

■ DEFENCE BRIEFING

NUCLEAR TARGETING OF THE THIRD WORLD

Introduction

In the last few years the world has undergone massive changes in the political and security environments. However, although President Bush has trumpeted a kinder, gentler 'New World Order', the rhetoric disguises an ugly reality. The demise of the Soviet Union has resulted in the collapse of one Cold War, but the United States and Britain continue to escalate their nuclear capabilities and are refocussing to threaten future intervention in the Third World. The United States' nuclear escalation is more in terms of technical innovation than numerical expansion but Britain's Trident programme involves both qualitative and quantitative change - increased range, accuracy and destructive capability of the Trident warhead/missile, plus a potentially massive increase in the actual numbers of warheads.

We now know that Western nuclear arsenals are being retargeted against the Third World. Figures like Saddam Hussein and Colonel Gadaffi are being used to justify this and to seek to gain public acquiescence in, if not outright support for, the retargeting plan. The reality is though that ever since nuclear weapons were first invented they have been used to intimidate non-nuclear Third World countries. Randall Forsberg, Director of the US Centre for Defense and Disarmament Studies, has asserted that 'intervention in the Third World is, ultimately, the issue that drives the nuclear arms race'.¹

Nuclear weapons helped the West fight the 1991 Gulf War. There were no nuclear explosions, but there were repeated barely veiled threats of both nuclear and chemical attack. This is only the most recent and obvious example in a pattern of criminal intimidation which deserves the widest possible discussion and debate.

The Gulf War

Why did Iraq fail to employ chemical weapons against the Western-led coalition during the 1991 Gulf war? Western commanders repeatedly expressed fears of such an attack. The Iran-Iraq war had made Iraq the most experienced state in the world at employing chemical weapons on the battlefield. In contrast, Western forces in the Gulf only had First World War experiences of chemical warfare to go by. After the Gulf war the UN Special Commission in Iraq uncovered 46,000 surviving chemical weapons,² and in Kuwait Iraqi bunkers marked for storing chemical weapons were discovered, although without the weapons themselves.³

Iraq had the arsenal, the training and the willingness to use chemical weapons. A leaked Pentagon study concludes that it is 'likely that Saddam Hussein refrained

1 Randall Forsberg, *World Policy Journal*, Vol 1, No.2, Winter 1984, p.292

2 *The Independent*, 31 July 1991, p.1

3 *Sunday Telegraph*, 3 March 1991, p.22



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from the use of chemical warheads on his Scud missiles because of the clear Israeli capability and the implied US intent to retaliate with nuclear weapons".⁴ In fact Western leaders repeatedly threatened Iraq with mass destruction before and after the war began on 17 January 1991. [A list of US and British nuclear threats during the Gulf crisis is set out in **Appendix I**]. On 8 August 1990, less than a week after the Iraqi invasion President Bush warned Baghdad that the use of chemical weapons "would be intolerable and would be dealt with very, very severely".⁵

British Threats

Three kinds of threats emanated from Britain.

1) There were leaked hints of possible nuclear retaliation or even of a pre-emptive strike. For example, on 10 August 1990 "Whitehall sources made it clear that the multi-national forces would be ready to hit back with every means at their disposal...[including] using tactical nuclear weapons against [Iraqi] troops and tanks on the battlefield",⁶ and on 26 October The Daily Mail reported pressure in Cabinet circles for a pre-emptive nuclear attack: "One senior minister said, 'If we were prepared to use tactical nuclear weapons against the Russians, I can't see why we shouldn't be prepared to use them against Iraq'".⁷

2) There were public statements by Ministers including the Prime Minister. For example, on 15 January 1991, John Major was asked in the Commons whether it might be necessary to use nuclear weapons in the Gulf, and replied, "We have made it clear to the Iraqis we have a wide range of weapons and resources at our hands, and I do not envisage needing to use the sanction he suggests".⁸ After two weeks of bombing, The Guardian reported that "Mr Hurd said that if Iraq responded to an allied land assault by using chemical weapons, President Saddam would be certain to provoke a massive response - language the US and Britain employ to leave open the option of using chemical or nuclear weapons".⁹

