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CONVENTIONAL ARMS NEGOTIATIONS IN EUROPE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today noted with satisfaction the Statement on Conventional Arms Control issued by the North Atlantic Council in Ministerial Session in Brussels on December 8 (copy attached). The statement sets out clearly and concretely the guiding principles and the framework of a negotiating approach for Alliance members at the negotiations relating to conventional arms in Europe which will be launched next year. Mr. Clark observed that "taken together with President Gorbachev's announcement of unilateral reductions and restructuring of Soviet conventional forces, the Statement by Ministers of the North Atlantic Alliance indicates that both sides are moving with dispatch toward serious negotiations on conventional forces in Europe. I think the conditions for productive negotiations toward maintaining stability at lower levels of conventional forces have never been better."

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Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures

Canada

CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL

STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL MEETING IN MINISTERIAL SESSION AT NATO HEADQUARTERS, BRUSSELS

(8-9 December 1988)

1. In their statement "Conventional Arms Control: The Way Ahead", the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in March 1988 emphasized that the imbalance in conventional forces remains at the core of Europe's security concerns. We shall be presenting specific proposals at the negotiating table to redress this imbalance.
2. We look forward to the early commencement of the two negotiations we have proposed: one on conventional stability between the 23 members of the two military Alliances in Europe and one on confidence- and security-building measures among all 35 signatories of the Helsinki Final Act.
3. In these negotiations we will be guided by:
 - the conviction that the existing military confrontation is the result, not the cause, of the painful division of Europe;
 - the principle of the indivisible security of all our nations. We shall reject calls for partial security arrangements or proposals aimed at separate agreements;
 - the hope that the new thinking in the Soviet Union will open the way for mutual agreement on realistic, militarily significant and verifiable arrangements which enhance security at lower levels.

TOWARDS STABILITY

4. The major threat to stability in Europe comes from those weapons systems which are capable of mounting large-scale offensive operations and of seizing and holding territory. These are above all main battle tanks, artillery and armoured troop carriers. It is in these very systems that the East has such a massive preponderance. Indeed, the Soviet Union itself possesses more tanks and artillery than all the other members of the Warsaw Pact and the Alliance combined. And they are concentrated in a manner which raises grave concerns about the strategy which they are intended to support as well as their role in maintaining the division of Europe.

7. Finally, we shall require a rigorous and reliable régime for monitoring and verification. This would include the periodic exchange of detailed data about forces and deployments, and the right to conduct on-site inspections.

TOWARDS TRANSPARENCY

8. Greater transparency is an essential requirement for real stability. Therefore, within the framework of the CSCE process, the negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures form an essential complement to those on conventional stability. We are encouraged thus far by the successful implementation of the Stockholm Document and we consider that the momentum must be maintained.

9. In order to create transparency of military organization, we plan to introduce a proposal for a wide-ranging, comprehensive annual exchange of information concerning military organization, manpower and equipment as well as major weapon deployment programmes. To evaluate this information we will propose modalities for the establishment of a random evaluation system.

10. In addition, in order to build on the success of the Stockholm Document and to create greater transparency of military activities, we will propose measures in areas such as:

- more detailed information with regard to the notification of military exercises;
- improvements in the arrangements for observing military activities;
- greater openness and predictability about military activities;
- a strengthening of the régime for ensuring compliance and verification.

11. Finally, we shall propose additional measures designed to improve contacts and communications between participating states in the military field; to enhance access for military staffs and media representatives; and to increase mutual understanding of military capabilities, behaviour and force postures. We will also propose modalities for an organized exchange of views on military doctrine tied to actual force structures, capabilities and dispositions in Europe.