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SECOND CONSULTATION: CALL FOR PAPERS

There have been some important developments in the preparation of the European Conference, which the Russell Foundation first proposed in the summer of 1999.

A first consultation to prepare the Conference took place at the European Parliament in Brussels on 11/12 May 2000 (see *Spokesman* 68 pp.83-86). It was agreed then that a short Appeal for a Nuclear-free Zone in Europe might form the basis for invitations to a second consultation, together with consideration of other relevant issues. This Appeal was published in our previous issue, and we continue to circulate it for signature.

Most people tell us that they thought the first Consultation went reasonably well, although it is clear that there are many other forces we need to reach before we are in a position to go ahead to call a full-scale Conference. Meantime, the international situation is becoming more difficult, and the nuclear dimension more complex. Talk of a European nuclear deterrent, together with dramatic change in the European arms industry, needs more analysis and attention. That is why we need a further international consultation.

We were very pleased to receive the continuing support of the GUE-NGL Group in the European Parliament. Stefano Squarcina has been able to negotiate the availability of Parliamentary facilities for a second Consultation. Our support among the Greens remains strong. But there is much still to do in reaching members of other political parties, and extending the dialogue with those churches, peace movements and other organisations that are not already involved. We hope to be able to do this at the **Second Consultation which will take place at the Parliament in Brussels on Thursday 7th and Friday 8th December 2000.**

We very much hope that a wide cross-section of peace movements and other interested organisations will be represented in Brussels in December. More information is available from the Russell Foundation at the address below.

In the year 2001, we need to maintain the momentum and extend the dialogue. We have been wondering whether we can organise consultations on a national basis, bringing together national or regional groupings: perhaps Italy or Italy and Greece, Scandinavia, and, as the Greens have proposed, Austria. There may be other such proposals. We should be very pleased to hear your views.

We continue to receive written papers on the themes of the Conference. These are being circulated for comment and response. We are also issuing a call for papers on specific themes for this second consultation. These are:

- Proposals for European nuclear armament
- What is happening to the European arms industry?
- The arms trade
- National Missile Defence (Son of Star Wars) and Putin's response
- Economic and political developments in Central Asia and the Caspian Basin
- The conflict in Chechnya
- Developments in Kosovo

They should be sent to: The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, Russell House, Bulwell Lane, Nottingham NG6 0BT, England. Fax: 00 44 (0) 115 9420433 e-mail: elfeuro@compuserve.com

The Opposition to Nuclear Weapons

NUCLEAR WAR-FIGHTING

Retired US Navy Rear Admiral Eugene J. Carroll Jr, Vice President of the Centre for Defence Information in Washington, explains why new, smaller nuclear weapons are more likely to be used for fighting, not just defence.

The US Senate is preparing to take a major step to abandon all pretence that US nuclear forces exist only to deter war. An amendment to the pending Defence Authorisation Act for 2001 would lead to the development of a new nuclear weapon designed expressly for fighting. The new weapon is to be a low-yield device with earth penetration capability, intended to destroy deeply buried bunkers.

Paul Robinson, director of Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which would build the device, is a strong advocate of it. Robinson apparently favours a new, low-yield device because US leaders presumably would be more ready to employ smaller weapons than to use the larger city- and silo-busting high-yield weapons in our current arsenal. He considers large weapons 'self-detering.'

This thinking is an eerie throwback to the days of the Cold War, when weapon designers provided the US military with an array of explosives to 'prevail' in a survivable limited nuclear war. Among the 70,000 US nuclear weapons produced during the Cold War were suitcase bombs, neutron bombs, torpedoes, depth

charges, artillery shells, air-to-air missiles and anti-tank rockets. The laboratories were like nuclear ice cream factories, churning out the flavour of the day to meet the latest craving of the customers.

Not only is the Senate's action a throwback to those unlamented days of preparing to prevail in nuclear war, but it also is a flagrant repudiation of a solemn pledge the United States made in May 2000 at the Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference in New York. We joined with Britain, France, China and Russia in a commitment to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament. Nothing could be more contrary to that commitment than a congressional order to develop a new, more usable nuclear weapon.

