12. SNIE 11-16-88 CX, November 1988, *Soviet Policy During the Next Phase of Arms Control in Europe* (Key Judgments only)

Director of Central Intelligence

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[redacted]

Soviet Policy During the Next Phase of Arms Control in Europe

Special National Intelligence Estimate

This Special National Intelligence Estimate represents the views of the Director of Central Intelligence with the advice and assistance of the US Intelligence Community.

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Soviet Policy During the Next Phase of Arms Control in Europe (U)

Information available as of 17 November 1988 was used in the preparation of this Special National Intelligence Estimate.

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this Estimate:
The Central Intelligence Agency
The Defense Intelligence Agency
The National Security Agency
The Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State

also participating:
The Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army
The Office of the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy
The Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force
The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps

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Figure 1
NATO and Warsaw Pact Forces Within the Atlantic-to-the-Urals Zone

Indigenous Forces		Stationed Forces
Belgium	Netherlands	Belgium
Denmark	Norway	Canada
France	Portugal	France
Greece	Spain	Netherlands
Iceland	Turkey	United Kingdom
Italy	United Kingdom	United States
Luxembourg	West Germany	West Germany

Indigenous Forces		Stationed Forces
Bulgaria	Hungary	Group of Soviet Forces, Germany
Czechoslovakia	Poland	Central Group of Forces (Czechoslovakia)
East Germany	Romania	Northern Group of Forces (Poland)
Soviet Military Districts		Southern Group of Forces (Hungary)
Baltic	North Caucasus	
Belorussian	Odessa	
Carpathian	Transcaucasus	
Kiev	Ural	
Leningrad	Volga	
Moscow		

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Key Judgments

We judge that the Soviets and their allies have a number of interrelated military, political, and economic reasons to engage the West in conventional arms control:

- Military:
  - — To improve the correlation of forces and to reduce what they perceive as NATO's capability to launch a surprise attack.
  - — To impede NATO's force modernization plans and to prevent or impede NATO's deployment of advanced technology weapons.

- Political:
  - — To demonstrate the "new thinking" in Soviet foreign and domestic policy.
  - — To appeal to foreign and domestic public opinion in a generalized way, while adding to Moscow's overall arms control posture and enhancing the USSR's image as a trustworthy, rational player in the international arena.

- Economic:
  - — To reduce the threat from NATO and thereby reduce the urgency on the part of the Soviet Union to match or better NATO's high-technology modernization programs.
  - — To make it politically easier to allocate economic resources within the Soviet Union from the defense sector to the civilian sector to carry out *perestroyka*.

We believe the Soviets and their allies *prefer* to negotiate with NATO to achieve *mutual* reductions of conventional forces. Militarily, it makes more sense to trade force reductions, thereby retaining a balance in the correlation of forces. However, the Warsaw Pact probably realizes that negotiating an agreement with NATO that is acceptable to the Soviets could take years—and might not even be possible.

In the short term (up to two years), we believe the Pact will pursue a strategy aimed at reducing the West's perception of the Soviet threat in the expectation that this course will make it difficult for NATO governments to maintain or increase defense spending. The Pact will engage NATO in the Conventional Stability Talks and probably will introduce sweeping proposals for asymmetric reductions.

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We predict that, when formal negotiations concerning conventional forces in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals zone begin, the Warsaw Pact will quickly present a formal version of its public diplomacy position—and might even table a draft treaty very early in the negotiations. It will probably insist on an initial discussion of data regarding asymmetries between the two sides' forces and will probably suggest establishing a working group on data.

The Warsaw Pact states will *not* accept the current NATO proposal, which in effect calls on the Pact to take gigantic cuts in tanks and artillery for minor cuts on the NATO side so that there is parity between the Pact and NATO. For example, this would mean the Pact would have to withdraw or destroy about 25,000 tanks while NATO would withdraw or destroy about 900 tanks.

Outside of the negotiating process itself, for political effect, the Soviets may also take unilateral initiatives:

- We judge the Soviets could garner significant political gains in Western Europe at tolerable risks by unilaterally removing some of their forces from Eastern Europe, especially all from Hungary. The evidence on Soviet timing and conditions is insufficient to predict with confidence when and whether a withdrawal announcement might be made.

- Given the West German concern about short-range nuclear-capable forces, it is possible that the Soviets might make a gesture by unilaterally withdrawing some short-range ballistic missile launchers from Eastern Europe; however, we judge the likelihood of such a move to be low for the period of this Estimate.

- The Soviets may attempt to portray force restructuring as a unilateral force reduction; however, we judge that the ongoing restructuring of the Soviet ground forces is intended primarily to make units more effective for prolonged conventional combat operations against NATO.

We judge that, among our NATO Allies, France will be the most resistant to potential Soviet gambits, with the United Kingdom a strong second. Of the major partners, the Federal Republic of Germany will be the most responsive to such ploys, because of its strong desire to reduce defense spending and to reduce the chance of the country becoming Europe's nuclear battleground. The challenge for the United States and the rest of NATO will be to continue the ongoing NATO modernization, while at the same time negotiating on a possible agreement with a more sophisticated adversary in an environment where the public perception of the Warsaw Pact threat has been softened significantly.

~~*These Key Judgments are Secret Noforn.*~~