

negotiations; undertaking research related to the verification of CSBMs; organizing seminars; and preparing a CSCE military yearbook. Although Canada did not envisage the Centre having an active role in verifying obligations devolving from various treaties -- that would remain the responsibility of individual states parties, just as matters regarding compliance would be dealt with elsewhere -- it did want the Centre to possess a clearly identified capacity for information exchange and verification support. Canada reasoned that the implementation of transparency and verification provisions in the CSBM and CFE agreements (and experience gained therein) would be of direct relevance to CSCE conflict prevention efforts.

The Canadian paper represented the most fleshed out contribution to date for the development of the CSCE's conflict prevention and management capabilities, and the Prepcom drew extensively from the Canadian document in preparing the "basic elements" paper that would form the basis of the Charter of Paris. In August, Canada shared a revised version of its paper with selected delegations, including a mixture of East, West and NNA, hoping to gather support for its approach. As preparations for the Summit intensified, states were coalescing around three poles:

- 1) those who thought the proposed Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) should be limited to the non-political function of supporting the arms control and CSBM process.

In this view, the Centre would reduce the risk of conflict by increasing the flow of information between states regarding military matters. Broader conflict prevention and resolution tasks should be left to the high-level political consultative forum that would undoubtedly be agreed at the Summit. Voluntary conciliation procedures could be provided separately, as an adjunct to the political forum. Supporters of this conception included France, the UK, the US and the Netherlands, and the NATO paper tabled at the Prepcom took this approach. These states argued that conferring a more "political" character on the CPC would set it up in competition with the ministerial forum, resulting in a lack of clear direction and, eventually, contradictions between the two.

- 2) those who thought that, in addition to providing support for arms control and CSBM implementation, the CPC should be entrusted with specific responsibilities in the areas of conflict prevention and resolution, including providing participating states with a dispute settlement mechanism.

Advocates of this approach included Canada, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Poland and Hungary. They argued that the CPC would have a greater chance of living up to its name if it immediately engaged political attention and encompassed a full range of conflict resolution tools. Since the CPC would remain under the direction of and accountable to the CSCE political consultation fora, in particular to meetings of foreign ministers, the question of competition or contradiction would not arise.

- 3) the Soviet Union, which favoured an encompassing and intrusive CPC to coordinate verification and monitoring activities and to play a broad role in conflict prevention and mediation.

In making its case for the middle option, Canada ran up against several difficulties. There were the teething pains associated with a diverse group of North Americans, West and East Europeans, and neutrals learning to work outside traditional dividing lines. There was a division between "old" and "new" CSCE hands that cut across all delegations and led to