

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



CANADA

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 73/11

NORAD AND THE AIR DEFENCE OF NORTH AMERICA

A Statement by the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable James Richardson, on April 13, 1973, to the House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence.

...I understand that the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence wishes to give particular attention to the air defence of North America and more particularly the NORAD Agreement. I will, therefore, as requested, confine my remarks this morning to this important subject.

In the evidence which he gave you on March 2, Lieutenant-General R.J. Lane, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the North American Air Defence Command, has already provided you with a fairly full account of the history of NORAD, of its currently assigned missions and of the forces and facilities which the Canadian and United States Governments have placed under the operational control of CINCNORAD. General Lane also described to you the strategic threat to North America as it is seen from NORAD headquarters and spoke briefly on the Command's view of its future needs. Mr. Kirkwood, my Assistant Deputy Minister (Policy), who accompanied General Lane, gave the Committee a brief account of the relationship which exists between Canada's contribution to NORAD and our ability to exercise and ensure respect for our national jurisdiction in Canada's air-space.

Members of the Committee who were able to attend that briefing will recall that the present strength of NORAD is 85,000 military and civilian personnel. I believe it is worth emphasizing that the number of personnel in NORAD have been reduced substantially during the last decade. The present strength of 85,000 is down from 248,000 in 1961.

The breakdown of the present strength is that 11,000 are provided by Canada and 74,000 by the United States. The United States' forces consist of 53,000 full-time regular force and civilian personnel, mostly of the Air Force and Army, and 21,000 from the National Guard.

NORAD's interceptor force today consists of three Canadian Forces squadrons, nine regular United States Air Force squadrons, and 17 American Air National Guard squadrons. The anti-aircraft missile force, entirely American, has 28 *Hercules* missile batteries manned by the United States Army, 27 *Hercules* batteries manned by the Army National Guard and eight Army *Hawk* missile batteries.

Canada's contribution to NORAD in terms of military personnel may appear large by comparison with the United States contribution. But, in comparing the relative contribution of both countries, we should not forget that the United States Government pays virtually all of the costs of operating and maintaining the Distant Early Warning line. The Dew Line, as it is called, is operated under civilian contract and manned mainly by civilians employed by the contractor, who are not counted in the previous figures. The United States Government also pays a substantial share of the costs of the other ground-based radar, interceptor-control and communications facilities which make up the air-defence ground environment in Canada. We currently estimate the direct, annually recurring costs of all North American Air Defence activities in Canada at about \$250 million, to which the United States Government contributes approximately \$100 million. This means that in round figures, the cost to Canada of our air defence, including our participation in NORAD, is \$150 million. The total annual costs of NORAD to both Canada and the United States amount to about \$1,270 million annually. With due allowance for differences between the two countries in budgetary procedures, the Canadian contribution of \$150 million amounts to just under 12 per cent of the total.

In addition, the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff have made provision to assign to the operational control of the Commander-in-Chief NORAD other suitable forces that might be available in the United States. Thus the forces available to NORAD might be augmented by fighter squadrons of the United States Air Force Tactical Air Command or Navy and Marine squadrons that were not otherwise committed.

I should now like to discuss with you air-defence co-operation between Canada and the United States, and the objectives of the Government's defence policy as they relate to Canada's security from military attack in the present strategic setting.

There can, I believe, be no doubt that a close link exists between the security of Canada from external military attack and the security of the United States. The White Paper *Defence in the Seventies*, published in August 1971, identified a large-scale attack on North America, occurring as part of a catastrophic war between the two super-powers, as the only direct military threat to Canada's national security. Although it is improbable that nuclear war between the Soviet Union and the United States would be deliberately initiated as long as a stable strategic balance between these two countries and their allies is maintained, Canada's overriding defence objective must, as the White Paper said, be the prevention of nuclear war. There are a number of means by which we seek to do this, including efforts to ease tension through political reconciliation and to bring about arms-control and disarmament agreements. The way most relevant to the activities of my Department and to co-operation between Canada and the United States in North American defence activities is that of contributing to the system of stable mutual deterrence which now prevails between the two super-powers.

The evolutionary process through which this stable mutual deterrence has been achieved in recent years has undoubtedly been the most significant international strategic development during the past several years. Deterrence has come about as the result of increasing recognition on both sides that defence, in the commonly-accepted sense of the word, is not now technically or economically possible against large-scale nuclear attack. Stated in the simplest language, the current defence against war is to keep both sides fearful of the consequences of war.

