

DECEMBER 3, 1987, HALIFAX, N.S.

I - Lawyers for Social Responsibility (LSR), Halifax

A brief, private discussion was held with three members of LSR (Dawn Russell, Wade McLaughlin and Rodney Burger). Discussion centered on the Defence White Paper, specifically the consultation process leading up to and following publication of the paper, its presentation and conclusions. It was felt that inadequate consultation had taken place and it was suggested that a vigorously pursued defence policy was incompatible with a commitment to arms control and disarmament.

II - Public Forum, Dalhousie University Law School

Vice-Admiral Harry Porter (ret'd) lamented the fact that the world citizenry had not recognized sufficiently all of the groundwork accomplished by the United Nations. Turning to Canadian security policy and NATO, he recognized the importance of the nuclear deterrent and the fact that it had been responsible for preventing a third world war these past 42 years. However, he did feel that the world currently possessed too many nuclear weapons. He also felt that there should be reductions in conventional forces, especially naval forces.

Professor Dennis Stairs of the Consultative Group viewed the INF Treaty as a sound base from which the superpowers could proceed to ever larger reductions in nuclear arms. He reminded the audience that a step-by-step approach to arms control was the path most likely to achieve results. He sympathized with the Ambassador having to work within the United Nations systems and other multilateral organizations and their many-faceted agencies and professed a preference for dealing with one problem at a time. With regard to the "reforms" of General Secretary Gorbachev, he wondered whether the West should accept them at face value, or whether, in fact, they were merely the continuation of a Soviet programme of sophisticated propaganda. Professor Stairs was also critical of the "cold war" rhetoric contained in the DND White Paper and wondered whether it was appropriate in this time of USA-USSR improved relations.

Questioners covered a wide range of topics with opposition to purchase of nuclear-powered submarines being raised by one. Canada was praised for its refusal to allow its economic well-being to become dependent on the domestic