

## Military Industrial Complex

The Military Industrial Complex can be understood as the marriage of war-making and money-making. In the case of the United States, our ever increasing war-making budget is parceled out to a network of corporations to develop and manufacture war materials, including the American arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. Many billions of American tax dollars each year are paid to Lockheed Martin, Bechtel, and other corporations.

The U.S. is currently spending more on its nuclear weapons' program than it did at *any* point in the Cold War. While some argue that our nuclear weapons' program is slowing with the move to sub-critical testing at the Test Site, nothing speaks stronger of the continuing escalation of nuclear treat than the allocation of cold hard cash. Such spending continues to drain resources that could be used to end hunger and other poverty related conditions worldwide. If we truly seek a free and democratic world, we must liberate ourselves from a consciousness framed in fear and vengeance and disarm the weapons of mass destruction here in our country.

**NUCLEARISM:** /NU-klee-ir-êsm/ [Mod. Eng., Psych., Relig.] (n) 1. ideology among some U.S. Americans and their allies in which nuclear weapons are held in such high esteem that they are regarded as essential to maintaining worldwide U.S. military and economic dominance. 2. belief rising in the late 20th century among many scientists, military persons, corporations, government agencies, and others within the military-industrial complex that nuclear weapons are useful, valuable, and needed to maintain/enforce "peace." 3. habitual engagement in working for the nuclear industry. 4. "death cult" (often subconsciously observed) which believes that peace is created by ultimate violence or threats of ultimate violence (i.e. the power to annihilate others); the worship of the deadliest substance that humans have created to-date.

In 1992, the United States signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Between 1992-1997 the United States in accordance with the Treaty stayed the all forms of nuclear testing. Since 1997, sub-critical nuclear testing has occurred regularly in violation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Sub-critical testing is the term used to describe the process of testing component pieces of a nuclear bomb without inducing a full explosion. While sub-critical testing is less politically visible, the resumption of any form of testing reinvigorates the nuclear weapons' machine and greatly increases the possibility of a return to full scale testing in the near future.

## Recent Nuclear Tests

**1st Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test 2 July 1997, "Rebound," Los Alamos**  
**2nd Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test 18 Sept 1997, "Holog," Livermore**  
**3rd Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test 25 March 1998, "Stagecoach,"**

4th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	26 September 1998, “Bagpipe,” Nevada
5th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	11 October 1998, “Cimarron,”
6th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	9 February 1999, “Clarinet,”
7th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	27 September 1999, “Oboe”
8th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	10 October 1999, “Oboe” 2
9th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	6 February 2000, “Oboe 3,”
10th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	22 March 2000, “Thoroughbred,” Nevada Lyner facility
11th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	9 April 2000, “Oboe 4”
12th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	18 August 2000, “Oboe 5”
13th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	14 December 2000 “Oboe 6” Nevada
14th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	26 September 2001 “Oboe 8” Nevada
15th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	13 December 2001 “Oboe 7” Nevada
16th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	14 February 2002 “Vito” Nevada
17th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	7 June 2002 “Oboe 9” Nevada
18th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	29 August 2002 “Mario” Nevada
19th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	26 September 2002 “Rocco” Nevada
20th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	19 September 2003 “Piano” Nevada
21th Post-Moratorium U.S. Subcritical Test	25 May 2004 “Armando” Nevada

## Ten Myths About Nuclear Weapons

by David Krieger & Angela McCracken

1. [Nuclear weapons were needed to defeat Japan in World War II.](#)
2. [Nuclear weapons prevented a war between the United States and the Soviet Union.](#)
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**1. Nuclear weapons were needed to defeat Japan in World War II.** It is widely believed, particularly in the United States, that the use of nuclear weapons against the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was necessary to defeat Japan in World War II. This is not, however, the opinion of the leading US military figures in the war, including General Dwight Eisenhower, General Omar Bradley, General Hap Arnold and Admiral William Leahy. General Eisenhower, for example, who was the Supreme Allied Commander Europe during World War II and later US president, wrote, “I had been conscious of a feeling of depression and so I voiced [to Secretary of War Stimson] my grave misgivings, first on the basis of my belief that Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary, and secondly because I thought that our country should avoid shocking world opinion by the use of a weapon whose employment was, I thought, no longer mandatory as a measure to

save American lives. It was my belief that Japan was, at that very moment, seeking some way to surrender with a minimum loss of 'face'...." Not only was the use of nuclear force unnecessary, its destructive force was excessive, resulting in 220,000 deaths by the end of 1945.

