

Consequently, the more that is known about the CFE negotiations and about what lies behind them the better. It is essential to look at their antecedents, to understand the preoccupations of the various participants, and to examine the key factors affecting the approaches of East and West. Even now, when political conditions are changing so rapidly, it is important to recognize that the CFE talks are still negotiations among members of two alliances, whose approaches to this issue have not altered fundamentally since bargaining started early in 1989.

Doug Hamlin's paper makes a valuable contribution to understanding the field. It sets out the issue of conventional force reductions in Europe as seen by a Canadian diplomat with long involvement in arms control. In a very careful and balanced fashion, he outlines the key factors governing the West's policies, and indicates how they evolved over time especially during the Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) negotiations. Mr. Hamlin focuses on the problems of surprise attack and geostrategic disparities between the two alliances, and then sets out Western thinking on such questions as verification and the long-term future of security in Europe. Canada's particular interests in this field are mentioned, and the paper concludes with an outline of the objectives that this country ought to pursue in the new, CFE negotiations.

This paper was completed before the onset of massive political change in Eastern Europe. We decided to publish it as it stands -- with the expectation that the reader will mentally update a few sections -- rather than embark on a major rewriting process. We believe that, despite the changes in the environment, Doug Hamlin's paper will be seen as a very useful outline of official Western thinking on the CFE question, that is helpful to the interested public as well as students of the conventional forces issues.

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