European Security in the 1990s

**Deterrence and Defense after the
INF Treaty**

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the INF Treaty**
Walter Laqueur and Leon Sloss

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**Deterrence and Defense after the
INF Treaty**

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Foreword

Rarely if ever have the political, economic, and military foundations of the Western Alliance been in such a state of flux. Walter Laqueur and Leon Sloss, therefore, deserve credit not just for the quality of the analysis in this superb book but also for the timeliness of its appearance.

As Laqueur says in his chapter "Touring the Western European Defense Horizon," if the likely development of European defense policies is not particularly reassuring, at least it gives no grounds for despair. The list of problems we face is a daunting one. First there is the spiralling cost of defense expenditures, particularly in the absence of significant NATO or inter-European cooperation. This is particularly serious in light of the reluctance to increase, or even maintain, current expenditures in the midst of Mikhail Gorbachev's "peace offensive" and the extraordinary changes in Eastern Europe, both of which have had a dramatic impact on Western public opinion.

There is also a problem in the perceived relative economic decline of the United States vis-à-vis Western Europe and Japan, which only exacerbates calls to reduce the number of American troops in Europe. Other dangers to the political cohesion and military credibility of the alliance include demographic trends that threaten current manpower levels, transatlantic acrimony over the burden-sharing issue, and political pressures (particularly in West Germany) toward denuclearization and even neutralism.

To address all of these elements, and more, requires a mixture of vision, strategy, and political skills. As Laqueur says, "a new strategic concept is needed both for the individual countries and for NATO as a whole."

Even though the situation with West Germany is radically new, it has a precedent in the mid-1960s. Back then, General de Gaulle lost faith in NATO's nuclear strategy and in U.S. dominance, declared that the USSR was no longer a threat, and withdrew from the military side of the alliance. It all sounds suspiciously like Germany today. But in response to de Gaulle, NATO acted admirably by producing the Harmel Report, which articulated the policy of defense and dialogue that has been NATO's guiding star ever since.

Then, while I was at NATO in 1983, we had a different kind of crisis. Following the stalemate caused by the Soviet walkout from negotiations, an East–West study set up by Leo Tindemans laid the groundwork for NATO’s successful pursuit of the “Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles.”

The momentum of the Cold War was broken when the Soviets tried and failed to split NATO on the issue of deploying intermediate-range nuclear weapons. In response, in a masterful diplomatic move, Moscow reversed course. If Stalin had created NATO by his threats, Gorbachev would unmake it by removing that threat. As a result of the General Secretary’s deft diplomatic maneuvering, NATO moved from victorious unity in 1983–1984 to potentially dangerous disunity.

NATO’s current disarray means that despite the promise of change in the Soviet Union, there is new peril in Europe. As the USSR is confronted by destabilizing forces—some springing from its own “new thinking”—the West confronts its own forms of destabilization. The result is a transformation of Europe in which the Soviet threat has diminished but the dangers of instability have increased. In the 1990s, with the Soviet empire crumbling, Eastern Europe moving to liberate itself, intensified interest in German reunification, the withdrawal of American troops, transatlantic protectionism, and economic conflict, the Western security system could disintegrate. At worst, this could lead to the types of uncertainties and miscalculations that produced World War I. Even in a less pessimistic scenario, however, there will still be a breakup of the Cold War order, and a questioning of some of NATO’s fundamental tenets that accompanied that order. It is now necessary for NATO to follow these earlier precedents but with a more comprehensive mandate to develop a NATO grand strategy for the 1990s.

The first aspect of this should be an attempt to do what NATO has resisted doing before, namely, examining the critical triangular relationship between contentious short-range nuclear forces (SNF), improvements in conventional forces, and negotiations for nuclear and conventional arms control. If short-range nuclear forces have any use, it is to offset, however crudely, the Warsaw Pact’s conventional superiority. But if the conventional balance can be stabilized through a combination of NATO force improvements and conventional arms control agreements, then the requirements for modernizing SNF could be reconsidered.

We have, therefore, the makings of an alliance deal. The American proposal, which makes SNF negotiations contingent on conventional reductions and insists in advance that SNF will not be reduced to zero, identifies some of these trade-offs correctly. However, what is still lacking is any link between SNF and the third side of the triangle, namely, improvements in NATO’s conventional forces. Consequently, there is a pressing need for an overall net assessment of our critical vulnerabilities, caused not just by superior Soviet forces but also by flagrant weaknesses deriving from NATO’s own maldeployments, ammunition shortages, and so forth.

One of this book’s most valuable insights is its observation that NATO must develop systems “that can adapt to weapons perhaps not yet fully conceived.” And

although the authors do not identify such systems specifically, an excellent example of how we might close our self-created vulnerabilities would be the development of the most important Pentagon program of the past decade—"competitive strategies." Instead of matching the Warsaw Pact tank for tank, the concept emphasizes the incorporation of smart and brilliant weapons into new weapons systems and tactical concepts that might turn the tide of a conventional battle in NATO's favor. As well as rendering NATO's defense posture more effective, competitive strategies also provide an uncontroversial alternative to the deeply divisive short-range nuclear missiles. Political unity within the alliance is more important than any weapon system.

Discussions within the alliance at every level—from summit meetings to "public diplomacy"—are needed on a huge range of issues in order to convince Western electorates of the need to retain a credible defense posture. Walter Laqueur and Leon Sloss are fully aware that security involves not just military matters but politics and economics as well. It is this fundamental awareness providing a backdrop to their remarkable expertise and grasp of the details that makes this book such a welcome contribution to the debate.

