

Keys to Armageddon

“You have my permission to fire”

With this simple phrase, 16 nuclear-armed Polaris missiles, each of which was 30 times as powerful as the Hiroshima bomb, could have been launched into the stratosphere on a free-fall path to targets in the former Soviet Union. Their use would have marked the end of the world as we know it; an act of retaliation for the launch of similar nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union at Britain or her NATO partners under the policy of mutually assured destruction. It would have caused a nuclear winter akin to the one that wiped the dinosaurs off the planet. It would have been an act too dreadful for any reasonable person to contemplate for long.

Except that we did. As executive officer of a Polaris submarine in the mid-1970s, I took part in multiple exercises intended to prepare us to launch our missiles in a nuclear confrontation. In the event of a real one I would have been party to authenticating that the order to fire came from the prime minister. I would have been required to stand next to the captain as he inserted his dedicated key in the firing panel and turned it to complete the electronic circuits that would then irrevocably count down to the launch of the first missile. It would have been an unimaginable moment.

It is a matter of history that this never happened for real during the cold war. It is a matter of policy, however, that it still could – for the

UK, the US and at least four other countries that maintain a submarine-based nuclear deterrent ...

My captain and I had our own private and very serious discussions before we went on patrol together for the first time. We both wanted to be quite clear that we were of the same mind about how we would respond if we received an order to fire. We agreed that we could not obey an unlawful order just because it came with the authority of the prime minister.



This view was based on recent history. The Nuremberg Principles established after the Second World War that “the fact that a person acted pursuant to order of his Government or of a superior does not relieve him from responsibility under international law, provided a moral choice was in fact possible to him”.

Our dilemma was that the use of nuclear weapons by any yardstick had to be an offence against prevailing humanitarian law as expressed in the Geneva Conventions ...

The question, then, was what would constitute a lawful order to fire ... my captain and I agreed that, if the UK or NATO was subjected to a nuclear attack, then the norms of humanitarian law no longer applied and we would fire as ordered. In these terrible circumstances the hope, possibly vain, would be to halt further nuclear exchanges.

What we were not prepared to do under any circumstance was automatically obey an order to fire first with the intention of destroying

Soviet targets before they fired at us. This would almost certainly have been unlawful (and arguably still would be) and neither of us had any wish to start a nuclear war ...

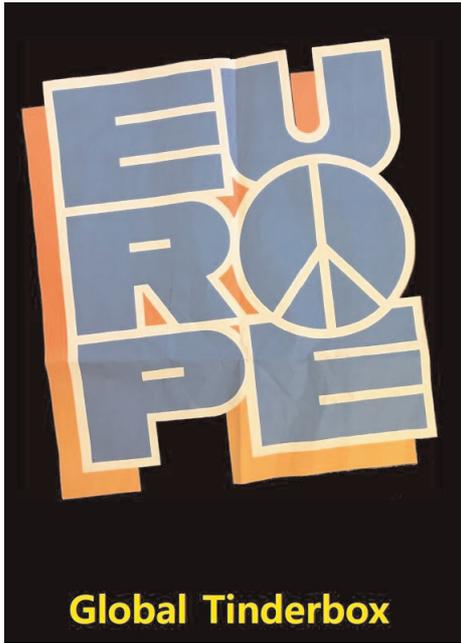
Commander Robert Forsyth RN (Ret'd)

The full version of this article can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y3kuswma>. Commander Forsyth has given important evidence to an ongoing UK Parliamentary Inquiry into authorising military action. See *ENDINFO 2* for further information.

Global Tinderbox Time for Europe's Nuclear-Weapon- Free-Zone?

The full text of *Global Tinderbox: Time for Europe's Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone* is now available online at: <http://www.spokesmanbooks.com/Spokesman/PDF/141Unterrainer.pdf>.

The article makes the case for a NWFZ in Europe as a response to the crisis in the INF Treaty. We encourage END supporters to read, share and translate the article.



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New Arms Race

Twenty years after the end of the Cold War, a new nuclear arms race between the USA and Russia looms over Europe, following the disengagement of presidents Trump and Putin from the historic INF Treaty of 1987.

