ALLIED COMMAND EUROPE: KEEPING THE PEACE WITH FREEDOM

General Bernard W. Rogers

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Five years ago the Atlantic Alliance initiated a comprehensive review of its long term defense needs. The result was consensus on two key points:

— The Warsaw Pact had not matched Western restraint on armaments in the early 1970s but had continued a massive military buildup despite its pronouncements of genuine interest in peace;
— To maintain deterrence the Alliance would have to respond with a comprehensive and sustained program for improving its military posture.

Thus, the commitment to real increases by allies in defense spending of 3 % annually and to the Long Term Defense Program (LTDP) became centerpieces of NATO's security policy for ensuring the viability of deterrence in the 1980s.

In late 1980 I presented in public fora an assessment of the evolving balance and the growing challenges to Alliance security within and beyond the NATO area. In brief, my assessment then was that the threat to the Alliance has grown rapidly over the past 20 years and continues to grow; that despite the efforts the Alliance has made, our relative military capability to counter the threat is declining; and, therefore, the credibility of our deterrent is diminishing and is in jeopardy. The negative tone of the assessment resulted from nations' failing to fulfill sufficiently their commitments to Force Goals and the LTDP.

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What occurred during 1981 which impacted upon the balance? First, the Warsaw Pact. At the theater nuclear level:

— New «SS-20» sites became operational at a rate which equated to more than 5 new launchers per month in 1981; these new sites added over 200 warheads on launchers (over 400 counting refires);
— We continued to observe deployment or preparations for deployment of the new generation of Soviet medium range missiles — the «SS-21», the «SS-22» and the «SS-X-23» — all of which have improved accuracy and destructive power over the older systems they replace or supplement.

With regard to Warsaw Pact ground forces, during 1981:

— Our assessment of the ground forces facing Allied Command Europe (ACE) increased by 6 divisions;
— Divisional reorganization in the Group of Soviet Forces Germany was nearing completion, which, *inter alia*, adds an artillery battalion to all their tank regiments and upgrades the regimental motorized rifle companies in their tank divisions to battalions;
— Approximately 2000 «T-64/72» tanks were added to the inventory, with the «T-80» entering trial production.

In the air we saw in 1981:

— The addition of about 1000 modern aircraft to the Warsaw Pact inventory;
— Development of the modified FOXBAT, the USSR's first look-down/shoot-down fighter; and
— Continued trials of the new Sukhoi close air support fighter.

As for naval forces, I would note that in 1981 the Warsaw Pact:

— Increased its capabilities for long range operations and power projection by adding the KIROV SAM/SSM cruiser and SOVREMENNY Class destroyer to the inventory;
— Launched an additonal 8 submarines (5 nuclear powered);
— Added 30 surface ships of all types to its operational fleet.

Across the board, the Warsaw Pact also continued to improve its significant capability to suport and sustain its forces.

In sum, in 1981 we saw a continued increase in Soviet offensive capabilities, reflecting a determination to shift the balance further to NATO's disadvantage.

On the ACE side of the ledger, with respect to Tactical Nuclear Forces (TNF):

- The Alliance remained firm in its support of the December 1979 two-track decision, full implementation of which remains SACEUR's highest priority;
- The «zero level outcome» was defined and adopted;
- The deployment schedule of GLCMs and PIIs remained on track;
- Negotiations on TNF arms control and reduction measures got underway.

During 1981 we enhanced ACE conventional readiness in a broad range of national and multinational efforts. For example:

- We fielded a significant number of new anti-armor systems and several hundred improved artillery pieces, modern tanks and modern tactical aircraft;
- Although our modernization programs for maritime forces still lag behind the growing needs for them, the United States announced a major fleet expansion which will help secure control of the seas in the long term;
- Some slight improvement was made in our very inadequate ability to sustain our forces with fuel, ammunition and reserve materiel stocks;
- The AWACS program became fully supported and on schedule;
- The U. S. made decisions directed toward future major enchancements of its forces.

We further improved readiness in 1981 through significant advances in ACE reinforcement planning. National responses to the SHAPE Rapid Reinforcement Plan were generally favorable; we have completed the plan and forwarded it for approval by NATO's Political authorities. We wel-

come Germany's agreement to provide over 90,000 personnel for Wartime Host Nation Support, thus materially assisting the introduction of external combat formations into our Central Region.

Of particular importance to the Northern Region was the reaffirmation by Norway of the decision to pre-stock equipment for a US Marine Amphibious Brigade and to position in the North the equipment for a second Norwegian Regimental Combat Team. We are very pleased by Canada's announcement in December 1981 that it is funding the prestocking in Norway of equipment for its air and sea transportable brigade group.

The reintegration of Greek forces in the military structure holds the promise of considerably strengthening NATO's vital Southern Region. The willingness of the nations of the region to do more, and the military and economic assistance others provide to Turkey, Greece and Portugal are of continuing significance. Spain's prospective membership provides the potential to enhance materially the security posture of this key area.

