

which increased defence expenditures might be met. Compared to cuts in other spending programs, for example, increased taxes are distinctly unpopular. Cutting social services appears the least palatable option, according to the 1984 Goldfarb poll, but almost three times as many Canadians would be willing to reduce foreign aid to pay for a larger defence budget as would accept cuts in pensions and family allowance.

In sum, the apparent softness in support for increased defence expenditures must be balanced against the unpopularity of the revenue options. One proposal certain to generate more opposition than higher government spending seems to be higher government taxes. This apparent softness must also be balanced against the fact that when it comes to raising revenues, there is often less public acceptance, especially of higher taxes, on public opinion polls than there is in reality. Moreover, the popularity of increased defence expenditures is underscored by the fact that all three major political parties promised more defence spending in the recent election and none seems to have suffered from advancing that position.

THE THIRD AND FOURTH QUESTIONS ARE CONSIDERED together: What military capabilities are possible and appropriate, and what general policies ought to be

followed? Most clearly and unambiguously, those polled reject nuclear weapons for Canada. Only a small minority (14%) agree Canada should equip its armed forces with nuclear weapons. This result corresponds with a 1985 CBC poll which found roughly a third willing to have nuclear weapons "on Canadian soil." The subtle distinction here, between having such weapons in Canada's own arsenal and having someone else's weapons in Canada, is apparently not lost on the public.

An anti-nuclear stand, however, does not translate into automatic opposition to the Mulroney government's proposal to purchase a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines. In response to the question "The Canadian government recently announced its intention to purchase ten to twelve nuclear-powered submarines to enable the armed forces to patrol Canada's three oceans. Do you approve or disapprove of this proposed plan?" 55% of the CIIPS respondents approve or strongly approve. Indeed, as many approve of the submarine acquisition while disapproving of Canada having nuclear weapons (44% overall as disapprove of both (42%) (See Figure 3).

These two positions are nevertheless related: the small minority in favour of a nuclear capability are almost universally in favour of the submarines; those

opposed to a nuclear capability, much the larger group, still tend more than those in favour to oppose the submarine purchase. This is not at all to say that Canadians confuse the nuclear propulsion with nuclear weapons; previous polls suggest little such confusion. It is to say that the association, the fact that Canada would be joining an exclusive "nuclear club" of sorts, leads to opposition.

Lower levels of support for the subs have been found in other surveys with different question wording. Questions asked by the CBC and the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament do not mention the "three oceans" role and instead emphasize the multi-billion dollar cost. Such wording seems to lower the level of support to around 40% or less. Price tags, however, like the prospect of higher taxes, reduce the attractiveness of many potential purchases. The policy problem in the case of the submarine proposal, unlike that for defence spending in general, is that opposition is clearly based on more than the high price tag.

If there is clearly a strong consensus that Canada's defence capabilities ought to be conventional rather than involving nuclear weapons, there is less consensus on the specific defence policies that ought to be followed. Particularly striking is the lack of support for the use of nuclear weapons by NATO if conventional defence measures prove inadequate against a Soviet attack into Western Europe. Only about one-third of Canadians approve despite the fact that such a first-use of nuclear weapons is a basic doctrine of the alliance. While most Europeans are understandably opposed to first-use, Canadians might have been expected to have fewer compunctions about the use of nuclear weapons on European territory.

THERE IS SCANT EVIDENCE IN ALL OF THIS FOR CONCLUDING that Canadians are anti-military and little that they are even "unmilitary," if by that label is meant a reluctance to maintain defence expenditures in peace time. Canadians are certainly not "unmilitary" in the sense that they have no coherent attitudes on defence and security. In fact, what emerges from these polls are two reasonably consistent defence policy "logics" on the part of the Canadian public. Those who support a greater defence effort also tend more than those who don't, to support increased taxes to pay the bill, a greater NATO commitment, and the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines; those who do not support one of these measures tend not to support the others.

But perhaps most interesting is Canadians' continued commitment to an alliance and to conventional defence despite their substantially altered perceptions of the traditional enemy and lack of a perceived immediate threat. Given this lack of a psychological foundation, that commitment could easily weaken. A major policy dilemma for the newly elected government may, therefore, be maintaining existing support for a defence effort in the face of further improvements in superpower relations, and further progress in East-West arms control leading possibly to reductions in conventional as well as nuclear weapons. □

Figure 3

Canada ought to equip its Armed Forces with nuclear weapons – strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree.

The Canadian government recently announced its intention to purchase ten to twelve nuclear-powered submarines, to enable the armed forces to patrol Canada's three oceans – strongly disapprove, disapprove, approve, strongly approve.

