

Dealing with the Hydra?

Proliferation and Full Spectrum Dominance

by

Ken Coates

with comments by

Phil Goff, Anna Lindh,
Louis Michel, Errki Tuomioja

Foreign Ministers respectively of

New Zealand, Sweden, Belgium and Finland

Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation

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Dealing with the Hydra?

Proliferation and Full Spectrum Dominance

By Ken Coates

'The horror scenarios of the Cold War have disappeared, but the threat of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons has not. Like the monstrous Hydra of Greek mythology, modern weapons of mass destruction are sprouting new heads faster than anybody can cut them off.'

So wrote Anna Lindh and Erkki Tuomioja, the Foreign Ministers of Sweden and Finland respectively, in an article in *The International Herald Tribune*, whose title gives their answer to the threat: 'Slaying the Hydra – Together'. As they conclude:

'Even Hercules could not kill the many headed monster alone. Only by acting together will we safeguard the security of all.'

In spite of strenuous combined efforts, the hydra of proliferation remains very much with us, and it has certainly not been caged by the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The most recent NPT preparatory conference, held in Geneva, between April 28th and May 9th 2003, resounded with reproaches, notably those of the United States against North Korea and Iran. The Americans were also most concerned about the possibility that Libya might become a proliferator. Delegates in Geneva will have been actively wondering how far these kinds of proliferation match the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, the phantasms for which the British-American coalition went to war, and which have totally eluded the occupiers of Iraq.

None of us should be surprised that the United States has been fixated by the question of horizontal proliferation, and almost oblivious to that of vertical proliferation, which is likely to provoke the sharpest concern when the next Review Conference of the Treaty takes place in the year 2005.

At the full-scale NPT Review Conference of 2000, thirteen practical steps for nuclear disarmament had been agreed. These were designed to satisfy non-proliferating objectors that the apparent immunity of the nuclear powers to Treaty action for actual disarmament would, by agreement, be ended. But in 2002, at the earlier Preparatory

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Conference in New York, the American Ambassador declared that he no longer supported many of the conclusions which had been agreed two years earlier.

During the two years of the Bush administration which had seen the modification of American views on these thirteen practical steps, a marked swing to unilateralism had affected numerous other areas of United States policy. Unilaterally, the United States withdrew from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty; it declined to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which had been signed by 164 nations; it had caused the ousting of the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. In lesser disarmament decisions, the United States had also rejected the Landmine Treaty of 1997, endorsed by 122 Member-States, which meant that anti-personnel bombs, banned by most countries, could be used by American forces in the bombardment of Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, and in the second Iraq war. Additionally, the USA had been alone among nations in opposing an agreement in the United Nations to restrict international trade in small arms. Of course, the Bush administration also rejected the Kyoto Agreement and forced the resignation of the Chairman of the United Nations Panel on Climate Change because his views were disapproved in the administration. And the United States not only opposed the creation of the International Criminal Court, but demanded immunity from prosecution for all American citizens.

The thrust of unilateralism has intensified the continued proliferation of nuclear weapons, especially in the development of smaller, 'usable' weapons designed to implement the new military doctrines which were being developed. These consistently undermine the distinction between conventional and nuclear weapons, partly by requiring ever more horrific conventional armaments. It could be argued that the distinction is further undermined by the category 'weapons of mass destruction', which takes the focus off specifically nuclear explosives. In this context, we now hear of a new generation of low-yield and 'bunker-busting' nuclear weapons, to match recent developments in high-powered conventional bombs.

Unilateral instincts have also been given free play in drafting the original United States resolution on the post-war reconstruction of

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Iraq, somewhat satirically entitled 'To Assist the People of Iraq'.

All of these initiatives have attracted publicity, not excluding a great deal of adverse commentary. But it is possible that the most serious impact of unilateralism will be judged to have been the decision to back-pedal on those NPT Review Conference decisions of 2000.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty was fundamentally a voluntary engagement by signatory States who foreswear the development of their own nuclear weapons, and reliance on nuclear arms. But a significant part of the shift in United States policy to 'going it alone' has been the abandonment of the language of non-proliferation, and the substitution of an apparently similar, but in fact diametrically opposed, language of 'counter-proliferation'.

Counter-proliferation is not a voluntary engagement, but a policy of compulsion, which can be prayed in aid against States which are, or are thought to be, considering the acquisition of nuclear armaments or other so-called 'weapons of mass destruction', particularly chemical and biological weapons. Up to now, this policy has been slowly crystallising. For example, although the United States has expressed its disapproval of the decision of Pakistan and India to acquire nuclear warheads, there has been no threat to compulsorily disarm either country. Of course there has also been scant recognition and no threat whatever, to effect the nuclear disarmament of Israel, which is believed to have a very large nuclear arsenal, including thermo-nuclear warheads. This military commitment could have been challenged at the time that the related South African move to nuclear disarmament was undertaken: but no such benign action took place. However, States designated by the United States as rogue States have all been the subject of threatening messages, outstanding cases being those of North Korea, Iran, Iraq and Libya.

The foundation of these threats will be more widely questioned in the wake of the occupation of Iraq, which has yielded up none of the suspected weapons, and appears rather unlikely to find them in future.

