A Participant's View of On-Site Inspections

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Implicit in Soviet writer Roland Timerbaev's 1983 book on verification of arms limitation and disarmament[1] is that on-site inspection, for the Soviet Union, is a device of last resort. Considering that the Soviets are most concerned with foreign *intrusion* while the United States is most concerned with compliance *verification*, the essential impasse concerning on-site inspection which existed for so long is quite understandable. Despite their long-held reservations, however, the Soviets probably deduced that a full range of arms reduction, technological, and economic agreements—which promise the only salvation from their endemic economic ills—could not be achieved without acceding to physical inspections on Warsaw Pact territory itself.

The crucial date is 19 September 1986. On that occasion, after over two years of deliberations, the United States, Canada, and 33 European nations, including the Soviet Union, adopted the Document of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (CDE).[2] Those deliberations had begun under a cloud created by the Soviet Union's foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko, who used harsh, cold-war rhetoric during his address to the opening session on 17 January 1984. However, the final document which emerged 31 months later committed the participants to an unprecedented degree of cooperation. The document was a significant breakthrough in arms control negotiations in that it was the *first major agreement* in which the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries, as a means of verification, permitted on-site inspections on their territory.

The Stockholm Document expands considerably on the confidence-building measures of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act[3] and the follow-up session of the Helsinki meeting which took place in Madrid in 1980.[4] Whereas the Helsinki Final Act, as further strengthened by the Concluding Document of the Madrid meeting, only *suggested* the invitation of observers and made no mention of inspections, the Stockholm Document requires notification and

invitation of observers to a broader category of activities and permits on-site inspections with no right of refusal. Furthermore, the inspections are not necessarily limited to military exercises, but may be conducted against other military activities, suspected or actual.

Verification under the Stockholm Document

The Stockholm Document sets forth in considerable detail the basic rules of engagement for the inspections. Some of the more important provisions are as follows:

- *Inspections are compulsory.* Refusal of an inspection is not allowed, except that no state must accept more than three inspections per year nor more than one from the same state.
- *Inspections are conducted on short notice.* A challenge must be answered in 24 hours; an additional 12 hours are allotted to "facilitate" the start of the inspection; and the duration of the actual inspection is set at 48 hours.
- *Inspections are subject to minimum restrictions.* Inspection may be made on the ground, from the air, or both; the number of inspectors is limited to four; and inspectors are to be provided access, entry, and unobstructed survey (including use of dictaphones, cameras, maps, and binoculars) except for restricted areas, whose number and extent should be "as limited as possible."

A rudimentary US on-site inspection group was organized at Headquarters, US European Command, Stuttgart, Germany, in March-April 1987. The future inspectors were trained during the ensuing weeks, and the first rehearsal—a mock inspection of elements of the US First Armored Division—was conducted in May. The second and final rehearsal was carried out in mid-June with the West German Twelfth Panzer Division. Both rehearsals cleared away most foreseeable problems and served as excellent shakedowns of equipment and inspection techniques. The practice inspections also served to pull together the various US governmental agencies involved. Close cooperation also was effected with representatives of several allied nations. Regardless of the detailed preparations and war-gaming of scenarios that might develop during the course of the inspection, however, there still remained numerous unanswered questions and unknowns that would have to be worked out on the

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ground once the inspection actually got underway. This also would be true of subsequent inspections conducted by US CDE on-site inspection teams.

The Stockholm Document generally is considered to be an excellently crafted measure. Certainly it contains minor discrepancies and a few ambiguous portions, but on balance it provides good working guidance. It is virtually impossible, and possibly unwise, to attempt to reduce every conceivable contingency on such matters to the definitive written word. If knowledgeable personnel with experience and good judgment are in charge on the ground, then decisions can be made there on matters not fully covered in the basic document. It is impossible to avoid action-reaction improvisations during the "military implementation of a document that essentially was negotiated by our political masters," as several inspectors of different nationalities have explained it.

The First CDE On-Site Inspection

In late August 1987, in accordance with paragraphs 65 and 66 of the Stockholm Document, the United States invoked its right to conduct an inspection of a Soviet ground force exercise. The exercise involved elements of one tank division and one motorized rifle division, the two aggregating 16,500 troops and 425 tanks. As specified in the Document, the inspection request (called a "challenge") was submitted by the US State Department concurrently to the Soviet Foreign Office in Moscow and to the Soviet Embassy in Washington. The Soviets replied to US authorities within 20 hours (the document permitting a maximum of 24 hours for an affirmative reply) in both Moscow and Washington.

Paragraph 66 of the Document specifies that the party requesting an inspection "will state the reasons for such a request." However, the US State Department's expressed reason for the inspection was simply the phrase "in accordance with paragraphs 65 and 66," and at no time during the inspection did the Soviets question that rationale.