Regrettably, this action is merely one more blatant signal that the United States is determined to pursue nuclear dominance indefinitely through enhanced readiness to fight a nuclear war. Additional preparations include the decision to resume production of tritium and plutonium pits for thermonuclear weapons, continued sub-critical explosive testing in Nevada and rejection of Russian proposals to reduce nuclear numbers 75% below START II levels.

The thinking behind all of this was revealed by then-Deputy Defence Secretary John Hamre when he said in March: 'Nuclear weapons are still the foundation of a superpower . . . and that will never change.' All of these actions are supportive of President Clinton's signing in 1997 of a directive whose overarching principle was that nuclear weapons would remain the cornerstone of US security indefinitely. Far from emphasising deterrence, the document reasserted the need for all three arms of the US triad of nuclear forces – intercontinental ballistic missiles, sea-launched ballistic missiles and long-range strategic bombers. It declared the US right to make first use of nuclear weapons and to target not only Russia and China but also any prospective nuclear states that might threaten US interests in the future.

Authoritative sources subsequently have revealed that the US has expanded the list of world-wide targets planned for destruction under the new doctrine (see *Spokesman* 68 pp.3-4). In short, with plans for new nuclear weapons, Congress is joining the White House in putting into place all of the elements of a war-fighting strategy. There is no way a deterrent strategy can justify or rationalise developing new nuclear weapons to make them more usable for fighting purposes. This is the ultimate antithesis of deterrence and a total abrogation of the legal and moral obligation of the US to work for the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY

William Drozdiak describes how the UN's Atomic Agency is threatened by financial crisis because the United States and other countries refuse to pay their bills on time.

VIENNA — The U.N. agency responsible for preventing the proliferation of

nuclear weapons is facing a financial crisis and may soon have to cease key operations because the United States and other countries refuse to pay their bills on time, according to senior diplomats here.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, which seeks to ensure that no country secretly diverts nuclear materials for bomb-making purposes, has already curtailed some aid projects and defaulted on \$1 million in travel expenses, officials say. By the end of the month, they warn, the agency may not be able to meet its payroll.

'If this perilous situation continues, it could undermine critical safeguard operations that verify the safe uses of nuclear energy,' said IAEA Director General Mohammed Baradei. 'The US Congress and others will then have to ask themselves hard questions about the damaging impact on important strategic interests.' The United States covers about a quarter of the agency's \$300 million annual budget.

The IAEA is pleading for faster payment at a time when Congress is considering building a national missile defence system – at a cost of more than \$60 billion – that would attempt to shield the country from missile attacks by such countries as North Korea, which the Agency monitors closely.

'It makes no sense to spend that amount of money on a future missile defence while neglecting simple, effective and much cheaper measures available right now to curtail the threat,' said John B. Ritch, the US ambassador to the UN agencies in Vienna.

Congressional officials said the United States is not stalling the agency but sticking to a long-established schedule of paying dues in the fourth quarter of the calendar year, after Congress passes the budget for the new fiscal year.

'The US fiscal year is not aligned with the United Nations' fiscal year,' said Dan DuBray, spokesman for the House International Relations Committee. 'That is hardly a new development. . . . What UN agencies are expected to do is coordinate and manage the funding' so that their operations are not disrupted.

A State Department spokesman said that the administration is trying to ease IAEA's cash crunch and is exploring whether the agency could borrow money from separate funds the United States gives it for technical activities and then repay that amount in October, when the regular US payments are made. The spokesman noted that the IAEA was able to meet its payroll last month only by delaying payment on the agency's Diners Club credit cards.

Early this year, the Clinton administration worked out a compromise with the Republican-controlled Congress to pay more than \$1 billion in back dues to the United Nations, but the deal left intact the two-decade-old US practice of paying late in the year, rather than early, as provided for under UN regulations.

This policy has caused previous disruptions at the IAEA, which devotes about a third of its annual budget to monitoring nuclear facilities around the world. Its inspectors use electronic sensors, laboratory analysis and on-site observation to try to smoke out secret nuclear weapons development.

