

RUSSIA

7. Given its potential contribution to nuclear safety and stability, and the need to act promptly to address the possible implications of the millennium bug, the Committee recommends that the Government of Canada explore further with the United States and Russia the feasibility of establishing a NORAD "hotline" to supplement and strengthen Russia's missile early warning system.

Response

Canada welcomed the agreement announced at the September 1998 U.S.-Russia Summit in Moscow to establish a joint U.S.-Russia Missile Early Warning Centre and to set up an international system to provide notification of intended missile launches. Canadian officials have encouraged the U.S. to share information with Russia and to multilateralize this initiative.

An international system for launch notification is one of the subjects the Government would wish to see addressed by an Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space that Canada has proposed be set up in the Conference on Disarmament.

The Government agrees that one vehicle for a multilateral early warning system might be NORAD. As NORAD is a formal agreement between Canada and the United States, however, any such role would have to be effectively discussed and accepted by the parties before such a suggestion was pursued with Russia.

With respect to possible Y2K nuclear problems, the U.S. and Russia are holding bilateral talks aimed at excluding any possible computer-related difficulties.

The Government also welcomes the American invitation to Russia to establish a temporary Centre at Colorado Springs in December 1999 to co-operate in addressing the challenges of the Y2K phenomenon. Canada would welcome a decision to extend the operation of this Centre indefinitely in order to implement similar confidence-building measures.

Canada should also strongly support the idea of broadening such a mechanism to include other nuclear-weapons-capable States.

Response

The Government considers that all states can benefit from an international system for launch notification and other security and confidence-building measures. Canada will continue to promote this objective, as well as universal adherence to the NPT.