

of Short Range Nuclear Forces (SNF), with the Federal Republic of Germany opposing the modernization which was supported by the US and UK. Canada was in the middle on this question and was able to help find a compromise approach calling for the "partial" reduction of SNF and deferral of modernization. This issue is scheduled to re-emerge but, it is clear that in the changed context in the two Germanies, the paramount German interest will prevail, and other NATO countries will have to accommodate it.

Canada and other NATO member countries may also have direct and urgent stakes in particular issues. They need to define their positions, and be prepared to press their case, ideally even while the conventional force and strategic arms negotiations are still underway.

Verification and "Open Skies"

In the whole field of arms control and disarmament, it is also worth noting that Canada has achieved a leading capability in one area, that of verification techniques. A low-key technical programme maintained in the Department of External Affairs since 1983 has suddenly become a key resource internationally with the upsurge of serious arms control negotiations. Other governments will now quickly invest in this work as well, often drawing on the Canadian effort, and Ottawa's unusual strength in the field will thus not remain uncontested for long, but it remains a valuable and creditable contribution.

The verification investment has also led Canada to take a leading role in developing and pursuing the "open skies" concept, now to be the subject of a major international conference in Ottawa in February 1990. There are still some major clarifications required as to the objective of this exercise, and with the availability of modern satellite technology, "open skies" is intended more as a political "confidence-building" measure than a military surveillance system, but even in the latter function, Canadian verification experts had become aware that it could have great specific utility.

Secretary Baker's proposal to take advantage of the Ottawa gathering of all NATO and WTO foreign ministers to focus as well on the acceleration of political and arms control progress should have the effect of greatly increasing the interest and importance of the meeting, and also of the successful conclusion of an "open skies" agreement.