

incoming warheads, to a system called "Brilliant Pebbles," involving thousands of smaller space-based rockets.

The eleventh round of the negotiations began on 19 June 1989.

CURRENT CANADIAN POSITION

In the past four years the Government of Canada has declared both that it is in favour of the narrow interpretation of the ABM Treaty, and that it is not prepared to become involved in government-to-government participation in the SDI programme.

On 26 March 1985, Canada and the other NATO allies, as well as Australia, Japan and Israel, received a letter from US Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger. Weinberger reassured the US allies that they were to be included in the benefits the SDI programme may offer and in the decision-making process. He also invited them to become participants in the research stage of the programme, insofar as they were allowed under the limits of the ABM Treaty.

On 7 September 1985, after internal Government study and a set of public Parliamentary hearings, Canada refused the offer of government-to-government participation in the research programme but left open the possibility that private companies could compete for SDI contracts. Of the allies contacted by the US, five nations--the United Kingdom, West Germany, Italy, Israel, and Japan--have signed Memoranda of Understanding involving SDI research participation.

The Canadian Government has repeatedly expressed its belief that while it does not want to get involved directly in SDI research, it is only prudent to have some such research pursued in the West. This view was elaborated by External Affairs Minister Clark on 5 March 1987, following a meeting with Paul Nitze, Special Advisor to President Reagan on arms control issues. Having expressed Canadian support for continued US adherence to the narrow interpretation of the ABM Treaty, Mr. Clark stated:

Any move to a broader interpretation could have significant political and strategic ramifications for international stability and security....Any unilateral action by either party to the Treaty that could have a negative impact on the current strategic balance would be regarded by Canada with profound concern.

He went on to say:

Canada has expressed its support for the Strategic Defence Initiative research program as a prudent measure in light of significant similar Soviet activity in the field of ballistic missile defence. We believe, however, that any transition to a greater dependence on strategic defences should be undertaken on a mutually agreed basis by both superpowers and should be combined with significant reductions in strategic offensive forces....[The] SDI program should continue to be pursued within the current restrictive interpretation of the ABM Treaty.¹

¹ Department of External Affairs *Statement* 87/14, 5 March 1987, p. 2.