Many countries have complained about late US payments, saying the tardiness places a heavier responsibility on them to sustain the agency's functions until the US funds arrive. This year, several countries have adopted go-slow tactics of their own. France, for example, has delayed paying its share of nuclear-inspection costs because its UN peacekeeping duties have proven greater than expected. Other major donors, irritated by US behaviour, also have delayed their payments, officials here said.

VANUNU PUT BACK IN SOLITARY

Mordechai Vanunu has been put back into solitary confinement. The former Dimona technician who exposed the Israeli nuclear weapons programme has also been told he will not be released from prison until the end of his 18-year sentence.

The decision was taken after the 44-year-old technician became involved in a row with guards at Ashkelon jail near Tel Aviv after he left the exercise yard to sit in the sun for a brief period.

The British Campaign to Free Vanunu recently held a vigil outside the Israeli embassy in London to mark the 14th anniversary of his abduction by the Israeli secret service. 'These violations of human rights will not deter the campaign continuing to fight for Mordechai's freedom,' the campaign coordinator, Ernest Rodker, said. 'They show how brutal the Israeli authorities can be when wishing to crush a courageous prisoner who has been determined not to be silenced.'

Vanunu spent his first 11 years in jail in solitary confinement before being allowed brief exercise periods and periodic visits from his family.

More information about the Campaign to Free Vanunu is available from their web site (www.vanunu.freeserve.co.uk).

NUCLEAR SUBMARINES: SAFETY FEARS

The dramatic tragedy of the Kursk, which sank in August with the loss of the entire crew, has highlighted questions of submarine safety. Two British submarines were also having problems this summer, as Neil Tweedie's report shows. It was circulated by CND.

Two Royal Navy nuclear-powered submarines have been lying inactive because of a potentially dangerous fault in the propulsion system of a sister vessel. The Ministry of Defence said it had declared *Sovereign* and *Superb* non-operational because it was not prepared to place their crews at unnecessary risk. Both submarines, which carry crews of 116 officers and men, should have been available for deployment at short notice from Faslane on the Clyde. The latest

troubles, added to problems with the newer Trafalgar class boats, mean that only four out of 12 attack submarines are thought to be available for service in the short term.

The defect – in the submarine *Sceptre* – was discovered in 1998 when she was beginning a two-and-a-half-year refit. But the MoD said that its full seriousness had not been appreciated until more recent tests. It refused to give details, but said that the concern was over the quality of components in the nuclear reactor systems. Only *Sceptre* has been confirmed as having the defective components. But the MoD said: 'One would not operate a reactor when one did not have absolute confidence in its safety.'

The submarines affected are members of the five-strong Swiftsure class, which makes up almost half of Britain's fleet of nuclear-powered attack submarines. They are the oldest submarines in service, all having been built between 1974 and 1981. They are not due to be replaced until at least 2004 when Astute class boats begin to enter service. Of the remaining two members of the class, *Splendid* has been declared safe to operate until next February and *Spartan* is in refit. Examination of *Spartan* has so far not revealed the defect.

The problems with the Trafalgar submarines have been particularly embarrassing for the Navy. Of the seven submarines in the class, *Tireless* is lying crippled in dock at Gibraltar following a cooling system failure during exercises in the Mediterranean. Gibraltarians have angrily demanded that she be towed to Britain for repair. *Tireless*'s sister boat, *Talent*, is also laid up after the detection of a major defect and will not be operational until the end of the year.

Britain's four Vanguard class boats, which carry the Trident nuclear deterrent, are understood not to be affected by the problems being experienced in the hunter-killer fleet. Britain is one of only a handful of nations to operate nuclear-powered submarines and the Royal Navy has a good safety record. No British nuclear boat has been lost since operations began in the Sixties.

Hiroshima

HIROSHIMA PEACE DECLARATION

The Mayor of the City of Hiroshima, Tadatashi Akiba, made this Declaration on 6th August, 2000.

Today we are witnessing the last August 6th of the twentieth century.

