

MUTUAL AND BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS (MBFR)

After SALT, the most important East-West arms control negotiation is the Conference on the Mutual Reduction of Forces and Armaments and Associated Measures in Central Europe, generally referred to as MBFR. In these negotiations, which began in Vienna in 1973, NATO and the Warsaw Pact countries have been seeking agreement on ways to reduce the level of armed confrontation in Central Europe. As had been expected from the outset, many difficulties have been encountered and progress has been slow. A principal obstacle has been the failure to reach agreement on the level of forces actually present on each side in the area of proposed reductions and the consequent failure to agree on the size of reductions by each side that would result in a balanced outcome.

Canada remains convinced that a balanced reduction in the level of armed confrontation in Central Europe would improve the political climate and reduce the possibility of war. Within the NATO alliance, Canada has been a consistent and strong supporter of MBFR aims and has participated actively in the formulation of policy and in the conduct of the negotiations.