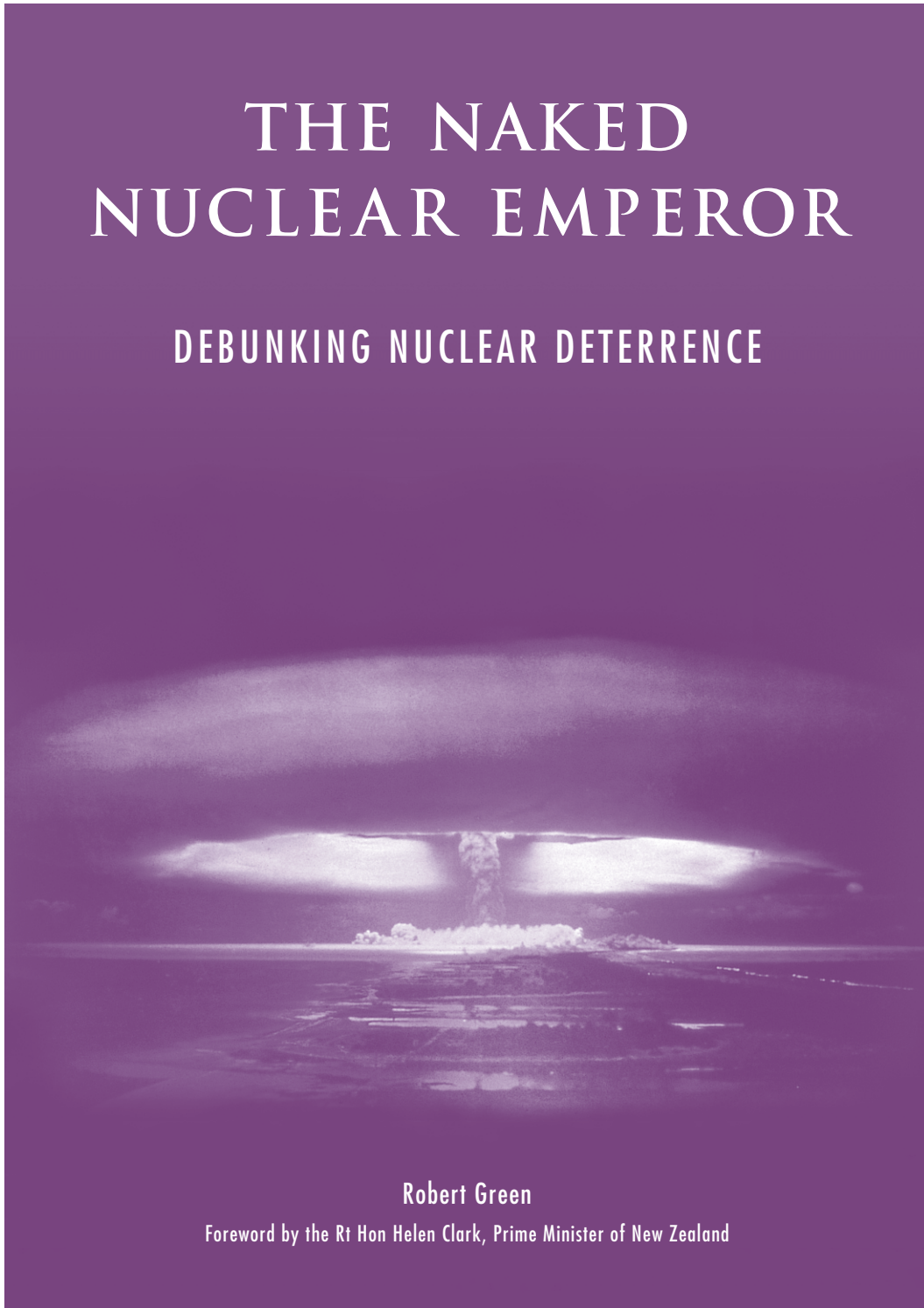


RE-THINKING NUCLEAR DETERRENCE

Summary of Arguments from

THE NAKED NUCLEAR EMPEROR

DEBUNKING NUCLEAR DETERRENCE



Robert Green

Foreword by the Rt Hon Helen Clark, Prime Minister of New Zealand

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CONTENTS

PREFACE	2	MORALITY	11
		A fundamental moral deception	11
DEFINITIONS	3	If nuclear deterrence fails	11
What is deterrence?	3	Nub of the moral argument	11
What is needed for it to work?	3		
What is so different about nuclear deterrence?	3	LEGALITY	12
Mutual Assured Destruction	3	If nuclear deterrence is immoral, why is it not illegal?	12
Flexible Response	3	The 1996 World Court Advisory Opinion	12
Launch-on-Warning	3	UK <i>Trident</i> and the Law	13
Minimum Deterrence	3		
Self-Deterrence	4	SAFER SECURITY STRATEGIES	14
Extended Deterrence	4	The way back from the abyss	14
Existential Deterrence	4	New Zealand shows the way	15
Nuclear Winter	4	What if terrorists try nuclear blackmail?	15
		Security does not need nuclear deterrence	16
PRACTICALITY	5	Strengthening self-deterrence	16
Nuclear deterrence lacks credibility	5	Conventional deterrence is less dangerous and more credible	16
Does nuclear deterrence prevent war between nuclear-armed states?	5	Converting US <i>Trident</i> to conventional armament	17
Nuclear deterrence stimulates perpetual hostility and mistrust	5	Conventionally armed UK <i>Trident</i> ?	17
Nuclear deterrence creates instability	6	Stand down nuclear forces from alert	18
Problems of self-deterrence	6	Urgently negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention	18
Dangers of “sub-strategic” nuclear deterrence	7	Promote “nuclear-free umbrellas”	19
Why the US should worry about UK “sub-strategic” nuclear deterrence	7	From nuclear deterrence to non-provocative defence	21
Risks of extended nuclear deterrence	8	A non-nuclear strategy for NATO	21
Escalation is inevitable	8	Application to other US allies	22
Nuclear deterrence against chemical and biological weapon attacks	8	How to stop someone cheating	23
Nuclear deterrence undermines security	9		
Would it work against a paranoid regime?	9	CONCLUSION	24
Terrorists are undeterrable	9		
Launch-on-warning is irresponsible	9	USEFUL WEBSITES	
Nuclear deterrence provokes proliferation	10		
Nuclear deterrence threatens democracy	10		

PREFACE

Since publishing my book *The Naked Nuclear Emperor: Debunking Nuclear Deterrence* in April 2000, the debate over nuclear deterrence has experienced a revival. However, the credit for this must surely go to George W. Bush. He is the first United States President publicly to doubt that nuclear deterrence would work against what he sees as the greatest threat to Americans: extremists armed with weapons of mass destruction intent on blackmailing the US. What is more, both his Vice-President and Secretary of State are known to have rejected the use of nuclear weapons against Iraqi forces in the Gulf War.

The horrific terror attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 have injected a new sense of urgency into this debate. The perpetrators were not deterred by the massive US nuclear arsenal. Moreover, nuclear weapons are worse than useless in dealing with this immediate and dire threat to US security. If we are to minimise the risk of nuclear weapons being used, then the persisting addiction to the dogma of nuclear deterrence must be challenged.

I served in the British Royal Navy from 1962–82. As a Fleet Air Arm Observer (Bombardier-Navigator), I flew in Buccaneer carrier-borne nuclear strike aircraft (1968–72) with a target on the outskirts of St Petersburg, then in anti-submarine helicopters equipped with nuclear depth-bombs (1972–77).

On promotion to Commander, I spent 1978–80 in the Ministry of Defence in London as Personal Staff Officer to the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Policy), an Admiral who was closely involved in recommending the replacement for the *Polaris* ballistic missile submarine force. My final appointment was as Staff Officer (Intelligence) to Commander-in-Chief Fleet at Northwood HQ near London, in charge of round-the-clock intelligence support for *Polaris* as well as the rest of the Fleet. Having taken voluntary redundancy in 1981, I was released after the Falklands War.

Prime Minister Thatcher's decision to replace *Polaris* with *Trident* against naval advice was one reason I left the Royal Navy. The break-up of the Soviet Union followed by the Gulf War caused me to speak out against nuclear weapons. In 1991, I became UK Chair of the World Court Project, an international citizens' initiative which successfully campaigned for the UN General Assembly to request an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice, which the Court delivered in July 1996. As co-coordinator with my wife, Dr Kate Dewes, of the New Zealand Peace Foundation's Disarmament & Security Centre, I am now using my military experience to promote more enlightened thinking about security and disarmament, and build bridges between the military and the peace movement.

Arguing against nuclear deterrence, especially where soundbites are required, is not easy. I had hoped that my book would provide an adequate quick reference backed up by authoritative notes. However, there is a need for a more concise summary in which the presentation is sharpened and compressed, but which can be amplified by reference to the main book (www.disarmsecure.org). This is the result.

Robert Green
Christchurch
New Zealand

October 2001

DEFINITIONS

What is Deterrence?

Deterrence aims, by some form of **threat**, to prevent unwanted action by an opponent by convincing them that the cost would exceed any gain. There are two common versions:

- 1) Deterrence by prospect of **denial** – the traditional version is threatening damage to the opponent's military efforts and thus the gains to be made by war.
- 2) Deterrence by prospect of **punishment** – the primary role of **nuclear** deterrence, whereby unacceptable damage is threatened to the opponent's society following any military attack.

What is needed for it to work?