It has been precisely 55 years since one single atomic bomb created a hell on earth. Together with the *hibakusha* who rose from the depths of despair, we have shed tears of wrenching grief, comforted and encouraged each other, shared indignation and prayers, then studied and healed. Above all, we have appealed to the world through our actions. Our efforts have produced remarkable results in

many respects: for example, we passed the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law, constructed the Cenotaph for the A-bomb Victims, enacted the Atomic Bomb Survivors' Support Law, created a nuclear-free zone covering most of the Southern hemisphere, won a ruling by the International Court of Justice on the illegality of the use of nuclear weapons, concluded the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, registered the Atomic Bomb Dome as a World Heritage site, and persuaded the nuclear-weapon states to agree to 'An unequivocal undertaking . . . to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals . . .' Of course, our most striking victory, for all humankind, is that nuclear weapons have not been used in war since Nagasaki. Unfortunately, our most fervent hope, to see nuclear weapons abolished by the end of this century, has not been realised.

We are determined, nevertheless, to overcome all obstacles and attain our goal in the twenty-first century. For this purpose also, it is imperative that we reinterpret the *hibakusha* experience in a broader context, find ever more effective ways to express its significance, and carry on the legacy as a universal human heritage. Our effort to preserve and utilise the Atomic Bomb Dome, now officially designated a World Heritage site, the former Bank of Japan Hiroshima Branch, which withstood the bomb's blast, and the many paper cranes sent by children from all over the world is important in this regard. It is also crucial that we mobilise the World Conference of Mayors for Peace through Inter-city Solidarity to translate the ruling that 'nuclear weapons are illegal' into their abolition. Furthermore, we will continue to call on individuals everywhere to recognise whatever responsibility their own countries or ethnic groups may bear for war, to do everything in their power to break the chain of hatred and violence, to set out bravely on the road to reconciliation, and to ensure that the world abolishes all nuclear weapons without delay.

Looking back to ancient times, long before there were computers, pencils, or even written language, the twentieth century is distinguished from previous centuries by the fact that our science and technology have created concrete dangers that threaten the very existence of humankind. Nuclear weapons are one such danger. Global environmental degradation is another. They are both problems that we have brought upon ourselves, and both are problems that we must act responsibly to resolve.

Having called on the world to abolish nuclear weapons, Hiroshima wishes to make a new start as a model city demonstrating the use of science and technology for human purposes. We will create a future in which Hiroshima itself is the embodiment of those 'human purposes.' We will create a twenty-first century in which Hiroshima's very existence formulates the substance of peace. Such a future would exemplify a genuine reconciliation between humankind and the science and technology that have endangered our continued survival.

The north-south summit meeting on the Korean Peninsula was an outstanding example of human reconciliation. Patterned after the exchange of cherry trees and dogwood trees symbolic of Japan-US friendship early in this century,

Hiroshima would like, with the co-operation of both Japanese and American citizens, to create its own dogwood promenade symbolic of all such reconciliations. On the international stage, Hiroshima aspires to serve as a mediator actively creating reconciliation by helping to resolve conflict and animosity.

Again we call upon the government of Japan to recognise the crucial role that the *hibakusha* have played and to further enhance its support policies for them. In addition, we strongly call upon the government to forge the collective will to advocate the abolition of nuclear weapons and make common cause with Hiroshima for global reconciliation in accordance with the preamble to our Constitution.

Gathered here in Hiroshima on the last August 6th of the twentieth century, as our thoughts turn to humanity's past and future, we declare our resolve that, if we had only one pencil we would continue to write first of the sanctity of human life and then of the need to abolish nuclear weapons. Last but certainly not least, we pay our profound respects to the souls of all who perished in the tragedy of Hiroshima.

APPEAL FOR A EUROPEAN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT INITIATIVE

The Russell Foundation has been circulating this appeal, which was initiated by the German coalition 'Abolish Nuclear Weapons'. It is being circulated throughout Europe, and will be presented to the European Union summit in Nice in France in December 2000.

'Fifty-five years after the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and ten years after the end of the confrontation between East and West, the policy of deterrence based on nuclear weapons must come to an end, and the abolition of these weapons of mass destruction commence.

