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**The SORT Debate:
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Canada**

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Abstract

News that Ottawa may join an American ballistic missile defence (BMD) initiative has rekindled Canada's missile defence debate. Critics of BMD charge that the system is detrimental to arms control and strategic stability. They argue that Canada, a traditional stalwart of arms control, should not be involved in missile defence. But supporters of BMD contend that the system does not undermine arms control or stability, and that Canada stands to lose by not working with the United States on BMD. Not until the Canadian government announces its final decision on BMD participation will the debate subside.

This paper aims to inform both sides of the Canadian missile defence debate by analyzing the Russo-American Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT), the first strategic arms control treaty ratified by Russia and the United States since the latter withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty. SORT and the policies which led to its negotiation indicate that critics of BMD have legitimate concerns. Above all, SORT allows Russia and the United States to field multiple -warhead land-based ballistic missiles. This allowance not only represents an abandonment of the United States' long-standing arms control objectives, but also has potentially destabilizing consequences. Given these and other problematic aspects of the treaty, SORT shows that BMD critics are right to see a link between missile defence and the decline of arms control and strategic stability.

Irrespective of SORT's flaws, Canada must consider the benefits of BMD participation. Being party to BMD helps secure the continued existence of NORAD and demonstrates to an uneasy United States that Canada is serious about continental defence. Hence, this examination of the SORT treaty argues that Ottawa is faced with a choice: Canada can either preserve its arms control reputation or maintain its standing as an equal partner in North American defence.

THE SORT DEBATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR CANADA

Philippe Lagassé

In January 2003, the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien surprised observers by announcing that Canada would keep an “open mind” about participating in a possible American ballistic missile defence (BMD) system.¹ The events of September 2001 that strained Canada-US relations, lobbying by the Canadian defence industry and a bitter leadership race within the Liberal Party have all been touted as probable causes of this new resolve. Whatever the impetus behind the Liberals’ apparent interest in BMD, one outcome of the government’s pronouncement has been a resurrection of the Canadian missile defence debate.

Lloyd Axworthy, former minister of foreign affairs (1996–2000) and a vocal critic of BMD, warns that Canada will lose its standing as a promoter of arms control, disarmament and international stability if the government chooses to take part in missile defence.² Beyond the fact that the United States withdrew from the anti-ballistic missile (ABM) treaty to pursue BMD, Axworthy maintains that the future of meaningful arms control is undermined by Washington’s missile defence plans. Axworthy also argues that Canada might be guilty of “helping to ignite a new arms race” by agreeing to BMD.³ More critically, Axworthy proposes that missile defence has less to do with defending North America than it does with enabling the United States to pursue a more militarized and aggressive foreign policy.⁴ Presented as a defensive system, BMD is in fact part of an offensive strategy aiming to preserve American dominance through the threat and use of force. If it participates in BMD, therefore, Axworthy estimates that Canada will be sacrificing its multilateral foreign policy to American militarism.

Defending the government’s position, the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bill Graham, notes that weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and missiles capable of delivering them to North America are a growing threat.⁵ Though the government estimates the danger to Canada is minimal at the moment, Graham believes that steps must be taken to protect future generations. Graham further contends that Canada will continue to be active in arms control and disarmament. As a steadfast supporter of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and as a founding member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Canada maintains a solid reputation as a proponent and defender of arms control and

disarmament. Indeed, Graham is adamant that Canada will have no part of any weaponization of space undertaken as part of an American missile defence system. Also implicit in the government's case is the notion that Canada must have a role in missile defence if the prized binational North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) is to survive. Arguably, absent a role in missile defence, NORAD will be reduced to a conventional air defence function. Already, indications are that United States Strategic Command (StratCom) will fulfill the missile defence mission if NORAD does not.⁶ Coupled with the fact that the United States' new continental defence command, United States Northern Command (NorthCom), is prepared to provide for the conventional air defence of the United States,⁷ NORAD's abstention from missile defence may therefore end the binational command. Lastly, Graham rejects critics' fears of a new arms race by pointing out that the United States and Russia recently agreed to a new strategic arms control treaty that will significantly reduce their nuclear arsenals. The agreement in question is the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT), signed in Moscow on 24 May 2002 and ratified by the United States Senate on 7 March 2003 and the Russian Duma on 14 May 2003.

Negotiated after the United States made clear its intent to nullify the ABM treaty, SORT outlines the future of the Russo-American nuclear balance. SORT requires the United States and Russia to reduce their operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads to a range of 1,700–2,200 by 31 December 2012. Relative to the current limit of 6,000 warheads imposed by the 1991 Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty (START), SORT's provisions are trumpeted by American President George W. Bush as proof that "the Cold War legacy of nuclear hostility between our countries" has been liquidated.⁸ On the surface, therefore, SORT appears to reinforce the arguments of BMD supporters such that missile defence will not lead to a new Russo-American arms race or destabilize the strategic balance between the two countries.

Upon close inspection, however, the SORT treaty reveals that missile defence critics have legitimate concerns. Compared to previous Russo-American arms control treaties, SORT represents an abandonment of the United States' traditional nuclear policy and arms control objectives. With respect to nuclear strategy, SORT resulted from the Bush administration's intention to provide the United States with a flexible nuclear force posture. Essentially, the Bush administration no longer believes that the principle threat to security of the United States emanates from Russian nuclear weapons. Instead, proliferating rogue states are seen as the greater danger. Thus, to confront these proliferating rogues, the United States must move beyond the Cold War model of nuclear deterrence and the arms control dynamics with which it

is associated. Consequently, SORT materialized as an anti-arms-control arms control treaty. No constraints are imposed on the distribution of the 1,700-2,200 allowed warheads. Additionally, a ban on multiple warhead land-based missiles, which had been enshrined in a previous agreement, is absent from SORT. The treaty is also silent about warhead stockpiles and tactical nuclear weapons. Moreover, SORT's verification measures are significantly weaker than those established by previous treaties. All told, while it is presented as an arms control landmark, SORT in fact represents Washington's growing indifference to the Russo-American strategic balance.

Though little discussed in the Canadian missile defence debate so far, SORT and recent developments in American nuclear policy provide a measure by which to weigh the fears of Canada's BMD critics and the optimism of Canada's BMD supporters.

