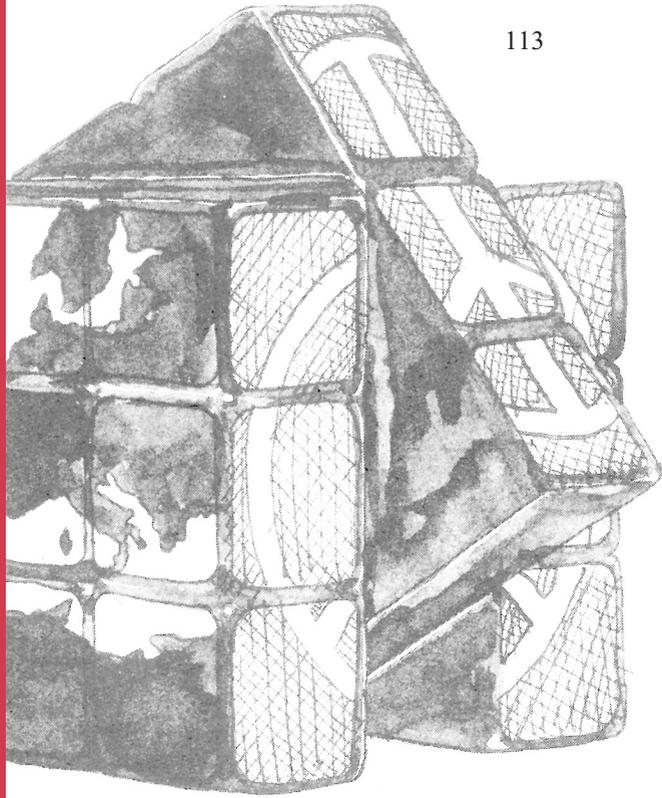


END INFO

European
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A Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Europe: Why today?

Marc Finaud

Since 1967, five regions of the world have declared themselves as nuclear-weapon-free on the basis of a treaty:

- Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco, signed in 1967, entered into force in 2002),
- The South Pacific (Treaty of Rarotonga, signed in 1985, entered into force in 1986),
- South-East Asia (Bangkok Treaty, signed in 1995, entered into force in 1997),
- Africa (Treaty of Pelindaba, signed in 1996, entered into force in 2009),
- Central Asia (Semipalatinsk Treaty, signed in 2006, entered into force in 2009).

In most cases, the nuclear powers have committed themselves in protocols to respect these zones and not to transfer or use their nuclear weapons therein. In addition, Antarctica, outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, and the seabed are free from the deployment of nuclear weapons under other treaties.¹

The idea of such a zone in Europe dates back to the beginning of the Cold War, but never saw the light of

day because of the refusal of the two military alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, to move into this direction. On the eve of the 30th anniversary of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and then of the Warsaw Pact, and in view of the imminent entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), is it not time to relaunch this initiative and gradually make the whole of Europe, which has been the most nuclearized zone in the world, a region of stability and peace?

I. Historical reminder: Proposals for a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ) in Europe²

1. In 1956, when the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union were the only countries possessing nuclear weapons, the latter proposed banning the deployment of any nuclear weapons on European soil. Moscow's main fear was Germany's rearmament and its ambition for strategic parity with the United States, which pursued its nuclear-sharing plan with NATO.

2. In 1957, the **Rapacki Plan**, presented by the Polish Foreign Minister, aimed to ban nuclear weapons in Central Europe (West and East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland). The United States and NATO, fearing an imbalance of conventional forces in favour of the USSR, opposed it.

3. In the same year, Romania

launched the **Balkan Initiative** for a nuclear-free zone including, on the Socialist side, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia and, on the NATO side, Greece and Turkey. The latter two countries refused to give up the American nuclear umbrella.

4. In 1963 Finland proposed a NWFZ to the **Scandinavian** countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) and then the Soviet Union launched its **Mediterranean Initiative**, excluding all nuclear weapons in most of the countries bordering the Mediterranean. The United States rejected both initiatives.

5. In 1969, after the signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Soviet Union extended the **Balkan Initiative** to the countries bordering the Adriatic. NATO countries rejected it, accusing the USSR of seeking to prevent deterrence against Soviet aggression.

6. In 1982 former Swedish Prime Minister Olaf Palme proposed a new version of the Rapacki Plan for **Central Europe**, in the form of a corridor from the Baltic to the Balkans, excluding all nuclear weapons with a range of more than 1000 km.

The main reasons for the failure of these initiatives are clear: the policy of the blocs and the nuclear deterrence strategy of the United States and NATO aimed at thwarting the conventional superiority of the USSR and the

Warsaw Pact. However, the Cold War did not prevent the two superpowers from concluding agreements for the elimination of certain nuclear weapons in Europe, mainly the INF Intermediate-Range Missile Treaty of 1987, which led to the destruction of some 2,700 such missiles.

II. The post-cold war era and progress towards denuclearisation

At the end of the Cold War, the 1991 START I Treaty prohibited the deployment of the strategic offensive nuclear weapons covered by the Treaty outside the territory of the two countries, i.e. also in Europe. In the same year, in the “Presidential Nuclear Initiatives” (PNIs), the United States and Russia undertook to withdraw their tactical nuclear weapons from their theatres of deployment (in Europe) and to destroy or store them in central locations. The Lisbon Protocol of May 1992 guaranteed the repatriation to Russia of all Soviet nuclear weapons from Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. The 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act excluded any deployment of nuclear weapons in the new NATO member countries.

In 1996, and after two attempts in 1990 and 1995, in response to the accession to NATO of several former Soviet republics or former members of the Warsaw Pact, Belarus launched a new proposal for a NWFZ in Central and Eastern

Europe. In fact, the combination of the INF and START I Treaties and the PNIs meant that, in the area proposed by Belarus,³ no nuclear weapons were to be deployed.

