

of Defence Caspar Weinberger was issued on March 26 to all of the NATO defence ministers, including Canada's, who were meeting in Luxembourg at the time. Weinberger asked that governments inform him of their decision within 60 days. The Secretary's deadline had been imposed without consultation in Washington, however, and both the White House and State Department were quick to reproach him. He, in turn, wrote Nielsen and other recipients advising them not to take his deadline too seriously, but not before considerable irritation had been expressed in various NATO capitals.<sup>11</sup>

The Prime Minister confirmed the invitation on March 27 telling reporters that Canada's decision would be taken "in a timely manner" consistent with the ABM Treaty.<sup>12</sup> But he voiced reservations both that day and the next during a visit to his home riding when he remarked, "My enthusiasm for all of these matters . . . is restrained."<sup>13</sup> For this, he had his wrists slapped by the Ottawa *Citizen* which advised the Prime Minister in an editorial on April 1 to stop dithering in public until the cabinet decided. The *Toronto Star* was more pointed: in a March 31 editorial it counselled staying clear of any involvement.

On April 18, the *Globe and Mail* ran its first editorial on the subject: "Stay out of the SDI." It maintained that the U.S. was certain to keep the most sensitive high technology contracts at home, farming out tasks at the "lower end of the scientific spectrum" which, in any case, would be capital-intensive research activities creating relatively little employment.

On the same day External Affairs Minister Clark announced that the cabinet had chosen senior bureaucrat Arthur Kroeger to head a small team of experts to assess the invitation and examine its strategic, scientific and economic implications.

## THE JOINT COMMITTEE

On May 14 the government tabled its Green Paper on international relations, "Competitiveness and Security", and announced the formation of a Special Joint Parliamentary Committee to study the paper. A debate was sparked at once by the absence of Canadian participation in SDI from the list of agenda items. The opposition refused to participate in the committee unless a decision on SDI was postponed until public hearings had been held and the committee had submitted an interim report. The impasse was broken on May 16 when Clark announced that the government's decision would not be forthcoming for another three to four months, thus giving the committee ample opportunity to prepare its interim report.

The committee was to examine both the question of bilateral trade with the United States and Canada's participation in SDI research. It was comprised of five senators and 12 members of parliament under the joint chairmanship of Senator Jacques Flynn of Quebec and Thomas Hockin, M.P. for London West, and a political scientist by training. Representation consisted of 10 Conservatives, 5 Liberals and 2 New Democrats. Among the opposition members were External Affairs critic Jean Chretien and Lloyd Axworthy of the Liberals and NDP External Affairs critic Pauline Jewett, all of whom had been particular thorns in the government's side over SDI. Public hearings were scheduled to begin in Halifax on July 15, to include Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, and Winnipeg.

Prior to the hearings the Liberal party set up a task force on peace, security and world disarmament under the chairmanship of Jean Chretien. It heard from 71 groups in six cities between May 27 and June 7 and released its report on July 13 only two days before the Joint Committee began to hear public testimony. The exercise was widely perceived as a means of embarrassing the government; consequently, the task force's strong recommendation against participation came as little surprise and was generally treated skeptically by the press.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the constraints that time imposed and the vagaries of the holiday season, the committee was overwhelmed by the public response. With only a month to deliver them, almost 700 individuals and organizations sent written submissions, the vast majority of them pertaining to SDI. The committee also heard from 127 scheduled witnesses and 196 witnesses from the public. Many of the presentations and briefs were major efforts in themselves, the totality representing an enormous investment of time and energy on the parts of citizens literally from coast to coast.

Submissions to the Joint Committee were received from private citizens, organizations concerned with peace and security issues, industry, labour, military and church groups, academics, diplomats and strategic specialists. The issues they raised can be broadly characterized as falling into four different categories: the economic implications of SDI, its technical reliability, its impact on the arms control process and East-West relations, and the effect on Canada's international reputation and national sovereignty.

### 1) *Economic Issues*

Most observers, regardless of their position on SDI, agreed that its potential for job creation in Canada would be small, particularly given the capital-intensive nature of the research in which Canada