In spite of these difficulties, the zeal of the American President for counter-proliferation was not tempered by his victories in Iraq. At the Evian summit on the 1st June, President Bush 'injected a surprise element into what had been expected to be an informal discussion on

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weapons of mass destruction'. *The Financial Times* (June 2nd 2003) reported:

'US-UK officials said the so-called Proliferation Security Initiative would seek an international agreement to intercept ships and aeroplanes suspected of carrying shipments of arms, or nuclear, chemical and biological cargo.'

This appears to seek to legitimise unilateral action against proliferators, given that the power of interception necessarily imposes quick decisions on those exercising it. If interception were to be the prerogative of a duly constituted international authority, working under appropriate controls, then this might act equally promptly and effectively against all proliferation, horizontal or vertical. There are no indications that such open-handedness is being proposed by either the American or British sponsors of this initiative.

It has been argued that the biggest shock to the non-proliferation regime has been the formal repudiation, by North Korea, of its adherence to the NPT. But, in the words of one commentator:

'At least as damaging as North Korea's departure have been successive moves by Washington to distance itself from nuclear disarmament. In the run up to the Iraq war, the US President, George Bush, signed National Security Presidential Directive 17, which said: the United States will continue to make clear that it reserves the right to respond with overwhelming force - including potentially nuclear weapons - to the use of weapons of mass destruction against the United States ...'

The significance of this directive is not simply that it marks a higher level of bellicosity than has been customary among nuclear powers: it also constitutes a serious undermining of the non-proliferation regime, by removing the 'negative security assurances' made by all nuclear powers to NPT non-nuclear signatories in 1978. This was indeed strengthened in 1995 by the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 984, committing the nuclear powers not to use nuclear weapons against the non-nuclear weapon States.

These commitments were of some considerable importance in encouraging what has been perhaps the most positive step against proliferation, the development of nuclear-free zones over wide areas of the earth's surface. Without the guarantee that nuclear weapons will not be used against them, it may be increasingly difficult to

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persuade non-nuclear States that they will gain any advantage by maintaining their commitment to non-proliferation.

This commitment had been strained already by the time of the NPT Review Conference of 2000, which is why the thirteen practical steps which the US Government is now questioning were needed to keep the show on the road. Non-proliferators were absolutely impatient with the continued assumption of the nuclear powers that their own weapons were in a special category, beyond the reach of disarmament measures which would only apply to lesser mortals.

Certainly there have been various agreements between nuclear powers which have reduced various kinds of deployment. But the essential trend has maintained the predominance of nuclear States, even if the number of States involved has been seen to increase. That increase has provided no reassurance, since the conflict in the Indian Sub-continent has manifestly been made more dangerous by the development of both Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons. And the possession of a hundred or two Israeli nukes may give a sense of security to Israelis, or rather to some Israelis: but it will do nothing to improve the prospects in neighbouring Arab States.

To the extent that the NPT, and reliance on voluntarism, have been weakened, it is not surprising that we hear more and more talk about counter-proliferation. This implies a policeman, and only one such policeman has presented itself on the scene. The United States military preponderance is intuited by all, and the various wars which have been launched in recent years have all served to underline that message. Military preponderance has in fact been codified in official American military doctrine. In the years before the recognition of President Bush's unilateral policies, it was already stated, for instance in the US Space Command *Vision for 2020*, which opens with the claim:

'US Space Command – dominating the space dimension of military operations to protect US interests and investment. Integrating Space Forces into war fighting capabilities across the full spectrum of conflict.'

This pretension is backed by some explicit reasoning:

'The emerging synergy of space superiority with land, sea, and air superiority, will lead to Full Spectrum Dominance. Space forces play an increasingly critical role in providing situational awareness (e.g. global

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communications; precise navigation; timely and accurate missile warning and weather; and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance to US forces.)

Space doctrine, organizations, training, materiel, leadership and personnel will evolve to fully realize the potential of space power. Space power is a vital element in moving towards the Joint Vision goal of being persuasive in peace, decisive in war, and pre-eminent in any form of conflict.'

The plain military version of Full Spectrum Dominance

'implies that US forces are able to conduct prompt, sustained, and synchronised operations with combinations of forces tailored to specific situations and with access to and freedom to operate in all domains – space, sea, land, air, and information. Additionally, given the global nature of our interests and obligations, the United States must maintain its overseas presence forces and the ability to rapidly project power world-wide in order to achieve full spectrum dominance.'

With the visible and indeed spectacular augmentation of American military power, even before the rise of overt unilateralism under the Bush administration, we can easily see why there has been more talk about counter-proliferation, where persuasion has been seen to give place to direct compulsion.

However, military power is not everything, and subject nations in a complex and integrated modern world can find a variety of ways of containing militarism. One is reminded of the Czech hero, the good soldier Schweik, who knew how to reduce the might of the Habsburg Empire to gibbering impotence and rage, by assiduously obeying orders. If for United Nations based on persuasion, we seek to substitute Dominated Nations, we shall find a great burgeoning of inventive ways of frustrating the dominators.

This is why the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, only caught half the truth when he tried to persuade his parliamentary colleagues in England, and the French and German Governments, that they should go along with the wishes of the United States in Iraq.

