



communiqué

N°:
No.: 147

July 28, 1987.

WESTERN NATIONS TABLE DRAFT MANDATE FOR NEW NEGOTIATIONS ON CONVENTIONAL STABILITY IN EUROPE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today announced that the 16 NATO participants in informal consultations at Vienna with members of the Warsaw Pact today circulated a detailed proposal for a mandate or terms of reference for a new negotiation on conventional stability in Europe.

The Western nations proposed that the objectives of the negotiation be to strengthen stability and security in Europe through:

- the establishment of a stable and secure balance of conventional forces at lower levels,
- the elimination of disparities prejudicial to stability and security,
- the elimination, as a matter of high priority, of the capability for launching surprise attack and for initiating large-scale offensive action.

Mr. Clark expressed the hope that the draft mandate circulated today would lead to early commencement of negotiations aimed at establishing in Europe a stable and secure balance of conventional forces at lower levels. The negotiations should seek as a matter of priority to eliminate the capability for launching surprise attack and for initiating large scale offensive action.

Mr. Clark noted that Canada, as a member of NATO and through its participation in the High Level Task Force, had taken an active role in the development of this mandate and will be fully involved in these important negotiations which could have a major effect on lowering tensions between East and West and, if successful, could pave the way for further progress in nuclear arms negotiations.

The mandate proposed by the NATO members would see the new negotiation take place in the framework of the CSCE process between the 23 members of the two Alliances, retaining autonomy as to its agenda, timetable, rules of procedure, working methods, and other organizational modalities.

The negotiation would cover the conventional forces of participants based on land within the territory of the participating states in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. Particular emphasis would be given initially to those forces directly related to the achievement of the objectives defined in the mandate. Nuclear weapons would be excluded, as would naval forces and chemical weapons.

The Western text constitutes a complete mandate for the negotiation. In this it differs significantly from the Eastern non-paper circulated on June 22, which merely indicated possible elements for a mandate.

The text reflects the determination of Allied governments to pursue vigorously the initiatives taken at Halifax and Brussels in 1986, as elaborated in the Reykjavik Communiqué of June this year, aimed at achieving a comprehensive, stable and verifiable balance of conventional forces at lower levels.

The circulation of the draft mandate was accompanied by a statement on the exchange of information and verification by Canada's Ambassador in Vienna. In that statement, the Ambassador stressed that timely exchanges of appropriately detailed information on forces and equipment subjected to an arms control agreement is essential to the operation of an effective verification régime. He also emphasized the importance of a system of verification measures which can effectively confirm compliance by all parties to an eventual agreement with obligations undertaken. He noted that on-site inspections as of right are a necessary part of an effective verification régime.