fifties, Soviet writings described as pure propaganda the contention that there "will be no victor" in a nuclear war. A nuclear war was credited with the potential of people's liberation struggles against capitalism. By the early sixties, the destructive potential of a nuclear war was highlighted but the above optimism

was retained, and even mentioned in the CPSU programme of 1961.  

The Soviet writers continued to search for ways to victory in the event of a nuclear war. Thus, the Third Edition of *Soviet Military Strategy*, edited by Marshal V.D. Sokolovskiy (1975) states that in modern warfare, the military strategy "becomes the strategy of deep nuclear rocket strikes ... (effecting) simultaneous defeat and destruction ... throughout the enemy territory, thus accomplishing the war aims within a short time period."  

This completely modified the earlier strategic principles of "concentrating the force and means in the decisive direction", "strategic principle of the economy of forces", "the principle of partial victory", etc. The victory in modern warfare was seen as a result of "one-time application of the entire might of a state accumulated before the war."  

As regards the nature and essence of Soviet military strategy, it was directed at increasing the defensive potential of the Soviet government and "toward the organisation of its armed forces for successful repulsion of aggression. This is the class essence of Soviet military strategy."  

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18. Ibid., p.12.
19. Ibid., p.46.
From these representative quotes from a book which is compulsory reading for officers of the Soviet armed forces, it is obvious that the Soviet military strategy that evolved in the wake of the introduction of nuclear weapons has been that of retaliating against enemy attack with the combined might of the state which also included the nuclear weapons might. This was clearly not the firststrike advocacy. At one stage, Soviet military doctrine regarded a future war as a world war which would be a nuclear war in which the initial period would be of decisive importance. "Victory is the shortest possible time" would be the "goal" in this kind of war. The Soviet forces were also advised to be ready for a surprise attack which could escalate into a full scale nuclear war. Therefore, it was the "main task of the theory of military strategic leadership" to address "the theoretical and practical questions related to the preparation and waging of just such a war (i.e. nuclear war). The Soviet strategists also warned that the "logic of war is such that if a war is unleashed by the aggressive circles of the United States, it will immediately be transferred to the territory of the United

20. Ibid., p.171: There has been some controversy on whether the Soviets regarded future war "inevitably" nuclear. What is clear, however, is that the Soviets regarded a war in which nuclear powers participated to be a nuclear war. See Ibid., p.170.

21. Ibid., p.188.

22. Ibid., p.193.
States of America. Of course, all this thought emerged together with the concept that nuclear war, thanks to its very nature, was unacceptable and, therefore, total disarmament and destruction of nuclear stockpiles was desirable. 23

The Soviet military thought has closely followed the development of NATO/US military doctrine after the advent of nuclear weapons. According to Soviet classifications, the US has been following a doctrine of "nuclear deterrence" for at least 40 years. This doctrine underwent two significant revisions, one in the late fifties, when it was realised that US territory was no longer out of reach of the nuclear weapons and the other in the late sixties, when the USSR achieved nuclear parity. The NATO doctrine of "massive retaliation" was officially replaced by "flexible response" in the late sixties. In the beginning of the seventies, NATO introduced "realistic deterrence" and came up with "countervailance strategy" for application to strategic nuclear missiles in the late seventies. Reagan's strategy, according to Soviet experts, could be called the strategy of "direct countervailance". The essential point about these strategies was the use of concepts like "limited" and "protracted" nuclear wars on global and regional scales with a view to achieve nuclear superiority over the USSR. In the realm of conventional forces, the concepts of "horizontal" and "offensive" actions were formulated. 24

23. Ibid., pp. 195 & 197.
the USSR itself adopted a deterrence doctrine in the late sixties as evident in its search for "parity" in nuclear and conventioned weapons.

The Soviet military doctrine in the late sixties gave up the idea that any war between East and West would necessarily be a general nuclear war, although such a war was still considered a possibility requiring appropriate contingency preparations. The prevention of nuclear war became the guiding principle of both the foreign and military policies. It has been noted above the emergence of the Tula line of Brezhnev was essentially a defensive strategy. In the eighties, the Soviet Union, after years of futile polemics with the NATO, also adopted the no first use pledge in regard to nuclear weapons.

