

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, East-West relations were in decline. One result was that the risk of surprise attack became even more pressing. Though not mentioned specifically in the Madrid mandate for the Stockholm Conference on CSBMs, reducing the risk of surprise attack was a key Western objective when the talks began early in 1984. The opening Canadian statement called on the Conference to "take into account all of the factors which are present in the current imbalance of conventional arms and which could lead to surprise attack ..." ³² Some of the measures outlined in the Stockholm Document, and implemented since the beginning of 1987, go some considerable way to reducing the risk of surprise attack. ³³ Examples of these measures include notification and observation of certain military activities and verification through on-site inspection. Strengthening the CSBM regime in the second stage of these talks can contribute further to the realization of this objective, particularly if an agreement can be reached on the regular exchange of information on the structure and deployment of forces and on verification of the information. ³⁴

The CSBM regime may also facilitate attempts to reduce the capability for surprise attack. NATO countries have identified this as one of the objectives of the new negotiations on conventional arms control and disarmament in Europe. ³⁵ The NATO statement in December 1988 was more specific. "Stationed forces, particularly those in active combat units, are especially relevant to surprise attack. We shall propose limits on such forces." ³⁶

³² The Honourable Allen J. MacEachen, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, "Notes for a Statement to the CCSBMDE", Stockholm, 18 January 1984, pp. 2-3.

³³ Document of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, External Affairs Canada, Canadian Foreign Policy Series, Ottawa, 19 September 1986.

³⁴ Having failed to reach agreement at Stockholm on exchange of information, the members of NATO have indicated that in the second stage they will propose "a wide-ranging comprehensive annual exchange of information concerning military organization, manpower, and equipment as well as major weapon deployment programmes." See Statement issued at the NATO Ministerial Meeting, 8 December 1988, paragraph 9.

³⁵ Brussels Declaration, paragraph 8.

³⁶ Statement at NATO Ministerial meeting, 8 December 1988, paragraph 5.