This realization that there is now no practical way to stop inter-continental or submarine-launched ballistic missiles has led to a conscious decision by each of the super-powers to counter the threat to its security by placing its own strategic forces in such a way that, even if the other power decided to attack first and was able to achieve maximum surprise, the country being attacked would be able to retaliate in such strength that it would be able to devastate the territory of the attacker.

Deterrence as a military concept is neither particularly new nor particularly difficult to understand. A power is deterred from launching a military attack when it believes that the consequences it will suffer, or the penalty it will pay for doing so, will be so serious as to outweigh or nullify the advantages it might expect to gain. What is new in the present strategic situation, and what, I believe, gives hope for something better in the more distant future, is that, as between the super-powers, deterrence is perceived to be mutual and it is perceived to be stable. Both sides now appear to believe that the consequences they would suffer from retaliatory attack nullify any possible advantage they might gain from initiating a nuclear attack. The core of our policy is that we believe that it is very much in our interest and, in fact, in the interest of the whole world, that mutual and stable deterrence continue until the need for it is, we hope, removed by better understanding and by meaningful negotiation. The agreements reached between the United States and the Soviet Union as a result of the first round of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, and the fact that they have embarked on the second round, give encouraging evidence that they share this view.

Stable, mutual deterrence rests on the possession by both sides of strategic forces which satisfy three interrelated but essential conditions.

The first requirement is diversity in the composition of the strategic forces to ensure that weapons which may be capable of knocking out one component will not knock out other components. Both the United States and the Soviet Union have achieved this kind of diversity by including within their strategic forces such different components as land-based Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) of various kinds, Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs), and long-range bombers.

The second essential condition is "survivability". Diversity, of course, contributes to survival. Both sides, however, have taken a variety of other measures to enhance the "survivability" of their strategic forces. These include such steps as putting the majority of their land-based missiles in well-protected silos, dispersal of missile complexes or bomber bases to widely-separated geographical locations, and concealment, particularly through placing missiles in nuclear-powered submarines. Because of their endurance and mobility, these submarines are capable of remaining concealed below the surface of the oceans for long periods.

The third condition is that of confidence. By this I mean the confidence of each of the super-powers that its capability to mount a devastating retaliatory attack is assured, and that it has denied, and has convinced the other super-power that it has denied to the latter, the possibility of achieving a decisive advantage by launching a large-scale surprise or pre-emptive attack. This confidence is the product of effective surveillance and warning systems and of the continuing watch which each side maintains in peacetime on the activities of the other side's forces to ensure it knows with reasonable certitude what they are capable of doing, and

that adequate notice of any changes in the disposition or capabilities of these forces will be obtained.

I should like now to relate the question of the future of NORAD and of the NORAD Agreement to the broader strategic considerations I have just outlined.

It is well known that the relative importance of the long-range bomber as a component of the Soviet strategic forces has steadily declined as the Soviet Union has built up its intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missile forces. It is probably also true that the long-range bomber force is now the least important of the three major components of the Soviet strategic forces, and certainly, for employment in a first strike, the least effective of these components.

The relative decline in the strategic value of the long-range bomber is not the result of accident. It is the product of three factors: the bomber, when on the ground, is difficult to protect and is therefore vulnerable to an opponent's missile attack; the bomber, by comparison with a ballistic missile, takes a long time to reach its target and therefore allows considerably more time in which to obtain warning of attack; and, finally, the bomber, when in the air, is far more vulnerable than missiles to interception and destruction by defensive forces.

As General Lane told you, we now believe that, if the Soviet Union were to decide to launch a nuclear attack on North America and to employ bombers in such an attack, the bombers would be launched at the same time as the ICBMs, or subsequently, against targets which might have survived the initial missile attack. I think we should recognize that, if so employed, the bombers could add substantial to the total of destruction and casualties, but would nevertheless have little influence on the basic strategic outcome. By the time the bombers reached their targets, the retaliatory attack would, in all probability, have occurred.

