

zone as a long term goal. Similarly, all states in the region are urged to commit to joining the chemical weapons convention currently under negotiation, once it is completed. The Biological Weapons Convention will be holding a review conference in September 1991. The US proposal calls for the conference to use the opportunity to strengthen the conventions provisions.

Two days later, France announced its initiative in Middle East arms control. The French plan included similar goals on limiting weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms transfers and also included proposals for confidence-building measures intended to enhance regional security.

On 9 July 1991, after a two day meeting in Paris, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, the main arms suppliers to the Middle East, agreed to seek the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and to observe rules of restraint in exporting conventional arms to the region. Their final statement also encouraged countries in the region to develop their own proposals for arms control. The five countries will meet again in September and October to develop concrete measures to this end.

CURRENT CANADIAN POSITION

Canada supports regional arms control initiatives and is in favour of arms control in the Middle East. (For Canadian policy on arms transfers to the region see Chapter 1, ARMS TRANSFERS.) As discussed above, Canada has put forward a proposal which deals with Middle East arms control concerns, as they have been articulated since the Persian Gulf crisis, as part of a global initiative on weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms transfers. In announcing the Government's plan for a world summit, then Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark explained the rationale behind the Government initiative:

Over the years, ...we have all helped to create a military apparatus in this region, especially in Iraq, that is beyond human comprehension. Military assistance in the region has exceeded economic assistance. This must stop. ... To be credible, any peace plan must include strict measures to check the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the stockpiling of conventional weapons in the region. Multilateral negotiations have already begun regarding these crucial issues.... However, their success has been limited owing to the lack of political will or the conflicting interests of the various parties involved. It is urgent that we make further efforts to display a strong political will. In this belief, Canada plans to promote a world summit on instruments of war and weapons of mass destruction in the coming months.¹

¹Department of External Affairs. "Canada and the Challenges of the Post-War Period in the Gulf," *Statement*, 91/10, 8 February 1991: 7-8.