

The Canadian Position on Naval Arms Control

The following are excerpts from an address delivered by Ms. Peggy Mason, Ambassador for Disarmament, at the Conference on Naval Arms Limitation and Maritime Security sponsored by Dalhousie University's Centre for Foreign Policy Studies in Halifax on June 27.

It is a cliché to say that Canada is a maritime nation. When it comes to naval arms control, however, it is a cliché that bears repeating. The three oceans off our shores are sources of great natural wealth, in the form of fish and energy resources. Seaborne trade contributes significantly to our national income. In fact, our domestic exports using a sea mode of transport are worth more than \$30 billion each year. Traditionally, the distance provided by the oceans has helped to keep us secure from military invasion.

If military invasion has, over the years, been regarded as a reasonably lower-order threat to Canada, the areas of potential vulnerability have remained similar to those faced by most maritime nations reliant on trade and vigorous port activity. These are: disruptions to our sea lines of communication and ports through anti-shipping attacks and mining of harbours and sea lanes; protection of our sovereignty and economic rights, particularly, but not exclusively, in fisheries; and protection from physical attack by long-range, sea-based weapons, mainly missiles (some of a nuclear variety), which could conceivably come into play were a major war to break out between East and West...

Developments in naval arms control and maritime confidence-building will not diminish Canada's responsibilities as a maritime-dependent, sovereign nation to be a credible caretaker in the ocean approaches to our nation. By international agreement, we are responsible for the conduct of affairs in sea areas totalling 11 million square kilometres — an area ten percent greater than our land mass. Clearly the priorities for Canada's maritime forces will continue to be surveillance, early warning, presence and control — on,

over and under the waves — in those areas for which Canada is responsible...

The solution is clearly not to eliminate the maritime defence aspect of our security, but to seek to complement it by the diplomatic instruments of naval arms control and maritime confidence-building...

[The Madrid Mandate, which governs the CSBM Negotiations,] limits CSBMs to the sea area adjoining the whole of Europe. The possibility might exist for some expansion of measures regarding naval activities directly linked to notifiable ground force activity, perhaps in the area of an information exchange. But this remains to be seen.

Nevertheless, there is a growing expectation that by the time of the next CSCE follow-up meeting in Helsinki in 1992, the possibility might exist of a negotiation on a new mandate, which might include naval forces and their activities. This would involve a complex deliberation, in which due consideration would have to be given to issues such as the following:

1. Do naval CSBMs run counter to a fundamental aspect of maritime policy for member states of NATO? NATO is vitally dependent on the free use of the sea for the collective defence of Europe. But naval CSBMs are often seen as limiting the capability of the US and Canada to reinforce Europe in a crisis. By contrast, the WTO enjoys an essentially self-contained land mass, with no challenge to its defence analogous to NATO's task of keeping sea lines of communication and supply routes open. Furthermore, some see naval CSBMs as possibly limiting the international right of passage on the high seas, as well as unimpeded transit through or over straits used for international navigation.

2. Would provisions for naval CSBMs have an inequitable effect on security? Naval CSBMs would disproportionately affect NATO, which is a maritime alliance, and the US in particular. In this sense, naval CSBMs, in the East-West context, could run counter to a basic CSCE principle by not providing for

"equal respect for the security interests of all CSCE participating states."

3. Are naval CSBMs appropriate to the CSCE? Naval CSBMs would constitute a de facto expansion of the CDE zone, but where would these lines stop? Artificial lines of demarcation in international waters might have to be drawn in an attempt to define as regional highly mobile and inherently global naval force activities.

4. Are naval CSBMs practical? For example, how are we to define a "naval manoeuvre"? Naval forces are constantly manoeuvring as a routine part of their daily operations. And how are we to verify, for example, a distinction between "activities" and routine "manoeuvres"? This poses an immense verification challenge. We have few answers as to how an appropriate and negotiable verification regime for naval CSBMs could be established.

There is, of course, another important area where some success has been registered in the realm of naval arms control...the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks...

Most significant in our view is the acceptance of the principle of constraints on nuclear SLCMs and the reaffirmation by the US and the Soviet Union of their 1987 Washington Summit Statement to continue to seek mutually acceptable and effective methods of SLCM verification. Given Canada's longstanding support of verifiable constraints on nuclear SLCMs, we noted this part of the overall agreement with satisfaction.

Taken together with the other measures in START, including specific prohibitions on heavy SLBMs and their launchers; on new types of SLBMs with more than 10 re-entry vehicles; and on the flight testing and deployment of existing types of SLBMs with a number of re-entry vehicles greater than the number specified in the Washington Summit Joint Statement of December 1987, they constitute a first step towards the enhancement of strategic stability and collective security at sea. Canada strongly