Since the Soviets accepted the phrase "in accordance with paragraphs 65 and 66" as "the reasons," the first small area of possible confrontation passed without much notice by either party. It should be noted that this potential issue seemed considerably more important to several Western representatives, some suggesting that without a clearly stated reason for an inspection the request would be denied, despite the fact that refusal is not permitted. However, in the case of this first inspection, it appeared that the Soviets were anxious to get on with it and refrained from raising questions about that ambiguous portion of the document. Happily, during subsequent inspections conducted by the US team this potential problem has continued to be a non-issue. Press releases of other inspections have also indicated no problem in this respect.

For many, it may have seemed to be just another military exercise in a major Soviet training area. However, for the US inspection team—consisting

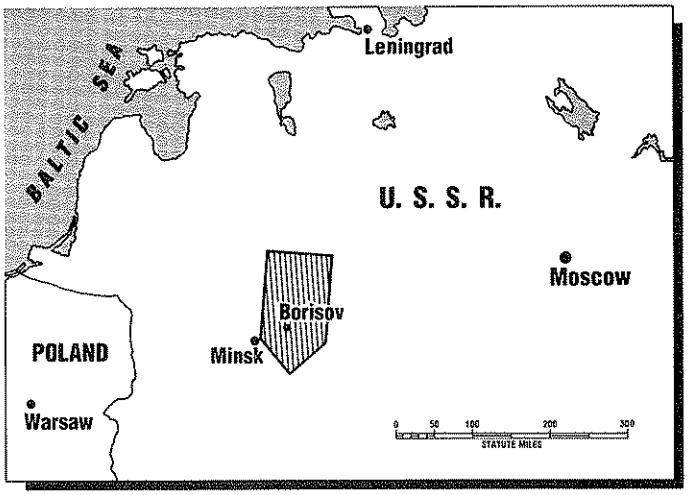
of Lieutenant Colonel Warren Wagner, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Crutcher, Major James Silva, and myself as team chief—the exercise was much more.[5] We were now on board a Lear jet heading for what was likely the first landing by a US military aircraft at the Minsk civilian airfield in the USSR since World War II, and some important international business was about to begin. Actually, the State Department's request for the inspection had specified the Soviet Machulushche military airfield southwest of Minsk as the touch-down point in the Soviet Union. The Soviet reply, however, had denied that and substituted the civilian airfield.

Dealing with the Soviets can be a very trying and frustrating experience, and this first on-site inspection was perceived by all concerned as having the potential to set the pace for the future. Policy would be established by a handful of military officers (both US and Soviet) in carrying out certain provisions of a document that had been negotiated and agreed to by representatives of 35 nations. It was not a responsibility to be taken lightly.

The US four-man inspection team, all Foreign Area Officers (Russian specialty) was on its way, after a lengthy period of rehearsals and preparations, to conduct the first on-site inspection under the auspices of the Document of the Stockholm Conference. No one, including the Soviets, knew exactly what to expect in a number of areas. We four Americans did know that our formal training days were over. Now we would be the operators, and the Soviets would be observing our every move as the most momentous phase of Stockholm's implementation began.

As the wheels of the Lear jet touched down on the roller coaster runway at Minsk, we noted that a small welcoming party was on hand. The Soviets were situated a short distance from the airport reception hall, near four Mi-8 Hip-C

In the map below, the shaded area around Borisov shows the approximate area for inspection specified by the United States.



helicopters which were to be placed at the disposal of the inspection team. Only two helicopters had been requested, but the other two were provided as spares, just in case. Back-ups also were provided for the two requested ground vehicles.

As we exited the aircraft, the Soviet air force colonel greeting us requested that we remain near the aircraft for a few minutes while the final steps in assembling the welcoming party were accomplished. One of the Soviet generals was a few minutes late and we agreed with the colonel that it would be best to let them get completely set prior to the introductions. The delay did not present a problem for us since the planning had allowed for a sufficient opportunity to develop the situation and still have adequate time to inspect portions of the specified area by helicopter and by ground vehicle before dark. It is extremely important to have time for an aerial reconnaissance in order to gain familiarity with the terrain and to locate the major troop dispositions during daylight hours. While we waited, visas were promptly stamped in our diplomatic passports.

Once the receiving line was in order, I introduced the team to the members of the welcoming party, consisting of two major generals, the air force colonel, and two "civilian" interpreters (purporting to be from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Actually, the Soviet colonel was well known to us, since he and I had been together for three days during an observation of a Soviet/East German exercise in the Letzlinger Heide main training area in the German Democratic Republic under the observer provisions of the Stockholm Document during the previous month.[6] Further, one of the civilian interpreters, "Mr." Popov, was known to have been a Soviet major eight years previously when he had worked with Lieutenant Colonel Crutcher during the SALT II negotiations in Geneva.[7] After the introductions, the groups chatted for a few minutes and then walked to the reception hall. Everyone was cordial and the event appeared to be off to a good start. Obviously, this was going to be a convincing Soviet display that there would be 100-percent compliance with all pertinent provisions of the Stockholm Document.

