

Throughout the MBFR talks, Canada favoured the close coordination of NATO negotiation positions. For the new negotiations, coordination has been somewhat looser.¹¹ Nevertheless, NATO members achieved consensus on a series of significant statements during the planning period.¹²

Canada has favoured a step-by-step approach towards the management of East-West relations. At the exploratory talks on MBFR, Canada argued for "a gradual, systematic approach."¹³ In practical terms, that meant an initial effort to reach an agreement on reductions in manpower levels of US and Soviet forces in Central Europe. Canada now supports reductions in certain armaments but, as was the case in MBFR, in "a negotiating process which proceeds step-by-step and which guarantees the undiminished security of all concerned at each stage,"¹⁴ -- a point which is embodied in the agreed mandate.

From a very early stage in post-World War II deliberations on arms control and disarmament, Canadian policy has always emphasized that agreements should be adequately verifiable. Canada has stressed the importance of including provisions to ensure that states comply with the terms of an agreement. One of the guiding principles laid down in 1956 was that negotiations should continue on those aspects which were considered to be "controllable" -- i.e., verifiable -- such as the reduction of troops and conventional armaments. Another principle was that verification proposals, such as Open Skies and ground control posts, should be part of the early stage of a comprehensive disarmament programme.¹⁵

¹¹ Planning took place in the High Level Task Force established at the NATO Ministerial Meeting, Halifax in May 1986.

¹² "Brussels Declaration on Conventional Arms Control," 11 December 1986; "Conventional Arms Control: The Way Ahead," 2 March 1988; and the statement issued at the Ministerial Meeting, 8 December 1988.

¹³ Department of External Affairs, Statements and Speeches, No.49, Ottawa, 15 May 1973.

¹⁴ Brussels Declaration, paragraph 8.

¹⁵ See Footnote 7 above.