This paper aims to place the Canadian missile defence debate in a larger strategic context by providing an analysis of the SORT treaty and the policies that guided its negotiation. The paper begins with an historical overview of Soviet/Russian-American arms control. This serves to outline long-standing American arms control objectives and highlight the pivotal role BMD has had in shaping the politics of arms control. Next, the strategic context of SORT is examined. What is shown is that the treaty stems from an American desire to pursue missile defence and a flexible nuclear force posture. The paper then turns to the implications of SORT and missile defence. This section demonstrates how SORT and BMD negatively impact strategic stability and the future of arms control. Finally, the Canadian missile defence debate is reexamined in light of SORT. Here it is proposed that missile defence critics are right to portray BMD as destabilizing and detrimental to arms control. However, it is also argued that a Canadian abstention from BMD will have no effect on the destabilizing character of missile defence. Furthermore, Canada can save NORAD and strengthen its ties with the United States by joining BMD. Thus, the essence of the Canadian missile defence debate is whether Ottawa wishes to preserve its ties to the United States while tacitly endorsing Washington's new strategic outlook or should weaken its ties to the United States in order to maintain Canada's reputation as a stalwart of arms control and disarmament.

I. SALT to START III

Upon being signed in 1972, the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) and the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty ushered in a new phase of the Cold War. Whereas the Cold War standoff between the Soviet

Union and the United States had been characterized by a series of confrontations and crises, this new era was marked by continuous strategic arms control negotiations between the superpowers. As former national security advisor Brent Scowcroft noted, from 1972 to the end of the Cold War, nuclear arms control was “the guts of [American] policy with the Soviets.”⁹ The contemporary debate about BMD, American nuclear policy and the SORT treaty, therefore, can only be understood with reference to the strategic arms control discourse established by SALT, ABM and those treaties built upon them.

Throughout the 1960s, the Soviet Union undertook a massive nuclear arms buildup.¹⁰ In the aftermath of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, during which the Soviets were compelled by an American threat of nuclear war to withdraw intermediate-range nuclear missiles from Cuba, leaders in the Kremlin determined that they should never again be at a strategic disadvantage vis-à-vis the United States. In 1967, to forestall this surge in Soviet strategic power, American President Lyndon B. Johnson initiated arms control negotiations with Moscow in hopes that an agreement could be reached to slow the arms race between the superpowers. Thus began the SALT talks.

Soviet aims in the SALT negotiations were twofold. First, the Soviets aspired to sign an agreement that could enshrine their status as an equal to the United States.¹¹ Though this had been a military reality since the late 1940s, a strategic arms control treaty served to politicize the parity between the superpowers. Secondly, the Soviet Union sought to limit the deployment of ABM systems.¹² Moscow had deployed the first ABM system in 1964. Theoretically, the ABM was to protect the Soviet Union from incoming American missiles by intercepting and destroying them in flight. Fearing the effect that this ABM system would have on its nuclear deterrent, the United States responded by installing its own ABM system in 1967. Being wary of an American technological edge, the Kremlin thus saw SALT as an opportunity to reconsider the sagacity of its beginning of the ABM competition by banning the system altogether.¹³

For their part, President Richard Nixon, elected in 1968, and his national security advisor Henry Kissinger, conceived of SALT as an occasion to restrain the Soviet nuclear buildup while simultaneously preserving the United States' technological lead in offensive ballistic missile technology.¹⁴ Toward the end of the 1960s, the United States had begun testing multiple independently targeted reentry vehicles (MIRVs). This innovation permitted intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) to carry several nuclear warheads. In turn, MIRVs increased an ICBMs lethality and accuracy. Thus, MIRVed ICBMs allowed the United States to

preserve its strategic superiority without having to match the Soviet Union's growing ICBM arsenal. Consequently, Kissinger entered the SALT negotiations intent on protecting the United States' right to pursue MIRVing. As the SALT negotiations progressed in the early 1970s, therefore, both sides pursued different, but not mutually exclusive, arms control objectives.

Once negotiations were finalized, SALT and the accompanying ABM treaty offered both superpowers what they wanted. The treaty limited the United States and the Soviet Union to two ABM sites each, one to protect the national capitals of each country and the other guarding an ICBM field. Also, SALT codified the strategic parity between the superpowers, as desired by Moscow. The treaty further contained the Soviet strategic missile deployments, as sought by Washington. Moreover, in accordance with Nixon and Kissinger's design, no limits were placed on MIRV technologies by SALT. Interestingly, however, SALT and ABM failed to actually reduce the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers. Though the United States was constrained to 1,054 ICBMs silos and 656 sea-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) tubes, and the Soviet Union to 1,607 ICBM silos and 740 SLBM tubes, SALT placed no limits on strategic bombers. More importantly, the fact that only silos and tubes were counted meant that the number of deployed warheads increased post-SALT, since MIRV allowed the placing of numerous warheads on a single missile. Thus, notwithstanding the achievement of the ABM treaty, SALT merely deferred American apprehensions about the Soviet Union's strategic capabilities.

SALT II, negotiated between 1973-1979, represented an attempt by the United States to correct what many in Washington saw as fundamental errors in the SALT treaty. Not unexpectedly, the Soviet Union perfected its own MIRV technology following the signing of SALT. As a result, the Soviet Union was poised to acquire warhead superiority by the early 1980s. Were this to happen, it was feared that heavy throw-weight MIRVed Soviet ICBMs (such as the SS-18s) would be a threat to the survivability of the United States' own land-based missiles.¹⁵ Specifically, critics such as Senator Henry Jackson held that a Soviet ICBM with multiple warheads represented a highly accurate weapon capable of destroying the American ICBMs in a first strike. To address these concerns, the United States began the SALT II negotiations intent on limiting MIRV deployments and securing a numerical equality of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles (SNDVs) with the Soviet Union.¹⁶ In June 1979, the United States and Soviet Union agreed to cap their SNDVs at a level of 2,250 by 1981. Additionally, SALT II limited the Soviet heavy ICBMs to 308, forbade either side from

constructing ICBMs which could hold more than 10 MIRVed warheads and introduced limits on the number of bombers and nuclear air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) in each superpower arsenal.¹⁷

In spite of its achievements, SALT II fell victim to the politics of the Cold War. After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, American President Jimmy Carter chose not to submit the treaty to the Senate for ratification. Although Washington and Moscow pledged to adhere to the provisions of the unratified treaty, SALT II slid into irrelevance as the Cold War grew tenuous in the 1980s.

Succeeding Carter as President of the United States was Ronald Reagan. A conglomerate of SALT II's harshest critics and more moderate voices, the Reagan administration pursued a schizophrenic nuclear arms control policy. On the one hand, it was the Reagan administration that committed the United States to abide by SALT II. Similarly, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) negotiations were launched by Reagan in 1981. On the other hand, due to the uncompromising stances of administration hard-liners, such as Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle, the START negotiations stalled throughout Reagan's tenure as President.¹⁸ Moreover, Reagan's 1983 announcement of a Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), which, as a type of ABM system, aimed to defend the United States against missile attack using a variety of space and land-based measures, also stalled START, as will be discussed later. As pertains to *strategic* arms control, therefore, the Reagan administration followed a disingenuous, and thereby unproductive, approach.

