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SECURITY ISSUES FOR THE 1990s

A PRESENTATION TO THE ATLANTIC COMMISSION

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Introduction

- If 1989 was the year of Revolution, 1990 will be the year of the think tank -- to find out what it all means; and to find out why we didn't predict the events of last year in the first place.
 - The post-war European security system is coming to an end, and the events of 1990 could well determine the security structure of Europe for the next several decades. This year we probably will have a Four Power agreement, a CFE Treaty, a START Treaty, and a CSCE Summit, a Superpower summit, a Soviet Communist Party Congress and elections in a new Germany.
 - Generally the signs for the future are good, but it is not yet time for strategists to become investment bankers.
 - There are at least eight factors that will determine the direction of things to come. I will look at each in turn and then examine possible security architectures for the future.
 - Dutch decisions on defence need to be taken in the context of this confused picture. By the end of 1990, the picture should be somewhat clearer, so my major recommendations are 1) wait a while before rushing to take fundamental decisions on the structure of Dutch defence, and 2) as much as possible take decisions together with the NATO allies.
1. The Soviet Threat
- In the eleven months from Gorbachev's 7 December 1988 UN speech to the 9 November 1989 puncture in the Berlin Wall, the Soviet Union has certainly stopped being the threat to NATO that it has been for 45 years.
 - In the European theatre, these dramatic events occurred in three stages. First, the unilateral withdrawals, now half implemented, created the prospect of conventional parity in Central Europe. Warning times more than doubled to 33-44 days. NATO no longer needed to fear the short warning attack, the scenario that haunted defence planners for 4 decades.
 - Second, in Vienna, Soviet negotiators accepted Western proposals which will further reduce Soviet tanks by about 35,000 so that both alliances will have parity in the Atlantic to the Urals area. As a result, the second nightmare of NATO planners -- the mobilisation of the Soviet second echelon forces - would be put to rest.
 - And third, the Soviets are under bilateral pressures from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and soon Germany to remove Soviet stationed forces from Europe. The Warsaw Pact is imploding and Moscow - even if it wanted to - could not count on its former allies to attack NATO. Moscow could not be sure which way Eastern European armies would point their guns.

- Similar trends have occurred with the Soviet Navy. The "out of area" ship days have reportedly fallen about 50% since 1983. The Soviets have only a very limited force -- with only 1-3 submarines - in the Mediterranean Sea.
- Moscow will retain 6,000 accountable strategic nuclear warheads after START and possibly some theatre nuclear warheads after SNF negotiations. And its land army even after CFE-I will be by far the largest single force in Europe. It will be modern, mechanised and mobile. And its armies will face demilitarised areas in Eastern Europe rather than NATO forward defence. A Soviet threat will thus continue, but it will be existential in nature.
- We all watch in amazement as the Soviet economy balances on the edge of the precipice and various Soviet republics vote for eventual independence. Soviet politics has become radicalised and polarised. Gorbachev seems to thrive on the chaos and grow even stronger with his new power base in Government rather than the Party. But how long can that last? The greatest threat to Gorbachev is probably mass strikes from the left and conservative Russian nationalism from the right.
- The overwhelming cold war conventional threat from the Warsaw Pact will be gone within a year or two. A residual nuclear threat and a less formidable conventional Russian threat will remain at a much lower order of magnitude.
- But a Soviet threat of a different nature might be resurrected in the future. The political basis for this threat could come from:
 - 1) a poorly handled German Unification process,
 - 2) misunderstandings elsewhere in Eastern Europe,
 - 3) the potential chaos of the decline of empire, or
 - 4) a Russian nationalist state with revanchist claims.
- Thus we need to manage the Soviet decline and avoid the Versailles syndrome of unequal treaties.
- At the military level, the West must maintain a credible nuclear deterrent, keep its command and control infrastructure, continue its R and D programmes, and keep a large enough reserve force with adequate mobilisation potential.

