

(and) to pursue the search for progress towards a more stable relationship in which the underlying political issues can be solved”.

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To deter aggression, the West has had to devote substantial resources to maintain credible defences and preserve a balance of forces between NATO and the Warsaw Pact military alliance. This has not been easy. Since the end of World War II, the USSR and its allies have had numerically superior conventional forces at their disposal. Until recently, the West enjoyed a compensating advantage in the quality of its conventional forces and the superiority of its nuclear forces. In the last fifteen years, however, these advantages have largely disappeared because of improvements in both the quality and quantity of Soviet forces, leaving the Soviet Union and its allies with a distinct edge in conventional forces and intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) and with rough parity in strategic nuclear forces. As a result, a major NATO effort has been mounted to improve conventional forces and to counter Soviet INF deployments (SS-20's).

It was against the backdrop of these important changes in the military balance that East/West relations began to deteriorate towards the end of the seventies. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, great hopes had been vested in detente and its promise of transforming East/West relations. Detente was based on the premise that the fear and suspicion at the root of confrontation could be overcome through contacts and cooperative ventures between the two sides. Both individually and collectively, Western nations devoted considerable efforts to this end. Individually, this took the form of state visits, treaties and agreements, and countless bilateral contacts. Collectively, it took the form of the commencement in Vienna of talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) in Central Europe; the negotiation of the “Final Act” of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE); and subsequent meetings, notably in Belgrade, Madrid and now Stockholm on a host of issues ranging from East/West confidence and security-building measures to rules for East/West trade, scientific exchanges, human contacts, and respect for human rights.

Some very notable progress was made. Relations were normalized between all the states of Europe, agreement was reached on Berlin, and both trade and human contacts expanded enormously. But hopes for a permanent transformation in relations were dashed by Moscow's determination to pursue its ideological and political goals. The USSR continued its military build-up, targetted powerful SS-20 missiles against Western Europe, invaded Afghanistan, threatened Poland and continued to flout fundamental human rights at home. In the West, optimism gave way to caution.

*Our position is based on a fundamental concern to avoid hostilities and their potentially catastrophic consequences for all. It also reflects an unwillingness to leave Canada's fate in the hands of others.*

While we recognize that Soviet behaviour has been inimical to our interests and that convergence of the two systems is not a reasonable expectation, we continue to believe in the importance of a cooperative track in East/West relations. Our position is based on a fundamental concern to avoid hostilities and their potentially catastrophic consequences for all. It also reflects an unwillingness to leave Canada's fate in the hands of others; a vocation of Canadians to play a part in East/West affairs; and a recognition that there are particular Canadian interests to be pursued in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and that these interests are best pursued in an environment of cooperation. As a result, we have worked hard to build up our bilateral relations with individual Soviet bloc countries.