**2. Nuclear weapons prevented a war between the United States and the Soviet Union.** Many people believe that the nuclear standoff during the Cold War prevented the two superpowers from going to war with each other, for fear of [mutually assured destruction](#). While it is true that the superpowers did not engage in nuclear warfare during the Cold War, there were many confrontations between them that came uncomfortably close to nuclear war, the most prominent being the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. There were also many deadly conflicts and "proxy" wars carried out by the superpowers in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Vietnam War, which took several million Vietnamese lives and the lives of more than 58,000 Americans, is a prominent example. These wars made the supposed nuclear peace very bloody and deadly. Lurking in the background was the constant danger of a nuclear exchange. The Cold War was an exceedingly dangerous time with a massive nuclear arms race, and the human race was extremely fortunate to have survived it without suffering a nuclear war.

**3. Prevent Nuclear Terrorism.** In light of the Cold War's end, many people believed that nuclear threats had gone away. While the nature of nuclear threats has changed since the end of the Cold War, these threats are far from having disappeared or even significantly diminished. During the Cold War, the greatest threat was that of a massive nuclear exchange between the United States and Soviet Union. In the aftermath of the Cold War, a variety of new nuclear threats have emerged. Among these are the following dangers:

- Increased possibilities of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorists who would not hesitate to use them;
- Nuclear war between India and Pakistan;
- Policies of the US government to make nuclear weapons smaller and more usable;
- Use of nuclear weapons by accident, particularly by Russia, which has a substantially weakened early warning system; and
- Spread of nuclear weapons to other states, such as North Korea, that may perceive them to be an "equalizer" against a more powerful state.

**4. The United States needs nuclear weapons for its national security.** There is a widespread belief in the United States that nuclear weapons are necessary for the US to defend against aggressor states. US national security, however, would be far improved if the US took a leadership role in seeking to eliminate nuclear weapons throughout the world. Nuclear weapons are the only weapons that could actually destroy the United States, and their existence and proliferation threaten US security. Continued high-alert deployment of nuclear weapons and research on smaller and more usable nuclear weapons by the US, combined with a more aggressive foreign policy, makes many weaker nations feel threatened. Weaker states may think of nuclear weapons as an equalizer, giving them the ability to effectively neutralize the forces of a threatening nuclear weapons state. Thus, as in the case of North Korea, the US threat may be instigating nuclear weapons proliferation. Continued reliance on nuclear weapons by the United States is setting the wrong example for the world, and is further endangering the country rather than protecting it. The United States has strong conventional military forces and would be far more secure in a world in which no country had nuclear arms.

**5. Nuclear weapons make a country safer.** It is a common belief that nuclear weapons protect a country by deterring potential aggressors from attacking. By threatening massive retaliation, the argument goes, nuclear weapons prevent an attacker from starting a war. To the contrary, nuclear weapons are actually undermining the safety of the countries that possess them by providing a false sense of security. While [deterrence](#) can provide some psychological sense of security, there are no guarantees that the threat of retaliation will succeed in preventing an attack. There are many ways in which deterrence could fail, including misunderstandings, faulty communications, irrational leaders, miscalculations and accidents. In addition, the possession of nuclear weapons enhances the risks of terrorism, proliferation and ultimately nuclear annihilation.

**6. No leader would be crazy enough to actually use nuclear weapons.** Many people believe that the threat of using nuclear weapons can go on indefinitely as a means of deterring attacks because no leader would be crazy enough to actually use them. Unfortunately, nuclear weapons have been used, and it is likely that most, if not all, leaders possessing these weapons would, under certain conditions, actually use them. US leaders, considered by many to be highly rational, are the only ones who have ever actually used nuclear weapons in war, against Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Outside of these two bombings, the leaders of nuclear weapons states have repeatedly come close to using nuclear weapons. Nuclear deterrence is based upon a believable threat of nuclear retaliation, and the threat of nuclear weapons use has been constant during the post World War II period. US policy currently calls for the use of nuclear weapons in response to an attack with chemical or biological weapons against the US, its troops or allies. One of the premises of the US argument for preventive war is that other leaders would be willing to attack the United States with nuclear weapons. Threats of nuclear attack by India and Pakistan provide still another example of nuclear brinkmanship that could turn into a nuclear war. Globally and historically, leaders have done their best to prove that they would use nuclear weapons. Assuming that they would not do so is unwise.

