



Visit to the
U.S.S.R.
by Prime Minister
Brian Mulroney

November 20-25, 1989

La visite du
Premier ministre
Brian Mulroney en
URSS

du 20 au 25 novembre 1989

ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

Assessing the military balance between East and West is a complicated task, given the wide variety of weapons systems and military units, and their geographical dispersion. Even though the global balance may be in rough equilibrium, serious asymmetries remain.

Last December's announcement of the withdrawal of Soviet forces, combined with various arms control negotiations, have begun to correct the balance of forces between East and West. However asymmetries in the Soviet favour, particularly in conventional land forces and nuclear weapons in Europe, continue to create instability. Further efforts, either unilaterally by the U.S.S.R. or through negotiation, must be pursued to eliminate these imbalances.

Two specific arms control initiatives should be noted: the Conference on Disarmament; and the Open Skies Conference, which Canada will host next year.

The 40-nation Conference on Disarmament is the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament issues to draw participants from all regions. Canada hopes an international treaty to ban chemical weapons can be reached over the next few years, given sufficient will by Conference participants.

Yet there is cause for concern in the lack of progress in other areas: radiological weapons, a comprehensive nuclear test ban, and prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Canada believes a NATO-Warsaw Pact agreement on Open Skies overflights would significantly improve openness on military activities. Canada is therefore heartened by the Soviet willingness to participate in the Open Skies Conference.

