

1980

Protest and Survive

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Summary:

Pamphlet from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation arguing for a nuclear-free Europe. Describes the potentially destructive effects of nuclear weapons. Promotes skepticism towards official government statements regarding weapons on both sides and the idea that the strategy of deterrence at its core will only lead to more usable weapons and eventually their actual use. Provides a document endorsing a European nuclear free zone for readers to sign.

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PROTEST AND SURVIVE



Protest and survive



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Keep this booklet handy

Prepared for the People of England by E.P. Thompson 1980
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Messages to the British Public

From the Right Hon. William Whitelaw, MP, Home Secretary:

"Most houses in this country offer a reasonable degree of protection against radioactive fallout from nuclear explosions and protection can be substantially improved by a series of quite simple do-it-yourself measures."

(*Times*, 12 February 1980)

From Mr William Rodgers, MP, Labour parliamentary spokesman for Defence:

"It was the view of the previous Government that theatre nuclear modernisation was essential, and that is our view today."

(*Hansard*, 24 January 1980)

From Dr Alan Glyn, MP for Windsor and Maidenhead:

"I welcome the decision to instal 40 bases in Britain."

(*Hansard*, 24 January 1980)

From Mr Stephen Ross, MP for the Isle of Wight, Liberal parliamentary spokesman for Defence:

"I shall mention hovercraft, which are built in the Isle of Wight. We need a large hovercraft capable of quickly conveying tanks on to beaches, particularly in the Middle East. The quickest solution is to buy those for sale from Hoverlloyd, which operates between Ramsgate and the Continent."

(*Hansard*, 24 January 1980)

From the Right Hon. James Callaghan, MP, Leader of the Opposition:

"We must welcome the intention of President Carter to set up a task force of 100,000 men which could move quickly into position, if only because of the utter dependence of the West on oil."

(*Hansard*, 28 January 1980)

From Mr Eldon Griffiths, MP for Bury St Edmunds:

"In the event of . . . demonstrations by political zealots it is better that British military police rather than Americans should be doing the job of protection."

(*Hansard*, 24 January 1980)

From Mr James Scott-Hopkins, Euro-MP for Hereford-Worcester:

"Releasing details to the general public of a Home Office pamphlet, *Protect and Survive*, describing what to do in a nuclear attack would cause unwarranted panic and be an irresponsible action. With the limited amount of spending money available, Britain should place priority on building up its armed forces."

(*Worcester Evening News*, 19 February 1980)

From Mr W. Blake, in another place:

"Then old Nobodaddy aloft Farted & belch'd and cough'd, And said, 'I love hanging & drawing & quartering Every bit as well as war & slaughtering'."

Protest and Survive

by *E.P. Thompson*

The following letter appeared in *The Times* on January 30, 1980, from an eminent member of Oxford University:

Reviving Civil Defence

From Professor Michael Howard, FBA

Sir,

The decision to provide bases in this country for United States cruise missiles; the future of our own "independent" strategic deterrent; the extent of our provisions for civil defence: all these have surely to be considered together as part of a single defence posture. No evidence emerged in the course of last Thursday's debate (January 24) that this is being done by the present Government.

The presence of cruise missiles on British soil makes it highly possible that this country would be the target for a series of pre-emptive strikes by Soviet missiles. These would not necessarily be on the massive scale foreseen by Lord Noel-Baker in your columns of January 25. It is more likely that the Russians would hold such massive strikes in reserve, to deter us from using our sea-based missiles as a "second strike force" after the first Soviet warheads had hit targets in this country.

This initially limited Soviet strike would have the further objective, beyond eliminating weapons in this country targeted on their own homeland, of creating conditions here of such political turbulence that the use of our own nuclear weapons, followed as this could be by yet heavier attacks upon us, would become quite literally "incredible".

Civil defence on a scale sufficient to give protection to a substantial number of the population in the event of such a "limited" nuclear strike is thus an indispensable element of deterrence. Such measures should not be covert and concealed. On the contrary, they should be given the widest possible publicity; not only so that the people of this country know that they will be afforded the greatest possible degree of protection in the worst eventuality, but so that the credibility of our entire defence posture should not be destroyed through absence of evidence of our capacity to endure the disagreeable consequences likely to flow from it.

In the absence of a serious civil defence policy, the Government's decision to modernise or replace our "independent deterrent" will be no more than an expensive bluff likely to deceive no one beyond these shores, and not very many people within them.

Yours faithfully,

M.E. Howard,

Chichele Professor of the History of War,
All Soul's College, Oxford.

This letter contains a number of very serious assertions and speculations, and I will proceed to examine these. We must first note that the letter is composed of two distinct elements, although these are so interwoven that the inattentive reader might be confused into taking them as a single progressive argument. One element is a speculative scenario as to future events; the other concerns the postures and pretences appropriate in the theatre of nuclear diplomacy. We will attend now to the first.

According to the scenario, the enemy – which enemy is plainly stated to be the Russians for as many years ahead as speculation can go – will make a pre-emptive strike against Britain with nuclear missiles. This is not anticipated to occur before 1982, since the decision that 160 or more United States cruise missiles should be based on British soil was taken by NATO (without consultation with the British parliament) on December 12, 1979, at Brussels; and it will take about three years before their manufacture is complete and they have been transported and sited in this country.

Professor Howard considers that the presence of these missiles on our soil will make it “highly possible” that this country will be the target, not for one, but for *a series of pre-emptive strikes*, at some time in 1982 or thereafter. So far from “detering” the Russians, he supposes that the presence of these missiles here will provoke and draw down upon us these strikes. We may agree that his reasoning here is sound.

I am less happy with the next step in his reasoning. He does not suggest that there will be any counter-strikes by British-based missiles against the Russians. On the contrary, he supposes that the Russian strikes, although “limited”, would succeed in “eliminating” all of these 160 cruise missiles. And that the Russians will hold more “massive strikes” in reserve to “deter us from using our sea-based missiles” against them. In the absence of adequate measures of civil defence, these first “limited” strikes would create conditions of “political turbulence” in this country, preventing “us” (but I am not now sure who “us” can be, unless the typesetter has inadvertently dropped the capitals into the lower case) from massive nuclear retaliation. If, however, a sufficient proportion of the surviving population were prevented from acts of “political turbulence” by measures of civil defence, then a proper military strategy could be pursued by NATO, and massive second-stage nuclear exchanges could freely commence.

It will be seen that the purpose of civil defence is political and provisional. It is to ensure the necessary degree of stability in that short interval between the first and the second (retaliatory) nuclear strike. Professor Howard does not take his scenario any further. He does not tell us whether the “massive strikes” of the second stage would seal the entrances to the air-raid shelters and block up their air-ducts.

We may suppose, at least, that these second strikes will be effective in bringing “political turbulence” to a prompt end, and thereby in removing the necessity for further civil defence. At this stage the professor passes over to the consideration of the correct degree of mendacity to be exercised in our current defence “posture”, and we will consider that element in his argument later on.

Now, as to the scenario, we will commence by noting that Professor Howard, in a letter to *The Times* whose intent is to advocate much greater expenditure and publicity on civil defence, does not, in any single clause, indicate any detail of what such defence might consist in, nor how effective it might be. His terms are all general. He wishes there to be "measures", which afford "the greatest possible degree of protection", and "evidence" of "our capacity to endure the disagreeable consequences likely to flow from" our present military and diplomatic strategies. But he does not indicate what measures might be possible, nor does he even explain what could be "disagreeable" about the expected event.

Professor Howard is perhaps himself a little uneasy on this count. For he reassures us that these pre-emptive strikes by Russian missiles "would not necessarily be on the massive scale foreseen by Lord Noel-Baker in your columns of January 25". He wishes us to suppose that this "series of strikes", which "eliminate" the 160 cruise missiles scattered on our soil, are to be, as these things go, a mild and local affair.

I have therefore consulted the letter from Philip Noel-Baker in *The Times* of January 25. Lord Noel-Baker is the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for his work for international conciliation over very many years. We may take it that he keeps himself well-informed. In his letter he notes that "many voices are being raised in the United States, Britain and elsewhere to argue that nuclear wars could be fought without total disaster; some even suggest that nuclear war could be won". He then goes on to detail the findings of Mr Val Peterson, who was appointed United States Civil Defence Administrator twenty-five years ago, and who organised many exercises, national, regional and local, at the height of a previous Cold War.

Mr Peterson drew the following conclusions from his successive exercises. In 1954 the national exercise was estimated to have had a yield of twenty-two millions of casualties, of whom seven millions would have been dead. In 1956 fifty-six millions, or one-third of the population of the United States, were presumed as casualties. In 1957:

"If the whole 170 million Americans has Air Raid Shelters, at least 50 per cent of them would die in a surprise enemy attack. In the last analysis, there is no such thing as a nation being prepared for a thermonuclear war."

From evidence of this order Lord Noel-Baker concludes:

"Any use of nuclear weapons will escalate into a general war . . . There is *no* defence against such weapons; and . . . nuclear warfare will destroy civilisation, and perhaps exterminate mankind. To hope for salvation from Civil Defence is a dangerous self-deluding pipe dream."

I do not know whether Professor Howard is a pipe-smoker or not. But he has at least taken care to cover himself against this argument. The series of strikes envisaged in his scenario "would not necessarily be on the massive scale" which Lord Noel-Baker foresees. What he foresees is possible (we should note), and perhaps even probable, but not "necessarily" so. That is a large relief. But, then, on what scale are we to suppose that a more "limited" attack might be? If we are to be futurist authorities on war, or even historians of war, then we should be exact as to weaponry and as to its effects.

“When radiological conditions permitted movement, district and borough London controllers should assume that one of the priority tasks for their staff, in areas where survivors were to continue residing, would be to collect and cremate or inter human remains in mass graves.

“Once the initial clearance of corpses has been completed, there would be still a problem of several weeks, and perhaps months, of an above average rate of dying from disease and radiation effects. Nevertheless, a return to the pre-attack formalities should be the objective in the longer term.”

Home Office circular No.ES 8/1976, issued on a “need to know” basis to chief executives of Councils.

There is a good deal of talk around today, from “defence correspondents”, military strategists and the like, which leads us to suppose that the military, on both sides of the world, are capable of delivering very small nuclear packs, with the greatest accuracy and with no lethal consequences outside the target area. Professor Howard’s scenario is evidently supported by some such assumptions: the Russians are to “eliminate” 160 cruise missiles, but only local damage will be done.

Now there are two points here which require examination. The first concerns the known power and probable effects of these weapons. The second concerns the strategic assumptions of those “experts” who suppose that any nuclear war could be limited in this way. We will now turn to the first.

It will not have passed Professor Howard’s notice that there appeared in *The Times*, nine days before his own letter, a major article (“The Deterrent Illusion”, January 21) by Lord Zuckerman. The author was the Government’s chief scientific advisor from 1964 to 1971, and, in addition to drawing upon his own extensive experience, he also draws, in this article, upon that of eminent United States scientists and advisors.

Lord Zuckerman’s testimony (which should be read in full) is wholly dismissive of the notion of a “limited” nuclear strike, confined to military targets only:

“It is still inevitable that were military installations rather than cities to become the objectives of nuclear attack, millions, even tens of millions, of civilians would be killed, whatever the proportion of missile sites, airfields, armament plants, ports, and so on that would be destroyed.”