The Soviet military doctrine debate once again resurfaced in the post-1982 period. The thrust of this debate was that the conventional military warfare option had to be given its due attention as the nuclear stockpiles had reached a low marginal utility limit. Further, the counter-productiveness of the arms race was also recognised. For instance, Marshal N.V. Ogarkov in an interview to Izvestia in September 1983 said that the USSR did not wish to compete with the US in the military field and would not "blindly imitate it in a reckless arms race...". In 1984, Ogarkov said that the Soviet nuclear arsenal did not yield any meaningful political or military advantage.25

Thus, in the transition period from Brezhnev to Gorbachev, the Tula line of 1977 found its expression in the thoughts of Soviet military strategists. The concept of sufficient defence had already taken birth before Gorbachev used it meaningfully in East-West relations. This point has not been sufficiently highlighted in the literature on Soviet security policies.

New Political Thinking, Security and Military Doctrine

"New political thinking" essentially means primacy of universal values over class interests, unwinnability of nuclear war, joint efforts to solve global problems, "freedom of choice" to all countries and peoples, a "balance of interests" approach to international relations, particularly between the East and West. In the area of military doctrine, it has highlighted the concept of "reasonable sufficiency" or what is also termed as "sufficient defence". The 'new political thinking' seems to completely change the traditional concept of security.

Security

At the 27th Party Congress, Gorbachev propounded the idea of comprehensive, universal security. Peace and freedom, he said, could be achieved only by terminating "the material preparations of a nuclear war." Yet, according to this prescription, even the

defensive preparation for a nuclear war ought to be terminated. This was a radical departure which has given the idea of "reasonable sufficiency" a strong fillip. However, before this idea is discussed, it would be worthwhile to discuss the new thinking on the concept of security.

The universal security concept regards military dimension as the one amongst several dimensions which guarantee the security of a country, the other dimensions being political, economic and humanitarian. The main aim of safeguarding the security of a country should be political and not military. The universal security idea regards the world as integral and interdependent in which there can be no zero-sum approach to security matters. The security of any one country cannot be at the expense of another. In a world threatened with nuclear annihilation, it is the "unity of opposites" that should be the guiding tenet of international relations rather than the "struggle of the opposites".

Clearly, the old security concepts would have to be discarded. In a critique of the old notions, certain Soviet civilian experts (like Alexei Arbatov) belonging to IMEMO and IUSAC who have emerged as leading exponents of unorthodox ideas on the military doctrine, have pointed out that the USSR should get rid itself of its "siege" mentality, discard its excessive obsession with qualitative and quantitative "parity" in every kind of weapons systems, pay more attention to the non-military aspects of security, take notice of emerging political trends in the world and do away with excessive secrecy on security matters. Attention is drawn to the fact that the USA, by developing new technologies
and weapons wants to draw the USSR into a futile arms race, thereby leading to the USSR's economic exhaustion.27

The critique of old security notions has emphasised the concept of "reasonable sufficiency", which in turn is bringing about important changes in the military doctrine.

**Reasonable Sufficiency and Military Doctrine**

The most important concept which forms the basis of the new thinking on security is that of "reasonable sufficiency" or "non-offensive defence". The concept, introduced by Gorbachev at the 27th Party Congress, is still being debated and elaborated. While it is now generally accepted by both civilian as well as military experts in the USSR that "reasonable sufficiency" or "sufficiency for defence" is the same approach towards security, there is as yet no consensus as to how much is reasonably sufficient in the different fields of armaments. Nor has a consensus emerged as yet on the precise nature and scope of defensive operations in accordance with the "reasonable sufficiency" concept.