3) Public nuclear threats were supplemented by more detailed private warnings. Swedish liaison officer Major Johan Persson claimed that Western nuclear capabilities and plans were made known to Baghdad. Persson claims to have seen a 200-page plan setting out Western plans for chemical and nuclear counter-offensives against Iraq: "I had the order book in my hand, it was a real document, no fake. It was not expected that use of chemical weapons would be necessary, but there was scope for it if it was. It would of course be in response to an Iraqi attack. I know for example that certain British units had the order distributed by JCC [Joint Command Centre, Riyadh]. You do not receive an order if you have nothing to use it for." Ships carrying nuclear weapons were also given orders. "If exposed to the worst, they would also be allowed to use the worst themselves. That was in a separate booklet for ships that I saw".¹⁰

According to the British American Security Information Council (BASIC), there were over 700 US nuclear weapons on board warships in the Gulf region during the Gulf Crisis, together with 300 land-based US nuclear weapons in Turkey. Britain had five nuclear-capable vessels in the region

4 Strategic Deterrence Study Group for the US Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff Strategic Advisory Group, Strategic Deterrence Study 1991, p.7

5 *The International Herald Tribune*, 9 August 1990, p.1

6 *The Daily Star*, 10 August 1990, p.1

7 *The Daily Mail*, 26 October 1990

8 Hansard, 15 January 1991 col.726

9 *The Guardian*, 4 February 1991

10 *The Independent*, 29 November 1991

probably carrying between eight and sixteen nuclear weapons.¹¹ According to Christopher Bellamy, defence correspondent for *The Independent*, Western chemical weapons were also “in the theatre of war, British sources have confirmed”.¹²

Negative security assurances

At the 1978 UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament all five declared nuclear weapons-possessing states (UK, USSR, USA, France, China) made separate official statements which were supposedly their guarantees that they would not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear signatories of the NPT. However, there are problems with these “negative security ‘assurances’”. “...the assurances offered showed significant disparities and contained qualifications which were so phrased as to suit the military doctrines of the nuclear weapon states and could be subject to divergent interpretations. Doubts have also been expressed as to the binding force of unilateral statements”.¹³

Iraq is a non-nuclear-weapon state signatory of the NPT. Questioned on 16 January 1991 by the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, Douglas Hurd, then Foreign Secretary, said, “If any non-nuclear weapons state covered by our negative security assurance were to manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons in breach of its Treaty obligations, we would have to consider carefully how our undertaking in respect of that state was affected. I think you can read the meaning of that”.¹⁴ Thomas C. Reed, Chair of the US government military advisory panel whose report was leaked in January 1992, has explicitly promoted the idea that Washington should rethink its 1978 pledge because he says that future attacks with chemical or biological weapons may warrant a US nuclear response.¹⁵

So there were secret messages of the kind that Major hinted at, and Persson confirmed; leaks from anonymous Cabinet sources, and public statements which “maintained a deliberate ambiguity on the question of whether [the West] would use nuclear weapons in response to Iraqi chemical attacks,” in the words of two Pentagon consultants.¹⁶ This “deliberate ambiguity” has consisted of reserving the right to use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear-weapon state, while predicting that the “sanction” will not prove necessary. In other words, a threat to use nuclear weapons if pressed.

As Hurd himself implicitly accepted, a nuclear attack on Iraq would have been extremely dubious legally, although international law is less clear on the threatened use of nuclear weapons. What is clear is that defects in international law cannot hide the moral bankruptcy of such threats. Nuclear threats are themselves terrorism.

The History of Nuclear Threats

US Nuclear Threats

Nuclear threats against Iraq are part of a pattern of nuclear intimidation which stretches back to the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A Brookings Institution study uncovered 19 incidents of

11 BASIC Report 90.6, Environmental Dangers of the Gulf Crisis: Nuclear Weapons in a War Zone

12 *The Independent*, 29 November 1991

13 Agreements for Arms Control, by Jozef Goldblat, SIPRI, 1982, p46

14 House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, Events in the Middle East, 16 January 1991, Minutes of Evidence p.67

15 *Washington Post*, January 6th 1992

16 Thomas C. Reed and Michael O. Wheeler, The Role of Nuclear Weapons in the New World Order, December 1991, p.12

intimidation involving US strategic nuclear weapons between 1946 and 1973 alone. [The full list is set out in **Appendix 2**]. Daniel Ellsberg, the former Pentagon analyst, has produced an expanded list which includes both strategic and tactical nuclear weapons.¹⁷ There has not been any comparable study of British nuclear crises but British nuclear threats have been issued on a regular basis; it is not necessary to fly a nuclear bomber directly overhead to make such threats. As Paul Nitze, one of Reagan's key arms control negotiators, noted, "To have the advantage at the utmost level of violence helps at every lesser level".¹⁸