It is important to recognize, however, that Reagan and his Soviet counterpart, Mikhail Gorbachev, did agree to a significant *non-strategic* nuclear arms control treaty in the late 1980s. In 1977, the Soviet Union strengthened its nuclear posture by deploying MIRVed SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) to Eastern Europe. As a direct threat to the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the SS-20 deployment prompted the alliance to counter the Soviets with a "dual-track" strategy.¹⁹ Track one called for NATO to attempt to negotiate a treaty to return intermediate nuclear forces to a balanced level. Absent such a treaty, NATO prepared for the modernization of its IRBMs and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs). As a result, when no agreement materialized, NATO accepted the stationing of American Pershing II IRBMs in Western Europe in 1983. Following years of unproductive negotiations, Reagan and Gorbachev signed a global "zero-option" treaty for intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) on 8 December 1987. In technical terms, the INF treaty required that both superpowers eliminate all ground-based ballistic and cruise missiles (nuclear and conventional) with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers.

In part the result of the economically enfeebled Soviet Union's need to cut defence expenditures,²⁰ the INF treaty was the first sign that the confrontational Cold War approach to arms control was at an end. Above all, INF is noteworthy for its abolition of an entire class of nuclear weapon. Moreover, for the first time since nuclear arms control negotiations began between the superpowers, nuclear arsenals were reduced rather than capped. Finally, INF also introduced a previously unattainable on-site verification regime. Both superpowers were required to share data and information about their nuclear programs and to submit themselves to baseline, close-out, elimination and short-notice inspections.²¹ Overall, therefore, INF represented a first step toward real reductions (as opposed to numerical limits) in the nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union.

Upon joining the administration of President George H. Bush as national security advisor in 1989, Brent Scowcroft held the conviction that "the primary objective of arms control should be stability, not reductions for their own sake."²² Given that Bush shared his advisor's perspective on arms control, Scowcroft's prudent philosophy was sustained throughout the Bush presidency. By means of this approach, Bush and Scowcroft's reinvigoration of the START treaty and negotiation of the START II treaty produced a "golden age of arms control for the United States."²³

When talks began to formulate the START agreement in June 1982, the United States and the Soviet Union were confronted with three apparently insurmountable obstacles. First, from the outset, the United States informed the Soviet Union that START needed to reduce the number of "heavy" SS-18 ICBMs. As discussed, MIRVed SS-18s were perceived by American analysts as a first-strike weapon, being capable of destroying all of the United States' land-based missiles. After SDI was announced in 1983, however, the Soviet Union believed it needed to maintain the SS-18s to overwhelm the proposed missile defence system. To reinforce their conviction, Soviet negotiators indicated that any further progress on START would be linked to a weakening of SDI, or a guaranteed twenty-year commitment to the ABM treaty on the part of the United States.²⁴ Thus, as of 1985, the START talks slowed as the superpowers maintained incompatible objectives.

Notwithstanding the SDI/ABM stalemate, American and Soviet negotiators did manage to establish a framework for the START treaty in the mid-1980s. At the Geneva Summit of 21 November 1985, Reagan

and Gorbachev announced that each of their governments was dedicated to a “principle of 50 percent reductions in the nuclear arms of the United States and the Soviet Union appropriately applied.”²⁵ A truncated version of the 50-percent principle was agreed to at the Reykjavik Summit of October 1986: each side accepted to limit their arsenals to 1,600 SNDVs and a total of 6,000 warheads distributed across ICBMs, SLBMs and ALCMs. On account of SDI, however, Reykjavik failed to produce an agreement. Nevertheless, a skeletal structure for START emerged in spite of the irreconcilable missile defence standoff.

Aided by improved Soviet-American relations and increasing scientific and congressional skepticism about the viability of SDI,²⁶ the newly elected Bush administration garnered important concessions from the Kremlin at the Wyoming Ministerial of September 1989. For the first time since 1984, the Soviet Union agreed to stop linking START to a weakening of SDI. Instead, the Kremlin merely warned the United States that it would withdraw from any START agreement if the United States violated the ABM treaty.²⁷ As a rejoinder, the American negotiators ceased demanding that mobile ICBMs be banned by START. Having thereby bridged the SDI division, fruitful START negotiations resumed using the Reykjavik framework.

After a decade of negotiations, the START treaty was signed on 31 July 1991. Though ratified by the American Senate on 1 October 1992, the disintegration of the Soviet Union mere months following the signing of START complicated its enforcement.²⁸ While the new Russian parliament approved START on 4 November 1992, many of the weapons systems covered by the treaty were located on the territory of former members of the Soviet Union, including Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. Consequently, START needed to be ratified by these other states. Following Kazakhstan in June 1992 and Belarus in February 1993, Ukraine accepted START and agreed to return relevant nuclear warheads to Russia on 5 December 1994. As stipulated by its provisions, START then entered into force. Since it was crafted to be binding for fifteen years, START and its provisions continue to apply until December 2009.

In concert with Reykjavik, START commits the United States and Russia to a deployment of no more than 1,600 SNDVs and 6,000 warheads. According to counting rules, every missile, launcher and bomber qualifies as an SNDV. Also, every bomber capable of delivering short-range attack missiles (SRAMs) is equivalent to one warhead. In addition, START imposes strict guidelines as to how allowed warheads are to be distributed across the SNDVs. A total of 4,900 warheads can be placed on ICBMs and SLBMs. Heavy

ICBMs (SS-18s) and mobile ICBMs are assigned sub-limits of 1,540 and 1,100, respectively. Thus, to meet the restriction of heavy ICBMs, Russia is required to halve its 10-warhead MIRVed SS-18s from 308 to 154.²⁹ Furthermore, both states are restricted to a total ballistic missile throw-weight of 3,600 metric tons, prohibited from developing heavy SLBMs, and forbidden to increase the throw-weight of existing ICBMs. Finally, the development of MIRVed ALCMs was barred, as was any ICBM with more than ten MIRVed warheads.

To ensure compliance with these restrictions and counting rules, the START treaty includes vigorous verification measures which are monitored by a Joint Compliance and Inspection Commission (JCIC). The principle means of verification used is a sharing of national technical means (NTM) data by Russia and the United States. Moreover, each state accepts on-site inspections to confirm NTM data, inspections of closed-out facilities and eliminated equipment, and a consistent monitoring of specific facilities and suspect sites.³⁰ Information must also be shared about the movement of systems covered by the treaty. Lastly, both countries are required to provide unencrypted missile test data.³¹ To date, few noteworthy violations have been reported to the JCIC.³²

Compared to previous strategic arms control agreements, START thus distinguishes itself by requiring the United States and Russia to cut their nuclear arsenals and accept intrusive verifications. Like the INF treaty, therefore, START was as a critical turning point for Soviet/Russo-American arms control. It is important to note, however, that START is by no means an entirely benign undertaking. Despite Reagan and Gorbachev's call for a 50 percent reduction of nuclear weapons, START only obligates cuts of 25 to 30 percent.³³ As a result, the treaty only requires that 2009 strategic forces return to their 1982 levels. Ironically, then, START reduces nuclear weapons to a level equal to that which existed when negotiations began in 1981. Moreover, START addresses only "accountable" warheads. In other words, in setting the 6,000 warhead maximum, the treaty limits only those warheads placed on SNDVs. No restrictions were imposed on reserve (i.e. warehoused) warhead stockpiles.³⁴ Most importantly, in light of the Bush administration's principle not to pursue "reductions for their own sake," START's provisions should primarily be understood as an attempt to stabilize the strategic environment, albeit on American terms.

