A nuclear drawdown in Europe would magnify the Warsaw Pact's huge advantage in tank armies and tactical airpower.

**Why NATO Needs a Conventional**

BY JOHN T. CORRELL, EDITOR IN CHIEF

For the past decade, no speech about NATO by a Western politician has been complete without a fervent appeal for nuclear arms control. There was great consternation in the 1970s when the Soviet Union targeted Europe with the new nuclear threat of its mobile SS-20 missiles. And in 1983, protesters took to the streets when the US, on behalf of the Alliance, started deploying intermediate-range missiles in response to the SS-20s.

NATO’s other problem—its limited ability to mount a conventional defense of Europe—simmered in the background while most Americans and Europeans worried exclusively about nuclear weapons.

Now, however, NATO’s under-supported conventional forces may get more attention for the most ironic of reasons. To the surprise of almost everybody, the United States and the Soviet Union have begun to talk seriously about removing entire categories of nuclear weapons from Europe.

The total denuclearization of Europe is not in prospect, but the “Double Zero” arms-control option would remove two complete categories of nuclear missiles, banning all those with ranges of between 300 and 3,000 miles. Both sides would still have nuclear weapons in the theater that they could deliver by aircraft, artillery, or missiles with “battlefield” range.

When the NATO defense ministers met in May at Stavanger, Norway, the West Germans opposed the Double Zero option. They felt that it would leave their country, which has a long common border with the Warsaw Pact, uniquely exposed. Germany held out for a couple of weeks against political pressures from within and without and then agreed to go along with the Double Zero proposal.

Any nuclear drawdown would alter the balance of power in Europe to some extent. A growing number of Westerners believes that the superiority of the Warsaw Pact in conventional firepower would then become even more of an advantage than it is already. If so, NATO will have to find time to attend to one of its oldest problems at the same time it adjusts to the fast-developing opportunities for arms control.

“Disarray” Is Not New

The Stavanger conference was scarcely ended before press accounts were reporting NATO “in disarray” on arms-control policy. That phraseology had a familiar ring. According to a study done by a former US permanent representative to NATO, the Alliance has been declared “in disarray” for one reason or another on the average of once every fourteen months since its founding in 1949.

NATO will probably weather its current disarray, too, but 1987 may be remembered as one of the shakier years in its history. An extraordinary number of problems and concerns—some old, some new—have converged on the allied nations more or less simultaneously.

In addition to the turbulence on arms control, there are frictions within NATO about trade protectionism, continuing accusations that some allies are not paying their “fair share” of defense costs, and periodic calls to pull 100,000 or more US troops out of Europe.

America’s Strategic Defense Initia-
Defense

tive, which promises security from ballistic missiles, has stirred fears that the US might “decouple” its own defense—and especially the extended protection of its strategic nuclear arsenal—from the defense of Europe. The allies complain that the US is eager to sell military goods to them, but is reluctant to buy anything of consequence in return. Nearly everyone admits that billions are wasted by duplication of effort in military R&D.

Anti-Americanism has been gathering steam in Europe for some time, and substantial numbers of Europeans profess to see little moral difference between the Soviet Union and the United States. The US is faulted for arrogance, recklessness in foreign affairs, and failure to consult fully with its allies before it acts. Opinion polls find a weakening of support for NATO. On the other hand, British voters stuck with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative Party in the June elections, and the radicals in West Germany have not yet managed to unhorse Helmut Kohl and his center-right coalition.

Thatcher and Kohl have stood staunchly with the United States on NATO military policy.

The United States has always been the dominant partner in NATO, partly because it is the strongest of the allies and partly because testiness between the European nations would deny the leadership role to any of them. Americans realize that a certain amount of the resentment that Europeans express, often caustically, goes along with such a relationship, but they are stung by it nevertheless.

Most Europeans disapproved of the 1986 US action against Libya. Their disapproval angered a good many Americans who figured the Europeans should have been helping instead of sniping from the sidelines. Europe’s inclination to deal itself out of responsibility for defending Western interests around the world is a further cause of irritation.

