

Fast
Track
to

Z e r o Nuclear Weapons

The
Middle
Powers
Initiative

A Briefing Kit

Fast Track to Zero Nuclear Weapons The Middle Powers Initiative

A Briefing Kit

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This briefing kit is mostly excerpted from MPI's briefing book *Fast Track to Zero Nuclear Weapons: The Middle Powers Initiative*, which was published by the Middle Powers Initiative in the fall of 1998.

A revised edition of this well-received book, authored by Robert D. Green, will be published in June 1999. To order, please find an order form at the back of this kit.

MPI
727 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139 USA
Telephone: 617-492-9189
Fax: 617-868-2560
E-Mail: mpi@ippnw.org
Website: www.napf.org/mpi

THE MIDDLE POWERS INITIATIVE: A NEW APPROACH TO DISARMAMENT

Launched in March 1998, the Middle Powers Initiative (MPI) is a carefully focused and coordinated campaign by a network of international citizen organizations to encourage the leaders of the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) to break free from their Cold War mindset, and move rapidly to a nuclear weapon-free world — which is now widely considered feasible and is overwhelmingly desired. The MPI will specifically press the NWS to start immediate multilateral negotiations leading to a Nuclear Weapons Convention, similar to the enforceable global treaty prohibiting and eliminating chemical weapons.

Leading co-sponsors of the MPI campaign include: two Nobel Peace Prize-winners, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) and the International Peace Bureau (IPB); and also the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, the State of the World Forum, Parliamentarians for Global Action, the International Network of Engineers and Scientists and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. An International Steering Committee, chaired by Senator Douglas Roche, O.C., former Canadian Ambassador for Disarmament, manages the campaign, and an MPI Operations Centre is run by a full-time Coordinator in the Cambridge, Massachusetts, office of IPPNW; MPI also maintains a U.N. Coordinator in New York.

The MPI was started because, nearly a decade after the end of the Cold War, more than 30,000 nuclear weapons remain in the world. No new nuclear disarmament negotiations are taking place; and the Conference on Disarmament is paralyzed. The Russian Duma — fearing NATO expansion and US ballistic missile defence plans, and angered by the US/UK bombing of Iraq and Yugoslavia -- is now unlikely to soon ratify START II. Therefore START III is immobilized. Faced with these threats and reeling from the collapse of its conventional military might, the Russian government has replaced Gorbachev's no-first-use policy and bold plans for abolition of nuclear weapons with a replica of NATO's nuclear deterrence doctrine. Even if START II were ratified, there would still be at least 17,000 nuclear weapons of all kinds remaining in 2007.

The world is poised to enter the 21st century in a "cold peace", where the CTBT will go unratified by some of the 44 required nuclear-capable states, and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) may begin to unravel. A growing number of non-nuclear states resent the nuclear powers' flouting of their obligations under the NPT. The nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in May 1998 were the most dramatic demonstration so far that the non-proliferation regime has broken down.

The continued retention of nuclear weapons by the five permanent members of the Security Council, who insist that nuclear weapons are essential to their security and to that of their allies while denying the same right to others, creates an inherently unstable situation. This was an essential point made by the International Court of Justice, whose unanimous call for nuclear weapons negotiations to be concluded continues to be rejected by the bulk of NATO. Pressure from a new direction is clearly needed.

Originally, MPI planned to urge the governments of a number of key middle-power states to form a coalition to press the NWS for an unequivocal commitment to commence negotiations for nuclear abolition, starting with removing nuclear weapons from persisting hair-trigger alert and adopting a No-First-Use pledge. Then on 9 June 1998 this aim was suddenly achieved when, in an unexpected independent initiative, the Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa and Sweden simultaneously launched a Joint Declaration entitled "Towards A Nuclear Weapon-Free World: The Need

For A New Agenda". Known as the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), these eight courageous governments criticised both the NWS and the three nuclear-capable states of India, Israel, and Pakistan, and called on them all to agree to start work immediately on the practical steps and negotiations required for elimination.

MPI therefore adjusted its immediate priorities as follows:

1) Support for the NAC. The NAC, reduced to seven with the loss of Slovenia following NATO pressure, introduced a resolution in the 1998 UN General Assembly incorporating its agenda. The resolution was adopted by 114 votes to 18 with 38 abstentions. The "No" voters included all the NWS except China (which abstained) plus India, Israel and Pakistan. Among the abstainers were all the non-nuclear NATO states except Turkey, signalling an unprecedented split in NATO. Thereby, the NAC resolution forged a new alliance of Northern and Southern states with a practical agenda for eliminating nuclear weapons.

MPI sent delegations to capitals of key NATO and other US-allied states to help change planned "No" votes to abstentions and to encourage nations under pressure from the NWS to stand their ground. MPI continues to work with the NAC to broaden and deepen support for their resolution, which will be re-introduced in the 1999 General Assembly.

2) Campaigning for a Review of NATO Nuclear Doctrine. As the NAC resolution demonstrated, NATO no longer speaks with one voice on the question of nuclear weapons. MPI is working with other NGOs, parliamentarians and government officials in non-nuclear NATO states to build support for the NAC and an urgent review of NATO's nuclear posture, and in particular to challenge the immorality, illegality and irresponsibility of current deterrence doctrine.

3) Ensuring the Survival of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The NPT — like the rest of the international arms control regime — is under tremendous strain. The NWS refuse to live up to their nuclear disarmament obligations; many non-nuclear states feel they are being taken for granted and that the agreements they made for indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 have not been honoured. MPI considers it a priority to ensure that the NPT survives beyond its 2000 Review Conference as an instrument for true nuclear disarmament.

4) Facilitating Strategy Consultations. MPI is developing a role in organising and facilitating consultations between NGOs and governments to advance nuclear disarmament. Its most recent such initiative was to co-convene, with the Fourth Freedom Forum, a Strategy Consultation at the Rockefeller Foundation in New York in February 1999. This brought together officials from the NAC plus several other governments and 37 NGO representatives to develop and coordinate strategies to expedite nuclear disarmament in the time leading up to the NPT Review Conference.

5) Developing a Media Strategy to Project the NAC and MPI. As the foundation of a media strategy, MPI has published a briefing book *Fast Track to Zero Nuclear Weapons* which highlights the deepening nuclear weapon crisis, discusses the feasibility and desirability of rapid nuclear disarmament, and explores the role that middle power governments, supported by civil society, can play in advancing this goal. Following a successful launch in the UN in October 1998 by Jayantha Dhanapala, UN Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs (who wrote the foreword), a revised edition is planned for publication in June 1999, which will be distributed worldwide and translated into Japanese and possibly several other languages.