During the next hour and a half, discussions covered administrative and logistical arrangements, including the flight plan for the helicopters. The Stockholm Document (paragraph 90) specifies that "after the flight plan . . . has been filed with the competent air traffic control authority the inspection aircraft will be permitted to enter the specified area."[8] That was the reason for selecting the initial touch-down point of the Lear jet outside the specified area. The desire was to accomplish everything strictly in accordance with the Document. By the same token, the inspectors also wanted to clear up as much as possible those measures that were not extremely clear in the Document. The use of flash photography at night, for example, was such a measure. Its later use did not raise any questions or comments.

During these preliminaries the Soviets were told that the team would split into two sub-groups and that initially each group would overfly and

inspect major portions of the specified area. At first the Soviets were dismayed at that expressed intention since, as one of the Soviet generals explained, there was no military activity there, especially in the northern portion. His words were, "Why do you want to go there [pointing to the northern half of the map]? That is merely farming area with absolutely no military activity. The exercise will be conducted here [pointing to the map], in the Borisov training area and no place else."[9] After several minutes of discussion, both Soviet generals accepted the fact that the two sub-teams were going to fly over as much of the specified area as they deemed necessary (avoiding any "sensitive points").

The specified area, delineating where the inspectors would be permitted "access, entry, and unobstructed survey," encompassed a total of 20,000 square kilometers. Access to such a large expanse of terrain had been requested by the team so we could better judge the strength of units moving to and from the exercise area. Also, an overflight of much more than the immediate main training area west of Borisov was required to ensure that this was, in fact, a training exercise. One of the objectives, of course, was to determine if the exercise was threatening in any way. The Stockholm Document states that the specified area should "not exceed that required for an army-level military activity."[10] Thus far, no receiving state (i.e. the state where the inspection occurs—its forces may or may not be inspected forces) has ever questioned the requested size or location of a specified area. Representatives of some participating states, however, have expressed grave concern over the possible inclusion of certain territory within a specified area.

Paragraph 75 of the Document states that "within the specified area, the forces of participating States other than the receiving State will also be subject to the inspection conducted by the inspecting State." Minor problems in this regard cropped up during the Soviet inspection of NATO exercise Iron Forge in the Federal Republic of Germany, 28-30 October 1987, and also during the US inspection of a Pact exercise in Poland, 25-27 July 1988. In both cases, exercise and non-exercise military units jointly occupied portions of the large training areas and were actively involved in unit training. It has been difficult in some cases to explain to inspecting officers that units observed in training are not participants in the inspected exercise. This point is not clear in the Stockholm Document. It generally is assumed that it is the responsibility of the receiving state to show proof that a particular military unit, located within the specified area and actually out of garrison, is not directly involved in the exercise or activity being inspected. This has not been a serious problem in the past; however, it is an area that requires careful explanation and coordination on the ground during the actual inspection.

Determination as to exactly what are "sensitive points" was the one portion of the Document that raised the most questions. This was true not only during the first inspection, but also during subsequent inspections conducted by the US team. Paragraph 74 of the Document is not clear in that respect.

Inspectors are entitled to "access, entry, and unobstructed survey, except for areas or sensitive points to which access is normally denied or restricted."

In several cases, we failed to gain entry to certain areas that should not have been declared sensitive points. In one case, the area denied was a railhead which, from the extent of the track marks on the ground leading to and from the point, evidently had been used as a loading and unloading point, probably for the exercise. One road within the training area also was denied and no reason was given. During two attempts to count columns of vehicles in the training area, the civilian interpreters insisted that the vehicles had been previously counted and that it would take special permission from the major general in charge before the inspectors could go there again. Those columns of vehicles were not declared to be sensitive points, however, and thus valuable time was wasted.

It would be very difficult not to accept an escort officer's declaration of a command post, permanent encampment, or some such entity as a sensitive point. However, a column of vehicles involved in the exercise is not a sensitive point by any stretch of the imagination. In the case of the columns of vehicles mentioned, by the time we finally found the major general and received his permission to count them, they had departed and could not be relocated. Under the terms of the Document, the Soviets were incorrect in delaying the inspection of those columns. The episode, however, did not warrant labeling as a serious incident, which probably would have evoked an official protest on our part. Consequently, although a strong vocal protest was lodged, an official one was not deemed appropriate. None of these problems was critical to the accomplishment of the mission, but together they did show the inflexibility of certain Soviet officers (and "civilian" interpreters). One hopes that the Soviets too were learning from this first inspection. Indeed, subsequent inspections have shown more Soviet flexibility in their interpretations of the verification provisions, and the US inspection teams have been able to work with them and bring about a good deal of mutual understanding and cooperation during actual inspections.