And he explains that strategists, in calculating the estimated effects of missile strikes, employ the acronym CEP (Circular Error Probable) for the radius of a circle within which 50 per cent of strikes would fall.

Thus we have to deal with two factors: the 50 per cent of missiles which fall *within* the CEP, and the 50 per cent which fall *without* and which “would not necessarily be distributed according to standard laws of probability”. Lord Zuckerman does not tell us the presumed CEP for a “limited” strike aimed at a single missile base, and this is perhaps an official secret. But in the debate that was eventually held in the Commons (*Hansard*, 24 January) *after* NATO’s decision

to base cruise missiles here, statements were made which enable an impression to be offered.

I must first explain that the strategy of nuclear warfare has now become a highly specialised field of study, which has developed its own arcane vocabulary, together with a long list of acronyms: CEP, MIRV (multiple independently-targetted re-entry vehicle), ICBM (inter-continental ballistic missile), ECCM (electronic counter-counter measures), MEASL (Marconi-Elliott Avionics Systems), and, as the plum of them all, MAD (mutual assured destruction).

In this vocabulary nuclear weapons are sub-divided into several categories: *strategic* – the inter-continental missiles of immense range and inconceivable destructive power, which may be submarine-launched or sited in silos and on tracks behind the Urals or in the Nevada desert: *theatre* (long, middle or short-range), which may be bombs or missiles, carried on aircraft or permanently sited, or moved around at sea or on land on mobile launch platforms: and *tactical*. Sometimes NATO strategists refer to “theatre” weapons as “tactical” ones, and sometimes they are referring to smaller battlefield nuclear (and neutron) devices – land-mines, artillery shells, etc., which could be mixed in with “conventional weapons”.

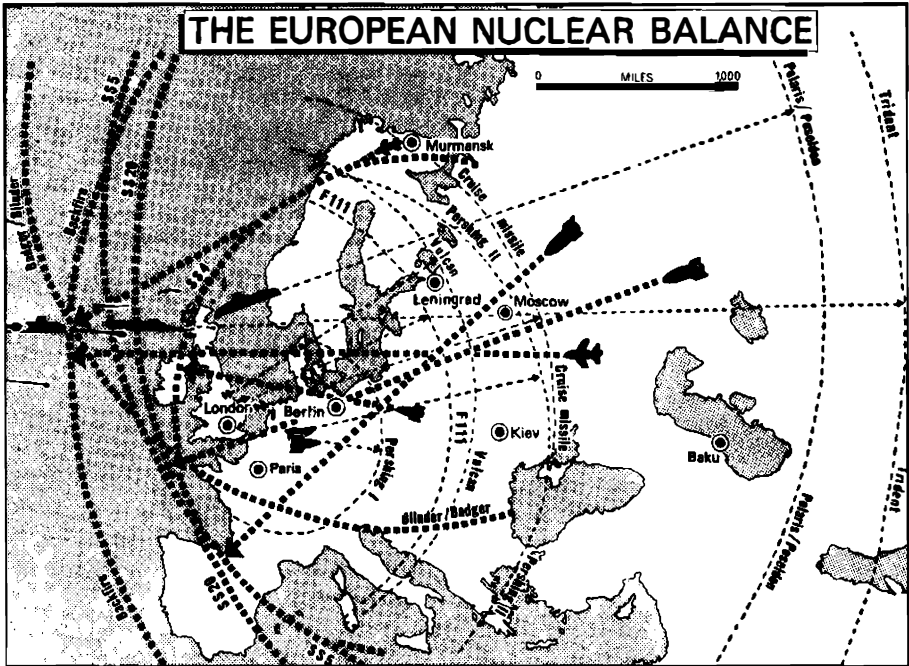
These several degrees of weaponry form “a chain of deterrence”. Mr Pym, the Defence Secretary, spoke in the House of Commons on January 24 of “an interlocking system of comprehensive deterrence . . . a clear chain of terrible risk”, with the pistol and the grenade at one end and the MX missile at the other.

It is generally agreed that “the West” has the advantage in *strategic* weapons, although this fact has been concealed from the Western public in recent months in order to direct attention to long and medium-range *theatre* weapons, where it is said that the Soviet Union has recently attained an advantage by replacing the SS-4 and SS-5 missiles with the very deadly SS-20, and by introducing the Backfire bomber. It is to meet this “threat” to parity in the middle link of the chain that cruise missiles are to be introduced by NATO all over Western Europe.

On December 3, 1979, Mr David Fairhall, the *Guardian*'s defence correspondent and a very zealous apologist for NATO, published a map (reproduced on page 7) which illustrates how NATO apologists perceive the European “balance”. It will be seen from this map that the Soviet threat is very serious, since it is marked in heavy dotted lines and thick arrow-heads, whereas NATO's response is delicately etched. It will also be seen that NATO's existing, pre-modern weaponry (the Pershing I, the F III and the Vulcan) is pitiful, and will not even be able to destroy Rome or Naples, nor any part of Greece. So that if it were not for the submarine-launched ballistic missiles (Polaris and Trident), NATO would be reduced in a nuclear war to stinging itself, like a scorpion, to death.

Either NATO or the map is pretty silly, or both. The point, however, is that present strategic thinking supposes a “limited” nuclear war, with “theatre” weapons. This limited war will be localised to a small area from the Urals to the Western coast of Ireland. In this scenario, “strategic” weapons (ICBMs and the like) will be held back for a “second strike”, so that neither Siberia nor the North American continent will be under any immediate threat. Professor Howard has adopted this

scenario, in supposing the Russians will employ their own "theatre" weapons (SS-20 or Backfire bombers) in a pre-emptive strike upon our cruise missile ("theatre") bases.



With grateful acknowledgements to The Guardian.

Let us now examine this scenario more exactly. Sir Frederic Bennett (Torbay) affirmed in the Commons debate on January 24 that the warheads of these Russian theatre missiles "have at least the destructive capacity of the bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima", although Mr Churchill (Stretford) had different information: "By today's standards Hiroshima's bomb was a puny and miserable weapon" and (he said) each SS-20 missile carried a pack equivalent to 100 Hiroshima bombs.

It will be seen that two well-informed Conservative spokesmen differed in their information by a factor of one hundred. This is a trivial disagreement (since both are agreed that these missiles are capable of very great destruction). But it serves to illustrate the fact that, when we come to hard information, the air is very much fouled up today.

The reasons for this are easy to identify, but they illuminate a part of the problem, so we will digress to explain them. First, it is axiomatic that each military bloc has an interest in misleading the other, and this is done both by concealing information and by deliberately spreading disinformation.

In general, each bloc is at pains to deny and conceal its own areas of greatest

military strength, and to advertise a pretence to strength in areas where it is weak. The intelligence agencies which report on each other's resources are themselves an interest-group, with high ideological motivation, and on occasion they deliberately manufacture alarmist reports.

Lord Zuckerman gives evidence as to the steady flow of "phoney intelligence" and "far-fetched" predictions as to Soviet military power which have influenced United States planning over the past twenty years. There is no reason to suppose that this fouling-up of information takes place only in Western capitals.

The name of the game, on both sides, is mendacity. Indeed, "deterrence" might itself be defined as the biggest and most expensive Lie in history; and it was, in effect, defined in this way by our Defence Secretary, Mr Pym, in the debate on January 24: "Deterrence is primarily about what the other side thinks, not what we may think".

The debate on that day was the first to be held in parliament on the subject of nuclear weapons for fifteen years, and it lasted for about 5½ hours. It was distinguished throughout by the paucity of hard information, although it should be said that Mr Pym imparted some new information, and more than had come at any time from the previous administration.

Mr Pym announced the near-completion of the "Chevaline" programme to "modernise" the warhead of our Polaris missiles – a programme costing £1,000 millions, which had been carried out in the deepest secrecy, and without the knowledge of the full Cabinet, and in defiance of official Labour policy, on the authority of Mr Callaghan and two or three of his particular friends.

Thus the House was given this information *after* the decision had been taken, the money had been spent, and the work had been done. I do not know how £1,000 millions was tucked away in a crease in the estimates and hidden from view (just as the many millions expended on internal security services, telephone-tapping, etc., are hidden from view), but it suggests that the level of official mendacity is today very high indeed.

In any case, let us be fair, Mr Pym did give the House this information, and we may suppose that he did so in order to embarrass Mr Callaghan, Mr Fred Mulley, Mr Healey and Mr David Owen (the co-partners in this expensive deception), and to reduce them to silence or assent on other matters of nuclear weapon "modernisation" in the ensuing debate.

In this he succeeded very well. (We may suppose that he held other, "second-strike", secret material back as a further deterrent.) But apart from this malicious little political detonation, the yield of new information in the debate was low. The House was not informed where the cruise missiles are to be sited, nor, most importantly, whether the British Government will have any effective control over their operation and launching. But this is another matter.

The second reason why the air is fouled-up is that the military and security elites in both blocs, and their political servitors, cannot pursue their expensive and dangerous policies without continually terrifying the populations of their own countries with sensational accounts of the war preparations of the other bloc.

To be sure, the plain facts are terrifying enough without any embroidery. But it

is necessary to persuade the native populations that the other side is stealing a lead in order to justify even greater preparations and expenditure at home.

This is as necessary in the Soviet Union as it is in the West, despite the absence of any open public debate over there on the issues. For the Soviet military budget is very heavy, and this entails the continual postponement and disappointment of people's expectations as to improving services and goods. In particular, a quite disproportionate concentration of the nation's most advanced scientific and technological skills takes place in the military sector – as it does, increasingly, even in this country. The threat from the West, whether it exists or not (and in Soviet perception it certainly does), has become a necessary legitimization for the power of the ruling elites, an excuse for their many economic and social failures, and an argument to isolate and silence critics within their own borders.

In the West we have “open debate”, although it is contained by all-party “consensus” and is not permitted to intrude in any sharp way into our major media. I have discussed elsewhere (*New Statesman*, December 1979) the ways in which this is carefully controlled by the preparation and selective release of “official information”.

An interesting example of this manipulation came out towards the end of the Commons debate. In responding, Mr Barney Hayhoe, the Under-Secretary for Defence, sought to allay fears expressed by the patriotic Mr Peter Shore (Labour's shadow Foreign Secretary) that the NATO programme of missile “modernisation” might not be *large* enough to keep up with Soviet missile programmes. Mr Hayhoe replied:

“The United States is planning to introduce cruise missiles, carried on B 52 bombers, for the strategic role. It is planning an armoury of 2,000 or 3,000 missiles . . . forming only one part of a huge strategic triad alongside ICBMs and submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and all due to enter service in two or three years' time.”

This programme is to be *in addition to* the existing United States “strategic” resources (which are generally agreed to be already in excess of Russia's, and which have always been so).

Now I am not an expert in these matters, and I do not usually follow the specialist press. But in the past three months, and especially in the weeks preceding the NATO decision of December 12, I followed the general press with care. I have on my desk now a thick file of clippings from the defence correspondents of the more serious daily, weekly and Sunday papers. Yet this is the first mention I have met with of these rather substantial United States plans, which are to be added to NATO's little provision.

