

Open Skies — Or Pie in the Skies?

It seemed a good idea, to build confidence between the world's two biggest military alliances. Suggested by Dwight D. Eisenhower nearly 34 years earlier, the idea of Open Skies — reciprocal surveillance flights — fell afoul of the Cold War and remained in limbo until another Republican President of the United States, George Bush, revived it as part of his National Security Council's review of arms control. Canada immediately offered to play host to the delegations from the 15 other North Atlantic Treaty Organization members and the 7 in the Warsaw Pact — and hopes of a truly new era bloomed.

"There is no question we have contributed to historic processes in Europe," External Affairs Minister Joe Clark said at the close of the ministerial part of the conference. Vitaly Karpov, chief of the Soviet Department of Arms Limitations and Disarmament, acknowledged that both sides may have been "over-optimistic" when the talks began, but "no one is really doubting that a treaty will be reached."

The political part of the meeting was overshadowed by American and Soviet announcements of troop reductions in Central Europe, the former to 225,000 and the latter to 195,000, and that they planned to work with Britain and France on German reunification. West German officials said this cleared the way for urgent negotiations on a new security framework for the continent as a whole. Canada, Belgium and the Netherlands, each with troops in West Germany, were disgruntled at having been excluded from the reunification group, but were assuaged when Britain, France, the U.S. and West Germany agreed later to more formal consultations.

As for Open Skies itself, although the ministers lauded the concept, the alliances essentially held to their opening positions; the U.S. insisted each side use its own aircraft and share data only internally while the Soviet Union argued for common aircraft and universal data sharing. And while the Pact wanted to have naval and space-based technologies subject to surveillance, NATO was not willing to discuss either addition. If anything, it was the Soviets who seemed most tractable at the meeting.

It should be understood that it was Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze who set the tone for the discussions with a surprise proposal at the start of the conference for more comprehensive surveillance. "The easiest way to launch an attack is from the seas" because of the capability of modern surface vessels and submarines, so he called for an Open Seas policy on such things as fleet positions and naval exercises. As for Open Space, the primary Soviet con-

cern is the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative; Mr. Shevardnadze called for an international prohibition on space-based weapons as well as creation of a multilateral directorate that would monitor the launching of all other hardware. That was rebuffed by the U.S., so when most of the politicians had departed Ottawa, their officials spent the next two weeks behind closed doors working on the details needed to make Open Skies workable.

It quickly became apparent that brinkmanship is far from a lost art when the Soviets proposed strict limits on NATO overflights. These included a minimum 10,000-metre ceiling over nuclear and chemical plants as well as built-up areas and no all-weather or night flights. NATO's proposal is for unlimited surveillance. The Soviets also demanded fewer than 20 flights by any one NATO member annually in contrast to the 30 by each side proposed by Canada and that was where the talks were adjourned. John Noble, Director-General of International Security and Arms Control in the Department of External Affairs, conceded the impasse, but is convinced the negotiations are "not deadlocked."

There are indications the Soviets will soften their stance, if for nothing else than to address the concerns of their Warsaw Pact partners. An important interim step is a mooted bilateral meeting between Mr. Shevardnadze and his American opposite-number, Secretary of State James Baker, before the talks resume in Hungary. The question remains: why did the climate, so politically auspicious to begin with, seem to deteriorate so quickly at the official level? Mr. Karpov is understood to have told the other negotiators that an Open Skies policy would be difficult to sell at home, to the conservatives in the Kremlin as well as to the Soviet military. Again, there is history to consider. For all the promise of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, distrust is part of the Soviet psyche. But neither is the U.S. particularly accommodating.

It is abundantly clear that delegates to the second round must overcome the legacy of decades of intransigence and distrust if what was billed as a major step along the road to lasting peace isn't to become a roadblock.

1955

- July 21: Eisenhower proposal at quadrilateral summit in Geneva.

1989

- January: Mr. Bush asks his National Security Council to review arms control initiatives.
- April: Canada learns the NSC is considering Open Skies.
- May 2: Prime Minister Mulroney endorses the idea in a letter to Mr. Bush.
- May 4: Mr. Mulroney urges Mr. Bush during a meeting in Washington to include all NATO and Pact countries.
- May 11: Mr. Bush confirms to Mr. Mulroney by telephone that he is going ahead.
- May 12: The President goes public in a speech at Texas A&M University.
- May 30: NATO leaders endorse the proposal.
- Sept. 21: Mr. Shevardnadze tells Mr. Baker the Soviets are willing to participate.
- Sept. 24: Canada offers Ottawa as a venue.
- Dec. 15: NATO issues a 'basic elements' paper.

1990

- Jan. 6: Canada conducts a trial overflight of Hungary.
- Jan. 30-Feb. 1: NATO and Pact representatives meet in Budapest to evaluate the flight and to discuss conference procedures.
- Feb. 12-14: Ministerial portion of conference.
- Feb. 15-28: Official portion.
- April 23-May 11: Conference in Hungary.

