

Communist conservatism on the one hand, and new efforts to move forward with domestic reform and increased cooperation with the West on the other.

Western defence planners recognized, by 1991, that the Soviet Union no longer dominated Central and Eastern Europe in the way that it once did. Its capacity for launching a massive surprise attack against the West in Europe had also disappeared. However, it still remains the greatest single military power, by far, on the European continent, and its armies could still pose serious threats to neighbouring countries, and to European peace in general, if Soviet leaders, for whatever reason, turned again to confrontation and active competition with the West.

Moreover, cuts in Soviet military capabilities at the European theatre level have not yet spilled over into similar reductions at the intercontinental, strategic one. There has been some cut back in the production of specific types of missiles, aircraft and naval forces, but the modernization of strategic forces as a whole continues in the Soviet Union as well as in the United States. A START I agreement may be signed in 1991, and a START II accord within a few years, but even both together will still leave most of the two superpowers' deterrent forces largely intact throughout this decade. Research and development work on strategic defence systems and other advanced weaponry also continues in the two countries, even if the scale of the overall effort has been reduced significantly, in the US case, since the days of the Reagan administration.

This strategic relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States poses particular security problems for Canada. Unless all the long-range bombers, nuclear submarines and strategic missiles in the superpowers' arsenals become redundant as a result of greatly improved political relations or the massive decline or virtual disintegration of the Soviet state, Canada will have to continue to pursue defence policies which recognize that this country is located, geographically, on the flightpaths of devastating nuclear weaponry.