

plus certain measures associated with such limitations, mainly in the area of verification; the latter seeks to develop measures to build a sense of increased confidence and security independently so as to reduce tensions and create a political climate more conducive to military reductions.

Should the CDE receive a mandate at the 1986 CSCE review meeting in Vienna to address force reductions, the future of MBFR as a forum may become uncertain, not only because of duplication of effort but also because the CDE would address forces throughout Europe, while the MBFR negotiations are restricted to the zone in the central part of the continent. However, MBFR could usefully take on some sort of crisis control function in addition to (or in lieu of) the dialogue on force reductions. Because the MBFR talks are a bloc-to-bloc, non-political arena — or at least as non-political as any such effort can be — they have value, if for no other reason than that the exchange of information between the two blocs at the weekly meetings is conducive to increased understanding. In that sense the MBFR exercise is a confidence-building measure in itself.

By any standard, accomplishments in East-West arms control over the past several years have been modest. Neither side has been willing to pay the price demanded by the other in most of the major undertakings. Extreme caution has characterized the approach of both: the East is reluctant to divulge information about its military strengths and capabilities and to accept meaningful on-site inspection; the West resists the notion of constraints on military activities as proposed in the CDE, and refuses to discuss reductions of conventional armaments (as distinct from manpower) in MBFR. The situation is made more complex by the possibility of the negotiated reduction of nuclear weapons in Europe, because such a development would increase NATO's reliance on the effectiveness of its conventional forces to deter aggression. Any significant reduction of conventional forces, on the other hand, would increase reliance on nuclear weapons and the declared intention to use them should conventional strength prove inadequate in war. Thus paradoxically and ironically, the case can be made that arguments in support of nuclear weapons reductions and non-first use of nuclear weapons declarations have implicit within them support for increased conventional capabilities. The counter argument is, of course, that lower levels across the board would maintain the same stability that has been a characteristic of the military confrontation in Europe for many years. Moreover, the contention that neither nuclear nor conventional capabilities should be altered in isolation contains a premise which may not be entirely valid; that is, that the existing distribu-

tion of military capabilities between those forces is very precise and finely tuned.

Dominating such abstract considerations, however, is the matter of political will to reach agreement in any of the forums. It is a widely held view that a favourable political climate is needed for advances in arms control; certainly such a state of affairs facilitates the identification of common ground. In addition, outside events can frequently provide a greater stimulus to productive negotiation than the internal dynamics of the negotiation itself. But agreements can be reached even when times do not seem propitious: for example, the mandate that enabled the convening of the CDE was settled during a nadir in East-West relations brought on, in part, by the downing of the Korean airliner.

For Canada, NATO membership and the permanent presence of Canadian forces in Europe have provided the entrée to participate in negotiations among countries of the continent. The internal discipline that is imposed by NATO members on themselves can be frustrating and a constraint on independent national initiatives outside the confines of the Alliance. (The Trudeau peace initiative of 1983-84 demonstrated that this need not always be the case, however.) It is also true that the Allies frequently settle on the lowest common denominator of policy on many arms control issues. But membership in the Alliance provides opportunities to consult, to explore possibilities and to press national views. The prospects for successfully persuading other nations of the validity of Canada's position is greater inside the Alliance.

The negotiations in both MBFR and the CSCE/CDE are complex and difficult. This is because the issues are complex and difficult. The fact that all parties have agreed to meet and to discuss them is in itself an accomplishment. As in all multilateral forums the process of negotiation in the MBFR and CDE allows each side to explore and develop common ground with the other, and to understand better the motivations behind their actions.

In the high days of detente the then Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mitchell Sharp stated at the CSCE meeting of Foreign Ministers on 4 July 1973, "We are laying the groundwork for a new kind of world — a world which should be better than the one we have known." Less than four years later Mr. Klaus Goldschlag, speaking as the Special Representative of the Secretary, said at the convening of the first review meeting of the CSCE on 6 October 1977, "We are still in a situation where stability probably owes as much to fear of nuclear war as it does to any political arrangement we have yet succeeded in making." This latter view remains valid, perhaps more so than ever. But the effort to give practical effect to the first must continue.