

one hand, it could be argued that increased surveillance capabilities of various kinds — including nuclear-powered submarines, in the case of a submarine “stand-off” zone — would be necessary to help monitor any measures of negotiated arms control that might be reached for the region. Certainly, as noted above, many of the peace groups in Canada and abroad who argue for a “demilitarization” of the Arctic are nevertheless prepared to accept the continued, or even expanded, presence of surveillance systems of various kinds, to monitor agreements and help safeguard against surprise attack. While most would clearly not go so far as to endorse the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines for this purpose, any Canadian Government committed to the current submarine programme would undoubtedly marshal such arguments in its favour.

On the other hand, insofar as negotiated submarine stand-off zones might contribute to diminishing what, in some quarters, threatens to become a positive hysteria about the intrusion of foreign submarines into Canadian coastal waters, then such zones could have the effect of undermining public support for the submarine programme, at least on its currently planned scale. Thus in the end they might reduce somewhat the extent of militarization to which Canada, at least, would directly contribute.

In any case, if a comprehensive Canadian Arctic security policy including measures of the type announced in the Defence White Paper is to have credibility with the public at large, the Government should be energetically pursuing negotiated measures of arms restraint in the region. At this time, the Canadian Government is only beginning to look at the possibility of such “Arctic-specific” measures. Much work remains to be done before it will be in a position to endorse particular proposals and begin advancing them through diplomatic channels. However, the matter is increasing in urgency and the time is apparently ripe for such initiatives.