“The Alliance should plan to maintain an adequate conventional defence as long as necessary to negotiate an acceptable peace. If not successful in achieving its aims with conventional forces, NATO will employ nuclear weapons as necessary.”

Document (NATO 'secret') DPC/D/74/30, Appendix B, Item 1.

The entire “debate” in Britain was conducted in the press and television on the basis of letting the people believe that there was a massive build-up of Soviet SS-20s and Backfire bombers, all aimed at “NATO” (but with the United States, the dominant power in NATO, removed from the equation), and that NATO’s programme of nuclear weapon “modernisation” was a tardy and inadequate response to this. Nothing at all was mentioned, in the general press, as to this little addition to the Western sum (“2,000 or 3,000 missiles”) as part of “a huge strategic triad”.

In fact, NATO’s “modernisation” programme, taken together with that of the United States, was one of *menace*. It was certainly perceived by Soviet leaders as menacing. This perception hardened, on December 12, when NATO endorsed the full programme at Brussels. In response, the hard arguments and the hard men had their way amongst the Soviet leadership, and, two weeks later, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan took place. It is a textbook case of the reciprocal logic of the Cold War.

I am not suggesting that Russian missiles are not multiplying, nor that they are not menacing to us. They are both. My point has been to illustrate the logic of “deterrence”; and to emphasise that the whole basis of our information is corrupt, and that every official statement, on both sides, is either an official lie or a statement with direct propagandist intent which conceals as much as it reveals.

As to the actual facts of the “nuclear balance”, objective research by such bodies as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute give rise to conclusions more complex than anything that we have been offered in our press or on our screens. Thus, in one count of strategic weapons, by individual bombers and missiles, the Soviet Union appears to be a little ahead of the United States; whereas by a different count of actual warheads (for the US Poseidon missile carries an average of ten warheads, each capable of being independently targeted) the United States appears as having twice as many weapons (8,870 to 3,810) as Russia. This is, of course, before “modernisation”. The available information has been examined with care by Dan Smith in *The Defence of the Realm in the 1980s* (Croom Helm, 1980), and his fourth chapter, “Of Numbers and Nukes”, is essential reading. Please get it, and read it.

We are now in a position to conclude this digression, and to return to Lord Zuckerman and to Professor Howard.

Lord Zuckerman has shown that we must take into account two variables when considering the effect of the “series of pre-emptive strikes” which Professor Howard envisages as being drawn upon us by cruise missile bases: the 50 per cent of missiles falling within the CEP, and those falling without.

We have seen that the SS-20 is the “theatre” missile which we must expect to strike Britain, and that the lowest estimate of its destructive capacity is “at least” that of the bomb dropped upon Hiroshima. This bomb (Mr Churchill reminded the House) caused the death of 100,000 persons within hours, and of a further 100,000 who have died subsequently, in the main from radiologically-related diseases.

I do not know the CEP of a missile of this very small yield. I would guess that if it was buffeted about and wobbled a little — and if the aiming and homing devices

were a trifle inexact (as Soviet electronic technology is reputed to be) – then it could miss the target by several miles. The meditated strategy of both sides is to send, not one accurate missile at each target, but missiles in clutches of thirty or forty.

These strikes would be made against the major bases from which these missiles are deployed. Currently, Lakenheath and Upper Heyford are being mentioned as these. Upper Heyford is less than fifteen miles as the crow or the SS-20 flies from the centre of Oxford city, and Lakenheath is, by crow or cruise, just over twenty miles from Cambridge. It is possible that Cambridge but less probable that Oxford will fall outside the CEP. Within the CEP we must suppose some fifteen or twenty detonations at least on the scale of Hiroshima, without taking into account any possible detonations, release of radio-active materials, etc., if the strike should succeed in finding out the cruise missiles at which it was aimed.

This is to suppose that the Soviet strike is homing onto clearly-defined and immobile targets. Now this matter is unclear, since we have been told a number of contradictory things by defence “experts”, some of which are perhaps disinformation (to set the public mind at rest) but most of which are whistlings in the dark, since United States military personnel will take the decisions in their own good time.

We have been told that they will all be housed at Upper Heyford and Lakenheath, and will be moved out to launching positions in times of emergency, perhaps on mobile transporters carrying four at a time. We have been told that they will be permanently sited, in six, or twelve, or forty different stations. The latest statement to come to hand is from Mr Pym, and was given, not to the House of Commons, but on a BBC TV phone-in programme:

“I think you will find that there may be a certain spread of these weapons, but no decision is yet taken . . . Because they would be scattered it would be an impossible task in the foreseeable future for the Russians to knock them out. This is part of the merit of these particular weapons.” (*Cambridge Evening News*, 6 February 1980)

The poor fellow was really saying that he does not know, and he is waiting for an American officer to tell him. He added that:

“From the point of view of siting the cruise missiles I don’t think it makes a great deal of difference. It is really a security and defence and strategic consideration, and of course one must take public opinion into account as far as one possibly can.”

This is a politician’s way of saying that the military will take the decision, and that public opinion will be disregarded. Three weeks before this Mr Pym gave a somewhat more honest reply to questions from the Member for Swindon (Mr David Stoddart) who had discovered that Greenham Common, near Newbury (Berks) and Fairford (Glos.) are being considered by US military as convenient places for little batches of missiles: “I urge the Secretary of State to keep these updated nuclear weapons well away from Swindon”. Mr Pym responded thus:

“The siting of these weapons in no way affects the vulnerability or otherwise of a particular place. It is a mistake for anyone to think that the siting of a weapon in a particular

place . . . makes it more or less vulnerable. We are all vulnerable in the horrifying event of a holocaust." (*Hansard*, 15 January 1980)

I do not know whether the citizens of Swindon find this reassuring or not. Mr Pym was saying that he thinks that the Americans will decide to "spread" and "scatter" these weapons, so that the enemy will have to spread and scatter his strike over a very much larger area in order to have any hopes of "eliminating" them. If the Russians really want to find the cruise missiles out, then there will be CEPs dotted all across southern, central and eastern England. There is nothing very special being prepared by NATO for Oxford, Swindon and Cambridge: Luton, Sheerness and Southampton will be just as "vulnerable", and there is no way of describing a series of nuclear strikes against cruise missiles except as "a holocaust".

This is before we take account of Lord Zuckerman's other variable – the 50 per cent of strikes which would fall outside the Circular Error Probable. These will be missiles whose navigational or homing devices are inaccurate or which, perhaps, are brought down on their path. It would be over-optimistic to suppose that every one of these would fall on Salisbury Plain or on that barren patch of the Pennines around Blackstone Edge. I have taken a ruler to a map of Europe, and I cannot see any way in which an SS-20 despatched from Russia could home in on Newbury or Fairford without passing directly over central London.

If by misadventure a strike outside the CEP fell on a major city the damage would be considerable. Lord Louis Mountbatten told an audience in Strasbourg in May 1979 that "one or two nuclear strikes on this great city . . . with what today would be regarded as relatively low yield weapons would utterly destroy all that we see around us and immediately kill half of its population". And Lord Zuckerman adds that "a single one-megaton bomb" – and the warhead of the SS-20 is said to be 1½ megatons – "could erase the heart of any great city – say, Birmingham – and kill instantly a third of its citizens".

There is no room in this island to "scatter" missiles without bringing multitudes into mortal danger, and there is no room to "search" without inflicting a holocaust. As Lord Zuckerman has said:

"There are no vast deserts in Europe, no endless open plains, on which to turn war-games in which nuclear weapons are used into reality. The distances between villages are no greater than the radius of effect of low-yield weapons of a few kilotons; between towns and cities, say a megaton."

We are now at last prepared to cast a more realistic eye upon Professor Howard's scenario.

According to this, the "initially limited Soviet strike" might, in the absence of civil defence precautions, create conditions of "political turbulence" which would prevent "us" from using our own nuclear weapons in retaliation. This would be regrettable, since it would inhibit the escalation from "tactical" or "theatre" to "second-strike", sea-based nuclear war. But he envisages civil defence measures "on a scale sufficient to give protection to a substantial number of the population", enabling this number to endure the "disagreeable consequences" which would ensue.

The object of civil defence, then, is not so much to save lives as to reduce the

potential for “political turbulence” of those surviving the first strike, in order to enable “us” to pass over to a second and more fearsome stage of nuclear warfare. It is Professor Howard’s merit that he states this sequence honestly, as a realist, and even allows that the consequences will be disagreeable.

We are still entitled, however, to enquire more strictly as to what measures would be *on a scale sufficient*, what proportion of the population might constitute *a substantial number*, and what may be indicated by the word *disagreeable*.

It is not as if nuclear weapons are a completely unknown quantity, which have only been tested in deserts and on uninhabited islands. They have been tested upon persons also, in 1945, at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and to some effect. These effects have been studied with care; and the beneficiaries of this sudden donation of advanced technology were so much struck by the disagreeable consequences that they have continued to monitor its effects to the present day.

One remarkable consequence of those two detonations is that the survivors in those two cities, and the descendants of the sufferers, were transformed into advocates, not of revenge, but of international understanding and peace. To this day work for peace is regarded as a civic duty, and the mayors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima regard this work as the principal obligation of their office.

For example, in 1977 an International Symposium on the Damage and After-Effects of the bombing of these two cities was inaugurated, and a number of reports of this work are now in translation. I have read condensations of these, as well as other materials from Nagasaki.

It had been my intention to condense this material still further, and to remind readers of the effects of the first atomic bombings. I have now decided to pass this matter by, for two reasons. The first is that I have found the task beyond my powers as a writer. After reading these materials, whenever I approached my typewriter I was overcome by such a sense of nausea that I was forced to turn to some other task.

The second reason is that, at some point very deep in their consciousness, readers *already know* what the consequences of these weapons are. This knowledge is transmitted to children even in their infancy, so that as they run around with their space-weapons and death-rays they are re-enacting what happened thirty years before they were born.

There is, however, one area of convenient forgetfulness in this inherited memory. The moment of nuclear detonation is remembered vaguely, as a sudden instant of light, blast and fire, in which instantly tens of thousands of lives were quenched. It is thought of as a stupendous but instantaneous moment of annihilation, without pain or emotional suffering.

But this is not accurate. It is now estimated that 140,000 were killed “directly” by the bomb on Hiroshima, and 70,000 by that on Nagasaki, with an allowance for error of 10,000 either way in each case. But the bombs were dropped on August 6 and 9, and the accounts for *immediate* casualties were closed on December 31, 1945. This reflects the fact that a very great number of these deaths — especially those from burns and radioactivity — took place slowly, in the days and weeks after the event.

Michiko Ogino, ten years old, was left in charge of his younger sisters when his mother went out to the fields to pick eggplants. The bomb brought the house down on them all, leaving his two-year-old sister with her legs pinned under a crossbeam:

“Mamma was bombed at noon
When getting eggplants in the field,
Short, red and crisp her hair stood,
Tender and red her skin was all over.”

So Mrs Ogino, although the clothes were burned from her body and she had received a fatal dose of radiation, could still run back from the fields to succour her children. One after another passing sailors and neighbours heaved at the beam to release the trapped two-year-old, failed, and, bowing with Japanese courtesy, went on their way to help others.