The opponent must **perceive** that their action would result in unacceptable damage to their interests. This requires the following conditions:

- Both sides must **share similar values** so that the intended threat is perceived as such.
- The threat must itself be **credible**.
- There must be **reliable communication** between the sides.

What is so different about *nuclear* deterrence?

There is an almost unimaginable step change in both the **destructive power** and poisonous, persisting **after-effects** of nuclear weapons over conventional munitions. Consequences of threatening use of nuclear weapons include:

- Unacceptable damage extending beyond the opponent's territory, with the potential to affect the entire planet (see **nuclear winter**).
- Inevitable damage to **civilians and all other forms of life**, if not directly then through environmental damage from radioactive fallout.

Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)

Until the Soviet Union built enough nuclear devices, United States (US) nuclear deterrence policy was to threaten **assured destruction** of enough Soviet cities and other civilian ("**counter-value**") targets as punishment for any conventional aggression.

As the nuclear arms race gathered pace in the 1950s in response to this US policy, the scale of threatened destruction rose and became mutual. In response to deployment of "**counter-force**" ballistic missiles which could destroy retaliatory systems in a pre-emptive **first strike**, both sides deployed a relatively invulnerable, devastating **second strike** force based in nuclear-powered submarines. **Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)** was buttressed by the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which largely prohibits deployment of defensive systems.

Flexible Response

By the mid-1960s, MAD's **lack of credibility** as a deterrent to lower levels of provocation had been widely recognised. The doctrine of **Flexible Response** was therefore adopted by NATO, whereby less destructive **sub-strategic** or **tactical** nuclear weapons were deployed, to deter by denial, as an **interim step** before escalating to deterrence by punishment with massive strategic nuclear weapons. The implied flexibility relates not to **whether** to escalate, but to **when**.

Launch-on-Warning

Fear that a first strike could "**decapitate**" the **centre of decision-making** drove both the US and Soviet Union to develop a "**launch-on-warning**" capability. This means that each side is at about 15 minutes' notice to launch over 2,000 strategic nuclear weapons before the other side's first strike arrives. Over ten years after the end of the Cold War, both the US and Russia persist with this **reckless "hair-trigger" alert state**, which is a direct result of following nuclear deterrence doctrine.

Minimum Deterrence

All current nuclear arsenals threaten massively indiscriminate destruction and poisonous after-effects. However, China, the United Kingdom (UK) and France claim that their much smaller arsenals would cause enough assured destruction to be credible. This is known as "**minimum deterrence**", which encompasses whatever level of capability that states consider is necessary. Thus, the UK defines its *Trident* submarine force as a "minimum deterrent", despite the fact that it represents a major **increase** in nuclear firepower over the *Polaris* force it replaced, at a time when the Russian capability markedly **declined**.

Self-Deterrence

NATO's 1999 Strategy Concept states that it continues to deploy some sub-strategic nuclear weapons as "an essential element in ensuring that no nuclear-armed aggressor could gamble on us being **self-deterred** by fear of an inevitable strategic exchange."



Photo: Gil Hanly

Extended Deterrence

This is when a nuclear weapon state extends its so-called "**nuclear umbrella**" to cover the territories of its non-nuclear allies. Examples include the 16 non-nuclear NATO member states, Japan, South Korea and Australia covered by the US; and Belarus covered by Russia.

Existential Deterrence

This is where a nuclear state does **not deploy** any weapons, but simply announces that its arsenal exists and demonstrates that it has the **ability** to deliver it. Examples include India and Pakistan, while Israel uses a form of it combined with ambiguity about whether it has an arsenal.

Nuclear Winter

In 1983, the distinguished US scientist Carl Sagan co-authored a report on the outcome of several computer models which considered the global effects of a war in which less than 1% of the world's nuclear arsenals were exploded over cities. It was found that smoke from fires alone would cause an **epoch of cold and dark worldwide**, where average land cooling beneath the smoke clouds could reach 10-20 degrees C and continental interiors could cool by up to 20-40 degrees, with subzero temperatures possible even in summer. This would mean that a strategic nuclear attack would be **suicidal for the aggressor**, because collapse of agriculture would lead to famine.

PRACTICALITY

Deterrence was our shield and, by extension, our sword. The nuclear priesthood extolled its virtues and bowed to its demands. Allies yielded to its dictates, even while decrying its risks and costs. We brandished it at our enemies and presumed they embraced its suicidal corollary of mutual assured destruction. We ignored, discounted, or dismissed its flaws and even today we cling to the belief that it remains relevant in a world whose security architecture has been transformed. General Lee Butler USAF (Ret), 1997

Timid critics of nuclear weapons often claim that *the only apparent military utility that remains for nuclear weapons is in deterring their use by others*. However, this is **unsustainable** for the following reasons, which constitute the in-built contradictions and dynamics of nuclear deterrence – which therefore **cannot be relied upon to work**.

Nuclear deterrence lacks credibility

For deterrence to work, those to be deterred must be **convinced** that the deterrent force can and will be used, and will be effective. Furthermore, the deterrer must have reasonable confidence that the force can be used without unacceptable penalties. However, nuclear threats against nuclear adversaries capable of a retaliatory second strike **lack credibility**, because only an **irrational** leader would execute them. The credibility problem also features strongly in self-deterrence, “sub-strategic” deterrence, extended deterrence, nuclear deterrence against chemical or biological weapon attacks, and nuclear deterrence against extremists.

Does nuclear deterrence prevent war between nuclear-armed states?

First, this **unprovable** assertion is threatened by the current **irresponsible** and **unnecessary hair-trigger alert** status of US and Russian strategic nuclear forces. Second, the US atrocities at Hiroshima and Nagasaki only **reinforced a consensus** from the carnage of World War II that war between major states was no longer a rational instrument of policy, and must be avoided at almost any cost.

It is conventional wisdom in the West that nuclear weapons kept the peace during forty years of Cold War. It is also widely believed that in adopting a policy of nuclear deterrence, we suffered no harm. Neither claim is supported by the evidence, and the second belief is dangerously wrong. Michael MccGwire, 1996

Nevertheless, in the 1962 **Cuban missile crisis** the illusions of nuclear deterrence meant that nuclear war was only avoided by **luck**, with both sides **miscalculating** the other’s nuclear deployments and plans.

Nuclear weapons did not and will not, of themselves, prevent major wars, and their presence unnecessarily prolonged and intensified the Cold War. General Lee Butler, 2000

What now constrains modern industrialised states from going to war with each other is their increasing **interdependence** through multinational corporations and the globalisation of trade – and their growing **sensitivity to public opinion** associated with risk of casualties and instant media coverage.

The undeniable, overriding reality is that nuclear weapons **make nuclear war possible** – and major nuclear war has the **unique capacity** to destroy civilisation and most of life on Earth.

The assertion that nuclear deterrence prevents war offers no evidence for the corollary, that there would have been a war if there were only conventional weapons. More seriously, it is an **incitement to proliferation** – witness India and Pakistan. Yet their nuclear weapons have not stopped them pursuing limited conventional war – which **now could “go nuclear”** in a moment of stress, mis-calculation or imminent defeat. Their proximity high-lights the perils and impracticalities of nuclear deterrence.

Nuclear deterrence stimulates perpetual hostility and mistrust

An intrinsic, inescapable characteristic of nuclear deterrence is that it stimulates a state of hostility and mistrust. By inhibiting co-operation in promoting true security, it is also **self-perpetuating**.

Such a hostile deterrence relationship can have **unpredictable consequences**. Because of India and Pakistan's history of wars launched for pride or fear relating to religious and territorial disputes, mutual survivability of nuclear forces might have the effect of **attracting** them again to war. There is a **fine line between deterrence and provocation**.

Nuclear deterrence creates instability

The expression "stable nuclear deterrence" is a **contradiction in terms**. There are two forms of instability caused by nuclear deterrence: through **arms racing**, and through **creating or exacerbating crises**.



Miniature nose-cones represent the 25,000 warheads in the US nuclear arsenal in the early 1980s. There are now an estimated 30,000 nuclear weapons in all the arsenals of the nuclear states.
Amber Waves of Grain: Barbara Donachy. (Photo: Robert del Tredici)

*Deterrence failed completely as a guide for setting rational limits on the size and composition of forces. The **appetite of deterrence was voracious**, its capacity to justify new weapons and large stocks unrestrained... I saw the arms race from the inside, watched as intercontinental ballistic missiles ushered in mutual assured destruction and multiple-warhead missiles introduced genuine fear of a nuclear first strike. I was responsible for nuclear war plans with more than 12,000 targets, many of which would have been struck with repeated nuclear blows.*

General Lee Butler, 1998

The prime example of crisis instability is the 1962 **Cuban missile crisis**. Nuclear deterrence encourages both sides to adopt a **high alert** state early in a serious crisis, to discourage the other side from pre-empting – thereby increasing the risk of accidental nuclear war.

The most extreme current example of instability in **both forms** is between **India, Pakistan and China**. Pakistan is heavily disadvantaged with respect to India's conventional military strength. This asymmetry is unaffected by India's claim to be developing a "minimum deterrent", because India's minimum will be assessed with respect to **China**, not Pakistan. If the US persists in developing a Theatre Missile Defense system with Japan and Taiwan, China will be driven to counter it by expanding its nuclear arsenal. Inevitably, India's minimum will therefore always exceed Pakistan's.

Until Pakistan builds a survivable second strike capability (if it can afford one), it will be faced with a "**use them or lose them**" situation in the face of India's ability to launch a **decapitating** strike. Meanwhile, if India succeeds in its announced plan to build its own second strike capability which can reach key Chinese targets, then China may well explore an **even closer nuclear relationship** with Pakistan.

