

*Co-operation
needed
in political
environment*

always, in the last resort, act unilaterally to defend itself than the absence of an agreement in which the violation of air-space is flagrant.

Thirdly, there is a certain fear, voiced more frequently in the past than at the present time, that Canadian military officers serving in a joint command with the Americans tend to lose their national identity and to adopt a common perspective on the military problems facing the two countries which ignores the difference in political perspectives. The most frequent illustration of this point is the tendency of military officers to talk about "our" defences, "our" interceptor squadrons, and so on, when they are actually referring to American forces.

These considerations, which at various times have been important factors in the political discussion of NORAD, seemed to weigh lightly on the present Government. They did so, apparently, because the difficulties or dangers of co-operation with the United States at the present time are less salient than the need to show willingness to co-operate in a political environment where there are many basic disagreements between the two governments. Mr. Richardson alluded to this in his statement to the Standing Committee when he said that to withdraw from NORAD would be to strain Canadian-American relations, not simply in the defence field but in a number of other areas. Mr. MacEachen commented on the point even more emphatically:

"... defence is an important element of our overall relationship, which can be affected for better or worse by our own willingness to regard positively issues which we know to be of deep concern to the United States.

I think it is clear to everyone that in the period ahead there will be a number of areas in our bilateral relations where differences are likely to arise. We must attempt to keep these areas of difference as limited as possible . . ."

This is the key to the 1975 renewal of NORAD. It provided the Government with an area of co-operation at relatively little cost, which may offset, in some measure, areas of disagreement with the United States in matters such as trade, the environment, and resource policy. Moreover, if Canada's experience in partially withdrawing from NATO by reducing the forces committed counts at all, then we should know that the act of withdrawal may be more significant diplomatically than the weight of Canada's presence within an alliance. Since the

Government indicated that the United States was anxious to continue the NORAD agreement, the same reasoning presumably applied.

Financial benefits

Finally, at a time when the Canadian defence budget is severely stretched, the Government was anxious to continue an arrangement in which it obtained the financial benefits that derived from the American contribution to the surveillance of Canadian air-space. Although no detailed figures have been made public, Mr. Richardson suggested that it would cost Canada twice as much to conduct the necessary surveillance, control and interception functions, which are now performed under the auspices of NORAD.

Such reasoning is a long way from strict military need. Hence the paradox that, at a time when the military arguments were least significant, the case against renewing NORAD appeared to be at its weakest, for few, if any, arguments had been made to counter the position described above. Allowing the Government's case, however, it would nevertheless be a pity if some broader considerations in defence policy were allowed to pass by in the present discussion. The most obvious one is that the cost of re-equipping Canada's air-defence forces assumes considerable proportions. General Carr has indicated that an all-purpose advanced fighter of the F-15 or YF-16 type to replace the *Voodoo*, the CF104, and the CF5 might involve procurement of about 100 aircraft. Although no firm cost figures are available, there is little doubt that this item alone could exhaust the present equipment funds of the defence budget for many years to come. Therefore, it is imperative that, in renewing its commitments to air-defence, the Government consider the choices which must be made between, for example, buying new tanks, coastal surveillance vessels, new long-range patrol aircraft, and an advanced manned interceptor. Secondly, such an appraisal, placing NORAD in the broad context of defence policy, would logically lead to an assessment of Canada's present defence priorities as they are defined in the 1971 defence White Paper. It is evident to anybody who has considered the implications of these tasks that they cannot be performed within the confines of the existing defence budget. The danger of the NORAD decision, therefore, is that it may bring in its wake a commitment to equipment procurement which, inevitably, will be at the expense of other military