The Europeans, chafed by Reagan Administration lectures on the evils of buying natural gas from the Russians and on the need for standing tough against terrorist states, took a dim view of the subsidized sale of US wheat to the Soviet Union and of America’s covert arms sale to Iran. The Iran-Contra affair has also undercut the prestige of the United States in the eyes of the allies just when NATO is most in need of US leadership.

The most frequent source of tension, though, is disagreement about the size, upkeep, and relative responsibility for NATO’s conventional force. The allies have been wrestling with this one for a while.

Holes in Flexible Response

In 1967, concerned that it had grown too reliant on nuclear weapons, NATO adopted a new strategy called “Flexible Response.” In theory, Flexible Response should enable the Alliance to defend itself by conventional means, at least in the early stages of an attack on NATO. The next option, to be taken only after the most careful deliberation, is escalation to theater nuclear weapons. The ultimate backup is the strategic nuclear force of the United States, which is pledged to the defense of NATO.
For a variety of reasons, the allied nations have never fielded the army divisions, tactical fighter squadrons, or combat sustainability that a true Flexible Response strategy would require. NATO continues to rely almost as heavily as ever on nuclear weapons, which are supposed to be the fallback element in the strategy.

This is the cheaper approach, although it keeps the nuclear threshold dangerously low. The Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, in the meantime, have built up their own conventional forces to unprecedented levels.

The Pact has enough spare parts and supplies deployed forward in Central Europe to sustain combat for sixty to ninety days. By contrast, some of the NATO nations have only a few days’ worth of critical supplies. The highly developed Soviet capability to wage chemical warfare would force NATO troops into protective suits, the best of which reduce their efficiency by thirty percent. NATO’s obsolescing chemical weapons impose no similar burden on the enemy.

One of the clearest voices of warning has been that of Gen. Bernard W. Rogers, who retired in June after eight years as Commander in Chief of US European Command and Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. He says that the readiness and sustainability of US forces in Europe are better than at any time since NATO was formed thirty-eight years ago—but that even so, the allied conventional forces would not be able to hold out for long against the Pact’s tank armies, operational maneuver groups, and fighter-bombers.

**Escalation or Capitulation**

“If attacked conventionally today, NATO would face fairly quickly the decision to escalate to a nuclear response in order to try to cause the aggressor to halt its advance,” General Rogers told the Senate Armed Services Committee in March. “We are in such a posture for several reasons, but primarily it results from NATO’s inability to sustain its forces adequately with trained manpower, ammunition, and war reserve materiel.”

General Rogers does not believe that NATO’s military situation is beyond repair. “By improving our conventional forces, we would move away from a posture in which capitulation might be viewed as the most credible choice facing NATO,” he told the Senate.

Nor does he think the Soviet Union will launch a direct attack on the West. The Soviet objective in Europe, he says, is “to have the fruits of victory without the pain of war.”

His fear is “that the day will arrive when the military situation for our defensive alliance is beyond all restoration. We will know it, and the Soviets and the Warsaw Pact will know it. With the backdrop of that massive conventional force they have in the East, a force that threatens the taking and holding of territory, we’ll find ourselves being subject to intimidation, coercion, program than its allies are. Today, forty-five percent of USAF’s tactical combat fleet is new generation aircraft, and fifty-five percent is current generation. The allies field twenty-five percent new generation, sixty-five percent current generation, and ten percent older aircraft. By the end of the decade, new generation aircraft will be a sizable part of the allied inventory, with few older model aircraft in service except in the Southern Region countries.

USAF squadrons in Europe are achieving remarkable readiness rates with their F-15s and F-16s. The Panavia Tornado is in service with the British, the Germans, and the Italians. Canada and Spain are converting to variants of the F/A-18 Hornet. Five NATO nations—the US, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands—fly F-16s. Greece and Turkey are acquiring F-16s. The NATO E-3 AWACS, operating with international crews, has added considerably to the Alliance’s battle management.

On the other side, the Soviet Su-24 Fencer is a first-rate interdiction aircraft and can strike deep. The Su-27 Flanker has been compared to the US F-15 and would provide long-range escort. The shorter-range MiG-29 Fulcrum is replacing the Flanker series of air-superiority fighters. For the past ten years, the Soviet tactical air forces have emphasized ground attack in their modernization plans.
blackmail, and accommodation with the East.”

