

the Central Front from rear areas in the Soviet Union or North America".⁵¹ The geographical factor will remain crucial to Canada, as it will to the other members of NATO.

OTHER SIMILARITIES

Apart from surprise attack and geostrategic positions, several other factors influencing objectives have changed little over the past twenty years. They include: the possibility of conflict by accident or miscalculation, the concept of stability, the question of long-term European security, the desirable level of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe, and the desirable level of US forces in Western Europe.

Conflict by Accident or Miscalculation

Like the risk of surprise attack, the possibility of conflict by accident or miscalculation has been a function of uncertainty about intentions and of lack of confidence. In the 1970s Canada foresaw such a possibility⁵² and argued for measures -- such as inspection and observation of military movements and manoeuvres -- as a means of reducing misunderstanding ensuing from military activities.⁵³ Thus, this factor was prominent in efforts to develop a CBM regime as part of the Helsinki Final Document and to negotiate associated measures as part of an agreement on MBFR. In the same way it was a factor in the Stockholm Talks on CSBMs. In Canada's view, the agreement reached "will reduce the risk of accidental war in Europe."⁵⁴ If concern about accidental war is less today, a major reason is the success in implementing the provisions of the Stockholm Document, particularly those on observation and inspection. Recent NATO statements, while not making direct reference to the possibility of war by accident or miscalculation, have called for measures on "greater openness and predictability about military activities" and on "improvements in the arrangements for observing military

⁵¹ Security and Disarmament, Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, Ottawa, 1982, p. 54.

⁵² Foreign Policy for Canadians, Europe, Ottawa, 1970, p. 24.

⁵³ Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Issue No. 10, 5 April 1974, 18-19.

⁵⁴ Hansard, Ottawa, 4 December 1986, p. 1764.