**7. Nuclear weapons are a cost-effective method of national defense.** Some have argued that nuclear weapons, with their high yield of explosive power, offer the benefit of an effective defense for minimum investment. This is one reason behind ongoing research into lower-yield tactical nuclear weapons, which would be perceived as more usable. The cost of nuclear weapons research, development, testing, deployment and maintenance, however, exceeded **\$5.5 trillion** by 1996, according to a study by the Brookings Institution. With advances in nuclear

technology and power, the costs and consequences of a nuclear war would be immeasurable.

**8. Nuclear weapons are well protected and there is little chance that terrorists could get their hands on one.** Many people believe that nuclear weapons are well protected and that the likelihood of terrorists obtaining these weapons is low. In the aftermath of the Cold War, however, the ability of the Russians to protect their nuclear forces has declined precipitously. In addition, a coup in a country with nuclear weapons, such as Pakistan, could lead to a government coming to power that was willing to provide nuclear weapons to terrorists. In general, the more nuclear weapons there are in the world and the more nuclear weapons proliferate to additional countries, the greater the possibility that nuclear weapons will end up in the hands of terrorists. The best remedy for keeping nuclear weapons out of the hands of terrorists is to drastically reduce their numbers and institute strict international inspections and controls on all nuclear weapons and weapons-grade nuclear materials in all countries, until these weapons and the materials for making them can be eliminated.

**9. The United States is working to fulfill its nuclear disarmament obligations.** Most US citizens believe that the United States is working to fulfill its nuclear disarmament obligations. In fact, the United States has failed to fulfill its obligations under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, requiring good faith efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament, for more than 30 years. The United States has failed to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and has withdrawn from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The 2003 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) with Russia takes strategic nuclear weapons off active deployment, but has no provisions for verification or systematic reductions and it fails to adhere to the principle of irreversibility agreed to at the 2000 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. The treaty seeks maximum flexibility for rearmament rather than irreversible reductions in nuclear arms. Nuclear weapons taken off active deployment will be put in storage where they will actually become more vulnerable in both the US and Russia to theft by terrorists. In the year 2012, the treaty will end, unless extended.

**10. Nuclear weapons are needed to combat threats from terrorists and "rogue states."** It has been argued that nuclear weapons are needed to protect against terrorists and "rogue states." Yet nuclear weapons, whether used for deterrence or as offensive weaponry, are not effective for this purpose. The threat of nuclear force cannot act as a deterrent against terrorists because they do not have a territory to retaliate against. Thus, terrorists would not be prevented from attacking a country for fear of nuclear retaliation. Nuclear weapons also cannot be relied on as a deterrent against "rogue states" because their responses to a nuclear threat may be irrational and deterrence relies on rationality. If the leaders of a rogue state do not use the same calculus regarding their losses from retaliation, deterrence can easily fail. As offensive weaponry, nuclear force only promises tremendous destruction to troops, civilians and the environment. It might work to annihilate a rogue state, but the amount of force entailed in using nuclear weaponry is indiscriminate, disproportionate and highly immoral. It would not be useful against terrorists because strategists could not be certain of locating an appropriate target for retaliation.

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## **Does the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Have a Future?**

by Lawrence S. Wittner., March 21, 2005.

This May, the United Nations will be holding a review conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a key nuclear arms control and disarmament agreement to which 188 countries are now parties.

Originally proposed by the U.S. and Soviet governments, the NPT was signed at the United Nations in 1968 and went into force in 1970. Under its provisions, non-nuclear nations agreed to renounce the development of nuclear weapons and nuclear-armed nations agreed to divest themselves of their nuclear weapons through good faith negotiations for nuclear disarmament. In this fashion, nations on both sides of the Cold War divide signaled their intention to halt the nuclear arms race and move toward a nuclear-free world.

For decades, there was substantial progress along these lines. Non-nuclear nations refrained from building nuclear weapons. And the nuclear powers signed a series of important nuclear arms control and disarmament treaties: the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty; two Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties; the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty; two Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties; and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. At times, they even reduced their nuclear forces unilaterally. As a result, by the late 1990s, no additional nations belonged to the nuclear club, while the number of nuclear weapons deployed by the nuclear nations or in their stockpiles declined dramatically.

Starting in 1998, however, the nuclear arms race began to revive. Determined to place their nations within the ranks of the nuclear powers, the governments of India and Pakistan exploded their first nuclear weapons that year. Since then, they have engaged in dangerous and mutually threatening nuclear buildups. Other non-nuclear nations, including North Korea, took the first steps toward going nuclear, though the extent of their progress along these lines remains uncertain.