The situation is all the more distressing in view of the major improvements made in NATO conventional forces, the US components in particular. Maj. Gen. Thomas L. Craig, USAF Director of Plans Policy for US European Command, ticks off a list of gains achieved by USEUCOM between 1981 and 1986. Virtually every major land and air combat system in the theater has been modernized. Reserve stocks of Army munitions are up twenty percent. Spare parts to support fighter sorties have increased by eighty-three percent. The backlog of Army maintenance and repair is down by half. Stocks of “selected” modern air-to-air missiles increased by sixty-eight percent. Air Force in-flight refueling capacity is up by eighty-four percent. Strategic airlifters can deliver fifty percent more tonnage than before.

**Deficiencies All Over**

Despite this, NATO remains deficient in troop numbers, equipment, munitions, support structure, and more.

The US is short 100,000 troops in Europe for meeting its M-Day commitments. The Army support structure could not handle the arriving augmentation forces, so many of the mobilized units would stay at home awaiting support. The Air Force is better off, General Rogers says, but minimum essential facilities are available for only twenty percent of the deploying aircraft that plan to work out of collocated operating bases.

“Mobilizable forces vary considerably in levels of training, equipment, manning, and availability,” General Rogers told the Senate. “Many, including some US forces, are inadequate for their tasks.”

NATO, he continued, lacks adequate numbers of suitable aircraft and the modern munitions with which to arm them. Standing Army forces are insufficient in numbers and must depend on timely reinforcement. This limits their ability to defeat the Soviet lead echelons and prevent a breakthrough of the forward lines.

Stocks of the following items are below a five-day supply or at less than thirty percent of the level required:

- Munitions
- Support structure
- Munitions, support structure, and air combat system in the theater
- Munitions, support structure, and armament
- Munitions, support structure, and war reserve materiel

The US is short 100,000 troops in Europe for meeting its M-Day commitments. The continued freedom of Western Europe from Warsaw Pact/Soviet aggression and intimidation/coercion is crucial to these interests. Currently, US defense policy places the defense of Western Europe as second only to the defense of North America itself. This is appropriate because the defense of North America begins not on the beaches of the Eastern seaboard, but at the . . . border [between the two Germanies]. Any other approach only makes it more likely that we will someday have to defend those beaches.

Our European allies are of strategic importance because without them the global balance of power would shift alarmingly in favor of the Soviet Union. Our NATO allies are strong and capable militarily, more so than the allies of the Soviet Union, and they contribute significantly to the global military balance so vital to American security. Control over Western Europe would take the Soviets a giant step along the path toward their goals of isolating the United States and eventually dominating the world.

In addition to the strategic importance of our NATO allies, we cannot forget the economic importance of Western Europe to our continued prosperity. Trade with our NATO partners in 1985 constituted more than twenty percent of the total US foreign commerce, totaling more than $120 billion, almost twice the amount traded with the Orient.

In addition, two-way investment between the US and Western Europe exceeds $830 billion, approximately forty percent of the US total. Europe has become even more important to our well-being in the past forty years as our economies have become increasingly interdependent. The combined economic power of the NATO nations is more than double that of the Warsaw Pact. If Europe were brought into the Soviet orbit, the balance would shift to the Soviets, to the great detriment of US interests. In addition to military and economic interests, there are the deep-seated political and cultural ties we have with our NATO partners. To allow the neutralization or domination of these democracies by the Soviet Union would call into question our commitment to freedom around the world and would isolate the US from potential friends and allies everywhere. As we examine US objectives, strategy, and forces, we must remember that our commitments as a member of NATO contribute directly and centrally to our own vital national interests. We are not in Europe solely because of an altruistic concern for their security; we are there because of a pragmatic concern for our own welfare as well as theirs.

"Fair share" contributions to allied defense include more than money. Germany, for example, hosts 400,000 foreign troops on its soil. Five thousand exercises and maneuvers are held there each year, causing considerable damage to land and surroundings. Some 580,000 sorties—many at low level—are flown in German airspace annually. Most allied nations also pay a political price to maintain a military draft.

required to counter specific threats: modern artillery munitions, five-ton trucks, drive-train components for wheeled vehicles and tanks, air-to-air missiles, air-to-ship missiles, antiradiation missiles for attack of enemy radars, and antirunway munitions. The allies generally have less sustainability than does the US.

