

VII.

CONCLUSIONS

As is evident throughout this paper, the combination of the technological change, the search for new strategic doctrines, and the President's support for a strategic defence against ballistic missiles, has produced a situation of uncertainty in bilateral continental defence relations which is likely to continue for at least several more years.

In particular, the surveillance and interception technologies relevant to air defence seem likely to improve dramatically in the next decade, but, given the potential of cruise missile and stealth technology, so also will the threat from nuclear weapons delivered by air breathing machines. The speed and scope of change are subject to a variety of technological and political factors which suggest that a number of outcomes are equally plausible. In such a situation, the logical approach for Canada, as the minor partner, might be to defer major decisions pending clarification of the technological research programmes and the strategic defence objectives of the United States. But such a strategy does not respond to the need for long lead times in defence planning, nor to the domestic political demand for clarification of Canadian policy on issues relating to national sovereignty, continental defence, the SDI, and arms control.

More so than at any time in the past two decades, moreover, there is an explicit link between the future of continental defence and developments in arms control. As the analysis of the Geneva and Reykjavik arms control proposals indicated, lower overall ceilings with a separate ceiling on bombers could impell the Soviet Union into a major strategic bomber building programme which would, in turn, accelerate the search for new technologies of air defence. The same is true of cruise missile developments, where the lack of constraints on SLCMs provides a particularly obvious opportunity for unregulated expansion of the superpower inventories. Similarly, amendments to the ABM Treaty, the interpretation of its provisions, or even its abrogation, would have major effects on the United States, and possibly, therefore, the bilateral approach to continental defence. In this connection, some plausible future scenarios for strategic defence are fundamentally at odds with long-standing Canadian arms control policy. For example, the testing in Canada of sensors, such as the Airborne Optical Adjunct or Braduskill, which violate, or are alleged to violate, the ABM Treaty, will pose acute problems for Canada. In political terms, sooner or later, these problems will require forthright Canadian statements on the place of strategic defence in the calculus of deterrence, and on the value of arms control restraints.

In turn, the complexity, uncertainty, and impact of the issues requires substantial long-term planning of a kind not yet practised by the Canadian Government. For example, developments in space based surveillance technologies require a co-ordinated policy drawing on a number of government programmes and departments, including the proposed