These developments mean a **nuclear arms race amid severe political tension** in South Asia, with increasing probability of accidents and misunderstandings as the Kashmir crisis festers. This means **deepening instability**, with nuclear deterrence playing a central role.

Problems of self-deterrence

The NATO nuclear weapon states threaten a "sub-strategic" (ie less destructive) "demonstration" nuclear strike in

defence of their “vital interests” anywhere against a chemical or biological weapon attack, because a strategic strike would not be credible. However, even a sub-strategic strike would so outrage world opinion that it would be **self-defeating**. Hence a rational nuclear weapon state leader **would probably be self-deterred** in this first vital escalatory level of nuclear deterrence doctrine.

For a nuclear state facing defeat by a non-nuclear state, there is evidence that nuclear weapons are again self-detering. The US in Korea and Vietnam, and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, preferred withdrawal to the **ultimate ignominy of resorting to nuclear revenge**.

Dangers of “sub-strategic” nuclear deterrence

Despite, and because of, the **self-deterrence** problem, current NATO nuclear deterrence doctrine still relies initially on the threatened use of “sub-strategic” or “tactical” nuclear weapons.

I have never been able to accept the reasons for the belief that any class of nuclear weapons can be categorised in terms of their tactical or strategic purposes.

Admiral of the Fleet Earl Mountbatten, 1979

Meanwhile, mirroring NATO’s justification in the Cold War, **Russia** has revived its dependence on its vast arsenal of sub-strategic nuclear weapons to compensate for its conventional military inferiority. **Sub-strategic nuclear weapons, therefore, would be the first and most likely ones to be used.** This introduces **three more dangers**:

- 1) The fantasy that nuclear weapons could be used for counter-proliferation or **war-fighting**.
- 2) The temptation to **lower the nuclear threshold**.
- 3) Almost inevitable, **uncontrollable escalation** to full-scale nuclear war.

This in turn encourages “**escalation dominance**”, where the deterrer deliberately escalates the conflict to show sufficient resolve to deter the opponent from continuing. That risks the opponent **mis-perceiving** deterrence as offensive and provocative, and intensifies a nuclear arms race.

No matter how small these nuclear payloads were, we would be crossing a threshold. Using nukes at this point would mark one of the most significant political and military decisions since Hiroshima. The Russians would certainly retaliate, maybe escalate. At that moment, the world’s heart was going to skip a beat. From that day on, I began rethinking the practicality of these small nuclear weapons.

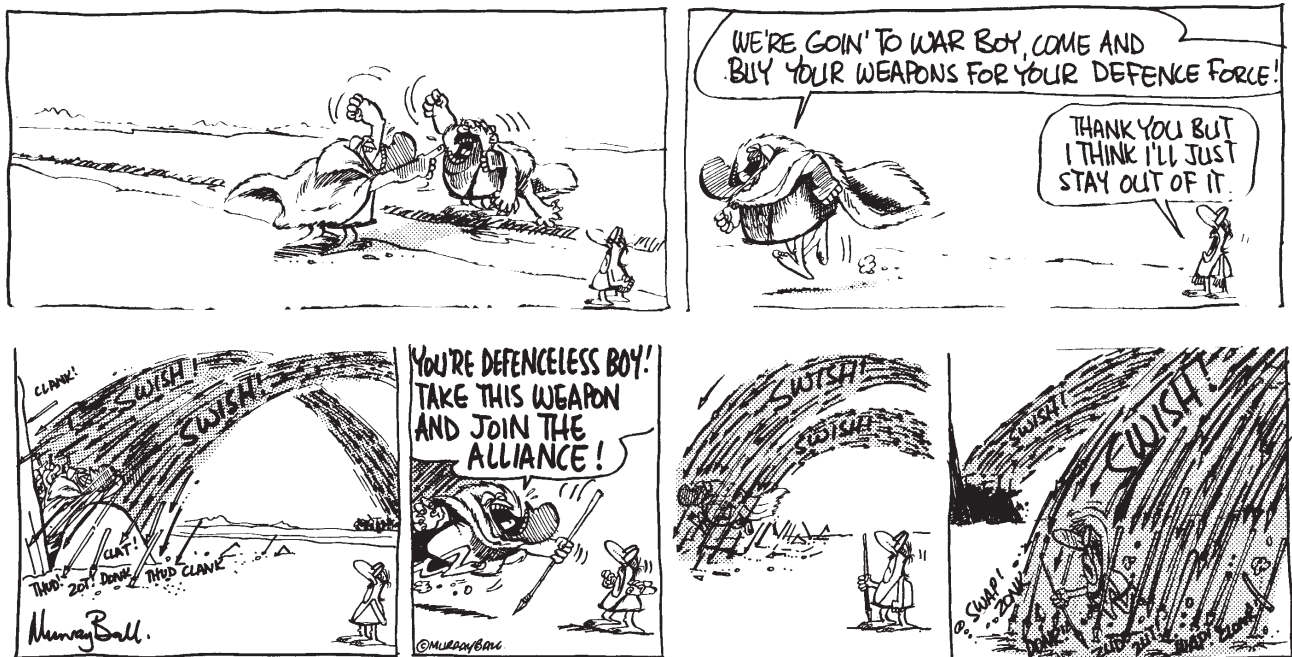
Current US Secretary of State Colin Powell, 1995

Why the US should worry about UK “sub-strategic” nuclear deterrence

With four *Vanguard* class *Trident* ballistic missile-equipped submarines now the sole delivery system for the UK nuclear arsenal, the UK government claims an added sub-strategic capability by stating (without further explanation) that it has a “degree of flexibility in the choice of yield for the warheads on its *Trident* missiles.”

There is a risk that use of a UK *Trident* missile would be **misidentified as a US *Trident* launch**. Also, it is **difficult to distinguish the sub-strategic from the strategic threat** in the perceptions of the potential aggressor. The **range** of the system is the same in both cases; there is **no identification** of the platform with a particular piece of territory and therefore no evidence of commitment; and there is no indication to surveillance systems on launch that an attack is sub-strategic. For that one must **count the number of detonations**.

The US should also worry that the UK might use *Trident* without US approval. In the 1982 **Falklands War**, rumours abounded that a UK *Polaris* nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarine was moved out of range of Moscow and **within range of Buenos Aires**. If Argentine aircraft had sunk one of the troopships before the landing force had got ashore, the British might have been forced to withdraw or risk defeat. What would Prime Minister Thatcher have done? *Polaris* had clearly **not deterred** Argentina’s President Galtieri from invading. With victory in his grasp, it is doubtful that he would have believed even Thatcher would have seriously threatened a nuclear strike on Argentina. If she had, Galtieri would have very publicly **called her bluff** and relished watching President Reagan trying to rein her in.



Courtesy Murray Ball, reproduced from 'Stanley' (1982)

Risks of extended nuclear deterrence

A nuclear weapon state providing a so-called “nuclear umbrella” risks being pushed through the nuclear threshold **when its own security is not directly threatened** – hence the **credibility** problem. In the increasingly probable event that extended deterrence fails, the “nuclear umbrella” becomes a **“lightning rod” for catastrophic insecurity**, because of the near-certainty of rapid, uncontrollable **escalation** to full-scale nuclear exchange.

Escalation is inevitable

Both sub-strategic and extended nuclear deterrence entail a **huge risk**. Admiral of the Fleet Earl Mountbatten said in 1979: *I can see no use for any nuclear weapons which would not end in escalation*. One main reason for this would be that **managing nuclear war would be very difficult** because of degraded communications, not least from **electromagnetic pulse** effects of nuclear detonations.

Nuclear deterrence against chemical and biological weapon attacks

The extreme dangers of threatening to use nuclear weapons in retaliation against attacks with chemical or biological weapons (CBW) include:

- The nuclear explosion would create and disperse massive amounts of **fallout**.
- Any chemicals or biological toxins not destroyed in the blast could be dispersed.

- Any state with CBW is unlikely to store them in one place. Thus any attempt to destroy them would require **several** nuclear weapons.
- Threatening to use a nuclear weapon would give that state the political and military **justification** to use its own weapons of mass destruction.

In a single act, we would martyr our enemies, alienate our friends, give comfort to the non-declared nuclear states and impetus to states who seek such weapons covertly.

General Lee Butler (on proposed US use of nuclear weapons against a CBW attack), 1998

Low-yield nuclear weapon ineffective against deeply buried target. A recent report by the Federation of American Scientists (www.fas.org) challenged US nuclear weapon laboratory claims that low-yield nuclear weapons could neutralise deeply buried targets. It cited tests with the currently operational “earth penetrator” variable yield B61-11 air-dropped bomb that it penetrated only 20 feet into dry earth. Moreover, **deeper penetration is impossible** because the weapon casing could not be made strong enough to withstand the impact and temperatures involved, and low-yield warheads are too sensitive to the massive shock. The report recommended that the latest

precision-guided conventional munitions be relied on instead, arguing that for example the GBU-37 guided bomb is capable of disabling targets formerly thought vulnerable only to nuclear attack.

Nuclear deterrence undermines security

Nuclear deterrence directly threatens the security of **both** those who depend on it and those it is meant to impress. Nuclear weapons are in fact a **security problem**, not a solution. They undermine a possessor's security by provoking the most likely and dangerous threat – **proliferation to undeterrable extremists**.

Would it work against a paranoid regime?

