

objective of the prevention of war and "the enhancement of international stability and security at the lowest possible level of armaments."²¹ The new negotiations on conventional forces in Europe are likely to be much more at centre stage than were the MBFR talks. Public support, in Canada and other NATO countries, may well be a key factor as negotiations proceed.

TWO CONSTANTS

The possibility of surprise attack by the Soviet Union has influenced objectives on conventional arms control and disarmament in Europe more than any other concern. The second and closely related concern is the disparity in the geostrategic positions of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Surprise Attack

The possibility of war breaking out in Europe through surprise attack was a major preoccupation in the 1950s. Concern grew throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Reducing that possibility was a major objective at the Stockholm CSBM negotiations. It has been identified as a primary objective for new negotiations on conventional forces in Europe. For the past thirty years, it has remained a "constant in Canadian thinking about arms control in Europe."²²

In deliberations on comprehensive disarmament at the United Nations in the mid-1950s, there were frequent attempts to come to grips with the fear of a surprise attack using nuclear weapons. Even then though, it was widely assumed that an initial conventional attack was more likely.²³

²¹ The Right Honourable Joe Clark, Standing Committee on National Defence, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Issue No. 10, Ottawa, 28 April 1987, p. 6.

²² Michael Tucker, "Reducing the Level of Fear," Peace&Security, Vol. 2. No. 2, Summer 1987, p. 7.

²³ Up to the 1970s it was argued that the Soviet Union might begin a war using nuclear strikes.