

PURSUING A CANADIAN APPROACH

3.

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada intensify its efforts, in cooperation with States such as its NATO allies and the members of the New Agenda Coalition*, to advance the process of nuclear disarmament.

Response

The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendation. NATO takes seriously its distinctive role in promoting a broader, more comprehensive and more verifiable international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The importance and value of the Alliance as a forum and centre for coordinating practical work on future non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament should not be underestimated. Canada will urge Allies to pursue consistently this positive role which is a vital aspect of their efforts to provide for their security and defence.

Practical steps the Alliance might take to ensure it plays a positive role in advancing disarmament objectives could include better coordination of threat reduction efforts among Allies; more coordinated efforts on the part of Alliance member States in disarmament fora, with a view to giving greater content to our shared obligations under Article VI of the NPT; identification and promotion of new confidence-building measures such as improved exchange of missile launch warning information and consideration of steps that might lead to negotiations to reduce further sub-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, including Russian stockpiles west of the Urals. Canada has also proposed that the Alliance revise the 1989 NATO Comprehensive Concept of Arms Control and Disarmament. Its modernization would go far to enhance the Alliance's contribution and relationship to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Canada will continue to engage the members of the New Agenda Coalition in pursuing shared nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives and will encourage all States to reaffirm their commitments to the NPT-based nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime in the face of pressing and potent challenges.

* Current members of the Coalition are Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden.