

## INTRODUCTION

These four essays on strategic stability, written by Albert Legault, James Fergusson, and Frank Harvey of the Universities of Laval, Manitoba, and Dalhousie, and by Tariq Rauf of the Monterey Institute in California, discuss the relevance of strategic stability about which Canada may have to make important decisions in the coming years.

While the subject of strategic stability received scholarly analysis prior to the twentieth century, it was generally discussed under the heading of "the balance of power", and revolved around alliances of European states and the numerical strengths of their armies and navies.

The second half of the twentieth century brought the Cold War, contested between the North Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Pact, both equipped with nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them over intercontinental ranges. As accurately summarized by Fergusson and Rauf, without means to defend against these strategic weapons the only effective countermeasure was to retain the capability to retaliate for an attack in like manner, to a degree that would be unbearable to the initiator of the attack. This was strategic deterrence. Its objective was not to win or even survive a war, but to use the certainty of "Mutually Assured Destruction" to prevent it occurring at all. To keep the deterrence effective in spite of foreseeable changes in numbers and types of strategic weapons, and to ensure that an attack would not be launched through some mistake, perhaps in the midst of a crisis, would be to make it more stable. Stable strategic deterrence was established, and it worked. World War III did not happen. So why can't we continue to rely on stable deterrence to prevent wars on the future?

The four essays explain the need to examine the concept of strategic stability in the conditions of the twenty-first century, with the Cold War over, the Warsaw Pact gone, Russia no longer an enemy of the United States, and the USA by far the most powerful country in the world. However, more states, including some with unfriendly relations with the developed West, are thought to be acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and may be able to challenge better-equipped enemies by the adoption of "asymmetric" strategies, including terrorism, which can capitalize on the asymmetric tolerance to loss of life between western and some other countries (Legault).

Today, strategic stability should not be assessed simply by comparison of numbers and capabilities of weapons, but must include other attributes of security such as the control, guardianship, and proliferation of weapons (Rauf, Harvey). In Fergusson's opinion "the end of the Cold War (at least in the context of US-Russian relations) spells the end of strategic stability as a useful concept". Many would prefer to retain its usefulness by enlarging its definition.

The authors agree that the strategic deterrence of the Cold War still applies among China, Russia and the United States. Rauf gives a good summary of the negotiations between the US and Russia, which eventually produced a considerable convergence of views, and introduced principles of openness and transparency, irreversibility, predictability, and cooperative threat reduction. As China's power and influence rises one can imagine the emergence of a dominant trioka.

However, between the USA and the aspiring or remaining nuclear, the state of deterrence is not mutual, and in some cases is of doubtful stability. Perhaps is better describe as unilateral sad discriminate, and is determined more by politics than by weapon deployments. Parity of numbers will not guarantee stability. Under the right conditions high numbers can be stabilizing while under the wrong conditions low numbers can be dangerous. The acquisition of just one nuclear weapon by a "state of concern" could