

B. Approach to Arms Talks

While the participants were obviously unanimous in their deep concern about the state of East-West relations and the "terrifying" arms race, there were no strong perceptions among the participants concerning President Reagan's approach to the next round of talks, nor a consensus about his commitment to the goals of nuclear disarmament. A few participants described President Reagan as insincere in his statements concerning nuclear disarmament -- "pre-election talk," -- and mentioned that he had already committed more funds to increasing arms. Others believed that President Reagan cares about peace -- "less of a warmonger now," -- and would like to see something done in the interest of disarmament but is not getting co-operation from the Soviets because of "a mutual lack of trust." Many added that they felt that President Reagan wanted to be remembered in history as the President who achieved a dramatic reduction in the arms building.

There were few opinions of the Soviets' commitment to disarmament; however, it was mentioned that "as a government" they are committed to this goal. A few reasons were offered as to why the Soviets have agreed to resume negotiations: the threat of Star Wars, a sincere concern for peace, and to improve their "image" in light of the shooting down of the jetliner.

From the participants' comments it was apparent that they did not feel Canada could offer any specific advice to the U.S. concerning the upcoming talks because it was neither needed nor wanted. Some participants suggested that Canada should offer supportive comments -- "sit down in good faith and think of humanity." It was generally felt that anything we had to say to the U.S. should be done publicly with the qualification that