In negotiating a significant reduction of the SS-18s, the United States fulfilled a long-standing arms control objective. As discussed, concerns about these heavy MIRVed missiles were voiced as early as the mid -

1970s. This achievement is doubly impressive in light of the fact that the United States never formally abandoned SDI.³⁵ Similarly, as with the INF treaty, START's verification measures are considered an achievement for the United States, since it had long sought their inclusion in strategic arms control treaties.³⁶ The source of this American success is simple: the United States was able to use the economic and political decline of the Soviet Union to secure a strategic arms control agreement tailored to the American national interest. As argued by Jordan, Taylor and Mazarr, "A reforming Soviet government sought agreement with the West, largely on Western terms, in order to secure the benefits of a less demanding international environment."³⁷

Bolstered by its achievement, the Bush administration wasted no time in seeking further advantageous arms control arrangements with the Russian Federation. At the time, Scowcroft estimated that the priority of any future agreement was the elimination of MIRVed ICBMs.³⁸ Eleven months after the signing of START, Bush and the new Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, concurred that Russia and United States should work toward an accelerated drafting of a second START treaty. As hoped by the Americans, Bush and Yeltsin declared the elimination of MIRVed ICBMs to be the principle aim of the anticipated negotiations. Three weeks before Bush was to vacate the presidency, he and Yeltsin met in Moscow to sign the START II treaty on 3 January 1993. Continuing along the path set by its predecessor, START II obligated the United States and Russia to reduce the number of strategic nuclear warheads in their arsenals to between 3,000 and 3,500 by 1 January 2003. Additionally, the treaty set a sub-limit of 1,700–1,750 warheads deployable on SLBMs. Furthermore, as agreed to by Bush and Yeltsin, START II forbade the existence of MIRVed ICBMs and required the destruction of all Russian SS-18s.³⁹ Finally, START II was to rely on a verification regime similar to the one established by START.

In nearly every respect, START II symbolized the fulfillment of the United States' arms control objectives since the mid-1970s. First and foremost, the SS-18 threat was negotiated away and all MIRVed ICBMs were to be eliminated. Next, the treaty maintained intrusive verification regimes and cut deployed strategic warheads by half. Lastly, these four achievements not only served to stabilize the strategic environment but also offered a measure of protection against a recidivist Russia: even if Russia were to be governed by a radically nationalist government or revert back to communism, the provisions of START II provided the United States with a guarantee of strategic stability. In short, START II truly represented a "golden age of

arms control for the United States.⁴⁰ Regrettably for the United States, the treaty proved to be an ephemeral triumph.

Given that the START treaty had not yet come into force in 1993, the United States Senate chose to delay ratification of START II.⁴¹ Understandably, the legislative body thought it unwise to ratify the second treaty until issues related to the first were resolved. As a result, the American ratification of START II waited until 26 January 1996, approximately a year after START's acceptance by Ukraine. In the interim, the Russian Duma experienced its own misgivings about the wisdom of the treaty. Though Yeltsin asked the Duma to consider START II in 1995, tensions between the president and the lower house of parliament, and increasing Russian hostility to America's international behavior, hamstrung the Russian ratification of the treaty until 2000.

To many Russian politicians, Yeltsin's decision to accept to elimination of MIRVed ICBMs was fundamentally flawed. Economically, many wondered whether Russia would be able to maintain an arsenal of 3,000–3,500 single-warhead missiles. Simply put, it would cost less to keep fewer missiles with multiple warheads than a to maintain a fleet of 3,000–3,500 missiles with only one warhead. Thus, from a financial perspective, the loss of multiple-warhead ICBMs was poor policy when coupled with a weak Russian economy and shrinking defence budget. Strategically, members of the Duma worried that without MIRVed ICBMs Russia might not be able to maintain its deterrent against the United States. More precisely, Russian analysts voiced concerns that their single-warhead ICBMs would be unable to penetrate an American missile defence system. Furthermore, if the United States deployed a missile defence system, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Igor Ivanov, expressed concern about China's reaction. To be exact, in order to counter the American system, the Chinese were expected to react by strengthening their strategic forces.⁴² In turn, Russia might find herself at a disadvantage in the Sino-Russian strategic dyad if denied MIRVed ICBMs. After the pro-missile-defence Republican Party took control of the United States Congress in 1994, both these fears were exacerbated.⁴³ Before ratifying START II, therefore, the Duma's unease needed to be addressed. This task fell to the administration of Bill Clinton.

Over 20–21 March 1997, President Clinton held a summit with Yeltsin in Helsinki, Finland. The meeting allowed both presidents to placate their respective legislators on the issue of missile defence. Like the congressional Republicans, Clinton and his advisors believed that the United States needed to defend itself

and its allies against missile attacks from so-called rogue states, such as Iran, Iraq, Libya and North Korea.⁴⁴ However, Clinton also supported the continuation of the ABM treaty. To remedy this dilemma, Clinton proposed to Yeltsin that they agree to a distinction between theater missile defences (TMD) and ballistic missile defences (BMD). Since TMD testing and technologies were permitted by the ABM treaty, this demarcation allowed the United States to devise innovative missile defence techniques, thus satisfying Congress without further alienating the Duma. Yeltsin granted Clinton the TMD/BMD differentiation on condition that a protocol granting an extension to START II's SNDVs elimination deadline from 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2007 be accepted by the United States. This Protocol was signed on 26 September 1997 by American Secretary of State Madeline Albright and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov.

Though receptive to the protocol and the TMD/BMD clarification, the Duma chose not to ratify the START II extensions when Yeltsin submitted them on 13 April 1998. Instead, the Duma began linking ratification to the conduct of American foreign policy. After the United States and the United Kingdom conducted air strikes against Iraq in late 1998, for example, the Duma postponed a 25 December 1998 vote on START II. Similarly, when NATO initiated its air strikes against Yugoslavia in 1999, the Duma postponed the 2 April 1999 ratification vote. At these junctures, therefore, Yeltsin was incapable of securing legislative approval of START II. Vladimir Putin, Yeltsin's handpicked successor, fared better. Strengthened by a swell of popular support, Putin imposed his support of START II on the Duma using a variety of economic and strategic arguments.⁴⁵ Yet, being himself opposed to an American withdrawal from the ABM treaty,⁴⁶ Putin did not prevent the Duma from legislating that Russian compliance with START II was contingent on an American respect for the ABM treaty. Thus, upon ratifying the treaty on 14 April 2000, the Duma introduced ratification resolutions that tied START II to the ABM treaty. Article 2, for instance, stated that the Russian Federation had a "right to withdraw from the Treaty" in the event of an American withdrawal from ABM. Moreover, Article 9 of the resolutions prevented the treaty from coming into force until the United States ratified the 1997 ABM amendments agreed to at the Helsinki summit.

