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COMMENCEMENT OF NEGOTIATIONS ON
CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL IN EUROPE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today announced that Canada, at the opening sessions of the two new negotiations on conventional arms control in Vienna, tabled a series of proposals aimed at enhancing stability in Europe. Canada tabled these proposals on behalf of all the states members of the NATO Alliance.

In the Negotiation on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), Mr. Clark noted that Canada and its Western Allies seek: the establishment of a secure and stable balance of conventional forces at lower levels; the elimination of disparities prejudicial to stability; and the elimination of the capability for launching surprise attack and for initiating large-scale offensive action. To achieve these ends, we have proposed: a radical reduction in the overall levels of those weapons systems most relevant to surprise attack and offensive action (main battle tanks to 40,000; artillery to 33,000; armoured troop carriers to 56,000); a limit on the amounts of these armaments which can be held by any one country (no more than 30% of the overall limits); and additional limits on armaments stationed outside a country's national territory in active units (main battle tanks 3,200; artillery 1,700; armoured troop carriers 6,000). We have also proposed an annual exchange of information regarding military holdings and troop levels, and have underlined the need for stabilizing measures and rigorous verification arrangements.

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Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures

In the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBM), Mr. Clark explained, we seek to build upon the successful implementation of the Stockholm Document on CSBM in Europe by creating greater transparency about military organization, as well as military activity. To achieve this we have proposed: an annual exchange of information concerning military organization, manpower, equipment and major weapons deployment programmes, subject to a system of random evaluation; greater information exchange on military activities; improvements to observation/inspection modalities; the lowering of thresholds for observation and for longer notice of larger scale activities; as well as measures designed to improve contacts and communication. To enhance the free exchange of ideas and further reduce misunderstandings, we have also proposed the holding of a seminar among all 35 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) participating states on military doctrine.

Mr. Clark noted that the proposals put forward by Canada and its Allies in Vienna enjoy the advantage of being realistic. They involve reasonable steps which, if implemented, could result in a new architecture for security, upon which to build a more stable Europe. It is our hope, Mr. Clark added, that these proposals will be received in the spirit of cooperation in which they have been put forward.