Dealing with the US record first, the first US nuclear threat came only months after the destruction of Nagasaki. In 1946, six nuclear-capable B-29s were deployed to Germany and "rather ostentatiously flew along the border," after a US aircraft had been downed over Yugoslavia.¹⁹ At the time the USSR was, of course, a non-nuclear-weapon state. Five of the incidents cited by Blechman and Kaplan relate to the various Berlin crises, three of them before the Soviet Union became a nuclear power. Five of the incidents cited were threats directed at China and/or North Korea, both non-nuclear states at the time. After China became a nuclear power, *The Daily Telegraph* reported in 1965 that the USAF and the RAF had developed a "joint target plan for all-out nuclear and conventional attacks on China should the need arise".²⁰ This was supposedly to prevent Chinese moves against the US intervention in Vietnam, or against India. "In two peculiar incidents, U.S. long-range bombers assigned to the Strategic Air Command were flown to nations in the Western Hemisphere (Uruguay in 1947 and Nicaragua in 1954), apparently to reassure U.S. allies".²¹

Some threats were communicated to opponents, in other situations active consideration of the nuclear option was not necessarily communicated to the opponent. "In the thirty-six years since Hiroshima, every US President from Truman to Reagan, with the possible exception of Ford, has felt compelled to consider or direct serious preparations for possible imminent U.S. initiation of tactical or strategic nuclear warfare, in the midst of ongoing, intense non-nuclear conflict or crisis".²²

British Nuclear Threats

Historical records make clear that Britain has brandished its nuclear weapons on many occasions. Already in 1957 one of the most influential military strategists of Britain's nuclear era, Sir John Slessor, Marshal of the Royal Air Force, was delivering a speech on the subject of "Total or Limited War?". Six years later in 1963 Bomber Command sent the nuclear V-Force on 400 flights overseas in that one year alone, to demonstrate "the ability to back up tactical air forces overseas, and to deter limited aggression anywhere in the world and at any time".²³ "Limited war" and "limited aggression" meant, essentially, colonial war against Third World nationalists. Slessor had stated bluntly that "In most of the possible theatres of limited war... I think it must be accepted that it is at least improbable that we should be able to meet a major communist offensive in one of these

17 Daniel Ellsberg, 'Call to Mutiny', in *The Deadly Connection: Nuclear War and US intervention*, American Friends Service Committee, 1983

18 cited in Michio Kaku and Daniel Axelrod, *To Win a Nuclear War: The Pentagon's Secret War Plans*, Zed Books, 1987 p.6

19 Barry Blechman, Stephen Kaplan et al., *Force Without War: US Armed Forces as a Political Instrument*, Brookings Institution 1978, p.47

20 *The Daily Telegraph* 13 October 1965, cited in *I.F. Stone's Weekly*, 8 November 1965, p.3

21 Blechman et al., *op. cit.* p.48

22 Daniel Ellsberg, *op. cit.* p.19f

23 Andrew Brookes, *The History of Britain's Airborne Deterrent: Force V.*, Janes Publishing Company, 1982, p.140

areas without resorting to tactical nuclear weapons''.²⁴ While Slessor believed that the strategic "hydrogen bomb [was] entirely inappropriate as a counter to limited aggression anywhere".²⁵ nonetheless, "In the background must be strategic air (power) to 'keep the turbulent within bounds'".²⁶

This strategic project was pursued enthusiastically by the RAF, and led to the commitment in 1963 of Vulcan 1/1As at RAF Waddington "dealing with conventional trouble in the Middle East while the Victor 1/1As from Cottesmore and Honington looked after the Far East".²⁷ There was a "feeling of nuclear responsibility for South-East Asia, and V-bomber facilities were built at Tengah, Singapore.... in case their nuclear capability ever had to be employed in earnest".²⁸ In the Malaysian Confrontation, a major counter-insurgency war, "eight Victors were sent out... in December 1963 to supplement the Far East Air Force... positioned so as to be ready to eliminate Indonesian Air Force capabilities if they launched air attacks".²⁹ Air Chief Marshal Sir David Lee comments, "Their potential was well known to Indonesia and their presence did not go unnoticed".³⁰

