

dian media, Mr. Honderich said, to report the various positions taken in a given policy debate, extract the key information from the experts, and make it available to the public.

Mr. Honderich argued that the media had not adequately conveyed the strategic implications of SDI to the Canadian public. He cited three reasons for this poor performance. The first was their perception of an overall lack of interest in strategic and military affairs among Canadians, although he acknowledged that this complacent attitude had been changing in recent years, mainly because the activities of "grassroots" disarmament groups were forcing these issues on to the national agenda and consequently into the media. The second reason was the secretive manner with which Canadian government officials treated these matters. He contrasted the behaviour of Canadian officials with that of their American counterparts. As a correspondent in Washington, writing about Canadian-US commercial relations, he had been contacted by the Commerce Department official responsible for Canadian/US affairs, in order to set out the conditions for a working relationship. This sort of initiative was uncommon in Ottawa. The third reason given by Mr. Honderich was the failure of journalists in Canada to find out all they could and to transmit that information to the Canadian public. He acknowledged that the actual outcome of SDI was not yet clear-cut; what was required was an ongoing "clarification of the issues." Experts should talk to journalists often, because the print and broadcast media represent the quickest most effective method of communicating with a broader audience.

## **2. The Problem of Government Secrecy**

Gérard Pelletier, an experienced diplomat, politician, and journalist, provided a unique insight into the attitudes and behaviour that characterize representatives from each of these three fields.

Politicians, he said, tend to think that the voters are not interested in foreign policy and defence planning. However, often citizens were not interested because their political élites did not address international issues, especially during election campaigns. The reason for this, M. Pelletier suggested, was that the majority of political leaders did not know enough about these topics to feel comfortable dealing with them. It was the role of journalists to keep the important subjects of defence and foreign policy before the public, to ask participants probing questions, and to provide as much information as possible. M. Pelletier quoted Jean Monnet, who wrote in his memoirs: "In politics and in public affairs in general, what is secret