

WORDS TO KNOW

- Cold War infiltration values
- nuclear pernicious worldview
- cipher doomsday clock renounced
- embassy harbinger

# Nuclear Threat and Canada's Response

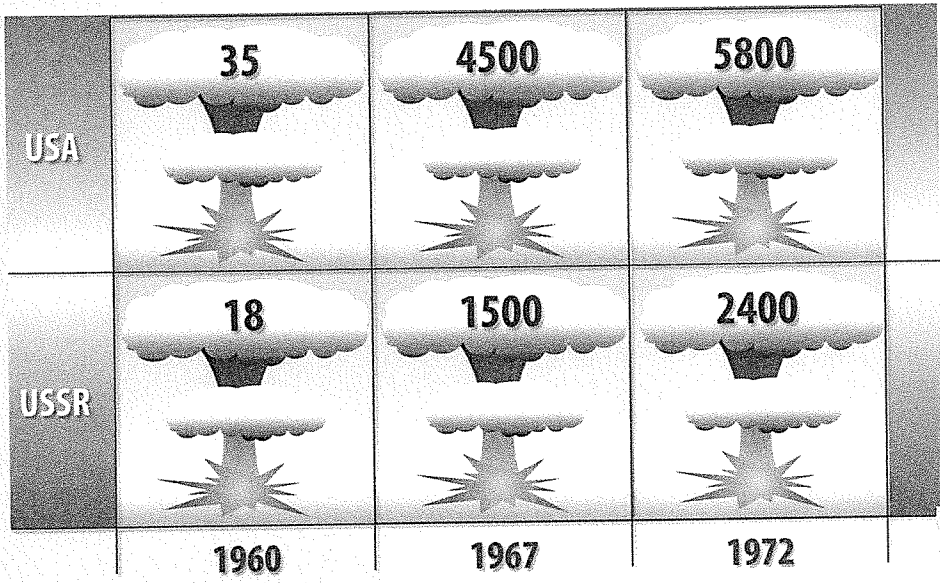
## Living with Nuclear Threat

- 1. Brainstorm what you have heard about the Cold War, and any questions you have about it.
- 2. What fears do people have today that might cause governments to take action at a national level?

READING BEFORE

Evidence 6.5

### Growth in Nuclear Warheads (1960–1972)



On August 6, 1945, the United States dropped the world's first atomic bomb to be used in warfare on Hiroshima, Japan, instantly killing 70 000 people and almost totally destroying the city of 200 000. Three days later another bomb targeted Nagasaki. On August 14, Japan surrendered. The Second World War was over—and the nuclear age had begun.

One month later, on September 5, 1945, a Russian cipher clerk, Igor Gouzenko, fled the Soviet embassy in Ottawa with 109 documents proving the existence of a Soviet spy ring in Canada. Gouzenko's revelations shocked the world and marked the beginning of the Cold War in Canada.

In 1949, the Soviet Union tested its first nuclear bomb, triggering a nuclear arms race between the West and the Soviets. The Soviet test raised fears of a nuclear attack on the West and suspicion of communist infiltration at home. These fears continued until the late 1980s, but were particularly strong in the 1960s.

Number of nuclear weapons for selected years: During the arms race, the United States and the Soviet Union kept increasing their nuclear strength to keep up with each other.

**If you were a teenager living in the Soviet Union in the 1960s, how would these figures affect you? Why?**

Source: Ian M. Hundey and Michael L. Magarrey, *Canada: Understanding Your Past* (Toronto: Irwin, 1990), p. 180.

- 1. As you examine the evidence on pages 143–146, visualize what is happening and then prepare a “think-aloud” organizer like the one opposite. In your organizer, explain how the evidence portrays the perceptions of the time. For example, when thinking aloud, describe what you “see.” Use prompts such as “I picture...,” “I can see...,” or “I cannot imagine...” Then, in the third column, draw an image to convey the idea suggested by the evidence. A sample is shown.
- 2. Consider whether the evidence supports or disputes the existence of a nuclear threat in the 1960s. Do the descriptions help you understand what life was like for those living in the shadow of nuclear war?

| Evidence   | Think aloud   | Images |
|--|---|--------|
| 6.10: “school children being taught duck-and-cover manoeuvre that was supposed to protect them in case bombs fell” | I picture students in classrooms, hiding under desks, with white faces and being scared to death, and perhaps some students not taking it seriously and getting into trouble with the principal |        |



What does this 1980s cartoon suggest to you about how people felt about the nuclear arms race during the Cold War? How would these feelings affect the general atmosphere in Canada during the 1960s?