We demand:

- that all nuclear weapons shall be withdrawn from the territory of the member states of the European Union;
- a common European peace policy which does not threaten the use of nuclear weapons;
- the implementation, without delay, of a comprehensive ban on all testing of nuclear weapons;
- that the Heads of State and Governments of the European Union initiate negotiations on the complete disarmament of nuclear weapons, to end their proliferation, and to liberate Europe from nuclear weapons.'

Endorsements may be sent to Initiative für Frieden, Internationalen Ausgleich und Sicherheit (IFIAS), Oppelner Strasse 130, 53119 Bonn, Germany, tel.00 49 228 668 5214, fax.00 49 228 668 5229, e-mail: ifias@ifias.net

No to Star Wars

EUROPEAN APPEAL

This appeal in defence of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty was initiated jointly on Hiroshima Day 2000 by SYNASPISMOS in Greece and the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. It is being circulated for signature.

Despite the end of the Cold War, the nuclear threat has not been eliminated. The hopes of a steady course towards a nuclear-weapons-free world, which received a great boost after the signing and implementation of the treaty to abolish the 'euromissiles', have not been fulfilled.

On the contrary, the nuclear arsenals remain almost intact, and the danger of nuclear proliferation has increased. The 'first use' doctrine has been declared anew recently by both NATO and Russia, and the treaty for a total ban on nuclear tests has been blocked by the United States Senate. But even if nuclear weapons are not used on purpose, there are serious dangers of mistakes or accidents, as the *Kursk* tragedy dramatically reminded us.

In particular, we express deep concern about the planned violation or cancellation of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) systems by the US administration, which has decided to un-freeze its 'star wars' project.

We are strongly opposed to these plans and call upon the governments of Europe to resist them and support the UN General Assembly Resolution on the 'preservation of and compliance with the ABM', which states that this Treaty **'remains a cornerstone in maintaining global strategic stability and world peace in promoting further strategic nuclear arms reductions'** (resolution 54/54A).

We urge the peoples of our countries and of the whole world to be on the alert and mobilise in defence of the ABM Treaty, and for the re-invigoration of the nuclear disarmament process that must lead to a nuclear-weapons-free world.

We call upon all the nuclear powers to renounce the 'first use' of nuclear weapons, and all the countries to ratify and abide by the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

At the dawn of the 21st Century, we declare with more determination: **the only security from nuclear weapons lies in their abolition!**

NOBEL PRIZEWINNERS OPPOSE MISSILE DEFENCE

A group of 50 Nobel laureates has signed an open letter to President Clinton urging him to reject a proposed \$60 billion missile defence system.

Dear Mr President:

We urge you not to make the decision to deploy an anti-ballistic missile system during the remaining months of your administration. The system would offer little protection and would do grave harm to this nation's core security interests.

We and other independent scientists have long argued that anti-ballistic missile systems, particularly those attempting to intercept re-entry vehicles in space, will inevitably lose in an arms race of improvements to offensive missiles.

North Korea has taken dramatic steps toward reconciliation with South Korea. Other dangerous states will arise. But what would such a state gain by attacking the United States except its own destruction?

While the benefits of the proposed anti-ballistic missile system are dubious, the dangers created by a decision to deploy are clear. It would be difficult to persuade Russia or China that the United States is wasting tens of billions of dollars on an ineffective missile system against small states that are unlikely to launch a missile attack on the US. The Russians and Chinese must therefore conclude that the presently planned system is a stage in developing a bigger system directed against them. They may respond by restarting an arms race in ballistic missiles and having missiles in a dangerous 'launch-on-warning' mode.

Even if the next planned test of the proposed anti-ballistic missile system works as planned, any movement toward deployment would be premature, wasteful and dangerous.

Respectfully,

Sidney Altman and 49 other Nobel laureates

Yorkshire CND's web site (www.gn.apc.org/cndyorks) is a first-class source for information about 'Son of Star Wars'.

