

The Standing Committee's examination of "security and disarmament issues with special attention to Canada's participation in the second Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to Disarmament" is directed to a priority of Canadian foreign policy. I should like to express my appreciation for the concentrated series of hearings which the Committee has undertaken.

Canada's security policy has three complementary thrusts. They are: (1) deterrence of war through the collective security arrangements of NATO and NORAD; (2) active cooperation in efforts to achieve equitable and verifiable arms control and disarmament agreements; (3) support for peaceful settlement of disputes and the collective effort to resolve the underlying economic and social causes of international tensions. Since I have elaborated on this last point on a number of occasions, I shall not do so today.

Canada recognizes the need for collective efforts to deter aggression against the North American and European regions of the North Atlantic Alliance. It supports and contributes to this defence effort. We are members of an Alliance which relies on a deterrent strategy in which nuclear weapons play an important part. This is unavoidable in the world as we know it. The NATO strategy of flexible response and forward defence depends on our being ready and able to respond to aggression at whatever level is necessary to counter it. The nuclear weapons of the United States and other NATO allies make an essential contribution to the security of Canada and of the Alliance as a whole. While the United States provides the principal strategic deterrent, nuclear weapons of the United Kingdom are committed to the defence of NATO, and France's independent force also serves to reinforce deterrence in Europe.

We now face approximate parity at the strategic nuclear level between the Soviet Union and the United States, Soviet superiority in intermediate range nuclear weapons in Europe and the numerical superiority of the Warsaw Pact in conventional land forces. In these circumstances, members of the Alliance have felt it necessary to take steps to prevent their capacity to deter aggression and to defend themselves from being further eroded. These efforts must be seen against the background of the qualitative and quantitative growth in the military power of the Soviet Union in recent years and in its disposition to project that power in support of its political goals. Canada supports the NATO decision on intermediate range nuclear forces. We are convinced that failure to make adjustments in these areas could dangerously weaken the collective security of the Alliance of which we are a part and seriously undermine the prospects for productive negotiations with the USSR on limitations on such forces. For this reason we do not accept proposals for a moratorium or freeze which would perpetuate the present imbalance of these forces.