

Canadian concerns of recent years about both general strategic stability and developments with potential direct impacts on Canada's security have related to the modernization of weapons systems.

The Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) with its counterpart Soviet projects, has been one such major concern – on which no Canadian government could offer unqualified support or unconditional participation. It may be significant, and promising for a future abandonment of such projects by the superpowers, that US Defence Secretary Cheney's recent budget proposals suggested some reduction in these expenditures and those on the B2 "Stealth" bomber. It can be safely assumed that the superpowers are acutely aware of each others' activities in these "modernization" projects and that any slowdowns will be tacitly linked or at least reciprocally tuned, even prior to formal agreements. Like "Stealth bomber" technologies, however, the development and extension of cruise missile technology demand urgent attention and action – and Canada is directly involved in both the development and the subsequent potential military fallout. So far, only the most tentative opening has been made toward arms control on sea-launched cruise missiles (although the air-launched variety has been more fully integrated) in the START talks, and Canada took a further step in its own involvement, in early 1989, with the approval for US testing of the Advanced (Stealth) Cruise Missile over Canadian territory.

With solid progress now practically assured on both strategic missile and conventional force reductions, and the marked improvement in East-West relations generally, an issue like cruise testing has lost some of its political immediacy in this country, but it could well re-emerge more powerfully than ever. The majority of Canadians who were uncertain and divided during previous national debates over cruise missile testing, would clearly be much more difficult to convince of the need and legitimacy of further modernization in the current international climate. Canada has an urgent and direct interest in seeing cruise missiles (particularly the sea-launched variety) fully included in East-West arms control and reduction negotiations. This concern is shared by NATO as a whole, but progress is blocked by the dogmatic resistance of the US Navy, which has also, so far, blocked virtually all other attempts at naval arms control. There is no reason why Canada should accept and be expected to cooperate indefinitely in a situation which is detrimental to its own security interests.

It should also be recalled that, as recently as April and May 1989, NATO was embroiled in an intense dispute over the modernization