CND POINTS THE FINGER

On 1st September 2000, President Clinton deferred deployment of a 'National Missile Defense' (NMD) system and effectively handed the decision to the next President of the United States. But, speaking at Georgetown University, Mr Clinton said that 'the threat of a missile attack by an extremist nation is real and growing' and added that 'it would be wrong to believe there are no serious long-term challenges to our security.' This programme is still very much part of the United States military planning.

Peace movements around the world are stepping up their campaigns against the 'Son of Star Wars', as National Missile Defence is better known. CND activists, including Bruce Kent and Jeremy Corbyn MP, gathered outside the US Embassy in London's Grosvenor Square on Saturday 7th October behind their

large yellow 'NO TO STAR WARS' banner. Many also carried large 'POINT THE FINGER' hands and placards, as part of CND's continuing campaign to 'point the finger' at the many establishments throughout Britain which are in some way involved with nuclear weapons.

This action was in support of an International Day of Protest to Stop the Militarisation of Space. Yorkshire CND organised an action at Fylingdales, and the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases (CAAB) organised an action at Menwith Hill – both in North Yorkshire and required for the Pentagon's National Missile Defence (NMD) system.

GREENLAND AND CANADA

Opposition is growing in Greenland and Canada to any role in America's 'Son of Star Wars', as these extracts from the *New York Times* (18.9.2000) by James Brooke makes clear.

'What is at stake is Greenland's eventual acquiescence to the use of the American air base in Thule as part of a national missile defence system. Although Denmark, the old colonial power here, retains control over Greenland's foreign and defence policy, Copenhagen insists that the Greenlanders' wishes will be taken into account.

Whoever occupies the White House next year will probably find that public opinion is sceptical, bordering on hostile, in the two proposed North American partners, Greenland and Canada.

"No one in Greenland wishes to take actions that would lead to recreating the atmosphere of the cold war era," Jonathan Motzfeldt (Greenland's premier) said in an interview. "I am content that NATO has not greeted the N.M.D. plans with cheers." Even though the new defensive programme would not involve placing weapons at Thule, Greenland's deputy premier, Josef Motzfeldt (no relation to the premier) attributed the missile plan to lobbying by "big shots in the weapons industries" and said in an interview, "The United States is very alone in the project."

Russia's ambassador, Nikolai Bordyuzha, charged here that the defence system would violate the 1972 Antiballistic Missile Treaty. His Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, who visited Canada with similar warnings this month, told Danish officials earlier this summer that if they allowed Thule to be used for the American defence system, "Copenhagen will be responsible for pulling down the ABM treaty."

Mikaela Engell, a Greenland Foreign Affairs spokeswoman, said: "If you do a vox pop in the street, people will ask, 'Why should we get involved in the American problems? Are we now going to get hit on the head with a great big bomb?'"

Denmark has yet to take a position on Thule's role in a missile defence system, but Gunnar Martens, the Danish High Commissioner here, stressed: "It should be in accordance with the ABM treaty. It should live up to international obligations between the United States and Russia."

Although Canada has been a partner of the United States for almost half a century in the North American Aerospace Defence Command, known as Norad and involving dozens of radars strung across Canada's north to detect Russian bombers or missiles coming over the North Pole, the loudest voices there oppose national missile defence.

"Put simply, the national missile defence system is a dumb idea," Canada's influential *Globe and Mail* newspaper editorialised, hailing Mr Clinton's decision (to defer

deployment). It advised whoever is the new president to substitute "sense for macho posturing."

Canada's military establishment supports the missile defence plan. Although Canada and the United States renewed the Norad agreement last June for another five years, the Canadians fear, in the words of one general, that without participation in the new defence system they would be marginalised in Norad. Without directly contributing to the missile defence system, Canada is proceeding with a \$430 million "joint space project," a military sensor programme intended in part to free up American resources for missile defence.

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien has not taken a position on President Clinton's delay. But his Foreign Minister, Lloyd Axworthy, has been blunt. "We certainly welcome the decision," he said. "It's something we've been advocating." Last spring, Mr Axworthy had criticised the plan as "a risk not worth taking," one that could precipitate a new nuclear arms race. In a speech at the United Nations General Assembly, Canada's Foreign Minister said the Pentagon's plan "doesn't screen out cruise missiles, doesn't screen out drones, doesn't screen out terrorist operations or tramp steamers or whatever other – you know, Greyhound buses or ferries. And those are real security issues."