III. Why relaunch a NWFZ in Europe now?

The conditions that prevailed at the end of the Cold War have undergone major changes. The INF Treaty was abrogated on the initiative of the United States, followed by Russia, in 2019. Although the United States has not announced any redeployment of intermediate-range missiles with nuclear capability in Europe and Russia is considering such deployment only in response to an American initiative, there is no longer any legal obligation to exclude such weapons in Europe.

While Russia maintains some 1,870 tactical nuclear weapons,⁴ most of which are stored centrally on its European territory, the United States deploys some 150 gravity nuclear bombs on the soil of NATO countries (Germany, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey).⁵ None of these weapons are covered by the 2010 New START Treaty, which relates only to deployed strategic offensive weapons and is due to expire in February 2021.

At the same time, in 2017 the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was adopted and is due to enter into force on 22

January 2021 after 50 ratifications. In Europe, several states have already signed or ratified the Treaty (Austria, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Malta, San Marino, Holy See), while others have supported its adoption at the UN (Cyprus, Moldova, Sweden, Switzerland). Even if these states were already party to the NPT and therefore prohibited themselves from seeking to acquire or possess nuclear weapons, their obligations under the TPNW will be more extensive and will include, in particular, the non-stationing of nuclear weapons on their soil or non-cooperation with any state in the production of nuclear weapons.

The nuclear powers and their allies dependent on “extended deterrence” or nuclear umbrella, unsurprisingly, opposed the TPNW because it will lead to the delegitimization of nuclear weapons. This situation does not seem likely to change in the near future.

However, reviving a NWFZ in Europe would offer several advantages and allow several states to join it subject to the formulation of obligations in a future treaty:

- With the exception of the countries possessing nuclear weapons in Europe (France, United Kingdom, Russia), which would have to renounce them in order to participate in an NWFZ, **all the other European states could accept a non-possession and non-stationing commitment** apart from the five

NATO states where American tactical weapons are currently stationed (Germany, Belgium, Italy, Netherlands, Turkey). In several of the latter, a debate is taking place on the continuation of nuclear sharing,⁶ and the launch of a NWFZ could influence this debate in favour of the withdrawal of American weapons and hence negotiations with Russia on the elimination of all tactical nuclear weapons from European territory. Indeed, keeping these weapons in the arsenals of both countries contributes to lowering the threshold for their use in a nuclear war, the main targets and victims of which would be in Europe.

- Similarly, a NWFZ initiative widely supported in Europe, one of the consequences of which would be the **exclusion of the deployment of new nuclear missiles of the type prohibited by the defunct INF Treaty**, would be likely to reassure Russia and encourage the negotiation of a new agreement on this subject, independently or in the framework of a successor to the New START Treaty.

- **NWFZs are recognised and encouraged by the NPT** (Article VII) and by the Plan of Action of the 2010 NPT Review Conference (Action 9), which states that “(t)he establishment of further nuclear-weapon-free zones, where appropriate, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the region

concerned (...) is encouraged.” Reaffirming this legitimacy may help those countries that are still hesitant to accede to the TPNW.

- NATO member states (Baltic States, Poland) and non-NATO member states (Ukraine, Georgia) that fear Russian aggression should find it in their interest to belong to a NWFZ which, like the existing zones, would benefit from **legal guarantees of non-attack with nuclear weapons** by the nuclear powers (“negative security assurances”).

- Precedents of NWFZs in other regions or other negotiations (anti-personnel mines, TPNW) show the **diversity and flexibility of possible frameworks**: NGO campaigns, conferences of interested states, negotiation of a treaty.

With a view to sounding out the governments of the states most likely to launch or support an initiative for a NWFZ in Europe (the European states party to the TPNW and those that had launched such initiatives in the past: Belarus, Romania, Finland, and Sweden), concerted action with NGOs in these countries should be launched as soon as the TPNW enters into force (22 January 2021).

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Notes

1. The 1959 Antarctic Treaty, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 1979 Moon Treaty, the 1971 Seabed Treaty.

2. H. Müller et al., "A Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone in Europe – Concept, Problems, Chances", Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, Jan. 2016 (<https://bit.ly/338aZzc>). See also: Marc Finaud, "The Experience of Nuclear- Weapon Free Zones", BASIC, May 2014 (<https://bit.ly/3mVdOeT>).

3. Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czechia, (Eastern) Germany, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine. For a more detailed analysis, see: H. Müller et al., "A Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone in Europe – Concept, Problems, Chances", op. cit.

4. Source: Federation of American Scientists (<https://bit.ly/33rfiB4>).

5. Ibid.

6. See: P. Grüll & A. Brzozowski, "SPD Leadership Reignites German Debate on US Nuclear Weapons", Euractiv, 6 May 2020 (<https://bit.ly/2KHdf4S>); A. Brzozowski, "Belgium Debates Phase Out of US Nuclear Weapons on Its Soil", Euractiv, 17 Jan. 2020 (<https://bit.ly/39qm0iQ>).

10 reasons why increasing the number of warheads is wrong

Commander Robert Forsyth

1. The UK is one of three official Depositaries for the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In addition to administrative duties, UK is required to set high standards of conformity. The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development & Foreign Policy appears to be in breach of the letter of the NPT and definitely in breach of the spirit.

2. One 100kt Trident warhead is sufficient to physically destroy hundreds of thousands of people along with the infrastructure of a small State. It would also inflict generations of radiation effects on all its neighbours. The previous limit of 180 warheads was sufficient to kill millions of people and cause such devastation as would lead to a nuclear winter and extinction of multiple lifeforms. An additional 80 achieves no more than doubling up on this and ensuring any surviving life forms are extinguished

3. It may be that the Government envisages using low yield (5 - 10kt) warheads against chemical and biological threats - even from NPT signatories. While these may be slightly less than Hiroshima's blast and radiation effects – still being experienced 75 years later – their use could well trigger a nuclear

exchange between third parties whose effects would be totally disproportionate to the reason for using them and replicate delivery of several 100kt warheads.

