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Dept. of Foreign Affairs
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THE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR ARMS

IMPLICATIONS FOR CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY
Integrated Report from Roundtables in Ottawa, Kingston and
Victoria - December, 1995

THE CONTEXT

"The Future of Nuclear Weapons" was discussed at roundtables held in Kingston, Ottawa and Victoria during early December. These timely discussions coincided with the signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Brussels and the pending release of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's report, "Canada and the Nuclear Challenge" (December 19, 1995).

Nuclear Weapons and the Future

International and Canadian reports from government and civil society (NGOs, think tanks, strategic studies academics) addressed a number of key issues at the three roundtables, including:

- the NATO Strategic Concept Review
- ballistic missile defence
- the Non-Proliferation Treaty
- Canada and USA relations
- the role of middle powers
- the future role of NATO
- the elimination of all nuclear weapons - feasibility and desirability, and
- the increased threat of biological and chemical weapons

It was a complex and ambitious agenda. Nuclear weapons culture is currently undergoing transition and although some thought Canada should work within the existing US lead consensus, these roundtables confirmed support for Canadian leadership to pursue reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons.

KEY THEMES

1. Canada's objectives and roles:

There was strong agreement at the three roundtables that Canada should continue to pursue the principle to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons. Some policies and practices toward this goal should be developed. Canada should support both strong, sophisticated principles and practices. According to Professor Glen Jack, Institute of International Relations, University of British Columbia, "we shouldn't give up on one for the other (principles or practices). Canada should pursue intelligent change based on well-organized policy development." (Victoria)

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