'... you are right it is the United States which has the military power to act as the world's policeman, and only the United States. We live in a uni-polar world; the United States has a quarter of the world's wealth, the world's GDP, and it has stronger armed forces than the next 27 countries put

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together. So its predominance is huge. That is a fact. No one can gainsay it; no one can change it in the short or medium term. The choice we have to make in the international community is whether, in a uni-polar world, we want the only super-power to act unilaterally and we force them to act unilaterally or whether we work in such a way that they act within the multilateral institutions. What I say to France and Germany and all other European Union colleagues is to take care, because just as America helps to define and influence our politics, so what we do in Europe helps to define and influence American politics. We will reap a whirlwind if we push the Americans into a unilateralist position in which they are the centre of this uni-polar world.'

However, the lesson of the war in Iraq is that the world is very far from uni-polar. New military alliances will probably form because the material economic interests of France, Germany and Russia will require a counter lobby to that of the USA. (In the wings, waits China, not yet seen as a part of any axis of evil, but neither yet seen as an acceptable world partner.)

But the military cannot do many necessary things. Often, it seems, it cannot maintain the basic fabric of civil society. The civil power came first, and may even have the last laugh. No doubt the conflict between the United States and Iraq was exacerbated by the decision of Saddam Hussein to trade oil for Euros instead of Dollars. The heightened tension in Saudi Arabia and the continued pressure on Iran, may quickly persuade the two other major oil exporters to do the same. Already Venezuela is moving in that direction. So, the good soldier Schweik may get his revenge.

If oil is traded in Euros, then petro-dollars will no longer bridge the yawning gap in the United States balance of trade, and it will be necessary for the Americans to vastly increase their exports, or reduce their imports, in order to reach a balance. Full Spectrum Dominance financed by petro-dollars will be a thing of the past, and the fate of the Soviet Union, which over-reached itself because successive Soviet Governments spent more and more on military technology at the expense of popular contentment, may yet visit the United States.

Even so, the proliferation of nuclear weapons remains a serious danger. Yes, weaker nuclear powers may well be visited by thieves and terrorists who wish to find the means of punishing their adversaries.

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For some years the major fear was that the Russians might not be able to control their crumbling nuclear arsenals. If economic weakness overtakes the world's solitary megapower, who dare argue that this pattern may not recur?

But all this is somewhat speculative. What has already left the area of speculation is the fact that what Donald Rumsfeld calls 'old Europe' is finding a necessity for closer diplomatic and military co-operation. An alignment with Russia is already likely. Miscalled 'new Europe' may well seek closer affinities with the United States, based largely on ancient ideological prejudice and modern nationalism. None of the parties threaten a 'New Cold War': ideology is absent, but conflicts of interest are not. For this reason, the economic future of Rumsfeld's new Europe is far more likely to turn on its relations with Germany and France than it is to prosper from transatlantic aid. There is no pot of gold or Marshall Plan which will relieve Eastern Europe's needs: so the resurgence of Nato on an Eastern basis is likely to be more an affair of trumpets and drums, not to say flags, of which there will be an abundance, than it is of serious and sustained military power. Nato is founded on a Treaty, and its members therefore have rights, which sit ill with unilateral policies by the senior partner. The planting of impressive new bases will not consolidate, but aggravate, this redivision of Europe's military space. A new set of alignments is emerging, perhaps reluctantly, but driven by a powerful sense of necessity, from the turmoil which has recently hit Iraq. The effects of that turmoil are likely to be even more profound than the dire effects of coalition policies on Mesopotamia.

All these speculations serve only to show that vertical proliferation is still both possible and likely to continue. Horizontal proliferation may be thought to have been deterred by the adoption of policies to 'counter' it by the megapower: but to the extent that these encourage duplicity, they will merely make more difficult its detection. There can of course be endless attempts to restrict the spread of nuclear technology, and its refinement into ever more damaging areas, but so complex is this territory that more and more of us are coming to the conclusion that the simple solution is the most practical one. In the words of General Lee Butler, formerly of the United States Air Force, 'standing down nuclear arsenals requires only a fraction of the

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ingenuity and resources that were devoted to their creation'. General Butler was following in the footsteps of another distinguished military man, Lord Mountbatten.

'As a military man who has given half a century of active Service, I say in all sincerity that the nuclear arms race has no military purpose. Wars cannot be fought with nuclear weapons. Their existence only adds to our perils because of the illusions which they have generated.

There are powerful voices around the world who still give credence to the old Roman precept ...if you desire peace, prepare for war. This is absolute nuclear nonsense, and I repeat – it is a disastrous misconception to believe that by increasing the total uncertainty, one increases one's own certainty.'

Butler's conclusion is that

'a global consensus that ... nuclear weapons have no defensible role ... is not only possible, it is imperative.'

It is understandable that the investment of a prodigious treasure gives an institution the semblance of permanence and indestructibility. To imagine all that to be dispensable, indeed to think we could be better off without it, is widely described as 'utopian'. But this utopian decision is more practical by far than the endless pursuit of lesser agreements to regulate powers, which continually escape all efforts to confine them. The price of establishing a controlling agency strong enough and extensive enough to enforce counter-proliferation could all-too-easily be the price of universal enslavement, and the enthronement of one power over all. A movement to disarm all, by contrast, enfranchises all who participate, and is by its nature pluralistic and inclusive.