4. The threat of use of nuclear weapons in the past has not prevented non-nuclear warfare e.g. Korea and Vietnam. There is no reason to suppose that it would deter cyber or chemical/biological attacks or any other form of non-nuclear warfare.

5. The increase in warheads undermines the UK commitment to Article VI of the NPT and so significantly weakens the Treaty, i.e. 'The haves can have more with impunity but not you' is not a good message.

6. The implication that UK may use nuclear weapons to counter non-nuclear attacks may encourage non-nuclear weapon States to provide themselves with nuclear weapons to have similar enhanced protection.

7. The 'Global Reach' military ambitions of the recent Integrated Review exceeds the capability available, even after implementing its recommendations, because of the extreme cost of nuclear weapons.

8. Nuclear weapons are a very blunt Cold War era instrument entirely inappropriate for nuanced reaction to say Russian incursions in the Baltic or China in the Pacific. Neither country would seriously consider that UK would actually

launch a nuclear attack against them and so would proceed knowing we lacked the conventional force to oppose.

9. UK professes to be a 'rules based' society. The targets at which a nuclear warhead could be lawfully fired and arguably be compliant with current international laws are limited to mid ocean or uninhabited desert - provided there is no prevailing wind.

10. The US Biden administration is contemplating reducing nuclear weapons and to be used on a 'sole use' and not first use basis i.e. only to deter/retaliate to a nuclear weapon attack. The UK policy of 'deliberate ambiguity' which, by denying nothing, embraces all, will conflict with the US. The risk is that technical/political support for UK Trident might be withdrawn. The US is so deeply embedded in UK Trident, from supply of missiles, warheads, targeting procedures and the launch system, that it has the means to render UK Trident inoperable if it so wishes.

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Persistent objectors

Tom Unterrainer

END Info 22 (Feb 2021) reported on a recent report from Chatham House, 'NATO and the TPNW' (page 5). This report is, available online, is worth closer examination in one particular regard: the matter of 'persistent objectors'. The report states as follows:

While it is a general principle of international law that treaties do not create obligations for third states, **it is also an accepted principle that a rule set forth in a treaty could, under certain conditions, become binding on a third state as a customary rule ... However, this is not an automatic process.** Two distinct concepts are relevant here: the concept of so-called 'specially affected states', and that of '**persistent objectors**' ... As the ICJ has explained, a lack of consent from specially affected states may have the effect of preventing the required general state practice from emerging, preventing the rule from coming into being in the first place. **There is a strong argument that states with nuclear weapons and those in a nuclear alliance would be specially affected by a proposed ban on nuclear weapons.** Even if a rule is indeed created, **states that have objected to a certain degree to**

its emergence - so-called persistent objectors - will not be bound by it.

(emphasis added)

What does all this mean and what does it explain? It seems that the hope that the TPNW will create a decisive 'normative shift' in international law with respect to nuclear weapons is in question. What Steven Hill¹ points out in his Chatham House report is that if a state or alliance of states persistently raise their objections to a treaty, then they can - in the terms set out in international law - prevent such a treaty from becoming 'customary law' or binding on states which have not signed up to the treaty. So whilst the TPNW will be 'in force' in those states which have ratified the treaty, 'persistent objection' on the part of the nuclear-armed states and allies could prevent a more general application of the treaty provisions.²

How to address this potential barrier? How to react to the ongoing insistence of the nuclear-powers that their possession of instruments of mass murder is in any way legitimate?

An important step is to understand that the TPNW will not steadily accrue widespread legal status through the ongoing workings and mechanisms of international law. The 'persistent objections' of the US, UK, NATO and whoever else must be met with organisation and

mobilisation of great legions of persistent objectors on the streets, in the conference rooms, inside political parties and social movement organisations. We must continue to find creative and imaginative means to apply the concrete lessons of the TPNW, to mount sharp arguments against 'nuclearism', to sound the alarm about the manifold dangers presented by such weapons and the geopolitical strategies of their possessors.

There is much work to do.

Notes:

1 Hill, Steven (2021) 'Nato and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons', Chatham House, London accessed at

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/01/nato-and-treaty-prohibition-nuclear-weapons>

2 See Falk, Richard (2021) 'Challenging Nuclearism' in *The Spokesman 147: Challenging Nuclearism*, Spokesman, Nottingham for an extended discussion on this a related point

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Note on Nuclear Weapon Announcements in the UK Integrated Review

Peter Jenkins

Summary

The United Kingdom government recently announced, in the context of an integrated policy review, that it will move to an overall nuclear weapon stockpile of no more than 260 (from a previous target of no more than 180) and that it will extend its longstanding policy of deliberate ambiguity by no longer making public figures for its operational stockpile, deployed warheads and deployed missiles.

These decisions are best seen as symptomatic of a belief that the United Kingdom's and NATO's security environment has been deteriorating and that now Russia in particular poses a grave threat to the Kingdom and its NATO allies. Pugwash has an opportunity to react constructively to the decisions by exploring the reasons for the heightening of NATO/Russian tensions in recent years.

Additionally, use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear aggressors in certain circumstances is envisaged (extension to the policy of deliberate ambiguity may be connected to this) and the right to review the UK's negative security

assurance to Non-Nuclear Weapon States is reserved. But nuclear weapon use in response to cyber-attacks and against non-state actors is ruled out, and the UK's nuclear weapon submarines will remain at several days' notice to fire.

Detail

The context of these changes in the UK's nuclear weapons policy is a strategic review of "security, defence, development and foreign policy". Being the first review of UK strategy since the 2016 decision to withdraw from the European Union, and inviting comparison with strategic reviews done in 2010 and 2015, the 2021 review suggests a wish to convince readers that EU withdrawal has enhanced the UK's potential to be an important actor on the global stage. In particular, the 2021 review dwells on economic and political interests in the Indo/Pacific region and it sets out the capabilities, actual and aspirational, that the Kingdom can bring to bear on the pursuit of those interests. Nonetheless, it recognises that the North Atlantic area remains the primary concern of UK defence policies.

