

have so far not attracted much media attention in Canada. While some progress has been made in these negotiations, in which Canada is a direct participant, the principal stumbling block has been the failure to reach agreement in factual terms on the present strength of Warsaw Pact forces. The Soviet Union insists that the total number of Warsaw Pact Organization forces in the area is almost 150 000 less than the number which has been confirmed by the best allied intelligence available. Continuing efforts have been made by the Western negotiators to persuade the Eastern members to provide a detailed breakdown of their figures to support their calculations or to co-operate in clarifying the differences between Western and Eastern figures. Unless both sides can agree on the numerical base from which reductions must be made, clearly it's virtually impossible to verify what's left after reductions even if such reductions can be monitored. Moreover, the Eastern side has proved to be very reluctant to accept what the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) would regard as adequate verification measures.

**Binding  
obligation  
agreement  
proposed**

New life is being injected into these negotiations through a draft treaty tabled by the West last week in Vienna which makes substantial concessions to the Eastern side. The West now proposes that the countries concerned should undertake a binding obligation in one agreement (instead of two sequential agreements as proposed previously) to reduce to a common collective ceiling on each side of approximately 700 000 ground force manpower and 900 000 ground and air force personnel combined. These reductions would be in four stages over a period of seven years, with the United States and the Soviet Union withdrawing 13 000 and 30 000 troops respectively in the first year after conclusion of the agreement. Other direct participants including Canada would join in the reduction process in the three later stages. Agreement on manpower data would remain a pre-condition. If the Warsaw Pact countries are prepared to co-operate, particularly on the question of the actual present strength of their forces in the area and on verification, it should now be possible to progress more rapidly towards an agreement.

I'm certain you would agree that a reduction and balancing of the existing levels of troops of the two Alliances confronting each other in Central Europe would serve to reduce tensions and improve the climate of East-West relations. Such an agreement would also maintain and even enhance the security of the two sides.

The Committee on Disarmament (CD), the multilateral negotiating body in Geneva, will resume its 1982 session early next month. Its new Working Group on a Comprehensive Test Ban will begin its work on verification and compliance. Its Working Group on Chemical Weapons will build upon previous progress. Another subject to be taken up is that of arms control and outer space. This question is one of special interest to Canada. In his speech to UNSSOD II the Prime Minister drew attention to the serious gaps in the present international agreements and proposed that an early start be made on a treaty to prohibit the development, testing and deployment of all weapons for use in outer space.