



## The Canadian Commitment to NATO

The following letter to the Editor, written by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, was published in The Globe and Mail on December 4.

"You have confused the relationship between security and arms control in your editorial Risky Violations (December 1).

Canada is a member of NATO and will continue to shoulder its share of the burden of collective defence. The Government's undertaking to allow air-launched cruise missile (ALCM) testing is a contribution we make to the viability of NATO's nuclear deterrent. As long as there are nuclear weapons we must rely on that deterrent. Testing unarmed cruise missiles in Canada is a small contribution compared to that of our European allies, who have deployed armed cruise missiles on their territory.

As a member of NATO and a partner in North American defence, we are unquestionably a US ally. But we are not unquestioningly a US ally. On November 28, I questioned the wisdom of the US decision to no longer abide by SALT II limits. We have repeatedly expressed that view to the US Administration, most recently in a letter last week from Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to President Ronald Reagan, and two weeks ago in my discussion with US Secretary of State George Shultz in Ottawa. SALT II is not perfect, but even imperfect restraint is better than no restraint. Our position on this point has been consistent, clear and unequivocal.

It is untrue to say that testing of ALCM guidance systems entails 'co-operation in order to subvert SALT II.' Testing assures the effectiveness of a weapon; it does not determine how many weapons of that type there should be. ALCM testing in Canada no more made it possible for the US to equip its 131st B-52 bomber with cruise missiles than to equip the first B-52.

The important point is that negotiations on limiting the number of cruise missiles are under way in Geneva. This Government strongly supports those negotiations. We are looking for the superpowers to agree on a new arms control accord. In the interim, cruise missile

testing contributes to Alliance unity and demonstrates to the Soviet Union that attempts to drive wedges into the Alliance will not work. This is one reason they returned to the negotiating table in Geneva, and why they are now beginning to negotiate seriously."

Following is an excerpt from an address made by the Minister of National Defence to the Empire Club in Toronto on January 15.

"Deterring aggression, or intimidation through threat of aggression, requires forces with sufficiently credible capabilities to dissuade a potential enemy. The massive Warsaw Pact conventional and nuclear capabilities in Europe pose a real threat to the democratic values enjoyed by our European partners. Canada shares with its allies in the West a commitment to these values. Preserving them cannot be taken for granted. They must be actively defended.

Canada could not survive as the sort of country we all wish it to be if democracy among our traditional allies were lost. A threat to the other Western democracies threatens us here in Canada as well.

We are not in NATO and in Europe today simply out of a spirit of altruism. We are there because our interests as a nation require us to be there and because the loss of a free Europe would be a grave blow to our ability to maintain our democratic freedoms here in Canada. There can be no doubt that the defence of Western Europe continues to be critical to the defence of the Canada we wish to preserve.

The direct threat to Canadian territory is posed currently by Soviet long-range nuclear missile, bomber and submarine forces based in the Soviet Union. Since our geography uniquely situates us between the two nuclear superpowers, we could not remain unaffected by Soviet

aggression against the United States. Opting out is not possible, nor would it be consistent with our proud history, our beliefs and our responsibilities as a democratic and sovereign nation.

Bearing in mind our geographic location, I do not believe that a neutral cordon around Canada would make us safer or improve the global situation by the example it would set. Even if we could afford it, the cost for Canada of going it alone would be very much greater, with no assurance that we would be any more secure. Arguably, we could end up being much less so. In any case how could we hope to enforce Canadian neutrality or even verify that it was being respected?

To opt out would be to give up the collective development of all security measures, which includes arms control, in the North Atlantic Alliance. A disarmed or neutral Canada would not have become part of the process of security and cooperation building in Europe begun with the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. We could not then have contributed to the success of the Stockholm Conference, nor have a seat at the table of the current Vienna meeting continuing the Helsinki process. We could not have become participants in European conventional arms control negotiations, and could not be part of allied consultations on nuclear arms control.

Would the declaration of Canada as a nuclear weapons-free zone make Canadians safer? Unfortunately, such a unilateral act does not provide the security its advocates suggest. A nation of nuclear-free zones is not a nuclear weapons-safe nation. Such a declaration would not by itself eliminate a single nuclear weapon or reduce the differences which divide East and West. Indeed, as the *Toronto Sun* observed, 'it serves more to comfort our enemies and confound our allies.' I do not believe that any worthy aim would be achieved by divorcing Canada from weapons and policies which, despite our action, would continue to provide security to Canadians. Along with all our NATO partners, we have rejected this course as illusory...."