The official US report on the inspection provided to the other participating states declared that radio communications between the two subgroups generally were excellent. Although true, that statement should be qualified. First, very little flying was done because of the safety requirements imposed while the exercise play (attack, defense, and meeting engagement) was taking place and also because of high winds and poor visibility on the second day which made flying too dangerous. Flying was not permitted over the exercise area after the exercise got underway because of low-flying Hind helicopters and Flogger and Frogfoot aircraft. Also, when the aircraft or ground vehicles were out of communication range (because of the distance limitations of the tactical radios provided), attempts to communicate by radio simply were not made. Thus, during this inspection (and several subsequent inspections), communications proved inadequate in general terms. During US

inspections, tactical radios without added relay capability have not proven satisfactory. That fact now being known, advance planning can alleviate most problems that would occur as a result of the lack of communications. In certain situations, dividing the specified area into smaller geographical compartments to be inspected individually is a simple but effective way to overcome communications range limitations.

Paragraph 78.5 specifies that the inspecting state will notify the receiving state of the exact starting point of the inspection within the specified area. For our inspection in Belorussia, we selected a point on the map close to the Minsk airfield, where the edge of the specified area intersected a secondary road. Our original intent was to officially initiate the inspection as the helicopters flew over that point and entered the specified area. That point on the ground turned out to be a landfill not indicated on the US maps. The Soviet assumption was that all concerned actually had to be on the ground to identify the start point. True to their literalistic fashion, the Soviets led the way to that point in Volga sedans after a high-speed dash through downtown Minsk. The column arrived in a cloud of dust. Everyone exited the vehicles and verified that it was, in fact, the exact starting point that had been selected. Because of the terrain and safety requirements, the helicopters could not land in or near the landfill.

Both parties then agreed that the starting time of the inspection would be the precise moment when the helicopters lifted off from the heliport. Consequently, everyone returned to the sedans and headed for the heliport nearby. Thus, the Soviets were "proving" their strict compliance with the Document provisions, in this case by literally eyeballing the specified start point. The ground between strict compliance and reasonable interpretation through flexibility at the scene seemed to be lost somewhere in the activity.

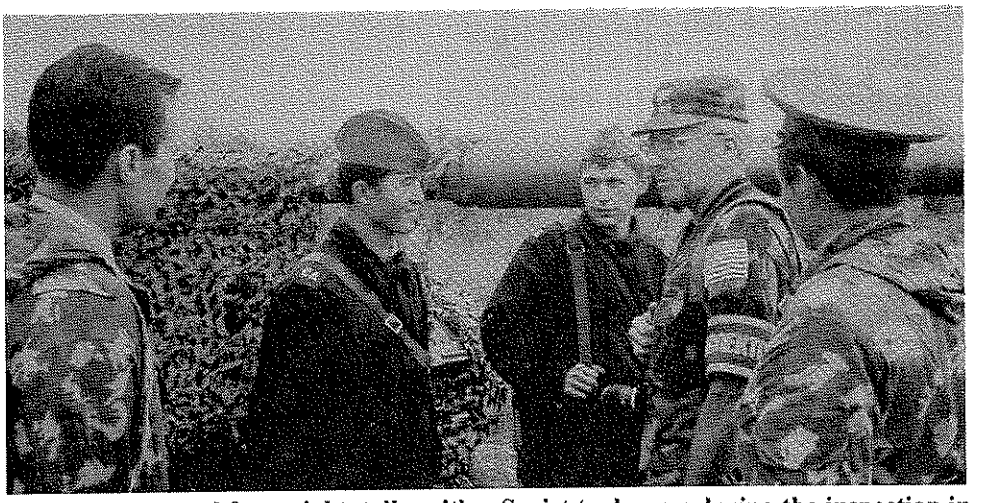
When Lieutenant Colonel Wagner lifted off at 0845 hours GMT in the first chopper, the Soviet escort officer and I (occupying the second helicopter) conferred briefly and agreed to record 0845 as the official start time, even though our helicopter experienced minor mechanical problems and was delayed a few minutes. The Soviets offered to delay starting the inspection clock until the second helicopter lifted off; however, in the interest of cooperation and in an attempt to reduce the hairsplitting formality which might impose stifling inspection precedents, I declined the offer. Later, when we discuss the completion of the inspection, the significance of all the punctilio as to start time will become clearer.

In the case of the Belorussian inspection, starting at precisely the planned moment was not of overriding importance since we had timed matters so as to arrive early enough to familiarize ourselves with the terrain and the major troop and equipment locations before dark. That timing is extremely important. On a subsequent inspection in the German Democratic Republic, the team arrived too late to conduct an aerial reconnaissance at the start and that proved to be a disadvantage.

