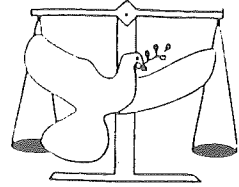


World Court Project

Bulletin No. 2

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Seeking to outlaw nuclear arms

by The Very Reverend John Murray

THE WORLD Court Project is a new dimension in people's desire for peace.

Rather than leave it to the politicians alone, we are calling on law, international law, to protect the life of the planet by eliminating nuclear weapons.

As a just and peaceful society in our own country depends on the law, so it is on the global scene.

Who would legalise biological and chemical weapons?

Yet nuclear weapons, equally if not more indiscriminate and devastating, have not yet been banned by international law or convention.

We are asking the UN General Assembly to seek an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice "on the legality or illegality of the use or threat to use nuclear weapons".

If a ruling in favour of illegality can be achieved it will be a milestone step that will then have to be followed by the negotiations of nuclear and non-nuclear nations working for an International Convention for the elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Disarmament Minister signals likely support for UN resolution

Disarmament Minister Doug Graham suggested the Government would support a United Nations resolution calling for the legality of nuclear weapons to be tested in the World Court.

Speaking at the presentation of 20,106 "declarations of public conscience" at the Beehive on Tuesday, September 28, Mr Graham said the resolution is being drafted "and I don't think that there will be much doubt that New Zealand will support it".

Mr Graham said nuclear weapons were a worry for most people around the world, although some countries have so many difficulties of their own that international causes tend to pass them by.

"When that occurs I think it is even more important that countries such as ours take up the challenge and are heard...It seems to me the time to make a move has certainly arrived."

The Minister said the initiative to seek a judicial ruling on the use or threat to use nuclear weapons was unusual, "but the cause is so great that we should never turn down any initiative which is sensible, rational and constructive."

The UN resolution is due to be tabled by co-sponsoring and supporting nations on October 18. The resolution will request the International Court of

Justice to urgently advise on the following questions:

1. Is the use of nuclear weapons permitted under international law?
2. Is the threat of use of nuclear weapons permitted under international law?

The resolution is expected to be voted on during the first week of December.

Accepting the 20,106 declarations, which reinforce the resolution's message, Mr Graham said they were an expression of democracy at its best. He paid a special tribute to Harold Evans.

"I'm well aware of the initiative that he brought to this and the many hours and sometimes difficult times that he would have had in engendering enthusiasm at the beginning and then bringing it to this stage."

The project has already gathered millions of declarations of public conscience around the world which are scheduled to be presented to the United Nations on October 27.

Doctors, lawyers, women's organisations, peace groups and the main Churches were represented at the Beehive presentation, along with about 150 supporters.

Representatives and speakers included Sonja Davies, Archbishop Brian Davis, Pauline Tangiora and Dr George Salmond.

A proud day for small nations

Professor Bernard Lown, Co-President of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, of Boston USA, was interviewed by Kathryn Asare on *Newstalk 2ZB* on Monday, September 27. He has some special things to say about recent developments and the New Zealand contribution.

Interviewer (Kathryn Asare): Doctors are the ones who pick up the pieces when things go dreadfully wrong. One way in which the world can go dreadfully wrong is a nuclear war. And those doctors who put their money where their mouths are and have put their feelings first are the doctors who've signed up for Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. Professor Bernard Lown was right there at the beginning. Professor Lown, your work is now coming to fruition with your presentation to the United Nations, can you tell us what is going to happen at the UN

shortly?

Lown: What is going to happen is an attempt to bring the issue of illegalising the use of nuclear weapons for a vote in the General Assembly and thus follows very important action at the World Health Organisation in May.

Asare: Are you currently at the United Nations?

Lown: No, I'm currently in Boston actually getting ready to go to Mexico for our 11th world congress that begins this week.

Asare: What is the extent of support by doctors around the world for this movement?

Lown: We have at the present about 200,000 members in 78 [nations].

Asare: And what is the actual statement that will be voted on by the United Nations?

Lown: The statement is right now being introduced by a number of nations reflecting the need for the elimination of nuclear weapons in the arsenal of nations—and this is something that we have fought for over a long time.

The issue is really very important because what is not realised is that pro-

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Labour wants NZ to co-sponsor resolution

The Opposition's disarmament spokesperson, Chris Laidlaw, in an interview for Radio New Zealand on Wednesday, September 29, said if Labour were the Government after the election it would co-sponsor a UN resolution calling for the legality of nuclear weapons to be tested in the World Court.

"We want to see New Zealand not just support the resolution in a rather luke-warm way, which is what is most likely to happen. We want to seek co-sponsorship," said Mr Laidlaw.

"This is an opportunity for New Zealand to take the whole disarmament debate one big step forward, and we should be right up front."