These improvements to our security arrangements are most welcome. Some nations, however, decided in 1981 to reduce defense spending, which, in some instances, will result in a downward spiralling of their conventional capabilities. Nevertheless, if one gauges our military force structure in ACE today against that of a few years ago and takes into account the fiscal strains besetting our national economies, then our collective performance in the defense sector, despite its deficiencies, can be viewed in a positive light.

Unfortunately, measuring our efforts against national economic constraints does not give us a valid yardstick by which to assess our ability to deter and defend. It is in the more relevant context of comparative military capabilities actually available to NATO and the Warsaw Pact that our security must be judged.

In that context, the candid assessment which I presented in 1980 is still applicable today. Although ACE is stronger today than in 1980, the gap between NATO and Warsaw Pact relative force capabilities continues to widen. There is good cause for concern about the impact of this continually widening gap in real military capabilities on our ability to implement NATO strategy.

In the days of the West's nuclear superiority, a «trip wire» strategy of «massive retaliation» that posited the early use of strategic nuclear

weapons made sense. But a decade and a half ago, as the Soviets strove for strategic nuclear parity, NATO recognized the bankruptcy of that strategy and developed our current deterrent strategy of Flexible Response. This strategy is deliberately vague about the precise nature of our response to aggression; however, it envisions 3 types of military response:

— *Direct defense* to defeat an attack *or* place the burden of escalation on the enemy;
— *Deliberate escalation* on our part;
— *General nuclear response*, the ultimate guarantor of deterrence.

This strategy remains applicable today for meeting our security challenges *if* adequate and appropriate forces to fulfill it are available. But what is to be said of a strategy of deterrence, which, after several years of insufficient effort relative to the threats which must be deterred, approaches a point of being inoperable? Are we at or near such a point? Do we have in reality a strategy which requires capabilities so obviously greater than those which exist that the deterrent impact is lost upon the minds of the leaders of the USSR? These are unpleasant questions, but they are relevant in the context of the current Soviet quest for military superiority. To answer them we must take a hard look at the manner by which we are to implement Flexible Response.

If Flexible Response is to be credible, it must be supported by an adequate military capability for each leg of our Triad. At the strategic nuclear level, the Soviets have made vast improvements over the last decade; fortunately, the United States and the United Kingdom are planning to ensure the continued deterrent value of our strategic forces. At the theater nuclear level we must ensure that we implement the December 1979 two-track program if we are to succeed in eliminating the imbalance.

Thus, while we have no reason for complacency regarding the nuclear components of the Triad, we have recognized the need to improve them and have begun to act. Remaining is the third element of the Triad: conventional forces. It is with regard to their role in the strategy of Flexible Response, and our ability to fulfill that role, that I have the greatest concerns.

The awesome destructiveness of nuclear weapons and the grave risk of rapid escalation to a general nuclear exchange which could result from the first use of theater nuclear weapons are persuasive arguments for

keeping the nuclear threshold in Europe as high as possible. That can only be done by maintaining adequate conventional forces. In my judgement, by continuing to fail to provid sufficiently for these forces, we are committing the double error of reducing our ability to deter while lowering the nuclear threshold should deterrence fail.

Although our strategy calls for us to resort initially to conventional defense without escalation, its clear implication is that to deter conventional attack we must convince the Soviets of our *readiness*, if forced, to escalate to nuclear war. In 1967, when NATO possessed significant theater nuclear advantages, such reliance on escalatory potential was undoubtedly credible in Soviet eyes. But is it now, in a time when the Soviets equal or have surpassed the West in the measures of strategic nuclear strength and enjoy an unprecedented theater nuclear superiority? Might they believe that under such conditions we would not escalate to TNF?

The question is not one of our nations' confidence in each other or of our collective will, but rather one of the beliefs about us held by leaders on the other side. My concern is that in the context of international crisis, the Soviets would perceive that they possess both the capability to inflict a conventional defeat and a sufficient nuclear edge to deter NATO's escalation. Such a perception could well cause the Soviet leaders to justify the risks of direct attack, or of aggression against vital Allied interests outside the NATO area, or of political coercion of NATO nations.

Alliance defense policy has for some years implicitly recognized the impact on escalatory credibility of these trends in the nuclear balance. As a consequence, we dedicated ourselves to improving the deterrent contribution of both our theater nuclear and conventional forces. However, our commitment to conventional force modernization, implicit in adopting our strategy in 1967, reaffirmed by the LTDP in 1978 and biennially by the agreed Force Goals, has not been fulfilled and cannot be realized at current levels of effort. Consequently, what remains is a conventional posture which is clearly inadequate to accommodate the growing conventional threat and which leaves us terribly uncomfortable that it is we who will be forced to bear the burden of escalation to nuclear weapons in the event of major conventional aggression against us.

In my view, the viability of the Alliance strategy has arrived at a critical crossroads. On the one hand, with our current level of effort (and our inability to sustain our forces with manpower, ammunition and war reserve stocks in a conventional war), we can continue to maintain our present posture that in reality equates to a «delayed tripwire.» This is a posture which, against large scale conventional aggression, might at best — given adequate warning and timely and appropriate political decisions — be sufficient to allow us only the time and security necessary to deliberate and execute the employment of nuclear options — or, failing that, to capitulate. On the other hand, there is an alternative available to us which would seek a conventional capability that would give us a reasonable prospect of success in the forward defense, with success defined as the capability to check a major conventional aggression and place the burden of escalation — or withdrawal — on the agressor.