A fundamental difficulty is that the regime **might not** be deterred. The US National Defense University warned in 1998: *Deterrence based on a generically rational and sensible foe will not be adequate in the decades ahead.*

Was Iraq deterred in the Gulf War? Tariq Aziz, Iraq's Foreign Minister during the Gulf War, is often cited as admitting that fear of nuclear attack was why Iraq had not used its CBW arsenal.

However, there is evidence that he said this (in 1995) to **try to end UN sanctions** by claiming that Iraq was a victim of the US. **Rolf Ekeus**, head of the UN Special Commission investigating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction at the time (and to whom Aziz had made the claim), discovered that Iraq had deployed biological weapons to airfields in western Iraq shortly before the Allied air blitz began. It was then **caught off guard** by the speed and ferocity of the war: the destruction, especially of command and control systems, had probably prevented the mounting of a successful attack. Another major factor was **adverse weather**, with winds which would have carried CBW back over Iraqi ground forces, which were poorly equipped with defensive measures.

Moreover, as Colin Powell describes in his autobiography *A Soldier's Way*, both he and then Defence Secretary Dick Cheney **ruled out** using nuclear weapons in the Gulf War, so the US **now lacks credibility** in making any future threat.

Terrorists are undeterrable

As for nuclear-armed terrorists, former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said in 1969: *Nothing can deter an opponent bent on self-destruction.* The terror attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 were proof of this: nuclear deterrence was **irrelevant** in the most

devastating strikes at the heart of US financial and military power in history. Moreover, there was **no credible target** for a nuclear retaliatory threat. Thus, in the event of attempted nuclear blackmail, Special Forces using sophisticated **conventional** weapons are the most effective response if negotiations fail.

Launch-on-warning is irresponsible

Launch-on-warning:

- perpetuates **Cold War attitudes** and assumptions
- **needlessly** sustains the risk of **hair-trigger** postures
- **retards** the critical process of normalizing US-Russian relations
- sends the unmistakable and, from an arms control perspective, severely **damaging message** that nuclear weapons serve a vital security role

Russia feels **more vulnerable**, because lack of resources means that only two of its submarines are at sea on patrol at any time. What is more, its **early warning system has been degraded** with the break-up of the Soviet Union and technical problems – five of the eight radar stations which formed the Soviet system are now outside Russia.

Risk of **accidental launch** is real: in January 1995, the **world came close to it** when the Russians detected an unidentified ballistic missile over Norway possibly heading for Russia. For the first time, the Russian President's "nuclear briefcase" was activated. Disaster was averted by only a few minutes when the missile was reassessed as a harmless scientific rocket.

Our forces with their hair-trigger postures are effectively the same as they have been since the height of the Cold War.

General Lee Butler, 1999

Over ten years after the end of the Cold War, and when US President Bush says that "today Russia is not our enemy", it is **irresponsible** for the US and Russia to cling to launch-on-warning to **sustain the dogma** of nuclear deterrence at the expense of risking catastrophic damage to all humanity and the planet.

Nuclear deterrence provokes proliferation

India and Pakistan offer the most dramatic recent evidence of this. NATO's insistence that nuclear weapons are essential for its security cannot be excluded as a **primary motive** for India's and Pakistan's decision to go nuclear. **Iraq** could argue that US refusal to condemn Israel's nuclear arsenal justified its drive to acquire one.

In Israel there is frequent mention of the "Iranian and Iraqi danger", while ignoring the fact that it was Israel that introduced nuclear weapons to the Middle East in the first place, and created the legitimacy for other states in the region to obtain nuclear weapons.

Israeli politician Issam Makhoul, 2000

I was caught up in the holy war, inured to its costs and consequences, trusting in the assertions of the nuclear priesthood and the wisdom of my seniors... Emptied of any rational content, deterrence was reduced to a cheap carnival elixir, a rhetorical sleight of hand, deceptively packaged and oversold. General Lee Butler, 1996

Nuclear deterrence threatens democracy

Nuclear deterrence is about threatening the most indiscriminate violence possible, unrestrained by morality or the law. It is therefore the **antithesis of democratic values**. Also, democracy in a nation operating a nuclear deterrence policy is inevitably eroded by the need for secrecy and tight control of technology, equipment and personnel. The record shows almost zero **accountability** for every major nuclear weapon decision in the historically democratic nuclear weapon states (US, UK and France).

MORALITY

A fundamental moral deception

Nuclear deterrence entails a fundamental moral deception: using the **most immoral means** to achieve what the nuclear weapon states claim are highest moral ends. The associated stimulation of **perpetual hostility and mistrust** adds another layer of deception. To live by threats and menaces is evil: US international law expert Richard Falk calls it “**terrorist logic on the grandest scale imaginable**”.

If nuclear deterrence fails

Nuclear weapons are not weapons at all. They are devices which combine the **poisoning** horrors of chemical and biological weapons, plus **inter-generational effects unique to radioactivity**, with almost **unimaginable explosive violence**. In addition, the US and Soviet Union agreed with several reports in the early 1980s that a nuclear war would trigger a “**nuclear winter**”.

Nub of the moral argument

The basis of deterrence is **living by threats and menaces**, which is evil. If neighbours were found with loaded shotguns in their gardens with notices announcing their intention to use them if provoked, they would be charged with “issuing threats and menaces likely to lead to a breach of the peace”. For nuclear weapons, the analogy is that the neighbours have amassed enough **high explosive laced with anthrax** to blow up each other **plus the whole neighbourhood and make it uninhabitable for years**.

Nuclear deterrence cannot be right by any moral code. Jesus Christ in his Sermon on the Mount condemned “An eye for an eye”, and taught instead “Love your enemies”. Moreover, Christ made it clear that the intention and the threat are as wicked as the deed. Nuclear deterrence requires a **conditional intention to commit a monstrously evil act**.

In clinging to nuclear deterrence, the nuclear weapon states **place national sovereignty above the safety of the planet**, and **threaten a greater evil than they purport to prevent**, while they selfishly and irresponsibly pursue the chimera of total security for themselves and their allies. Moreover, they **pervert the truth** in claiming that this is necessary, when nuclear weapons are a pre-eminent and growing cause of national and global **insecurity**, and there are **safer alternatives**.

Nuclear deterrence as a national policy must be condemned as morally abhorrent.

US Pax Christi Bishops, 1998

This is above all a moral question... one of my heroes... General Omar Bradley, who said...having witnessed the aftermath of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: ‘We live in an age of nuclear giants and ethical infants, in a world that has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. We have solved the mystery of the atom and forgotten the lessons of the Sermon on the Mount. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about dying than we know about living.’ General Lee Butler, 1999

LEGALITY

If nuclear deterrence is immoral, why is it not illegal?

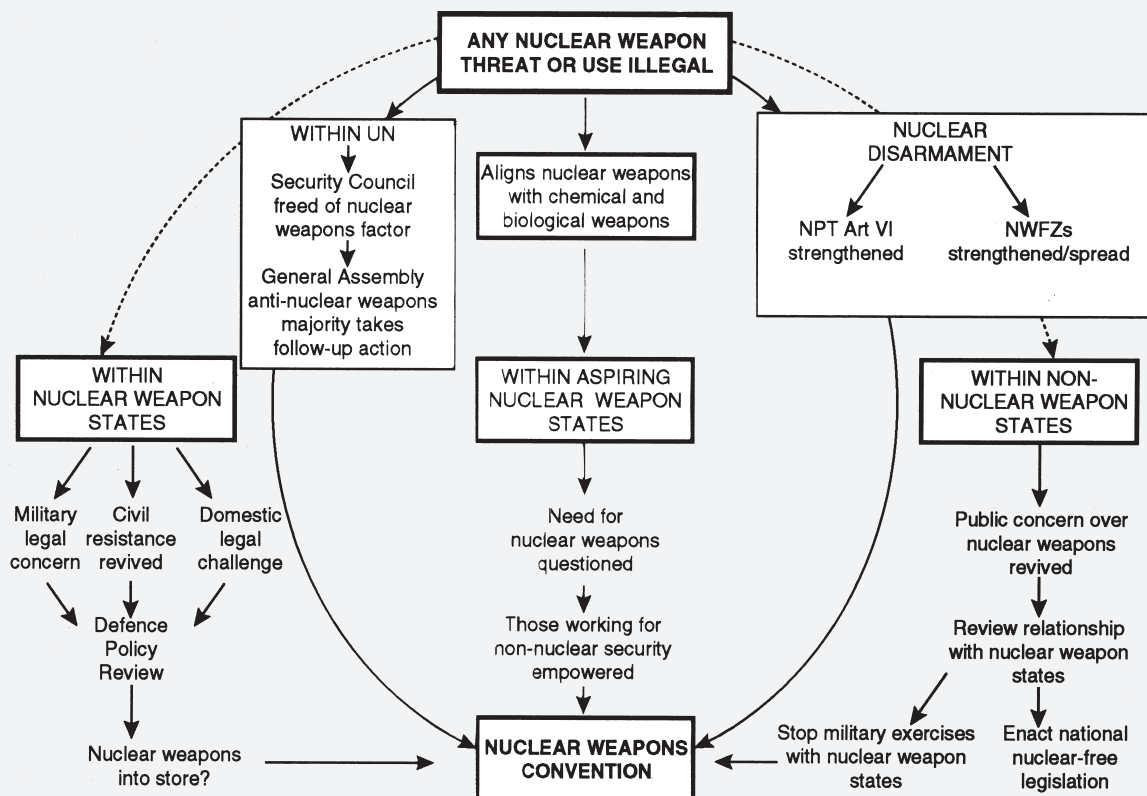
If nuclear deterrence is immoral, then it should also be illegal. Yet the nuclear weapon states have resisted – or blocked by, for example, abusing their UN Security Council veto – all initiatives to outlaw nuclear weapons.