He said Labour would support the initiative unreservedly and would co-sponsor the resolution if they won the election and the timing is right.

"We have absolutely no hesitation about it. It is sound, and... We want to see whether the Government will go with it."

Support from Sir Geoffrey Palmer

An extract from a letter to the World Court Project from former Prime Minister Sir Geoffrey Palmer:

In the past New Zealand has been on the receiving end of unlawful international actions by other nations. It is in the interests of all New Zealanders to ensure that there is a strong international legal system that protects the smaller nations from the might of the larger ones.

The request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legality of the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons is a project which New Zealand should support...

An authoritative legal ruling... will contribute to a stable and peaceful future for the world.

Professor Sir Geoffrey Palmer
University of Iowa, USA. 20.9.93.

Spreading the word...

The World Court Project has developed into a massive international movement since its origins in Christchurch in 1986. With the "declarations of public conscience" due to be presented to the UN on October 27, the initiative is entering a crucial stage.

It is as important as ever now to spread the word about the aims of the project, to raise people's awareness of what is at stake, and to con-

tinue to debate the issues.

To this end, the World Court Project would be very keen to assist any groups with facilitation of meetings, providing speakers and providing more information.

Enquires should be addressed to:
World Court Project,
PO Box 5203,
Wellington. Tel. [04] 472 9211 or
PO Box 4110,
Auckland. Tel. [09] 373 23790

A step towards peace

Cont'd from page 2

liferation is going on right now. The threshold for using nuclear weapons is becoming diminished, as became evident in the Iraq war and the recent warning to North Korea from US President Bill Clinton.

It is also becoming clear by the type of weaponry being developed, namely micro and macro nukes which are very small tactical nuclear weapons intended for use in the Third World.

[The United States] has always justified the use of nuclear weaponry using the argument that American lives could be saved. That was the argument presented at the time of the Gulf War.

We doctors have taken our struggle to the World Health Organisation in the hope that the WHO will take the issue to the World Court for a ruling about the illegality of use, which is a first step to illegalising possession. New Zealand doctors played a key role in initiating this whole venture.

What is so fascinating to me is that we did not think we had a chance to succeed, since it created a division. The debate divided the affluent from the developing nations.

Asare: What do you mean?

Lown: The affluent nations - the nations of the north - supported the American position by and large. The United States, Britain, France, Russia (now an ally), China and most of the Nato countries thought, as happened last year, this would be a routine matter that they'd dispense with rapidly. They thought they would have no problem because invariably the developing world is held hostage by poverty and misery to the funds that WHO provides — 25% comes from the United States. So therefore they never dared to speak out on such issues publicly.

"It is a long struggle but it's a first step - an indispensable one"

But the doctors planned well. They lobbied everybody. They stiffened the backbone of representatives from the developing world. It was a fascinating David and Goliath struggle. Zambia, Mexico, Vanuatu and Tonga initiated the debate.

Most moving was that Hilda Leni, the Minister of Health of that little tiny speck in the Pacific, Vanuatu, spoke passionately on behalf of all of humanity and against the mighty colossus of the North. We prevailed because we insisted that there be a secret ballot. And the moment there was a secret

ballot, the decision was preordained because we knew exactly how everybody felt.

Asare: Supposing you are successful and ultimately you get the ruling that nuclear weapons are illegal, what then?

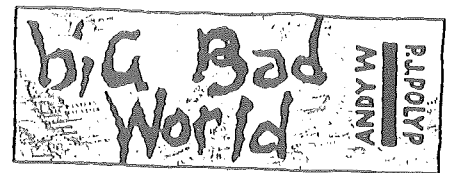
Lown: Well, you know, as a doctor you hope to ameliorate the patient. Sometimes you cannot get an immediate cure but you have to assuage pain.

In this case it is a very important step that creates a moral climate globally. If, as the United States and other countries insist, we must have a world of law, then a law must prevail in relation to these weapons because there cannot continue to be nuclear apartheid.

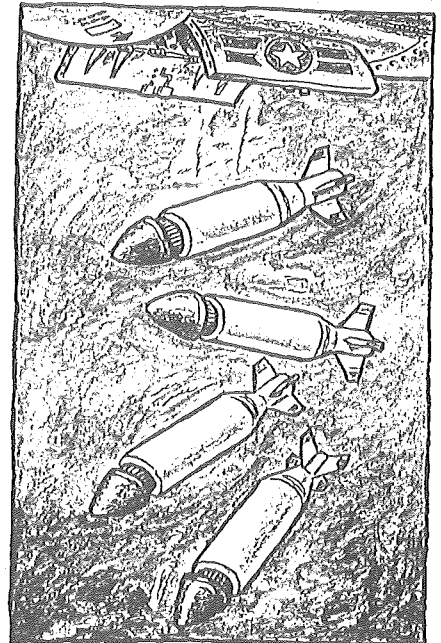
Either everybody has nuclear weapons or nobody's permitted to possess them. And if this is acted by the United Nations, we begin to create a culture which makes weapons of genocide abhorrent to humanity. It's a long struggle but it's a first step — an indispensable one.