Paragraph 86 charges the receiving state to provide the inspection team with "appropriate board and lodging in a location suitable for carrying out the inspection." The Soviets selected the leading hotel in Minsk to meet this requirement. Although the 75-kilometer distance from the Borisov training area to Minsk could not be called excessive, a great deal of time was consumed moving back and forth between the two points. This movement time counted against the allowable 48-hour inspection time. Weather conditions, and the fact that the Soviets declined to fly at night even if the weather had permitted, precluded the use of helicopters for such travel, leaving surface means as the only alternative. Surface travel was woefully slow owing to bad road conditions, one-way traffic sections of the main road, heavy civilian truck traffic, and the fact that livestock occasionally strayed onto the highway. The road from Minsk to Borisov is not an interstate highway by any means. Of course, it was not strictly necessary to return to the hotel during the 48-hour inspection. For that brief period, we could have roughed it in the field. However, I came to the conclusion that the Soviets probably would be unnecessarily offended if their room and board offerings were not accepted. Protocol plays a role in inspections, and we felt it expedient to cooperate with the hosts whenever possible.[11] Furthermore, after a detailed search of the training area, we determined that there would not be any significant military activity during the first night. The army rule of "rest while you can" became the deciding factor.

According to paragraph 90, "Directions to crews will be given through a representative of the receiving State on board the aircraft involved in the inspection." In all cases during this first inspection, that rule was followed. However, during several subsequent inspections conducted by the US team, it occasionally became possible for us to give directions directly to the pilot. These situations arose naturally, as functions of mutual convenience and cooperative spirit on the part of the escort officer. In most cases, this was accomplished by giving arm and hand signals to the pilot. An average of ten minutes was required during the Belorussian inspection in order to alter flight directions because the Soviets went by the book. By contrast, during later inspections in Hungary and Poland when we adopted the more relaxed procedure of direct inspector-to-pilot instructions, the reaction time was reduced to seconds. Again, the bulk of these improvements in procedures can be attributed to the experience of working together over a period of time, thereby increasing understanding and cooperation during the inspections.

Another event of this inspection is noteworthy. As mentioned earlier, the Soviet officers were markedly punctilious as to the "exact" starting time of the inspection. On the final day of the inspection, while on the main observation post in the Borisov training area, I casually mentioned in the hearing of the Soviet party that I estimated the flying time from that point to the edge of the specified area as being 30 minutes. I added, again quite casually, that with road conditions being what they were, it probably would take considerably more than



The author, second from right, talks with a Soviet tank crew during the inspection in the Borisov training area, August 1987.

an hour to drive to the edge of the specified area. In the back of my mind, I was concerned that if we had to depart via road rather than by helicopter, the added travel time might cut into our inspection time. Giving voice to this concern, I asked one of the Soviet colonels who had accompanied the team during most of the inspection, "What happens if the weather closes in and we cannot fly? Is it absolutely essential that the inspectors be out of the specified area at the termination of the 48-hour period?" Immediately, one of the individuals in civilian clothes—but actually a Soviet colonel himself—leaped forward and, tapping his finger firmly on my chest, announced in a loud voice: "Colonel Stovall, you know the Document as well as I, and it states that you must be out of the specified area within 48 hours, so do not attempt to stay longer and violate the Document!" This Soviet colonel in civilian dress was manifestly rude in his remark, and later a Soviet interpreter and another Soviet officer apologized. Indeed, the offender was promptly "escorted" out of the immediate area after one of our inspectors commented to several Soviet officers that the individual appeared to be trying to provoke a serious incident. Beyond this, we overlooked the unpleasantness and assured the other Soviet officers that we regarded it as quite atypical of the gentlemanly treatment we had otherwise received.

With respect to the implied dispute itself, paragraph 83 states that "within 48 hours after the arrival of the inspection team at the specified area, the inspection will be terminated." There are no words in the Document stating that inspectors must be *out* of the specified area upon termination of the inspection. As professionals, and within a fair interpretation of the Document, we would of course have put away cameras and dictaphones on the termination of 48 hours had the team remained in the specified area some additional time. It was obvious to all that the Soviet colonel was wrong, but we regarded the episode as insufficiently weighty to merit an official protest.

As the time neared for departure from the observation point by helicopter and for the termination of the inspection, a Soviet air force lieutenant general arrived on the scene. He accompanied me on the flight out of the specified area, and he seemed very proud to point out that at the precise moment when the helicopter exited the specified area, exactly 48 hours had transpired since the inspection began. (Actually, the helicopter exited the specified area six seconds early!) Exactness and flexibility have a strange relationship when dealing with some Soviets.

