

compromise — Canada would raise the forces and purchase the equipment needed to carry out fully her commitments to NATO and to the defence of North America.

The reactions to the White Paper suggest, however, that Canadian public opinion remains both confused and divided over these commitments (as well as their order of priority), and more generally over the meaning of “security” in a global environment threatened by new challenges to which old commitments may appear irrelevant. These commitments were based on two main assumptions: that the USSR posed the principal direct threat to Canada (or, put more objectively, that a nuclear war between the superpowers represented such a threat), and that the best means of dealing with this threat was strategic deterrence, or the capacity and the will to retaliate if attacked by Soviet forces anywhere in the NATO area. The White Paper was published at a time when new Soviet policies (and tentative American responses) were beginning to suggest the need for re-examining the first assumption, and when the development of the concept of strategic defence (SDI) seemed to contradict the second. Was the post-war era coming to an end just at the time Canada was preparing to play its full part again in the defence structures built to cope with that era?

Most Canadian critics of the White Paper have focussed on the first of these assumptions—the priority given to the Soviet threat. (SDI, they believe, is not feasible, and the attempt to achieve it would increase the risks of inadvertent nuclear war.) They advocate “common security,” a concept which has gathered strength since Mr. Gorbachev came to power in 1985. Project Ploughshares, a non-governmental organization specializing in peace and security issues, sums up the implications of this view for Canadian policy as follows: “To maintain peace and enhance international security, Canada should focus increased effort on disarmament and arms control, international cooperation and the peaceful settlement of disputes, and peacekeeping, all in the context of pursuing ethical, developmental and environmental goals” (Working Paper 88-1).

Reflecting on specific policies, the critics make a number of points:

a) *NATO:*

The critics of Canada's NATO policies fall generally into three camps: those who call for withdrawal; those who want Canada to support different policies from within NATO, or to reduce the Canadian military commitments to NATO; and finally those who believe we should do more to sustain these same commitments. The intention announced in the White Paper on Defence to strengthen and concentrate Canada's ground forces in the Federal Republic of Germany and to triple the reserves has satisfied most members of the third group, although some may have

misgivings about the total re-equipment package, especially the costs involved in acquiring nuclear submarines. The proponents of withdrawal from NATO appear to remain a small minority of the critics, and the NDP has been obliged to muffle its 1969 pledge to withdraw, by stating that it would not do so immediately if it formed a government. The second group of critics, therefore, represents the mainstream of current opposition to certain aspects of NATO policy.

These critics want Canada to support change in NATO military doctrines and deployments, including the negotiated withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Europe, a pledge not to use these weapons first in the meantime, and the adoption of a “non-offensive defence” posture. Some would withdraw Canada's forces from Europe, either unilaterally or in exchange for Warsaw Pact reductions.

b) *North America:*

The chief concern is that Canada will be drawn into new plans for the defence of the continent which could further militarize the Arctic and increase the threat of war. Accordingly, Canada should take control of early warning and surveillance facilities in the North, oppose SDI, and if the US refuses to cooperate we should scrap NORAD. In the Arctic, Canada should work with other states to form a cooperative regime for non-military activities. Nuclear submarines are regarded as offensive weapons, contrary to the spirit of the Non-proliferation Treaty, and in any case too expensive. Most of the critics oppose the testing of cruise missiles in Canada.

c) *Peacekeeping:*

Canada should earmark larger forces for peacekeeping under UN auspices.

d) *Military Production:*

Economic arguments in favour of military spending are rejected. Canada should produce what it needs on defence grounds alone, but there is no consensus on what is needed nor how much should be spent. Arms exports would be severely restricted.

## COMMENT

Both the government and the critics give more attention to northern security than used to be the case, in part because the Arctic basin has developed a new strategic importance for submarines carrying cruise missiles, and in part because of what might be called a new nationalism which envisages the North as a uniquely Canadian asset. However, the decision to concentrate our European commitments in the Federal Republic of Germany and to abandon the commitment to reinforce Norway in case of need runs counter to this emphasis. Moreover, the decision