

# WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

## Canada's Military Security in the 1990s

### ROUNDTABLE

The following roundtable is based on a discussion held on 30 March in Ottawa. The moderator was **Roger Hill**, Director of Research at the Institute.

**Roger Hill:** How do you see the changing world and what do you think is most important today in the field of defence and security policy?

**Denis Stairs:** The most profound change has to do with the change in East-West relations that is clearly altering, in a quite fundamental way, the very stable framework in which Canadian security policy has been functioning for the last forty years. Obviously, we know what is being taken apart, we are not quite sure what is going to rise in its place.

The fundamental change seems to me to have to do with a kind of dissonance that is developing, between, on the one hand, increasing global interdependence on a whole array of functional, technical communications, economic fronts – and on the other, a resurrection, of very traditional forms of nationalism, the need for ethnic identification and a need for group cultural expression in political terms. And it is causing a kind of political disintegration within the Soviet Union and the same phenomenon is present in Eastern Europe. One can even argue that there are traces of it alive and well in our own country.

**Janice Stein:** I think the first issue is *not* the changes which you have identified – the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union – but the *durability* of those changes. And that is a hotly contested proposition depending on the vantage point one adopts and the kinds of things that one looks at to measure that durability. I agree with Denis, that we are witnessing two different tendencies operating at the same time.

#### THE PANELISTS

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is Associate Professor of Political Studies at Queen's University in Kingston, and author of the Institute Occasional Paper Trends in Continental Defence: A Canadian Perspective.

##### DESMOND MORTON

is Professor of History and Principal of Erindale College, University of Toronto and author or co-author of nineteen books on Canadian military and political history.

##### DENIS STAIRS

is Professor of Political Science and Vice-President of Dalhousie University in Halifax, and author of The Diplomacy of Constraint: Canada, the Korean War and the United States.

##### JANICE STEIN

is Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto and, most recently, author with Richard Ned Lebow of an Institute for Peace and Security monograph, When Does Deterrence Succeed and How Do We Know?

##### GÉRARD THÉRIAULT

was Chief of the Defence Staff of the Canadian Armed Forces from 1983 until his retirement in 1986. He is now Corporate Vice-President for Canada of AEG Aktiengesellschaft.

dramatically destabilizing tendencies in the Middle East as a result of the very positive change in the relationship between the US and the Soviet Union. One is the vastly increased supply of weapons that will be available to the Middle East as a result of the build-down between the Soviet Union and the United States. Another is the collapse of the restraints that the Soviet Union and the United States exercised, in the past, as a result of their engagement in the Third World conflicts. Viewed from the perspective of their relationship, it is positive development; viewed from the perspective of the Third World, it may well be a negative development.

**Desmond Morton:** Historians have a bad habit – which they try to control – of making analogies, most of them false, but I think of a pre-1914 scenario when war came, in a sense, because of the enormous instability of Central Europe and the Balkans. I think too of 1789. I, in fact, went back and began foraging for quotations about the joy seen as monarchist France turned republican, peaceful and loving and idealistic, and I thought of the reportage on Central Europe and the Soviet Union, and began to think of what followed of course from 1789, not only for the French, but for the world. And so I suppose I don't see an optimistic future, but historians seldom do. I do worry about the instability of Central Europe, and of a potentially fragmenting Soviet Union, in which political experience of accommodation and compromise appears to be rather scarce. I am afraid I don't see, except in the very short term, a dramatically less dangerous world.

A third area is the impact of the changing relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union on the Third World. I can foresee

**Gérard Thériault:** I think we'd all been aware for some time that there was a major breakdown of ideology in the Soviet Union, but