MPI

Co-Sponsors

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International Peace Bureau
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Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
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Alyn Ware
Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy
Peter Weiss
*International Association of Lawyers
Against Nuclear Arms*
Suzanne Pearce
MPI Coordinator
Jim Wurst
U.N. Coordinator

Middle Powers Initiative
727 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139 USA
Tel: 617-492-9189
Fax: 617-868-2560
E-mail: mpi@ippnw.org
Website: www.napf.org/mpi

Country Representatives

Tony D'Costa
Ireland
Hiromichi Umebayashi
Japan
Karel Koster
The Netherlands

Lars G. Lindskog
Sweden
Arthur Muhl
Switzerland

THE DEEPENING CRISIS

Nuclear Tests by India and Pakistan

On 11 May 1998, an event occurred which could have almost as great an impact on international affairs as the initial breaching of the Berlin Wall. India announced that it had carried out three nuclear tests — the first since 1974. Two more followed on 13 May. Pakistan replied with its own tests on 28 and 30 May. The risks are serious and immediate. With tensions mounting in the disputed Jammu-Kashmir region, the prospect of war leading to a nuclear exchange cannot be discounted. Daniel Moynihan, former US Ambassador to India, warned: "The world is on the edge of nuclear warfare." In addition, the tests have challenged the sustainability of the present non-proliferation regime, raising the spectre of an escalating nuclear arms race in South Asia, the Middle East and elsewhere.

However, the core of the problem lies beyond India and Pakistan. A major pretext prompting India to test was the absolute refusal by the nuclear weapon states to implement their obligation under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, reaffirmed by the International Court of Justice, to negotiate for the elimination of nuclear weapons. In a press statement, India's prime minister argued that "the refusal of the nuclear weapon states to consider the elimination of nuclear weapons... continues to be the single biggest threat to international peace and security... it is because of the continuing threat posed to India by the deployment of these weapons...that India has been forced to carry out these tests."

India's decision to test may also have been stimulated by their languishing campaign to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Despite being the world's largest democracy with the second largest population, India's candidacy was receiving much less attention than those of smaller but more influential countries like Japan and Germany. The fact that the current permanent members are also the nuclear weapon states may therefore have been another factor prompting India's decision. This was borne out when some US commentators raised India's candidacy for the Security Council after the tests.

India also cited the hypocrisy of the nuclear weapon states which criticised India's tests while continuing their own nuclear testing by non-nuclear explosive means such as sub-critical and hydrodynamic tests. India has refused to join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and Non-Proliferation Treaty because it sees both as discriminatory, saying that they allow the nuclear weapon states to continue their possession and development of nuclear weapons while denying this to others. The tests by India and Pakistan show that such a discriminatory regime can no longer be sustained. The nuclear weapon states must choose: either an enforceable global ban on all nuclear weapons, or nuclear weapons will continue to spread.

The fact that both India and Pakistan had the technology to produce nuclear weapons for decades, but refrained from becoming overtly nuclear until recently, demonstrates that political considerations drive proliferation as much as feasibility. India, and Pakistan to a lesser degree, had been at the forefront of efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Nuclear Disarmament Stalled

Nearly a decade after the end of the Cold War, more than 30,000 nuclear weapons remain. No new nuclear disarmament negotiations are taking place; and in the Conference on Disarmament the only progress since 1995 is the August 1998 decision to start negotiations on a treaty to halt the production of fissile material. The non-aligned group has proposed a comprehensive programme of disarmament measures culminating in the elimination of nuclear weapons within a timebound framework. However, this was opposed by the nuclear weapon states. The Russian Duma has not ratified START II; START III is immobilized because of this. Some Russian politicians and militarists, concerned about Russia's



20 May 1998: Indian women cheer as Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visits the test site at Pokaran where India tested five nuclear devices. Vajpayee said that India was willing to "pay any price" for its security. Photo: AP/Ajit Kumar.

crumbling conventional force structure in the face of superior NATO forces, are once again talking of nuclear weapons as a vital line of defence for Russia.

Even if START II is ratified and fully implemented, there will still be at least 10,000 nuclear weapons of all kinds remaining on each side at the end of 2007. Besides, over half the weapons reduced by START II would have come to the end of their useful lives in that time, and been scrapped anyway. Even full compliance with START III would leave about 2,000 strategic warheads on each side — and would not touch the British, French or Chinese arsenals. Finally, there are still no plans to include the thousands of tactical nuclear weapons in any disarmament negotiations — yet these are the ones most likely to be used first in a future regional conflict, and to be coveted by paranoid regimes or terrorist groups.

Insecure Nuclear Weapon Materials and Nuclear Terrorism

On 13 October 1997, the *New York Times* deplored the "perilous pause on nuclear cuts." It focused on persistent reports of smuggling of nuclear materials from an insecure Russian system. General Alexander Lebed, former Secretary of Russia's National Security Council, insisted that 84 "suitcase" bombs were missing. Economic deprivation, ethnic unrest, religious fundamentalism, terrorist connections and old warheads at risk make a volatile cocktail.

The problem is not confined to Russia. In addition to sites for storing intact nuclear weapons, there are about 25 separately fenced areas in the US handling weapon-usable fissile nuclear materials. About 100 such sites are known to exist in the former Soviet Union, of which over ten are outside Russia (in Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan). In November 1994, the Kazakh and US governments cooperated to airlift over 600 kilogrammes of insecure highly enriched uranium from Kazakhstan to the US. However, there is an urgent need to establish more accurately how much nuclear material is stored at the remaining sites before building new, secure storage.

A particular vulnerability, which applies to all countries with nuclear weapons or materials, is their transport. The US is helping Russia by providing more secure transport equipment. There is also cooperation in improving Russian regulatory support, but this will take years to establish and cost more than Russia can afford.

Once such fissile materials are stolen, the difficulty of finding and recovering them before they can be used rises dramatically. This is a global problem requiring intensive international cooperation. As a 1995 report by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War warns, "Nuclear proliferation with its potential for nuclear terrorism has replaced a nuclear world war as the most serious nuclear threat in the post-Cold War world, at least in the short term."

Growing Risk of Accidental Nuclear War

With Russia's early warning and nuclear command systems deteriorating for economic and political reasons, the possibility of a weapon launch by accident, miscalculation or design has increased since the end of the Cold War.

Despite de-targeting agreements, US, Russian and French strategic nuclear forces remain on hair-trigger alert. However, in its Strategic Defence Review published in July 1998, the UK announced that it had relaxed the alert status of its single deployed Trident submarine to "several days' notice to fire." China's posture is not known for certain, but it claims its nuclear warheads are not on such high alert.



In August 1994, German police confiscated a suitcase used to smuggle plutonium from Moscow to Munich.
Photo: AP/Wide World.

The New England Journal of Medicine became so concerned by this situation that, in April 1998, it published a special report. This concluded that, despite the end of the Cold War, the risk of an accidental nuclear attack "has increased in recent years, threatening a public health disaster of unprecedented scale." It pointed to the alarming number of US military personnel who had to be removed from involvement with nuclear weapons because of alcohol or other drug abuse, or psychiatric problems; and to the admission by a former Commander of US Strategic Command that he had "investigated a dismaying array of accidents and incidents involving strategic weapons and forces."

As if this situation was not serious enough, a new Presidential Decision Directive (PDD60) issued in late 1997 recommits the US to policies of threatened first use and retaliation, and permits nuclear strikes against any non-nuclear state which had used chemical or biological weapons — again increasing the risk of nuclear weapon use. What is more, according to Robert Bell, a special assistant to the President and senior director for defense policy at the National Security Council, the Directive affirms that the US will continue to rely on nuclear weapons as a cornerstone of its national security for the "indefinite future."