It sounds grim, but NATO isn't done for just yet. Events of the next few years will play out in the complicated crossing of strategies, requirements, political machinations, and perceptions of what claim defense should have on the economic resources of the allied nations.

Sticking With the Strategy

The Warsaw Pact, too, would have some disadvantages in a European war. Strategists from Clausewitz on have contended that it requires greater military strength to attack than to defend. And above all else, NATO is committed to the defense.

The reliability of Soviet allies is open to question. The Russians have had to use the threat—and sometimes the exercise—of military force to keep their East European empire in line. The allegiance to the Soviet Union of some Warsaw Pact nations is weaker than that of others, and the Soviets cannot be certain they would fight with total determination.

Soviet doctrine is inflexible and tied to centralized command and control. The Soviets made the same strategy work in previous wars, but they often took horrendous casualties because of their rigid stubbornness. Their dependence on an unbroken chain of command is a vulnerability that NATO might exploit.

Although NATO's lead in technology has narrowed, it is still ahead, and with improved defense funding its chances for stretching that lead out again are excellent. The quality of NATO military manpower is also judged to be better than that in Soviet and Warsaw Pact units.

Much depends on how long the Pact would take to prepare for an attack. Gen. Charles L. Donnelly, then Commander in Chief of US Air Forces in Europe, told an Air Force Association audience earlier this year that if the Soviets give NATO time to bring in its full complement of reinforcements, "we're going to crack 'em good." (See "Thirty-Seven Wings of the Best," April '87 issue.)

NATO plans to stick with its Flexible Response strategy, including the controversial option for first use of nuclear weapons. Former US Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara is one of many worried Westerners who argue that NATO should renounce the use of nuclear weapons unless the enemy uses them first. (McNamara, like most others offering alternative strategies, assumes a corresponding buildup of NATO's conventional forces.)

General Rogers has insisted that the first-use option is a key element in NATO's ability to deter an attack and that the West must never allow the Soviet Union to suspect that war without the potential use of nuclear weapons might be possible. However much the Soviets doubt that NATO would invoke the first-use option, they could never be sure.

"In essence," General Rogers says, "a no-first-use doctrine would make it appear that NATO would rather accept a conventional defeat than resort to nuclear weapons. . . . The answer to preventing nuclear war is not a no-first-use declaration. We cannot create an artificial firebreak between conventional and nuclear war where a natural one does not exist. . . . The only durable and meaningful firebreak is the one between peace and any kind of war."

Radical Strategies

The conventional-arms portion of NATO strategy is under challenge as well, especially that aspect of it that calls for a forward defense. Thirty percent of the West German population and industry is situated within 100 kilometers of the Warsaw Pact border. The Germans, understandably, insist that this area be defended.

Critics say that this strategy is un-
realistic and that a determined attack will punch through the line. They call, variously, for defense in depth, fortifications, or some sort of maneuver strategy. (See Trevor N. Dupuy's "Strategy for Victory or Defeat?" April '83 issue.)

There is no chance that NATO will abandon the forward defense, because the Germans would never stand for that. From a military perspective, General Rogers has said that he sees no point in conceding territory that will have to be retaken later. "Despite what many have been led to believe, we do not envisage deploying our forces in a thin defensive line along the border markers," he says. "Rather, commanders are expected to deploy their forces on the best defensible terrain near the border and to place covering forces between their defensive position and the border."

The most radical of the alternative strategies, appealing mostly to the pacifist-left in Europe, is the "defensive defense." It would do away with "offensive" forces and put large numbers of civilian reservists armed with antitank and air defense weapons in the path of the invaders. This approach has been ridiculed as the "defenseless defense." It might annoy the Russians or perhaps slow them down, but it would not stop them.

General Rogers observes that this strategy does not hold Warsaw Pact territory at risk in the event of attack. There would be no weapons that could reach their territory. "Further," he says, "the last thing we want to do is have our reinforcements have to fight their way ashore or into the nations they're supposed to reinforce."

