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MUTUAL AND BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS WORKING GROUP

THE MBFR REDUCTION ZONE: HUNGARY

Note by the United Kingdom Member of the Working Group

We have seen no thorough analysis of the advantages and disadvantages for NATO of the addition of Hungary to the NATO guidelines reduction zone. A decision on this matter seems likely to be required soon, so early discussion in the Working Group seems to be required. This note offers some ideas relevant to such a discussion, but does not pretend to be a full appreciation of the pros and cons.

2. MC 161/72 (page 280) shows the four Soviet and five Hungarian divisions as "available for southern region operations or to reinforce WP central region actions". This suggests that if Hungary were included in the reduction zone, the WP could use this as an argument for demanding compensating reductions in Italian forces. This has not yet been envisaged by NATO. Such an increase in the already large reduction area postulated for the WP might perhaps lead the latter to demand even the inclusion of France.

3. Hungary is not obviously part of the "confrontation in the central region" which MBFR are supposed to reduce. It is doubtful if its inclusion would lead the Russians to reduce a larger total of Soviet forces than they would if it were not so included. Thus the reduction of Soviet forces in the key central region would be attenuated (though perhaps not by much).

4. It is held by some that Soviet formations withdrawn from e.g. the GDR would be relocated in Hungary unless the latter were included in the reduction area. Not only could this be dealt with through "constraints" but it seems most unlikely that the Russians would wish to do so; and anyway in Hungary they would not be much more of a threat to NATO's central region (or for that matter to Italy) than they could be in the USSR (though they might be thought to increase the threat to the southern edge of the central region).

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5. The inclusion of Hungary could lead to a WP demand for the inclusion of Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece and Turkey. Would this be to NATO's advantage? Might Yugoslavia then demand to be included also?

6. If "constraints" are desired in Hungary, there is already an agreement in the Working Group that the "constraints" zone need not coincide with the reduction zone.

7. The bias of this note is clear. It would be most helpful if a protagonist of the inclusion of Hungary would circulate a note on the arguments supporting his view, to provide a balanced basis for discussion.

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