Of course, if such a great human resistance begins to emerge, Anna Lindh and Erkki Tuomioja will remain right throughout all the interregnum before it takes effect. Short of comprehensive nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation cannot be abandoned without enthroning brute force. But real disarmament is the overcoming of force.

Hercules had the very great advantage that he was a God. But some of us think it is a disadvantage that he is also a myth. If we want to solve our problems we must do it ourselves.

* * *

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On 29th May, 2003, the Chairman of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, Ken Coates, wrote to the foreign ministers of all the signatory states to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), enclosing a copy of his article 'Dealing with the Hydra', and seeking their views on how to advance a process of comprehensive nuclear disarmament. A small selection of the many responses which have been received follows his letter:

Dear Foreign Minister,

I am writing to you about the next round of negotiations for the renewal of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which, as I understand it, falls due the year after next. Thus, there may be just a little time in which an appropriate response could be prepared.

I am enclosing a short article about this question which I submitted at the invitation of the Greek Foreign Minister, George Papandreou, to a conference which he organised in Athens at the end of May during the Greek Presidency of the European Union.

In a nutshell, the end of the Cold War changed many perceptions about the dangers of nuclear proliferation, and these have been further modified by the emergence of an apparently hegemonic power in the United States of America which has given rise to the official military doctrine of Full Spectrum Dominance. This has undoubtedly helped to foster the mentality of 'counter-proliferation', which is frequently now substituted for non-proliferation, as the natural order of things. But non-proliferation is a voluntary engagement, the result of an impressive convergence by the States of the world on common policies designed to restrict the diffusion of nuclear weapons. 'Counter-proliferation' is a policy of compulsion, which implies the instatement of a policeman who can enforce action against proliferators.

I think this is a very dangerous substitution. I doubt very much whether counter-proliferation will succeed, since it will merely make proliferation into a covert policy. But to the extent that it did succeed, it would be giving over powers to the greatest power, instead of subjecting the most important decisions to consensus and democratic influence.

In the enclosed paper I argue that it has become necessary to follow through on previous agreements to complete non-proliferation by overall and comprehensive nuclear disarmament, including the

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disarmament of the nuclear powers themselves. Much of the argument of the great powers is running the other way. Prominent American politicians have cast doubt on the validity of the thirteen steps agreed in the year 2000 at the full-scale NPT Review Conference.

What can be done to make the thirteen steps into a reality? Is it not time for all those States party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to seek to complete non-proliferation by a process of comprehensive nuclear disarmament, to organise a conference of their own, in which they can co-ordinate their plans, and agree on common action to realise them?

With respect and good wishes.

Yours sincerely,
Ken Coates

*Reply from Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finland,
26th June 2003*

Dear Ken,

Thank you for your letter of 30 May on the issues confronting the nuclear non-proliferation regime. I found your assessment of the problems posed by the doctrine of counter-proliferation interesting and insightful, and I fully share your concern about maintaining the momentum of nuclear disarmament in the review process of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Finland is strongly committed to the NPT in all its aspects and the ultimate goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons. We do our best to contribute constructively to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime and to the implementation of the thirteen practical steps for disarmament. For instance, on 3-5 September 2003 in Vienna I will have the honour to chair the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT), to be convened by the Secretary General of the United Nations.

Recently, on June 16, my fellow Foreign Ministers of the European Union and I agreed on Basic Principles defining the broad lines for an EU Strategy against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and an Action Plan for the practical implementation of these basic principles. Our approach will be guided by our commitment to uphold and implement the multilateral disarmament and non-

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proliferation treaties and agreements. We reaffirmed our determination to pursue universalisation of the existing disarmament and non-proliferation norms and stressed the importance of effective national implementation thereof. We also recognised the importance of appropriate steps towards the goal of general and complete disarmament.

I enclose for your information a report Finland submitted to the NPT Preparatory Committee in its session in Geneva between 28 April and 9 May outlining our efforts to help make the thirteen steps into a reality.

The issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation will be high on the international agenda in the coming months. I will be following these questions with great interest, and appreciate your input and ideas.

Yours sincerely,
Errki Tuomioja

P.S. As an additional measure we are calling for the CBTB meeting in Vienna to be held on a ministerial level.

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Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Second session, Geneva, 28 April – 9 May 2003

Implementation of Article VI and Paragraph 4 (c) of the 1995 Decision on 'Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament'.

Report by Finland

1. Finland is strongly committed to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, to the pursuit of global nuclear disarmament and the general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Finland regards the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the associated safeguards regime as the key elements of global efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.
2. For Finland, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty (CBTB)

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represents an essential building block in the efforts of the international community to contain the proliferation of nuclear arms in all its aspects, thus contributing to nuclear disarmament. Finland signed the Treaty on the first day it was opened for signature, and completed her ratification process in 1999. Finland is fully committed to the obligations of the CTBT and makes every effort to promote its entry into force at the earliest possible date. Accordingly, Finland has been nominated as President-designate of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, to be convened by the Secretary General of the United Nations on 3-5 September 2003 in Vienna. A Primary Seismological Station and a radionuclide laboratory are located in our territory as part of the International Monitoring System.

