

In 1983, the Conference on Disarmament sought to establish an ad hoc committee on a comprehensive test ban, but was unable to agree on a mandate. Specifically, the major point of contention was whether an ad hoc committee should have a mandate to negotiate a CTB as opposed to analysis and recommendations to member states. In 1986, a Group of Scientific Experts was created to work in association with the CD, but not as a committee of the CD. The Group of Scientific Experts has concentrated on the technical requirements needed for a global seismic data exchange to support a comprehensive test ban. In 1990, the CD was finally able to create an ad hoc committee on a CTB. Agreement on a "non-negotiating" mandate led to four meetings of the Ad Hoc committee in 1990 and appeared to strengthen the otherwise tenuous base for the work of the Group of Scientific Experts.

At the New York Amendment Conference, a number of states, including some such as Sweden who were in favour of amendment, argued that the documents from the Conference should be referred to the CD. Others, such as Nigeria and Mexico, argued that the CD had failed to deal with the CTB issue, and that the Conference should remain seized of the issue and reconvene at a specified date.

Despite the opposition of the United States, the final declaration of the Conference held out the prospect of a further meeting, but at an unspecified date. The brief final statement read:

Acknowledging the complex and complicated nature of certain aspects of a comprehensive test ban, especially those with regard to verification of compliance and possible sanctions against non-compliance, the State parties were of the view that further work needed to be undertaken. Accordingly, they agreed to mandate the President of the Conference to conduct consultations with a view to achieving progress on those issues and resuming the work of the Conference at the appropriate time.¹

CURRENT CANADIAN POSITION

A comprehensive test ban is one of six key arms control objectives identified by the Canadian Government. Since 1976, Canada has played a prominent role in the Group of Scientific Experts, and has upgraded the Yellowknife seismic array station as a contribution towards test ban verification. Nevertheless, its position on the Amendment Conference has been persistently critical. In particular, various Government spokespersons have argued that it was irresponsible to convene a meeting which had no chance of success, and dangerous to seek to link progress on a CTB to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In an early forthright comment to this effect, a spokesman for the Department of External Affairs commented:

¹Institute for Defence and Disarmament Studies. *Arms Control Reporter*, 1991: 601,B30.