

increasing complexity of such negotiations, verification might well be the single most important factor in making concrete progress on arms control in the 1980's.

In response to this assessment, the Department of External Affairs expanded its verification programme. Since that time we have been devoting considerable resources, within the Department and through contracts with universities and commercial enterprises, to exploring possible verification techniques, their feasibility and their implications. In order to assist in developing a possible treaty banning weapons in space, Spar Aerospace, under contract from the Department of External Affairs, recently completed a feasibility study of a spacecraft-based system to determine the presence of weapons in space. In the field of chemical weapons research, Canada has submitted three detailed reports to the U.N. regarding allegations of chemical weapons use in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan. Verification is a field in which Canada has gained a reputation for having significant experience, resources and expertise available to the international community.

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The steady work that Canada is doing in the multilateral forums in Europe and New York and in verification research may come as news to some. The negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (now in its seventh year) and at MBFR (now in its 11th year) are too slow, too tedious and too involved to warrant much media attention. Thus, the long-term work being done by Canadian officials in many parts of the world tends to go unnoticed and become overshadowed by issues such as the nuclear freeze, Cruise missile testing and the Strategic Defence Initiative. This is understandable, for these are timely, urgent issues. These are the issues which fire the public imagination and provide a rallying cry for the peace movement. They attract attention precisely because they are controversial. But these issues must be placed in the wider context of what Canada is attempting to accomplish in arms control and disarmament and how we are going about it.

There should be no doubt about the essence of Canadian policy: the Government is working for mutual, balanced and verifiable reductions in nuclear weapons; and this can only be achieved by genuine negotiations. Declarations of good intentions will not do. Concrete steps are essential. That is why the confidence-building process is so important.

Canada, to have any influence at all, must work from a strong position within the Alliance. We are not a neutral nation. We have commitments to our defence partners. We