In the Middle East, the strategic V-bombers backed Britain's tactical nuclear air force of Canberra airplanes, described as "the Central Treaty Organisation's nuclear strike force".³¹ The Central Treaty Organisation was a Middle Eastern equivalent of NATO including Britain, Turkey and Iran. Iraq was the centrepiece of the alliance until the nationalist coup of 1958. The US response to the Iraqi coup of that year was to launch an invasion of Lebanon, landing troops armed with atomic-armed rockets while deploying nuclear weapons on offshore aircraft carriers and placing the Strategic Air Command on worldwide nuclear alert.³² In 1961 after arranging "independence" for Kuwait, Britain manufactured a crisis during which London threatened Iraq with nuclear attack. After Kuwaiti independence was declared, Iraq reiterated its claim to Kuwait and Britain raised fears of Iraqi mobilization on the border. 6,500 British troops were sent in and London "placed V-bombers at readiness in Malta".³³ An aircraft carrier carrying a squadron of nuclear-capable Scimitars was also deployed to the Gulf.³⁴

Britain has also issued nuclear threats in Latin America. In 1972, during a sovereignty dispute with Guatemala over the then British colony of Belize, Britain responded to Guatemalan troop movements by dispatching two nuclear-capable Buccaneer aircraft from the Ark Royal to fly over Belize, thus echoing US overflights in Latin America in 1947 and 1954.³⁵ Britain also sent strategic nuclear bombers to the Ugandan independence ceremony in 1963, just as the US had sent bombers to a

24 John Slessor, *The Great Deterrent: A collection of lectures, articles, and broadcasts on the development of strategic policy in the nuclear age*, Cassell & Company, London, 1957, p.272

25 Slessor, *op. cit.* p.245

26 *ibid.* p.158

27 Brookes, *op.cit.* p.138

28 *ibid.* p.140

29 *ibid.* p.138

30 David Lee, *Eastward: A History of the RAF in the Far East 1945-70*, HMSO, 1984, p.213

31 cited in M. Leitenberg, 'Background information on tactical nuclear weapons', in Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Tactical Nuclear Weapons: European Perspectives*, Taylor Francis Ltd., London, 1978, p.69

32 Noam Chomsky, *Towards a New Cold War*, Sinclair Browne, London, 1982, p.29

33 Brookes, *op. cit.* p.114

34 Adel Darwish and Gregory Alexander, *Unholy Babylon; The Secret History of Saddam's War*, Victor Gollancz, London, 1991, p.33

35 Latin America Bureau, *The Belize Issue*, 1978, p.20

presidential inauguration in Uruguay sixteen years earlier. As with the three Victors from 139 Squadron sent to Jamaica in 1966, "they were there for more than decorative purposes".³⁶

British nuclear force was seen as part of the underpinning of the global Empire, as Commander-in-Chief of Bomber Command, Sir John Grady, demonstrated in his world map: Malta was 2 hours 30 minutes away for the V-bombers, Cyprus was 3 hours 45 minutes away, Aden 7 hours, Gan 11 hours, and Singapore 15 hours.³⁷

The Future

Targeting the Third World

The pretence is that nuclear weapons have simply accumulated over the years, "unused and unusable save for the single function of deterring their use against us by the Soviets." This quote is from Ellsberg who has pointed out that the reality is that "Again and again, generally in secret from the American public, U.S. nuclear weapons have been used... in the precise way that a gun is used when you point it at someone's head in a direct confrontation, whether or not the trigger is pulled".³⁸ The same goes for the British nuclear arsenal. The history of British and United States nuclear threats against Third World countries should be born in mind when the "retargeting" of Western nuclear arsenals against such countries is considered.

Recent Pentagon leaks indicate that United States military forces, including the nuclear component, will in future be oriented mainly towards the Third World. It is clear that Britain too has similar plans "It is in fact largely the risk of Third World proliferation that is being used to reinforce the case for the British nuclear deterrent".³⁹ The history of Britain's Bomber Command demonstrates that intimidating non-nuclear Third World countries is by no means a new policy and has in fact been a high priority for the West throughout the nuclear era.

