

Collins Addresses Opening of CFE

The following is the text given by the Honourable Mary Collins, Associate Minister of National Defence, at the new Negotiation on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe on March 7, 1989 in Vienna.

"It is a great honour for me to be here to speak for the Government of Canada at this landmark meeting. I know that Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, regrettably unable to be here today, would have appreciated as much as I do the gracious hospitality which has been extended to us by Dr. Mock and the Austrian authorities.

We have come together this week, here in Vienna, a city whose history extends both to the East and West, to mark the opening of two new negotiations on military security. The significance of these negotiations cannot be overemphasized.

We are here to help banish the threat of war in Europe and to search for new expressions of peace and security. We are here to establish new traditions of cooperation for future generations of Europeans and North Americans.

Forty-four years after the end of the Second World War, Europe remains a house divided between two military alliances, with over five million men and women still facing one another under arms. Despite the enormous progress made since 1945, Europeans continue to live with the spectre of sudden military attack. The present concentration of armed forces in Europe is the highest ever known in peacetime; its destructive potential is enormous.

Clearly, this is a situation which cannot be allowed to continue. Europe has seen, over the years, more than its share of war, and well understands its horrors. Canadians too understand the horrors of war; over 100,000 Canadian men and women have died in Europe in two World Wars. Such wars must never be allowed to happen again.

On March 9th, our delegations will sit down at two new negotiations, with the goal of lessening the possibility of war. One of these negotiations, dealing with Confidence- and Security-Building



Ms. Mary Collins, Associate Minister of National Defence.

Measures, will attempt to build upon the already considerable results achieved at the Stockholm Conference; the second, a Negotiation on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, will attempt to establish a balance of conventional armed forces at lower levels in Europe.

The negotiations which we are about to begin promise to be the most significant arms control and disarmament deliberations yet undertaken on a multilateral basis. If successful, they will have implications for negotiations in other areas as well, and will help consolidate the growing political will for a more stable Europe.

Today, all our peoples have grounds for new hope that the peace we now enjoy will continue — but in a more secure and less confrontational world. We are the makers of our own history. Let us harness our collective energy and direct it toward the creation of a more harmonious and stable European security framework.

The work that has gone into preparing these negotiations, both at the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting and in the Mandate Talks, has been protracted and arduous. However, the results are worthy of the

effort. No arms control undertaking has ever started off on a firmer footing than the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, nor has any begun with more clearly stated objectives and guidelines than the Negotiation on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

The signs are encouraging. True, a serious imbalance in conventional forces in Europe still exists. Yet, dramatic progress in arms control and disarmament has been made over the past few years, and problems which previously seemed intractable have yielded, or are in the process of yielding, to long-sought solutions.

The successful conclusion of the Stockholm Agreement in 1986 marked a major step forward toward enhanced security in Europe. The soundness of the agreement signed in Stockholm has been amply confirmed in its implementation.

Since January 1987, some 35 observations of military activities have been carried out under its terms. Canadian soldiers are among those who have been inspected and observed, and have themselves participated in observations. These observations have contributed materially to the heightened sense of confidence which now exists; they have helped entrench such important gains as the right to on-site inspection.

The pattern of observations and contacts among military personnel that has been established is unprecedented in both its nature and scope. A great opportunity exists to enhance this new climate for trust and cooperation. We must build carefully and well on this foundation.

All of our efforts, of course, have not been equally fruitful. Last month, for example, we concluded the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks without having reached agreement. The extent of common ground proved to be insufficient. However, even here we gained invaluable experience.

Earlier this year at the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Mr. Clark described the MBFR talks as a