Increase in the Overall

Nuclear Weapons Stockpile

"In 2010 the Government stated an intent to reduce our overall nuclear warhead stockpile ceiling from not more than 225 to

not more than 180 by the mid-2020s. However, in recognition of the evolving security environment, including the developing range of technological and doctrinal threats, this is no longer possible, and the UK will move to an overall nuclear weapon stockpile of no more than 260 warheads"

Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy (IR), 15 March 2021

The most specific and most logical explanation for this decision came in a TV interview that the Secretary of State for Defence gave on 21 March. He referred to improvements in Russian missile defences and implied that these meant the UK's nuclear deterrent must grow in size to remain credible. UK governments have long taken a capacity to inflict unacceptable damage on Moscow as a yardstick for the credibility of the UK deterrent. Russia is thought to have been strengthening Moscow's anti-ballistic missile defences in the context of a major upgrade of its anti-access and area-denial capabilities, lessons having been drawn from the first and second Iraq wars and NATO's 1999 aerial assault on Serbia.

However, the Integrated Review itself contains no reference to Russian missile defences. Instead, it refers to a wider, more amorphous range of threats, which has been

described as “a deteriorating security environment.”

“We have previously identified risks to the UK from major nuclear armed states, emerging nuclear states, and state-sponsored nuclear terrorism. Those risks have not gone away. Some states are now significantly increasing and diversifying their nuclear arsenals. They are investing in novel nuclear technologies and developing new ‘warfighting’ nuclear systems which they are integrating into their military strategies and doctrines and into their political rhetoric to seek to coerce others. The increase in global competition, challenges to the international order, and proliferation of potentially disruptive technologies all pose a threat to strategic stability...We will continue to keep our nuclear posture under constant review in light of the international security environment and the actions of potential adversaries.” (IR)

This explanation seems to lack logic. It is far from obvious that increases and improvements in another state’s nuclear forces require increases in a retaliatory nuclear force judged to be assured (because invulnerable to a first strike) and credible (because capable of causing a potential aggressor unacceptable damage). Nonetheless, this is the explanation to which the

Integrated Review gives pride of place.

British Pugwash has heard it said that these risk concerns centre on Russia, China, North Korea (DPRK) and Iran. Here, too, an element of illogicality enters in. China has stated publicly that it does not intend to be the first to use nuclear weapons in the event of a confrontation with an adversary, and it is hard to imagine the UK intending to be the initiator of a nuclear exchange with China. The North Korean government is preoccupied with what it sees as an existential threat from the United States of America. Iran is not thought to have resumed the research into nuclear weapon design and manufacture that it abandoned in 2003; its Supreme Leader has issued a fatwa against the possession and use of nuclear weapons; in agreeing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action Iran pledged to remain a Non-Nuclear Weapon State; Iran does not possess a missile capable of reaching Western Europe; and Iran has offered to refrain from developing missiles with ranges in excess of 2000 km.

It is probable, therefore, that these risk concerns centre essentially on the weapon systems and military doctrines of Russia, and that they are felt as much from a NATO perspective as from a national UK perspective. A country assessment of Russia in the review

includes this passage:

"The UK respects the people, culture and history of Russia. However, until relations with its government improve, we will actively deter and defend against the full spectrum of threats emanating from Russia. Through NATO, we will ensure a united Western response, combining our military, diplomatic and intelligence assets in support of collective security ... We will also support others in the Eastern European neighbourhood and beyond to build their resilience to state threats."

This is not the place to explore why the British government has formed a view that the United Kingdom and NATO now face a grave "spectrum of threats" from Russia. Several possible reasons will occur to anyone who has been taking an interest in the evolving character of Russia's relations with NATO members since 2012. Suffice it to say that this grim assessment contrasts with the 2010 strategic review (which set the stockpile target at no more than 180):

"No state currently has both the intent and the capability to threaten the independence or integrity of the UK. But we cannot dismiss the possibility that a major direct nuclear threat to the UK might re-emerge – a state's intent in relation to the use or threat of

use of its capabilities could change relatively quickly, and while we will continue to work internationally to enhance mutual trust and security, we cannot rule out a major shift in the international security situation which would put us under grave threat."

The 2021 assessment also goes some way beyond the assessment in the 2015 strategic review. The latter confines its Russian threat perception to the following sentence:

"Though highly unlikely, we cannot rule out the possibility that it (Russia) may feel tempted to act aggressively against NATO Allies."

Belief in a re-born Russian threat thus seems to be the leading explanation for the decision to increase the overall weapons stockpile. Two other possible factors mention merit, however, before turning to the decision to expand a longstanding policy of ambiguity to embrace actual stockpile and deployed nuclear weapon numbers.

One is a possible fear that in time improvements in offensive underwater technologies will affect the invulnerability of the UK's strategic missile submarines. Behind the stockpile increase could lie an intention to maintain more than one such submarine on patrol on a

routine basis.

However, an IJSS commentary on the Integrated Review casts doubt on the feasibility of a two-vessel routine, at least until a new generation of submarines enters service during the 2030s:

"There are, however, potential constraints to that scenario. Among them are the well publicised problems with the refits and serviceability of the current Vanguard class, which have recently made it challenging to maintain the minimum Continuous At Sea Deterrence requirement of one submarine on patrol."

(The UK and nuclear warheads – stretching credibility?, 26 March 2021)

Second, it could be that officials have come to the view that the 2010 decision to cut the stockpile to 180 by 2025, re-confirmed in 2015, and to deploy no more than 40 warheads on routine patrol, was ill-judged and that the stockpile needs to grow, irrespective of changes in the strategic environment and threat perceptions, to achieve credibility. This possibility has been hinted at in British Pugwash's hearing but there is no hard evidence for it.