3. Finland also attaches great importance to assisting countries in their endeavours to build capacity that is needed to implement the obligations under the CTBT. For this purpose we actively support the Provisional Secretariat in its training activities. *Inter alia*, representatives of signatory states have been trained in Finland to work as National Data Centre operators.
4. Finland has been a member of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) since 1996. Finland held the Presidency of the Conference for the first time in 2002 (March-May). As a member and former President, Finland has done her utmost to break the current deadlock in that unique institution. With reference to the existing proposals and CD/1624 Finland in her capacity of President tried to initiate the work of the CD by proposing the establishment of Ad Hoc Committees, Working Groups and the schedule of activities. The proposal was in line with the Final Document of the NPT 2000 Review Conference, Article VI's paragraph 15, sub-paragraphs three and four.
5. Even with the continued difficulties in the Conference on Disarmament, Finland remains committed to these goals which have been expressed several times also in the NPT process. Finland is willing to assist in all efforts towards fulfilling the mandate of the CD. Finland welcomes the increased co-operation between the EU member states on CD matters and is ready, for her part, to enhance it further.

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6. The international safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the fundamental pillar of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Finland has concluded a comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA and signed and ratified the Additional Protocol. We consider the Additional Protocol an essential additional instrument for further strengthening of the IAEA's safeguards system. Finland urges all states that have not yet signed and ratified the Additional Protocol to do so without delay.
7. Finland is developing its national safeguards system further so as to enable effective implementation of IAEA strengthened safeguards in Finland. In addition, Finland continues to support the IAEA research and development programme for nuclear verification and materials security.
8. Finland contributes to strengthening the non-proliferation regime by conducting well-established safeguards supports programmes as part of Finnish bilateral assistance to third countries. The objective of the safeguards co-operation is to assist these countries in developing and maintaining national systems for accounting and control of nuclear materials and other radioactive materials, and for export controls and border controls. These support programmes are co-ordinated with the IAEA programmes for safeguards and security of material.
9. In recent years Finland has contributed to the development of verification concepts and capabilities, e.g. in the fields of nuclear material measurements, environmental monitoring, including airborne gamma ray measurements for the detection of radioactive materials, and air sampling techniques and equipment. Furthermore, we are looking at ways of contributing to the efforts to strengthen confidence building and verification processes in order to facilitate effective non-proliferation and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction.
10. Finland reaffirms her commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in all its aspects and the ultimate goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons. Finland will do her utmost to contribute constructively to the preparatory work for the 2005 Review Conference.

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*Reply from Louis Michel, Deputy Prime Minister
and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Belgium*

Dear Sir,

I read with great interest your letter of 29th May last and transmitted your article on Proliferation and Full Spectrum Dominance to the relevant directorate in my administration.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty remains the cornerstone of our nuclear security policy. We are committed to progress in all three essential components of the Treaty: nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and international co-operation for peaceful use of nuclear material. The Non-Proliferation Treaty represents a delicate balance of interests, and it is in the global interest to respect this comprehensive approach. In this context, Belgium has actively pursued a policy aimed at preserving the integrity of the NPT regime.

At the recently held Preparatory Meeting for the 2005 NPT Review Conference, Belgium launched a number of specific and concrete proposals. We consider the unequivocal undertaking by the Nuclear Weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament as one of the major achievements of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. In this respect irreversibility is a core principle. While welcoming the steps the Nuclear Weapon States have taken so far to reduce their nuclear arsenals (both by dismantling nuclear weapons as by the destruction of fissile material and closing down production facilities), we encourage the Nuclear Weapon States to continue their efforts in this respect. We also encourage the establishment, without further delay, of an *ad hoc* committee in the Conference on Disarmament to deal with nuclear disarmament.

Belgium is also deeply disturbed by the recent challenges to the NPT following serious proliferation activities undertaken by a number of countries. We are concerned that some States have sought or are seeking to develop weapons of mass destruction. This is a major threat to international peace and security. The risk that terrorists will acquire such materials adds a new dimension to this threat. We believe that the existing multilateral treaty regime should be made more effective by working with those who share its interest in preventing proliferation as well as dealing with those who cheat, and considering carefully the position of those who do not belong.

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Belgium is working today on containing proliferation while dealing with its underlying causes. We will actively foster the establishment of regional security arrangements and regional arms control and disarmament processes. We count on all other States to join in these efforts.

Yours sincerely,
Louis Michel

Reply from Phil Goff, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand, 21st July 2003

Dear Ken Coates,

Thank you for your letter of 30 May, in which you outline your concerns over the failure of some states to live up to their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

I agree that the failure of some states to demonstrate any verifiable progress on their nuclear disarmament obligations is a cause for concern. New Zealand is part of the New Agenda Coalition, a group of countries which came together in 1998 because we were unhappy about the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament under the NPT. I have enclosed copies of the New Agenda Statement¹ and the New Agenda Position Paper from the 2nd NPT Preparatory Committee meeting held in Geneva in April/May of this year. These documents set out the New Agenda's concerns with the current situation and outline our strategy in the lead-up to the 2005 NPT Review Conference. States must not be allowed to renege on commitments to the 13 steps, which were agreed by all NPT members at the 2000 Review Conference.