Yet another group of alternative strategists wants NATO to be more aggressive. Their idea is "offensive retaliation," which would throw a conventional ground counterattack against Eastern Europe. General Rogers says that retaliatory invasion is not politically acceptable to some of the allies—and that NATO does not have enough conventional forces to hold its general position, defend its rear areas, and strike on the ground at the enemy second echelon all at the same time. If it did, he says, "defense and deterrence would be assured without the need to endorse a politically and operationally risky course."

This does not mean that NATO would not go after the enemy's second and third echelons with tactical airpower and long-shooting ground weapons. It would strike in both of these ways as part of the Follow-On Forces Attack (FOFA) concept, which the Alliance adopted in 1984.

NATO's first battle priority would be to block the enemy's initial air and ground attack. This includes disrupting the lead echelons of mechanized forces and destroying them if possible. Penetrating aircraft would pound Pact airfields and command and control centers. The forthcoming capability to operate at night and in bad weather will enable fighter and attack aircrews to find the Soviet lead echelons at any hour and to hit force concentrations or complicate their movement and supply.

Soviet follow-on forces are the second priority: Special operations forces, along with fighter squadrons, would try to prevent enemy reinforcements from reaching the battlefront. The objective of FOFA is to reduce to manageable proportions the attacking elements against which NATO must defend at its forward positions.

FOFA does not replace the nuclear option, but it does reduce NATO's early reliance on it. General Rogers has an answer for those who ask what conventional force is required to carry out allied strategy. Enough, he says, to "be perceived by the Soviet Union as having a reasonable prospect of frustrating a conventional attack by the Warsaw Pact. . . . The minimum required is [that] sufficient to ensure that when and if the time comes, political authorities do not have to react in panic with respect to the use of nuclear weapons, but can make a very determined and deliberate decision. And secondly, sufficient conventional forces [are required] to ensure that our nuclear assets are there when the time comes that we have to use them."

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**What's a Fair Share?**

Burden sharing—the question of who's paying a "fair share" of the cost and who isn't—has become such a contentious issue that the Secretary of Defense is required by law to give Congress an accounting each year. The 1987 "Report on Allied Contributions to the Common Defense" is check-full of tables and data and, among other things, demonstrates how difficult it is to establish what a nation's "fair share" actually is.

No single criterion is adequate, but on balance, the Defense Department and senior US military spokesmen say that the NATO allies contribute more than they usually get credit for. Prior to mobilization, Europe provides ninety percent of NATO's land forces and seventy-five percent of the air and naval forces. After mobilization, the Europeans still supply seventy-five percent of the land forces, fifty percent of the air forces, and thirty percent of the naval forces.

The most popular index of a "fair share" is the percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) a nation allocates to defense. In 1985, the most recent year for which the Secretary's report had data, Greece led the NATO list with defense expenditures equal to 7.1 percent of its GDP. The US was second with 6.9 percent, followed by the UK (5.2), Turkey (4.5), and France (4.1). All others—including Germany—allocated 3.3 percent or less.

The Germans would appear as slackers by that measure alone, but as the report says, GDP doesn't tell the whole story. Germany, a nation geographically about the size of Oregon, hosts 400,000 foreign troops. Five thousand military exercises and maneuvers are conducted there each year, with damages to land and the surroundings amounting to about $100 million. Some 580,000 sorties a year—100,000 of them at low level—are flown in German airspace. The Germans register civil assets, such as trucks, that would be used for military purposes in an emergency, and Germany has 93,000 reservists standing by to provide logistics support for US forces in wartime.

Only four NATO nations—the US, the UK, Canada, and Luxembourg—rely on volunteer forces. The others pay a political price to maintain a military draft, and their conscripted manpower generally costs less than volunteers do.

The allied nations field about the same active-duty military manpower levels as a percentage of their populations as the US does—and their contributions of division-equivalent firepower and tactical airpower in relation to their economic strengths exceed those of the United States. Furthermore, there are more than 900 US installations in Europe provided by host nations that get no return in the form of taxes or rent. The value of such real estate in Germany and Britain exceeds $20 billion.
NATO continues to upgrade the quality of its tactical airpower. The Panavia Tornado is deployed in several variants, including the German Navy version shown here. US squadrons are achieving remarkable readiness rates with their F-15s and F-16s. Today, the allies field twenty-five percent new-generation aircraft and sixty-five percent current generation. The mix will improve even more in the decade ahead.