Nuclear Weapon States Undermining the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

Despite the signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the development of new nuclear weapons and delivery systems continues. The US nuclear weapons laboratory programmes are being funded by a dramatic expansion in annual defence budgets which, after their initial post-Cold War decline, are now expected to rise by 33 percent, costing \$60 billion over a 13-year period.

In April 1998, the US-based Natural Resources Defense Council warned: "The U.S. government clearly intends to maintain under the CTBT, and indeed significantly enhance, its scientific and technical capabilities for undertaking development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons." The report stated that the US has embarked on a program "to design, develop, prototype and flight test an indisputably new-design warhead for the Trident II missile to replace the current W76 and W88 warheads."

Under the designation "Stockpile Stewardship Program," the US has begun "sub-critical" nuclear weapon tests to improve their reliability and efficiency — but this also provides diagnostic information to enable new weapons to be developed through computer simulation.

The US is not alone in planning new generations of nuclear weaponry. It has an extensive joint programme with Russia of explosive pulsed-power experiments. Meanwhile, the UK is believed to be participating in the US Stockpile Stewardship program in order to extend the life of its Trident warheads and missiles; and France is conducting its own laboratory tests in the Laser Megajoule project in Bordeaux.

All this advanced experimentation by the nuclear weapon states is seen by the non-nuclear weapon states as clearly contravening the spirit, if not the letter, of the CTBT. A study by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research argues that fusion research planned at the National Ignition Facility under construction in California would do so. This is because it would involve tiny thermonuclear explosions in violation of the CTBT prohibition against any nuclear explosion — as do "sub-critical" tests at the Nevada test site. It could also pave the way for a new generation of nuclear weapons using pure fusion reactions, a development which the treaty was clearly meant to prevent.



U1A complex, an underground laboratory of tunnels built 960 feet beneath the ground, designed to conduct subcritical high explosive experiments to test nuclear weapon materials. Photo: US Department of Energy.

IMMEDIATE STEPS

The most important first step required of the nuclear weapon states is to give an unequivocal commitment to complete nuclear disarmament, by commencing multilateral negotiations leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons through a Nuclear Weapons Convention. All other steps should be seen as contributing to that goal.

However, there are also interim achievable steps which the nuclear weapon states can take immediately — unilaterally, bilaterally or multilaterally — to make the world safer, and show a responsible example to the nuclear weapons-capable states. The most important of these, as emphasised by the New Agenda Coalition, is to stand down all nuclear forces from hair-trigger alert.

De-Alerting

In their report of August 1996, the Canberra Commission made the following points about the continuing practice of maintaining nuclear-tipped missiles on alert:

- It is a highly regrettable perpetuation of Cold War attitudes and assumptions.
- It needlessly sustains the risk of hair-trigger postures.
- It retards the critical process of normalising US-Russian relations.
- It sends the unmistakable and, from an arms control perspective, severely damaging message that nuclear weapons serve a vital security role.
- It is entirely inappropriate to the extraordinary transformation in the international security environment.

The report added: "Taking these missiles off alert is a natural counterpart to the stand-down of bombers from nuclear alert which was implemented in late 1991." Terminating nuclear alert would:

- Reduce dramatically the chance of an accidental or unauthorised nuclear weapons launch.
- Have a most positive influence on the political climate among the nuclear weapon states.
- Help set the stage for intensified cooperation.

An obvious follow-up to such an initiative would be the Commission's second recommended step: removal of warheads from delivery vehicles. This would strongly reinforce the gains achieved by de-alerting. Advantages cited by the Commission include:

- This measure can be implemented to the extent that nuclear forces can be reconstituted to an alert posture only within known or agreed timeframes, much as is the case with bomber forces.
- Adequate response to nuclear threats would remain certain, but the risk of large-scale pre-emptive or surprise nuclear attack and the imperative for instantaneous retaliation would be avoided.
- The barriers against inadvertent or accidental use would be greatly strengthened.

General Lee Butler was responsible for recommending to President Bush the proposal to stand down his own Strategic Command bombers in 1991. General Butler later commented: "Among its advantages, it is easily explainable, and easily reversible in physical terms. However, once implemented, politically it would be extremely difficult to reverse."

In the recent UK Strategic Defence Review, the government announced that it had taken the Trident force off high alert, but had rejected separating warheads from missiles and placing them in verifiable storage.

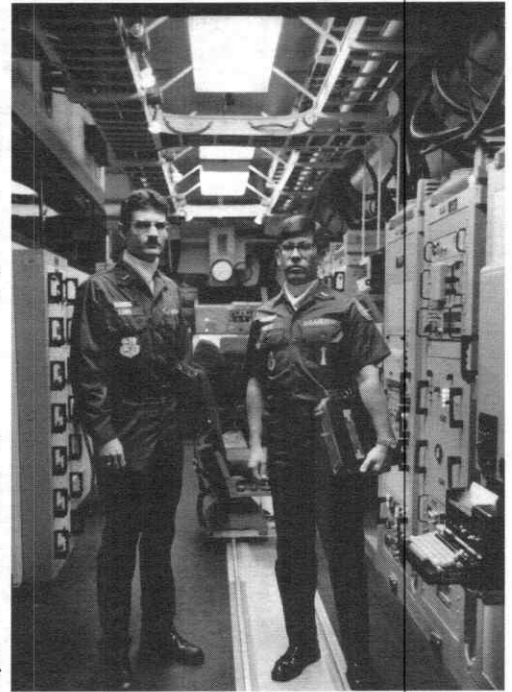
Ending Deployment of Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons

As demanded by the New Agenda Coalition, the nuclear weapon states should unilaterally remove all non-strategic nuclear weapons from deployed sites to a limited number of secure storage facilities on their territories. This would be a logical follow-on to the 1991 unilateral declarations by the US and Soviet Union, whereby each pledged to remove all non-strategic nuclear weapons from surface ships and store them on shore.

No-First-Use

The New Agenda Coalition stated: "Legally binding instruments should be developed with respect to a joint no-first-use undertaking between the nuclear-weapon States..." The NATO nuclear weapon states and Russia should join China in making a commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Hitherto, NATO has refused on the grounds that nuclear weapons may be needed to counter an overwhelming conventional attack. Now Russia has the same excuse because of NATO's conventional preponderance. This means that the onus is now on NATO to take the initiative, especially in light of the World Court Opinion.

However, it must be recognised that no-first-use agreements do not remove the threat of use of nuclear weapons. In times of conflict, adversaries with nuclear arsenals may doubt whether their opponents would keep such a pledge, or they may launch a first strike mistakenly thinking it to be in response to a nuclear attack. No-first-use must therefore be accompanied by de-alerting and followed quickly by dismantling and elimination.