Yours sincerely,
Hon. Phil Goff

1 See *The Spokesman (No 80)*, the journal of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation (www.russfound.org)

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Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Geneva 28 April – 9 May 2003

New Agenda Coalition Paper

By New Zealand on behalf of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa and Sweden as members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC)

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I Background

In 1995, the States parties extended the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty indefinitely and undertook to make every effort to achieve its universality. The Review Process of the Treaty was strengthened and Principles and Objectives to address the implementation of the Treaty were adopted. The Resolution on the Middle East was adopted as an integral part of the 1995 package.

In 1996, the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice concluded unanimously 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'.

The Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference represents a positive step on the road to nuclear disarmament. In particular, nuclear-weapon States made the unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals and agreed on practical steps to be taken by them that would lead to nuclear disarmament. To this end, additional steps were necessary to improve the effectiveness of the strengthened review process for the Treaty.

II Fundamental Principles

The participation of the international community as a whole is central to the maintenance and enhancement of international peace and stability. International security is a collective concern requiring collective engagement. Internationally negotiated treaties in the field of disarmament have made a fundamental contribution to international peace and security.

Unilateral and bilateral nuclear disarmament measures complement the treaty based multilateral approach towards nuclear disarmament. It is essential that fundamental principles, such as transparency, verification and irreversibility, be applied to all disarmament measures.

We reaffirm that any presumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States is incompatible with the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and with the broader goal of the maintenance of international peace and security.

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Irreversibility in nuclear disarmament, nuclear reductions, and other related nuclear arms control measures is imperative. A fundamental prerequisite for promoting nuclear non-proliferation is continuous irreversible progress in nuclear arms reductions.

Each article of the Treaty is binding on the respective State parties at all times and in all circumstances. It is imperative that all States parties be held fully accountable with respect to the strict compliance of their obligations under the Treaty.

Further progress on disarmament must be a major determinant in achieving and sustaining international stability. The 2000 NPT undertakings on nuclear disarmament have been given and the implementation of them remains the imperative.

A nuclear-weapon-free world will ultimately require the underpinning of a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument or a framework encompassing mutually reinforcing sets of instruments.

III Developments since the 2000 NPT Review Conference

To date, there have been few advances in the implementation of the thirteen steps agreed to at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We remain concerned that in the post Cold War security environment, security policies and defence doctrines continue to be based on the possession of nuclear weapons. The commitment to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in security policies and defence doctrines has yet to materialise. This lack of progress is inconsistent with the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to achieve the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. In addition, we are deeply concerned about emerging approaches to the future role of nuclear weapons as a part of new security strategies.

The Conference on Disarmament has continued to fail to deal with nuclear disarmament and to resume negotiations on 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 disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. The expectations of progress that resulted from the 2000 NPT Review Conference have to date not been met.

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Although implementation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty's international monitoring system has proceeded, the CTBT has not yet entered into force. There are no indications that nuclear-weapon States have increased transparency measures. Measures have been taken by one nuclear-weapon State to unilaterally reduce the operational status of its nuclear weapons systems. The Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions ('The Moscow Treaty') is but one step towards this goal. To date, there is limited evidence of any further agreed measures to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapon systems.

There is no sign of efforts involving all of the five nuclear-weapon States in the process leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. On the contrary, there are worrying signs of the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons. We remain deeply concerned at the continuing possibility that nuclear weapons could be used. Despite the intentions of, and past achievements in bilateral and unilateral reductions, the total number of nuclear weapons deployed and stockpiled still amounts to thousands.

We acknowledge that reductions in the numbers of deployed strategic nuclear warheads envisaged by the Moscow Treaty represents a positive step in defining the new relationship between the United States of America and the Russian Federation. We however question the Treaty's contribution to nuclear disarmament. The Treaty does not contain verification provisions, is not irreversible, and ignores non-operational warheads. Reductions in deployments and operational status of strategic nuclear warheads cannot substitute for irreversible cuts in, and the total elimination of, nuclear weapons.

There is concern that the abrogation of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM) has brought an additional element of uncertainty to international security, has impacted negatively on strategic stability as an important factor contributing to and facilitating nuclear disarmament, and will have negative consequences on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It could also have grave consequences for the future of global security and create apparent rationales for action based solely on unilateral concerns. Any action, including the development of missile defence systems, which could impact negatively on nuclear disarmament and

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non-proliferation, is of concern to the international community. We are concerned about the risk of a new arms race on earth and in outer space.

The achievements and the promise the bilateral START process held, including the possibility it offered for development as a plurilateral mechanism including all the nuclear-weapon States, for the practical dismantling and destruction of nuclear armaments, undertaken in the pursuit of the elimination of nuclear weapons, is in jeopardy.

In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the heads of State and Government resolved to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open to achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.

We believe that the recent international debate in the United Nations Security Council, including statements made by its Permanent Members, on weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, underlined international concerns about the legitimacy, possession and possible use of weapons of mass destruction. These statements should provide a further impetus to international efforts to de-legitimise all nuclear weapons and to hasten international efforts towards nuclear disarmament. These statements further underline our basic belief that the only real guarantee against the use of any weapons of mass destruction anywhere, including nuclear weapons, is their complete elimination and the assurance that they will never be used or produced again.