“Mother was looking down at my little sister. Tiny eyes looked up from below. Mother looked around, studying the way the beams were piled up. Then she got into an opening under the beam, and putting her right shoulder under a portion of it, she strained with all her might. We heard a cracking sound and the beams were lifted a little. My little sister’s legs were freed.

“Peeled off was the skin over her shoulder
That once lifted the beam off my sister.
Constant blood was spurting
From the sore flesh appearing . . .”

Mrs Ogino died that night. Fujio Tsujimoto, who was five years old, was in the playground of Yamazato Primary School, Nagasaki, just before the bomb dropped. Hearing the sound of a plane he grabbed his grandmother’s hand and they were the first into the deepest part of the air raid shelter. The entrance to the shelter, as well as the playground, was covered with the dying. “My brother and sisters didn’t get to the shelter in time, so they were burnt and crying. Half an hour later, my mother appeared. She was covered with blood. She had been making lunch at home when the bomb was dropped”.

“My younger sisters died the next day. My mother – she also died the next day. And then my older brother died . . .

“The survivors made a pile of wood on the playground and began to cremate the corpses. My brother was burned. Mother also was burned and quickly turned to white bones which dropped down among the live coals. I cried as I looked on the scene. Grandmother was also watching, praying with a rosary . . .

“I am now in the fourth grade at Yamazato Primary School. That playground of terrible memories is now completely cleared and many friends play there happily. I play with my friends there too, but sometimes I suddenly remember that awful day. When I do, I squat down on the spot where we cremated our mother and touch the earth with my fingers. When I dig deep in the ground with a piece of bamboo, several pieces of charcoal appear. Looking at the spot for a while, I can dimly see my mother’s image in the earth. So when I see someone else walking on that place, it makes me very angry.”

I will not quote any more of the testimony of the children of Nagasaki (*Living Beneath The Atomic Cloud*). What it makes clear is that the “instant” of detonation was protracted over days and weeks, and was full, not only of physical misery, but of unutterable yearning and suffering. A great river runs through Hiroshima, and

each year the descendants set afloat on it lighted lanterns inscribed with the names of the family dead, and for several miles the full breadth of this river is one mass of flame.

After this we still have to consider the future tens of thousands who have died subsequently from the after-effects of that day – chiefly leukemia, various cancers, and diseases of the blood and digestive organs. The sufferers are known as *Hibakashu*, a word which ought to be international. Some *hibakashu* suffer from the direct consequences of wounds and burns, others from premature senility, others from blindness, deafness and dumbness, others are incapable of working because of nervous disorders, and many are seriously mentally deranged. Only two comforts can be derived from the expert *Nagasaki Report*: *hibakushu* have been distinguished by their mutual aid, sometimes in communities of fellow-sufferers: and the genetic effects of the bomb (which are still being studied) do not as yet appear to have been as bad as was at first apprehended.

“Radiological conditions may be expected to prevent any organised life-saving operation for days or weeks following an attack. Trained health service staff would be vital to the future and should not be wasted by allowing them to enter areas of high contamination where casualties would, in any case, have small chance of long-term recovery.”

Home Office circular on the preparation of health services for nuclear war, ESI/1977.

We may now push this distressing matter back into our subconscious, and reconsider the possible effect of “a series of pre-emptive strikes”, with scores of weapons very much more powerful than those bombs, upon this island.

It is true that the inhabitants of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were very little prepared for this advanced technology, and, indeed, in Nagasaki the “All Clear” had sounded shortly before the detonation, so that the populace had trooped out of their conventional shelters and the women were working in the fields and the children playing in the playgrounds when the bomb went off.

Our own authorities might be able to manage the affair better. With greater warning, stronger houses, and with some more effective measures of civil defence, some lives might be saved, and perhaps even “a substantial number”. Indeed, two Conservative MPs have calculated that effective measures might reduce deaths in a nuclear war in this country from about thirty-five millions to just twenty millions, and I will allow that fifteen millions in savings is a substantial number indeed.

Nevertheless, two comments must be made on this. The first is that the death or mortal injury of even the small figure of twenty millions might still give rise to the conditions of “turbulence” which Professor Howard is anxious to forestall. The incidence of disaster would not be evenly spread across the country, with hale and hearty survivors in all parts standing ready, with high morale, to endure the hazards of the “second strike”.

Air Marshal Sir Leslie Mavor, Principal of the Home Defence College, addressing a civil defence seminar in 1977 said that "the main target areas would be so badly knocked about as to be beyond effective self-help. They would have to be more or less discounted until adjoining areas recovered sufficiently to come to their aid". Those parts of the country "holding no nuclear targets" might come through "more or less undamaged by blast or fire".

"Their difficulties would be caused by fall-out radiation, a large influx of refugees, survival without external supplies of food, energy, raw materials . . ." (*The Times*, 16 January 1980)

This seems a realistic assessment. There would be some total disaster areas, from the margins of which the wounded and dying would flee as refugees; other intermediate areas would have energy supplies destroyed, all transport dislocated, and persons, food and water contaminated by fall-out; yet others would be relatively immune. But even in these immune areas there would be some persons in a state of hysterical terror, who would be ready (if they knew how) to intervene to prevent the second stage of Professor Howard's scenario.

The second comment is that we do not yet have any realistic notion of what might be *a scale sufficient* to effect *substantial* savings, nor what measures might be taken. We may certainly agree with the professor that no such measures are either planned or contemplated. The defence correspondent of *The Times*, Mr Peter Evans, in an illuminating survey in January, discovered that measures have been taken to ensure the survival of the high personnel of the State. This has long been evident. There will be bunkers deep under the Chilterns for senior politicians, civil servants and military, and deep hidey holes for regional centres of military government. That is very comforting.

The population of this country, however, will not be invited to these bunkers, and it is an Official Secret to say where they are. The population will be issued, some three or four days before the event, with a do-it-yourself booklet (*Protect and Survive*), and be sent off to wait in their own homes. They will be advised to go down to the ground floor or the cellar, and make a cubby-hole there with old doors and planks, cover it with sandbags, books and heavy furniture, and then creep into these holes with food and water for 14 days, a portable radio, a portable latrine, and, of course, a tin-opener.

I have for long wondered why sociologists and demographers keep writing about "the nuclear family", but now it is all at length set down and explained, and there is even a picture in illustration of the term (see page 17).

Now this might save some lives, but it will also make for an unhappy end to others. For the principal effects of nuclear weapons are very intense heat, blast and radio-active emissions. Within a certain distance of the centre of the detonation all houses, cars, clothes, the hair on dogs, cats and persons, and so on, will spontaneously ignite, while at the same time the blast will bring the houses tumbling down about the cubby-holes. We must envisage many thousands of nuclear families listening to Mr Robin Day's consensual homilies on their portable radios as they are burned, crushed or suffocated to death.

Those outside this radius might be afforded a little temporary protection. But

A Nuclear Free Europe



We are entering the most dangerous decade in human history. A third world war is not merely possible, but increasingly likely. Economic and social difficulties in advanced industrial countries, crisis, militarism and war in the third world compound the political tensions that fuel a demented arms race. In Europe, the main geographical stage for the East-West confrontation, new generations of ever more deadly weapons are appearing.

For at least twenty-five years, the forces of both the North Atlantic and the Warsaw alliance have each had sufficient nuclear weapons to annihilate their opponents, and at the same time to endanger the very basis of civilised life. But with each passing year, competition in nuclear armaments has multiplied their numbers, increasing the probability of some devastating accident or miscalculation.

As each side tries to prove its readiness to use nuclear weapons, in order to prevent their use by the other side, new more "usable" nuclear weapons are designed and the idea of "limited" nuclear war is made to sound more and more plausible. So much so that this paradoxical process can logically only lead to the actual use of nuclear weapons.

Neither of the major powers is now in any moral position to influence smaller countries to forego the acquisition of nuclear armament. The increasing spread of nuclear reactors and the growth of the industry that installs them, reinforce the likelihood of world-wide proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby multiplying the risks of nuclear exchanges.

Over the years, public opinion has pressed for nuclear disarmament and detente between the contending military blocs. This pressure has failed. An increasing proportion of world resources is expended on weapons, even though mutual extermination is already amply guaranteed. This economic burden, in both East and West, contributes to growing social and political strain, setting in motion a vicious circle in which the arms race feeds upon the instability of the world economy and vice versa: a deathly dialectic.

We are now in great danger. Generations have been born beneath the shadow of nuclear war, and have become habituated to the threat. Concern has given way to apathy. Meanwhile, in a world living always under menace, fear extends through both halves of the European continent. The powers of the military and of internal security forces are enlarged, limitations are placed upon free exchanges of ideas and between persons, and civil rights of independent-minded individuals are threatened, in the West as well as the East.

We do not wish to apportion guilt between the political and military leaders of East and West. Guilt lies squarely upon both parties. Both parties have adopted menacing postures and committed aggressive actions in different parts of the world.

The remedy lies in our own hands. We must act together to free the entire territory of Europe, from Poland to Portugal, from nuclear weapons, air and submarine bases, and from all institutions engaged in research into or manufacture of nuclear weapons. We ask the two super powers to withdraw all nuclear weapons from European territory. In particular, we ask the Soviet Union to halt production of the SS-20 medium range missile and we ask the United States not to implement the decision to develop cruise missiles and Pershing II missiles for deployment in Western Europe. We also urge the ratification of the SALT II agreement, as a necessary step towards the renewal of effective negotiations on general and complete disarmament.

At the same time, we must defend and extend the right of all citizens, East or West, to take part in this common movement and to engage in every kind of exchange.

We appeal to our friends in Europe, of every faith and persuasion, to consider urgently the ways in which we can work together for these common objectives. We envisage a European-wide campaign, in which every kind of exchange takes place; in which representatives of different nations and opinions confer and co-ordinate their activities; and in which less formal exchanges, between universities, churches, women's organisations, trade unions, youth organisations, professional groups and individuals, take place with the object of promoting a common object: to free all of Europe from nuclear weapons.

We must commence to act as if a united, neutral and pacific Europe already exists. We must learn to be loyal, not to "East" or "West", but to each other, and we must disregard the prohibitions and limitations imposed by any national state.

It will be the responsibility of the people of each nation to agitate for the expulsion of nuclear weapons and bases from European soil and territorial waters, and to decide upon its own means and strategy, concerning its own territory. These will differ from one country to another, and we do not suggest that any single strategy should be imposed. But this must be part of a trans-continental movement in which every kind of exchange takes place.

We must resist any attempt by the statesmen of East or West to manipulate this movement to their own advantage. We offer no advantage to either NATO or the Warsaw alliance. Our objectives must be to free Europe from confrontation, to enforce detente between the United States and the Soviet Union, and, ultimately, to dissolve both great power alliances.

In appealing to fellow Europeans, we are not turning our backs on the world. In working for the peace of Europe we are working for the peace of the world. Twice in this century Europe has disgraced its claims to civilisation by engendering world war. This time we must repay our debts to the world by engendering peace.

This appeal will achieve nothing if it is not supported by determined and inventive action, to win more people to support it. We need to mount an irresistible pressure for a Europe free of nuclear weapons.

We do not wish to impose any uniformity on the movement nor to pre-empt the consultations and decisions of those many organisations already exercising their influence for disarmament and peace. But the situation is urgent. The dangers steadily advance. We invite your support for this common objective, and we shall welcome both your help and advice.