These Strategic Air Command missileers work together in a capsule 60 feet underground. They will execute nuclear weapons launch commands when issued orders to do so. Photo: Robert Del Tredici

Towards a Nuclear Weapon Free World: The Need for a New Agenda

U.N Resolution 53/77Y adopted 4 December, 1998

Introduced by Ireland, with Co-sponsors:

Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Ireland, Lesotho, Liberia, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, New Zealand-Aotearoa, Nigeria, Peru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Uruguay, Venezuela

The General Assembly,

PP1 Alarmed by the threat to the very survival of mankind posed by the existence of nuclear weapons,

PP2 Concerned at the prospect of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons,

PP3 Concerned at the continued retention of the nuclear-weapons option by those three States that are nuclear-weapons capable and that have not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT),

PP4 Believing that the proposition that nuclear weapons can be retained in perpetuity and never used accidentally or by decision - defies credibility, and that the only complete defence is the elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again,

PP5 Concerned that the Nuclear-Weapon States have not fulfilled speedily and totally their commitment to the elimination of their nuclear weapons,

PP6 Concerned also that those three States that are nuclear-weapons capable and that have not acceded to the NPT have failed to renounce their nuclear-weapons option,

PP7 Bearing in mind that the overwhelming majority of States entered into legally-binding commitments not to receive, manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and that these undertakings have been made in the context of the corresponding legally-binding commitments by the nuclear-weapons States to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament,

PP8 Recalling the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its 1996 Advisory Opinion that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control,

PP9 Stressing that the international community must not enter the third millennium with the prospect that the possession of nuclear weapons will be considered legitimate for the indefinite future and convinced that the present juncture provides a unique opportunity to proceed to prohibit and eradicate them for all time,

PP10 Recognizing that the total elimination of nuclear weapons will require measures to be taken firstly by those nuclear-weapon States that have the largest arsenals, and Stressing that these States must be joined in a seamless process by those nuclear-weapon States with lesser arsenals in the near future,

PP11 Welcoming the achievements to date and the future promise of the START process and the possibility it offers for development as a plurilateral mechanism including all the nuclear-weapon States, for the practical dismantling and destruction of nuclear armaments undertaken in pursuit of the elimination of nuclear weapons,

PP12 Believing that there are a number of practical steps that the nuclear-weapon States can and should take immediately before the actual elimination of nuclear arsenals and the

development of requisite verification regimes take place, and in this connection noting certain recent unilateral and other steps,

PP13 Welcoming the agreement recently reached in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on the establishment of an Ad hoc Committee under Item 1 of its agenda entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", to negotiate, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and considering that such a treaty must further underpin the process towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons,

PP14 Emphasising that for the total elimination of nuclear weapons to be achieved, effective international cooperation to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons is vital and must be enhanced through, inter alia, the extension of international controls over all fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices,

PP15 Emphasising the importance of existing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone treaties and of the signature and ratification of the relevant protocols to these treaties,

PP16 Noting the Joint Ministerial Declaration of 9 June 1998 and its call for a new international agenda to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world, through the pursuit, in parallel, of a series of mutually reinforcing measures at the bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral levels,

OP1 Calls upon the Nuclear-Weapon States to demonstrate an unequivocal commitment to the speedy and total elimination of their respective nuclear weapons and without delay to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to the elimination of these weapons, thereby fulfilling their obligations under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT);

OP2 Calls upon the United States and the Russian Federation to bring START II into force without further delay and immediately thereafter to proceed with negotiations on START III with a view to its early conclusion;

OP3 Calls upon the Nuclear-Weapon States to undertake the necessary steps towards the seamless integration of all five Nuclear-Weapon States into the process leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons;

OP4 Calls upon the Nuclear-Weapon States to pursue vigorously the reduction of reliance on non-strategic nuclear weapons and negotiations on their elimination as an integral part of their overall nuclear disarmament activities;

OP5 Calls upon the Nuclear-Weapon States, as an interim measure, to proceed to the de-alerting of their nuclear weapons and in turn to the removal of nuclear warheads from delivery vehicles;

OP6 Urges the Nuclear-Weapon States to examine further interim measures, including measures to enhance strategic stability and accordingly to review strategic doctrines;

OP7 Calls upon those three States that are nuclear weapons-capable and that have not yet acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to clearly and urgently reverse the pursuit of all nuclear weapons development or deployment and to refrain from any actions which could undermine regional and international peace and security and the efforts of the international community towards nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation;

OP8 Calls upon those States that have not yet done so to adhere unconditionally and without delay to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to take all the necessary measures which flow from adherence to this instrument;

OP9 Calls upon those States that have not yet done so to conclude full-scope safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to conclude additional protocols to their safeguards agreements on the basis of the Model Protocol approved by the IAEA Board of Governors on 15 May 1997;

OP10 Calls upon those States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify, unconditionally and without delay, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and, pending the Treaty's entry into force, to observe a moratorium on nuclear tests;

OP11 Calls upon those States that have not yet done so to adhere to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and to work towards its further strengthening;

OP12 Calls upon the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to pursue its negotiations in the Ad hoc Committee established under Item 1 of its agenda entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, taking into consideration both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament objectives, and to conclude these negotiations without delay; and pending the entry into force of the treaty, Urges all States to observe a moratorium on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

OP13 Calls upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish an appropriate subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament and, to that end, to pursue as a matter of priority its intensive consultations on appropriate methods and approaches with a view to reaching such a decision without delay;

OP14 Considers that an international conference on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, which would effectively complement efforts being undertaken in other settings, could facilitate the consolidation of a new agenda for a nuclear-weapon-free world.

OP15 Recalls the importance of the Decisions and Resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and Underlines the importance of implementing fully the "Strengthening the Review Process for the Treaty" Decision;

OP16 Affirms that the development of verification arrangements will be necessary for the maintenance of a world free from nuclear weapons and requests the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), together with any other relevant international organisations and bodies, to explore the elements of such a system;

OP17 Calls for the conclusion of an internationally legally-binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons;

OP18 Stresses that the pursuit, extension and establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at, especially in regions of tension, such as the Middle East and South Asia, represent a significant contribution to the goal of a nuclear- weapon-free world;

OP19 Affirms that a nuclear-weapon-free world will ultimately require the underpinnings of a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument or a framework encompassing a mutually reinforcing set of instruments;

OP 20 Requests the Secretary General, within existing resources, to compile a report on the implementation of this resolution;

OP21 Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session the item entitled "Towards a Nuclear Weapons Free-World: The Need for a New Agenda", and to review the implementation of this resolution.

VOTE ON RESOLUTION 53/77 Y, "Nuclear Disarmament: The Need for a New Agenda" in the UN General Assembly on 3 December, 1998

YES: 114

NO: 18

ABSTAIN: 38

YES: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua-Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Dar-Salam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central Afr Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cote D'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Dominican Rep, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equat. Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Dem Rep, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent-Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad-Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Unit. Rep of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

NO: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Hungary, India, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Monaco, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Russian Fed, Slovakia, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States

ABSTENTIONS: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bhutan, Canada, China, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Myanmar, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Rep. of Korea, Rep. of Moldova, Slovenia, Spain, Former Yug Rep Macedonia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

MODEL NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONVENTION

In November 1997, at the request of Costa Rica, the United Nations circulated a model Nuclear Weapons Convention (UN document A/C.1/52/7) as a discussion draft. The model, drafted 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 on 29 April 1997. As with nuclear weapons, the knowledge of making chemical weapons cannot be disinvented. Yet that did not prevent the world from making a legally binding, enforceable treaty to ban them — despite the fact that verification of compliance is far more difficult for chemical weapons than for nuclear weapons. The purposes of the model convention include:

- Demonstrating the feasibility of the elimination of nuclear weapons;
- Encouraging governments to pursue 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 the day when the political will to begin negotiations emerges.