**“Thank you, Burrows, for that descriptive insight into the nuclear arms race.”**

Source: © Jim Unger 1984. Herman® is reprinted with permission from LaughingStock Licensing Inc., Ottawa, Canada. All rights reserved.

**A young mother describes her experience of fear in the 1960s:**

“ This was in the early '60s and much of the anxiety I felt for my children was rooted in the pernicious mindset of the times: talk of our government accepting American nuclear warheads for Canadian-based missiles, school children being taught the duck-and-cover manoeuvre that was supposed to protect them in case bombs fell, talk of evil madmen (theirs and ours) pushing the button, a doomsday clock that kept ticking toward midnight—zero hour—that yellow sign with its ominous black logo and the words ‘Nuclear-Free Zone’ posted in public places. Overriding all these harbingers of doom was a male voice that spoke to me several times each day on CBC Radio—between programs designed for ‘easy daytime listening.’

‘Radiation doesn’t seep. It settles,’ the voice said—words that still give me the shivers. After this reassuring tag line, the voice would continue with tips on ‘how to protect your family against potential danger of nuclear war.’ I must store tinned food, fresh water and first aid supplies in a windowless room. I would also need a battery-operated radio and containers for waste. The voice was male, calm, sure.”

Source: Bernice Morgan, a Newfoundland writer, quoted in Marjorie Anderson, *Dropped Threads 3: Beyond the Small Circle* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2006), p. 222.

## Government Responses to Protect Canadians

The 1960s were a time of significant civil defence activity, such as the creation of attack-warning and emergency systems. Governments and municipalities prepared plans for providing emergency resources. A public information program included publications with such topics as converting basements into fallout shelters. Regional Emergency Government bunkers were built, and Exercises Tocsin A and B were developed to test the national defence system. (A tocsin is an alarm sounded on a bell.)

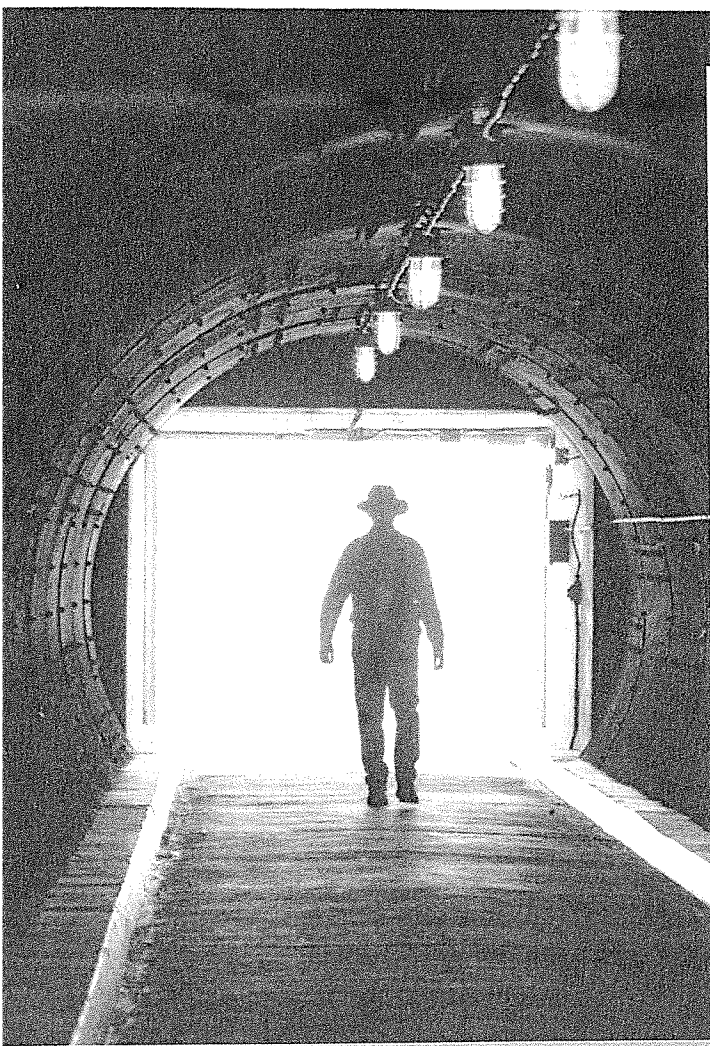
The Canadian government created materials such as films and pamphlets to advise citizens what to do in case of a nuclear attack. One of the most famous was the film *Duck and*

