

In 1986, the NORAD agreement was renewed for a further five-year period with no change in the scope or thrust of the accord. An intensive parliamentary review conducted in Canada prior to the extension argued that Canada benefitted from NORAD because of its contributions to international strategic stability and to the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty. Canada's efforts in NORAD helped to provide the early warning that was essential to the security of the US strategic bombers, long-range missiles, command systems and other key elements of the deterrent, the report indicated, and also provided surveillance for Canadian territory as well as some residual active defence capability. Participating in NORAD, it has been argued, also helps to ensure the joint aerospace defence of North America in ways that are not offensive to Canadian national sensitivities, and preserves Canada from having the United States come in to carry out alone the defence of the northern half of this continent.

NORAD has recently been renewed for a further five years, under circumstances substantially different from those pertaining during the previous renewal in 1986. Canadians today are no longer so focussed on the question of possible involvement in SDI through participation in the Air Defence Initiative or eventual requests to provide facilities in Canada for US ballistic missile defences or anti-satellite weapons. The SDI and ADI programmes are going ahead, but the former is a much reduced undertaking that now concentrates on strengthening deterrent forces rather than research into replacing them with a new strategic defence posture, while the latter is concentrating on surveillance and identification rather than efforts to find ways of enhancing, massively, active air defence capabilities.

The greater question in recent months has been whether NORAD is necessary at all, in light of the massive changes under way in the international system, especially the extraordinary series of events in the Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe that have led, since 1988, to the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Germany, the march towards pluralistic democracy in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and other Central European states, the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces, and massive reductions in conventional armed forces. Above all, the possibility of movement towards