The Next Steps
In 1982, General Rogers told the NATO nations that they could have a good conventional capability by the end of the decade if they increased their defense budgets by an average of four percent. The allies soon concluded that such a program of growth was beyond their means. The prevailing trend is toward cutting defense budgets rather than raising them.

There are signs of promise, however, in the Conventional Defense Improvements (CDI) plan approved by NATO defense ministers in 1985. "The main focus of the CDI effort is on specific critical munitions that are identified, item by item, for each nation," Richard N. Perle, then Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, said in March. "Among the objectives for all of these items for non-US NATO nations, roughly one-half will be fully implemented or virtually fully implemented within the current five-year planning period."

Another CDI objective is to increase cooperation in armaments. NATO spends more on defense than the Warsaw Pact does (although the USSR outspends the US by a considerable margin), but loses much of the benefit by wasteful duplication. The US is already working on a number of programs in partnership with allies, and the allies are working with each other on multinational developments. For example, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom have joined together to field a European Fighter Aircraft for the 1990s.

Congress voted $125 million in FY '86 and $190 million in FY '87 as venture capital for cooperative R&D. But legislators are ever watchful for international deals that might take business away from their districts. Some congressmen complained that the award of $9 billion in military contracts to foreign companies in 1986 both contributed to the trade deficit and hurt American companies that might have done the work.

In reply, Deputy Secretary of Defense William H. Taft IV pointed out that the military trade balance with industrialized NATO nations favors the US by about two to one. "The broad benefits of cooperation cannot be achieved if the United States, for domestic reasons, insists on defining cooperation as buy American," Mr. Taft said.

CDI technological initiatives em-
phrasize the "capability to both see and strike deep...regardless of weather or lighting conditions," says Donald N. Fredericksen, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Tactical Warfare Programs. Leading requirements include "low-observable technology, smart munitions for top attack of armored vehicles, new all-weather real-time target acquisition, and microprocessing for improved data handling," he says. Mr. Fredericksen identifies five major US programs in this category: the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (Joint STARS), the Army's Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), the Army Tactical Missile System (TACMS), the Joint Tactical Cruise Missile System (JTACMS), and the Tacit Rainbow loitering drone for engaging enemy radar emitters.

The Low-Altitude Navigation and Targeting Infrared for Night (LANTIRN) system, now in production, will provide unprecedented capabilities for air operations in darkness and bad weather. And the Mark XV Combat Identification System, a joint-service US development in cooperation with the allies, will soon begin relieving the problem of cumbersome and often ineffective procedures for distinguishing friends from foes.

Among the steps to improve coordination is the NATO decision to adopt JP-8 as the standard aviation fuel for ground-based aircraft in Europe. Conversion from JP-4 is in progress.

**Nunn's Prescription**

NATO has few supporters as supportive or critics as tough as Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. In 1984, he sponsored a legislative amendment—subsequently defeated—that would have pulled large numbers of US troops out of Europe unless the allies began spending more on combat sustainability. (Europeans refer to that one as the "bad" Nunn Amendment. A different Nunn Amendment in 1985 earmarked $200 million for NATO cooperative R&D.)

"America should not plan and pay for a robust conventional defense when our allies are planning and paying for a tripwire strategy," Senator Nunn says. He is encouraged by NATO's improvement efforts since 1984, but is far from satisfied with the Alliance's present conventional posture. NATO's nuclear-conventional dilemma is profound, he says, but not new: "We have depended on nuclear weapons to basically deter not only nuclear war but also to deter conventional war since the end of World War II."

Senator Nunn accuses Western politicians of mincing their words about the realities of allied defense. "Why should our citizens be conscious of conventional deficiencies when our political leaders and the news media spend ninety-five percent of their time talking about nuclear weapons?" he asks. "Why should our citizens believe there is a link between nuclear weapons and conventional weakness when NATO has not made bold arms-control proposals [that] require meaningful reduction in Soviet conventional power? And why should our citizens not be increasingly attracted to the Soviets' call for no first use of nuclear weapons when they have not been clearly told that the West's first-use threat prevents the Soviets from massing their overwhelming tank forces in a threatening and destabilizing fashion?"

