

When the MBFR talks began, Canada stated that an agreement should have provisions designed "to avoid the risk of their possible violation."¹⁶ This was the intent of some of the "associated measures", the term used in the official title of the talks. Canada also referred to them as stabilizing measures.¹⁷ Such measures are likely to be featured strongly in the new negotiations.¹⁸ An "effective verification regime" has been highlighted as an important objective.¹⁹ Canada can help achieve this objective through the Verification Research Programme it launched some years ago.²⁰

Canadian arms control and disarmament policy has been buttressed by strong domestic support. Negotiations on conventional forces have so far taken second place to deliberations and negotiations on nuclear arms in the public view. With Canada's geographic position between the USSR and US, the two major nuclear weapon states, public concern about strategic nuclear weapons is hardly surprising. Moreover, both the US and USSR have been concentrating on bilateral negotiations on nuclear forces.

Though public comment on negotiations on conventional forces has been more muted, support for NATO has remained high throughout the period during which NATO increasingly devoted attention to arms control and disarmament, both nuclear and conventional. Over the years there has been a growing public awareness of the complexities of the issues. Canadian policy, particularly in the past ten years, has encompassed the need to provide information to the public on these issues. A major challenge in the period ahead will be to explain, not only the complexities involved in negotiations on conventional forces, but also the need for the modernization of forces. In addition, the public should be made aware of the continuing interrelationship between the nuclear and conventional balance of forces. All of these bear on the overriding

¹⁶ George K. Grande, "Statement by the Head of the Canadian Delegation," Vienna, 30 October 1973.

¹⁷ W. H. Barton, "Reducing the Credibility of War as a Tool of Government," Department of External Affairs, Statements and Speeches, 73/27, Ottawa, 24 October 1973, p. 7.

¹⁸ Statement issued at the NATO Ministerial Meeting, 8 December 1988, paragraph 6.

¹⁹ Brussels Declaration, paragraph 8.

²⁰ Under the Programme, the project known as PAXSAT B is directly related to verifying of compliance with a conventional forces agreement.