

REDUCING THE POLITICAL VALUE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada adopt the following fundamental principle to guide its nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament policy, within an overarching framework encompassing all aspects — political, military, and commercial — of Canada's international relations:

That Canada work consistently to reduce the political legitimacy and value of nuclear weapons in order to contribute to the goal of their progressive reduction and eventual elimination.

Response

The Government endorses this recommendation. Canada's security is promoted through supporting an appropriate balance between Canada's nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives and Canadian security requirements.

The objective of successive Canadian Governments has been and remains the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. In order to ensure the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995, the five nuclear-weapon States (NWS) agreed, in the adoption of the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament, to "the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally with the ultimate objective of eliminating those weapons... ." The Government will continue to press for negotiated reductions that bring the international community closer to this objective.

The Government's policy is guided by the firm belief that the NPT is the central instrument in which Canada's nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament policy is rooted. The international community must implement all of the obligations of the Treaty.

The Government will continue to promote the NPT, along with new and strengthened instruments that enhance the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to invigorate efforts to rollback nuclear proliferation where it has occurred. In this context, Canada will continue to stress the necessity to devalue the political significance of these weapons.

Canada will also continue to resist any movement to validate nuclear weapons as acceptable currency in international politics.