Predictably, congressional leaders in the United States were not swayed by the Helsinki ABM amendments. Influenced by the findings of investigative groups such as the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, headed by former Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, Republicans in Congress feared that "rogue" states hostile to the United States would be capable of attacking the American homeland with ballistic missiles in less than ten years.⁴⁷ Aiming to shield the United

States from these future ballistic missiles, Congress passed the *National Missile Defense Act* in March 1999. This new law stated that “[i]t is the policy of the United States to deploy as soon as is technologically possible an effective National Missile Defence (NMD) system capable of defending the territory of the United States against limited ballistic missile attack (whether accidental, unauthorized, or deliberate).”⁴⁸ Being national in coverage, such a system would invariably violate the ABM treaty. Congressional reaction to the Duma’s START II ratification resolutions was equally dismissive. Congress not only pressed ahead with NMD but also refused to consider any arrangement with Russia that might preserve the ABM treaty. Senator Jesse Helms, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, for instance, warned Clinton that “any modified ABM Treaty negotiated by this administration will be DOA—dead on arrival.”⁴⁹ Accordingly, Clinton never submitted the 1997 ABM amendments to the Senate for ratification. Hence, START II, though signed and ratified, remained unbinding.

Regardless of the fact that a third START agreement could not be agreed to before the START II came into force, Clinton and Yeltsin did discuss the framework for START III at the 1997 Helsinki summit. Like the first two START treaties, START III would have required the United States and Russia to further reduce their deployed strategic nuclear warheads. In Finland, Clinton and Yeltsin proposed a level of 2,000–2,500 for each side. With respect to its planned reductions, therefore, START III represented a continuation of the original START framework.

START III’s originality manifested itself in Clinton and Yeltsin’s desire to address constraints on tactical nuclear weapons and the destruction of stored warheads.⁵⁰ In 1991, the Bush administration had unilaterally withdrawn all its non-air-launched tactical nuclear weapons from Europe. Since that time, however, no reciprocal steps had been taken by the Russians. As a result, by the end of the decade, Russia still deployed between 7,000 and 12,000 tactical nuclear warheads.⁵¹ To many in the arms control community, tactical nuclear weapons are the most likely to be stolen by, or sold to, terrorist organizations or other non-state actors.⁵² Consequently, controlling these weapons was thought to be of paramount importance to the national security of the United States. A second problem lay with the fact that neither START nor START II included provisions for the destruction of non-deployed strategic warheads. Instead, both treaties allowed Russia and the United States to warehouse the unused weapons. Like tactical nuclear weapons, Clinton wanted to end the serviceability of these warhead stockpiles in order to ensure that they could not be sold to third parties hostile to the United States. As Clinton’s former Secretary of Defense

William Perry and Assistant Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter noted in 1999, "It makes little sense to debate whether deployed strategic weapons should number one-thousand, two-thousand or some similar number when the number of tactical and nondeployed warheads and fissile cores, all with the potential to become "loose nukes," is many times larger."⁵³ Hence, whereas START distinguished itself from Cold War arms control treaties by reducing, not simply capping, the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers, START III promised to be the first arms control treaty to restrict tactical nuclear weapon deployment and require that surplus strategic warheads be destroyed as opposed to stockpiled. However, without START II entering into force, the START III talks could not evolve into a treaty.

When the 2000 presidential elections began in the United States, therefore, the fates of START II and III were undecided. As with SDI, the specter of an American missile defence system polarized the governments of Russia and the United States, thereby preventing any effective progression of the strategic arms control agenda. Treaties that offered the United States its most advantageous nuclear arms control achievements, namely, vigorous verification measures, the dismantling of the SS-18s and Russian warhead stockpiles, controls on Russian tactical nuclear weapons, and the forbiddance of MIRVed ICBMs, were thus vulnerable to Russian disavowal. This was the arms control inheritance handed to George W. Bush, the winner of the 2000 presidential election.

II. SORT and the Nuclear Posture Review

During his presidential campaign, President Bush enunciated his conviction:

When it comes to nuclear weapons, the world has changed faster than US policy...Russia itself is no longer our enemy. The Cold War logic that led to the creation of massive stockpiles on both sides is now outdated. Our mutual security need no longer depend on a nuclear balance of terror...As president, I will ask the Secretary of Defense to conduct an assessment of our nuclear force posture and determine how best to meet our security needs. While the exact number of weapons can come only from such an assessment, I will pursue the lowest possible number consistent with our national security...These changes to our forces should not require years and years of detailed arms control negotiations...It is possible to build a missile defense, and defuse confrontation with Russia.⁵⁴

From the outset, therefore, Bush committed his administration to five nuclear policy and arms control axioms. First, the Russo-American rapprochement negates their adversarial relationship. In turn, planning the United States' nuclear posture as a response to Russia's nuclear arsenal is an outdated doctrine. Thirdly, absent the need to react to a Russia threat, the United States need not maintain an excessive

number of nuclear weapons. Next, the deployment of a missile defence system is not injurious to the United States' growing friendship with the Russian Federation. Finally, the future of arms control is not tied to complex treaties that follow the START model. Together, these five principles guided the Bush administration in its formulation of the SORT treaty.

In June 2000, in an effort to prevent outgoing President Clinton from unilaterally reducing the American nuclear arsenal before the end of his term, Senator John Warner amended the 2001 *National Defense Authorization Act* to prohibit any nuclear weapon cuts below START levels in the absence of a nuclear posture review.⁵⁵ The amendment also required that this nuclear posture review be undertaken alongside the expected 2001 *Quadrennial Defense Review*. Hence, upon entering the White House in January 2001, the Bush administration was congressionally mandated to perform an assessment of American nuclear strategy.

