

The Standing Committee's report, "Canada and the Nuclear Challenge" is a reference point for further debate and analysis and will shape Canada's role and objectives. The report was not released at the time of the three roundtables but the final draft recommendations were examined by Michel Fortmann, University of Montreal, at the Kingston roundtable (Appendix 1)

There will be 150 days to respond to the Standing Committee's report once released on Dec. 10, 1998.

2. Elimination:

a) "Prohibition": John Steinbruner, Brookings Institute in Washington, DC, stated that elimination of nuclear weapons must be taken very seriously. He claimed that ultimate elimination was not feasible in the near future and introduced the goal of "prohibition" whereby weapons are put into a "status of other than active". In his opinion, abolition of weapons needed much more thought and new strategies and practices need to be developed.

b) "Safety": The immediate nuclear operating conditions are very unsafe worldwide, with new proliferators in Asia. Problems are compounded as the US and Russia are using standard Cold War deterrence (execute within 20 minutes) when Russia's current capacity is about a century behind that of the United States. Russia is drifting with a deteriorating infrastructure. "We have not fathomed the problems in Russia - deep structural problems which have become an unmovable burden and consequently the greatest security issue in the world." (Steinbruner, Victoria roundtable) Alyn Ware raised the concerns expressed worldwide about Y2K.

c) Disclosure: Steinbruner recommended an accurate accounting system be designed and executed worldwide - a transparent, accurate accounting of all nuclear weapons as a step in achieving the goal of prohibition. Alyn Ware further emphasized the new disarmament agenda point of creating inventory for both nuclear weapons and fissile materials.

d) "Reinforcing the Moral Order": Reinforcement of the moral climate in public opinion will build public and political support for the elimination of nuclear weapons. The seriousness must be recaptured in the public's mind. "We must build a moral order and moral response to those weapons which is the central thing that durability depends upon. Remember we need to have barriers between knowledge and use which transcend a broad range of political and strategic environments. That kind of moral understanding of the heinousness of these weapons is going to be, in the long term, fundamental to a successful regime and international climate that abolishes nuclear weapons." (Ernie Regeher, Project Ploughshares, Ottawa roundtable)

e) The nuclear culture is changing: US Senator Alan Cranston (Victoria roundtable) gave an impassioned argument for moving quickly to major, not incremental, reductions in the level of nuclear weapons held by the US and Russia, supporting the technical arguments of Steinbruner and the moral issues of holding such arsenals stated by Regeher. Senator Cranston strongly stated that the post-war environment does not support the Cold War logic represented by the largely unchanged US doctrine and expenditure on nuclear weapons.