

The Search for Adjustment: Consultation and Co-operation

The year 1975 brought welcome progress in reducing international tensions. The agreement on the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) was a significant milestone in continuing efforts to improve relations between East and West, while the inauguration of the Conference on International Economic Co-operation (CIEC) represented an important attempt to develop a North-South dialogue. Canada, as one of the signatories of the Final Act and as co-chairman of the CIEC, was deeply involved in both conferences.

Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe

The Final Act of the CSCE was signed in Helsinki on August 1 by the heads of government of 33 European states, Canada and the United States. It was the culmination of more than two years of intense negotiation aimed at the establishment of a basis for the development of better relations among participating states and their people. The forward-looking document that emerged laid the groundwork for mutually-advantageous co-operation on the basis of equality. While it was clear that it did not mean an end to East-West ideological and political differences, the Final Act reflected a recognition by all concerned that, however imperfect, co-operation was preferable to confrontation and, indeed, was vital in an age when nuclear mass destruction was an ever-present threat.

The Final Act supported the principle of co-operation and more open communication among people as well as states. Canada believes that the development of human contacts, and the freer movement of people and ideas, are essential to the improvement of relations between East and West. It is the impact of this document on people that will lend substance to our goal of achieving the mutual understanding and confidence necessary for an enduring security and co-operation. The Canadian hope is that, as channels of communication open and as mutually-beneficial economic and technical co-operation is developed, the people and their leaders in both East and West will overcome the mutual mistrust of the past 30 years. (See pages 16 and 63)

Defence Structure Review

At the same time, it is the Canadian view that the reduction of tensions will continue to

depend for the foreseeable future on the maintenance of a rough balance of power. Consequently, active participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) remains a basic principle of Canadian policy. As a result of the Defence Structure Review undertaken during 1975, Canada reaffirmed these commitments and announced its intention to reinforce its contribution to NATO's joint defence effort with a view to the preservation of a strategic balance that would reduce the risk of war and encourage improved relations.

MBFR and SALT

Thirty years after the end of the Second World War, a fundamental objective of all countries is to ensure that another such war never takes place. A major concern is to prevent hostilities where possible, and to ensure their containment if they do occur in order to avoid an escalation that could involve a nuclear confrontation between the super-powers. Urgent and close attention must be given to the achievement of arms control and the reduction of forces and, with the CSCE concluded, Canada looks for substantial progress in negotiations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in Vienna on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions in Central Europe (MBFR), as well as in the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) between the United States and the Soviet Union in Geneva.

At the end of the year, the Middle East remained the most serious potential threat to world peace, although the Second Stage Disengagement Agreement in Sinai, which was put into effect during 1975, represented a beginning — however fragile — towards a resolution of the underlying tensions in the area. Canada is concerned at the ever-present risks of armed conflict and great-power confrontation. Canadian policy continues to be one of balance and objectivity, with participation in peacekeeping operations and support for initiatives aimed at securing a permanent settlement that takes into account the legitimate interests of all parties.

Hostilities in Indochina came to an end in 1975 but, as the year ended, developments in Angola threatened to envelope the whole of Southern Africa and raised questions concerning the validity and viability of *détente*. While SALT and MBFR negotiations had been of major importance in promoting a climate of