The Cold War was generally portrayed as a superpower contest when in reality it was a history of assaults by the Soviet Union on countries within its domains, and of Western assaults on countries in the 'Free World', both justified by reference to the threat of the superpower enemy. "In fact the majority of the crises we have responded to since the end of World War II have not directly involved the Soviet Union".⁴⁰ Now the rhetoric about the Soviet threat is being dropped, and the policy of nuclear terrorism is becoming more public.

According to the leaked 1992 Pentagon 'Strategic Deterrence Study', one of the new US nuclear targeting plans, 'SIOP Echo', involves a 'Nuclear Expeditionary Force' which would be armed with some bombers, some submarine-launched weapons and possibly some tactical arms. It has long been policy however for US Central Command (USCENTCOM), for example, to integrate nuclear weapons into its conventional missions.⁴¹ The 1982 US Army AirLand Battle Operations Manual FM 100-5 set out the basic doctrine: "A relatively small rapidly deployable force with nuclear weapons may be assigned a contingency mission. This force might succeed as a deterrent while a larger conventional force might deploy too late".⁴²

36 Brookes, p.140 (37) *ibid.* p.142 (38) Ellsberg, *op. cit.* p.17

39 Lawrence Freedman, *The Independent*, 5 March, p.25

40 US Marine Corps Commandant General A.M. Gray, cited in Noam Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy*, Verso 1991, p.30

41 USCENTCOM's vast nuclear arsenal is described by Christopher Paine in *The Deadly Connection* p.70. CENTCOM commanded Operation Desert Storm against Iraq.

42 Cited in Martha Wenger, 'Getting to the war on time', in *MERIP Report* 128, November-December 1984, p.20

An earlier leak in 1992 confirmed the growing threat to the Third World. Iraq, North Korea, Panama and the Phillipines were all mentioned by name. The documents make it clear that the US does not aspire to collective nonpartisan global security, for example by means of a revitalised and restructured UN, but to hegemony backed up by the threat of nuclear weapons.

As the Third World emerges as the real enemy of Western elites, genuine concerns over, for example, nuclear proliferation are being manipulated to serve the needs of elite elements in the West, and in particular the nuclear weapons establishments. Originally, the Trident missile programme was justified by a perceived need to breach the Anti-Ballistic Missile defences around Moscow.⁴³ Equally, the British 'requirement' for a Tactical Air-to-Surface Missile (TASM) to replace the WE-177 free-fall bombs was based on the threat of improved Soviet air defences.⁴⁴ Now, however, the MOD has lengthened the warning time for an attack on Western Europe emanating from the Former Soviet Union from two days to two or more years,⁴⁵ and both Trident and TASM are being justified by reference to threats from the Third World. As Lawrence Freedman points out it is suggested that TASM could better fulfil 'the perceived need to counter nuclear-armed countries in the Third World, which would not justify the use of Trident'.⁴⁶

Tackling Nuclear Proliferation

The Gulf war and its aftermath shows that there is indeed an urgent need to tackle nuclear proliferation. However 'gunpoint' inspections of, or raids on, Third World states is not the way to do it. Such actions would be more examples of selective Western intervention (it is extremely unlikely that Israel, for example, would get this treatment), and would be counter-productive, leading to massive resentment.

However, it is also clear that despite the problems with the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) - in particular the fact that it permits the nuclear powers to retain nuclear weapons although it calls on them to reduce their stockpiles - attempts to curb nuclear proliferation would suffer an extremely serious setback if the NPT was not extended in 1995. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the policing agency of the NPT at present. What is needed is a radically reformed IAEA. Although the IAEA has 112 member states, is open to all UN members and is meant to "show due respect for the sovereign rights of states",⁴⁷ it shows signs, like the UN during the Gulf War, of becoming a tool of Western interests rather than a non-discriminatory safeguarding tool for the international community.

The IAEA's role is contradictory; on the one hand it is supposed to check that NPT signatory states do not divert nuclear fissile materials for nuclear weapons production, on the other hand it is meant to help and encourage such states with their nuclear power needs. The problem of course is that nuclear power reactors can provide the very materials that are needed for nuclear bombs. The contradictions in the two roles, more acutely obvious since the Gulf War, need to be looked at very closely.

