

Nowhere have calls for some measure of Arctic arms control been louder or more persistent in recent years than in Canada. In the midst of renewed concern about Canadian claims to sovereignty over its Arctic waters, a long-awaited official review of its defence policy commitments and capabilities in general, and the deterioration of East-West relations since the late 1970s (including the manifest failure of most on-going arms control efforts to achieve substantial results so far), such proposals have been put forward by peace groups, academics, and parliamentarians of all parties.

An indication of official interest on the part of the Canadian Government in some measure of Arctic arms control came in response to the unprecedented canvassing of public opinion on foreign policy issues at the hearings of the so-called Hockin-Simard Committee, the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons on Canada's International Relations, in 1985-86. In its June 1986 report, the Committee, while rejecting the idea of an Arctic nuclear weapon-free zone (NWFZ), nevertheless recommended that "Canada, in co-operation with other Arctic and Nordic nations, seek the demilitarization of the Arctic region through pressure on the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as through a general approach to arms control and disarmament."¹ The Government's official response to the report, tabled by Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark in December 1986, noted that "the strategic military importance of the Arctic makes it extremely unlikely that the Arctic as a whole can soon be singled out for demilitarization." However, it did undertake to "strive to limit excessive militarization of the Arctic in the context of our wider arms control and disarmament effort, in the interest of strategic stability."²

Yet the Canadian Government's approval of a programme to construct a fleet of nuclear-powered attack submarines, announced

1. *Independence and Internationalism: Report of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons on Canada's International Relations*. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, June 1986, p. 135.

2. Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, *Canada's International Relations: Response of the Government of Canada to the Report of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, December 1986, p. 32.