Vice Adm. Herbert Browne, deputy commander of the United States Space Command, was so irritated that he suggested that if Canada did not participate in the system, the United States would not waste missiles defending Canadian cities. If Ottawa came under attack, Admiral Browne told reporters, "Detroit would be next, and the United States would be reluctant to say, 'Well, we've expended all of our ground-based interceptors protecting Ottawa.'"

In Greenland, American advocates of the missile defence plan want first to make \$50 million worth of improvements to an existing early warning radar in Thule, and then build an expanded radar that would focus on threats from the Middle East and from the Korean peninsula.

"Thule is a basic element in the N.M.D. architecture," John D. Holum, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, said in an interview. Mr Holum led the Pentagon and State Department delegation that briefed Greenland and Danish officials here, then travelled 1,000 miles north to visit the American base. In an attempt to assuage the fears of the 55,000 people living here, on the world's largest island, he said: "Greenland is not a target."

At the height of the cold war, Thule had 7,000 American soldiers and an array of nuclear-tipped missiles. It still has Greenland's largest road network and the island's northernmost airfield capable of accommodating jets, but the American presence has been reduced to 200 soldiers who maintain early warning radars. Greenlanders say they are grateful for the network of airfields left by the Americans, who at the height of World War II had 17 installations here, but would like the military to come back and clean up the abandoned sites, including barrels of oil, and ammunition buried at Sondre Stromfjord, a base abandoned in the early 1990's.

In mid-August, a group of former employees at Thule charged that the Pentagon has covered up the loss of a nuclear bomb from a B-52G bomber that crashed and burned on sea ice seven miles from Thule on January 21, 1968. Based in Plattsburgh, N.Y., and loaded with four nuclear bombs, the aircraft was flying over the area when it made an emergency crash landing, killing one crew member. In response, Mr Holum said: "There is no bomb remaining. They did a very comprehensive cleanup."

But, for some people here, the American military presence bears a legacy of mistrust. For almost 40 years, American and Danish officials assured Danes and Greenlanders that Greenland was "a nuclear-weapons-free zone." Then in 1995, a 1957 memo came to light in which H.C. Hansen, then Denmark's Prime Minister, gave the United States secret permission for storage at Thule of nuclear bombs and warheads for Nike Hercules missiles. According to a recent investigation by a Danish government institute, all nuclear weapons were removed in 1965.

Dealing with another source of rancour, a Copenhagen court last year ordered the Danish government to pay to \$3,500 to each of 53 Inuit villagers who sued over the forcible removal of their village in 1951 to make way for construction of the base at Thule. Today, the mayor of Thule and many Inuit in the area “are scared and are unanimous in their opposition to N.M.D.,” said Aqqaluk Lynge, a Greenlander who is president of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, an organisation based here that often speaks for the 150,000 Inuit of Greenland, Canada, Alaska and Russia. “We don’t like that superpower attitude that says, ‘We can do what we want with our air bases,’” said Mr Lynge, who was a member of Greenland’s Parliament in the mid- 1980’s. “The Arctic has always been looked at as a desert, with only a few Eskimos and polar bears. Well, we see ourselves as the guardians of the environment up here.”

OBITUARY

The death of Audrey Wise has come as a great shock for everybody in the Peace and Labour Movements.

Audrey was a staunch CND member who became committed to European Nuclear Disarmament (END) in the 1980s and, as long as she remained a member of the Party’s National Executive Committee, represented the Labour Party in the END Liaison Committee. At the same time she became a member of the *Spokesman* editorial board.

She was long dedicated to the work of the Institute for Workers’ Control from the 1960s onwards. She spoke at most of its major Conferences, played a significant role on its Council, and was eventually elected to Chair the IWC on the retirement of Bill Jones.

Audrey Wise combined, in a unique way, a strong and unwavering attachment to principles and people, with a close attention to detailed work on the many issues and campaigns in which she was engaged. Such creative socialists are irreplaceable.