Nineteen of the 20 CDE on-site inspections conducted to date have been of pre-notified exercises. The US inspection carried out in the German Democratic Republic during 10-12 April 1988 was the sole exception, there having been no exercise announced for the specified area requested in the US challenge. The US inspection team was sent to East Germany to inspect what eventually was determined to be end-of-cycle training of a Soviet tank division based in Riesa. One of the Soviet battalion commanders identified the unit's location to me after receiving instructions to do so from the Soviet colonel who was acting as the chief liaison officer. That may well have been the only instance, at least during US inspections, where information concerning unit locations was provided by the Soviets.

As this latter inspection progressed and the number of positively identified tanks began to accumulate, some degree of concern on the part of the senior East German escort officer and also the senior Soviet liaison officer became apparent. On one occasion those officers mentioned, "It might possibly happen *some day* [author's emphasis] that an over-zealous commander would order more than 300 tanks out of garrison for end-of-cycle or some other type of training activity that would not actually be an exercise per se." The figure of 300 was critical because the Stockholm Document (paragraph 31.1.1) requires prior notification any time the training activity involves "at least 300 battle tanks." We of course had not been so notified.[12] They were implying—wrongly of course—that if more than 300 tanks happened to be identified during this "activity," it certainly would not be in violation of the Stockholm Document.

There was no doubt that this inspection had gotten the attention of the East German and Soviet officers with whom the inspectors had come in contact. The conclusion here is that, at least in the case of ground force exercises and activities, surprise or suspect-site inspections definitely do have utility.

The First Soviet CDE On-Site Inspections

The third CDE on-site inspection was carried out in Turkey during 5-7 October 1987 by the Soviets (the second CDE on-site inspection having been conducted by the United Kingdom on East German soil during 10-12 September). One of the members of the Soviet inspection team in Turkey was the colonel who had berated me in Belorussia for asking the question about

exiting the specified area within 48 hours. He was to be seen several times on different inspections during the course of the next year, and his *modus operandi* remained the same—aggressive and forceful and probably very effective for the Soviets.

The dress and equipment of the four Soviet inspectors who descended upon the site in Turkey on 5 October 1987 were almost carbon copies of that worn by the US inspectors in Belorussia. The specially designed shoulder patches worn by the Soviet inspectors were "professionally" done, whereas the US inspectors' arm bands had been fabricated in-house in order to meet the deadline.

Since a US Marine Corps Amphibious Battalion and elements of the US 24th Infantry Division were a part of exercise Display Determination underway in Turkey on 5 October, it was important that a US liaison team be available to assist the Turkish escort officers whenever the Soviet inspectors came in contact with US personnel or equipment. In many respects, that precedent already had been set by the Soviet liaison officers during the UK inspection in East Germany in September 1987. During that inspection, Soviet liaison officers were normally present with the UK inspectors.

That same procedure was planned for exercise Display Determination; however, due to late notification of US European Command Headquarters in Stuttgart, the US inspection team arrived in Turkey after the Soviets already had started their inspection. Coordination has vastly improved since that snafu and there is no longer such a problem.

The Soviet inspectors were very aggressive during that inspection and stayed on the go during most of the 48 hours. As liaison officers, we four US officers worked very closely with the Turkish escort officers and acted as interpreters (Russian-English) for the Soviet officers and for US troops whenever required. The Turkish escort officers spoke excellent English, which greatly aided the rendering of assistance whenever a request was made. The US liaison officers were the guests of the Turkish forces, and we realized full well that we were there with the blessing of the receiving state, which has final authority over verification matters on its soil. For all of the US liaison officers, working with the Turkish officers was a distinct pleasure.

In some cases, the fact that the receiving state has full authority on verification issues has a tendency to accentuate some minor differences which are bound to exist among participating states. The Soviets pick up quickly on such differences. Sometimes, this vulnerability has worked to the disadvantage of the West. Sovereignty rights are taken seriously by all nations, and both inspectors and liaison officers must be sensitive to that fact.

One of the Soviet officers in Turkey has been present during several subsequent inspections as either an inspector or liaison officer. Largely because of the continuity of association during these contacts, a certain degree of cooperation and mutual understanding has evolved among inspectors. On

one occasion, one of the Eastern inspectors went so far as to say, "We should form an inspectors' union, have conferences, and work out the problems we all are forced to face in the implementation of the Stockholm Document." Although the statement was possibly made somewhat in jest, there also was a certain serious tone which made the comment seem plausible.

The Soviet inspectors strongly objected to the presence of the US liaison officers during the Turkey inspection. However, that attitude had considerably softened by the time the American officers next appeared as liaison officers, which came during the Soviets' inspection of exercise Iron Forge in the Federal Republic of Germany, 28-30 October 1987. The US liaison officers were again there as guests because the US First Armored Division was involved in the exercise on West German soil. Since that time, the Soviets probably have determined that the presence of US liaison officers is not threatening to their interests and, on occasion, even works to their advantage. When a determined US commander or other US military member of a unit feels no obligation to answer the questions of a Soviet inspector, the US liaison officer, who knows and understands all aspects of the Stockholm Document, can offer advice and provide assistance—both military-technical and language skills.