Having accepted the outlawing of **chemical and biological weapons**, the nuclear weapon states must no longer be **allowed to get away with claiming** that their so-called “nuclear deterrent” is “consistent with international law”, when they know that **only nuclear weapons** could destroy all civilization and most forms of life on Earth.

The 1996 World Court Advisory Opinion

The 8 July 1996 Advisory Opinion by the International Court of Justice (or World Court) was a historic breakthrough by **implicitly condemning nuclear deterrence as illegal** (www.icj-cij.org). In confirming that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally breach international humanitarian law (of which the **Nuremberg Principles** are part), the Opinion has serious implications for all those involved in planning and deploying nuclear forces. This is because, unlike hired killers or terrorists, **military professionals** and their **political leaders must be seen to act within the law**.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF 1996 WORLD COURT ADVISORY OPINION



UK *Trident* and the Law

On 30 March 2001, the Scottish High Court released its opinion on questions relating to the acquittal in October 1999 of three women activists from the *Trident Ploughshares* non-violent direct action campaign, who cited the World Court Opinion in their defence (www.tridentploughshares.org). In what is seen as a **perverse judgment**, the Scottish High Court argued that international humanitarian law is not applicable in peacetime.

Deployment of UK *Trident* on so-called “deterrent patrol” is **illegal in peacetime** because:

- 1) The use of UK *Trident* nuclear weapons would be illegal in armed conflict, because the explosive power of each warhead (100 kilotons, equivalent to **8 times** the Hiroshima bomb) makes them **incapable of use** without violating international humanitarian law.
- 2) In its 1996 Advisory Opinion, the World Court concluded: *If the envisaged use of force is itself unlawful, the stated readiness to use it would be a threat prohibited under Article 2, paragraph 4 [of the UN Charter]. The UN Charter is applicable at all times*: thus the argument that international humanitarian law only applies in armed conflict is **irrelevant** with respect to threat of use. It is **only applicable to use**, when there is a situation of armed conflict.
- 3) UK *Trident* is deployed under a policy of **stated readiness to use**, in order that nuclear deterrence is credible.
- 4) **Nuremberg Principle VI** states: *The crimes hereinafter set out are punishable as crimes under international law: (a) Crimes against peace: (i) Planning, preparation... of a war... in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances; (ii) Participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the acts mentioned under (i).*



The International Court of Justice in session.

SAFER SECURITY STRATEGIES

We cannot sit in silent acquiescence to the faded homilies of the nuclear priesthood. It is time to reassert the primacy of individual conscience, the voice of reason and the rightful interests of humanity.

General Lee Butler, 1997

The way back from the abyss

To find a way back from the nuclear abyss, on the edge of which nuclear deterrence dogma has kept us hypnotised for fifty years, we need the leaders of the nuclear weapon states and their allies to make a **crucial shift** to a new mindset which understands that nuclear disarmament is a **security-building** process.

Incredibly, over **30,000** nuclear weapons remain: and as the World Court reminded us in 1996, **only they** have the potential to **destroy all civilization and the entire ecosystem** of the planet. In May 1998, a shocked world learned that its biggest democracy, **India**, had become a nuclear weapon state, followed by **Pakistan**, locked in a deadly dispute over Kashmir. Then NATO, already

expanding eastwards, intervened in the Balkans without UN Security Council approval, alienating both Russia and China.

Underlying and driving this **deepening crisis** in nuclear disarmament is an addiction to the dogma of nuclear

The leaders of the West expressed not a moment's outrage about terrorism directed by a government against opponents of nuclear deterrence.

Former Prime Minister David Lange 1990



'Rainbow Warrior' sunk by the French Government, 10 July 1985 (Photo: Gil Hanly)

deterrence. At the May 2000 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the nuclear weapon states gave an **unequivocal undertaking to get rid of their nuclear arsenals**. Despite this, the United States, United Kingdom and France – supported by their NATO allies plus key US allies Australia and Japan – cite nuclear deterrence as the **final, indispensable justification** for maintaining their nuclear arsenals for the foreseeable future. Alternatives must therefore be offered if there is to be any serious prospect of eliminating nuclear weapons.

New Zealand shows the way

New Zealand adopted **nuclear-free legislation** in 1987 (<http://canterbury.cyberplace.org.nz/peace/nukefree.html>). Uniquely, it prohibits both nuclear weapons from New Zealand and its territorial waters and airspace, and visits by nuclear-powered ships. In 1984, the newly-elected Labour government led by **David Lange** announced the nuclear-free policy, and that it would promote a South Pacific Nuclear Weapon Free Zone and renegotiate the Australia/New Zealand/US (ANZUS) security treaty to accommodate this.

With the US fearing that the “**Kiwi disease**” might spread to other allies such as Japan, Australia and the Philippines, New Zealand was demoted from US ally to “friend”; military cooperation under ANZUS was curtailed; the US and UK threatened trade, and officials were ostracised from the Western group in the UN. Yet the **government held firm**, bolstered by a massive mobilisation of public support by the peace movement in New Zealand and the US. The **French government’s terrorist bombing** of Greenpeace’s anti-nuclear flagship *Rainbow Warrior* in Auckland coincided in 1985 with the creation of a South Pacific Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. When the **Chernobyl** nuclear power plant exploded in 1986, the combination of these events ensured the passage into law of the Nuclear Free Act.

New Zealand’s relations with the US are now such that, in September 1999, President **Clinton** made the first state visit by a US President since 1965, during which he made no public mention of New Zealand’s nuclear-free policy. Two years before, General **Butler** had thanked New Zealand for “staying the course” against nuclear weapons: *I know as well as anyone the courage it took for New Zealand to make that decision 10 years ago... If I had been here 10 years ago, I might have had a different message – but now I’m saying you got it right.*

Being a democracy wasn’t enough; being well disposed towards NATO and the United States wasn’t enough. You had to subscribe to deterrence to be in the alliance, and to prove it, you had to share in its risks...[O]ur membership of ANZUS... led us too often into appeasement of deterrence and caused us too frequently to neglect our real interests. It offered nothing to New Zealand that was actually worth having. It was fool’s gold. David Lange, 1990



The Rt Hon David Lange

What if terrorists try nuclear blackmail?

If terrorists try nuclear blackmail, the first rule must be: **on no account try to oppose them with a threat of nuclear retaliation**. The bluff will

be called – because targeting them with even a small modern thermonuclear weapon would be impossible without incurring **unacceptable collateral damage** and provoking **global outrage**. Indeed, some extremists could even provoke a nuclear state to do this, and hope to “take as many others with them” as they could. So nuclear weapons are **worse than useless**.

The only way to deal with nuclear blackmail is by **negotiation while trying to neutralize the blackmailers** using exhaustion, disorientation etc., and if necessary, **Special Forces** with sophisticated precision weapons. An example of this was how the French authorities dealt with a man with explosives wrapped around his chest who hijacked a class of schoolchildren and threatened to blow them up with him if his demands were not met. They exhausted him by lengthy negotiations while installing surveillance devices to determine his condition and location. When he refused to cooperate, at an optimum moment Special Forces moved in and killed him with a silenced handgun.

However, by far the best and most responsible solution is to **shift the image of nuclear weapons from asset to stigmatized liability**. Thereby, the risk of a regime or terrorists even wanting to get one is minimized, because it would destroy any support for their cause. This reinforces the urgent need to agree an enforceable global treaty banning nuclear weapons.

I cannot believe that we are about to start the 21st century by having the Indian sub-continent repeat the worst mistakes of the 20th century, when we know it is not necessary to peace, to security, to prosperity, to national greatness or to personal fulfilment. President Clinton, 1998

Security does not need nuclear deterrence

The reality is that an **overwhelming majority** of nations do not have nuclear weapons, and are not in nuclear alliances. New Zealand's status has been mentioned. **Mongolia** by becoming a nuclear-free zone in 1992, followed its example, as did Austria in 1999. Moreover, several countries which once had nuclear arsenals have eliminated them: **South Africa** is the supreme example. The **Ukraine**, inheriting the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world when the Soviet Union was dissolved, plus **Belarus** and **Kazakhstan** decided that their security would be enhanced by returning the warheads to Russia. In South America in the early 1990s, **Argentina** and **Brazil** mutually agreed to abandon their nuclear weapon research programmes, preferring to rely on the Tlatelolco Treaty which established a nuclear weapon-free zone throughout Latin America in 1967.

Of the 182 countries signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states, all but the 16 NATO members plus Australia, Japan and some former Soviet Union members reject a so-called "nuclear umbrella". Instead, they have opted to rely on modest conventional defence forces backed up by a mix of **diplomatic, legal and economic** forms of deterrence. These include nuclear weapon-free zones and United Nations bodies such as the International Court of Justice, and supporting initiatives to strengthen international law, like the establishment of an International Criminal Court.

Strengthening self-deterrence

An immediate, unacknowledged consequence of the World Court's Advisory Opinion in 1996 was that it **made the world safer** by strengthening self-deterrence. Though not binding on states, it provided a new, legal stop to help keep open the window of opportunity for nuclear disarmament created by the end of the Cold War.