My Department has, as you will be aware, recently carried out a complete review of our air-defence policy. In this review, we have had to recognize that the bomber, *if it could reach its target undetected and unopposed*, would be a very effective weapon against United States land-based missile forces and strategic bomber forces and could seriously reduce United States retaliatory capabilities. We have concluded that effective early-warning systems, able to detect the approach of bombers well away from their targets, are the main requirement to deter the Soviet Union from using them effectively in a first-strike attack on the United States retaliatory forces. As long as such effective early warning is available as NORAD provides through the Dew line and Pine Tree radar systems, bombers could not be launched by the Soviet Union ahead of missiles in a co-ordinated attack without running the serious risk of indicating an intention to attack well before the missiles were launched and inviting United States pre-emption of the missile attack.

We have also concluded that to rely at this time on warning alone to deter bomber attack would introduce an undesirable element of instability into the present strategic system. Bombers are large aircraft which, in international airspace, are not readily distinguishable from the host of other large aircraft regularly plying the international airways. Their crews must be trained in and practice their missions in peacetime, and, in the course of such exercises, foreign bombers from time to time approach North America to probe the alertness of the defences. Effective early warning requires a capability not only to detect such aircraft through radar but to carry out positive identification as well.

The detection of a number of ballistic missiles on course for North America would constitute unambiguous warning of imminent strategic attack. This would not be the case, however, for detection and identification of potentially hostile bombers approaching North America, even in considerable numbers. The intentions of an intruding bomber force remain unknown up to the point at which it releases its weapons, unless before that point it is effectively challenged. The approach of potentially hostile bombers in an ambiguous situation might lead to the release of retaliatory forces even without direct confirmation that an attack, as opposed to a show of force or even just an exercise, was intended. The stability of deterrence is, therefore, reduced if intruding bombers cannot be compelled by interceptor aircraft to reveal clearly what their intentions are.

Accordingly, it is our judgment that the two North American nations should maintain a reasonable level of capability to intercept aircraft approaching North America in order to provide for positive identification when necessary, and also to remove any ambiguity about the intentions of approaching aircraft identified as foreign bombers. It is important to recognize that this concept of stabilizing the deterrent does not require a capability to defeat an attacking bomber force but merely to determine without ambiguity, through the threat of significant losses, whether an attack on the continent is actually intended. The capacity to obtain that unambiguous determination should be sufficient to deter destabilizing probes or exercises; deterrence of actual attack, however, depends not on the air defence capability but on the assured retaliatory capability.

Canada, because of its geographical position, can contribute effectively both to the surveillance and warning systems and to the interceptor forces which the two governments judge necessary for our mutual security and to make sure that Soviet bombers cannot be employed effectively against the United States retaliatory forces. We can, moreover, make this contribution more effectively within the kind of integrated system for operational control of the air-defence forces of both nations which the NORAD Agreement has established.

At the present time, neither government has yet reached the point at which it is prepared to decide on the precise future of its air-defence systems. Further review and consultation will be required before these decisions are made but, in the meantime, I believe it would be most unwise to dismantle the existing NORAD arrangements.

From a purely national point of view, we need to maintain the capability to detect, identify and control aircraft which might not comply with Canadian regulations or might otherwise infringe on our sovereign authority and legitimate interests. For this reason, even if we did not make our present contribution to NORAD, we should still require similar forces and levels of capability. To provide all the facilities involved entirely by ourselves, without the type of close co-operation with the United States which we now have, could cost us more than our present NORAD contribution. Furthermore, we see advantage in greater integration of Canada's military and civil air-traffic surveillance and control systems, a trend observed in the United States as well. In this situation, and with a high and ever-increasing volume of air traffic between the two countries, a high level of cross-border co-operation will be a practical necessity.

As a final point, the working arrangements developed within the context of the NORAD Agreement would ensure the closest consultation between the two governments in any situation which could develop into a direct military threat to

North America. Hence the Agreement provides us with a useful instrument to make our views known to the United States at the senior level in possible critical situations. Such access, arising from NORAD, which is limited to matters concerning the defence of North America against aerospace attack, could also permit exploration at a time of tension of other aspects of the situation, in which Canada might not be directly involved and which it might, therefore, otherwise have little opportunity to raise.

Taking all these considerations into account, Mr. Chairman, I believe that Canada and the United States should continue to co-operate closely in the air defence of North America. I believe that the NORAD system has served us well for this purpose, and that it provides the best framework to develop future arrangements in this area that is vital to our national life.