

1. Arms Transfers

After considerable Parliamentary opposition to the amendments was voiced, in exchange for the passage thereof, the Government promised in mid-June to suspend all further export of automatic weapons to the Middle East for a period of six months. It also undertook to support public hearings by a Commons committee in the autumn of 1991, and not to proceed with any further sales while the committee was at work. This compromise permitted both General Motors and Diemaco to pursue their respective contracts.

On 19 June 1991, Secretary of State for External Affairs Barbara McDougall addressed the Berlin meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). As promised in the February "Programme of Action," she made a strong appeal for a declaration on arms transfers:

I believe we all agree that this meeting in Berlin provides a timely and appropriate opportunity for us to make a political declaration on arms transfers. I am confident that we all recognize the importance of the issues and its relevance to the CSCE countries. States which are party to the CFE agreement have a special responsibility not to contribute, by transfer of armaments, to excessive build-ups of conventional arms outside the CFE area of application.¹²

In its closing statement, the Council of Ministers adopted the Canadian proposal to limit massive weapons build-ups by urging countries to make public their arms sales.

In the light of the recent experience in the Gulf region...this should be a priority of CSCE governments, and...ministers agreed to maintain a dialogue on these issues.¹³

On a number of occasions the Government expressed its keen interest in the report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Arms Transfer Transparency, due to be completed by the autumn of 1991. Canada is one of the few countries which is represented on the Group by a non-governmental specialist, Mr. Ernie Regehr, editor of the *Project Ploughshares Monitor*.

¹²Secretary of State for External Affairs. "Notes for Remarks by the Honourable Barbara McDougall at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe Council of Ministers Meeting," *Statement*, 91/32, 19 June 1991: 5.

¹³*Globe and Mail*, 21 June 1991: A8.