

So any steps towards weapon reductions in the North would require a massive change in Soviet deployments, we would therefore be very interested in seeing the details of what Mr. Gorbachev proposes.

Even if the Soviet Union were to withdraw those armies, dismantle that fleet, reduce and destroy its ballistic missiles and bomber squadrons in the Arctic, that would not remove the threat to Canada. The simple fact is that the shortest distance between the Soviet Union and the United States is over the Arctic. This would be one axis of attack but it is not, of course, the only one given the threat from other Soviet bases, aircraft and naval forces. That threat can come from any direction -- on, over or beneath the waters, including those of the Arctic Ocean.

It is, therefore, a great myth to think that reducing armaments in the Arctic would make North America or even our own North safe. The threat to Western security is global. Reducing our Northern defences would do nothing to reduce the threat from global strategic weapons. On the contrary, in weakening deterrence it would be destabilizing. It would make the world less safe, not more.

The place to address the global problems of armaments is in the negotiations on arms control and disarmament under way in Geneva and Vienna. In the context of the Soviet-American Strategic Arms Reduction Talks, Canada has advocated the negotiation of effective limits on air- and sea-launched cruise missiles, weapons which could increasingly threaten us directly, as intercontinental missiles do now. We are pleased that at the Washington Summit there was agreement to tackle this problem. Our NATO Allies, including the Danes and Norwegians, agree fully that Arctic security cannot be dealt with in isolation. This is a NATO issue not a Northern issue, and we will stand fast with our Allies.

The other alternative some would advocate for Canada -- neutrality -- also deserves comment in this regard. Let me quote from the recent study by the Canadian Institute for International Affairs:

"Neutrality would be a hollow option, because we could not defend it, and doing nothing about our own defence would be incompatible with our self-respect and prejudicial to our sovereignty and security. Moreover, the only defence policy that makes sense in the nuclear age is the prevention of war through deterrence. Therefore it is in Canada's interest to cooperate with other members of NATO in the collective defence of Western Europe, the North Atlantic, and North America and in the protection of the U.S. nuclear deterrent force. The Arctic has a particular bearing on this latter role ..."