

# THE ENVIRONMENT AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Let us heal this Earth.....

## **Our goal?**

We seek Canadian environmentalists to support our call for a ban on nuclear weapons.

## **Chemical and biological weapons are banned. So are landmines. Why not nuclear weapons?**

They are still here, roughly 32,000 of them and 4,400 are "on alert": that is, ready to be launched in less than 30 minutes.

## **What are the environmental consequences of nuclear weapons?**

What happens if "deterrence" fails and nuclear weapons are used? Here is the prediction:

*"The consequence of failure invokes death on a scale rivalling the power of the creator, poisoning the Earth, deforming its inhabitants for generation upon generation."*

General Lee Butler, Former Commander-in-Chief, US Strategic Air Command, Feb. 2, 1998.

## **What would happen if an average-sized bomb were exploded?**

At the centre, expect a luminous fireball hotter than the sun which would incinerate all life. As far as 8 kilometers away, all structures would collapse. Farther away, some would survive the blast but die slowly without medical assistance. Even up to 16 kilometres away there would be fires and winds up to 250 km per hour.

Fallout would create a lethal zone of 1024 sq. km. Radioactivity would contaminate 50,000 sq. km.

## **What if people argue that nuclear weapons are simply so dangerous they won't be used?**

"The proposition that large numbers of nuclear weapons can be retained in perpetuity and never used - accidentally or by decision - defies credibility." Canberra

Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, 1996

## **Suppose a bomb was exploded on the far side of the Earth? Would we be safe?**

Not necessarily. Estimates vary, but if approximately 100 bombs were used, we could trigger a "Nuclear Winter" covering the Earth, preventing the germination of crops and causing eventual starvation. The "winter" would be caused by dust and smoke rising into the atmosphere due to the impact of nuclear weapons exploded at ground level. If oil refineries were the main targets, we could trigger nuclear winter. Further, nitrogen oxide from the fires would cause 50 - 70% depletion of the ozone layer, blinding animals and destroying the food chain.

## **How are we suffering the environmental consequences of nuclear weapons already?**

Yes, people have experienced radiation sickness and death as a result of:

- 1) **Nuclear Warhead Explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki**
- 2) **Uranium Mining**
- 3) **Production of Nuclear Weapons**
- 4) **Testing of Nuclear Weapons**
- 5) **Mishandling of radioactive waste**

## **SHOULD WE BE DISCOURAGED? No!**

Work by nuclear abolitionists and concerned states has resulted in a moratorium on nuclear testing, a reduction in nuclear warheads from a high of 68,000 down to around 32,000 today, a sharp reduction in nuclear weapons production and increased public awareness of the risks entailed in the nuclear weapons cycle. However, the U.S. and several other nuclear weapon states have refused to abandon their remaining stocks of nuclear weapons.

In response, through international and national coalitions, we are:

- a) calling for an end to NATO's reliance on nuclear

weapons

- b) calling for a Nuclear Weapons Convention
- c) asking middle power states to begin the study of requirements for verification of this Convention with international monitoring by inspectors and electronic equipment

We need to persist!

*“Duelling, slavery, and ritual human sacrifice are all human institutions which have been dispensed with by law due to a crystallized public opinion. The war method of settling disputes can be dispensed with in the same way simply by the decision to eliminate it from the lexicon of acceptable alternatives.”* (Jeannette Rankin)

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Phone or write your Member of Parliament. Ask what he or she is doing to support work on a ban on nuclear weapons.
- If you belong to a group, ask it to endorse the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons by signing the Statement below. Invite a speaker to discuss nuclear issues with your group.
- Join a peace group. Many are listed on our website. Even if you can't spare time for peace activities, provide your financial and moral support.
- Encourage your media to cover nuclear weapons issues.
- Call your local television station and ask them to run a video on nuclear weapons. We can provide suggestions.
- Check out our website.
- Share this information with your friends.
- Make a donation to CNANW and/or your local peace group to support work for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

*“Recognition of our environmental interdependence can do more than save us, negatively, from the folly of war. It could, positively, give us that sense of community, of belonging and living together, without which no human society can be built up, survive and prosper.”* Barbara Ward and Rene Dubois

## STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

**I/We believe that the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons are abhorrent and morally wrong.**

**I/We call on the Government of Canada to work urgently with other nations to conclude a convention which will set forth a binding timetable for the abolition of all nuclear weapons in the world.**

Name of Group:

Name of Contact Person:

Address:

Phone:

FAX:

Email Address:

For further information contact:

**Canadian Network  
to Abolish Nuclear Weapons**

145 Spruce, #208,  
Ottawa, ON K1R 6C8

Ph. (613) 233-1982

FAX (613)233-9028

[www.abolishnuclearweapons.org](http://www.abolishnuclearweapons.org)

*“World peace through nonviolent means is neither absurd nor unattainable. All other methods have failed. Thus we must begin anew.”*

Martin Luther King, Jr.