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At the forefront of the "reasonable sufficiency" debate are the civilian scholars of the IMEMO and IUSAC. A survey of their recent writings highlights several aspects of this concept:

- "Reasonable sufficiency" in strategic weapons is akin to "minimum deterrence" of about 400-500 megatons of nuclear warheads. (Thus, while the Soviet theory criticized in the past the Western doctrine of "deterrence", "the reasonable sufficiency" idea advocates "minimum deterrence". This idea seems similar to the US idea of the sixties of "mutually assured destruction" on the basis of 400-500 megaton capabilities.

- "Reasonable sufficiency" would be an apt reply to US efforts to wear out the USSR economically in an arms race. Thus, the idea requires the USSR not to needlessly match every US move to build new weapons.

- "Reasonable sufficiency" would politically and psychologically create a favourable climate for further progress in the arms control talks. It could lead to bilateral and even unilateral measures by various countries to reduce arms.

- "Reasonable sufficiency" discards the quantitative parity approach totally and instead focuses on qualitative improvement of weapons.

- According to some (e.g. Bagdanov, Kortunov), under the concept of "reasonable sufficiency", the USSR could go ahead with unilateral deep cuts rather than waiting for a negotiated agreement with the US/NATO to mature.

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The Soviet military experts hold a more conservative view of "reasonable sufficiency". While the WTO has adopted the concept of "reasonable sufficiency" in its military doctrine, it is insisted that there could be no question of unilateral cuts. "Reasonable sufficiency" has to be mutually acceptable. A survey of the writings, speeches and interviews of leading Soviet military leaders as well as a study of WTO military doctrine and commentaries on it brings out the following:

- According to the Soviet Defence Minister, Yazov (in 1989), the "existing military-strategic parity remains the decisive factor of preventing war". Reasonable sufficiency", declared the Defence Minister, was determined by the "need to prevent an unpunished nuclear attack in any, even the most unfavourable situation". "Sufficiency" in conventional weapons meant ensuring of "collective defence of the socialist community". The actions of the NATO and USA determine the limits of reasonable sufficiency.29 Clearly, this approach, as outlined in 1987, made reasonable sufficiency dependent upon the NATO and USA and also took into account the worst case scenarios. Thus, it did not differ significantly from Brezhnev's "parity" approach.

- In an 1987 book, Yazov spoke of the necessity of ensuring "decisive offence" which stressed the need to launch "counter-offence".30 This again brought out the limited nature of the "reasonable sufficiency" concept.


The idea of "non-offensive defence", absent from Yazov's above quoted statements, found expression in Gorbachev, who in 1987 advocated restructuring of the Soviet armed forces so that they would be "sufficient to repel possible aggression, but not sufficient to conduct offensive operations." The same idea was expounded in an article on "Kursk Battle" by Kokoshin and Larianov mentioned before.

In Marshal Akhromeyev's words, the WTO forces would be restructured on the basis of the "defence sufficiency" principle. This implies a non-offensive structure of the armed forces. But he insisted that defence sufficiency will have to be "on mutual basis" only.

It would appear from the above that while a number of changes have been made in the WTO military doctrine for making it explicitly defensive and the principle of "reasonable sufficiency" has been adopted, at the military-technical level, the insistence on reciprocity still remains intact. It is not clear if the NATO would respond in kind, especially after they go in for "Exotic Technologies" (ZTS).

The conflicting points of view on "reasonable sufficiency" and the desirability of unilateral concessions by the USSR were recently expressed in the pages of the Soviet weekly Moscow News. Summing up the discussions, Yuri Bundura wrote that there was no consensus in the USSR on unilateral concessions; the proponents o


different points of view could not present fully convincing arguments in support of their respective contentions; the problem (of "reasonable sufficiency") has only been conceptualised, but no definite, practical ideas have been advanced; military experts and civilian analysts hold quite different perceptions and that till the advantages of unilateral concessions are proved, the talks on strategic weapons reduction between the USA and the USSR must continue.  

In short, "reasonable sufficiency" as an idea is still evolving. The question of how much is sufficient, is still largely unanswered.

