



Arms Control and Disarmament

There is a widespread consensus in Canada that defence and deterrence are only one dimension of international security and that effective arms control and disarmament agreements are a necessary complement. Questions which Canadians need to ask themselves relate to the balance to be struck between these two dimensions, and to how we can use our influence — as a country concerned about peace, skilled at mediation and negotiation and technically proficient — in the quest for international security.

In rejecting the nuclear option for itself, Canada set an example to the world, but at the same time dealt itself out of a seat at the nuclear negotiating table. Nonetheless, we have persevered in NATO, in the UN and in our bilateral relations in encouraging the nuclear powers to reach agreement on substantial reductions of their strategic and tactical nuclear arsenals.

In the future, Canada may need to take decisions on some of the diverse and sometimes contradictory strategic, arms control and technological interests that bear on strategic defence. The United States' Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) has been described not only as holding out the prospect of enhancing deterrence and the promise of eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, but also as potentially undermining strategic stability. Moreover, SDI could turn out to involve a prodigious research effort, dwarfing the Apollo project in cost and technical complexity. Its technological spin-offs could be very important for both our military and civilian sectors. We will have to reach a consensus on whether SDI is likely to enhance or diminish Canada's security, and we will have to consider to what extent Canada's economic and technological interests are at stake.

A great deal is at stake in multilateral disarmament diplomacy. Conferences and alliances are important vehicles for promoting arms control and disarmament objectives. They provide an essential mechanism for smaller and middle powers to influence arms control issues. Canada has, therefore, tried to make the most of existing multilateral forums devoted to these questions. Are there new, practical ideas that Canadians believe we could bring to these discussions? Do Canadians believe that declaratory

measures on arms control, such as calls for a "freeze", serve a useful purpose in building confidence or in leading to reductions? Budget permitting, should we make technological support for arms control agreements in such areas as verification a Canadian priority?

There is an important role here for concerned Canadians. In addition to normal parliamentary processes, special mechanisms exist for channeling the public's ideas to the government, including the Ambassador for Disarmament's Consultative Group on Disarmament and Arms Control Affairs, the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, and private organizations. The government's Disarmament Fund further facilitates the process of public participation and involvement in the discussion of these issues. Are further consultative mechanisms required?

The UN System and Multilateralism

A number of countries, some of them Canada's friends and allies, no longer attach the importance to the United Nations that they did formerly. In these circumstances, we need to ask ourselves to what extent the UN furthers Canada's current and prospective interests. If, despite its problems, we consider the UN irreplaceable, what priority should Canada put on revitalizing it and what practical steps can be taken?

Canada has in the past, and could again, make a substantial contribution to the United Nations through peacekeeping. However, there has been some tendency in recent years to bypass the UN in favour of other multinational arrangements. Do Canadians agree that we should encourage a return to UN sponsorship of peacekeeping operations, and devote additional Canadian resources to them — despite the frustrations involved?

The UN's economic and social institutions suffer from undue politicization and, in some areas, from inadequate attention to budgets and costs. UNESCO is a prime example. Canada is working to reform UNESCO from within, whereas other nations have decided to withdraw. What action would be in Canada's interest?

Multilateralism comprises more than the UN system. Other international institutions,