The way forward is for the restructured IAEA - or possibly a new verification agency under the auspices of the UN, with a new and independent Board of Governors, to have agreed and equitable

⁴³ Freedman, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ Mark Urban, *The Independent*, 16 May 1988, p.5

⁴⁵ *The Independent*, 25 July 1991, p.6

⁴⁶ *The Independent*, 10 July 1991, p.4

⁴⁷ *Treaties and Alliances of the World*, Longman, 1990, p.70

verification procedures for NPT signatory states. These would include both routine and challenge inspections (also planned for the Chemical Weapons Convention verification regime) plus information exchanges. On-site detectors at reactor sites could monitor the production of fissile materials. Inspections would not be allowed to be used for narrow Western ends. The composition of the Inspectorate would be as representative of the international community as possible and there would be no immunity for the activities of states such as Israel. If activities were discovered that ran counter to NPT commitments then they would be publicized and the State concerned asked to desist. If it did not diplomatic and economic leverage could be applied.

However, it is hard to see why Third World states should accept even a revamped regime unless the nuclear powers begin to take Article 6 of the NPT seriously. This is the article that requires them to genuinely pursue disarmament. Britain's Trident programme, for example, blatantly disregards this article. Equally, genuine negative security assurances are required. The ball is very much in the West's court if the scheme outlined above is to work.

A monitoring body for the international community to guard against diversion of fissile materials to bomb production is important, but the other major factor is the transfer of nuclear technology and expertise. Here again Western greed and self-interest has been largely to blame.

Conclusion

The semi-public nature of the nuclear threats against Iraq, the leaks from the Pentagon and the MOD in Britain, and the use of Third World enemies to justify nuclear escalation, all suggest a policy of legitimizing Western nuclear threats in the future. Policy-makers are anxious to avoid any real debate on the issue because the public appears strongly opposed to such policies. In fact public and international opinion is often cited as the main obstacles to the use of nuclear weapons. A poll taken days before the Gulf war found that 56 per cent of the public opposed the use of nuclear weapons against Iraq, even if Iraq had used chemical weapons first,⁴⁸ and a fortnight into the Gulf war, Joseph Nye of Harvard University warned that the "enormous political costs - domestic and international" of a nuclear attack on Iraq would "far exceed the benefits".⁴⁹

Those who are concerned to restrain the nuclear powers must work to raise these "political costs" and to stir the public debate that the government fears. The Permanent Under Secretary of State for Defence, speaking to the Soviet General Staff in November 1990, suggested that there being "no rational incentive, in any circumstances at all, for anyone to start a war between nuclear powers", the "practical task of strategy" should be "to construct the most effective possible system for... the absolute prevention of war between great powers or alliances".⁵⁰

According to this "strategy", the way is open for a tacit alliance between the nuclear powers, permitting "limited" wars against those unfortunate enough to lack nuclear weapons.

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May 1992

48 Robert J. Wybrow, 'The Gulf Crisis: A British perspective', in *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, Autumn 1991, p.265, citing Gallup poll 4-7 January 1991