Of particular concern has been the decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to withdraw from the NPT and also its declared intention to restart the Yongbyon nuclear reactor, without IAEA safeguards. Leaving aside the circumstances that led to these decisions, the implications are grave and affect us all. Like the rest of the international community, the New Agenda supports dialogue over confrontation. We hope for an early, peaceful resolution of the situation, leading to the DPRK's return to full compliance with the Treaty's terms and we call on the DPRK to reconsider its decisions.

We are concerned by the continued retention of the nuclear-

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weapons option by those three States – India, Israel, Pakistan – that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and have not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as their failure to renounce that option.

The continued possession of nuclear weapons or the retention of the nuclear weapons option by some States exacerbates the possibility of these weapons falling into the hands of terrorists. The only complete defence against this prospect is the elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again.

There has been further progress in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in some regions. We welcome Cuba's accession as a State Party of both the NPT and the Tlatelolco Treaty, which makes the regime of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean complete. We also welcome the endeavours of the five Central Asian States to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region and trust that these efforts will add further impetus to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world, including the Middle East and South Asia. Progress continues towards freeing the Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas from such weapons. In this context, the ratification of the treaties of Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba by all the States of the region, and all concerned States is of great importance. They should all work together in order to facilitate adherence to the protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties by all relevant States that have not yet done so. States parties to those treaties should be encouraged to promote their common objectives with a view to enhancing cooperation among the nuclear-weapon-free zones and to working together with the proponents of other such zones.

IV The Way Ahead

We remain determined to pursue, with continued vigour, the full and effective implementation of the substantial agreements reached at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. That outcome provides the requisite blueprint to achieve nuclear disarmament.

Multilaterally negotiated legally binding security assurances must be given by the five nuclear-weapon States to all non-nuclear-weapon States parties. The Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference

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calls upon the Preparatory Committee to make recommendations to the 2005 Review Conference on security assurances. Pending the conclusion of such negotiations, the five nuclear-weapon States should fully respect their existing commitments in this regard.

The nuclear-weapon States must increase their transparency and accountability with regard to their nuclear weapons arsenals and their implementation of disarmament measures.

Further efforts by nuclear-weapon States to effectively reduce their nuclear arsenals unilaterally are required. Formalisation by nuclear-weapon States of their unilateral declarations in a legally binding agreement including provisions ensuring transparency, verification and irreversibility is essential. Nuclear-weapon States should bear in mind that reductions of deployments are a positive signal but no replacement for the actual elimination of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear-weapon States should implement the NPT commitments to apply the principle of irreversibility by destroying the nuclear warheads in the context of strategic nuclear reductions and avoid keeping them in a state that lends itself to their possible redeployment. While deployment reduction, and reduction of operational status, sends a positive signal, it cannot be a substitute for irreversible cuts and the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons should be a priority. Nuclear-weapon States must live up to their commitments. Reductions of non-strategic nuclear weapons should be carried out in a transparent and irreversible manner and to include reduction and elimination of non-strategic nuclear weapons in the overall arms reduction negotiations. In this context, urgent action should be taken to achieve:

- further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner, based on unilateral initiatives and as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process;
- further confidence-building and transparency measures to reduce the threats posed by non-strategic nuclear weapons. These measures should include the exchange of data on holdings and status of non-strategic nuclear weapons, safety provisions, types of weapons, yields, ranges of their designated delivery systems,

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- distribution by region and weapons elimination;
- concrete agreed measures to reduce further the operational status of nuclear weapons systems so as to reduce the risk of use, pre-emptive or accidental, of non-strategic nuclear weapons;
- formalising existing informal bilateral arrangements, initiatives and declarations regarding non-strategic nuclear reductions, such as the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives of 1991/92, into legally binding agreements;
- prohibiting, as a first step, those types of non-strategic nuclear weapons that have already been removed from the arsenals of some nuclear-weapon States and the development of transparency mechanisms for the verification of the elimination of these weapons, as well as an undertaking not to increase the number or types of non-strategic nuclear weapons deployed; and
- enhancement of security and physical protection measures for the transport and storage of non-strategic nuclear weapons, their components and related materials.

Nuclear-weapon States must undertake the necessary steps towards the seamless integration of all five nuclear-weapon States into a process leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

We underline the importance and urgency of signatures and ratifications to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty without delay and without conditions and in the context of the progress in implementing the international system to monitor nuclear weapons tests under the Treaty.

In the interim, it is necessary to uphold and maintain the moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion pending entry into force of the CTBT. The strict observance of CTBT purposes, objectives and provisions is imperative.

The Conference on Disarmament should establish without delay an *ad hoc* committee to deal with nuclear disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament should resume negotiations on 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

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both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives.

The Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral negotiating forum, has the primary role for the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. The Conference should complete the examination and updating of the mandate contained in its decision of 13 February 1992, and to establish an *ad hoc* committee as early as possible.

The international community must redouble its efforts to achieve universal adherence to the NPT and to be vigilant against any steps that would undermine the determination of the international community to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Those three States, which are not yet parties to the NPT, must accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon States, promptly and without condition, and bring into force the required comprehensive safeguards agreements, together with additional model protocol, for ensuring nuclear non-proliferation, and to reverse clearly and urgently any policies to pursue any nuclear weapons development or deployment and refrain from any action that 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.