Withholding of Missile and Warhead Numbers

"We will remain deliberately ambiguous about precisely

when, how and at what scale we would contemplate the use of nuclear weapons. Given the changing security and technological environment, we will extend this long-standing policy of deliberate ambiguity and no longer give public figures for our operational stockpile, deployed warhead or deployed missile numbers. This ambiguity complicates the calculations of potential aggressors, reduces the risk of deliberate nuclear use by those seeking a first-strike advantage, and contributes to strategic stability." (IJSS)

Two additional explanations for this prizing of ambiguity come to mind.

The first is that the UK government intends to deploy nuclear weapon systems to deter substrategic nuclear and non-nuclear threats to NATO on its North East front, but does not wish to reveal the number of systems designated for this purpose that will be on routine patrol at any one time. A Q & A paper issued some weeks after the Integrated Review suggests that this explanation is unlikely. In it the Ministry of Defence affirms that none of the UK's nuclear weapons are "designed for tactical use during conflict"; instead, they exist to "deter the most extreme threats to national security".

However, this formulation seems to leave open the possibility that 'low-yield' strategic systems will be

deployed routinely in case a need for their use in sub-strategic/tactical contexts arises. That possibility is also left open by statements in the review that the UK's nuclear weapons are committed to the defence of both the Kingdom and NATO allies, and that "their fundamental purpose" is, inter alia, to deter "aggression", the qualifier "nuclear" being omitted.

The second possibility is that the UK government has come to view a greater lack of transparency as a necessary adjunct to maintaining the option of using nuclear weapons in retaliation for chemical or biological attacks and to cope with threats which emerging technologies may pose:

"We reserve the right to review this (Negative Security) assurance if the future threat of weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical and biological capabilities, or emerging technologies that could have a comparable impact, makes it necessary." (IR)

The impression sought is perhaps that the United Kingdom will have sufficient systems deployed at any one time to be able to respond to non-nuclear WMD and emerging technology threats without impairing the credibility of its strategic deterrent.

To end on some positive notes. The Integrated Review indicates that when on patrol the UK's

strategic submarines will continue to be at several days' notice to fire. The review states that

"since 1994, we do not target our missiles at any state." It seems, from what British Pugwash has heard, that the option of using nuclear weapons against non-state actors has been excluded. The MOD's Q & A paper rules out their use in response to cyber-attacks. And the UK government comes down firmly on the deterrence side of the deterrence/warfighting distinction:

"We would consider using our nuclear weapons only in extreme circumstances of self defence, including the defence of our NATO Allies ... We remain committed to maintaining the minimum destructive power needed to guarantee that the UK's nuclear deterrent remains credible and effective against the full range of state nuclear threats from any direction..The fundamental purpose of our nuclear weapons is to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression." (IR)

Conclusion

These changes in the UK's nuclear policy are regrettable. They amount to a step backwards and away from the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. They call into question the sincerity of the UK's advocacy of "step-by-step" movement in the direction of that vision. They raise doubt about the

strength of the UK's commitment to full implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. They demonstrate that the United Kingdom is still wed to the doctrine of nuclear deterrence.

However, it would seem best for the Pugwash movement to channel concern over these decisions into a constructive initiative. One option would be for Pugwash to explore in some detail why the UK government (probably in the company of other NATO governments) has come to believe that Russia now poses a much graver threat to NATO than UK governments believed in 2010 and 2015. Such work would open up the possibility of Pugwash trying to contribute to a reduction in NATO/Russian tensions and would complement work to prevent a resumption of the nuclear arms race (see Pugwash Note on Arms Control and Disarmament, January 2021).

It is probably fanciful to imagine that the mutual confidence which characterised relations between Russia and NATO in the years that followed German re-unification can be re-built. But there is room for each side, NATO governments and the Russian government, to clarify the motives behind recent forms of behaviour that the other side has found objectionable, and to draw up mutually acceptable rules of the road for future co-existence.

The current climate of mutual incomprehension, suspicion and

fear, of which the UK's latest strategic review appears to be a product, is pregnant with nuclear risk on both sides of the NATO/Russian border.

Peter Jenkins is the Chair of British Pugwash. This article was published in END Info 24.

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No new 'land-based' nukes in Europe?

Tom Unterrainer

'Defense News' reported in early June that "NATO allies are poised to formally oppose the alliance deploying ground-based nuclear missiles in Europe, following U.S. President Joe Biden's meeting with fellow heads of state". Confirmation of this stance is contained in paragraph 26 of the Brussels Summit Communiqué, issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 14 June 2021, which reads:

26. We reaffirm our commitment to respond in a measured, balanced, coordinated, and timely way to Russia's growing and evolving array of conventional and nuclear-capable missiles, which is increasing in scale and

complexity and which poses significant risks from all strategic directions to security and stability across the Euro-Atlantic area. We will continue to implement a coherent and balanced package of political and military measures to achieve Alliance objectives, including strengthened integrated air and missile defence; advanced defensive and offensive conventional capabilities; steps to keep NATO's nuclear deterrent safe, secure, and effective; efforts to support and strengthen arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation; intelligence; and exercises. **We have no intention to deploy land-based nuclear missiles in Europe.** (emphasis added)

Such a declaration is to be welcomed, for all the obvious reasons. It had been feared that one consequence of Trump's sabotage of the INF Treaty would be stationing of such weapons on the European landmass once again. Such a prospect has now been ruled out.

This commitment, welcome as it is, is not the end of the matter. For instance, in a linguistic sense having "no intention" to do something is not at all the same as a declaration that you "will never" do such a thing. When it comes to questions of weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the context of a

continuing sharpening of tensions, precision of language or a lack thereof has consequences.

Take the US Aegis Ashore missile system which is currently stationed in Romania and is due for deployment in Poland from 2022. According to a paper submitted to the Defence Committee of the British House of Commons on 'Consequences for UK Defence of INF Withdrawal' (Katarzyna Kubiak, see also *The Spokesman 142: European Nuclear Disarmament*), the missiles used in the Aegis system can be fairly straightforwardly adapted, by a change of fuel tank and payload, into an intermediate-range nuclear missile. If leaders have "no intention" of deploying such weapons in Europe, then perhaps there should be a clear commitment that the Aegis-based missiles will never be adapted.

