

it was agreed that a draft agreement based on this proposal would be tabled by the third round of the talks, scheduled to begin 7 September.

The Warsaw Pact characterized the Bush proposal as positive, and agreed that a treaty was possible as early as 1990.

On 12 July, ahead of schedule, NATO announced further details of the Bush proposals dealing with aircraft. These included limiting each side to 5700 combat aircraft and 1900 combat helicopters. The former category would include those designed primarily for air-to-ground bombing and air-to-air fighting operations. NATO indicated it had about 6700 such aircraft while the Warsaw Pact possessed approximately 9600. Major differences between the two alliances on defining the types of aircraft to be included in any agreement remained, however.

The next rounds of the talks were scheduled for 7 September to 10 October, and 10 November to 21 December.

### CURRENT CANADIAN POSITION

The Government of Canada, with its NATO Allies, supports the goal of conventional force reduction to the lowest levels commensurate with security and stability. At the time of the release of NATO's basic opening position for the talks on 8 December 1988, External Affairs Minister Joe Clark observed that:

...taken together with President Gorbachev's announcement of unilateral reductions and restructuring of Soviet conventional forces, the Statement by Ministers of the North Atlantic Alliance indicates that both sides are moving with dispatch toward serious negotiations on conventional forces in Europe. I think the conditions for productive negotiations toward maintaining stability at lower levels of conventional forces have never been better.<sup>2</sup>

Despite Mr. Clark's apparent optimism, however, in a speech delivered on 13 January 1989 he firmly supported the need for Canada and its allies to maintain their vigilance in dealing with the Soviet Union and its allies: "One lesson which history has taught us on numerous occasions is that negotiation based on mutual respect for each other's strength often succeeds. Negotiation from weakness cannot." He emphasized this point further by stating:

Prudence demands that we examine each new Soviet proposal with a careful eye to see how it affects our own vital interests. Prudence requires that we in the West remain clear-headed about what our most cherished ideals of peace, political freedom and respect for human rights really mean. Prudence demands that we maintain a credible military and political defence of these values.

<sup>2</sup> Department of External Affairs, *News Release* No. 245 (8 December 1988), p. 1.