What impact do you predict the emergency plans in this section would have on people’s daily lives? Explain your answer.

**DURING READING**

cover, made in 1950 and shown to students across North America during the 1950s and 1960s. In the film, a turtle named Bert demonstrated what to do when there was a threat—duck and cover (Evidence 6.10). Students were shown the film so that they would know to duck under their desks and cover their heads during an attack.

One of many actions the Canadian government took was to establish a Civil Defence College. It conducted programs for adults and a special one for teenagers from across the country, who were sent to Arnprior, Ontario to learn the basics of civil defence. Students took eight courses over two weeks in the summer.



This huge, four-storey bunker, buried deep under a hill outside Ottawa, was secretly built between 1959 and 1961 to house the top officials of the federal government and military during a nuclear attack. Throughout its 33-year lifetime, the "Diefenbunker" was the Central Emergency Government Headquarters for Canada. The blast tunnel seen here was open at both ends to allow the blast wave of a nuclear explosion to enter one end and exit the other without resulting in excessive pressure on the main entrance. The tunnel was large enough to accommodate cars and small trucks. Today, the bunker is part of the Diefenbunker Museum and is open to the public.

✱  
**What impact would this pamphlet have on Canadians? Why? Why might people decide not to build a shelter?**

# HOME FALLOUT SHELTERS

Home Fallout Shelters have been given a great deal of publicity during the past six months in Canada and the United States and are likely to receive every emphasis in the future, according to current indications. They are designed as protection against the radiation that sifts back down to earth following a nuclear explosion. ...

Evidence 6.10

**BERT the TURTLE** \*

says

**DUCK and COVER**

\* STAR OF THE OFFICIAL U.S. CIVIL DEFENSE FILM "DUCK AND COVER"

**FEDERAL CIVIL DEFENSE ADMINISTRATION**

All home fallout shelters should contain a battery-operated radio, emergency food and water supplies for 14 days, bedding, flashlight, first aid kit, and simple equipment to dispose of wastes. Keep these emergency supplies in the shelter or near enough to be moved into it quickly, if an attack warning is sounded.

Source: Metropolitan Toronto Civil Defence Organization, Welfare Services Bulletin No. 16, "Concrete Block Shelter in Existing Basement." City of Toronto Archives, ca. 1960.

From the *Duck and Cover* educational movie for students. ✱

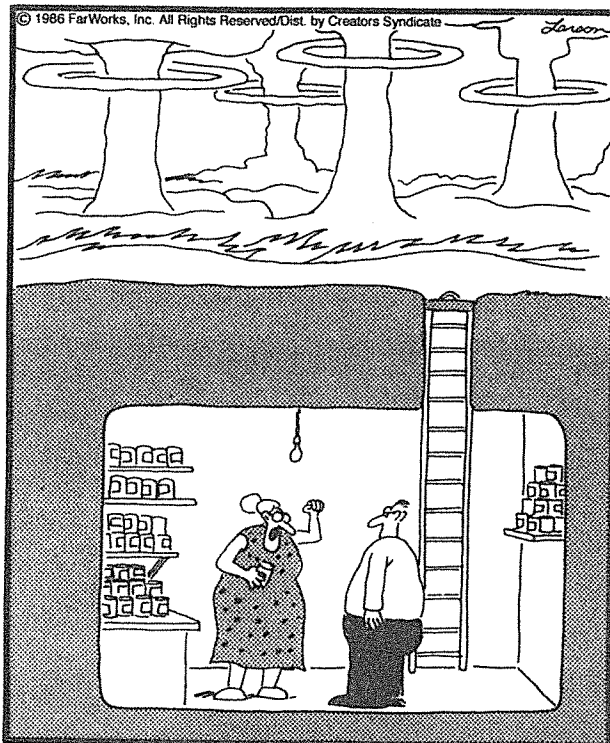
**Why would the filmmakers use a turtle to explain how to respond to a nuclear attack? How effective do you think the "duck and cover" response would be in the event of a nuclear attack? What does this suggested response reveal**

Evidence 6.11

Imagine you were forced to go into hiding in preparation for a nuclear attack. What would you take with you? What would be the most important item you would include? Discuss your choices with a partner and compare answers.