It is encouraging to note that other participating states have joined the ranks of "inspectors." The Federal Republic of Germany, Poland, Turkey, and Bulgaria all exercised their prerogatives under the provisions of paragraph 65 of the Stockholm Document during 1988, and the Federal Republic has repeated in 1989. Also, Italy conducted an inspection on Soviet soil in April of this year. The addition of these inspections to those of the United States, USSR, United Kingdom, and German Democratic Republic of 1987 brings to nine the number of countries that have conducted inspections—five Western and four Eastern. As of 17 April 1989, a total of 20 CDE on-site inspections had been conducted. There can be no doubt that the Stockholm Document objectives of openness and transparency will continue to be tested in the future. Arms control methods, whether they be by way of reductions and eliminations, or simply by increasing confidence- and security-building measures, are here to stay.

A US Inspector's Conclusions

We can draw a number of relevant lessons from our experiences thus far with CDE on-site inspections. These seem to be the most important ones:

- To date, there has been no evidence that any of the exercises inspected have been threatening to any nation.
- There has been no evidence that any country has cheated.
- All Warsaw Pact exercises inspected have been standard force-on-force exercises. Likewise, there has been no noticeable change in past Soviet training practices—offensive as well as defensive tactics are alive and well,

regardless of the statement by a senior Soviet officer during the US inspections in Poland: "Let the defensive battle begin" [*davai, oboronitel'nyi boi*].

• All countries that have actually participated in inspections have mounted a significant effort to comply with the verification provisions of the Stockholm Document.

• The apparent Soviet openness was initially often degraded by subtle control measures aimed at limiting the effectiveness of the inspectors. This tendency to influence the movement and actions of the inspectors has lessened considerably during more recent inspections.

• Soviet inspectors normally have been professional, though aggressive. However, they have generally "mellowed" in their actions and words after repeated contact with the same US inspectors. Cooperation *has* facilitated the handling of problems on the ground during the actual conduct of inspections. Give-and-take is possible at times.

• Soviet inspectors are able to discern even minor differences between Western allies with respect to implementation of the verification provisions of the Document and are quick to exploit those differences to their advantage. This makes Western *unity* with regard to interpreting the Document an absolute must.

• East European escort officers in their own countries deferred to Soviet liaison officers concerning questions of access. In matters of Stockholm Document interpretation and implementation, disunity among Warsaw Pact nations has not been apparent.

• The lack of a complete definition of "sensitive points" remains perhaps the most serious problem area in the current wording of the verification provisions of the Stockholm Document. Care must be taken in any future attempts at rewording; a *complete* definition may not be possible and probably is not advisable.

• An area of concern in the implementation of the Stockholm Document for some inspectors has been the distance permitted between the two inspectors of a two-man sub-team as they walk through an area of troop and equipment deployment. Paragraph 84 states that "the inspection team may divide into two parts." There is no explanation in the document concerning the allowed separation in terms of distance between the two individuals of a sub-team. Generally, it has been agreed during the conduct of inspections that inspectors within the sub-team must have visual contact with each other. If that condition is met, then there is not a problem. To increase the distance beyond visual contact probably would be incorrect since the inspection team itself would then be effectively divided into more than "two parts."

• The recording by dictaphones or camera of tank turret numbers, armored personnel carrier side numbers, aircraft side numbers, and vehicle registration numbers or other identifying markings is necessary to preclude double counting of weapons and equipment.

• From all indications, the inspections have not been used for the overt collection of intelligence. It is in everyone's best interest to adhere to that principle. The gathering of information on which to base verification and confidence must not be construed as collecting intelligence.

• A future reduction in the 36 hours' notice before an inspection team may enter the territory of the receiving state could decrease the opportunities for the receiving state to cover up exercise violations.

• For whatever reasons, the participating states involved directly in the on-site inspections conducted thus far have developed a mature outlook concerning the purpose of the inspections—more openness and transparency.

• There are important distinctions between "observations" and "inspections" under the Stockholm Document. They must not be confused nor should the *modus operandi* of the two be merged.

• The Soviets have determined that the dangers to their national security posed by on-site inspections in the conventional force arena are not serious and that the potential quid pro quo (i.e. political, economic, technological, and budgetary benefits) far outweighs any possible disadvantage, at least for now.

The Future

When considering the applicability of on-site and suspect-site inspections to future negotiations, agreements, and treaties, I would venture a couple of observations. In the conventional force arena, particularly with regard to the newly commenced Conventional Forces in Europe talks, *both* on-site inspections and suspect-site inspections are essential if the eventual treaty adopted is to be worthwhile. National Technical Means, sanctioned in paragraph 64 of the Stockholm Document, are vital, but they are no substitute for eyeball verification on the ground. It may very well be that on-site or suspect-site inspections will prove unwise or inhospitable in certain arms control situations—perhaps, for example, we'd be chary of turning Soviet inspectors loose in some of our most prized and secret high-tech industries. It thus becomes important that *conventional* force reduction talks be kept separate from all the others. For without suspect-site inspections, the participating states concerned with conventional forces will not have a meaningful treaty.