2. Eastern Europe

- Things have moved at an accelerating pace. Time Magazine observed that it took ten years for Poland to change, ten months for Hungary, ten weeks for the GDR, ten days for Czechoslovakia, and ten hours for Romania. Don't blink, you might miss Albania.
- Most of the Revolutions of 1989 look permanent, but the process may be unstable. We have seen signs of anarchy in Romainia and desperation in East Germany. Leadership changes will continue as seven East European countries have scheduled elections before this summer.

- These nations will have to make difficult decisions about their participation in the Warsaw Pact as they receive aid and investment from the West.
- At the same time, the nationality and border problems that have been smothered by the Warsaw Pact will eventually emerge.
- East European military forces are likely to decline dramatically as they shift priorities to economic development.
- A security vacuum may develop in Eastern Europe within which local conflict could rage.
- Already some Western observers are hoping that the Warsaw Pact will survive in a political form and that East European military reductions are not too dramatic. Two years ago that would have been treason.
- The West may need to decide whether and under what circumstances it would intervene in Eastern Europe. There was already some discussion in France of intervention during the Romanian revolution. There might be pressure under certain circumstances to extend Western commitments to Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. This might conceivably be done in the CSCE context. Hungary's foreign minister has even suggested that his nation might join NATO.
- European nations will have to sort out the risks, roles and responsibilities. The Soviets will have to decide what they can tolerate. If the risks are accepted there will be greater need in the West for Rapid Action Forces.

3. German Unification

- If disintegration is the norm in the East, unification and integration are key in the West.
- German unification will probably take place in 1990 and in the domestic area on the FRG's terms by extending Basic Federal law. Security considerations, however, will be complex. Key issues will include: Germany's eastern borders, its role in NATO, the size of the Bundeswehr, stationed forces in Germany, and continuation of the non-proliferation treaty.
- There is a consensus against neutrality in the FRG, but to some degree that is a bogus consensus because 1) the SPD would support rapid movement from Alliances to a "European Peace Order" based on CSCE, and 2) there is no consensus on the future of stationed forces. There is a strong consensus for neutrality in the GDR.

- There is also a new consensus among the three Western occupying powers on the path to unity. It includes the "2 + 4" process and "the GDR in NATO but no NATO in the GDR" formula. The Bundeswehr would remain at near full strength in the FRG area as part of the NATO integrated command. In the eastern five Länder, there would either be a demilitarised zone or a small territorial guard. The Bundeswehr is actively resisting cuts deeper than those contained in CFE-I, and its combined size could be in excess of 600,000 after unification. A more likely figure, however, is about 350,000.
- Underneath this NATO consensus, however, is deep mistrust of a united Germany. Kohl has moved very fast on unification without proper consultation, leading to much closer French-British ties. Poland and Germany's smaller neighbours are concerned about unification and resentful that they are not being consulted by the Four Powers. A consultative mechanism should be established.
- The Soviets may hold out for German neutrality, or they may try to push NATO stationed forces out of the FRG as they leave the GDR. (There appears to be a majority [71% by one poll] in the FRG to removal of all stationed forces). If US forces and the US nuclear umbrella are removed from German precipitously, Germany could become a nuclear power.
- The Western nations must design a security framework for German unity which 1) provides Germany with an adequate deterrent and 2) does not present the Soviets with yet another loss in the international chess game. The solution may include Soviet forces stationed in enclaves on NATO territory in east Germany. If political trends continue, that should pose no problem, but if reversals take place in Moscow it could cause serious trouble.
- For Holland, maintaining stationed forces in Germany could contribute to the maintenance of US stationed forces and hence to maintenance of a security structure for Germany.

4. The EC's Security Role

- In many ways, the West must now see Forward Defense as an economic concept. The EC now has a dual task of broadening and deepening at the same time.
- It must deepen its relationships in order to anchor a new Germany. Unfortunately the unification process is much faster than the integration process. Smooth absorption of the GDR in the EC will be critical and expensive. Some countries -- like Britain -- will resist paying the bill.
- The EC must also broaden through associated membership to East European countries. Without the hope provided by such an association, there will be greater instability in the east.
- Can the EC do both? It must try. If it can, it will probably begin to take on even more important security functions as former Warsaw Pact states are linked politically and economically to a more fully integrated EC.