A recurrent response to the demand for a model Nuclear Weapons Convention is that in today's political environment it is "premature" or "unrealistic idealism" to consider and discuss a framework for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. It is neither premature to begin devising a plan for complete nuclear disarmament, nor is it premature for states to begin developing the necessary verification mechanisms. For many years, a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty seemed beyond reach: yet verification mechanisms were studied by a scientific group of the Conference on Disarmament, which helped the negotiations once they began.

In light of the ongoing threat posed by nuclear weapons as demonstrated by the South Asia tests, discussions of a Nuclear Weapons Convention should be seen as an urgent need rather than a premature wish. The model is offered to states and NGOs in the hope that it can inspire and enrich these discussions.

Source: Merav Datan, "Nuclear Weapons Convention: Why and How," Statement to Second Preparatory Committee Meeting for the 2000 Review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, 28 April 1998.

WORLD COURT ADVISORY OPINION ON LEGAL STATUS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS — DISPOSITIF

The World Court gave a 34-page main Advisory Opinion, plus over 200 pages of separate statements and dissenting Opinions by individual judges. The final paragraph of the main Opinion, known as the "Dispositif", follows:

"For these reasons, THE COURT

(1) *By thirteen votes to one*, Decides to comply with the request for an advisory opinion;

IN FAVOUR: President Bedjaoui (Algeria); Vice-President Schwebel (US); Judges Guillaume (France), Shahabuddeen (Guyana), Weeramantry (Sri Lanka), Ranjeva (Madagascar), Herczegh (Hungary), Shi (China), Fleischhauer (Germany), Koroma (Sierra Leone), Vereshchetin (Russia), Ferrari Bravo (Italy), Higgins (UK); AGAINST: Judge Oda (Japan).

(2) Replies in the following manner to the question put by the General Assembly:

A. *Unanimously*, There is in neither customary nor conventional international law any specific authorization of the threat or use of nuclear weapons;

B. *By eleven votes to three*, There is in neither customary nor conventional law any comprehensive and universal prohibition of the threat or use of nuclear weapons as such;

IN FAVOUR: President Bedjaoui; Vice-President Schwebel; Judges Oda, Guillaume, Ranjeva, Herczegh, Shi, Fleischhauer, Vereshchetin, Ferrari Bravo, Higgins;

AGAINST: Judges Shahabuddeen, Weeramantry, Koroma.

C. *Unanimously*, A threat or use of force by means of nuclear weapons that is contrary to Article 2, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Charter and that fails to meet all the requirements of Article 51, is unlawful;

D. *Unanimously*, A threat or use of nuclear weapons should also be compatible with the requirements of the international law applicable in armed conflict particularly those of the principles and rules of international humanitarian law, as well as with specific obligations under treaties and other undertakings which expressly deal with nuclear weapons;

E. *By seven votes to seven, (by the President's casting vote)*, It follows from the above-mentioned requirements that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law;

However, in view of the current state of international law, and of the elements of fact at its disposal, the Court cannot conclude definitively whether the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be lawful or unlawful in an extreme circumstance of self-defence, in which the very survival of a State would be at stake;

IN FAVOUR: President Bedjaoui; Judges Ranjeva, Herczegh, Shi, Fleischhauer, Vereshchetin, Ferrari Bravo; AGAINST: Vice-President Schwebel; Judges Oda, Guillaume, Shahabuddeen, Weeramantry, Koroma, Higgins.

F. *Unanimously*, There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control."

Source: "Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons" (Advisory Opinion of July 8), UN Document A/51/218 (1996), reprinted in 35 I.L.M. 809 & 1343 (1996). Also available at the website: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/icj1/opinion.htm>.

THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY IN JEOPARDY

At midnight on 8 May 1998 in Geneva, the second Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2000 review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) collapsed, with no agreement on substance, recommendations or rules of procedure. The US had refused a request by fourteen Arab states, backed by the rest of the Non-Aligned Movement of 113 states, to include background documentation relating to the need to establish a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East. The US refused because it was determined to exclude Israel's nuclear capability from discussion. The real cause of the breakdown, however, was that the US, Russia, UK and France — China played a more detached role — had again blocked all attempts to make the nuclear weapon states honour their NPT commitment in Article VI which binds them to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

Both South Africa and Canada had introduced initiatives to try to break the deadlock on Article VI. South Africa had requested that, at the 1999 Preparatory Committee meeting, special time be devoted to nuclear disarmament. It had argued that this would provide the nuclear weapon states with an opportunity to report what they were doing, and for the non-nuclear weapon states to engage with them on how best to make progress. However, the South African proposal was repeatedly rejected by all the nuclear weapon states except China. This augured ill for the 1999 conference.

The history of the NPT shows growing frustration with the nuclear weapon states' promise of "ultimate" nuclear disarmament. The NPT was signed in 1968. At the first review in 1975, it was only endorsed by determined action by the Chair. In 1980, there was no agreement. In 1985, a consensus was only maintained by stating in the final document that some states agreed and others did not. There was no agreement again in 1990. In 1995, despite the NPT's indefinite extension, the review process again broke down, with 13 states denouncing the extension. The Chair of the Review & Extension Conference, Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala of Sri Lanka, warned:

"If there is naked cynicism on the part of the nuclear weapon States and a total disregard of nuclear disarmament commitments...then we might see not just one or two countries for individual reasons wanting to opt out...but a major threat of an exodus from the treaty...We must never ever let the Treaty be in jeopardy, and for that there has to be progress in nuclear disarmament."

Later that year when presenting its oral testimony to the World Court on the nuclear weapon question, Mexico warned that if the disarmament obligations of the NPT are not met, "we would need to revise our continuation as party to the Treaty... as a country, we are not prepared under any circumstances to accept a monopoly in the possession of nuclear weapons or to allow the modernization of these devices through tests whose legality we also respectfully question."

Three days after the first preparatory conference in 1997, which took a step back from the Extension Conference, India warned the UN: "The stubborn position of the nuclear weapon states has paralyzed the debate on nuclear disarmament. The window of opportunity opened at the end of the Cold War is closing."