As events have unfolded since General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's speech before the United Nations on 7 December 1988, it is apparent that the Soviets and several other Pact countries are going to reduce the physical size of their armed forces. They have certain options for mitigating the adverse impacts of those cutbacks, such as doctrinal improvements, force structure enhancements, and technological upgrading of weapons and equipment. That is not all. The Soviets already have taken giant strides in the political arena. Their much-ballyhooed pronouncements on arms control are

cleverly designed to weaken Western public support for defense modernization and to promote an indiscriminate public appetite for more arms control agreements simply for the sake of agreement. We must not be stampeded. A cautious and studied approach to future arms control and verification agreements is in the best interests of all concerned.

NOTES

1. Roland M. Timerbaev, *Kontrol' za ogranicheniem vooruzhenii i razoruzheniem* [Verification of Arms Limitation and Disarmament] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, November 1983), p. 18.

2. See *Document of the Stockholm Conference 1986* (Stockholm: Gotab, 1986), pp. 32-37, hereinafter, *DSC 1986*. The Document included an annual calendar exchange of forecasts of notifiable military activities, a standard format for the notification of military exercises, time and size constraints, and procedures for observation of military exercises—in addition to the verification (on-site inspection) provisions. The present article is concerned only with the verification provisions of the Stockholm Document, specifically through on-site or suspect-site inspections. With reference to the inspection of ground force exercises and activities under the auspices of the Stockholm Document, it is understood that on-site and suspect-site inspections refer to short notice, intrusive, challenge inspections of exercises or any other activity involving ground forces. These are generally considered "anyplace, anytime" inspections, but their requests would be tempered by an intelligent application of what is reasonable, fair, and responsible.

3. *Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe Final Act, Helsinki 1975* (Stockholm: Minab/gotab, 1984), p. 77.

4. Concluding Document, Madrid 1983 (Stockholm: Minab/gotab, 1983), p. 37.

5. The accounts of these inspections are based largely on the personal experiences of the author, who was the first Chief of the US CDE On-Site Inspection Team based at Headquarters, US European Command, Stuttgart, Germany. The author led the first four US on-site inspections and also participated in several of the first Warsaw Pact inspections where US forces were involved. In addition to the four inspectors and the two-man US air crew, two Soviet air force officers (a pilot and a navigator) also were on board the aircraft during the flight from Stuttgart to Minsk. Their presence was required in accordance with Soviet regulations and not as a result of any Stockholm Document requirement.

6. "Observations" under the Stockholm Document are very different from "inspections." For details, see *DSC 1986*, pp. 26-32.

7. Popov also acted as the chief interpreter for Soviet Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev during his visit to the United States in 1988. He wore a Soviet army officer's uniform with the rank of colonel during that visit. The point is not whether Popov is a civilian or a military man—the point is that the Soviets did want this first CDE on-site inspection to proceed correctly and without incident. Popov is fluent in the English language and is extremely knowledgeable on military matters and the Stockholm Document.

8. *DSC 1986*, p. 35.

9. The two Soviet generals also mentioned several times that the exercise director, Colonel General Shuralov (commander of the Belorussian Military District and the exercise director) was at the main observation point in the Borisov main training area and was ready to present briefings on the exercise and to answer any questions the inspectors might have. The Soviets did not "insist" that the US inspectors go there first; however, it was very obvious that it was their desire that they do so. By so doing, the team would have been following the prescribed outline of an "observation"; thus they elected for the overflight of the specified area as the first priority. Throughout all of the inspections the US team has conducted, there has been a tendency for the receiving states—the Soviet Union, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, and Poland—to guide the inspections toward the "observation" format. The US team has resisted this for obvious reasons.

10. During the negotiations in Stockholm, a more definitive agreement as to the size of the specified area could not be reached. Prior to the present inspection, there was concern among some Western authorities that the Soviets would question the request for such a large area, but that issue was never raised.

11. On several occasions during this first inspection and also during subsequent inspections, the US team paused during the actual inspection to partake of refreshments with their hosts. In the case of the Soviets, these have always been non-alcoholic. During the most recent inspections in the Soviet Union, the Soviets have become more cooperative in providing hotel accommodations closer to the training areas where military activities are scheduled to take place. This may have been due to tactful low-level suggestions made to the Polish colonel in charge of CDE affairs and to Soviet liaison officers during the inspection conducted in Poland in July 1988.

12. See *DSC 1986*, p. 26.