

It was concluded that we need a debate on whether NATO promotes peace and stability or not, on whether our resources can be more effectively used for security through some other body, and, again, on whether nuclear weapons provide security, especially in the new environment.

2.5.2 Principles and Concerns

Decision-making should be democratic and based on open, informed public debate.

- NATO is very closed and seemingly impervious to public opinion.
- In the recent Angus Reid poll, Canadians have indicated their desire for Canada to play a leading role in abolishing nuclear weapons; they have also indicated a desire to remain in NATO.
- There is little knowledge about these issues in the general public in Canada.

Canadian policy should respect and strengthen international law.

- NATO's nuclear policy contravenes the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on nuclear weapons.
- NATO plays a role in delaying action on article VI of the NPT treaty.

Canadian policy should be based on a review of NATO's contributions to overall stability and security, with due consideration given to alternatives to military force in promoting them.

- It is not clear whose security NATO protects.
- NATO's nuclear policy and expansion create a tension with Russia.

2.5.3 NATO and Civil Society Policy Options

Canadian education and participation in policy-making

- Foster citizen participation in NATO and nuclear policy decision-making by creating a website with postings about upcoming NATO decisions, news from the Conference on Disarmament, background information about Canada's nuclear policy and NATO, and a chat-line.
- Produce and circulate widely a quarterly newsletter from Canada's Ambassador on Disarmament.
- Produce public news releases on upcoming NATO decisions.
- Educate and consult with Canadians on full range of Canadian obligations and benefits attached to its NATO membership.
- In light of Canadian public support for Canada's taking a leadership role in the abolition of nuclear weapons (Angus Reid poll, 26 March 1998), initiate a public debate about whether to continue membership in NATO if NATO does not change its nuclear weapons policy.
- Make funding available to small, community-based groups to conduct public forums and education on NATO's nuclear policy, the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion, and article VI of the NPT.
- Provide funding for the education of Canadians, particularly youth, about historically successful resolutions of international and domestic conflicts by non-violent means (through, for example, UN diplomacy and popular movements).
- Establish a civil society advisory group to DFAIT to help Canada develop its policy on nuclear issues and NATO.
- Hold a consultative forum including peace activists and academics, military and policy-makers to review Canadian involvement in NATO, particularly with respect to its nuclear policy.
- Consider including (gender-balanced) NGO representatives (chosen from a slate nominated by grassroots groups) in its delegations to NATO.