

Ottawa, March 11, 1981

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to discussions that have taken place between representatives of our two Governments regarding future cooperation between Canada and the United States in the defence of North America. Our Governments remain convinced that such cooperation, conducted within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty, remains vital to their mutual security, compatible with their national interests, and an important element of their contribution to the overall security of the NATO area.

As neighbors and allies within North America, our two Governments have accepted special responsibilities for the security of the Canada-United States region of NATO and, in fulfilling these responsibilities, have entered into a number of bilateral arrangements to facilitate joint defence activities. Among these, the arrangements for air defence, aerospace surveillance, and missile warning embodied in the North American Air Defence Command (NORAD) have provided the means of exercising effective operational control of the forces assigned by our two Governments to the aerospace defence of North America.

In the years since the NORAD Agreement was first concluded, there have been significant changes in the character of strategic weapons and in the nature of the threat they pose to North America. The most important of these changes has been the major increase in the number and sophistication of strategic missiles. There has also been an increasing use of space for strategic and tactical purposes. In addition, although missiles constitute the principal threat, long-range bombers continue to pose a threat to North America.

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Mr. Alexander Haig,  
Secretary of State of the  
United States of America.