

CANADIAN INSPECTION OF A CZECHOSLOVAK MILITARY ACTIVITY

Background

Confidence-building in Europe began with the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. This agreement included a number of relatively modest confidence-building measures which, inter alia, encouraged nations voluntarily to notify each other of their plans to conduct certain large military activities. These measures were designed to dispel suspicion and mistrust about military capabilities and intentions.

A second major step in the direction of confidence-building was taken during the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe. This conference concluded in 1986 with the agreement of all 35 Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) participating countries regarding a requirement for the circulation of annual military calendars to other CSCE participants, the prior notification of military activities involving 13,000 ground troops or more, the observation of military exercises involving over 17,000 troops, and challenge on-site inspections. The provisions of the Stockholm Document have been in effect since January, 1987 and since that time some 35 observable exercises and 18 challenge on-site inspections have taken place. These inspections have proved their value in building mutual confidence. The increased contacts created by the observation and inspection of exercises have also contributed to better reciprocal understanding.

These achievements represent an encouraging advance. However, there is a need for still further steps towards our goal of reducing tension by clarifying military capabilities and intentions and fostering co-operation. In this regard, a mandate for a new set of negotiations to build upon and expand the work of the Stockholm Conference in developing further confidence- and security-building measures, was concluded in January, 1989 in the context of the CSCE Follow-Up meeting, in Vienna. In this negotiation, which opened on March 9, 1989 the members of the North Atlantic Alliance seek to create greater transparency of military organizations and activities, as well as to improve contacts and communications between participating states. Prospects for the new negotiations are positive. There is general agreement that the successful implementation of the provisions of the Stockholm Document over the last two years bodes well for an attempt to expand these measures further.

Canada is an active participant in the CSBM process: our representatives contributed to the successful development of the Stockholm Document; Canada has fulfilled its reporting obligations under the agreement; we have sent