Linked to this is the need to raise awareness – particularly among the military – that, through the Court's decision, nuclear weapons implicitly are now in the **same stigmatized category as chemical and biological weapons**, which military professionals shunned even before they were banned by specific conventions.

Nuclear weapons are the enemy of humanity. Indeed, they're not weapons at all. They're some species of biological time bombs whose effects transcend time and space, poisoning the earth and its inhabitants for generations to come.
General Lee Butler, 1999

Conventional deterrence is less dangerous and more credible

Conventional deterrence maintains the same unstable, hostile attitude between states as nuclear deterrence, stimulating an arms race and inhibiting co-operation in promoting true security.

Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, there is a **fundamental difference** which leads me to recommend it as an **immediate stopgap replacement** for nuclear deterrence.

If deterrence based on conventional weapons fails, the damage would be **confined to the belligerent states** – and the environmental damage would usually be repairable. What is at stake from the failure of nuclear deterrence is the devastation and poisoning of not just the belligerents, but potentially of most forms of life on Earth. **Any non-nuclear security strategy, therefore, is safer.**

Growing **US doubts** about the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence against the current **primary threat** – extremists armed with weapons of mass destruction – have prompted a major US nuclear posture review. These doubts first surfaced during the Gulf War, when **Israel** was subjected to nearly 40 Iraqi Scud missile attacks, for which it was known a chemical warhead had been developed. Lack of a **proportionate** response has led several US nuclear weapon experts to argue that deterrence through threatened



General Lee Butler

use of precisely targeted conventional munitions, rather than nuclear weapons, would be more credible and preferable in most cases.

George W. Bush is the first US President to have **publicly expressed lack of faith** in nuclear deterrence, linking this to his emphasis on reviving ballistic missile defence. Both his Vice-President Dick Cheney and Secretary of State Colin Powell **rejected** the use of nuclear weapons against Iraqi forces in the Gulf War, which means that any future comparable US nuclear threat would **lack credibility**.

A recent Federation of American Scientists report challenged claims that low-yield nuclear weapons could neutralise deeply buried targets. It condemned as **irresponsible** those who are pressing for “small” nuclear weapons to be threatened for such use, and recommended that the latest precision-guided **conventional munitions be relied on** instead.

Converting US *Trident* to conventional armament

US Navy research has established the feasibility of combining precision terminal guidance with a **kinetic energy** warhead in a *Trident* ballistic missile at ranges up to 6,000 nautical miles. Even a simple tungsten plug replacing the nuclear warheads causes enough shock and cratering, if delivered at full re-entry velocity of about 7 kilometres a second, to neutralise most hardened targets. Moreover, any contamination would come from the targeted weapons of mass destruction, which would encourage storage away from population centres.

Meanwhile, under START III, four US nuclear-armed *Ohio* class *Trident*-equipped submarines are to be decommissioned. President Bush recently authorised conversion of two of them to carry a formidable mix of conventional armament. All but two of their 24 launch tubes will be loaded with up to **154 precision-guided cruise missiles**, fitted with a variety of conventional warheads. The remaining two tubes will be kept for access by 66 **special forces** to two **midget submarines** attached to the deck, for covert operations in shallow water and ashore.

Such a capability compares with the current capacity of 24 cruise missiles in US and UK nuclear attack submarines. In NATO's 1999 conflict with Serbia, 25% of the cruise missiles fired came from these submarines. Four converted *Ohio* class submarines – offering relatively invulnerable, inherently stealthy and autonomous platforms capable of

proportionate, precisely targeted, effective responses – are serious competitors for the US Navy's planned fleet of DD-21 destroyers.

In view of the fact that we can achieve our objectives with conventional weapons, there is no purpose to be gained through the use of our nuclear arsenal. Paul Nitze, 1999

Conventionally armed UK *Trident*?

These developments have serious implications for the Royal Navy. As it discovered in the **Falklands War**, increasingly expensive surface warships are vulnerable to missile attack, which can now be delivered at stand-off ranges by relatively invulnerable and ever-quieter submarines. To keep up with the US Navy, therefore, it **cannot afford to ignore the option** of converting its *Trident* submarines from their current nuclear role.

In 1998, the UK government unilaterally cut its nuclear arsenal by a third, making it the **smallest** of the recognised nuclear weapon states, and relaxed its deployed *Trident* submarine's notice to fire from “minutes” to “days”. In 2000, it was also credited to be the **most constructive** of the nuclear weapon states in nuclear disarmament fora.

Both the UK government and Royal Navy face **domestic legal challenges** to *Trident* deployment. The *Trident Ploughshares* non-violent direct action campaign is gaining support, especially in Scotland where the submarines are based. This is because of a growing awareness that the campaigners have morality, common sense, international law and public opinion on their side. In particular, they are **applying the Nuremberg Principles** to the Royal Navy, whose leaders must already be frustrated by the reality that its most prestigious and costly capital ships' weapon system is **impotent** against the most serious threats.

A decision whether or not to replace the UK *Trident* system must be taken by around 2007. Following recent indications that the Royal Navy “**wants to lead in nuclear disarmament**”, a confluence of pressures could persuade it to recommend that UK *Trident* be converted to a conventionally-armed submarine force. In so doing, the UK could become the **first of the recognised nuclear weapon states to renounce nuclear deterrence**, thereby gaining the opportunity to wield unprecedented influence

in leading the drive for a Nuclear Weapons Convention and a nuclear weapon-free world. At the same time, the Royal Navy would strengthen its role as joint maritime enforcer with the US in protection of Western vital interests.

A new world role for the UK? For maximum kudos, the UK government could announce this step at the 2005 NPT Review Conference. **The first “breakout” by one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council** would be sensational, and would transform the nuclear disarmament debate overnight. The UK would gain a **major new world role** which would be enormously popular, with its Prime Minister an immediate candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize. In NATO, with Lord Robertson as Secretary General, the UK would wield unprecedented influence in **leading the drive for a non-nuclear strategy** – which must happen if NATO is to sustain its cohesion. It would create new openings for applying pressure, particularly to the US and France, and heavily influencing India, Israel and Pakistan and others intent on obtaining nuclear weapons. Moreover, it would open the way for a major reassessment by Russia and China of their nuclear strategies, for all **nuclear forces to be verifiably stood down**, and for multilateral negotiations to begin in relative safety on a Nuclear Weapons Convention, which will provide a **comprehensive, enforceable plan to go to zero** nuclear weapons.

The prospect of conventional deterrence fanning arms races in missiles and nuclear-powered submarines poses serious new risks for international stability, peace and the environment, and the peace movement will therefore oppose conventionally-armed *Trident*. However, this proposal is not intended as a long-term answer, but as a pragmatic first step to **loosen the grip of nuclear deterrence** and provide the UK government with a **militarily credible alternative** to nuclear-armed *Trident*.

Stand down nuclear forces from alert

Standing down strategic nuclear forces **could be verified**. In the first instance, reductions in alert status could be adopted by the nuclear weapon states unilaterally. As mentioned earlier, in 1998 the **UK government showed leadership** by announcing that it had taken its *Trident* force off high alert, relaxing the notice to fire for the single deployed submarine from “minutes” to “days” – but this is unverifiable.

In 1999, the US and Russia were concerned enough about the risk of inadvertent nuclear war from the Year 2000 computer problem to establish a joint Center for Y2K Strategic Stability in the US, where **they continue to monitor information** from their respective early warning systems. It

should be possible to **extend this** to monitoring de-alerting. With all strategic nuclear forces de-alerted, **rapid progress** could then be made in **relative safety** to expedite multilateral negotiations leading to a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

Urgently negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention

The pro-nuclear lobby claims “nuclear weapons cannot be disinvented”. **Neither can chemical weapons**. However, the international community has agreed on a Chemical Weapons Convention, an enforceable treaty banning every aspect of chemical weapons; and determined efforts are proceeding to strengthen a similar one against biological weapons. An immediate result is that **military professionals refuse to operate them**.

Since biological and chemical weapons have been prohibited, there is no reason why nuclear weapons, which are more destructive, should not be comprehensively banned and thoroughly destroyed. All it takes to reach this objective is strong political will.

China’s President Jiang Zemin, 1999

Nuclear weapons need fissile materials – plutonium or highly enriched uranium – which are extremely difficult and dangerous to make, not generally used for other purposes, and thus much easier to monitor. This means that **verification of a Nuclear Weapons Convention would be easier** than for other weapons of mass destruction.

In 1997–98, an **overwhelming majority of public opinion** in the US and UK (both 87%), Australia (92%) and at least three non-nuclear NATO states – Belgium (72%), Canada (93%) and Norway (92%) – **want their governments to negotiate** a Nuclear Weapons Convention (www.gracelinks.org). Placing nuclear weapons in the same stigmatised, outlawed status as chemical and biological weapons will mean that they are **no longer perceived as assets**. Instead, they become a security problem, and numbers held lose much of their significance other than as a dismantling burden. This especially applies to the 10,000 or more “tactical” Russian warheads.

A Model Nuclear Weapons Convention. In November 1997, the UN circulated a Model Nuclear Weapons Convention as a discussion draft (www.lcnp.org). The model, drawn up by an international team of lawyers,

scientists, and disarmament experts, offers a **plan** for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons in a series of graduated, verifiable steps. It is drafted on the same lines as the widely-acclaimed Chemical Weapons Convention, which entered into force in 1997. The purposes of the model include:

- Demonstrating the **feasibility** of the elimination of nuclear weapons.
- **Encouraging** governments to resume nuclear disarmament negotiations.
- Identifying policies that are **inconsistent** with the goal of nuclear disarmament.
- Overcoming some of the **barriers** that make nuclear abolition appear utopian.
- **Preparing** for when the political will to begin negotiations emerges.

