

PREFACE

Douglas Hamlin is a former director of Arms Control and Disarmament in the Department of External Affairs. This paper is based on research conducted by the author in his capacity as Senior Fellow at the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security. The views contained in the paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Institute and its Board of Directors.

In the last quarter of 1989 political change of unimaginable dimensions swept across Eastern Europe and altered the entire East-West security environment. NATO and the Warsaw Pact continued, but as one hard-line Communist régime after another toppled, there was increasing talk about such issues as a New Atlanticism, new architectures for European unity, and German reunification. Politics and popular aspirations were in the driving seat, pushing events along and setting the agenda.

At the same time, remarkable developments were underway in the field of arms control. By Autumn 1989, it had become clear that the NATO and Warsaw Pact states, meeting in Vienna, were rapidly heading towards the greatest force reductions agreement in history. The delegations assembled in the Negotiation on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) had already set out similar positions on most of the fundamental issues, and were expected, in the absence of some cataclysm, to reach agreement on a complete, initial accord by the Summer or Autumn of 1990.

These negotiations address a confrontation which has been at the centre of East-West rivalry for the last forty years. They deal with an issue involving well over fifty per cent of the whole world's military expenditures. If they are successful, they are expected to lead, in phase one, to reductions of tens of thousands of main battle tanks, armoured personnel carriers and artillery pieces, as well as tactical aircraft, other military equipment, and manpower. And afterwards there may be other rounds of negotiations leading to further cuts, as well as efforts to shift the whole thrust of the European security effort from confrontation to the pursuit of mutual reassurance.