The Trilateral Initiative between the IAEA, the Russian Federation and the United States must be implemented, and consideration should be given to the possible inclusion of other nuclear-weapon States.

Arrangements should be made by all nuclear-weapon States to place, as soon as practicable, fissile material no longer required for military purposes under IAEA or other relevant international verification.

International treaties in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must be observed, and all obligations flowing from those treaties must be duly fulfilled.

All States should refrain from any action that could lead to a new nuclear arms race or that could impact negatively on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We remain gravely concerned at heightened tensions in the Middle

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East and Asian regions. We renew our support for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons including other weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, we note that all states of the region with the exception of Israel are States parties to the NPT and call upon Israel to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible and to place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. We also renew our support for the establishment of nuclear-weapons-free zones in Central Asia and South Asia and in this context, urgently call on India and Pakistan to pull back from their aspirations to nuclear weapons and to accede to the Treaty without condition.

V The Strengthened Review Process

The Preparatory Committee should continue to deal with the procedural issues necessary to take its work forward but also with matters of substance as was decided in the 1995 and 2000 decisions, and to ensure that the issues of substance deliberated upon are recorded in the factual summary of the Preparatory Committee.

The Preparatory Committee should substantively focus on nuclear disarmament so as to ensure that there is a proper accounting in the reports by States of their progress in achieving nuclear disarmament. Accountability will be assessed in the consideration of these reports that the States parties agreed to submit. The Preparatory Committee should continue to consider regular reports to be submitted by all States parties on implementation of article VI and paragraph 4(c) of the 1995 Decision.

The strengthened review process envisioned in the 2000 NPT Final Document concerning the implementation of the Treaty and Decisions 1 & 2 as well as the Resolution on the Middle East adopted in 1995 should be fully implemented.

These reports should be submitted to each session of the Preparatory Committee. The reports on article VI should cover issues and principles addressed by the thirteen steps and include specific and complete information on each of these steps (*inter alia*, number and specification of warheads and delivery systems in service and number and specifications of reductions, de-alerting measures, existing holdings of fissile materials as well as reduction and control of such materials, achievements in the areas of irreversibility,

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transparency and verifiability). These reports should address current policies and intentions, as well as developments in these areas.

The States parties need to better utilise the opportunity of the preparatory meetings to make further substantive progress in the implementation of the Treaty and the strengthened review process and to interact substantively on contributions made.

The Review Process should continue to be strengthened.

Reply from Anna Lindh,
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden
2nd September 2003

Dear Professor Coates,

Thank you for your letter including, *inter alia*, your highly interesting paper on nuclear proliferation. I agree with your assessment that the proliferation of nuclear weapons, despite efforts, has not been restrained. Never before have we seen so many countries with access to nuclear weapons or the ambition to develop or acquire them.

I do, however, believe that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty up to date has played a valuable role in stemming the proliferation. Nevertheless, there are many challenges facing the NPT today. Even if the lack of universal application and the non-compliance of North Korea might be the most conspicuous examples thereof, the failure of the nuclear weapons states to live up to their disarmament commitments also challenges the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Nuclear weapons must be eliminated. There can be no doubt about that. This is inscribed in the NPT itself, and a view shared by many. And the 13 steps agreed by all states parties at the 2000 NPT Review Conference still constitute the roadmap for nuclear disarmament. My government fully supports the agreement of 2000 and the 13 steps, and will continue to work for their implementation.

Also I agree with you that the development of smaller, low-yield, nuclear weapons, which risks blurring the distinction between conventional and nuclear weapons and furthermore risks undermining the taboo against the use of nuclear weapons, is indeed worrisome. My government will continue its efforts regarding disarmament of non-strategic, or tactical, nuclear weapons. We hope to bring together more states in this struggle, to raise awareness about

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these neglected weapons and to put pressure on the nuclear weapons states to live up to their commitments.

As I have stated many times before, for instance in my article with Finnish Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja, which you kindly referred to in your paper, we need to uphold and strengthen existing treaties and regimes, we need to honour agreements and we need to work together in order to address proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Earlier this year my government initiated a discussion within the European Union on how the Union's policy on disarmament and non-proliferation could be further developed and strengthened. This discussion has now resulted in a rather ambitious action plan, which is to be implemented over the coming years. I hope this will make the EU more actively engaged than before.

In order to stimulate new thinking and to offer new ideas on how to pursue disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, my government has also decided to sponsor an independent, international commission to look closer into this matter. The commission, which will consist of internationally well-reputed persons, will now take its form under the leadership of former UN weapons inspectors' chief, Dr Hans Blix. Our hope is that the commission will give impulses to the international work against weapons of mass destruction, stimulate international debate, and give recommendations on how to strengthen existing regimes and improve international co-operation.

Yours sincerely,
Anna Lindh

* * *

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Other supportive letters were received from

Joseph Philippe Antonio, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Haiti

Micheline Calmy-Rey, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs,
Switzerland

A.K.Gayan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mauritius

Jan Arve Knutsen, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Foreign
Affairs, Norway

Roland Marxer, Director, Office of Foreign Affairs, Liechtenstein

Nico Pretorius, Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
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