Support for END

The appeal for a nuclear-free zone in Europe was launched at a special press conference in the House of Commons on April 28 1980, and simultaneously in four other capitals. At that time it was supported by 61 Labour Members of Parliament, two Welsh Nationalist MPs, one Scottish Nationalist and an Ulster Nationalist. Many distinguished people in literature and the arts, scholarship and public life were among the initial supporters. 11 members of the Labour Party's National Executive and 5 members of the General Council of the TUC signed the appeal before publication.

Hundreds of additional signatures have been arriving at Bertrand Russell House every week ever since the publication of the appeal. They include such distinguished scholars as Professor Sir Moses Finley, Sir Joseph Hutchinson, Dr Joseph Needham and Professor Peter Townsend; eminent Churchmen, such as the Bishop of Dudley, the Dean of Canterbury and Canon Paul Oestreicher; the well-known cricket commentator and writer, John Arlott; prominent personalities from the world of theatre, entertainment and broadcasting, like Juliet Mills, Helen Shapiro and Susannah York; military men such as Brigadier Harbottle. Since the end of April more parliamentarians have endorsed the appeal, including David Alton, Liberal Member for Edgely.

In Europe the response reaches across an extraordinary breadth of opinion. Among those who have expressed support for the general objectives of the campaign are Gunnar Myrdal, the eminent Swedish economist and Roy Medvedev, the Russian historian and defender of civil rights. Rudolf Bahro, recently imprisoned in East Germany, and now working with the Green Party in West Germany, is a signatory, and so also are leading exponents of liberal "Eurocommunist" policies in West Europe – Pierre Joye (Belgium), Professor Lombardo Radice (Italy) and Manuel Azcarate (Spain). In France signatories include Dr Alfred Kastler, the physicist and Nobel laureate, Professor Pierre Bourdieu, the eminent sociologist, theologians, priests, artists and scholars. Growing support in West Germany has been encouraged by Professor Ulrich Albrecht, the Professor of Peace Studies at the Free University. Famous artists include Joan Miro (Spain), Victor Vasarely (France), and Piero Dorazio (Italy); while among distinguished political figures, we find Artur London (Czechoslovakia), Professor B. de Gaay Fortman, the leader of the Dutch Radical Party in the Senate, Maarten van Traa, the International Secretary of the Dutch Labour Party, Andras Hegedus (former Prime Minister of Hungary), Melo Antunes (recently Portugal's foreign minister) and Francisco Marcelo Curto (former Minister of Labour in Portugal), Albert de Smaele (former Belgian Minister) and J. Pronteau (executive member of the French Socialist Party). From Greece up to Finland, and from Ireland to Moscow, the END appeal is being discussed by an ever-growing circle of concerned men and women.

In order to express your support for the appeal please complete and return the section overleaf.

**I ENDORSE THE STATEMENT ON A EUROPEAN NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE,
AND CONSENT TO THE PUBLICATION OF MY NAME IN THIS CONNECTION.**

Signed

Name (in block capitals)

Address

.....

Designation

I enclose £..... to help with the Campaign (if you possibly can!)

*Please return to the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, Bertrand Russell House,
Gamble Street, Nottingham, NG7 4ET. (Lists of additional signatories can be
attached.)*

To assist the development of the European Nuclear Disarmament Campaign in Britain and abroad a **Bulletin of Work in Progress** is being produced bi-monthly, price 40p.

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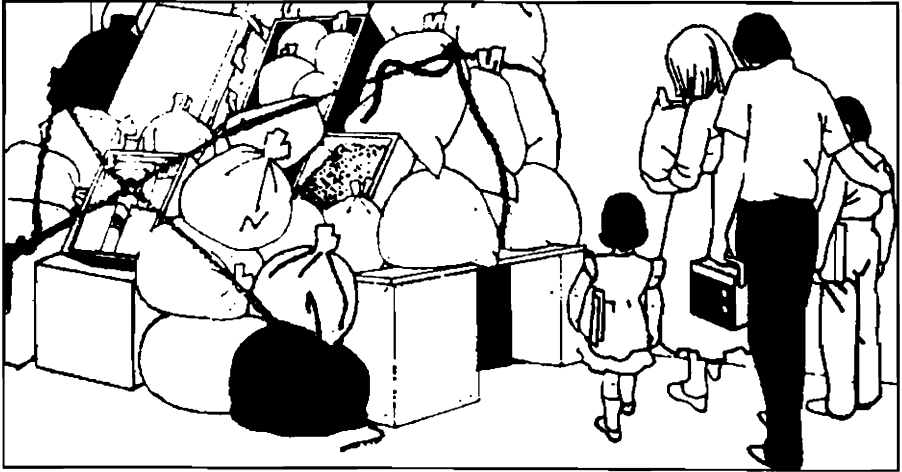
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when they eventually emerge (after some fourteen days) they will find the food and water contaminated, the roads blocked, the hospitals destroyed, the livestock dead or dying. The vice-chairman of Civil Aid, who is a realist, advises thus: "If you saw a frog running about, you would have to wash it down to get rid of active dust, cook it and eat it". (*The Times*, 14 February 1980.) And, according to Professor Howard's scenario, people will still be living in expectation of "yet heavier attacks".



The Nuclear Family

If we are to learn from the experience of the people of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, then I think it is, after all, unlikely that many survivors will be devoting their energies to "political turbulence", since, unless they know the entrances to the governmental deep bunkers, they will have nothing to turbul against. Most will be wandering here and there in a desperate attempt to find lost children, parents, neighbours, friends. A few of the most collected will succour the dying and dig among the ruins for the injured.

The measures outlined in *Protect and Survive* do not seem to me to be on a *scale sufficient* to reduce the consequences of a nuclear strike to the compass of a small word like "disagreeable". It is possible to imagine measures on a greater scale. The evacuation of whole cities, as is planned in the USA and perhaps in the Soviet Union, is inoperable here because this island is too small. But one might imagine the excavation of vast subterranean systems beneath our towns – and perhaps beneath All Soul's – complete with stored food and water, generating systems, air-purifying systems, etc.

This might save a *substantial number* of lives, although one is uncertain what it would save them for, since above ground no workplaces, uncontaminated crops or stock would be left. The logic of this development, then, will be to remove these activities underground also, with subterranean cattle-stalls, granaries, bakeries, and munitions works.

It is certainly possible that, if civilisation survives and continues on its present trajectory until the mid-twenty-first century, then the “advanced” societies will have become troglodyte in some such fashion. But it would not be advisable to suppose that our descendants will have then at length have attained to “security”, in the simultaneous realisation of the ultimate in “deterrence” with the ultimate in “defence”. For the military will by then have taken further steps in technology. Neutron weapons and Earth Penetrators already exist, which can drive death underground. All this will be perfected, “modernised”, and refined. There will be immense thermonuclear charges capable of concussing a whole underground city. And, in any case, by the time that humanity becomes troglodyte, it will then have been already defeated. “Civilisation” will then be an archaic term, which children can no longer construe.

We will now turn to the second assumption which underpins Professor Howard’s arguments. This concerns “tactical” or “theatre” nuclear war.

The professor supposes a “theatre” war confined to Europe, which does not escalate to confrontation between the two superpowers. We will not chide him too much on this witless supposition, since it is now commonplace in the strategic thinking of both blocs. Indeed, it is commonplace not only as idea but also as fact, since immense sums are spent on both sides to match each other’s weapons at “tactical” and “theatre” levels.

We have seen that poor Mr Pym (who is still waiting to be told by an American officer what to do) is quite as simple on this matter as Professor Howard. Both suppose a “chain of deterrence”, according to which war may not only start at any level but it may be confined to that level, since at any point there is a further fearsome threshold of “deterrence” ahead.

This is not the same as the proposal that *local* or *regional* wars with nuclear weapons may take place. That is a reasonable proposal. If the proliferation of these weapons continues, it is possible that we will see such wars: as between Israel and Arab states, or South Africa and an alliance of African states. Whether such wars lead on to confrontation between the superpowers will depend, not upon the logic of weaponry, but on further diplomatic and political considerations.

This proposition is different. It is that nuclear wars between the two great opposed powers and their allies could be confined to this or that level. This is a silly notion at first sight; and, after tedious and complex arguments have been gone through, it emerges as equally silly at the end. For while it might very well be in the *interests* of either the USA or the USSR to confine a war to Europe, or to the Persian gulf, and to prevent it from passing into an ultimate confrontation, we are not dealing here with rational behaviour.

Once “theatre” nuclear war commences, immense passions, indeed hysterias, will be aroused. After even the first strikes of such a war, communications and command posts will be so much snarled up that any notion of rational planning will give way to panic. Ideology will at once take over from self-interest. Above all, it will be manifest that the only one of the two great powers likely to come out of the contest as “victor” must be the one which hurls its ballistic weapons first, furthest

and fastest – and preferably before the weapons of the other have had time to lift off.

This was the commonsense message which Lord Louis Mountbatten, shortly before he was murdered, conveyed to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) at a meeting in Strasbourg. He referred to the introduction of “tactical” or “theatre” weapons:

“The belief was that were hostilities ever to break out in Western Europe, such weapons could be used in field warfare without triggering an all-out nuclear exchange leading to the final holocaust.

“I have never found this idea credible. I have never been able to accept the reasons for the belief that any class of nuclear weapons can be categorised in terms of their tactical or strategic purposes . . .

“In the event of a nuclear war there will be no chances, there will be no survivors – all will be obliterated. I am not asserting this without having deeply thought about the matter. When I was Chief of the British Defence Staff I made my views known . . . I repeat in all sincerity as a military man I can see no use for any nuclear weapons which would not end in escalation, with consequences that no one can conceive.”

The same firm judgement was expressed by Lord Zuckerman in *The Times* on January 21: “Nor was I ever able to see any military reality in what is now referred to as theatre or tactical warfare”:

“The men in the nuclear laboratories of both sides have succeeded in creating a world with an irrational foundation, on which a new set of political realities has in turn had to be built. They have become the alchemists of our times, working in secret ways which cannot be divulged, casting spells which embrace us all.”

Professor Howard takes his stand on these irrational foundations, and practices alchemy in his own right. The spells which he casts on the public mind are presented as “civil defence”. He calls for measures (unnamed) which must be “given the widest possible publicity”, in order to ensure “the credibility of our entire defence posture”, a posture which might otherwise be seen to be “no more than an expensive bluff”.

The professor supposes that he is a tough realist, who is drawing conclusions which others, including politicians, are too timorous to draw in public. If we spend thousands of millions of pounds upon nuclear weapons, then we either intend to use them or we do not. If we intend to use them, then we must intend to receive them also.

But, as he knows, there are no practicable civil defence measures which could have more than a marginal effect. He is therefore telling us that “we” must replace one expensive bluff by a bluff even more expensive; or he is telling us that “we” have decided that we are ready to accept the obliteration of the material resources and inheritance of this island, and of some half of its inhabitants, in order to further the strategies of NATO.

These are two distinct propositions, and it is time that they were broken into two parts. For a long time the second proposition has been hidden within the mendacious vocabulary of “deterrence”; and behind these veils of “posture”, “credibility” and “bluff” it has waxed fat and now has come of age.

