

Although the issue has not been finally decided, there now seems little prospect that the Canadian land forces will obtain a new main battle tank. The cost of maintaining a highly mechanized force in Europe would be a high one, and the government is obviously reluctant to move in that direction in light of the new political atmosphere and altered security environment that now prevails across the Atlantic. It might obtain new tanks and a range of other modern equipment at little initial cost through the "cascading" process that may accompany conventional force reductions, but even so it seems unconvinced about the long-term value of maintaining a strong armoured or mechanized brigade group in Europe. The days of the Canadian main battle tank seem to be ending.

If this is so, then the best alternative would seem to be to maintain a battalion group of infantry or paratroops in Germany together with some ground air defence, anti-tank, artillery, helicopter, ground transport and other support units. This could number between 1,500 and 2,000 personnel, and could be closely associated with German and American units, taking responsibility for such tasks as mountain defences, the defence of specified urban strong points, or such other defence duties in southern Germany as seem appropriate to Canadian and allied defence planners. By 1995, there will be a completely different defence situation in Germany from that prevailing a decade earlier: a united Germany will be there as a full member of NATO, there will no longer be Soviet forces in eastern Germany, and there will no longer be a Central Front running down the middle of the country.

Keeping 2,000 troops in Germany would not be a negligible act. The forces now committed to ACE Mobile Force by Canada and most other countries number less than 1,000 in each case, and yet are not considered a derisory contribution. In the new security environment in Europe, the maintenance of 2,000 military personnel in Germany would surely be seen as a worthwhile measure in military terms as well as in purely political ones.

Another approach to maintaining a military presence in Europe would be to concentrate on providing peacekeeping units, or verification teams for the CFE arms