For our planning to proceed in a coherent manner, I believe we need to determine which role we wish the conventional leg of the Triad to play. My own judgment is that there is a compelling case for adopting the alternative. In providing ourselves such a conventional capability, we would shift the decision of escalation to the potencial aggressor who is no more anxious to escalate than are we in view of the uncertainty whether the first use of nuclear weapons will soon further escalate to the strategic nuclear level.

Moreover, to the extent that we are successful in the arms reduction negotiations in eliminating LRTNF and placing limitations on MRTNF systems, we must have a correspondingly strengthened conventional posture — or a sudden breakthrough at the MBFR talks — if we are to preserve our deterrence. Otherwise our deterrent spectrum would then consist of conventional forces on one end and strategic nuclear systems on the other, with our only escalatory option coupling the extremes being relatively short-range nuclear weapons, most of which would land on our own soil. The «zero level outcome» proposal is a move for peace that reflects our peoples' antipathy towards the risk of nuclear war; however, if achieved we would need to have increased confidence in the strength of our conventional capability.

Let me sketch out the basic requirements for the kind of viable

conventional deterrent I think we need. They fall in three areas: readiness, sustainability and survivability. In brief outline, we must have adequate, ready, in-place, triservice forces which are capable, with minimum warning, of preventing foward based Warsaw Pact forces from gaining air superiority, seizing exits to the Atlantic or Mediterranean, achieving early penetration of forward defensive positions or destroying vital rear area logistical installations. We must also be able to generate adequately trained and equipped European reserves and the initial increment of North American air and ground reinforcements. To ensure that we can maintain ground force ratios which permit a coherent defense, there is an urgent need to be able to target and destroy by conventional means the Warsaw Pact second echelon forces — its follow-on divisions — before they engage at the main battle area.

We must be able to *sustain* our forces with adequate personnel replacements, reserve materiel stocks, fuel and ammunition. In all this, defense of lines of communications, strategic lift, infrastructure and host nation support play key roles.

If our conventional forces are to *survive* on the modern battlefield, we must redress our mid-term vulnerability to air attack, ensure that our forces can survive and operate in a toxic environment, and improve significantly our electronic warfare capability. We are making very limited progress in the electronic warfare area, one in which our technological superiority could be applied to such great advantage to blind enemy electronic systems and to cut communications between the highly centralized direction of operations and the operational units.

We must also have an additional capability — the capacity to shift rapidly to the counterattack, the very essence of a viable defense. Defending Western Europe consists of more than merely occupying a series of delaying positions until we are at the English Channel; it means being able to conduct local counterattacks to check the aggressor, regain lost territory, and turn his forces eastward, carrying with it the increased Soviet concern about maintaining Warsaw Pact unity under those conditions.

The concept I have outlined may appear ambitious. Yet most of the additional capabilities called for can be accomplished within the constraint of a reasonable economic challenge to each nation and at levels of national

defense expenditure which are not so great as most persons imagine. In fact, most of what is needed for the conventional deterrent I have described is in the Force Proposals for 1983 to 1988, which we would hope that ministers will adopt as Force Goals — and national commitments — at their meeting in May 1982. Nations' meeting these Forge Proposals on the schedule set forth will provide us an adequate conventional capability by the end of this decade.

In summary, our ability to implement effectively our strategy of Flexible Response continues to decline and the credibility of our deterrent is jeopardized. At the strategic and theater nuclear levels, decisions have been made which, if carried out, will help arrest this decline. Either through new weapons deployments or arms reduction agreements — or a combination of the two — we are committed to redressing the nuclear balance. But at the conventional level, there exists no parallel sense of urgency or decisive action. ACE needs the conventional improvements outlined in our Force Proposals if we are to have ready, sustainable and survivable forces. Without them, and with continued Warsaw Pact military growth, we must all understand what the strategy is that *can* be implemented. Today — and for the forseeable future at *current* levels of effort and status of our forces — it is one which, if we are attacked, will soon face us with 2 choices: escalation with whatever theater nuclear forces we possess, or capitulation. Further, any success we achieve through our negotiations in reducing the role of nuclear weapons must inevitably place greater weight on the conventional leg of the Triad.

The picture I have painted is accurate and somber, but it is also one overladen with shades of hope and confidence based upon our potential national and collective resolve — and ability — to regain the momentum we established with our previous commitment to continuous real growth in our defense spending. It is a regrettable but inescapable fact that we face a potential enemy determined to pursue the creation of massive military power in order to be dominant. Because of that fact, as a defensive Alliance — although we need not match the Warsaw Pact one for one in areas of statistical measurement — we are compelled to set our levels of defense spending higher than we would like; we are not afforded the luxury of setting them as we wish irrespective of the growing menace to

our freedom. However, until we can achieve real, verifiable and balanced arms reductions in all force areas, the strategic realities of our time — and for the future we would wish to have — require conventional forces truly capable of *sustained* defense. Fulfilling that need will enable us to complete NATO's fourth decade in peace with our freedom intact

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