DURING READING

What does this 1986 cartoon suggest about bomb shelters? What might the cartoonist be suggesting, in hindsight, about the reality of the nuclear threat? Explain to a partner.



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“How many times did I say it, Harold? How many times? ‘Make sure that bomb shelter’s got a can opener—ain’t much good without a can opener,’ I said.”

Evidence 6.12

# Canada Emergency Measures Organization

## DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE BLUEPRINT FOR SURVIVAL NO. 4

Make this your handbook for emergencies.

Keep it in a handy place so that you and your family can refer to it quickly should any emergency threaten.

Keep other emergency advice, such as first aid and artificial respiration instructions, antidotes for poison, and emergency telephone numbers, in the same place.

### Introduction

The Canadian Government has joined other peace-minded nations in doing everything possible to reduce world tensions. ...

The purpose of this booklet is to assist individuals and families in making personal survival plans and preparations to guard themselves against the potential dangers of nuclear war. ...

All Canadians are urged to read “11 Steps to Survival” with care, to act on the advice it contains and to keep it handy for emergencies.

### The 11 Steps to Survival

Governments and communities at all levels are planning for the survival of our Nation in the event of a nuclear war. But the survival of individuals also will depend upon the preparation that each person makes. ...

This pamphlet describes what YOU can do before and following a nuclear attack. You can greatly increase your family’s and your own protection by taking the 11 Steps to Survival:

- STEP 1: Know the effects of nuclear explosions.
- STEP 2: Know the facts about radioactive fallout.
- STEP 3: Know the warning signal and have a battery-powered radio.
- STEP 4: Know how to take shelter.
- STEP 5: Have 14 days’ emergency supplies.
- STEP 6: Know how to prevent and fight fires.
- STEP 7: Know first aid and home nursing.
- STEP 8: Know emergency cleanliness.
- STEP 9: Know how to get rid of radioactive dust.
- STEP 10: Know your municipal plans.
- STEP 11: Have a plan for your family and yourself.

**SEVERE**  
SEVERE RISK OF  
TERRORIST ATTACKS

**HIGH**  
HIGH RISK OF  
TERRORIST ATTACKS

**ELEVATED**  
SIGNIFICANT RISK OF  
TERRORIST ATTACKS

**GUARDED**  
GENERAL RISK OF  
TERRORIST ATTACKS

**LOW**  
LOW RISK OF  
TERRORIST ATTACKS

### SECURITY THREATS AND WARNINGS TODAY

“ The Department of Homeland Security is taking immediate steps to increase security measures in the aviation sector in coordination with heightened security precautions in the United Kingdom. For that reason, the United States Government has raised the nation’s threat level to Severe, or Red, for commercial flights originating in the United Kingdom bound for the United States. ”

Source: Statement by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, announcing a change to the country’s threat level for the aviation sector, August 10, 2006.

The 21st-century US Homeland Security Advisory System is a method of broadcasting information about the risk of terrorist acts to federal, state, and local authorities and to the American people.

