

## BACKGROUND PAPER

### POLICY SEMINAR ON FOREIGN AND DEFENCE ISSUES

Canadian security policy can be defined very broadly to include three elements:

- (1) Participation in collective defence and deterrence through our contribution to NATO and NORAD;
- (2) Active cooperation in efforts to achieve equitable and verifiable arms control and disarmament agreements;
- (3) Support for peaceful settlement of disputes and the collective effort to resolve the underlying economic and social causes of international tension.

#### Collective Defence

NATO's strategy is to preserve security through deterrence. Defence has been based on a triad of forces: intercontinental strategic nuclear forces based in the United States, intermediate and shorter range nuclear forces based in Europe, and conventional forces.

Through the 1970s, the United States and the Soviet Union reached a position of rough parity in their strategic forces. This was codified in the SALT II agreement of 1979. SALT II has not been ratified, but the main provisions are still being observed by both sides. Although the agreement provided limits on the aggregate number of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles to an initial total of 2400 each, it did allow for their modernization subject to agreed rules. Both countries are carrying out programs to renew their forces accordingly.

NATO's conventional forces in Europe have been lower than those of the Warsaw Pact in terms of numbers of men and increasingly of major items of equipment, such as tanks. The extent of this imbalance and its military significance are the subject of controversy. The International Institute for Strategic Studies has concluded that "the overall balance continues to be such as to make military aggression a highly risky undertaking...the consequences for an attacker would be unpredictable, and the risks, particularly of nuclear escalation, incalculable".

At the point when it was reaching agreement with the United States on a balance of strategic weapons, and already had conventional superiority in Europe, the Soviet Union began to introduce a new intermediate-range nuclear missile, the SS-20, with much greater range and accuracy and more warheads than its obsolescent SS-4s and SS-5s. Several Western European