The nuclear powers also began to abandon their NPT commitments. In 1999, the U.S. Senate stunned much of the world, including U.S. allies, by rejecting ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Taking office in 2001, the administration of George W. Bush withdrew the United States from the ABM Treaty, opposed ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, began deployment of a missile defense system, pressed for the development of new U.S. nuclear weapons, and abandoned negotiations for nuclear disarmament. Responding sharply to U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and U.S. plans for missile defense, the Russian government announced its intention to deploy a new generation of nuclear missiles. And China might not be far behind.

Why has there been a reversal of earlier progress toward a nuclear-free world?

A key factor behind the turnaround is the decline of popular pressure for nuclear disarmament.

Rival nations--and before their existence, rival territories--have always gravitated toward military buildups. This is based on the assumption--what might be called the "old thinking"--that national security is best achieved through military strength. Not surprisingly, then, in a world of competing and sometimes hostile nations, governments are tempted to develop nuclear weapons to secure what they consider their "national interests." Thus, beginning during World War II and continuing during the Cold War, a growing number of rival governments commenced developing powerful nuclear arsenals.

Fortunately, however, the nuclear arms race of the Cold War era inspired widespread public resistance--resistance that took the form of mass movements for nuclear disarmament, feisty antinuclear marches and rallies, and public critiques of nuclear weapons by religious bodies, scientists, and cultural leaders. Polls found public opinion strongly opposed to nuclear buildups and nuclear wars. As a result, governments were pushed, often reluctantly, into agreements for nuclear arms control and disarmament.

But, since the end of the Cold War, the mass nuclear disarmament movements of the past have declined dramatically and public concern about nuclear weapons has dwindled. Furthermore, much of the lingering public concern has been manipulated by cynical government officials to bolster their own policies—as when the Bush administration exaggerated the Iraqi government's readiness to wage nuclear war in order to justify its invasion of Iraq. Thus, freed of the constraint of popular pressure for international nuclear disarmament, governments gradually jettisoned their NPT commitments.

The situation, however, may be changing once more. Just as the nuclear arms race of the Cold War era inspired massive popular protest, the reviving nuclear arms race of recent years is beginning to generate substantial public opposition.

Much of this public opposition is crystallizing around the May 2005 NPT review conference at the United Nations, where nuclear and non-nuclear nations almost certainly will condemn one another for renegeing on their treaty commitments. United for Peace and Justice (the major peace coalition in the United States), along with Abolition 2000 (a group focused on the nuclear issue), is laying plans for a nuclear abolition march and rally in New York City on May 1, the day before the review conference convenes. Noting that the NPT is "in serious disarray," the organizers of these events have called for "a massive demonstration" to "demand global nuclear disarmament and an end to nuclear excuses for war." Large antinuclear meetings and other related events are taking shape in numerous American cities, with prominent speakers drawn from political, academic, and cultural life.

International organizations are also focusing their efforts on the NPT review conference. Stressing the importance of the gathering, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War is mobilizing for it as part of a Campaign for a Nuclear-Weapons-Free 21st Century. Mayors for Peace, an organization of top municipal officials from more than 600 cities around the world, has become particularly active in pressing the case for nuclear abolition. Headed by Hiroshima's mayor, Tadatoshi Akiba, Mayors for Peace will be sending a substantial delegation to the NPT review conference for this purpose.

Thus, at this time of widespread uncertainty about the future of the NPT--and, more broadly, about the future of nuclear arms control and disarmament--there are signs that popular pressure is developing to put the world back on track toward nuclear disarmament. Whether this pressure will prove powerful enough to save the NPT remains to be seen. But there is certainly movement on this front. Fortunately, in the most dangerous of circumstances, people have a tendency to rise to the occasion.

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## **Our Greatest Threat The Coming Nuclear Crisis**

by Douglas Roche, March 11, 2005

When the first atomic bombs destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it could hardly have been imagined that nearly sixty years later 34,145 nuclear weapons would be in existence. In a long career as a parliamentarian, diplomat, and educator, I have come to the conclusion that the abolition of nuclear weapons is the indispensable condition for peace in the twenty-first century. Yet progress toward that goal has been halted.

In May a conference of the 188 signatory nations to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) will be held in New York City to put a spotlight on this problem. A huge march is planned for May 1. Advocates of nonproliferation will once again try to draw attention to the immorality and illegality of such weapons. But will the eight nations that possess nuclear weapons—the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, and Israel—actually take steps toward eliminating their arsenals?