**How are 21st-century fears similar to and different from fears during the Cold War?**

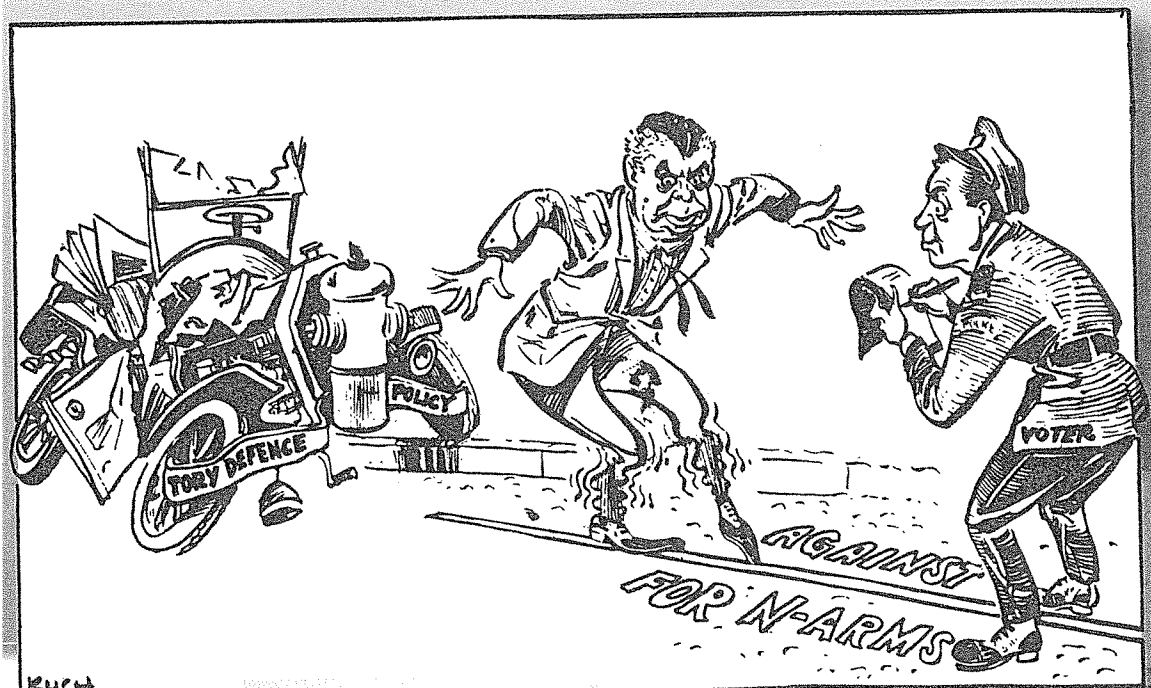
## Canada, Nuclear Weapons, and the United States

Create an organizer in your notebook like the one to the right. As you read the evidence that follows, select and analyze two primary sources indicating the purposes, values (personal view of what’s important), and worldview (philosophy of the world) of the author.

| Primary source | Purpose | Values of author | Worldview of author | Conclusion: Was there really a threat? |
|----------------|---------|------------------|---------------------|--|
| Source 1:      |         |                  |                     |  |
| Source 2:      |         |                  |                     |  |

Evidence 6.14

DURING READING



Canada’s military response to the Cold War was to join NATO in 1949 and NORAD in 1957. As part of its obligations, Canada accepted weapons, such as the Bomarc missile in Canada and the CF-104 aircraft based in Europe. Both these weapon systems were effective only if they carried nuclear warheads. However, the Diefenbaker government could not decide whether to accept nuclear warheads.

**How did this cartoonist see Canadian defence policy under Diefenbaker? Why would Diefenbaker be walking such a fine line on the issue of nuclear weapons?**

Source: Peter Kuch, *Winnipeg Free Press*, early 1963.

**Many Canadians were reluctant to accept nuclear warheads:**

*Is Canada about to acquire nuclear weapons for its armed forces at home and abroad?*

