

Opponents see
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in search
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ticipation. Some might argue that Canadian participation affords Canada access to and influence on the U.S. decision-making process; others, that Canada's participation not only does not yield political benefits but erodes Canadian sovereignty. Still others might argue that Canada should remain in NORAD merely because the political fallout from withdrawal would have a deleterious impact on the overall Canadian-U.S. interaction; others, that it does not really matter from a political standpoint whether Canada does or does not remain in NORAD.

Militarily, there are a multitude of arguments for the continuation of NORAD — for example, the possibility of damage limitation to North American urban-industrial complexes from Soviet manned bombers, prevention of damage from attacks by such nations as mainland China and Cuba, and the assertion that NORAD provides a complete mobile air-defence package. A definite school of thought also exists that maintains that these pro-NORAD arguments are, at best, not particularly compelling and that, at worst, NORAD is a defence system in search of an enemy. Whatever the validity of these "pro" and "con" military arguments, they all revolve about the question: Is there a manned-bomber threat to North America?

In this sense, it is interesting to observe that the August 1971 Canadian White Paper on defence noted a decline in the importance of manned bombers and, accordingly, of defences against them. However, the White Paper also noted that the only major military threat to Canada remained that of a nuclear war between the super-powers. The prevention of such a conflict is, therefore, seen as Canada's overriding defence objective.

As for the United States, it refuses to proceed on any assumption other than that a manned-bomber threat to North America does exist. Indeed, the United States sees its offensive strength — defined as its "retaliatory capability" — as consisting of three components: ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers. U.S. Secretary of Defence Melvin Laird's fiscal year 1973 net assessment of external threats includes that of the Soviet intercontinental heavy-bomber force, some aircraft of which are equipped to carry air-to-surface missiles. This report also notes that the Soviets have test-flown the *Backfire*, a new supersonic, swing-wing, dash bomber, which they "could deploy in significant numbers over the next several years". According to U.S. figures, the United States in mid-1972 has 531 heavy bombers to the Soviets 140 (in addition, the Soviets have 50 tankers).

Previously, the United States had also argued that the effectiveness of an anti-ballistic-missile system (ABM) increased the importance of a bomber force. That is, the ABMs are dependent on a system of radars for locating and destroying incoming hostile missiles. The fact that these radars are vulnerable to attack by long-range bombers makes the requirements for a heavy-bomber defence more, not less, important. However, the 1972 Nixon-Brezhnev signing of the Strategic Arms Limitation Agreement (SALT) limits the deployment of ABM systems. This, correspondingly, then limits the relevance of the heavy-bomber rationale *vis-a-vis* the ABM.

White Paper context

At this point it might be useful to extend the conceptual scope somewhat by placing Canadian-U.S. NORAD considerations within the larger context of the Canadian defence White Paper and the Nixon Doctrine. The Canadian White Paper essentially reaffirmed existing directions. Canada would remain in NORAD through its 1973 renewal date, at which time the strategic situation would be re-examined. The United States would continue to have overflight and refuelling rights, including nuclear-armed flights on airborne alert in times of crisis, rights that the United States regards as essential to North American defence. In addition, the White Paper reiterated Canada's non-involvement in ABM defence, an involvement the United States is not especially interested in.

In addition to reaffirming existing directions, the White Paper revealed two new decisions. First, Canada agreed to open negotiations, requested by the United States, for U.S. interceptor and Strategic Air Command refuelling dispersal-sites in Canada. That is, Canada was willing to discuss the U.S. proposal that U.S. interceptors and SAC refuelling tankers be allowed to disperse to prearranged airfields in Canada, if the Canadian Government concurred in the U.S. estimate that the international situation necessitated such action. Secondly, the White Paper announced that the two anti-bomber, nuclear-armed *Bomarc* squadrons, which had been a political liability for three successive Canadian Governments, were to be "retired". From the standpoint of a diplomatic trade-off, the United States attached much greater importance to the dispersal rights than to a continuation of the *Bomarc*s, even though the United States had urged Canada to maintain them until the late 1970s. Indeed, the Canadian decision to retire the *Bomarc*s can be inter-