The prognosis is not good. The preparatory meetings for the May conference ended in failure, with nonnuclear nations objecting to the intransigence of the nuclear-weapon states, noting how a world of nuclear haves and have-nots is becoming a permanent feature of the global landscape. The United States insists that the problem is not with those who possess nuclear weapons, but with states, such as Iran and other nations, trying to acquire them. To which Brazil responded: "One cannot worship at the altar of nuclear weapons and raise heresy charges against those who want to join the sect." Faced with this stalemate, the NPT is eroding, and an expansion of the number of states with nuclear weapons, a fear which produced the NPT in 1970, is looming once more.

Any discussion of the elimination of nuclear weapons inevitably raises questions of the feasibility of such action. How is an

architecture of security to be built without nuclear weapons? How can states be prevented from cheating and how can such weapons be kept out of the hands of terrorists? A wide range of military, scientific, and diplomatic experts, notably the Canberra Commission established in 1996, have tried to provide answers to these urgent questions.

First, the case for a nuclear weapons-free world is based on the commonsensical claim that the destructiveness of these weapons is so great they have no military utility against a comparably equipped opponent. Historically, nuclear weapons have been used as a deterrent. But even as a deterrent they pose too great a risk. Few doubt that the longer weapons are maintained, the greater the risk of use, or that possession by some states causes other nations to acquire them, reducing the security of all.

Second, the elimination of such weapons will not be possible without a new architecture of security based on an adequate verification system. The components of a reliable verification system are coming into place, beginning with the inspection system maintained by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the monitoring system maintained by the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization, which has the capacity to detect the most minute nuclear test explosions. On-site inspections of suspect materials will have to be part of the disarmament process (the United States and Russia already do this in the case of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1987).

"Trust but verify," President Ronald Reagan famously said. Verification is essential, but the demand for a perfect verification regime is little more than an excuse for not seeking a reduction in nuclear weapons. Perfect security is not possible. Inevitably, some risk will have to be accepted if the wider benefits of a nuclear weapon-free world are to be realized. Not the elimination of risk but an evaluation of comparative risks is the rational approach to take. It is much more dangerous for the world to stay on its present path. Compared to the risks inherent in a world bristling with nuclear weapons, the risks associated with whatever threat a cheating state could assemble before it was exposed are far more acceptable.

No one is advocating unilateral disarmament; that would be an unthinkable policy for the United States. Rather it is in the interests of the United States-and all other nations-to heed the directive of the International Court of Justice and pursue comprehensive negotiations leading to the gradual elimination of nuclear weapons. Such a program would take many years to implement. Many confidence-building measures would be needed. How long disarmament takes is not the most important thing; what is critical is that the major states show the rest of the world they are heading in that direction. Otherwise, the NPT, which entails a legal obligation to pursue negotiations in good faith, will become a mockery. This is the nub of the present dilemma.

In 1995, on its twenty-fifth anniversary, the NPT (virtually every country in the world except India, Pakistan, and Israel has signed the treaty) was indefinitely extended. In agreeing to that extension, the nuclear powers made three promises: a Nuclear Test Ban Treaty would be achieved; negotiations to ban the production of fissile material would be concluded; "systematic and progressive efforts globally" to eliminate nuclear weapons would be made. None of these promises has been kept.

When the NPT was reviewed in 2000, all the states were again able to find common ground and, by consensus, made an "unequivocal" commitment to eliminating nuclear weapons through a program of "Thirteen Practical Steps." Subsequently, the nuclear powers faltered again and bitterness set in.

The United States is in the forefront of the current stalemate. Its commitment to the consensus of 2000 was made under the Clinton administration. When President George W. Bush was elected, the United States position regressed: the ABM Treaty was abandoned and the administration turned its back on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), two of the thirteen steps agreed to in 2000. Moreover, in 2001 the administration conducted a nuclear posture review, which made clear that nuclear weapons remain a cornerstone of U.S. national-security policy. The review outlines expansive plans to revitalize U.S. nuclear forces, and all the elements that support them.

The Bush administration has also speculated about specific scenarios where the use of nuclear weapons may be justified: an Arab-Israeli conflict, a conflict with China over Taiwan, a North Korean attack on South Korea, and an attack on Israel by Iraq or another neighbor. This new policy, in contradiction of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, means that for the first time the United States will threaten the use of nuclear weapons against countries that do not themselves possess such weapons. Under President Bush, the United States is actually widening the role of nuclear weapons in defense policy far beyond deterrence. The administration is promulgating a policy that would retain a stockpile of active and reserve nuclear weapons and weapons components for at least the next fifty years.

