

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

The study of Canada-U.S. defence cooperation which the Committee has just completed has once again thrown into sharp relief the central nature of our defence relations with the United States. Our location in the path of nuclear missiles continues to ensure that, as the 1971 Defence White Paper pointed out, "the only direct external military threat to Canada's national security is that of a large-scale nuclear attack on North America". This guarantees that we will remain keen advocates of peace and arms control negotiations, but our geography also makes it imperative that we adopt a defence posture which meets our security requirements and those of our neighbour to the south. The relative sizes of our territory, population and defence budget incline us to seek and prefer collective defence approaches.

Technology, however, is challenging comfortable certainties and familiar assumptions. North American aerospace defence may be approaching a watershed. Washington has launched a major research program to determine whether it could defend its territory and that of its allies against intercontinental and submarine-launched nuclear missiles. Will the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI research) make a ballistic missile defence possible? Some of us may have doubts; but if it does, and ballistic missile defence systems are deployed, will the world be more or less stable? Would the passing of the age of Mutual Assured Destruction, MAD, require Canada to deploy on its territory both ground-based ballistic missile defence systems and vastly increased arrays of air defence systems, from radars to surface-to-air missiles and interceptors? Or, on the contrary, would a system of missile defence enable the United States to dispense not only with Canada's geography, but with Canada's goodwill and counsel as well? And what would that do to Canada's military, industrial and technological links with the United States?

These are grave and disturbing questions with which the Committee has had to grapple, though it is clear that no final answer will be available for some time. Some of us, perhaps overestimating our influence in Washington and overlooking the impact of time, would prejudge the future and sever present links for fear of what tomorrow may bring. Others, who can conceive of no fundamental differences in the strategic interests of Canada and the United States or who underestimate the tendency of weapons programs to develop a momentum of their own, would have us ignore the shadows in the road ahead.

The Committee has chosen to hew a less dogmatic course. Its report acknowledges the challenges of the future, but declines to let them paralyze the present. The aerospace defence of North America involves four basic missions, illustrated in the figure below. Three — airspace surveillance (quadrant I), air defence (quadrant II), and ballistic missile warning (quadrant III) — have been NORAD's responsibility for some time. (It is unfortunate, in many ways, that "aerospace defence" was substituted for "air defense" in the name of the NORAD command in 1981. It would have been more accurate to rename NORAD the North American Air Defence and Aerospace Surveillance command.) The fourth — ballistic missile defence — reaches beyond NORAD's brief, into the bailiwick of the U.S. Unified