

15. NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENCE COMMAND (NORAD)

BACKGROUND

On 7 August 1957 the North American Air Defence Command (NORAD) was formed on an interim basis between Canada and the United States. It began operations on 12 September 1957, and was established formally by the two governments on 12 May 1958.

NORAD was the result of many years of continental defence cooperation between Canada and the United States, following the Second World War. Its purpose was to defend against air attack on North America, particularly by the Soviet bomber force. For Canada, a major concern from NORAD's conception was the effect it would have on Canadian sovereignty. NORAD's commander is an American, while a Canadian officer holds the Deputy Commander position.

The NORAD agreement, initially to last ten years, established an integrated headquarters exercising operational control over the forces of both nations and dedicated to continental defence. At the outset, the Command included both active and passive defence systems, with a joint fighter-interceptor force and a series of radar nets across the continent. These nets included the Pinetree Line, built in 1951, at 50° North latitude; the Mid-Canada Line, completed in 1954, at 55° North latitude; and the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line, completed in 1957, at 70° North latitude.

As the assessment of the threat evolved, NORAD's resources also changed. The development of the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), in particular, lessened the need for bomber defence. By 1965, the ninety-eight detection stations of the Mid-Canada Line--the only system built, designed and financed solely by Canada--were deactivated. The number of DEW Line and Pinetree Line installations was reduced from seventy-eight to thirty-one and from thirty-nine to fifteen, respectively. From its height between 1958 and 1962 of nearly 250,000 (including 17,000 Canadians), the manpower available to NORAD had decreased to approximately 64,000 (including 6700 Canadians) in 1985. Canadian financial contributions have traditionally been about ten percent of the annual total of \$6.8 billion (in 1985 dollars).

The NORAD Agreement was first renewed in May 1968 for a period of five years. The renewed agreement included two changes: first, clarification that either party could nullify the agreement after review and one year's notice; and second, the insertion of a clause stating that the NORAD agreement would "not involve in any way a Canadian commitment to participate in an active ballistic missile defence." The 1973 renewal of the agreement was for two years only, to allow for re-evaluation of the strategic situation, in light of Soviet ICBM developments and the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I).

The 1975 renewal recognized the changed strategic circumstances, namely a higher degree of mutual and stable deterrence and a less significant long-range bomber threat. The bomber early-warning function, together with some limited defence, nonetheless remained. In addition, to reflect the increased emphasis on ICBMs, NORAD was charged with providing space surveillance, as well as warning and assessment of ballistic missile attack, to ensure an effective response, should deterrence fail. These new tasks involved the development and maintenance of new surveillance systems, including the Ballistic