Presented to the public by Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy J.D. Crouch on 9 January 2002, the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR)⁵⁶ embodies the nuclear policies Bush presented on the campaign trail. Chief among the NPR's findings is that the United States and Russia are no longer adversaries. As a result, the NPR recommends that American nuclear policy no longer size its arsenal in response to Russian nuclear capabilities. In place of this "threat-based approach," the NPR recommends that future nuclear strategies be "capabilities-based." Unlike the country-specific (i.e. Russia), threat-based approach, a capabilities-based approach seeks to provide the United States with a force structure capable of deterring, defeating and defending against a variety of enemies. Moreover, as opposed to threat-based approaches, capability-based planning allows the United States to address unexpected emergencies and contingencies involving a range of unequal stakes. Essentially, then, a capabilities-based approach asks not what the United States needs to respond to, but rather what the American military should be able to accomplish. Implicit in the NPR, therefore, is the notion that potential threats from rogue states are now a greater concern for the United States than the existing Russian weapons. Indeed, leaked portions of the classified NPR report presented to Congress identify that American nuclear policy must now be geared to meet counter WMD dangers emanating from North Korea, Iraq (at the time), Iran, Syria and Libya.⁵⁷ As stated publicly by Crouch, "What are the kinds of capabilities that we need to counter the *potential* adversaries or the capabilities of *potential* adversaries that are either extant today or that will emerge in the years to come?"⁵⁸

In advocating a capabilities-based approach, the NPR further demands a reconsideration of the United States' nuclear force posture. During the Cold War, the United States' maintained an offensive nuclear "triad" made up of ICBMs, SLBMs and strategic bombers. The purpose of the triad was to ensure that the United States retained a retaliatory capability against the Soviet Union in the event that either its ICBM or bomber fleet was destroyed. In the post-Cold War era, the NPR maintains, the United States must look to a "new triad." With respect to offensive capabilities, this new triad retains the force structure of the old triad but adds a role for precision-guided non-nuclear capabilities. Additionally, the new triad emphasizes the need to build missile defensive systems and to strengthen strategic command, control, intelligence and planning. Thanks to the new triad's non-nuclear forces and missile defence system, the NPR concludes that the United States can safely reduce its operationally deployed strategic warheads to between 1,700 and 2,200 by 2012.⁵⁹ All nondeployed strategic warheads are to be transferred into active or inactive reserve stockpiles. To arrive at these force levels, the NPR explicitly rejects any further recourse to so-called "Cold War-style arms control treaties." Moreover, the NPR also notes that its planned missile defence system is "more capable than the ABM treaty permits." Thus, it too was incompatible with the demands of the new triad.

In sum, the NPR outlines the Bush administration's vision of the post-Cold War strategic environment. According to this vision, Russia and the United States have been freed from their antagonistic relationship, and should therefore cease to deal with one another through arms control regimes which mirror those of the Cold War. As a replacement for these outmoded bilateral arrangements, the Bush administration is determined to establish conditions that will give the United States the greatest possible flexibility in its nuclear force structuring. Faced with a perceived menace to its interests from the proliferation of ballistic missiles and WMD to "rogue" states, the White House is steadfast that this flexibility allows the deployment of defensive systems. The NPR, therefore, reflects the determination of the Bush administration to abandon the dictates of the Cold War approach to Russo-American relations and confront the realities of a new, more uncertain era.

Prior to the public release of the NPR, Bush hosted Putin at the White House on 13 November 2001. At the meeting, he informed the Russian president of his intent to lower the United States' operationally deployed strategic warheads to between 1,700 and 2,200. When Putin spoke to the press afterwards, he concurred

with Bush that their respective nuclear arsenals should be reduced. Nonetheless, Putin stressed that future reductions should be undertaken within the confines of “a reliable and verifiable agreement.”⁶⁰ The reason for this position is that, for Russia, working through a treaty not only codified the cuts, it also preserved the semblance of equality between Moscow and Washington.⁶¹ Shortly after his meeting with Putin, Congress reiterated to Bush the desirability of negotiating an arms control treaty with the Russians;⁶² though unilateral reductions offered the United States more speed and flexibility, they could not provide the predictability, transparency and balance inherent in a bilateral accord.⁶³ Hence, even before the findings of the NPR were made public, Bush faced pressure to continue working within a treaty regime. In March 2002, he compromised with Putin and Congress by agreeing to embed the NPR’s proposed force restructuring in a new treaty. Unlike all previous strategic arms control agreements, however, the new accord would be short, concise and negotiated in only a few months. The only other clarification that Bush gave was that the treaty would include vigorous measures, which he believed were “the most important thing.”⁶⁴

On 24 May 2002, Bush and Putin signed the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT). In line with the estimates of the NPR, SORT requires the United States and Russia to not exceed 1,700–2,200 strategic nuclear warheads on 31 December 2012. How these warheads are distributed across SNDVs is at the discretion of each respective state. No restrictions are imposed on how many warheads can be placed on ICBMs, SLBMs or bombers. Moreover, the treaty does not include any restrictive counting rules. In Article II, both states agree that the START treaty and its provisions remain unchanged. Consequently, each side is permitted to deploy 6,000 until December 2009. Finally, pledging that the accord is the result of a “genuine partnership based on the principles of mutual security, cooperation, trust, openness and predictability,” SORT mandates the creation of a Bilateral Implementation Commission (BIC). This “diplomatic consultative forum” is scheduled to meet twice a year until 2012 to “discuss issues related to implementation.” Unlike START II, the treaty does not eliminate MIRVed ICBMs or the SS-18. Furthermore, in contrast to the START III framework, SORT does not propose any controls on tactical nuclear weapons. Similarly, the agreement does not require the dismantling of warhead stockpiles. Finally, despite Bush’s apparent enthusiasm, SORT contains no verification measures beyond the BIC.

Clearly, when compared to its predecessors, SORT, apart from the warhead reductions it requires, represents a departure from the established arms control objectives of the United States. To the Bush

administration this divergence is justified given the end of the Cold War, the Russo-American rapprochement, the dangers posed by “rogue” states, and the requirements of the new triad and its capabilities-based approach. A more critical investigation suggests that an abandonment of traditional arms control objectives represents a demonstrable danger to the United States. To assess the relative merits of both these arguments, the implications of the SORT treaty must be examined.

III. SORT and NMD

On 13 June 2002, in line with the NPR and the *National Missile Defense Act*, the United States withdrew from the ABM treaty. As warned, the Russian Federation declared itself no longer bound by START II the following day. Now being only committed to START and SORT, Russia is free to retain MIRVed ICBMs. Economically, as mentioned, the deployment of MIRVed missiles is an attractive option. Doing so will allow Russia to field its 1,700–2,200 warheads by 2012 with a minimal investment in SNDVs. Militarily, a retention of MIRVed ICBMs provides Russia with a Strategic Rocket Force which might be capable of overwhelming a limited American missile defence system. Diplomatically, and perhaps psychologically, being able to defeat NMD maintains Russia’s status in the international system and provides Moscow a measure of strategic equality in future dealings with Washington. As a result, in August 2002, Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov announced that Russia plans to retain its MIRV capability.⁶⁵ In compliance with START, 154 SS-18s, ten-warhead mobile SS-24s, and six-warhead SS-19s will remain in service until their service life expires in 2016. And once START expires in 2009, Russia will be allowed to MIRV its new ICBM, the SS-27.⁶⁶

