

In commenting on the preceding panel discussion, James Stark, Director of Operation Dismantle, began by pointing out that, although the session was entitled "Citizens and Governments," there were no "citizens" on the panel, only journalists. His second comment referred to the media's "unfair" treatment of members of the peace movement. Peace activists were criticized either for not trying to influence Soviet policy, or for being naive enough to believe that they could influence Soviet policy. Then, when the Soviet Union did do something right, such as implementing the unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, peace groups were left looking like apologists because they agreed with this or that specific Soviet initiative. In media reports, peace groups tended to be referred to as dupes of "fifth columnists". Members of the peace movement, according to Mr. Stark, feared a reinvention of McCarthyism. Finally, he agreed with earlier comments that the conference should have been open to the media because members of the press were, in effect, an unelected political force of immense influence. However, to do an effective job, journalists must learn to pick their way through the "ideological minefield" that surrounded the arms control debate.

Mr. George Bell, of the Canadian Institute for Strategic Studies, addressed the question of government secrecy. He emphasized the difference between the Canadian system of responsible government and the American system of representative government. For example, the written mandate of the Chief of Information for the US Department of Defense is to provide the maximum amount of information consistent with national security. In Canada, on the other hand, there is an unwritten mandate to provide the minimum amount of information consistent with "Cabinet Security." Since the Glassco Commission in 1964, Canada had had inhibiting regulations governing both defence and external affairs. Mr. Bell suggested that there were many issues about which the public could, and should, be informed by government officials. For example, in the development of the North Warning System, most of the discussion on the technology, the structure and the organization involved could have been divulged to the public. Mr. Bell addressed a question to M. Pelletier: How can we get Canadian Cabinet Ministers to recognize that there is a need for public information on many of these issues?

M. Pelletier replied by reminding the audience that Canada obeyed rules which are laid down by the United States and NATO. Unfortunately, Canadian officials frequently adhered to a policy of secrecy only to find that the critical information had been leaked to the press in Washington.