Swords and Ploughshares: Fresh Edge to Old Debate

John Kenneth Galbraith observed that "the enemy of conventional wisdom is not ideas but the march of events." That is certainly true today as the helter-skelter pace of change shatters much of the conventional wisdom in international affairs. Unconventional events require unconventional responses and this applies to the disarmament-development debate. "Only disarmament would permit an adequate transfer of resources from defence to foreign aid," British Labour MP Denis Healey writes. "There must be a massive transfer of resources worldwide from defence to development."

There are new elements to the debate. One is the real decrease in military spending by some nations and the decrease in the rate of growth in others, including Canada. While the "peace dividend" focus in Washington tends toward opportunities for spending on social programmes, there is an opening for U.S. entry into the disarmament-development deliberations. Analyst William Kaufmann, formerly of the Rand Corporation and the Central Intelligence Agency, proposes that U.S. defence spending be halved: "the realization is sinking in fast that the government can save not just a few billion here or there, but tens, scores of billions."

Another element is the end of the Cold War. The West's still financially limited interest in the rescue and future prosperity of East-Central and Eastern Europe has raised the issue of disarmament for development in Europe. Logic demands diversion of at least some of the money previously spent by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on defence against the Warsaw Pact. The possibility of shifting limited, and in Canada's case diminished, Official Development Assistance (ODA) resources from the Third World has already caused alarm. John Foster, National Secretary of Oxfam Canada, finds it "appalling."

The environment is a relatively new element in this debate. A cleanup and entrenched protection against future messes will be expensive. Some claim it will require a re-ordering of national and global economics. Military activities threatening the natural environment are a concern. In Canada, proposals for a

NATO low-level fighter training base in Labrador are being challenged. Visits by foreign nuclear-powered and probably-armed vessels to Canadian ports have been challenged on environmental grounds. British Columbia Provincial Court Judge Wallace Craig ruled in December that protests against the Vancouver visit of the aircraft carrier *USS Independence* were "properly motivated" and a "concern most right-minded people have." Although he ruled that foreign naval vessels are entitled to the same legal protection as Canadian ships, he also said it was "remarkable that the government sees fit to invite this type of equipment into Vancouver in view of the serious concerns people have."

Global Biosphere Changing

There also are those who believe in diversion of military spending to environmental needs. "The ratio of money spent on defence and on the environment in 1984 was 12:1," Canadian scientist David Suzuki says. "But the 'environmentally concerned' government of 1989 spent a ratio of 14:1.... Our security is threatened by changes in the global biosphere and it makes sense therefore that the Department of National Defence should change its focus from a military to an ecological emphasis."

The possibility of real disarmament "savings", the need for assistance to half of Europe and the urgency of the environment crisis are important elements in this debate. It is still not clear that there is a "relationship", other than a moral one, between armament and underdevelopment. U.S. Budget Director Richard G. Darman has made it clear that if there is a "peace dividend" as a result of reduced U.S. military spending, that dividend will be used to maintain U.S. economic strength and power. "As the world moves away from an emphasis on the risk of traditional military superpower conflict, the relative importance of U.S. economic strength only increases.... If the dividend metaphor must be applied to the budget, how can policy best assure that there is a continuing growth dividend?" Yet Canadian activist Shirley Farlinger, who believes in the armament-underdevelopment link. She

says U.S. military spending is "sucking the financial blood out of the poorest nations, reversing improvements in life expectancy, infant mortality, disease and clean water."

The debate should not obscure the need for increased ODA action. Geoffrey Pearson, former head of the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, urges Canada to share its knowledge, to increase assistance to the world's growing refugee population and the needy and to provide more support for the United Nations. Canada should heed the call from the First UN Special Session on Disarmament to undertake a national economic conversion study to determine which industries and what jobs would need to be demilitarized. There is now an urgent need to revive multilateral efforts to control, limit and even prevent much of the international trade in arms. Wars have shifted largely to the Third World. Disarmament by industrial nations could easily lead to the transfer of arms and the re-orientation of arms production to buyers elsewhere.

Canada could promote a revival of the Conventional Arms Transfer talks between the U.S. and the Soviet Union (perhaps including their allies) with a view to establishing some trade and technology transfer controls such as now exist with the Ballistic Missile Technology Control Agreement. There are useful suggestions to be found in the Final Document of the 1987 Disarmament-Development Conference: conversion studies, cuts in military spending and reallocation of funds for ODA, public education about the potential benefits of reduced military spending, the creation of a database on global and national military spending, and a larger UN role in co-ordinating disarmament and development efforts. As a signatory to the 1987 document and as one of the nations most able to contribute research, knowledge, energy and resources to both disarmament efforts and development needs, Canada could take up some of those suggestions and provide some new wisdom to the march of events.

— Steven Lee is an international affairs and policy advisor.