

As we approach the Conference's seventh session, Canada hopes that there will be some significant forward movement on the basis of a degree of consensus that does exist on the need to improve on the existing and admittedly modest confidence-building measures contained in the Helsinki Final Act. Canada believes that the Stockholm Conference should produce a substantial result by the time of the November 1986 CSCE Follow-Up Meeting in Vienna which is to review its progress.

The Vienna Talks

The remaining multilateral negotiating forum -- the Vienna-based Mutual Balanced Force Reduction Talks (MBFR) -- has a much more limited mandate and membership than the others previously described.

The Mutual Balanced Force Reduction Talks between NATO and the Warsaw Pact opened in Vienna in 1973. Recognising that the concentration of forces in Central Europe is the largest in the world, the objective of these talks, as its title suggests, has been mutual reduction of conventional forces in Europe to parity at 900,000. Although the talks have been underway for 12 years, progress has been, at best, modest. There has been disagreement between the two sides on the very fundamental and crucial issues of data and verification. The two sides have been unable to agree on the number of Eastern troops in the so-called "reductions area," thereby making it impossible to determine the reductions required to reach parity.

Without agreement on these very basic issues, particularly the question of data, it has been difficult to make any significant forward movement. However, the talks in themselves constitute an important "confidence-building measure" by providing a unique, ongoing forum for dialogue on a fundamental issue in East-West relations.

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As we have seen Canada does have a vital role to play in the work of disarmament. Another prominent forum where this will soon be evident is the Third Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The NPT, which came into force in 1970, will be reviewed at a four-week conference in Geneva opening August 27. With 128 signatories, the NPT enjoys the widest international support of any arms control treaty. Here indeed is something in the disarmament field for which we can be grateful. The NPT provides a legal framework for the political commitment to horizontal and vertical non-proliferation which underpins the international non-proliferation regime.