Soviet Approach To Arms Control

So far, the "parity" notion based on "equal security" has been guiding the Soviet approach on arms control issues. Following the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting in 1985 at Geneva, both sides, for the first time, declared that nuclear war was unwinnable. Gorbachev has also proposed, for the first time, a time-bound programme for complete nuclear disarmament. This programme envisaged mutual elimination of nuclear weapons. The major achievement in nuclear disarmament has been the signing of the INF accord on missiles in Europe. This accord would have the impact of reducing nuclear disarmament has been the signing of the INF accord on missiles in

Europe. This accord would have the impact of reducing nuclear armaments in the world by three percent. There are also signs, particularly after Bush-Gorbachev Summit in May 1990, that START negotiations, aimed at fifty percent reduction in strategic nuclear weapons, would result in an agreement soon. Gorbachev has also announced certain unilateral measures like the reduction of Soviet armed forces by 500,000 by the end 1990, unilateral cuts in conventional armaments, disbanding of tank divisions from GDR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary by 1991, reduction of Soviet forces in East Europe, etc. 34 In October 1989, during a visit to Helsinki, Gorbachev also announced the decision to remove from the Baltic Sea by 1991 all Soviet submarines carrying ballistic missiles. All tactical nuclear missiles in the north-west of the Soviet Union had been redeployed to put Northern Europe out of their range.

The Soviet approach to arms talks so far has been that of preparedness to meet the other side more than halfway or even making unilateral concessions. This has given a new impetus to the arms talks. It may be pointed out that thanks to the excessive arms build-up during the Brezhnev years, the Soviets are in a position to offer unilateral concessions in a controlled fashion just to keep up the tempo in the various arms control talks. The West has come under increasing pressure to respond matchingly to the Soviet initiatives.

34. See M.S. Gorbachev’s address to the 43rd UNGA session on December 7, 1988. Relevant extracts in Soviet-Review Documents, (New Delhi), December 1988, pp.24-27.
As regards the Soviet attitudes to arms control, an idea can be had from the following: under the INF Treaty, the Soviet Union is required to destroy 1836 missiles as compared to the USA's 859; 851 launchers as compared to the USA's 283.\textsuperscript{35} The USSR has also dropped its insistence on linking SDI with START although the insistence to observe the 1972 ABM Treaty remains. It agreed to dismantle the Krasnoyarsk radar station, admitting that it was a violation of the 1972 ABM Treaty. The USSR has also conceded excluding the strategic sea launched cruise missiles (SLCMS) from the framework of START negotiations and agreed to satisfy the 1974 and 1976 treaties on the limitations of underground nuclear tests. These treaties, in fact legalised underground nuclear testing within the "acceptable limits". The ratification amounts to encouraging the continuation of nuclear tests.\textsuperscript{36} It is a separate matter that in the context of the new thinking, these concessions are no longer regarded by the Soviet analysts as "concessions". Yet, it is difficult to view the exclusion of SLCMS and mobile missiles from the START framework as not a concession. This exclusion could, in fact, result in the continuation of the strategic arms race, despite the START agreement.

\textsuperscript{35} Disarmament and Security: IMSMO Year Book 1987, (Moscow, 1985), p.43.

\textsuperscript{36} Andrei Kortunov, "What Did We Concede?", Moscow News, no.43, 1989, p.3.
In 1989 the Soviet military continued to voice concern on the attitude of the NATO which had not shown matching reciprocity. Some specific issues which worried Soviet military leaders were reflected in the writings of Yazov, Akhromeyev, N. Chervov, etc. These can be summarised as:

- Despite the 1986 Stockholm Document on Confidence Building Measures, the possibility of a surprise attack still remained as the NATO refused to subject Navies and Air Forces to strict control.

- The problem of "dual purpose" arms (which can carry both conventional as well as nuclear warheads) and that of tactical strike aviation remained as the NATO insisted on the exclusion of tactical from the ambit of the talks.

- The USA continued to aim for superiority and unilateral advantages in long-range air and sea-launched cruise missiles.