The first proposition is that nuclear weapons are capable of inflicting such "unacceptable damage" on both parties to an exchange that mutual fear ensures peace. The second is that each party is actually preparing for nuclear war, and is ceaselessly searching for some ultimate weapon or tactical/strategic point of advantage which would assure its victory. We have lived uneasily with the first proposition for many years. We are now looking directly into the second proposition's eyes.

"Deterrence" has plausibility. It has "worked" for thirty years, if not in Vietnam, Czechoslovakia, the Middle East, Africa, Cambodia, the Dominican Republic, Afghanistan, then in the central fracture between the superpowers which runs across Europe. It may have inhibited, in Europe, major "conventional" war.

But it has not worked as a stationary state. The weapons for adequate "deterrence" already existed thirty years ago, and, as the Pope reminded us in his New Year's Message for 1980, only 200 of the 50,000 nuclear weapons now estimated to be in existence would be enough to destroy the world's major cities. Yet we have moved upwards to 50,000, and each year new sophistications and "modernisations" are introduced.

"The exercise scenario foresaw and developed a declaratory policy by the Warsaw Pact of no first nuclear use and a related NATO negation of this policy. The Alliance was therefore able to start from the assumption that its strategy of flexibility in response could take nuclear weapons fully into account . . . as a means to attempt war termination and restitution of the status quo . . .

"A message sent to an enemy during hostilities with strong ultimate features (demanding an end to hostilities and threatening to use nuclear weapons) should not be sent without a definite use decision by the nuclear power actually having been taken."

Report of NATO WINTEX 1977 exercise, prepared by the staff committee of the NATO Nuclear Planning Group ('secret').

The current chatter about "theatre" or "tactical" nuclear war is not a sophisticated variant of the old vocabulary of "deterrence"; it is directly at variance with that vocabulary. For it is founded on the notion that either of the superpowers might engage, to its own advantage, in a "limited" nuclear war which could be kept below the threshold at which retribution would be visited on its own soil.

Thus it is thought by persons in the Pentagon that a "theatre" nuclear war might be confined to Europe, in which, to be sure, America's NATO allies would be obliterated, but in which immense damage would also be inflicted upon Russia west of the Urals, while the soil of the United States remained immune. (In such a scenario it is even supposed that President Carter and Mr Brezhnev would be on the "hot line" to each other while Europe scorched, threatening ultimate inter-continental ballistic retribution, but at last making "peace".) This has been seen as

the way to a great “victory” for “the West”, and if world-wide nuclear war seems to be ultimately inevitable, then the sooner that can be aborted by having a little “theatre” war the better.

The cruise missiles which are being set up all over Western Europe are weapons designed for exactly such a war, and the nations which harbour them are viewed, in this strategy, as launching platforms which are expendible in the interests of “Western” defence. In a somewhat muddy passage, Mr Pym assured BBC listeners that:

“It is never envisaged that these weapons are in any sense a response to a nuclear attack from the Soviet Union which comes out of the blue. This is a lesser weapon, which would be deployed from these bases in times of tension, not only from the United Kingdom but throughout the other countries in Europe.” (*Cambridge Evening News*, 6 February 1980)

Mr Pym has also confirmed to the House of Commons (*Hansard*, 24 January 1980) that the cruise missiles “are to be owned and operated by the United States”. Their use must be sanctioned by the President of the United States on the request of the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, who is always an American general. It was for this reason that Senator Nino Pasti, formerly an Italian member of the NATO Military Committee and Deputy Supreme Commander for NATO Nuclear Affairs, has declared: “I have no doubt that the tactical nuclear weapons deployed in Europe represent the worst danger for the peoples of the continent”:

“In plain words, the tactical nuclear weapon would be employed in the view of NATO to limit the war to Europe. Europe is to be transformed into a ‘nuclear Maginot line’ for the defence of the United States.” (*Sanity*, July/August 1979)

Meanwhile the United States is urgently seeking for similar platforms in the Middle East for another small “theatre” war which might penetrate deep into the Caucasus. And an even uglier scenario is beginning to show itself in China, where greed for a vast arms market is tempting Western salesmen while United States strategists hope to nudge Russia and China into war with each other – a war which would dispell another Western phobia, the demographic explosion of the East. The idea here is to extract the West, at the last moment, from this war – much the same scenario as that which went disastrously wrong in 1939.

These little “theatre” wars (not one of which would obediently stay put in its theatre) are now all on the drawing-boards, and in the Pentagon more than in the Kremlin, for the simple reason that every “theatre” is adjacent to the Soviet Union, and any “tactical” nuclear strike would penetrate deep into Russian territory.

The plans for the European “theatre” war are not only ready – the “modernised” missiles designed for exactly such a war have been ordered, and will be delivered to this island in 1982. And at this moment, Professor Howard makes a corresponding *political* intervention. Let us see why this is so.

Professor Howard wishes to hurry the British people across a threshold of mental expectation, so that they may be prepared, not for “deterrence”, but for actual nuclear war.

The expectations supporting the theory of deterrence are, in the final analysis, that deterrence will *work*. Deterrence is effective, because the alternative is not only “unacceptable” or “disagreeable”: it is “unthinkable”.

Deterrence is a posture, but it is the posture of MAD (mutual assured destruction), not of menace. It does not say, “If we go to nuclear war we intend to win”: it says, “Do not go to war, or provoke war, because neither of us can win”. In consequence it does not bother to meddle with anything so futile as “civil defence”. If war commences, everything is already lost.

Those who have supported the policy of deterrence have done so in the confidence that this policy would prevent nuclear war from taking place. They have not contemplated the alternative, and have been able to avoid facing certain questions raised by that alternative. Of these, let us notice three.

First, is nuclear war preferable to being overcome by the enemy? Is the death of fifteen or twenty millions and the utter destruction of the country preferable to an occupation which might offer the possibility, after some years, of resurgence and recuperation?

Second, are we ourselves prepared to endorse the use of such weapons against the innocent, the children and the aged, of an “enemy”?

Third, how does it happen that Britain should find herself committed to policies which endanger the very survival of the nation, as a result of decisions taken by a secret committee of NATO, and then endorsed at Brussels without public discussion or parliamentary sanction, leaving the “owning and operation” of these “theatre” weapons in the hands of the military personnel of a foreign power, a power whose strategists have contingency plans for unleashing these missiles in a “theatre” war which would not extend as far as their own homeland?

The first two questions raise moral issues which it would be improper to introduce into an academic discussion. My own answer to them is “no”. They are, in any case, not new questions. The third question is, in some sense, new, and it is also extraordinary, in the sense that even proposing the question illuminates the degree to which the loss of our national sovereignty has become absolute, and democratic process has been deformed in ways scarcely conceivable twenty years ago.

But Professor Howard’s arguments are designed to hurry us past these questions without noticing them. They are designed to carry us across a threshold from the *unthinkable* (the theory of deterrence, founded upon the assumption that this must *work*) to the *thinkable* (the theory that nuclear war may happen, and may be imminent, and, with cunning tactics and proper preparations, might end in “victory”).

More than this, the arguments are of an order which permit the mind to progress from the unthinkable to the thinkable *without thinking* – without confronting the arguments, their consequences or probable conclusions, and, indeed, without knowing that any threshold has been crossed.

At each side of this threshold we are offered a policy with an identical label: “deterrence”. And both policies stink with the same mendacious rhetoric – “posture”, “credibility”, “bluff”. But mutual fear and self-interest predominate on one side, and active menace and the ceaseless pursuit of “tactical” or “theatre”

advantage predominate on the other. Which other side we have crossed over to, and now daily inhabit.

“Nuclear weapons must be employed . . . to convey a decisive escalation of sufficient shock to convincingly persuade the enemy that he should make the political decision to cease the attack and withdraw. To evidence our solidarity, I am considering use in all regions employing both UK and US weapons using primarily aircraft and land-based missile systems. The initial use would be restricted to GDR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria.”

Telex message from General Alexander Haigh, then Supreme Allied Commander Europe to the NATO Command, during the WINTEX 77 exercises.

Professor Howard himself has certainly thought the problem through. His letter was a direct political intervention. He called on the British authorities to rush us all, unthinkingly, across this thought-gap. His language – his anxiety as to possible “political turbulence”, his advocacy of measures which are not “covert or concealed” – reveals a direct intention to act in political ways upon the mind of the people, in order to enforce a “posture”, not of defence but of menace; and in this it corresponds, on a political level, with the menacing strategic decisions of NATO last December at Brussels.

The high strategists of NATO are busy in the Pentagon and the Hague, and Professor Howard is busy at All Soul’s, but they are both working away at the same problem. One end of the problem was clearly stated, at the height of the old Cold War, by John Foster Dulles:

“In order to make the country bear the burden, we have to create an emotional atmosphere akin to a war-time psychology. We must create the idea of a threat from without.”

But that was when the problem was only in its infancy. For the country – that is, *this* country – must now not only be made to bear a burden of heavy expense, loss of civil liberties, etc., but also the expectation, as a definite and imminent possibility, of actual nuclear devastation.

Hence it becomes necessary to create not only “the idea of a threat from without” but also of a threat *from within*: “political turbulence”. And it is necessary to inflame these new expectations by raising voluntary defence corps, auxiliary services, digging even deeper bunkers for the personnel of the State, distributing leaflets, holding lectures in halls and churches, laying down two-weeks supplies of emergency rations, promoting in the private sector the manufacture of Whitelaw Shelters and radiation-proof “Imperm” blinds and patent Anti-Fall-Out pastilles and “Bretheesy” masks, and getting the Women’s Institutes to work out recipes for broiling radio-active frogs. And it is also necessary to supplement all this by beating up an internal civil-war or class-war psychosis, by unmasking traitors, by

threatening journalists under the Official Secrets Acts, by tampering with juries and tapping telephones, and generally by closing up people's minds and mouths.

Now I do not know how far all this will work. There are tactical problems, which those who live outside All Soul's are able to see. Whitehall's reluctance to issue every householder with a copy of *Protect and Survive* is eloquent testimony to this. For there is a minority of the British people who are reluctant to be harried across this threshold. These people have voices, and if they are denied access to the major media, there are still little journals and democratic organisations where they are able to speak. If the mass of the British public were to be suddenly alerted to the situation which they are actually now in – by “alarmist” leaflets and by broadcasts telling them that they have indeed every reason for alarm – then the whole operation might backfire, and give rise to a vast consensus, not for nuclear war, but for peace.

I suspect that, for these reasons, Professor Howard is regarded, by public-relations-conscious persons in the Establishment, as a great patriot of NATO and an admirable fellow, but as an inexperienced politician. The people of this country have been made dull and stupid by a diet of Official Information. But they are not all *that* stupid, and there is still a risk – a small risk, but not one worth taking – that they might remember who they are, and become “turbulent” before the war even got started.

I suspect that the strategy of high persons in the Cabinet Office, the security services, and the Ministry of Defence, is rather different from that of Professor Howard. There is preliminary work yet to do, in softening up the public mind, in intimidating dissidents, in controlling information more tightly, and in strengthening internal policing and security. Meanwhile planning will go forward, and at the next international crisis (real or factitious) there will be a co-ordinated, univocal, obliterating “civil defence” bombardment, with All-Party broadcasts, leafleting and the levying of volunteers, and with extreme precautions to prevent any dissenting voices from having more than the most marginal presence.