Suggestions that the Russian response to the American withdrawal from the ABM treaty was “muted” are thus demonstrably false. In truth, Russia reacted decisively to the end of the ABM treaty: it once again turned to MIRVed ICBMs—the system described as “the single most dangerous innovation since the mating of nuclear weaponry with ballistic rocketry.”⁶⁷

For the Bush administration, Russia’s decision to retain MIRVed ICBMs is inconsequential given the realities of the new strategic environment. Specifically, since Russia is no longer an adversary of the United States, White House officials see no reason to be concerned about its nuclear posture. Noted Secretary of State Colin Powell: “Since neither the United States nor Russia has any incentive to launch nuclear

weapons at each other, we no longer view Russian deployment of MIRVed ICBMs as a destabilization of our strategic stability.”⁶⁸

Critics of SORT are less sanguine about Russian MIRVing. During the Cold War, Soviet MIRVed missiles were feared primarily on account of their ability to destroy the United States’ own ICBMs in a preemptive attack. In a post-SORT world, the danger posed by MIRVed ICBMs is different but no less perilous. Again, given its economic difficulties and SORT’s 1,700–2,200 warhead restriction, Russia is likely to place most of its warheads on a relatively small number MIRVed ICBMs. Unfortunately, this implies that a large portion of Russia’s nuclear arsenal will itself be vulnerable to a pre-emptive or preventive first strike (explicitly outlined in current American policy). Accordingly, if faced with a perceived threat to its MIRVed missiles, Russia might be faced with a “use or lose” scenario. To be exact, if alerted to an attack (real or accidental), Russia would be forced to choose between launching its missile on warning or risk having its retaliatory capability destroyed. During the Senate hearing on SORT, Powell’s response to these fears repeated the Bush administration’s mantra:

Our new strategic relationship with Russia is no longer based on a nuclear balance of terror...The scenario you describe of Russia believing it faced a “use it or lose it” situation with its force of MIRVed ICBMs is therefore not a credible concern.⁶⁹

SORT further fails to impose any restrictions on tactical nuclear weapons. Especially in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, preventing terrorist groups from acquiring a small nuclear weapon from Russia is considered of the utmost importance to American national security. Hence, if the United States is truly serious about protecting itself from catastrophic terrorism, it should seek to deny these groups access to weapons of mass destruction by cutting off supply “at the source.”⁷⁰ Reinforcing this point, General Eugene E. Habinger (Ret.) argues that since “unclassified intelligence estimates of Russian tactical nuclear weapon stockpile is in the range of 12,000 to 18,000 weapons,”⁷¹ the United States must act to help the Russia secure this arsenal. Indeed, events like the February 2002 theft of weapons-grade nuclear materials from a Russian institute demonstrate that Moscow does not have the resources to protect its vast stockpiles alone.⁷² Finally, in light of the fact that tactical nuclear weapon controls were discussed by former presidents Clinton and Yeltsin at the Helsinki summit, critics of the Bush administration believe that SORT failed to seize a critical moment in American counterproliferation policy.⁷³

SORT’s silence on the elimination of warhead stockpiles is perceived to be yet another weakness. By 2012, if both operationally deployed and reserves are counted, the United States will have approximately

4,600 strategic nuclear warheads.⁷⁴ As a result, critics of the treaty question whether the SORT is simply a reduction charade. As Senator Feingold stated, “Only by dismantling and destroying these devastating weapons can we truly achieve the goal of meaningful arms reduction.”⁷⁵ Once again, the knowledge that such “real” reductions were proposed at the Helsinki summit indicates that more could have been done in this regard. Doubly important, many SORT skeptics accuse the Bush administration of ignoring the threat posed by Russia’s equally large warhead stockpiles. To meet its SORT obligations, Russia will need to warehouse warheads “containing roughly 84,000 kilograms of fissile material.”⁷⁶ Coupled with the fact that “more than half of Russian storage facilities may still lack basic modern security features,”⁷⁷ the abundance of this fissile material compels critics to censure the Bush administration for not having negotiated a warhead elimination process. As with tactical nuclear weapons, therefore, SORT appears to be a “missed opportunity.”⁷⁸

In responding to these charges, Bush administration officials offer a number of rationales. First, with respect to tactical nuclear weapons, Secretaries Powell and Rumsfeld acknowledge the urgency of the issue but state that it was outside the scope of SORT as a strategic arms control treaty.⁷⁹ To assuage the senators that questioned them on the issue, Powell and Rumsfeld promised that the Secretary of Defense would work with the Russians to curb the tactical nuclear weapons threat through a new Russo-American Consultative Group for Strategic Security (CGSS). Second, pertaining to the American warhead stockpile, Powell defends the continuance of the hedge by reminding critics that neither INF, START nor START II mandated the destruction of warhead reserves. In addition, since the United States no longer has an active warhead production line, stockpiles are the only available source of additional nuclear warheads.⁸⁰ Hence, should the United States ever need to strengthen its nuclear posture to deter a new nuclear rival, warehoused warheads would be needed to supplement existing systems. Lastly, on the subject of the Russian stockpiles, Powell indicates that the decision to destroy additional warheads is Russia’s alone. Keeping with the philosophy of the NPR, any constraints on the deployment of stockpiled warheads would limit flexible force structuring. In fairness, however, it should be noted that the Bush administration began “debt-reduction-for-non-proliferation” swaps with Russia in 2002.⁸¹ This mechanism forgives Soviet-era debts if the funds are used to better secure Russian warheads and fissile materials.

A final point of contention about the SORT treaty relates to its nonexistent verification measures. In as much as START remains in effect until 2009, the Bush administration claims that SORT and its BIC will

have access to an intrusive verification regime. And although SORT continues until 2012, Secretaries Powell and Rumsfeld estimate that policies of openness and transparency will be in place between the two states by 2009, thereby making further verifications superfluous. Moreover, Rumsfeld argues, the NPR recommended that the United States reduce its nuclear arsenal with or without a Russian reciprocation. Correspondingly, there is no reason to be concerned about Russian warhead reductions simply because they were codified in a treaty. Stated by Rumsfeld: "Neither side has an interest in evading the terms of the treaty since it simply codifies unilateral announced intentions and reductions, and it gives both sides broad flexibility in implementing those decisions."⁸²

Citing past Russian arms control noncompliance, Senators Joseph Biden (D), John Kerry (D) and Richard Lugar (R) of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee are less optimistic about the effectiveness of open and transparent policies. In 1997, for example, the United States and Russia ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Yet, since that time, Russia has neglected to destroy its 40,000 metric tons of chemical agents.⁸³ To Biden, Kerry and Lugar this lack of effort on the part of the Russians shows that Moscow either has a history of evading its treaty obligations or lacks the capacity to implement them. Consequently, though the senators did not directly challenge Rumsfeld on the administration's original intent to reduce American warheads unilaterally, the implication that mere transparency will ensure Russian compliance with SORT is considered questionable at best.