On the whole, the Soviet military perception still remains that for the measures on European security to be meaningful, they have to be reciprocal. In fact, Marshal Akhromeyev recently wrote that if after a fifty per cent reduction on strategic nuclear weapons, the US military bases around the USSR still remain, the military threat to the USSR would increase and the Soviet position in the world would deteriorate. "How can we tolerate it"?

he asked. There is at the political level, evidence of a different approach — that of unilateral concessions.

As the political complexion of the East Europe changed in 1989-90, and the German unification process gained momentum and the fresh issues of European security arose, the traditional prominence of the Arms control issues in the East-West agenda was greatly eroded. NATO has officially acknowledged that "Europe has entered a new, promising era. Central and Eastern Europe is liberating itself. The Soviet Union has embarked on the long journey towards a free society". Warsaw Pact, on its part, has begun its own transformation in view of rapid disintegration of the "bloc security model" prevalent hitherto in Europe. Under the


changed conditions and judging from the outcome of the Bush-Gorbachev Summit meeting in May-June 1990, the future arms control agenda is likely to be as follows: Signing of the START treaty by the end of 1990; completion of Vienna talks on Conventional Force Reduction (CFE) in Europe by the end of 1990; beginning of the future treaty negotiations on nuclear and space arms, agreement on 'Open Skies', a package on Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM)', measures to limit 'manpower in Europe' as a follow-on to CFE and CBMs, limitation on the offensive capabilities of conventional forces in Europe etc. The stage is being set for START-II CFE-II and CSBII talks. The arms control agenda will include many new areas in the near future.

Military Reforms and Defence Conversion

One of the most important consequences of the change in Soviet Security perceptions and its military doctrine has been the initiation of 'most thorough going', radical military reforms in the USSR. Conceptually, the task of military reform is linked to the success of perestroika, and 'new political thinking'. According to the Soviet defense minister, who outlined a 10-year military reform plan, the military reform should be planned in such a way so as "to ensure that the country's defense capability" is "not harmed at any point of time" and that the "transformed" armed forces are "fully in accord with the defensive military doctrine, organically part of the new system of international security...". 40

40. Text of Marshal D.T. Yazov's Krasnaya Zvezda, 5 June 1990 is available in SW/SU/0785, pp.1/1-4.
Already, the Soviet authorities are working on the elaboration of "an integrated and detailed concept of military reform and the comprehensive socio-economic, military-theoretical, operational-strategic and legal study of its bases". The actual content of the military reform would include such aspects as: military budget cuts, organisational restructuring within the armed forces, equipment of the armed forces, doctrine, military-political facets, professionalisation of the army, defensive orientation of military formations, evaluation of the threat, etc. There has been considerable debate, bordering on the acrimonious in the Soviet media of late.

Defence conversion is a major plank of the Soviet military reform. Gorbachev in his address to the 43rd UNGA Session in 1988 said that the USSR was embarking on a substantial defence conversion programme. In 1989, the Soviet Government prepared a


5-year defence conversion programme which envisaged the raising of the share of civilian goods production in the defense sector from 40 percent in 1989 to 60 percent in 1990. By the end of 1989, 345 enterprises and more than 200 research design bureaus of the defence-industry complex had begun work on the development and production of civilian goods. The essential point about the defence conversion is that, for the first time, a massive demilitarisation of the Soviet economy is being undertaken.

Conclusion

"Reasonable sufficiency" and "non-offensive defence" are the most important concepts emerging from the 'new political thinking'. As yet there is no consensus among the military and civilian experts in the USSR on the precise scope and limits of these concepts. The political leadership under Gorbachev, by making unilateral concessions, has signalled its seriousness to conduct arms control talks to eliminate nuclear weapons, gradually dismantle military alliances (NATO and WTO) and lower tensions.

in Europe. The new thinking on security matters is closely linked with the train of events set in motion by the new thinking on other political issues. Europe will be transformed significantly if the present trends on security matters and those challenging the political, geographical and economic foundations of post-war Europe continue at the current pace.