49 *International Herald Tribune*, 4 February 1991

50 Michael Quinlan, 'Nuclear weapons and the abolition of war,' *International Affairs*, 67.2 April 1991, p.297

APPENDIX 1

US and British Nuclear Threats against Iraq during the Gulf Crisis 1990-1991

2 August 1990: Iraq invades Kuwait.

- 1) 8 August: President Bush warns Baghdad that the use of chemical weapons "would be intolerable and would be dealt with very, very severely". (*The International Herald Tribune*, 9 August 1990)
- 2) 10 August: "Whitehall sources made it clear that the multinational forces would be ready to hit back with every means at their disposal... [including] using tactical nuclear weapons against [Iraqi] troops and tanks on the battlefield". (*The Daily Star*, 10 August 1990)
- 3) 21 August: US Undersecretary of State for Defence Paul Wolfowitz states, "If we have to fight a war, we're going to fight it with all we have". (*The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, November 1990)
- 4) 30 September: A senior officer with the British 7th Armoured Brigade is reported as saying that if attacked by chemical weapons, British forces would "retaliate with battlefield nuclear forces". (*The Observer*, 30 September 1990)
- 5) 26 October: Reports of pressure in Cabinet circles for a pre-emptive nuclear attack: "One senior minister said, 'If we were prepared to use tactical nuclear weapons against the Russians, I can't see why we shouldn't be prepared to use them against Iraq'". (*The Daily Mail*, 26 October 1990)
- 6) 13 November: Hugo Young, the Journalist, reports hearing a minister say that the war might have to be ended with "tactical nukes". (*The Guardian*, 13 November 1990)
- 7) 6 December: Prime Minister John Major tells David Frost that the use of nuclear weapons in the Gulf is "not likely, remotely". (*The Guardian*, 8 January 1991)
- 8) 23 December: US Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney threatens Iraq with the "full spectrum" of available weaponry; "were Saddam Hussein foolish enough to use weapons of mass destruction, the US response would be absolutely overwhelming and devastating". (*The Guardian*, 24 December 1990)
- 9) 5 January 1991: President Bush writes a letter to Saddam Hussein, warning that, in response to any "unconscionable acts, "the American people would demand the strongest possible response", and "you and your people will pay a terrible price". (Cited in McGeorge Bundy, 'Nuclear Weapons and the Gulf', in *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1991, p.84)
- 10) 11 January 1991: General Schwarzkopf tells journalists, "I can assure you that if we have to go to war, I am going to use every single thing that is available to me to bring as much destruction to the Iraqi forces as rapidly as I possibly can". (*The Financial Times*, 12 January 1991)
- 11) 14 January 1991: Newsweek magazine reveals that General Schwarzkopf requested permission to explode a nuclear bomb over Iraq to generate an electromagnetic pulse that would shut down every electrical device in the country. The Pentagon also reportedly sought advice on the possible use of "earth-penetrator" nuclear warheads and neutron bombs. (*Newsweek*, 14 January 1991)

- 12) 15 January 1991: Prime Minister John Major answers a question on the possible use of nuclear weapons. "We have made it clear to the Iraqis that we have a wide range of weapons and resources in our hands, and I do not envisage needing to use the sanction he suggests". (**Hansard, 15 January 1991**)
- 13) 16 January 1991: Mere hours before the bombing begins, Douglas Hurd, the British Foreign Secretary, gives evidence to the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee. Britain gave a commitment at the 1978 UN Special Session on Disarmament not to launch a nuclear attack on a non-nuclear signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty such as Iraq. Hurd says, "If any non-nuclear weapons state covered by our negative security assurance were to manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons in breach of its Treaty obligations, we would have to consider carefully how our undertaking in respect of that state was affected. I think you can read the meaning of that". (**The Independent, 17 January 1991**)
- 14) 3 February 1991: "Mr. Hurd said that if Iraq responded to an allied land assault by using chemical weapons, President Saddam would be certain to provoke a massive response - language the US and Britain employ to leave open the option of using chemical or nuclear weapons". (**The Guardian, 4 February 1991**)
- 15) 3 February 1991: US Defence Secretary Dick Cheney says, "I would not at this point advocate use of nuclear weapons". (**The Financial Times, 4 February 1991**).
- 16) 5 February 1991: President Bush refuses to rule out the use of nuclear weapons, saying that he will wait for a recommendation from his military commanders: "I think it's better never to say what you may be considering". (**The Financial Times, 6 February 1991**)

APPENDIX 2

Incidents in Which US Strategic Nuclear Forces Were Involved 1946-1973

- 1) US aircraft shot down by Yugoslavia March 1946
- 2) Inauguration of President in Uruguay February 1947
- 3) Security of Berlin January 1948
- 4) Security of Berlin April 1948
- 5) Security of Berlin June 1948
- 6) Korean War: Security of Europe July 1950
- 7) Security of Japan/South Korea August 1953
- 8) Guatemala accepts Soviet Bloc support May 1954
- 9) China-Taiwan conflict: Tachen Islands August 1954
- 10) Suez crisis October 1956
- 11) Political crisis in Lebanon July 1958
- 12) Political crisis in Jordan July 1958
- 13) China-Taiwan conflict: Quemoy and Matsu July 1958
- 14) Security of Berlin May 1959
- 15) Security of Berlin June 1961
- 16) Soviet emplacement of missiles in Cuba October 1962
- 17) Withdrawal of U.S. missiles from Turkey April 1963
- 18) Pueblo seized by North Korea January 1968
- 19) Arab Israeli war October 1973

[From Barry Blechman, Stephen Kaplan et al., *Force without War: US Armed Forces as a Political Instrument*, Brookings Institution 1978 p.48].