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REVIEW OF PEACE AND SECURITY ISSUES IN 1987 AND THE CANADIAN RESPONSE

Introduction

1987 was in many ways a watershed year for the prospects of improved international security, especially at the super-power level. The agreement in December to eliminate intermediate-range missiles (INF), was the culmination of a process begun in 1979 and given shape two years later as the "zero option." In addition there was progress on other arms control issues, including negotiations for a reduction in strategic missiles, a ban on chemical weapons, and the placing of further limits on nuclear testing; and there were also indications at the end of the year that substantive negotiations might finally begin on force reductions in Europe. Moreover, the peace process in Central America was continuing, despite formidable opposition, and an agreement to withdraw Soviet forces from Afghanistan was closer than ever before.

On the other hand, conflicts in Africa continued to frustrate efforts to improve grim conditions of poverty and privation, especially in Mozambique, Angola and Ethiopia, and little movement was registered by the UN and others in their effort to end war between Iran and Iraq, or to bring about a settlement of the Arab/Israel dispute. Indian military intervention in Sri Lanka underlined the fact that domestic conflict can be as great a threat to peace as international conflict. Yet such internal conflict appears likely to become widespread as population pressures exacerbate ethnic and religious tensions in much of Asia and Africa. These tensions in turn lead governments to increase spending on arms, which is now approaching a trillion US dollars annually or about six