5. The Arms Control Process

- Completing CFE-I remains important, even though some argue it locks in an old status quo and makes Soviet stationed forces in Europe "legitimate". It should be signed this autumn and it deserves ratification.
- It is important 1) because East European countries need the support to reduce Soviet force levels, 2) because reductions can be verified even in the Soviet Union, and 3) because Soviet equipment is destroyed rather than just removed to East of the Urals.
- I would expect very few immediate savings for the Netherlands flowing directly from CFE-I. 15% reductions do not automatically mean 15% budget savings. There will be equipment reductions. If NATO's 15% cuts are proportionate for the Netherlands at the end of SHAPE's cascading process, the Netherlands might be forced to destroy equipment in roughly the following amounts: 135 Leopard 1 tanks, 435-AIFV/APCs, about 100 artillery pieces, and about 28 fighter aircraft (probably NF-5s). Modern equipment like Leopard 2, self propelled artillery, and F-16s could probably be kept under CFE-I. Naval forces are exempt. No personnel reductions would be mandated, though reductions would be a logical consequence of equipment reductions.
- There would be additional costs involved in treaty verification and destruction of equipment, and some of the remaining equipment might still need modernisation within existing ceilings. The only true savings that would flow directly from CFE-I would thus be for deferral of some planned equipment purchases and savings from lower maintenance costs.
- If the Netherlands decides to declare a significant peace dividend by reducing its F-16 force, removing stationed forces from Germany, cutting its submarine force etc, it is likely to do so outside the context of CFE-I.
- CFE-II as a simple extension of CFE-I, however, may be counterproductive. The British and French do not want further massive reductions. In addition, if the principle of superpower parity in the Central Zone is maintained, CFE-II could either force out US troops or be seen as an unequal treaty by the Soviets. Reciprocal unilateral cuts may be more efficient. If institutional arms control is judged to be important, then the CSCE process would allow national arms reduction. In this way, US stationed forces might be delinked further from Soviet stationed forces.
- The Four-Power agreements this year will be critical in terms of setting force limits for Germany, and it could overtake CFE-I, CFE-II, and even the SNF negotiations with regard to forces in Germany.
- Elsewhere on the arms control front, there are few consequences for Europe in START except to applaud as superpower inventories decline. But France and Britain might be included in START II.

- US chemical weapons will soon be out of Europe and US/Soviet inventories will be cut to 80% of the current US level.
- The SNF negotiations should be designed to maintain a minimum deterrence in Europe, an area of possible convergence of interests between the superpowers. The deterrence would be based on airpower alone, and both FOTL and nuclear artillery are on their way out. So a Third Zero is now inevitable.

6. US Defence Policy

- There will be a major battle in the US over the FY 1991 defence budget. The Administration's request is a 2.6% reduction in real terms but a 1.3% increase in nominal terms. Much deeper cuts will be proposed in 1992-94.
- The Democrats in Congress will probably cut deeper in 1991 to include the B-2, SDI, MX-mobile, and several conventional programmes, but there will be a limit because the Bush Administration could threaten base closings in individual states.
- The impact of US budget cuts on Europe thus far is nominal, with only a few base closings. The major manpower cuts thus far have been taken in CONUS. The plan is to take a future peace dividend as part of the CFE-I manpower reductions (about 80,000 troops of which 60,000 would be from Germany).
- In this next decade, we might expect to see US forces in Europe drop to about 100,000 or less, a level seen as enough to maintain a "forward presence". Thus the 225,000 level in CFE-I is likely to be a transition number. But the rationale for keeping these residual forces will shift from deterring the Soviet threat to maintaining general stability against an existential threat.
- During this period, the Congress will push the US in the direction of greater specialisation in NATO - which means a focus on airpower and airlift to return forces to Europe.
- By the end of this decade, US forces might be down to headquarters companies, and the remaining US nuclear deterrent could be in Britain. This may not be stable for Germany, however, and the trend should be resisted if possible.