Asare: Professor Lown, we'll watch that first step with great interest. And we wish you all the best.

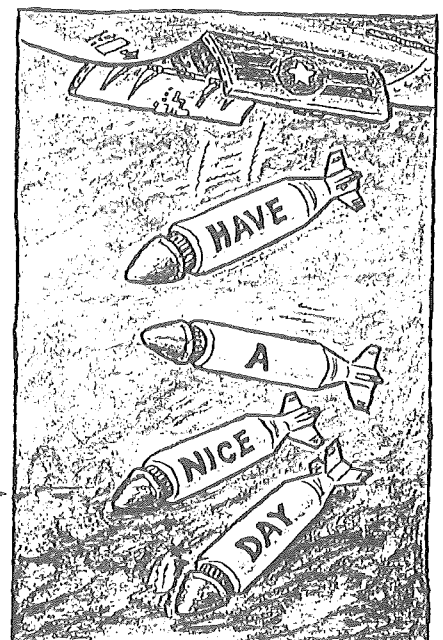
Lown: Thank you so much and convey my good wishes to all our wonderful New Zealand colleagues.



OLD WORLD ORDER



NEW WORLD ORDER



Overseas views

from *Medicine and War* Vol. 9, 89-90 (1993)

A Nuclear Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?

Public Discussion of these areas is called for.

A meeting examining above questions was held by the British Pugwash group at the Royal Society on 11 December, 1992.

Robert McNamara (a former United States Secretary of Defence) neatly defined nuclear deterrence as "a plan of making the world safe for conventional war" but his theme was "Nuclear Weapons after the Cold War."

In his view, human fallibility plus nuclear weapons made nuclear war inevitable; ergo, a non-nuclear world is essential. McNamara presented a fascinating historical survey of the cold war, in particular the Cuban missile crisis, when we came far closer to dis-

aster than was suspected at the time.

His point was that nuclear weapons were political symbols with little rational military purpose (as other "insiders" at the meeting were to confirm).

The destructiveness of modern weaponry - conventional as well as nuclear - rules out their use as instruments of policy. The path ahead must be the "delegitimising" of large-scale war.

Lord Zuckerman supported the main speakers and stated "Experience shows that we have to proceed slowly but deliberately; for example, the moratorium on nuclear testing must be maintained."

News Update

RNZ News, 28 September

President Clinton calls for halt to spread of nuclear weapons

President Clinton has outlined new measures his administration plans to adopt to help stop nuclear proliferation. Making his first speech to the UN General Assembly, the President said action must be taken to prevent the build-up of nuclear weapons, especially in unstable regions.

"We will pursue new steps to control the materials for nuclear weapons," he said.

"Growing global stockpiles of plutonium and highly enriched uranium are raising the danger of nuclear terrorism for all nations. We will press for an international agreement that would ban production of these materials for weap-

ons production forever."

President Clinton also renewed a call for a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing and for nations to ratify an International Chemical Weapons Convention.

RNZ News, 30 September

China wants nuclear weapons destroyed

China's Foreign Minister Qian Qi Chen addressed the UN General Assembly on September 30 calling for the total destruction of all nuclear weapons and an early start to the talks for a nuclear test ban treaty.

He said now that biological and chemical weapons were banned, the prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons should be next on the agenda.

The Minister said China supports an early start of negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

Support from Gorbachev

Mikhail Gorbachev has given his "wholehearted and unequivocal support" to the initiative made by the WHO in appealing to the World Court to issue an advisory opinion on the legality of using nuclear weapons.

In a letter to the Secretary-General of the International Peace Bureau, Colin Archer, on September 14, Mr Gorbachev said he had long held the view that nuclear weapons must be banned and destroyed.

"The gradual proliferation of nuclear weaponry makes the question of banning and destroying it even more pressing.

"I support the idea of an appeal to the International Court of Justice at The Hague being made through the United Assembly and wish you great success with your venture," said Mr Gorbachev.

"The Gorbachev Foundation will continue to work to guarantee global security and for the banning and destruction of nuclear weapons."

Action needed

The World Court Project urges concerned people to write to the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Jim Bolger; the Deputy Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Don McKinnon; and the Minister for Disarmament, Hon. Douglas Graham, pointing out that the Government's apparent intention to support the UN resolution is a welcome move but that New Zealand could strengthen the cause by going one step further and co-sponsor the resolution.

Acknowledgement

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Campaign donations can be sent to: World Court Project, PO Box 5203, Wellington; or World Court Project, PO Box 4110, Auckland