Greece has very painful experiences from that dark period of the 20th century, as its northern borders were the dividing East-West line in the Balkan region. As a result, the Greece peace and anti-nuclear movement from the outset supported the idea for a nuclear weapon free Balkans and for a nuclear weapon free Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals.

We do not forget that the opposition to “euro missiles” generated one of the greatest peace movements, especially in Western Europe and END

(European Nuclear Disarmament) played a decisive role towards this development.

At that time, I was general secretary of the Greece Peace Committee (EEDYE) belonging to the WPC, but this did not prevent us from joining successive END conferences. In addition, “no to euro missiles” was an issue that brought together the three main national peace organisations, AKE, EEDYE and KEADEA. So, we may say that it is time to repeat the unitary actions of that era.

PADOP has already published the new END Appeal, which has inspired me personally to write an article for daily newspapers in Athens. In addition, we plan a special event within the framework of the forthcoming monthly campaign on disarmament and reducing globally military spending.

The INF was significant for Europe and the victorious antinuclear movement of the 1980s, “the most dangerous decade”, according to our great friend Ken Coates.

Warm congratulations to those who took the initiative to revive END!

Panos Trigazis
PADOP President, Greece

Luciana Castellina awarded peace prize

Luciana Castellina, former MEP (and now a candidate in Greece), reporter and peace activist has been awarded the inaugural Nikos Nikiforidis Prize for her work as a founder of European Nuclear Disarmament in the 1980s.

Castellina played a central role in developing the movement and worked closely with Ken Coates, from the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. Her support and ongoing contribution to European Nuclear Disarmament has been recognized in the awarding of this prize named after a 22 year old martyr of the anti-nuclear movement.

Nikiforidis was executed in 1951 in Thessaloniki because he was collecting signatures for the Stockholm Appeal. The International Peace Bureau selected him to be among the people who should be

honored internationally for their work for peace.



Luciana Castellina receives her award

The tale of two reports

The UK Parliament's Defence Committee has released a report, *Missile Misdemeanours*, in which it claims to analyse the collapse of the INF Treaty. In summary, the report concludes that Russia is to blame and commends the UK government “for lending its strong support to the United States, individually and within NATO”.

The Committee suggests that whereas diplomacy with Russia has been based on a ‘carrot and stick’ approach in the past, now is the time for ‘less carrot, more stick’. This will be a recipe for ratcheting up tensions rather than ensuring peace and security.

Meanwhile, the House of Lords Select Committee on International Relations has released a report highlighting the fact that we “are dangerously close to a world without arms control agreements, which would increase the risk of nuclear use.”

Further analysis of these reports will be published in the next issue of *The Spokesman*.

Visit www.russfound.org for information on the work of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and for more on the END campaigns in the 1980s.

Two thirds of Belgians favour banning nukes

LE SOIR

2-VOUS! Nucléaire: 64 % des Belges favorables au désarmement

Un sondage dévoilé par « Le Soir » montre qu'une majorité de Belges voudraient que notre pays signe le traité d'interdiction des armes nucléaires de l'ONU.

Two-thirds of Belgians want the country to countersign the banning of nuclear weapons, according to an opinion poll conducted by the Belgian coalition against atomic weaponry.

In 2017, 122 member states of the UN voted in favour of banning nuclear weapons. The treaty aims to halt the development, testing, production, stockpiling, trade in, use and the threat to use nuclear arms. This is not the case in Belgium or NATO's other member states.

The majority of those taking part in the poll (66%) were also in favour of the withdrawal of Belgian financial institutions from the nuclear armaments industry.

The majority (53%) also considers that the new F35 fighter jets should not have a nuclear capacity, which is about double the number of those who said they were in favour (27%).