In light of the undertaking by the NPT signatory states to disarm, it is also a disturbing fact that, although the US nuclear warhead stockpile is about half what it was when the NPT was signed in 1968, only now are the Russian and UK arsenals returning to their 1968 levels; whilst those of France and China are almost four times greater. Moreover, France and China refuse to consider any further reductions until the US and Russian totals approach theirs — for which currently there are no plans. On the other hand, the UK government announced in its recent Strategic Defence Review that it was unilaterally reducing its stockpile of operationally available warheads from 300 to 200.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

Opened for signature in 1968, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (known as the NPT) entered into force on 5 March 1970. Its objective was to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and to further the goal of achieving general and complete disarmament. To achieve this

- The nuclear weapons states agreed not to transfer nuclear weapons to any recipient (Article I); and non-nuclear states agreed not to receive them or seek any assistance in manufacturing them (Article II).
- As a confidence-building measure, non-nuclear signatory states were obliged to accept a “safeguards” system of confidence-building measures, under which the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) conducts inspections to verify compliance with the Treaty (Article III). However, no such verification was imposed on the nuclear weapon states.
- In exchange, Article IV not only declared the “inalienable right” of the signatory states to develop “peaceful” nuclear energy, but non-nuclear weapon states were offered cooperation in developing “peaceful” nuclear technology by the three depository nuclear weapon states — the US, USSR and UK. (China and France signed in 1992 as the only other two nuclear weapon states because they too had exploded a nuclear weapon before 1 January 1967.)
- Article V allows the peaceful applications of nuclear explosions, and for any “potential benefits” to be made available to signatory non-nuclear weapon states.
- Article VI states: “Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”

The NPT’s duration was originally limited to 25 years. Four Review Conferences have been held every five years since 1970. In the 1995 Review & Extension Conference, the NPT was extended indefinitely, but with a strengthened review process. There are 186 signatory states, but Cuba, India, Israel and Pakistan refuse to sign. Differences have centered on whether the nuclear weapon states have sufficiently complied with Article VI, and on nuclear testing, nuclear weapon improvements and security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states by the nuclear states regarding the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

More fundamentally, the NPT is criticised because

- It legitimises the division of the world into nuclear “haves” and “have nots”; and it imposes stringent controls on the latter while the obligations of the former are not so strict or enforceable. Moreover, despite the controls, Iraq evaded them as a signatory non-nuclear weapon state; and an aspiring nuclear weapon state can withdraw from it under Article X by giving three months’ notice (as North Korea threatened to do) and then acquire nuclear weapons with impunity.
- It ignores the insurmountable link between the military and peaceful uses of nuclear technology, highlighted by the double role of the IAEA as promoter and controller of nuclear energy.

Sources: NPT Treaty Text; UN Department of Information Fact Sheet No. 1, DPI/1654-March 1995; Acronym Institute Report of the NPT Review and Extension Conference, New York, 17 April-12 May 1995 (ACRONYM No7, September 1995); Douglas Roche, O.C., “An Analysis of the Second Preparatory Committee Meeting for the 2000 Review of the NPT, Geneva, April 27-May 8, 1998.”

SECOND STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTION TREATY (START II)

Presidents Bush and Yeltsin concluded a framework agreement for START II on 17 June 1992, and signed it on 3 January 1993. Beginning on 1 January 2003, the Treaty limits the warheads on each side's intercontinental strategic forces to 3,500 "accountable warheads," of which no more than 1,750 may be deployed on multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle equipped (MIRVed) Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs), with the balance on single-warhead ballistic missiles and/or bombers.

"Heavy" Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) and MIRVed ICBMs are banned. "Reserve" stocks of strategic nuclear warheads, and nuclear weapons deliverable by shorter range systems, such as sea-launched cruise missiles and tactical aircraft, are not covered by the Treaty.

To achieve START II limits, the US plans to decommission 4 of its 18 Trident ballistic missile submarines, and reduce the number of warheads per missile in the remaining 14 submarines from 8 to 5.

On 26 January 1996, the US Senate ratified START II. However, the Russian Duma has not done so, and a substantial body of opinion in Russia views the Treaty as giving the US a nuclear advantage. The Treaty is also regarded as too costly to implement within the agreed timetable because it requires the early retirement of Russian ICBMs before the end of their service life and the production and deployment of an additional 500 single-warhead ICBMs just to reach the 3,500 warhead level by 2003. To maintain parity with the US, additional resources would have to be dedicated for missile submarine and SLBM modernisation, silo conversion, and improved command, control and communication systems.

Moreover, since 1995 the proposal to expand NATO eastward to include Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic has provided Russian hard-liners with an argument for not ratifying START II and for retaining large stocks of non-strategic nuclear weapons to offset a conventional imbalance — a logic reminiscent of NATO's during the Cold War.

Because of these problems for Russia, Clinton and Yeltsin agreed at their March 1997 Helsinki summit to extend the deadline for implementing START II to the end of 2007. However, all delivery vehicles for elimination under the Treaty will be deactivated by the end of 2003, by removing their nuclear warheads or taking other jointly agreed and verifiable steps. The US is providing assistance to Russia in this.

Source: *Nuclear Weapons: The Road To Zero*, edited by Joseph Rotblat (Westview Press, 1998), pages 158-159, 179-180.

THIRD STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTION TREATY (START III)

At their Summit in Helsinki on 21 March 1997, Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin agreed that, once START II enters into force, the US and Russia will immediately begin negotiations on a START III agreement. This will include the following:

- Establishment by 31 December 2007 of lower aggregate levels of 2,000-2,500 strategic nuclear warheads on each side.
- Measures relating to the transparency of strategic nuclear warhead inventories and their destruction, to promote the irreversibility of deep reductions.
- Resolving issues related to the goal of making the current START treaties unlimited in duration.
- Placement in a deactivated status of all strategic nuclear delivery vehicles which will be eliminated under START II by 31 December 2003 [See START II Box].
- Extending the deadline for implementing START II to 31 December 2007. The sides will agree on specific language to be submitted to the Russian State Duma and, following Duma approval of START II, to be submitted to the US Senate. The Presidents therefore underscored the importance of prompt ratification of START II by the Duma.
- US and Russian experts will explore possible measures relating to nuclear long-range, sea-launched cruise missiles, tactical nuclear systems and nuclear materials, to include appropriate confidence-building and transparency measures.

Source: *Nuclear Weapons: The Road To Zero* edited by Joseph Rotblat (Westview Press, 1998), pages 179-180.

CURRENT NUCLEAR ARSENALS

By the end of 1998, estimates of the number of nuclear weapons in the five nuclear weapon states were as follows:

Country	Nuclear Weapons
Russia	Some 10,000 weapons*
US	Some 10,000
France	450
China	Estimated 400
UK	185

* An additional 5-10,000 are being disassembled.

Source: "Nuclear Notebook", *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (Jan./Feb., March/April and May/June 1999) and personal communication by Robert S. Norris, Natural Resources Defense Council.

FISSILE MATERIALS HOLDINGS

The following table lists the estimated holdings (in tonnes) of military fissile material in the nuclear weapon and nuclear weapon-capable states, and the corresponding number of nuclear explosives that could be built with this material.

Country	Plutonium	HEU	Nuclear Explosives*
Russia	130	1,050	120,000
US	100	645	80,000
UK	12	8	4,000
France	5	25	3,000
China	4	20	3,000
Israel	0.5	—	100
India	0.3	—	80
Pakistan	—	0.2	20
TOTAL (rounded)	250	1,750	210,000

*Assumes 4 kg of plutonium or 12 kg of uranium-235 for each fission explosive.

Source: D. Albright, F. Berkhout, and W. Walker, *Plutonium and Highly Enriched Uranium 1996: World Inventories, Capabilities and Policies* (Oxford University Press, 1997).