What of sea-based nuclear missiles in European waters? As Joachim Wernicke has pointed out in these pages on previous occasions, a new generation of US sea-based, nuclear-capable missiles are in development. Will US ships be permitted to carry such weapons in the territorial waters of European states? Will US ships armed with such weapons be permitted to dock in European ports? If so, then what does having "no intention to deploy land-based nuclear missiles in Europe" amount to?

What of the US nuclear weapons

already in Europe? (see page 4 for a map of their locations) Do these weapons relate to a commitment to “keep NATO’s nuclear deterrent safe, secure, and effective”? The presence of US nuclear weapons, along with the French and UK arsenals, makes Europe a more dangerous and not a safer place to live. Real security will depend on their removal and a nuclear-weapons-free Europe.

* * * * *

Too late to shake NATO awake?

Sean Howard

It’s Stockholm, 14 December, 1992, and Russian Foreign Minister Andrei V. Kozyrev has begun to address over 50 of his counterparts at a summit meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), an institution widely considered instrumental in helping end the Cold War. Just two years after the November 1990 CSCE ‘Charter of Paris for a New Europe’ had boldly declared that the continent was “liberating itself from the legacy of the past,” Kozyrev is worried the chance to build a ‘Common European Home’ is being lost, a ‘peace dividend’ squandered by American-led NATO triumphalism. So, in diplomatic desperation, he decides: no time

like the present, to pay a visit from the future...

“Great Russia,” Kozyrev growls, is back, determined to protect its own western flank, defending its Slavic brethren (and suddenly vulnerable Russian minorities) from a NATO wave threatening to wash through the former Warsaw Pact to the shore of the Baltics, or even Ukraine. Given the Alliance’s pursuit of “essentially unchanged” goals – military supremacy and strategic dominance – a counter-Alliance is once again needed; and so, as a “state capable of looking after itself and its friends..using all available means, including military,” Russia will require all “the former Soviet Republics” to “immediately join a new federation or confederation”.

As Trudy Rubin wrote in The Baltimore Sun, what the Foreign Minister “didn’t say, but what every diplomat was all too well aware of, was that Russia still possesses 11,000-plus nuclear weapons.” No wonder, when he “left the room,” most “diplomats stood stunned,” while US Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger “rushed after him, demanding, ‘What is going on?’” A long hour later, he found out, when Kozyrev returned the podium to declare: Neither President Yeltsin nor I will ever agree to what I read out in my previous speech. I did it so that you should all be aware of the real threats on our road to a post-Communist Europe.

Widely dismissed as a joke or

hoax, it was instead, veteran New York Times columnist William Safire insisted “a historic performance” by “the young man,” a “slap in the face..to say, ‘Wake up! Stop being so damnably complacent! To avert a return to a divided world, help us now’” – a rude awakening, admittedly, but one to which “the West’s diplomats should reply: ‘Thanks, we needed that.’”

The ‘sleep’, alas, was not broken. As the nightmarish ‘Back to the Future’ decade of the 1990s unfolded, NATO’s war-wagons rolled east, against the urgent, bipartisan advice of many senior retired US politicians, diplomats and officials. As a 1997 Open Letter to President Clinton, signed by 40 national security establishment luminaries, argued, while Moscow “does not now pose a threat to its western neighbors,” expanding the Alliance – a move “opposed across the entire political spectrum” in Russia – would be certain only to “undercut those who favor reform and cooperation with the West,” and “bring the Russians to question the entire post-Cold War settlement.”

On 1 January 1995, two years after Kosyrev’s performative prophecy, the CSCE became the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), a change ostensibly intended to institutionalize and advance the pan-European agenda, embracing what the Budapest Declaration of

December 1994 called ‘Genuine Partnership in a New Era.’ The day the declaration was signed, however, President Yeltsin foresaw the dawn of a ‘Cold Peace’ unless Washington changed its ‘victory march’ tune, abandoning the “dangerous delusion” that “the destinies of continents and of the world community in general can somehow be managed from one single capital.” While “we hear explanations,” Yeltsin scoffed, that NATO expansion “is allegedly the expansion of stability, just in case there are undesirable developments in Russia,” the real “objective is to bring NATO up to Russia’s borders,” in breach of multiple, unequivocal ‘security assurances’ offered to the Soviet Union in 1990-91 that the Alliance would expand “not an inch eastward”.

Writing in the American journal *Foreign Policy* in 1995, the year before he was replaced in a sharp hardline shift, Kozyrev justified his Stockholm ‘stunt,’ arguing that “although the ideas I presented were far from the most extreme held by Yeltsin’s opponents, they threw my Western counterparts into virtual panic: for a few moments they had a realistic glimpse of the kind of Russia they would have to deal with” if “Western politicians, again Americans in particular” continued to “substitute a strategy of rapid expansion of NATO” for “its fundamental transformation” into a

defensive, denuclearized alliance seeking “partnership” with, not absorption of, “Eastern Europe, including Russia.”

On the sidelines of the 1994 Budapest Summit, Russia, the US, the UK, and Ukraine demonstrated the potential of disarmament diplomacy to positively shape the post-Cold War world, signing the ‘Budapest Memorandum’ confirming Ukraine’s relinquishment of Soviet nuclear weapons left on its territory, in return for security guarantees of non-interference in its internal affairs. Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 was a gross violation of these commitments, but also a graphic illustration of “the kind of Russia” the West had by then to deal with, an ultranationalist autocracy embittered by a near-doubling of NATO from 16 states to 28, a surge swallowing most of Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Baltic Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The total is now 30, with Bosnia and Herzegovina next in line and the former Soviet Republics of Georgia and Ukraine ‘aspiring’ to join, the latter with political encouragement and practical support (e.g. weapons and training) from Washington. The prospect of Ukrainian accession was at the root of Russia’s annexation of Crimea, designed in part to prevent the absorption of Sebastopol, for centuries the home port of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet, into a ‘Western’

Alliance not only enjoying conventional superiority but still claiming its Cold War ‘right’ (outnumbered by the Red Army) to strike first with nuclear weapons. Moscow, too, has claimed that same ‘right’ since the mid-1990s, when Yeltsin renounced the doctrine of ‘No First-Use’ inherited from the last Soviet leader – and champion of a nuclear-weapon-free world – Mikhail Gorbachev.

