

ARMS CONTROL DIGEST



Global Weapons Summit

■ In separate speeches on 8 February dealing with the post-war period in the Gulf, Prime Minister Mulroney and External Affairs Minister Clark called for the UN to convene a "Global Summit on the Instruments of War and Weapons of Mass Destruction." Its purpose would be "to mobilize political will and to re-energize international efforts" already under way to prevent the proliferation of conventional and non-conventional weapons, and delivery systems. The summit would seek to produce a "comprehensive programme of action" under which "individual proliferation concerns [would] be addressed in those multilateral forums set up to deal with them."

Among specific measures called for were: an early commitment by NPT signatories to its indefinite extension in 1995; formal reaffirmation by the nuclear weapon states of their commitment to pursue further nuclear disarmament measures; expanded participation in the current Missile Technology Control Regime, to include the USSR and others, while expanding its guidelines to include missiles with smaller payloads and longer ranges; enhancing the provisions of the 1975 Biological Weapons Convention; a commitment by members of the Conference on Disarmament to conclude negotiations on a global Chemical Weapons Convention by the end of 1992; expanding the membership of the "Australia Group" of states controlling exports of chemicals that can be used to produce chemical weapons; action on an information exchange system to promote the "transparency" of conventional arms transfers; and a commitment by the CFE signatories "to ensure that arms affected

by the accord are not exported to regions of tension."

Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty

■ As expected, a CFE Treaty was signed in Paris on 19 November. Negotiated in only twenty months, it has been described by a senior US official as "the most ambitious arms control treaty ever concluded." Under its terms, within forty months of entry into force (ten days after ratification by all twenty-two parties), the total number of tanks on each side (NATO and the Warsaw Pact) is to be limited to 20,000; armoured combat vehicles to 30,000; artillery, 20,000; combat aircraft, 6,800; and attack helicopters, 2,000. Overall, more than 50,000 weapons in these categories will have to be destroyed or converted to "non-military" purposes, most of these by the USSR and its former allies.

Critics have charged the USSR with violating the spirit of the Treaty by shifting tens of thousands of such weapons east of the Ural mountains, outside the geographic zone covered by the agreement, just prior to its signature. Both Soviet and Western officials explained that much of the transfer was accounted for by previously announced unilateral and bilaterally negotiated Soviet troop withdrawals from Eastern Europe. According to the chief US negotiator, then Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze gave assurances that the bulk of the equipment withdrawn prior to the Treaty's signature would be destroyed or converted. However, new disputes arose almost immediately after the official data exchange on 18 November. The US and its NATO allies have charged the USSR with under-reporting its equipment holdings as of that date by 20,000 or more; identifying less than half the number of military sites to be inspected than had been indicated earlier (which affects the number of inspections

it would be obliged to accept); transferring undeclared weapons outside the region after the Treaty was signed, contrary to its terms; and seeking to exempt three regular Army divisions by designating them as units of naval infantry, which the West insists are still covered by the Treaty.

American officials have made it clear that they will not submit the Treaty for Senate ratification until the disputes over data and interpretation have been settled. The parties have a period of ninety days after signature in which to "readjust" the data they have submitted.

The CFE Treaty provides for follow-on negotiations leading up to the March 1992 Helsinki Review Conference of the CSCE. Known as CFE-1A, these negotiations, intended to focus on personnel limitations and the details of an aerial inspection regime, began in Vienna on 29 November.

A new agreement on confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) in Europe was also signed at the Paris Summit in November. Building on the notification measures and information exchanges required by the 1986 Stockholm Accords, the new agreement adds provisions for annual information exchanges on troop strength and major weapon systems down to the level of brigade or regiment, the deployment of major weapon and equipment systems, and military budgets; and a "consultation and cooperation" mechanism for "unusual military activities." Despite the longstanding insistence of the Eastern and non-aligned states, it did not include CSBMs for independent naval and air exercises.

Strategic Arms Reduction Talks

■ Senior US and Soviet officials continued to report progress on outstanding START issues in the lead-up to a "ministerial meeting" between Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and US Secretary of State Baker in Houston on 10 and 11 December. After the

meeting, it was reported that only technical verification issues remained. President Bush announced "great progress" on the Treaty and declared his hope that it would be signed at a US-Soviet presidential summit in Moscow on 11 February. However, after the surprise resignation of Mr. Shevardnadze, the beginnings of a Soviet crackdown in the Baltic republics, and the resumption of hostilities in the Persian Gulf, doubts arose over whether the START Treaty (said to amount to 500 pages) would be ready for signature in time, and whether the summit would be held at all.

In Washington on 28 January, the new Soviet foreign minister Alexander Bessmertnykh and Secretary of State Baker announced that the summit was to be postponed to a later date, sometime before 30 June. The announcement cited the Persian Gulf war and unfinished business in the START agreement as reasons for the postponement.

PTBT Amendment Conference

■ A conference to convert the 1963 Partial Test-Ban Treaty into a Comprehensive Test-Ban (CTB) was held in New York from 7 to 18 January. The three depositary states (the US, UK, and USSR) were forced to convene the conference after being requested to do so by a third of the 117 parties to the Treaty, even though two of them (the US and UK) currently oppose negotiations on a CTB and enjoy a veto over any amendment of the earlier agreement. In the end, the conference approved by a vote of 74-2-19 (with Canada abstaining), a "draft decision" mandating the President of the Conference to "conduct consultations with a view to ... resuming the work of the Conference at an appropriate time." However, since the US made it clear that it would not attend such a follow-on conference, it is unlikely that it will ever be held. □

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