Global Nuclear Stockpiles, 1945-1997

Year	U.S.	Russia	U.K.	FR	CH	Total
1945	6	0	0	0	0	6
1946	11	0	0	0	0	11
1947	32	0	0	0	0	32
1948	110	0	0	0	0	110
1949	235	1	0	0	0	236
1950	369	5	0	0	0	374
1951	640	25	0	0	0	665
1952	1,005	50	0	0	0	1,055
1953	1,436	120	1	0	0	1,557
1954	2,063	150	5	0	0	2,218
1955	3,057	200	10	0	0	3,267
1956	4,618	426	15	0	0	5,059
1957	6,444	660	20	0	0	7,124
1958	9,822	869	22	0	0	10,713
1959	15,468	1,060	25	0	0	16,553
1960	20,434	1,605	30	0	0	22,069
1961	24,173	2,471	50	0	0	26,694
1962	27,609	3,322	205	0	0	31,136
1963	29,808	4,238	280	0	0	34,326
1964	31,308	5,221	310	4	1	36,844
1965	32,135	6,129	310	32	5	38,611
1966	32,193	7,089	270	36	20	39,608
1967	31,411	8,339	270	36	25	40,081
1968	29,452	9,399	280	36	35	39,202
1969	27,463	10,538	308	36	50	38,395
1970	26,492	11,643	280	36	75	38,526
1971	26,602	13,092	220	45	100	40,059
1972	27,474	14,478	220	70	130	42,372
1973	28,449	15,915	275	116	150	44,905
1974	28,298	17,385	325	145	170	46,323
1975	27,235	19,443	350	188	185	47,401
1976	26,199	21,205	350	212	190	48,156
1977	25,342	23,044	350	228	200	49,164
1978	24,424	25,393	350	235	220	50,622
1979	24,141	27,935	350	235	235	52,896
1980	23,916	30,062	350	250	280	54,858
1981	23,191	32,049	350	275	330	56,195
1982	23,091	33,952	335	275	360	58,013
1983	23,341	35,804	320	280	380	60,125
1984	23,621	37,431	270	280	415	62,017
1985	23,510	39,197	300	360	425	63,792
1986*	23,410	45,000	300	355	425	69,490
1987*	23,472	43,000	300	420	415	67,607
1988*	23,236	41,000	300	415	430	65,381
1989*	22,827	39,000	300	415	435	62,977
1990*	21,781	37,000	300	505	435	60,021
1991*	20,121	35,000	300	540	435	56,396
1992*	18,340	33,000	200	540	435	52,515
1993*	16,831	31,000	200	525	435	48,991
1994*	15,456	29,000	250	485	435	45,626
1995*	14,111	27,000	300	485	425	42,321
1996*	12,937	25,000	260	450	400	39,047
1997*	12,000	23,000	260	450	400	36,110

* U.S. (from 1988) and Soviet/Russian (from 1986) warheads include those in active, operational forces; retired, non-deployed warheads awaiting dismantlement; and weapons in reserve. For recent years, the estimate for the former Soviet Union/Russia is 50 percent active, 50 percent retired/reserve. For more detail on Russian and U.S. stockpiles see "Nuclear Notebook" May/June 1997 and July/August 1997.

NRDC Nuclear Notebook, *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* (November-December 1997), p. 67.

SOME CLAIMS FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS REBUTTED

1) "Nuclear weapons cannot be disinvented"

Neither can chemical weapons. Far from despairing about them, the international community has agreed on an enforceable treaty banning every aspect of chemical weapons; while efforts are proceeding to strengthen a similar one against biological weapons. An immediate result is that military professionals refuse to operate them. To claim that "this approach won't work for nuclear weapons" amounts to a limp mix of appeasement and fatalism. The world must, and can, do better than that.

Chemical and biological weapons are prohibited despite verification problems from the large number of chemicals and biological agents capable of use in such weapons. Many of these agents have dual uses, and thus are readily available and easy to convert to weapon use.

Nuclear weapons, on the other hand, require 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 significantly easier than for other weapons of mass destruction.

Recent opinion polls in two nuclear weapon states show that the American and British people overwhelmingly want their governments to negotiate a global, enforceable treaty like the Chemical Weapons Convention to outlaw nuclear weapons, with an agreed plan for their verified elimination.

All that is missing is the political will.

2) "Nuclear weapons prevent war between the major powers"

First, this unprovable assertion is threatened by the current irresponsible and unnecessary hair-trigger alert status of strategic nuclear forces. Second, the carnage of World War II had reaffirmed that serious war between major states was not a rational instrument of policy and must be avoided at almost any cost.

Third, the new danger of nuclear escalation merely underlined this. For example, we now know how the US and Soviet Union in the Cuban missile crisis only avoided a nuclear exchange by luck, with both sides hugely miscalculating the other's nuclear deployments and plans.

What this teaches us — along with the many other crises where nuclear weapons were threatened — is an undeniable, overriding reality: nuclear weapons make nuclear war possible; and major nuclear war has the unique capacity to destroy civilization and possibly all life on Earth.

Besides, what constrains modern industrial states from going to war with each other is their increasing dependence on multinational conglomerates and the globalization of trade, and their sensitivity to public opinion associated with the risk of casualties and instant media coverage.

3) "Nuclear deterrence works"

Whether nuclear deterrence works is unproven. However, there are growing doubts about it, particularly against a desperate regime, religious fundamentalists or terrorist group armed with nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.

Consider a scenario where a 1991 Irish Republican Army mortar bomb attack from a van in London against the British Cabinet had involved instead a threat to use even a crude nuclear device. A threat of nuclear retaliation is utterly incredible. Yet a greater threat to the government of a nuclear weapon state could barely be imagined.

Most countries have never subscribed to the nuclear deterrence myth and never sought to acquire nuclear weapons. Instead, they have opted to rely on modest conventional defence

forces backed up by recourse to a mix of diplomatic, legal and economic forms of deterrence through international institutions like the United Nations and the International Court of Justice, which have become much more effective since the Cold War ended.

Current nuclear deterrence doctrine is irresponsible because it:

- Requires the continued deployment of nuclear weapons, which flouts the World Court Advisory Opinion and treaty obligations by the nuclear weapon states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.
- Risks accidental nuclear weapon launch.
- Provokes the spread of nuclear weapons, as proved by Iraq, India and Pakistan.
- Causes health and environmental damage through the need to develop and produce nuclear weapons.
- Stimulates constant pressure to improve nuclear arsenals.
- Maintains an unstable, hostile attitude between nuclear possessor states, and inhibits cooperation in promoting true security.

There is another fundamental objection to relying on 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 all forms of life on Earth.

4) "What if terrorists tried nuclear blackmail?"

On no account should nuclear retaliation be threatened. The bluff will be called — because targeting them with even a small nuclear weapon would be impossible without incurring unacceptable collateral damage and provoking global outrage. Indeed, some extremists would relish taking 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 neutralise the blackmailers using exhaustion, disorientation etc., and if necessary, Special Forces with sophisticated precision weapons.

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

5) "Nuclear weapons are essential for my country's ultimate security"

South Africa, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan had nuclear weapons: but they got rid of them. Their governments understood that, far from being essential to their security, they were an unacceptable threat to it. Brazil and Argentina had nuclear weapon programmes, but mutually abandoned them.

Most countries have joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states, thereby rejecting the possession of nuclear weapons. Most of these are now covered by nuclear weapon-free zones rejecting the stationing of nuclear weapons within their territories. New Zealand has gone even further and adopted nuclear-free legislation.