And not only would both sides strike first to prevent or deter nuclear use; both would ‘go nuclear’ to deter or defeat non-nuclear attacks – conventional, chemical, biological, even cyber. As Admiral Charles Richard, head of US Strategic Command (STRATCOM), stated bluntly during a recent event at the Brookings Institution: “Nuclear is not separate from conventional”; hence the ‘need’, according to Air Force Magazine’s summary of his remarks, for a “new nuclear and conventional integration policy” – new not just for the US, but NATO.

On June 14, NATO leaders will meet at the Alliance’s new, \$1.45 billion (!) HQ in Brussels to discuss what Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg all-knowingly defines as “the challenges of today and tomorrow,” a self-serving short list – “Russia’s aggressive actions, the threat of terrorism, cyber attacks, emerging and disruptive technologies, the security impact of climate change, and the rise of China” – inexcusably excluding the

danger of nuclear war, or indeed the detrimental impact of astronomical military spending (almost \$2 trillion in 2020, the Year of COVID!) on, for example, pandemic preparedness...

Leaders will also be charged with reviewing a report, NATO 2030: United for a New Era, published in November 2020 by a 'Reflection Group' appointed by Stoltenberg in the turbulent wake of President Trump's description of NATO as "obsolete," and French President Macron's diagnosis of strategic "brain death." The Reflection Group, however (10 pro-NATO "independent experts") was tasked not to reason 'why' – to finally answer the basic questions posed by Kozyrev in 1995: "What is the *raison d'être* of NATO today?" and "Who is its real enemy?" – but rather explore 'how' Alliance "unity, solidarity, and cohesion," given and taken as a self-evident good, can be increased. For what is too good for a "strategic anchor in uncertain times," drawing on its "success in the Cold War" to keep at bay not only the Russian 'Bear' but now the Chinese 'Dragon' (added to the list of NATO adversaries in 2019 at the xenophobic behest of the Trump Administration)?

And to combat, maybe literally, both Russia and China will certainly require – as the report takes pains to stress – a hellish amount of firepower (conventional and nuclear), correspondingly massive

'investments, and the pursuit of "dominance" in every "arena" opened by emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs), e.g., "big data, Artificial Intelligence, autonomous capabilities, space, cloud technologies, hypersonic and new missile technologies, quantum technologies and biotechnologies, and human augmentation/enhancement."

A "strategic surge" in all these areas is necessary, we are told, to maintain NATO's "edge" and "ability to win on the battlefield." But the jewel in the Alliance's crown remains its spectrum of nuclear capabilities: the long-range, thermonuclear weapons of the US, UK, and France (thousands of warheads, each capable of killing millions) and around a hundred American short-range, 'dial-a-yeild' bombs (each capable of killing many thousands), 'hosted' at air bases in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey. In recent years, and particularly since Coronavirus lockdowns literally brought home the importance of 'human' rather than 'national' security, the popularity in NATO states of nuclear weapons in general, and 'nuclear sharing' in particular, has steeply declined, a fall also explained by the 'new light' cast on the issue by a fast-rising star, the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition on Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), the 'Ban Treaty' NATO continues to regard with a cool, porcelain

disdain at odds with public sentiment.

In Canada, for example, 74% of 1,007 respondents to a Nanos poll conducted in late March 'supported' (55%) or 'somewhat supported' (19%) Canada signing and ratifying the Ban. (Quebec – 82% – and Atlantic Canada – 74% – were the most enthusiastic regions, the Prairies – 65% – the least.) Almost the same number, 73%, agreed or somewhat agreed that Canada should join "even if, as a member of NATO, it might come under pressure from the United States not to do so." And in a striking indication of the Treaty's stigmatizing impact, 71% declared they "would withdraw money from any investment or financial institution...investing funds in anything related to the development, manufacturing or deployment of nuclear weapons."

The NATO 2030 Report dutifully rides to the rescue of the status quo, insisting not only that "nuclear-sharing arrangements" are a "critical element" of NATO's "security guarantees," but that the "political value of this commitment is as important as the military value it brings". But what does this mean, except that 'nukes' – acting as a kind of atomic adhesive, or Superweapon superglue – are needed as much to prevent internal division as deter external threat? Isn't that rather a high price to pay, absurd risk to run, for "unity?"

Counting the many blessing of the Bomb is essential, the Report argues, to "counter hostile efforts to undermine" the Alliance's "vital policy" of nuclear dependence. The 'hostility' presumably emanates from the Nobel Peace-Prize winning International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and other Ban Treaty supporters, an 'emerging and disruptive' threat – first the Bear, then the Dragon, now the Dove! – NATO needs to counter by insisting the TPNW "will never contribute to practical disarmament, nor will it affect international law." In January this year, however, with its 50th ratification, the Treaty became international law, fully-binding on its growing membership. And if that membership, to date, includes none of the nuclear-armed nine (China, France, Israel, India, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, UK, US) or their 32 pro-Bomb allies, its contribution to disarmament may yet prove decisive if it can generate new perspectives, inspire deep debates – and inform new policies – within NATO and beyond.

The Canadian Government recently insisted that the Ban Treaty's "provisions are inconsistent with Canada's collective defensive obligations as a member of NATO." This is a favourite means of 'cementing' the Alliance's pro-Bomb façade: but is it true? The famous 'collective defense' provision (Article V) of the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty states only that

an attack against one is an attack against all, not how such aggression should be deterred or responded to. As Canadian activist Ray Acheson details in her superb contribution to *Peace Research Perspectives on NATO 2030*, “a look at how NATO came to identify as a nuclear weapon alliance indicates, rather than ‘compromise’ achieved through ‘statecraft’, the process was more like obedience reached through intimidation.”

