

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, today tabled in the House of Commons an Exchange of Notes constituting an agreement between the Governments of Canada and the United States of America to continue their cooperation in the air defence of North America through the North American Air Defence Command (NORAD) for a further five years. The Notes were exchanged yesterday, May 8 in Washington by Canada's Ambassador to the United States, Mr. Marcel Cadieux, and Mr. Richard D. Vine, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Canadian Affairs in the State Department.

The decision to renew the NORAD Agreement was taken by the Canadian Government following an extensive review of the various factors involved and after taking into account the comments and recommendations made by the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence in its report to the House of April 22, 1975 following a series of hearings on the question.

The Government concluded that it is in Canada's interest to continue to cooperate with the United States on questions of North American defence both as a means of dealing with mutual security problems and as a contribution to the overall security of the NATO area. The Government also concluded that, although substantially diminished in relative terms, there continued to be a bomber threat to North America which requires some defence and that this could most efficiently and economically be provided through a continuation of the effective air defence arrangement which had been worked out by the two Governments through NORAD.

The Government was also conscious of the increased importance being attached by Canada and the United States to the peacetime surveillance and control of their respective airspace. For this purpose, both Canada and the United States are in the process of developing national civil-military air surveillance and control systems and it was concluded that the effectiveness of these new arrangements would be enhanced by a continuation of NORAD. To further the effectiveness of these new national systems, the two Governments have recently agreed to redefine NORAD's regional boundaries. For Canada, this will have the practical effect that in the future, all operations in Canadian airspace will be controlled from centres located in Canada and manned by Canadian personnel.

In negotiations on the Exchange of Notes to renew the NORAD Agreement, both sides accepted the desirability of taking account in the text of the various changes in the strategic situation affecting North American air defence which have occurred since the Agreement was originally concluded in 1958. On the Canadian side there was also a desire to ensure that in each aspect of the new Agreement, appropriate account was taken of the need to maintain full Canadian sovereignty.

The texts of the notes exchanged yesterday in Washington are attached.