

A new element in the area of arms control is the United States Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI). While it is still too early to render definitive judgement on the technical feasibility or the strategic merits of SDI, Canada is examining closely the SDI programme, particularly in light of the United States' invitation to participate in SDI research. In his January 21 statement, the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark stated that the actual development and deployment of space based ballistic missile defence systems by either the United States or the Soviet Union would transgress the limits of the 1972 ABM Treaty as currently constituted. He added: "That could have serious implications for arms control and would therefore warrant close and careful attention by all concerned."

As a strong supporter of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 1972 ABM Treaty, and ongoing efforts in the CD to pursue discussions leading to the negotiation of a treaty preventing the weaponization of space, Canada is evaluating SDI in all its aspects. The Government's desire to be fully aware of all the ramifications of SDI is reflected in the appointment of Dr. Arthur Kroeger to examine the nature and scope of SDI research and, in particular its strategic, scientific and economic implications. In addition, a joint committee of the House and Senate reviewing all aspects of Canada's foreign policy has been established and will report on the issues of SDI (and free trade) by August 23 of this year.

The Government places such importance on the Parliamentary review process and input from the Canadian public, that has reserved making its decision regarding participation in SDI research until after the Parliamentary Committee has tabled its interim report.

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Having reviewed the substance of the disarmament problem, as it is handled in the various forums, it is necessary to plunge more deeply into the fundamental question of the prospects for world peace.

We cannot look to what have been called "nuclear accountants" to produce peace. They are technicians. We must instead look deeply into our value system. The present system of adversarial international relations must be changed. Will nations forever build security by threatening to destroy one another -- and indeed the whole planet -- or will the world, as the Palme Commission recommends:

"...develop procedures to resolve conflicts peacefully and stress those modes of national behaviour which are consistent with the achievement of common security through cooperative efforts."