The debate has been carried forward further by an important book, *Security and Survival: The Case for a*

Nuclear Weapons Convention, in which the latest concerns from the nuclear weapon states are discussed and practical solutions offered (www.ippnw.org).

Starting multilateral negotiations would be how the nuclear weapon states could best **demonstrate a commitment** to their obligations to achieve nuclear disarmament. The very **act of starting** – regardless of how long the negotiations last – would restore the political impetus towards nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapon-capable states could no longer justify acquiring nuclear weapons by pointing to the lack of progress towards abolition, as did India.

Promote “nuclear-free umbrellas”

Most of the Southern Hemisphere is now covered by “nuclear-free umbrellas” of **nuclear weapon free zones**. **Brazil** and **New Zealand** have proposed that Southern Hemisphere countries adopt a “Declaration on the nuclear weapon free status of the Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas”, referring to the existing nuclear free zone treaties and outlining the general objectives and guidelines for future co-operation. These could include: **non-possession**



of nuclear weapons by all states located in the Southern Hemisphere; **no stationing** of nuclear weapons south of the equator, and **no threat or use** of nuclear weapons against targets south of the Equator. Such a declaration could also establish a **Southern Hemisphere Nuclear Forum**, through which signatory countries could discuss and coordinate approaches to nuclear disarmament.

Mongolia's nuclear free legislation in 1992 was followed by the 1995 Bangkok **Southeast Asian** Treaty and 1996 Pelindaba **African** Treaty, plus progress with a **Central/East Asian** Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. These show that it is possible to develop such zones in the Northern Hemisphere despite the proximity of nuclear weapon states. A **Central/East European** zone could **reassure Russia** about NATO enlargement, and would prevent Moscow from deploying weapons in **Belarus** or **Kaliningrad**.

In addition, since 1992 discussions have been conducted among interested parties on creating a “nuclear-free umbrella” in **Northeast Asia** covering the Korean Peninsula and Japan. Associated with this would be the establishment of a **Northeast Asia Cooperative Security Organisation**, modelled on the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

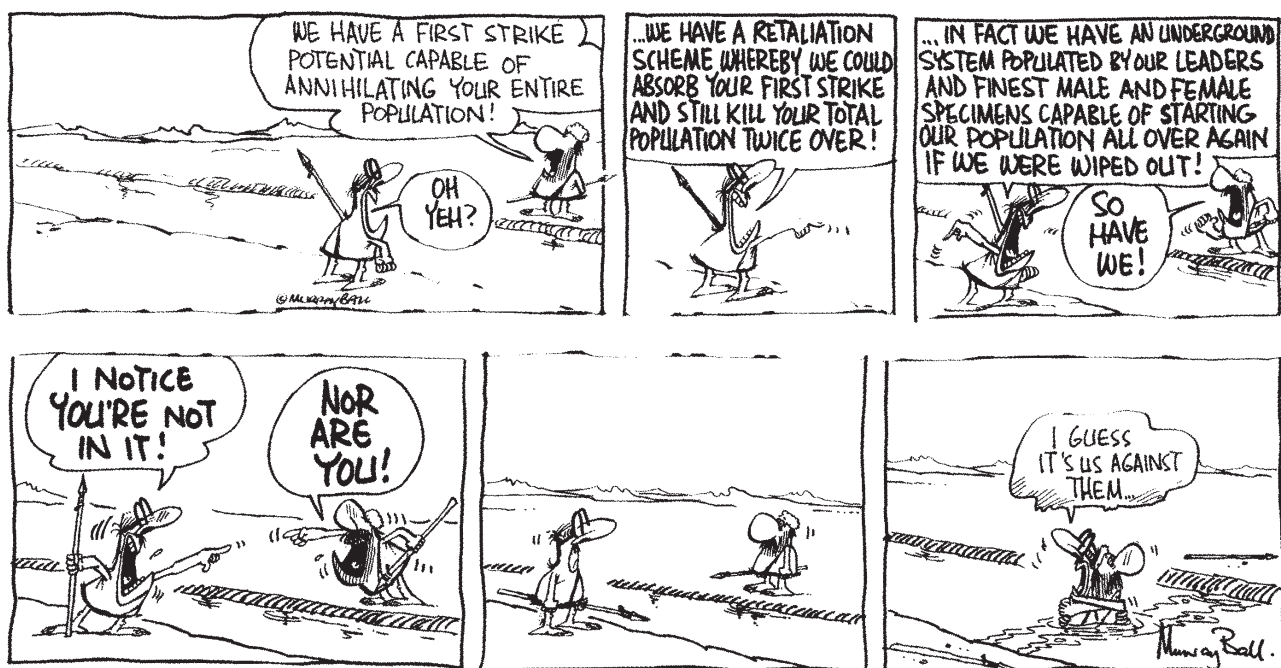
The core of such a zone would be the **existing nuclear weapon free zone** in the Korean Peninsula. The US, Russia and China would be invited to sign protocols which provide for **Negative Security Assurances** in which the nuclear states agree not to use, or even threaten to

use, their nuclear weapons against the states within the zone under any circumstances. In exchange, the non-nuclear states would reaffirm several undertakings they have made not to become nuclear weapon states. The most important objectives of such an initiative would be to:

- prevent a nuclear arms race between Japan, South Korea and North Korea, or between Japan and a reunified Korea
- establish a mechanism for verifying implementation of the zone, as the first step towards further confidence-building in the region.
- contribute to global nuclear disarmament.

This takes on added urgency in light of the reality that, if conflict is to occur among the nuclear weapon states, it is **most likely to take place in Northeast Asia**. The US, Russia and China all have substantial military forces as well as major stakes in the region. In addition, there are many sources of conflict among the three and their allies within the region, including the future of the **Korean Peninsula** and **Taiwan**, and control of natural resources and territory in local seas.

The other regions urgently in need of a “nuclear-free umbrella” are the **Middle East** (where progress is **stymied by Israel**, with Western complicity) and **South Asia**, where the small states surrounding India and Pakistan are likely victims in any nuclear exchange.



Courtesy Murray Ball, reproduced from 'Stanley' (1982)



From nuclear deterrence to non-provocative defence

The transition to non-provocative defence will only be feasible if taken in stages. The crucial first shift is to **denuclearise** security strategies, by temporarily **replacing** nuclear deterrence with conventional deterrence. This would enable all nuclear forces to be verifiably stood down and arsenals placed in internationally monitored storage pending their dismantling under the terms of a Nuclear Weapons Convention, **as is being done with chemical weapons**.

The first nuclear weapon state to **revert to conventional deterrence** will have a powerful vested interest in leading negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention. If pursued in good faith, these negotiations will require **new levels of cooperation** between former adversaries. They must be exploited to build confidence and trust to the point where the principles of **non-provocative defence** can be introduced.

These principles revolve around **war prevention** by having a capacity to deny an aggressor the prospect of a cheap victory, but only a **limited capacity to mount offensive operations** in an opponent's territory. Currently, NATO

claims that its posture is "defensive", but it is **intimidating to Russia** – especially with nuclear weapons, continuing expansion eastwards, and its evolving doctrine of "humanitarian intervention", as brutally demonstrated in former Yugoslavia.

A non-nuclear strategy for NATO

NATO currently has **no answer** to the argument that, because it places so much political value in its nuclear forces, it is providing a **justification for proliferators**. Instead it hints that it does not rule out threatening first use of nuclear weapons to deal with even **non-nuclear** "rogue" regimes – thereby exacerbating the problem.

If it is to survive, the moment has arrived for NATO to confront its **unacceptable** nuclear policy. Its **addiction to the dogma** of nuclear deterrence is undermining its professed purpose, which is "to secure a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe." NATO claims to uphold democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Yet, at the 2000 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), its three nuclear members tried to **intimidate** the rest into opposing a practical programme of nuclear

disarmament steps, most of which nevertheless were agreed by consensus in the NPT Review final document.

Even if NATO unilaterally gave up its nuclear weapons, **Russia would be deterred** from a decision to attack a member state by NATO's **proven ability**, after its intervention in Kosovo, to respond to any conventional attack or nuclear threat with **massive conventional firepower** using precision-guided weapons.

Because of its prowess in conventional weaponry, the **US has least need** of nuclear weapons. Thus *it is in its direct security interest to encourage a major shift to a non-provocative, non-nuclear NATO defence strategy.*

We should be circumspect about the political value we place on NATO nuclear forces, lest we furnish arguments proliferators can use.
Former Canadian Foreign Minister
Lloyd Axworthy, 1998

Those who think NATO could not survive such a change should ponder **how long it can maintain its cohesion** with its current nuclear strategy. Meanwhile, economic and political disruption, plus a major intra-state war in Chechnya, have **sapped the strength and morale** of what is left of Russia's conventional military might. Also, with Russia's current chaotic internal situation, which it will take years to recover from, what **motive** has it to launch an attack on a NATO member state? NATO therefore needs to provide Russia with:

- incentives to become **less dependent on nuclear weapons** for its security
- maximum **reassurance** that NATO has no offensive intentions

This especially means **removing** nuclear weapons from any potential conflict, thereby making them **irrelevant** to resolving the security problem instead of a **primary cause**.

