

Second Canada-Netherlands Seminar on Security Ottawa, 28 February - 1 March 2002

INTRODUCTION

This seminar was a follow-up to one held at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael) in mid-April 2000, sponsored by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in collaboration with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). That initial seminar, organized around the theme of "International Security: What Role for Canada and the Netherlands?," brought together a small group of government officials and academics from each country, to discuss important issues on the international security agenda and, especially, to probe the possibilities for developing joint initiatives whereby the two countries might further common interests.

In her welcoming remarks to the Ottawa seminar, Ms. Susan Cartwright (DFAIT) noted that the first seminar had been adjudged, by both governments, to have been so successful that hosting a second such event presented an opportunity her Department was more than happy to pursue. She also stressed a theme with which none present could disagree, namely that the two countries did constitute a "special relationship," one characterized by a commonality of values, interests, efforts and even preferred institutional forums. For Canada, said Ms. Cartwright, the Netherlands was and remained an "important ally." It would be clear from the two-days' proceedings that the Dutch thought similarly vis-à-vis Canada.

As with the first seminar, this one featured a relatively small group of government officials and academics from the two countries, but this time the discussions took place over two working days rather than one. They were organized into five substantive panels. This report conveys the important points made by the principal speakers of each panel (i.e., one presenter and at least one respondent, with duties alternating between Dutch and Canadian speakers). As well, a sense of the ensuing discussion is provided, although those who participated in the debate are not named. Panels one through three were held on the first day, and panels four and five on the second day.