

B.C. Consultative Group Members Discuss Naval Arms Control

British Columbia members of the Consultative Group on Disarmament and Arms Control Affairs met with Ambassador for Disarmament Peggy Mason in Vancouver on February 11 to discuss a range of arms control and disarmament issues. In addition to Consultative Group members, the meeting included a number of others from the province who are knowledgeable about and interested in arms control and disarmament issues, as well as officials from EAITC and DND.

Consultative Group meetings provide an occasion for informed debate among people who approach current arms control and disarmament questions from very different perspectives. They also offer government representatives a chance to hear the most persuasive arguments in favour of and against various policy alternatives.

The Vancouver consultation focused in particular on naval arms control and disarmament. Participants listened to presentations by Ms Patti Willis (Resource Coordinator, Pacific Campaign to Disarm the Seas, Denman Island), Vice-Admiral (retired) Nigel Brodeur (Chairman, Defence Associations National Network Pacific Region, Victoria) and Dr. Douglas Ross (Director, Centre for International Studies, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby).

Ms Willis called on Canada to take an active, visible role in promoting naval arms control and disarmament (ACD). She argued that the US and the USSR are engaged in an unrestrained naval arms race, which inherently increases the risk of war at sea. Some naval ACD measures could reduce the likelihood of inadvertent conflict.

Ms Willis observed that lack of political will on the US side is a larger obstacle to naval ACD than any technical difficulties. She was somewhat encouraged by recent developments and suggested that naval ACD is becoming more a question of "when" and "how" rather than "if."

Ms Willis recommended a number of steps that Canada could take to further

the cause of naval ACD. These included, among other things:

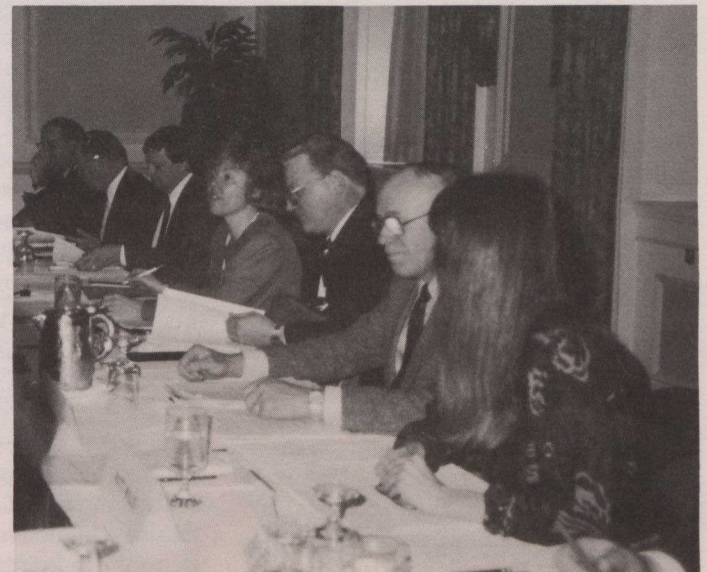
- making naval ACD one of the government's stated priority arms control and disarmament objectives;
 - encouraging the expansion of present incidents-at-sea agreements to include sub-surface activities, and encouraging the multilateralization of such agreements;
 - working with other countries that have proposed the regulation of nuclear-powered vessels;
 - promoting naval confidence-building measures in the CSCE context, including an exchange of information on naval forces, notification and observation of naval exercises, and a dialogue on naval issues;
 - encouraging the US to reevaluate its maritime strategy and to end its policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons on naval vessels;
 - encouraging the US and the USSR to agree to reduce further and eventually eliminate potential first-strike naval nuclear weapons, to agree to a ban on all long-range nuclear SLCMs, and to agree to limits on attack submarines; and
 - encouraging the development of a regime to control submarine technology, along the lines of the existing MTCR.
- V.Adm. Brodeur offered a historical perspective on the development of the Canadian Navy and inter-war arms control efforts, from which he drew lessons for present-day would-be naval arms controllers. He noted that the Canadian Navy has

long been involved in non-military activities, and that the need for future Canadian maritime forces will be governed largely by unforeseen events over which Canada may have little or no control. He further opined that in future the Navy will probably require more, as opposed to fewer, forces.

In V.Adm. Brodeur's view, the inter-war Washington and London Conference treaties were unsuccessful because they failed to limit the submarine and failed to prevent the rise of Germany and Japan as naval powers. He drew these lessons from the experience:

- any Pacific naval ACD measures must be equitable and binding on all Pacific Rim nations;
- those who lack the naval qualifications and experience to do so should avoid indulging in the "numbers game"; and
- nations must not fail to adequately address submarines and naval industrial capacity when considering naval ACD measures.

V.Adm. Brodeur concluded that efforts to abolish nuclear-powered sub-



At the Consultative Group meeting in Vancouver, from left to right: Col. Alain Pellerin, Director, Nuclear and Arms Control Policy, DND; R.Adm. Peter Cairns, Commander, Maritime Forces Pacific, DND; Dr. Douglas Ross; Ambassador Peggy Mason; Mr. Dennis Snider, Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Division, EAITC; V.Adm. Nigel Brodeur; Ms Patti Willis.