

## CURRENT CANADIAN POSITION

Canada is party to one of the oldest naval arms agreements, the Rush-Bagot Treaty of 1817. The Treaty limits US and Canadian naval activity on the Great Lakes. While Canada is willing to consider some forms of naval arms control, it is against any measure which might infringe on the basic freedoms of the high seas. Canada has supported UN resolutions on naval arms control and was active in the discussions at the UNDC. Canada has favoured limits on sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) and welcomed the US-Soviet agreement on annual information exchanges and the acceptance of the principle of constraint and the commitment to continue to seek further measures.<sup>2</sup>

Canada's strongest support for the concept of naval arms control comes in relation to confidence-building measures. In a speech before a conference on naval arms control, Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament, Peggy Mason, reiterated Canada's support for such measures. However, Ambassador Mason noted that a growing expectation that naval measures might be added to the mandate of the confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) negotiations under the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) would raise a number of difficult questions which need careful attention. These include the question of whether such CSBMs would detract from maritime security policy and whether the CSCE is the appropriate forum for such discussions.<sup>3</sup>

In outlining Canada's position Ambassador Mason said:

...Canada has actively promoted discussion within NATO on confidence-building in the maritime environment. Preliminary consideration on naval security and arms control has been undertaken, both in Brussels and in Ottawa. I believe that, despite the difficulties, we must continue to pursue such studies. Canada favours, in principle, consideration of measures that would promote mutual trust through transparency, enhance personal contact, and build upon the seafaring traditions of fairness and courtesy.<sup>4</sup>

## PARLIAMENTARY COMMENT

There was no comment on naval arms control during debates in the House of Commons. However, in hearings before the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs

<sup>2</sup>Ambassador Peggy Mason. "The Canadian Position on Naval Arms Control," *Disarmament Bulletin*, no. 14, Fall 1990: 11-12.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.: 11.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.: 12.