With these factors in mind, here is an outline of the recommended steps to a non-provocative, non-nuclear strategy for NATO:

- Harmonise NATO's Strategic Concept with the 2000 NPT Review final document

- Shift from nuclear to conventional deterrence
- Stand down US and Russian nuclear forces from "launch-on-warning"
- Withdraw NATO's nuclear arsenal to the US and UK
- Negotiate a Tactical Nuclear Weapon Treaty
- Establish a Central/Eastern Europe Nuclear Weapon Free Zone

Changing NATO's Strategic Concept. In December 2000, a NATO report confirmed that its members support the entire Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review. Paragraph 15 of that document listed **13 steps to implement NPT Article VI**, one of which included an **unequivocal undertaking** by the nuclear weapon states to accomplish the total **elimination** of their nuclear arsenals. Yet NATO's Strategic Concept still reinforces the **"essential"** role of nuclear weapons. NATO must therefore harmonise its strategy with the 2000 NPT Review document.

Shift from Nuclear to Conventional Deterrence. The way to **resolve this contradiction** is to shift NATO doctrine from nuclear to conventional deterrence. This may be timely, with the current US determination to move away from Mutual Assured Destruction towards relying on offensive and defensive missiles. However, the well-known **shortcomings of ballistic missile defence** suggest that threat elimination through diplomacy to **reduce the insecurities** driving states to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and strengthening the missile control regime, offer a safer and more cost-effective route to security.

Stand Down US and Russian Nuclear Forces. The overriding **need for NATO to reassure Russia** that it has no intention of exploiting Russia's military inferiority dictates that the US should immediately stand down its nuclear forces from "launch-on-warning" status, and **invite Russia to do likewise** under mutual verification. This would implement most of the agreed steps from the 2000 NPT Review final document associated with *promoting stability and security for all, taking further unilateral nuclear disarmament initiatives, increasing transparency and verification, reducing the operational status of systems, and diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in security policies.*

Withdraw NATO's Nuclear Arsenal. Currently, NATO deploys about **150 US B61 free-fall bombs** in Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey and the UK. In addition, paragraph 64 of the Strategic Concept states that, for the first time, "a small number of **United**

Kingdom *Trident* warheads” are part of NATO’s sub-strategic posture in Europe. The B61s should be **repatriated** to the US into verifiable storage; the US and UK nuclear arsenals should **no longer be assigned** to NATO; the UK should **discard** its implausible attempt to create a sub-strategic role for its *Trident* force; and NATO should **withdraw** its nuclear war plan.

Negotiate a Tactical Nuclear Weapon Treaty. The withdrawal of NATO’s tactical arsenal would constitute NATO’s side of a major **confidence-building** process, and would be a powerful way to **encourage Russia** to negotiate a Tactical Nuclear Weapon Treaty, through which a plan could be pursued for their elimination. An immediate start on this could be made by formalising, and making irreversible (through transparency and mutual verification), the **1991–92 reciprocal unilateral withdrawals** of all tactical nuclear weapons from ships and aircraft.

The next stage would be to **establish a tactical/sub-strategic nuclear weapon register**, in order to remedy the unacceptable absence of official figures, especially in **Russia** and the **UK**. This could be achieved either as part of the START III negotiations, or through the reactivated NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council established under the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act. As the **European** NATO members have most to gain, **they should lead** in this.

Establish a Central/Eastern Europe Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. Currently proposed by **Belarus**, this would be another important confidence-building measure both for Russia and the other former members of the Warsaw Pact which are not in NATO, and which have long **feared that they would be a nuclear battlefield**. It would extend from Sweden and Finland through the Baltic states, Poland, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, the Balkan states, the Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece to Turkey. Although there is little political will for this at present, a *de facto* nuclear weapon free zone would evolve if more NATO member states emulated the Norwegian, Danish and Spanish precedents of **refusing deployment of nuclear weapons** on their territory in peacetime.

Application to other US allies

With appropriate modifications, the proposal is applicable to the security treaties between the US and **Japan, Australia and South Korea**, which have at their core allegiance to extended nuclear deterrence under the so-called US “nuclear umbrella”. Such a shift is not only **in the security**

interests of the nuclear weapon states and their allies. It is also a **vote-winner**, because it would bring their security policies into line with **morality, international law and public opinion**.

How to stop someone cheating

Because nuclear weapons are mainly possessed by nations with great power status, a decision by them to join with the overwhelming majority of other nations in removing this threat to humanity will inevitably usher in a **new approach** to global security. The world will be better motivated and organised to tackle the **root causes of insecurity** which might drive a regime or terror group to such a desperate measure.

The status of nuclear weapons will have shifted from asset to **stigmatised liability** – like chemical or biological weapons, only worse. In such a transformed situation, the process of nuclear disarmament will no longer be conducted on the basis of trying to ensure that no-one “hides a few just in case”. Instead, possessor states will be negotiating to **enhance their security**. Above all, there will be a clear understanding that nuclear blackmail cannot be dealt with by threatened retaliation with nuclear weapons.

Crucial role of verification. A vital part of the process will be verification. The act of checking compliance not only provides information, but also creates **interaction** between **previously hostile** countries. For example, in 1991, former potential nuclear rivals Argentina and Brazil agreed on a bilateral regime of inspections of sensitive nuclear facilities, with parallel inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency. This could be a model for other regional agreements, such as between North and South Korea. There will be opportunities to assess capabilities with much greater confidence, building **trust** between states as they move to a situation in which they cannot annihilate each other. Indeed, the **confidence-building** aspects could eventually be verification’s single and most important role: we could move from a position of the threat of nuclear war as security to one of **verification as security**.

World **outrage against breakout** from a nuclear weapon-free world would be so massive – including probable conventional military intervention on the scale of the Gulf War, plus economic isolation – that there would be **no political or military incentive** to do so. The **risk** will diminish as the verification and enforcement arrangements are set in place. Moreover, that risk is minimal compared to the **near inevitability** of nuclear blackmail under the current policy.

CONCLUSION

Nuclear deterrence is about threatening the most indiscriminate violence possible, unrestrained by morality or the law. It is therefore deeply irresponsible and undemocratic. Over ten years after the end of the Cold War, the overwhelming majority of states have therefore rejected nuclear deterrence. They have realised that nuclear disarmament is a security-building process, where nuclear weapons are a liability and a security problem.

There definitely is a way back from the abyss towards which nuclear deterrence dogma is driving us. In the short term, deterrence using precision-guided conventional weapons can be used as a more credible, safer alternative strategy which can also be lawful and less morally unacceptable. This would enable nuclear forces to be verifiably stood down, and Russia to be reassured enough for negotiations to begin on an enforceable global treaty which will provide a plan to

go to zero nuclear weapons. The act of negotiating in good faith would build the confidence and trust needed to move from there towards non-nuclear, non-provocative defence policies.

NATO holds the key to this, because of its overwhelming conventional military strength and professed democratic credentials. Sooner or later it will have to adopt a non-nuclear security strategy if it is to maintain its cohesion and effectiveness. Its members' acceptance of the 2000 NPT Review final document constitutes both an unavoidable obligation, and unexpected opportunity, to do so. The UK could gain a new world role by becoming the first of the recognised nuclear weapon states to reject nuclear deterrence, and convert its Trident submarine force to conventional armament. In so doing, it could provide the leadership in NATO to begin the process.

USEFUL WEBSITES

UN Department of Disarmament Affairs: www.un.org/Depts/dda

NATO: www.nato.int

Acronym Institute: www.acronym.org.uk

British American Security Information Council: www.basicint.org

Disarmament & Security Centre: www.disarmsecure.org

Federation of American Scientists: www.fas.org

Institute for Energy and Environmental Research: www.ieer.org

International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation: www.inesap.org

International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War: www.ippnw.org

Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy: www.lcnp.org

Middle Powers Initiative: www.middlepowers.org

Nuclear Age Peace Foundation: www.wagingpeace.org

Oxford Research Group: www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: www.reachingcriticalwill.org

THE NAKED NUCLEAR EMPEROR

DEBUNKING NUCLEAR DETERRENCE

The challenge before us is to debunk the anachronisms that underlie the theory of nuclear deterrence. This book, and fora like the negotiations on the Non-Proliferation Treaty, provide avenues for the debate. In the 21st century, as the ever-expanding exchange of peoples, cultures and trade across nations helps to ease nationalistic prejudices, and as the shibboleths of the Cold War subside, it is time to abolish nuclear weapons and make the world a safer place for all peoples.

Rt Hon Helen Clark, New Zealand Prime Minister

Robert Green writes from a position of real authority – a former naval officer with nuclear weapons experience, he shows in an accurate yet highly readable way just how serious are the dangers we face. An excellent account of current and future nuclear dangers, with positive recommendations for a safer future.

Paul Rogers, Professor of Peace Studies, Bradford University, UK

A lucid, well-researched and documented analysis of nuclear deterrence. What makes the book unique is that it challenges the myths and rationalisations of the dogmas that dominate US, British and NATO doctrine using the insights of high-ranking military officers who, like Green himself, were once responsible for implementing nuclear policy... he unpicks the assumptions and logic underpinning nuclear deterrence, exposing the dangerous absurdities. A must-read.

Rebecca Johnson, Executive Director, the Acronym Institute, UK

Without a doubt the finest analysis and critique of nuclear deterrence in existence. The value of *The Naked Nuclear Emperor* lies in its accessibility and usefulness to educators, policy-makers, religious leaders and legislators of all countries.

Canadian Senator Douglas Roche, O.C.