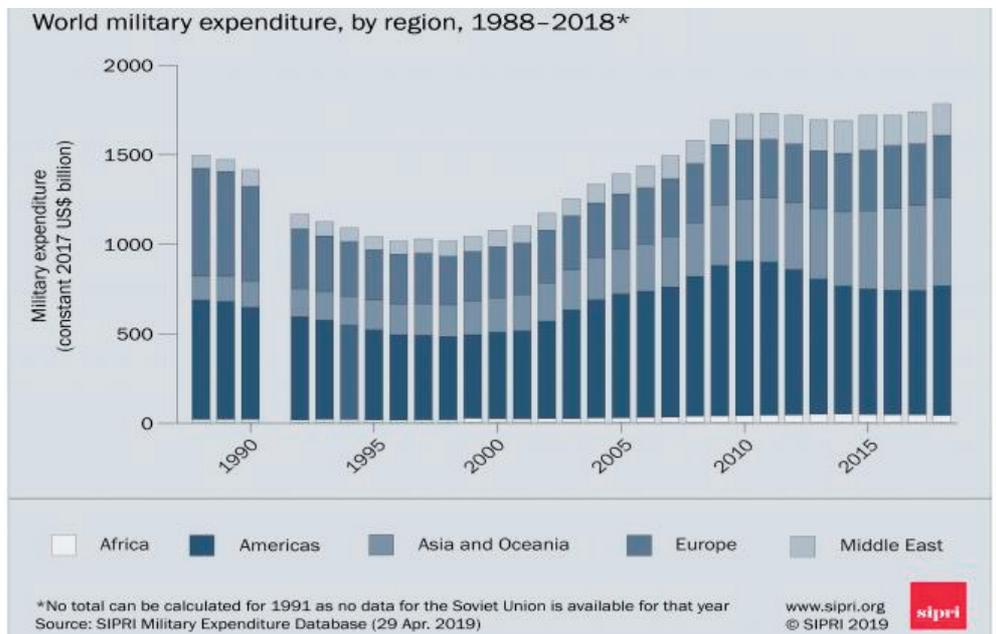
Those polled who said they were against the presence of American nuclear weapons at Kleine Brogel are also more numerous than those declaring themselves in favour of maintaining it (49% against 27%).

The Belgian coalition against atomic weapons, therefore, wants the different political parties to take these results into account before the next elections.

[source: *Brussels Times*]

Armed to the teeth

(Stockholm, 29 April 2019) Total world military expenditure rose to \$1822 billion in 2018, representing an increase of 2.6 per cent from 2017, according to new data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The five biggest spenders in 2018 were the United States, China, Saudi Arabia,



India and France, which together accounted for 60 per cent of global military spending. Military spending by the USA increased for the first time since 2010, while spending by China grew for the 24th consecutive year. The comprehensive annual update of the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database is now accessible at www.sipri.org.

Total global military spending rose for the second consecutive year in 2018, to the highest level since 1988 – the first year for which consistent global data is available. World spending is now 76 per cent higher than the post-cold war low in 1998. World military spending in 2018 represented 2.1 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP) or \$239 per person. ‘In 2018 the USA and China accounted for half of the world’s military spending,’ says Dr Nan Tian, a researcher with the SIPRI Arms and Military Expenditure (AMEX) programme. ‘The higher level of world military expenditure in 2018 is mainly the result of significant increases in spending by these two countries.’

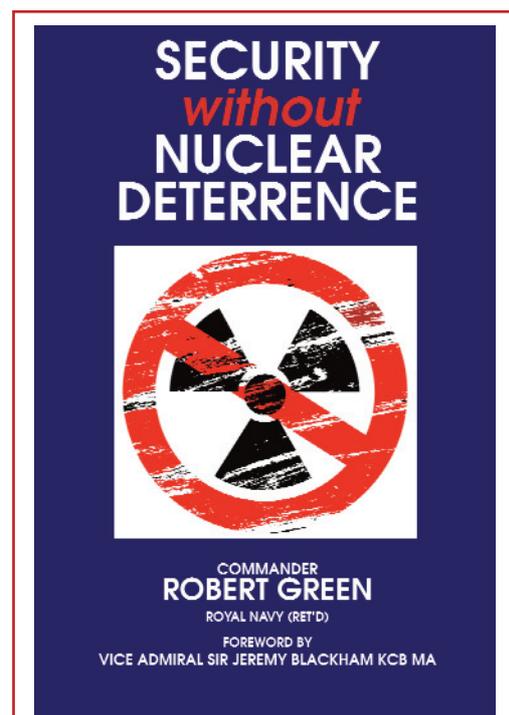
Review Conference, including setting an agenda and electing a president, but agreement on both substance and procedure could be challenging given persistent disagreements that have played out between key governments in the months leading up to the meeting.