DAVID M. ABSHIRE

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Preface

A specter is once again haunting Europe—the specter of profound political and economic change. These changes offer promise as well as peril, and their ultimate effects are as yet unknown. Their implications for European security have been debated by politicians, policy analysts, pundits, and publics throughout Europe and the United States, and have created or exacerbated differences within the Atlantic Alliance. Contentious issues such as burden-sharing and short-range nuclear force modernization, along with the challenges of Mikhail Gorbachev's public diplomacy, pose a threat to the future of the alliance. And NATO's responsiveness to the political explosion in Eastern Europe, with its implications for East-West relations, will pose a fundamental challenge to the continued importance of the alliance for European security.

Will the Atlantic Alliance survive the challenge posed by the dramatic changes now occurring in Eastern and Western Europe? Are there viable alternatives to NATO? How will Europeans define and ensure their security in the years ahead? Will the apparent lessening of the Soviet threat preclude the need for costly and politically divisive decisions on defense budgets and force improvements?

The distinguished authors address these and other questions about European defense. They give particular attention to economic and demographic trends and to the attitudes of publics and political elites in the major countries of Western Europe. They also examine the implications of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty for the future of NATO; identify trends toward denuclearization and their meaning for European defense, which ultimately has relied on U.S. nuclear weapons for more than four decades; and explore the viability of alternative defense concepts for future European security. The compelling analysis provided in the volume is supported by an appendix containing an extensive collection of documents pertaining to European security.

In compiling the documents presented in the appendix, we acknowledge and appreciate the assistance of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs; the British Information Services, New York; and the German Information Center, New York. We

also acknowledge and appreciate the dedication and contributions of Center for National Security Studies staff. Arthur Nichols, the Center's editor, established with the publisher editorial procedures and schedules, and he copyedited the volume. Molly Cernicek's contributions were substantial—she played a critical role in collecting, preparing, and organizing the documents in the appendix. The skilled assistance of Janis Dye was indispensable in preparing the manuscripts for the publisher. And Wanda Franks deserves special recognition for facilitating our communications with the authors.

JOSEPH F. PILAT

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Contents

Introduction	1
NATO's Dual-Track Decision	2
Toward the INF Treaty	4
In the Aftermath of the INF Treaty	6
 1. Touring the Western European Defense Horizon	9
Introduction	9
West Germany and the Atlantic Alliance in the Years to Come	10
Europe's Nuclear Powers	24
The Benelux Countries and Scandinavia	33
NATO's Southern Flank	37
Soviet Foreign Policy and the Future of NATO	41
Notes and References	42
 2. Western European Defense: The Next Ten Years	45
Introduction	45
European Defense Cooperation	48
Alternative or Nonprovocative Defense	54
Notes and References	72
 3. Future Requirements for Theater Weapons in Western Europe	75
Introduction	75
Setting the Context: Factors Affecting Theater Nuclear Forces	77

Future Requirements for Theater Nuclear Forces	88
Notes and References	97

Appendix: European Security in the Postwar Period: Documents from 1948–1989

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization 103

The North Atlantic Treaty, August 24, 1949	103
North Atlantic Council Communiqué, December 14, 1967	105
Speech of M. Laurent Fabius, September 17, 1982	107
North Atlantic Council Communiqué, December 9, 1983	111
Lord Carrington, Secretary General, on the Alliance, September 21, 1984	112
The Security Policy of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1985	117
Maintaining Security in a Changing World [United Kingdom, 1988] ...	120
Declaration of the Heads of State and Government, March 2–3, 1988	124
Statement on the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, June 9–10, 1988	126

European Security Cooperation 128

Treaty between Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, March 17, 1948	128
Protocols to the 1948 Brussels Treaty, October 23, 1954	132
Franco–German Summit Statement, February 27–28, 1986	139
Speech by Sir Geoffrey Howe, March 16, 1987	140

Arms Control: The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty 145

Treaty between the USA and USSR, December 8, 1987	145
Address by FRG Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, October 28, 1977	161
Communiqué of a Special NATO Meeting, December 12, 1979	165
President Ronald Reagan's Speech to the United Nations General Assembly, September 26, 1983	165
NATO Nuclear Planning Group Communiqué, October 28, 1983	166
Speech by FRG Chancellor Helmut Schmidt to the SPD Conference, November 19–20, 1983	167
Statement by General Secretary Andropov, November 24, 1983	169
Communiqué of the North Atlantic Council, June 11, 1987	170

NATO Nuclear Planning Group Communiqué, November 1987	171
North Atlantic Council Ministerial Communiqué, December 1987	172
Arms Control: Short-Range Nuclear Missiles	176
Statement by British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, May 14, 1987	176
NATO Nuclear Planning Group Communiqué, May 15, 1987	176
Statement by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, June 2, 1987	177
Arms Control: Conventional Forces	179
Document of the Stockholm Conference, September 19, 1986	179
Address of the Warsaw Treaty Member States, June 11, 1986	184
Press Conference of François Mitterrand, April 23, 1987	186
Interview with Jacques Chirac, May 16, 1987	187
Halifax Statement on Conventional Arms Control, May 30, 1987	187
Conventional Arms Control: The Way Ahead, March 2–3, 1988	188
Mikhail Gorbachev's Address to the United Nations, December 7, 1988	191
Statement Issued by the North Atlantic Council, December 8–9, 1988	192
Mandate for Negotiation on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, January 10, 1989	195
Position Paper, March 6, 1989	196
Conceptual Framework of Agreement on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, March 9, 1989	199
Speech by Hans-Dietrich Genscher, April 27, 1989	202
President George Bush's Statement, May 29, 1989	205
About the Authors	207
Index	209