To keep hopes of disarmament alive, saner NATO states like Denmark and Canada insisted that the Alliance’s first Strategic Concept (1950) did not embrace or endorse collective nuclear defense. After years of Anglo-American bullying and arm-twisting, the second Strategic Concept (1957) did – a fateful surrender greatly increasing, as Canada complained, the chances “of the atomic sword being unsheathed.”

False narratives – and histories – can generate false consciousness, constraining or eliminating options for change; and such fabrication, as peace researcher Michael Brzoska writes in ‘*Bending History, Risking the Future*,’ is the dangerous hallmark of the new ‘study’:

Foremost among the events the report does not mention are Russian opposition to the extension of NATO to the East, the illegality of the Western wars in Kosovo and Iraq, and Western contributions to the dismemberments of arms control

arrangements.

As a result, Brzoska worries, the report “bodes ill for the future,” strengthening “the view, already accepted in many NATO countries, of a Western world, with NATO as its ‘strategic anchor,’ that has been innocently drawn into the quagmires created by evil others.”

As an exercise in ‘reflection,’ in fact, NATO 2030 rather resembles the narcissistic architecture of the new Headquarters, a 250,000 square-meter complex (comparable in size to UN HQ!) of “shiny glass and steel interlocking buildings,” housing 4,000 staff, with “glazing equivalent to 10 football pitches, sleek, airport terminal-like halls” and an “amphitheatre-like..decision-making chamber”: a high-tech temple with a “central IT brain” – and 60,000 sensors – which I heard a former disarmament diplomat describe as a “glass mausoleum.”

Sixty thousand sensors – and no clue about peace.

What a joke!

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Flotilla on the warpath

Kate Hudson

The HMS Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier left Portsmouth for the Pacific in May 2021, accompanied by a flotilla comprising up to 36 US F-35 fighter jets, numerous escort vessels, and a strike group company of some 1,600 personnel. Utterly wasteful and potentially dangerous, it's the largest British naval and air taskforce since the Falklands War. Touted by the government as a way to 'make global Great Britain a reality', it's indicative of the new 'attack' mentality of the Johnson government. Whatever the political spin, the fact is, if you send a lot of military hardware out there, it is going to be seen as provocative and is likely to be used. Neither of those is a very good idea. How has it done so far?

Part of the carrier strike force has already caused an international incident. The British destroyer HMS Defender peeled off from the group and sailed into disputed waters in the Black Sea near the Crimea. It asserted that it was keeping open international shipping lanes – in waters claimed by Russia.

UK government sources have confirmed that the ship's action was deliberate, saying that 'it was not there to pick a fight but to make a point'. You have to ask:

why is a British destroyer making a point in the Black Sea? And how many more 'points' is the flotilla going to make on its way to the South China Sea where presumably it will be making further points to China? As the BBC website observed, as dramatic as the Black Sea events appear, 'this could end up being just a dress rehearsal for a bigger test to come... There, together with other nations, it will be challenging China's claims to a vast contested area of sea bordering several countries.'

But that's not all the flotilla has been up to. Last week British and American F-35 fighters flew anti-ISIS strike missions from the aircraft carrier – 'a first for the U.K. in a decade', said the RAF, referring to the 2011 Libya campaign. 'It sends a wider message', they said, as it demonstrates 'the speed and agility with which a U.K.-led Carrier Strike Group can inject fifth generation combat power into any operation, anywhere in the world.'

The strike group's main strategic aim is to reinforce Britain's 'Indo-Pacific Tilt', so following activities in the Middle East it's on course for exercises with the navies of India, Japan, South Korea and Singapore. This mirrors the US's 'Quad' approach to building up regional forces against China.

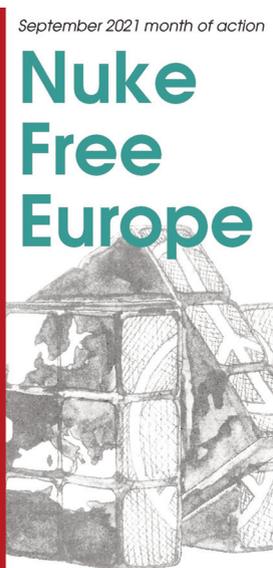
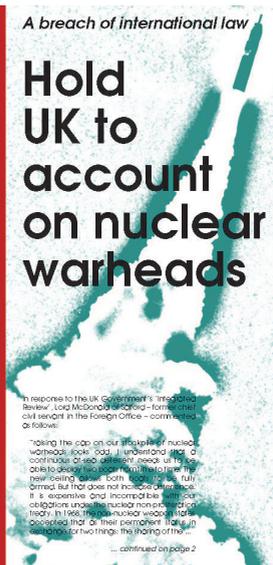
It's not only peace activists who are worried about such apparently provocative actions – senior military figures are also raising concerns.

Lord Houghton of Richmond, who was chief of defence staff between 2014 and 2016, said it would be “foolish to turn China into an enemy”. Quite so.

Serious opposition needs to be raised, not only by the movements but within Parliament too. Johnson has already started a new nuclear arms race with his illegal increase in the nuclear arsenal; the way he’s going now, military confrontation cannot be discounted, and that would be exceptionally dangerous. And it would be a block to resolving the central problems that the global community needs to address collectively, notably the pandemic and the climate crisis.

As we said in a recent letter to the Prime Minister, opposing the flotilla’s voyage, now is not a time for gunboat diplomacy; it’s time to explore new ways of cooperation instead of glorifying imperial myths. We haven’t yet had a reply.

Kate Hudson is General Secretary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. This article was first published at cnduk.org on 28 June 2021 and reproduced in END Info 25.



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