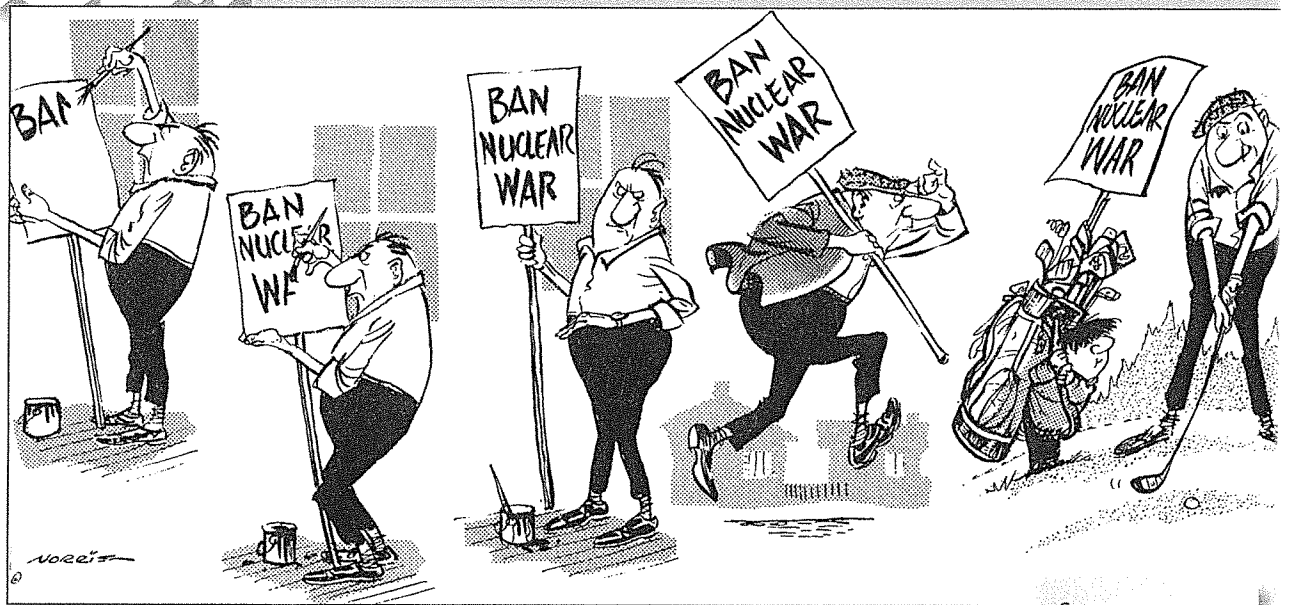
That's one interpretation being put on Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's foreign policy speech in the House of Commons yesterday, especially his statement that "some of us will have to go back on some of the views that we have expressed in the past." ...

It's our hope this interpretation is wrong. It's our hope that Canada will continue to oppose nuclear weapons for herself—and, what's equally important, continue to oppose their acquisition by other countries which at present time don't have them. ...

Nuclear weapons can add nothing to Canada's stature. Nor can they add anything to Canada's defence against the intercontinental ballistic missile—nor any against a determined assault by aircraft carrying nuclear bombs, some of which would always get through.

Canada's best defence is to work for peace and disarmament. That's the stand we have taken in the past, and that's the one we should take in the future. We will never have stronger weapons than our goodwill.

Evidence 6.17



Source: Len Norris, *Vancouver Sun*, October 27, 1962.

**AFTER READING**

**How does this cartoon reflect the divided opinions of Canadians of the time?**

The majority of Canadians in the early 1960s approved of accepting nuclear warheads, and so Diefenbaker and the Conservatives lost the 1963 election. Pearson honoured Canada's nuclear commitments. In 1968, when Pierre Trudeau became prime minister, he renounced Canada's nuclear roles.

1. Write a journal entry from the perspective of a teenager in the 1960s who is concerned about the possibility of a nuclear attack. Write a response from the 21st century on the credibility of this threat today, using at least three pieces of evidence. You may need to conduct further research on current terrorist threats in Canada and in the world.
2. Select evidence and prepare two one-minute public service announcements aimed at citizens in the 1960s. One advertisement should assert the threat of nuclear war and the other should debunk it. Include a quotation from the 1960s to support your view.
3. Over time, what has changed and what has remained the same about the lives of teenagers? Prepare a "then and now" visual display. Use evidence from the 1960s and today to support your choices.

A retired journalist recalls the events leading up to the nuclear decision.

**The US government was furious with Diefenbaker's indecision about whether to accept nuclear warheads for Bomarc missiles on Canadian soil:**

“ The Kennedy administration in the US didn't like Diefenbaker tilting toward the 'no' side on nuclear warheads for the Bomarcs. They intervened massively in Canadian affairs. They sent General Lauris Norstad, the just-retired supreme commander of NATO, to Ottawa, where he announced that Canada was backing out of its defence obligations if it didn't arm the Bomarcs with nuclear warheads.

The Norstad speech made Pearson change his mind and declare for nuclear arms for Canada. ”

Source: Larry Zolf, *CBC News Viewpoint*, August 27, 2004.