So that I think that Professor Howard is a little ahead of his times. But the *arguments* which Mr Howard has proposed, are, exactly, the arguments most deeply relevant to the present moment. That is why I have spent all this time in examining them.

I have sought, in these pages, to open these arguments up, to show what is inside them, which premises and what conclusions. I have not been trying to frighten readers, but to show the consequences to which these arguments lead.

Nor have I been trying to show that Professor Howard is a scandalous and immoral sort of person. I do not suppose myself to be a more moral sort of person than he. I think it unlikely that he put forward his ghastly scenario with any feelings of eager anticipation.

And, finally, although I am myself by conviction a socialist, I have not been grounding my arguments on premises of that kind. I do not suppose that all blame lies with the ideological malice and predatory drives of the capitalist “West”, although some part of it does.

Socialists once supposed, in my youth, that socialist states might commit every kind of blunder, but the notion that they could go to war with each other, for ideological or national ends, was unthinkable. We now know better. States which call themselves "socialist" can go to war with each other, and do. And they can use means and arguments as bad as those of the old imperialist powers.

I have based my arguments on the *logic* of the Cold War, or of the "deterrent" situation itself. We may favour this or that explanation for the origin of this situation. But once this situation has arisen, there is a common logic at work in both blocs. Military technology and military strategy come to impose their own agenda upon political developments. As Lord Zuckerman has written: "The decisions which we make today in the fields of science and technology determine the tactics, then the strategy, and finally the politics of tomorrow".

This is an inter-operative and reciprocal logic, which threatens all, impartially. If you press me for my own view, then I would hazard that the Russian state is now the most dangerous in relation to its own people and to the people of its client states. The rulers of Russia are police-minded and security-minded people, imprisoned within their own ideology, accustomed to meet argument with repression and tanks. But the basic postures of the Soviet Union seem to me, still, to be those of siege and aggressive defence; and even the brutal and botching intervention in Afghanistan appears to have followed upon sensitivity as to United States and Chinese strategies.

"I can think of no instance in modern history where such a breakdown of political communication and such a triumph of unrestrained military suspicions as now marks Soviet-American relations has not led, in the end, to armed conflict."

*George Kennan, former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union, and
Professor Emeritus, Princeton Institute of Advanced Studies.
Observer, 10 February 1980.*

The United States seems to me to be more dangerous and provocative in its general military and diplomatic strategies, which press around the Soviet Union with menacing bases. It is in Washington, rather than in Moscow, that scenarios are dreamed up for "theatre" wars; and it is in America that the "alchemists" of superkill, the clever technologists of "advantage" and ultimate weapons, press forward "the politics of tomorrow".

But we need not ground our own actions on a "preference" for one of the other blocs. This is unrealistic and could be divisive. What is relevant is the logic of process common to both, reinforcing the ugliest features of each others' societies, and locking both together in each others' nuclear arms in the same degenerative drift.

What I have been contending for, against Professor Howard, is this. First, I have

shown that the premises which underlie his letter are *irrational*.

Second, I have been concerned throughout with the use of *language*.

What makes the extinction of civilised life upon this island probable is not a greater propensity for evil than in previous history, but a more formidable destructive technology, a deformed political process (East and West), and also a deformed culture.

The deformation of culture commences within language itself. It makes possible a disjunction between the rationality and moral sensibility of individual men and women and the effective political and military process. A certain kind of “realist” and “technical” vocabulary effects a closure which seals out the imagination, and prevents the reason from following the most manifest sequence of cause and consequence. It habituates the mind to nuclear holocaust by reducing everything to a flat level of normality. By habituating us to certain expectations, it not only encourages resignation – it also beckons on the event.

“Human kind cannot bear very much reality”. As much of reality as most of us can bear is what is most proximate to us – our self-interests and our immediate affections. What threatens our interests – what causes us even mental unease – is seen as outside ourselves, as the Other. We can kill thousands because we have first learned to call them “the enemy”. Wars commence in our culture first of all, and we kill each other in euphemisms and abstractions long before the first missiles have been launched.

It has never been true that nuclear war is “unthinkable”. It has been thought and the thought has been put into effect. This was done in 1945, in the name of allies fighting for the Four Freedoms (although what those Freedoms were I cannot now recall), and it was done upon two populous cities. It was done by professing Christians, when the Western Allies had already defeated the Germans, and when victory against the Japanese was certain, in the longer or shorter run. The longer run would have cost some thousands more of Western lives, whereas the short run (the bomb) would cost the lives only of enemy Asians. This was perfectly thinkable. It was thought. And action followed on.

What is “unthinkable” is that nuclear war could happen to *us*. So long as we can suppose that this war will be inflicted only on *them*, the thought comes easily. And if we can also suppose that this war will save “our” lives, or serve our self-interest, or even save us (if we live in California) from the tedium of queueing every other day for gasoline, then the act can easily follow on. We *think* others to death as we define them as the Other: the enemy: Asians: Marxists: non-people. The deformed human mind is the ultimate doomsday weapon – it is out of the human mind that the missiles and the neutron warheads come.

For this reason it is necessary to enter a remonstrance against Professor Howard and those who use his kind of language and adopt his mental postures. He is preparing our minds as launching platforms for exterminating thoughts. The fact that Soviet ideologists are doing much the same (thinking us to death as “imperialists” and “capitalists”) is no defence. This is not work proper to scholars.

Academic persons have little influence upon political and military decisions, and less than they suppose. They do, however, operate within our culture, with ideas

and language, and, as we have seen, the deformation of culture is the precedent condition for nuclear war.

It is therefore proper to ask such persons to resist the contamination of our culture with those terms which precede the ultimate act. The death of fifteen millions of fellow citizens ought not to be described as "disagreeable consequences". A war confined to Europe ought not to be given the euphemisms of "limited" or "theatre". The development of more deadly weapons, combined with menacing diplomatic postures and major new political and strategic decisions (the siting of missiles on our own territory under the control of alien personnel) ought not to be concealed within the anodyne technological term of "modernisation". The threat to erase the major cities of Russia and East Europe ought not to trip easily off the tongue as "unacceptable damage".

Professor Howard is entitled to hold his opinions and to make these public. But I must enter a gentle remonstrance to the members of the University of Oxford nonetheless. Does this letter, from the Chichele Professor of the History of War, represent the best thoughts that Oxford can put together at a time when human culture enters a crisis which may be terminal? I have no doubt that members of that University hold different opinions. But where, and how often, in the last few months, have these other voices been heard?

I am thinking, most of all, of that great number of persons who very much dislike what is going on in the actual world, but who dislike the vulgarity of exposing themselves to the business of "politics" even more. They erect both sets of dislikes around their desks or laboratories like a screen, and get on with their work and their careers. I am not asking these, or all of them, to march around the place or to spend hours in weary little meetings. I am asking them to examine the deformities of our culture and then, in public places, to demur.

I am asking them whether Professor Howard's letter truly represents the voice of Oxford? And, if it does not, what measures they have taken to let their dissent be known?

I will recommend some other forms of action, although every person must be governed in this by his or her own conscience and aptitudes. But, first, I should, in fairness to Professor Howard, offer a scenario of my own.

I have come to the view that a general nuclear war is not only possible but probable, and that its probability is increasing. We may indeed be approaching a point of no-return when the existing tendency or disposition towards this outcome becomes irreversible.

I ground this view upon two considerations, which we may define (to borrow the terms of our opponents) as "tactical" and "strategic".

By tactical I mean that the political and military conditions for such war exist now in several parts of the world; the proliferation of nuclear weapons will continue, and will be hastened by the export of nuclear energy technology to new markets; and the rivalry of the superpowers is directly inflaming these conditions.

Such conditions now exist in the Middle East and around the Persian Gulf, will shortly exist in Africa, while in South-East Asia Russia and China have already

engaged in wars by proxy with each other, in Cambodia and Vietnam.

Such wars might stop just short of general nuclear war between the superpowers. And in their aftermath the great powers might be frightened into better behaviour for a few years. But so long as this behaviour rested on nothing more than mutual fear, then military technology would continue to be refined, more hideous weapons would be invented, and the opposing giants would enlarge their control over client states. The strategic pressures towards confrontation will continue to grow.

These *strategic* considerations are the gravest of the two. They rest upon a historical view of power and of the social process, rather than upon the instant analysis of the commentator on events.

In this view it is a superficial judgement, and a dangerous error, to suppose that deterrence "has worked". Very possibly it may have worked, at this or that moment, in preventing recourse to war. But in its very mode of working, and in its "postures", it has brought on a series of consequences within its host societies.

"Deterrence" is not a stationary state, it is a degenerative state. Deterrence has repressed the export of violence towards the opposing bloc, but in doing so the repressed power of the state has turned back upon its own author. The repressed violence has backed up, and has worked its way back into the economy, the polity, the ideology and the culture of the opposing powers. This is the deep structure of the Cold War.

The logic of this deep structure of mutual fear was clearly identified by William Blake in his "Song of Experience", *The Human Abstract*:

And mutual fear brings peace;
Till the selfish loves increase.
Then Cruelty knits a snare,
And spreads his baits with care . . .

Soon spreads the dismal shade
Of Mystery over his head;
And the Catterpillar and Fly
Feed on the Mystery.

And it bears the fruit of Deceit,
Ruddy and sweet to eat;
And the Raven his nest has made
In its thickest shade.

In this logic, the peace of "mutual fear" enforces opposing self-interests, affords room for "Cruelty" to work, engenders "Mystery" and its parasites, brings to fruit the "postures" of Deceit, and the death-foreboding Raven hides within the Mystery.

Within the logic of "deterrence", millions are now employed in the armed services, security organs and military economy of the opposing blocs, and corresponding interests exert immense influence within the counsels of the great powers. Mystery envelops the operation of the technological "alchemists". "Deterrence" has become normal, and minds have been habituated to the vocabulary of mutual extermination. And within this normality, hideous cultural abnormalities have been nurtured and are growing to full girth.

The menace of nuclear war reaches far back into the economies of both parties, dictating priorities, and awarding power. Here, in failing economies, will be found the most secure and vigorous sectors, tapping the most advanced technological skills of both opposed societies and diverting these away from peaceful and productive employment or from efforts to close the great gap between the world's north and south. Here also will be found the driving rationale for expansionist programmes in unsafe nuclear energy, programmes which cohabit comfortably with military nuclear technology whereas the urgent research into safe energy supplies from sun, wind or wave are neglected because they have no military pay-off. Here, in this burgeoning sector, will be found the new expansionist drive for "markets" for arms, as "capitalist" and "socialist" powers compete to feed into the Middle East, Africa and Asia more sophisticated means of kill.

"The MX missile will be the most expensive weapon ever produced – some estimates run as high as \$100 billion to deploy 200 missiles. Building its 'race track' bases will involve the largest construction project in US history . . . More than 20,000 square miles may be involved for this system . . . in the sparsely inhabited states of Utah and Nevada. Some 10,000 miles of heavy duty roadway will be required, and perhaps 5,000 additional miles of road . . . The MX will thus require the biggest construction project in the nation's history, bigger than the Panama Canal and much bigger than the Alaskan pipeline."