His prescription calls for explaining these things clearly to the public and addressing the problems he describes as "automatic escalators" and "structural disarmament."

Automatic escalators are short-

**Bringing Home the Troops**

The threat that some sizable contingent of US troops—100,000 is the number mentioned most often—might be withdrawn from Europe has loomed as a possibility for the past several years. Some calls for withdrawal have been based on the perception that the US was carrying an excessive share of the NATO cost load already, but other proposals have been for different reasons.

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, for example, say that US troop strength in Europe should be drawn down to create a force held in reserve for crises elsewhere in the world. The Pentagon would like the allies to help more with the global defense of Western interests, and it certainly needs resources for worldwide contingency, but defense leaders are dug in hard against troop withdrawals from Europe.

The Defense Department claims that its present troop strength of 326,000 in Europe is insufficient for the US to meet all of its obligations there and has been seeking relief from congressionally imposed manpower ceilings for years. The economics of troop withdrawal are wrong, too.

One-time cost of transporting 100,000 troops home and rebasing them in the US would be $5 billion, according to official estimates. Procurement of airlift for their rapid deployment in case of crisis or war would be another $40 billion, with recurring annual operating and support costs of $3.5 billion.

Sen. Sam Nunn, shown here in the cockpit of an F-16 fighter, wants NATO to pursue revolutionary technologies to make Soviet tank armies, as they are presently constituted, obsolete. This will be possible, he says, with a concentrated effort.
A Split of Opinions

A public opinion poll of Britons, Germans, Italians, and French reported earlier this year illustrates Senator Nunn's point that citizens do not understand the relationship of nuclear weapons, conventional forces, and defense costs.

A majority of the Britons and Germans polled disapproved of US nuclear weapons on their soil. In fact—in contrast to previous indications of opinion—many Europeans and disapprove of an American military presence on their soil period. Only in Germany did the poll find a majority in favor of a continued US participation in NATO. The British (forty-nine percent to forty-one percent), French (fifty-five to twenty-six), and Italians (sixty-nine to nineteen) preferred some sort of Europeans-only arrangement. Of those who wanted Europe to go it alone, many (ranging from twenty-five percent of the French to seventy percent of the Italians) thought defense should be accomplished by nonnuclear means.

Apparent unaware of the military and economic consequences of their attitudes, most Germans and Italians wanted to cut their defense budgets as well. The British and French publics were inclined to hold their defense spending at about the present levels.

Meanwhile, a Gallup poll conducted for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and published in March 1987 was finding the American public rather favorably disposed toward the defense of Europe. Of those surveyed, sixty-four percent said the US should play a more active role in the world, seventy percent were for holding the line on or increasing support to NATO, and sixty-eight percent said the US should use its troops if the Soviet Union invaded Western Europe. (Only fifty-three percent favored defense of Japan, although seventy-eight percent agreed that the US has vital interests there.) At the same time, seventy-eight percent of those polled said that the top US foreign policy goal should be protection of American jobs.

The agreement he has in mind might require the Soviets to remove thirteen divisions—tanks, manpower, and artillery tubes—to every two removed by the United States. In addition, both superpowers would have to pull their divisions far enough back so that they would need equal time to redeploy to forward positions in Europe.

What's in it for the Soviets? First, Senator Nunn says, the benefits of a more stable peace. And second, an opportunity to reduce defense costs and reallocate the savings to improvement of the Soviet economy. This is consistent with what Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev has said he wants from his reform program. NATO should find out how serious he is.

As NATO ponders the other possibilities for arms control, Senator Nunn urges the West to remember that there is a connection between nuclear forces and conventional forces. He does not suggest trying to wrap conventional arms into agreements currently pending, but he does believe there should be a "supreme national interest" escape clause. Before withdrawing the final twenty or twenty-five percent of the missiles, NATO could look again at the conventional force balance and decide then how to proceed.

In his speeches, Senator Nunn recalls a particularly relevant piece of advice from Winston Churchill: "Be careful above all things not to let go of the atomic weapon until you are sure, and more than sure, the other means of preserving the peace are in your hand."