All told, though supportive of its warhead reductions, SORT's critics are uncertain that the conclusions of the NPR merit the abandonment of the START treaties' accomplishments. In truth, some SORT skeptics feel that the allowance of MIRVed ICBMs, the lack of tactical nuclear weapons controls, the existence of large Russian warhead stockpiles and the absence of strong verification measures represent a continuing threat to the national security of the United States.

III. Conclusion: Canada and SORT

Clearly, the SORT treaty breaks with the United States' long-standing approach to nuclear arms control with the Russian Federation. As articulated during his campaign for the presidency, Bush had no intent to preserve the ABM treaty or complex arms control treaties. Unsurprisingly, his administration's NPR formalized these views in putting forth its capabilities-based approach and new triad. Thus, NMD was deployed at the expense of START II and its elimination of MIRVed ICBMs. Similarly, START III's call for

warhead stockpile eliminations has been abandoned so as to allow for more flexible force structuring. Finally, the desire to avoid a lengthy negotiating process resulted in SORT being free of any independent verification measures or tactical nuclear weapon controls. Indeed, the only traditional arms control objective to be found in SORT is its strategic warhead reductions. Not unexpectedly, the radical change in arms control policy undertaken by the Bush administration has resulted in dialogue about the relative worth of the SORT treaty.

Ultimately, the debate surrounding SORT does not revolve around the contents of the treaty itself. Rather, the fundamental issue at hand is whether the end of the Cold War and subsequent rise of so-called rogue states merits the abandonment of the ABM treaty and, correspondingly, the United States' long-standing arms control objectives. More to the point, SORT is a battleground between those who see NMD as the principal source of American strategic stability in a post-Cold War era versus those who retain the conviction that diminishing the threat of hair-triggered MIRVed ICBMs is a more effective means of lessening the possibility of a nuclear catastrophe on American soil. In ratifying SORT, the United States Senate has endorsed the Bush administration's view that Cold War arms control models must be transcended to effectively confront the dangers posed by proliferating rogues.

This question is directly related to the Canadian missile defence debate. First and foremost, SORT demonstrates that critics are correct in suggesting that missile defence is detrimental to arms control. The treaty could not have been agreed to by Russia if it retained START II's ban on MIRVed ICBMs. The fact that the Duma rejected START II after the United States withdrew from the ABM treaty, but ratified SORT a year later, makes this clear.

SORT's allowance of MIRVed ICBMs also suggests that missile defence could be destabilizing. Alongside the inherent danger of a Russian "use or lose" scenario, Russia's retention of MIRVed ICBMs may imbalance Asian strategic stability. Theoretically, China might respond to increased Russian MIRVing by accelerating its own MIRV program. This could in turn prompt India to strengthen its nuclear deterrent against China. Pakistan would then doubtlessly follow suit. While wholly speculative at this time, this scenario and others like it are now more probable since the signing of SORT.

Even if one dismisses the Axworthy claim that missile defence is reflective of Washington's intention to "pursue a more militarized and aggressive foreign policy" it cannot be denied that it is a part of a more offensive and unilateralist American national security policy. Understandably, September 11, 2001 awakened Washington to the need to act more decisively and with greater resolve in the defence of the United States and its interests. The NPR which gave rise to SORT supports this claim. Being part of the new triad that will supply the United States with a more flexible nuclear force posture, missile defence is a key component of the Bush administration's move away from Cold War nuclear deterrence. Instead of providing a simple shield, NMD is part of the Bush administration's determination to preemptively, and perhaps preventively, disarm rogue states hostile to the United States. Indeed, missile defence may encourage Washington to take preemptive offensive action against a threatening rogue state, since NMD could intercept missiles which survive an American first strike against a WMD-capable foe. Furthermore, maintaining a flexible nuclear force posture prevented Washington from negotiating the destruction of warhead stockpiles. Given that future challenges might require the United States to rearm itself quickly, the Bush administration is unwilling to do away with its warhead reserves. Regrettably, this also means that Russia's poorly protected surplus warheads will remain intact. Overall, therefore, SORT reveals that critics of BMD have legitimate concerns.

It is important to note, however, that a Canadian refusal to be part of missile defence will not affect the negative aspects of missile defence. Whatever Ottawa chooses to do, the Bush administration will not change its dismissive approach to arms control; Canada's "soft power" backing of arms control and disarmament holds no sway over the White House. Likewise, a principled Canadian abstention from BMD will not force the United States to reconsider its rejection of classical nuclear deterrence. The truth is, no matter what Canada says or does, the United States will do what it wants with its nuclear weapons. Hence, Ottawa contributes nothing positive to arms control or strategic stability by refusing to be part of BMD. Consideration should therefore be given to what Canada could gain from participating in missile defence.

As discussed, the introduction of NorthCom and the possible relocation of missile defence to StratCom undermine the relevance of NORAD. Arguably, the closing of NORAD would be a significant blow to Canada's image as an equal player in the defence of North America. While Canada and the United States would still consult on continental defence by means of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD), Military Cooperation Committee (MCC) and the recently established Binational Planning Group (BPG),

losing NORAD would diminish Canada's input into North American defence. In addition, via NORAD, members of the Canadian Forces have had privileged access to American military assets. Notably, the CF fostered close ties with United States Space Command (SpaceCom) between 1985 and 2002 when its headquarters and commander were shared with NORAD.⁸⁴ Currently, the CF enjoy a comparable relationship with NorthCom, which assumed SpaceCom's position alongside NORAD in October 2002. In order to preserve NORAD and the advantages it accrues to the CF, Canada would do well to participate in missile defence, for even if the missile defence mission is ultimately assigned to StratCom, Ottawa could tie its support of BMD to the preservation of NORAD.

Finally, Ottawa should recognize the full impact of 11 September 2001. Protecting the United States from asymmetric threats is now at the forefront of the American national security agenda. Since the 2001 attacks, Ottawa has acknowledged the need for greater homeland security cooperation with the United States by agreeing to new continental defence and border security measures. Alongside its function in the new triad, missile defence is also part of homeland security. Whether ballistic missiles are the *primary* threat to North America is inconsequential: they are a threat nonetheless. A Canadian role in missile defence would therefore be consistent with Ottawa's intent to jointly defend and secure North America. Indeed, participating in missile defence would further demonstrate to our anxious neighbour and closest trading partner that Canada is serious about continental security. Thus, in terms of raw national interest and Canada-US relations, a strong case can be made in favor of a Canadian role in BMD.

In conclusion, when put in the context of SORT and American nuclear policy, the Canadian missile defence debate can be reduced to its essentials: Should Canada safeguard NORAD and its ties with the United States at the expense of its belief in arms control? Or, should Canada's arms control principles trump the national interest?

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