*Herbert Scoville, Jr., "America's Greatest Construction: Can It Work?,"
New York Review of Books, 20 March 1980.*

The menace of this stagnant state of violence backs up also into the polity of both halves of the world. Permanent threat and periodic crisis press the men of the military-industrial interests, by differing routes in each society, towards the top. Crisis legitimates the enlargement of the security functions of the state, the intimidation of internal dissent, and the imposition of secrecy and the control of information. As the "natural" lines of social and political development are repressed, and affirmative perspectives are closed, so internal politics collapses into squabbling interest-groups, all of which interests are subordinated to the overarching interests of the state of perpetual threat.

All this may be readily observed. It may be observed even in failing Britain, across whose territory are now scattered the bases, airfields, camps, research stations, submarine depots, communications-interception stations, radar screens, security and intelligence HQ, munitions works – secure and expanding employment in an economic climate of radical insecurity.

What we cannot observe so well – for we ourselves are the object which must be observed – is the manner in which three decades of "deterrence", of mutual fear, mystery, and state-endorsed stagnant hostility, have backed up into our culture and

our ideology. Information has been numbed, language and values have been fouled, by the postures and expectations of the “deterrent” state. But this is matter for a close and scrupulous enquiry.

These, then, are among the strategic considerations which lead me to the view that the probability of great power nuclear warfare is strong and increasing. I do not argue from this local episode or that: what happened yesterday in Afghanistan and what is happening now in Pakistan or North Yemen. I argue from a general and sustained historical process, an accumulative logic, of a kind made familiar to me in the study of history. The episodes lead in this direction or that, but the general logic of process is always towards nuclear war.

The local crises are survived, and it seems as if the decisive moment – either of war or of peace-making and reconciliation – has been postponed and pushed forward into the future. But what has been pushed forward is always worse. Both parties change for the worse. The weapons are more terrible, the means for their delivery more clever. The notion that a war might be fought to “advantage”, that it might be “won”, gains ground. George Bush, the aspirant President of the United States, tries it out in election speeches. There is even a tremour of excitement in our culture as though, subconsciously, human kind has lived with the notion for so long that expectations without actions have become boring. The human mind, even when it resists, assents more easily to its own defeat. All moves on its degenerative course, as if the outcome of civilisation was as determined as the outcome of this sentence: in a full stop.

I am reluctant to accept that this determinism is absolute. But if my arguments are correct, then we cannot put off the matter any longer. We must throw whatever resources still exist in human culture across the path of this degenerative logic. We must protest if we are to survive. Protest is the only realistic form of civil defence.

We must generate an alternative logic, an opposition at every level of society. This opposition must be international and it must win the support of multitudes. It must bring its influence to bear upon the rulers of the world. It must act, in very different conditions, within each national state; and, on occasion, it must directly confront its own national state apparatus.

Recently the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation has issued an all-European Appeal for European Nuclear Disarmament. The objective of this Appeal will be the establishment of an expanding zone in Europe freed from nuclear weapons, air and submarine bases, etc. We aim to expel these weapons from the soil and waters of both East and West Europe, and to press the missiles, in the first place, back to the Urals and to the Atlantic ocean.

The tactics of this campaign will be both national and international.

In the national context, each national peace movement will proceed directly to contest the nuclear weapons deployed by its own state, or by NATO or Warsaw Treaty obligations upon its own soil. Its actions will not be qualified by any notion of diplomatic bargaining. Its opposition to the use of nuclear weapons by its own state will be absolute. Its demands upon its own state for disarmament will be unilateral.

In the international, and especially in the European, context, each national movement will exchange information and delegations, will support and challenge each other. The movement will encourage a European consciousness, in common combat for survival, fostering informal communication at every level, and disregarding national considerations of interest or "security".

It is evident that this logic will develop unevenly. The national movements will not grow at the same pace, nor be able to express themselves in identical ways. Each success of a unilateral kind – by Holland in refusing NATO cruise missiles or by Romania or Poland in distancing themselves from Soviet strategies – will be met with an outcry that it serves the advantage of one or other bloc.

This outcry must be disregarded. It cannot be expected that initiatives on one side will be met with instant reciprocation from the other. Very certainly, the strategists of both blocs will seek to turn the movement to their own advantage. The logic of peace-making will be as uneven, and as fraught with emergencies and contingencies, as the logic which leads on to war.

In particular, the movement in West and East Europe will find very different expression. In the West we envisage popular movements engaged in a direct contest with the policies of their own national states. At first, Soviet ideologues may look benignly upon this, looking forward to a weakening of NATO preparations which are matched by no actions larger than "peace-loving" rhetoric from the East.

But we are confident that our strategy can turn this rhetoric into acts. In Eastern Europe there are profound pressures for peace, for greater democracy and international exchange, and for relief from the heavy burden of siege economies. For a time these pressures may be contained by the repressive measures of national and Soviet security services. Only a few courageous dissidents will, in the first place, be able to take an open part in our common work.

Yet to the degree that the peace movement in the West can be seen to be effective, it will afford support and protection to our allies in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. It will provide those conditions of relaxation of tension which will weaken the rationale and legitimacy of repressive state measures, and will allow the pressures for democracy and detente to assert themselves in more active and open ways. Moreover, as an intrinsic part of the European campaign, the demand for an opening of the societies of the East to information, free communication and expression, and exchange of delegations to take part in the common work will be pressed on every occasion. And it will not only be "pressed" as rhetoric. We are going to find devices which will symbolise that pressure and dramatise that debate.

Against the strategy which envisages Europe as a "theatre" of "limited" nuclear warfare, we propose to make in Europe a theatre of peace. This will not, even if we succeed, remove the danger of confrontation in non-European theatres. It offers, at the least, a small hope of European survival. It could offer more. For if the logic of nuclear strategy reaches back into the organisation and ideologies of the super-powers themselves, so the logic of peace-making might reach back also, enforcing alternative strategies, alternative ideologies. European nuclear disarmament would favour the conditions for international detente.

As to Britain there is no need to doubt what must be done to protest and survive.

We must detach ourselves from the nuclear strategies of NATO and dispense with the expensive and futile imperial toy of an "independent" deterrent (Polaris). We must close down those airfields and bases which already serve aircraft and submarines on nuclear missions. And we must contest every stage of the attempt to import United States cruise missiles onto our soil.

Although we know that 164 cruise missiles are planned to be sited in Britain by 1982, Mr Pym (as we have seen) is still waiting for a United States officer to tell him where they will be sited. Official leaks suggest that the major bases for the operation will be at Lakenheath in Suffolk, at Upper Heyford in Oxfordshire, and possibly at Sculthorpe (Norfolk).

Whether they are permanently sited at these spots, or dragged around on mobile platforms in "emergency" to subsidiary bases (as at Fairford or Greenham Common), we can be sure that there will be a permanent infra-structure of buildings and communications devices, wire and ferocious guard dogs. It should be easy to find out what is going on. As a matter of course, in a question of national survival, any responsible and patriotic citizen should pass his knowledge of these matters on, whether they call it an "official secret" or not. How can a question which may decide whether one's children live or not be anyone's official secret?

There will also be a flurry of preparations, such as road-building and the strengthening of culverts. As Mr Churchill noted in parliament, the transporters for Pershing missiles weigh 80 tons, and are heavy enough to crush 90 per cent of the German road network. All this they will have to attend to, and there will be time not only for us to find it out but also to do our best to bring it to a stop.

The first necessity of *Protect and Survive* is to contest the importation of these foul and menacing weapons, which are at one and the same time weapons of aggression and invitations for retaliatory attack. In the course of this, there must be great public manifestations and direct contestations – peacefully and responsibly conducted – of several kinds. We must also take pains to discuss the question with the United States personnel manning these bases. We must explain to these that we wish them to go home, but that they are welcome to return to this country, as visitors, in any other role.

As it happens, these major bases are to be placed in proximity to the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and it seems to me that there is useful work to be done from these old bases of European civilisation. There will be work of research, of publication, and also work of conscience, all of which are very suitable for scholars.

Upper Heyford is a few miles out of Oxford on the Kidlington road (A43): take the left fork by Weston-on-the-Green, and then turn left again at Stone. The fellows of Cambridge who wish to inspect their fiendly neighbourhood base at Lakenheath must drive a little further. One route would be on the A10 through Ely to Littleport, then turn right on the A1101 and wiggle across that flat fenny land alongside the Little Ouse. Gum boots should be taken.

Oxford and Cambridge, then, are privileged to initiate this campaign: to plot out the ground: and to recommend which measures may be most effective. But they

may be assured that thousands of their neighbours can be brought to take a share in the work. And there are plenty of other places which will need visiting, alongside the general work of education, persuasion and creating a sharp political weather through which the politicians will have to sail. Our aim must be to ensure that, by 1982, any politician who still has a cruise missile on board will fear to put out to sea at all.

As for the international work, this is in hand, and I hope that before the summer is out we will receive news from – and exchange delegations with – the movement in other nations. The Dutch already have a start on us. They are, in a sense, the founders of this movement. Their torchlight processions were out in force last November, in Amsterdam, Heerlen, Groningen and Utrecht; and an alliance of left-wing organisations and of the Dutch Council of Churches proved to be strong enough, in December, to defeat the government and to enforce a postponement of the Dutch decision on cruise missiles. In Belgium also there is a movement, and in West Germany the “green” movement against nuclear power is looking in the same direction. Indeed, a movement is astir already in West Europe, and only Britain, the first home of CND, has been yawning on its way to Armageddon.

A final, and important, consideration is that this European work *need not wait upon governments*, nor should it all be routed through centralised organisations. What is required, and what is now immediately possible and practicable, is a *lateral* strategy.

Indeed, this strategy, even more than the conventionally “political”, is the most appropriate for exchanges between Western and Eastern Europe. Any existing organisation, institution, or even individual, can look out for any opposite number and get on with the work. Universities and colleges – or groups within these – can commence to exchange ideas and visits with colleagues in Warsaw, Kiev or Budapest. Students can travel to Poland or to Prague. Trade unionists, women’s organisations, members of professions, churches, practitioners of Esperanto or of chess – any and every kind of more specialised group can urge, along with their more particular common interests, the general common interest in European Nuclear Disarmament.

Before long, if we get going, we will be crossing frontiers, exchanging theatre and songs, busting open bureaucratic doors, making the telephone-tappers spin in their hideaways as the exchanges jam with official secrets, and breaking up the old stoney Stalinist reflexes of the East by forcing open debate and dialogue, not on their mendacious “peace-loving” agendas but on ours, and yet in ways that cannot possibly be outlawed as agencies of the imperialist West. If we have to do so, then we must be ready to inspect each others’ jails. We must act as if we are, already, citizens of Europe.

It would be nicer to have a quiet life. But they are not going to let us have that. If we wish to survive, we must protest.

The acronym of European Nuclear Disarmament is END. I have explained why I think that the arguments of Professor Howard are hastening us towards a different end. I have outlined the deep structure of deterrence, and diagnosed its outcome as terminal. I can see no way of preventing this outcome but by immediate actions throughout Europe, which generate a counter-logic of nuclear disarmament.

Which end is it to be?

If you wish to help with the British Campaign contact Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 29 Great James Street, London WC1N 3EY. If you can help with the European Campaign, write to Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, Bertrand Russell House, Gamble Street, Nottingham NG7 4ET.

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