A call to establish further Nuclear-Weapons-Free-Zones was made in Point 9 of the Action Plan agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Will NWFZs be discussed at the PrepCom? Will they be included in the 2020 Review Conference Action Plan?

For more coverage of the 2019 NPT PrepCom see www.armscontrol.org and other sources.

NPT PrepCom

Representatives from the states parties to the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) will meet for two weeks beginning Monday, April 29, for the last Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) session ahead of the 2020 Review Conference. At this final PrepCom, states are tasked with adopting recommendations for the



Security without Nuclear Deterrence
by Commander Robert Green RN (Ret'd)
Available from www.spokesmanbooks.com

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European Elections *Lobby your candidates!*

The coming elections to the European Parliament provide an important opportunity to ask sitting MEPs and candidates from across Europe to sign up to the European Nuclear Disarmament Statement.

The European Greens already support the idea of a Nuclear-Weapons-Free-Zone on the continent and members of the GUE/NGL have been very supportive of the idea. We plan to work together towards a meeting to discuss and develop the idea further.

Who else can we get on board? How can we put the idea of European Nuclear Disarmament on the agenda for these elections?

You can start by circulating the statement to candidates in your area and ask them to sign it.

Write letters to the local press raising the idea.

Call out and question those candidates and parties who are fully signed up to 'nuclear deterrence' and who have supported President Trump's agenda around the crisis in the INF Treaty.

Let us know how you get on: send reports, photos and letters to tomunterrainer@russfound.org

Translations

Can you help us translate the European Nuclear Disarmament statement? Might you help us with other translations, including longer articles? Please let us know.

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The next issue of *The Spokesman*, journal of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, will be published in June. It will carry more in-depth analysis of the issues raised in *END INFO*. Subscribe at www.spokesmanbooks.com

European Nuclear Disarmament: *A New Statement*

The INF Treaty, signed by Presidents Gorbachev and Reagan in 1987, bans all ground-based missiles – nuclear and conventional – with ranges between 500 and 5500km. It addresses the risk of 'limited' nuclear war, which sparked a Europe-wide movement of opposition and in favour of a nuclear weapons free zone in Europe, as expressed in the European Nuclear Disarmament (END) Appeal of 1980.

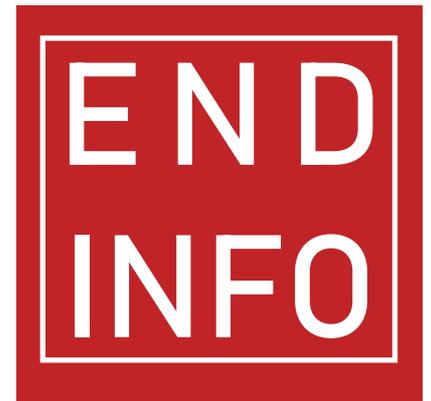
The END Appeal specifically sought the removal of medium range mobile nuclear weapons, deployed on Soviet territory and by the United States at bases in six European NATO member countries, in order to save the continent from becoming a nuclear battleground.

It warned 'we are entering the most dangerous decade in human history'. Appallingly, danger intensifies again. In January, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moved forward the hands of the 'Doomsday Clock' to two minutes to midnight. As the year draws to a close, President Trump's announcement drives the world nearer to the nuclear precipice.

We call on everyone concerned with peace and security to join in raising the alarm over the likely consequences of scrapping the INF Treaty and to work towards the creation of more Nuclear-Weapons-Free-Zones, including in Europe. These efforts will complement existing global disarmament initiatives, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, recently agreed at the United Nations.

Endorse here:

<https://goo.gl/forms/aOKywwzL4kw1q6LMb2>



For more information on END INFO or European Nuclear Disarmament email

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Visit www.russfound.org and www.spokesmanbooks.com

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