The reality is that nuclear weapons are a security problem, not a solution. This is because the claim by the nuclear weapon states that they need nuclear weapons for their security provokes the greatest threat: namely, the spread of nuclear weapons to paranoid regimes and terrorists

— who are least likely to be deterred — and even a renewed Cold War with the risk of nuclear war. If the rich nuclear weapon states, with their superior conventional arsenals, need nuclear weapons, then why not every other country — and especially those with real security threats?

In military terms, current security threats are mostly from internal conflicts, where nuclear weapons are irrelevant. Nuclear weapons are useless to tackle the major security threats: economic collapse, environmental disasters, lack of water, poverty, and associated famine and disease. In fact, nuclear weapons exacerbate many of these problems through diversion of funds and other resources, and generating radioactive contamination; and the risk of regional nuclear war is being provoked by the intransigence of the nuclear weapon states.

The only way to overcome these security threats is by co-operative international action — which is made more difficult by the secrecy, suspicion and need for enemies associated with the doctrine of nuclear deterrence.

6) "Nuclear weapons are needed to counter chemical and biological threats"

The justification for this is that only a nuclear weapon has the explosive power to destroy such a target, especially if underground, and its enormous heat would incinerate germ warfare agents. The extreme dangers of such an approach — amounting to military incompetence — are as follows:

- The nuclear explosion would create and disperse massive amounts of radioactive fallout.
- Any chemicals or biological toxins not destroyed in the blast could be dispersed with catastrophic effects.
- Any state with chemical or biological weapons is unlikely to store them in one place. Thus any attempt to destroy them would require several nuclear weapons, multiplying the risk of civilian casualties and environmental damage.
- Instead of deterring the possession or use of chemical or biological weapons, the mere threat to use a nuclear weapon would give that state the political and military justification to use their own weapons of mass destruction.

In the US confrontation with Iraq in February 1998, the possibility of using nuclear weapons against suspected underground Iraqi chemical and biological weapon production and storage sites caused a worldwide outcry. General Lee Butler, who in the Gulf War had helped to convince General Colin Powell to rule out plans to use nuclear weapons, added this comment:

"What could possibly justify our resort to the very means we properly abhor and condemn? Who can imagine our joining in shattering the precedent of non-use that has held for over fifty years? How could America's irreplaceable role as leader of the campaign against nuclear proliferation ever be re-justified? What target would warrant such retaliation? Would we hold an entire society accountable for the decision of a single demented leader? How would the physical effects of the nuclear explosion be contained, not to mention the political and moral consequences? In a single act we would martyr our enemy, alienate our friends, give comfort to the non-declared nuclear states and impetus to states who seek such weapons covertly. "

The official response was: "We have worked hard to fashion non-nuclear responses to the threat or use of weapons of mass destruction." This suggested that the US was stepping back from the revised Presidential Decision Directive issued in December 1997, which stated that

the US would consider using tactical nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states attacking US vital interests with chemical or biological weapons.

7) "Nuclear weapons are essential for my country's status in the world"

This, tragically, is France's position. Following the war in Chechnya and in the face of NATO expansion, Russia now agrees. Secretly, the UK still sees nuclear weapons as compensation for loss of Empire; but its dependence on the US for Trident missiles, targeting intelligence and communication satellites, and the grotesque size, cost and uselessness of the Trident force, make it look increasingly ridiculous. China has never taken nuclear weapons as seriously. Of all nations, the US, with its massive conventional military strength, technological prowess and economic might, has no need of nuclear weapons to give it status.

However, the status conferred upon those states which have developed nuclear weapons is like that of the neighbourhood bully, feared and resented but not respected. France was shocked by the global outrage and boycott of its products by civil society when it resumed testing in the South Pacific in 1995; while the US imposed economic sanctions on India and Pakistan when they tested in 1998, and India's hopes of achieving permanent membership of the Security Council were dashed.

If either the UK or France were to give up their nuclear weapons all indications are that this would be a way to secure their permanent membership, because of the urgent need following the South Asian tests to break the wrongly perceived link between a permanent seat and possession of nuclear weapons. The obvious intention to retain their nuclear arsenals is undermining the respect in which they are seen by the world, and hence their status.

Much greater status is gained by leaders and their countries if they take action to help eliminate nuclear weapons. US President Kennedy achieved considerable status for signing, with his Soviet counterpart, a Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963. In 1987, New Zealand and its Prime Minister David Lange achieved extraordinary international status and influence for adopting nuclear-free legislation.

The first leader of a nuclear weapon state to grasp the current opportunity and call for multi-lateral negotiations to start for a Nuclear Weapons Convention will gain massive status and prestige for his country — and secure his name in history.

8) "If we go for nuclear weapons abolition, how do we know some state won't cheat, make one and then dominate us?"

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. Above all, there will be a clear understanding that nuclear blackmail cannot be dealt with by threatened retaliation with nuclear weapons (see claim 4).

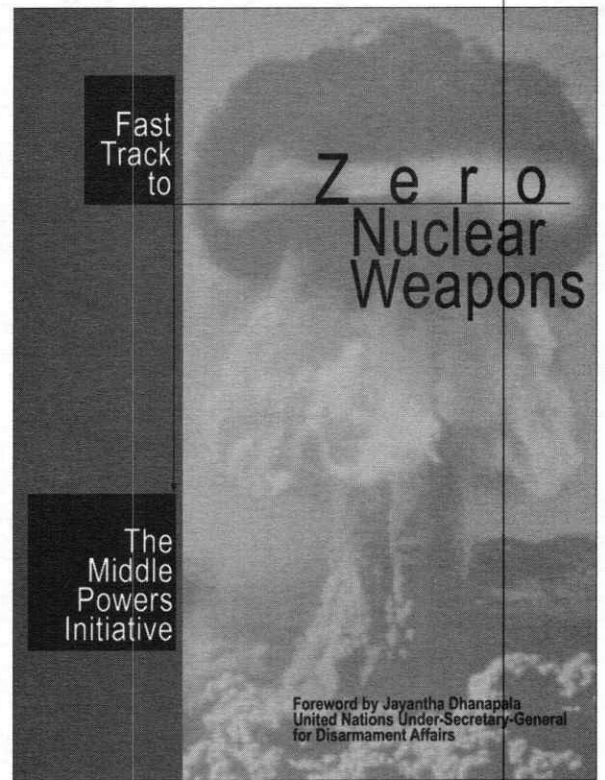
World outrage against such breakout from a nuclear weapon-free world would be so massive — including probable conventional military intervention on the scale of the Gulf War, plus economic isolation — that there would be no political or military incentive to do so.

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.

Fast Track to Zero Nuclear Weapons: The Middle Powers Initiative

This 72-page, illustrated briefing book is an important resource in the Middle Powers Initiative (MPI) to mobilize key non-nuclear weapons states to encourage the leaders of the nuclear weapons states to commit themselves to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

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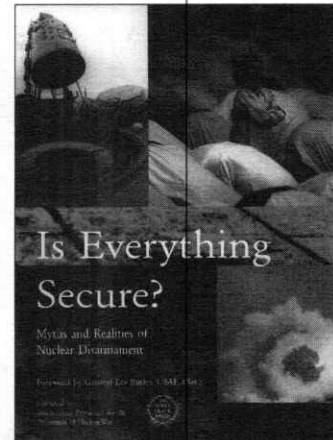


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