7. Impact on NATO

- If the Warsaw Pact collapses, it will be difficult but not impossible to hold NATO together. The justification would include: 1) an insurance policy for like-minded nations; 2) negotiating and monitoring European arms control; 3) providing a security framework for Germany; 4) managing European defence cooperation; 5) providing an infrastructure for part of a European peace order; 6) dealing with new threats like drugs and terrorism; and 7) coordinating out of area issues.

- The fundamentals of NATO doctrine will have to change, however.
- Forward defence might continue to exist as a concept, but not as a military deployment. The stress will be on operational reserves and mobilisation. Where would the forward defence line be: on the Elbe, the Oder, the Polish/Soviet border?
- Flexible response would have much less of a war-fighting element to it and would become more like "existential deterrence". It would be based solely on airpower.
- In addition, NATO itself will have to change. It will be more political in nature, it may even lose its integrated command, and it will be influenced by rather than led from Washington.

8. Out of Area Responsibilities

- The same phenomena can be seen in the US, the UK, and France. As the threat from the Warsaw Pact resides, the potential for out of area operations to justify spending is prominent.
- The result is greater stress on naval forces, special operations forces, and light mobile forces at the expense of heavily mechanised forces.
- There is some justification for concern about out of area issues. As arms control reduces weapons in Europe, some will find their way to the Third World. Ballistic missile and chemical weapons proliferation are serious problems.
- Soviet disengagement in the Third World is only partial, and that disengagement could in fact produce more rather than less conflict.
- The problem is that as the Third World gains sophisticated equipment, the costs of European intervention will rise significantly. The Falklands War is a case in point.
- But Europe will retain the potential, in part because the equipment needed for the changed military threat in Europe can more easily be adapted for out of area roles.

Future Security Architectures

- These pressures will drive Europe to one or a combination of several of five security architectures.
- The first is based on maintenance of existing alliances. It is probably the most stable of the four, but can it be maintained if the Pact implodes?
- The second might be called reverse asymmetry. In this model, the Warsaw Pact disappears but NATO remains viable in the West, and possibly some East European states join. This model is also stable, but it will be resisted by Moscow.

- The third is the Balance of Power model that kept some degree of peace in the early 19th century. This might develop if Germany became neutral, the Warsaw Pact collapsed, and NATO lost its coherence. The systems, however, required occasional use of force by one or a group of countries; not a pleasant prospect if four or more of these states have nuclear weapons.
- The fourth architecture is a collective security model in which CSCE would take on elements of the League of Nations. It has been described as a "common European house", a "European Peace Order" and a "European Security Community". This would extend security to Eastern Europe, but it would not be accepted by the superpowers without a veto. A veto by only the superpowers would set up the potential for superpower condominium. A unanimity rule could render it impotent.
- The fifth architecture is a United States of Europe with an army provided primarily by Germany and nuclear deterrence by France and Britain. The current system may be headed in this direction, but has anyone studied the dynamics of three nuclear superpowers with areas of instability between two of them?

Questions for the Netherlands to think about

1. What is your vision of European security architectures in the 1990s? Is it in the Netherland's interest to abandon one security system in favour of another?
2. What can the Netherlands do to maintain NATO with Germany in it?
3. How can the Netherlands contribute to maintaining a minimal nuclear deterrence when SNF missiles are removed from Europe?
4. Would the Netherlands be prepared to participate in a collective security system that extends into Eastern Europe? What force structure would be necessary?
5. Should the Netherlands make unilateral reductions before the CFE-I process is completed and in excess of the reductions required by that treaty?
6. How far should the Netherlands go in shifting its armed forces from active duty to reserve status?
7. Does the Netherlands have an out of area role and if so what forces are necessary to maintain a capability?
8. Can the Netherlands afford to relax its ASW operations in light of reduction in Soviet naval operations?