Among the current nuclear powers, the U.S. position is particularly aggressive, but it is by no means alone in its determination to hold onto nuclear weapons or to expand their strategic role in military policy. On November 17, 2004, President Vladimir Putin of Russia confirmed that his country is "carrying out research and missile tests of state-of-the-art nuclear missile systems" and that Russia would "continue to build up firmly and insistently our armed forces, including the nuclear component." The United Kingdom, France, and China are all busy modernizing their nuclear arsenals. Similarly,

NATO adheres to its stated policies that such weapons are "essential."

More and more states now treat nuclear weapons as part of a war-fighting strategy, not strictly as a deterrent. Nuclear weapons have become embedded in nations' military doctrines. This shift in the rationale for keeping nuclear weapons is what characterizes our deepening crisis.

Another aspect of this crisis is the specter of nuclear terrorism. "Nothing could be simpler," was the assessment of the eminent physicist Frank von Hippel, on the capacity of terrorists to obtain highly enriched uranium and improvise an explosive device with power equal to the Hiroshima bomb. If the 9/11 terrorists had used a nuclear bomb, hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers would have perished. The International Atomic Energy Agency reports that at least forty countries have the capability to produce nuclear weapons, and criticizes the failure of export control systems to prevent an extensive illicit market in nuclear items. The disappearance, by theft or otherwise, of nuclear materials from Russia is well established. The threat of nuclear terrorism is on the mind of every official I know. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the IAEA, says the margin of security today is "thin and worrisome."

In 2004, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1540, requiring all states to take measures to prevent nonstate actors from acquiring or developing nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. Similarly, the Proliferation Security Initiative of the United States seeks to interdict on the high seas the transfer of sensitive nuclear materials. And the G8 countries have allocated \$20 billion over ten years to eliminate some stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction in Russia.

These steps are by no means sufficient. The fact remains that the proliferation of nuclear weapons cannot be stopped as long as the most powerful nations in the world maintain that nuclear weapons are essential for their own security.

Of course, Iran and any other hostile state must be stopped from acquiring such weapons, and inspection and verification processes must be stepped up with more funding and personnel. But a one-dimensional approach that attempts to stop proliferation while ignoring meaningful disarmament will never work.

The New Agenda Coalition, a group of states (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, and Sweden) pressing the nuclear-weapons states to fulfill their disarmament obligations, offers some hope. The coalition has been gathering political momentum. A recent UN resolution proposed by the group was supported by eight NATO states, including Germany and Canada. That resolution, calling on the nuclear powers to cease activities leading to "a new nuclear arms race," identifies priorities for action: universal adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the early implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty; reduction of nonstrategic nuclear weapons and ending development of new types of weapons; negotiation of an effectively verifiable fissile-material treaty; establishment of a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament at the Conference on Disarmament; and compliance with principles of transparency and verification.

Even though this resolution was mild compared to the regular demands of groups such as the Non-Aligned Movement, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France voted against it. China voted for the resolution and Russia abstained.

Can the NPT be saved? Will civil society groups, whose protests have been rather mild compared to the vigorous activities of the 1980s, now start clamoring for government action? Will those who maintain that nuclear weapons are deeply immoral and a blot on God's creation now be heard?

These are questions posed by the present crisis. Another key question is how religious leaders will react to the realization that nuclear weapons are apparently here to stay.

In 1982, Pope John Paul II sent a message to the Second Special Session on Disarmament:

In current conditions, "deterrence" based on balance, certainly not as an end in itself but as a step on the way toward a progressive disarmament, may still be judged morally acceptable. Nonetheless, in order to ensure peace, it is indispensable not to be satisfied with the minimum which is always susceptible to the real danger of explosion.

In short, deterrence as a permanent policy is not morally acceptable. The American bishops' 1983 Pastoral Letter on War and Peace took up this theme. It argued for a strong "no" to nuclear war, declaring that a nuclear response to a conventional attack is "morally unjustifiable." Moreover, the bishops expressed skepticism that any nuclear war could avoid the massive killing of civilians. Only a "strictly conditioned moral acceptance of nuclear deterrence" is possible. The nuclear weapons states have ignored the bishops' admonitions as well as those of many other religious groups.

A well-considered moral argument must be heard once again that the circle of fear perpetuated by those with a vested interest in maintaining nuclear weapons is a trap from which humanity must escape. The alternative does not bear



thinking about.

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