

I used to be quite respectable in my views on defense," says Gwynne Dyer, writer and narrator of the series *War and The Defense of Canada*.

The Newfoundland-born journalist, who has served in the Canadian, British, and American navies, now has slightly less respectable views. In a lecture two weeks ago at Mount Saint Vincent University, he told a large audience that Canadian neutrality is both feasible and desirable.

Dyer wants Canada to leave NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and adopt a policy of non-alignment. He feels Canada should not be a part of today's dangerous alliance system. Having all other great powers of the world divided into two camps creates world wars: if one country decides to flex its muscles and attack another, all the other aligned countries get drawn into the conflict.

There have been seven such wars in the last 350 years. Dyer thinks as long as the system is still in place, another world war is likely, and the present deterrence policy will not prevent it. "The fact that we've gone forty years without the next world war proves nothing about the efficacy of deterrence. There were only twenty years between the first and second world wars, but that is not to say we're doing particularly well this time."

Today, with nuclear weapons, another world war could destroy all participants, along with most of the non-aligned world. We must abandon the present international system and find a new way of dealing with conflicts, says Dyer. He suggests countries accept the idea of collective security, as they pledged to do in 1945 with the creation of the United Nations.

"We must start dismantling the alliances."

The principle of collective security is that nations cannot form alliances. Under present international law, NATO must be called a "regional security grouping" or it would be illegal. Every UN member has signed a document agreeing that if a country attacks another, all the nations in the world would come to the defense of the victim, under the UN flag.

In practice, this is not the way the world deals with its problems. Both of the world's major "regional security groupings", NATO and the Warsaw Pact, are militarized and prepared for war against each other. "We must start dismantling the alliances," says Dyer. "How do you dismantle alliances? Well, they are made up of sovereign nations, and what every sovereign nation has to do is quit."

Dyer thinks Canada's quitting would be an important first step in the process. "The force of example is much underestimated," says Dyer. "Nobody has left NATO since it was founded thirty-nine years ago, and we are not an inconsiderable power. If we leave, it will be noticed."

Other countries would not automatically follow us; they would each have to make their own decision, says Dyer, but they could at least see it can be done, and may begin considering neutrality for themselves.

"What a Greek politician could do with a Canadian example could be quite impressive." One of Dyer's most surprising arguments is that Canada could be

Leaving NATO would require a lot of planning and determination, he says. "If we are the first to do it, we're going to have to hang on for a long time in a world not of our opinion."

Canada would have to meet certain obligations: one of the UN requirements of neutral countries is that they show some concern for the security of their

Because of the remote chance of invasion, Dyer says Canada could reduce the size of its army and concentrate more on the navy and the air force. Air defences must be strong, he says: "We're right on the flight path of the bombers and the cruise missiles." To keep international obligations, Canada must keep any foreign aircraft out of its airspace.

Dyer says the navy has been neglected and should be given more attention, especially since Canada has so much ocean to defend. On the question of buying nuclear submarines to patrol the Arctic, however, he says this proposal was

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prompted by either "stupidity or paranoia". The Canadian Arctic is too shallow, with too many narrow channels, for subs to navigate properly or hide easily, he says. Moreover, there is nothing to catch. He also says he's heard "rumours from people in uniform" that, in a crisis, the subs would not remain in Canada but would be "lent" to the United States to invade Soviet waters, which, he says, could destabilize the international situation.

Dyer says it is unlikely the U.S. would take any strong measures against Canada for leaving NATO. Economic boycotts would be difficult for the government to enforce because of the enormous investments U.S. businesses have in Canada. Political pressure would probably bring opposition from abroad. The U.S. would be unwilling to risk this, since it would be anxious to keep its other allies, not alienate them. Dyer does think if the proposed free trade deal goes through, neutrality will be more difficult, since the deal would make Canada's ties with the U.S. even stronger.

Neutrality would not be painless, Dyer says. The defense budget would have to be expanded to pay for the withdrawal of troops from Europe and improvements in naval and air defenses. Dyer says on this point the New Democratic Party (NDP), which has long called for neutrality, has been unrealistic. The NDP does not realize the cost, he says; the party could not have a neutral Canada and still have all of its social programs.

So why bother? At least, Dyer says, because we should be doing everything we can to save the world from nuclear war rather than collaborating in its destruction. At most, we could start the world moving away from the alliance system and towards collective security. There is no guarantee of this: "You cannot move the world from Canada, but then, you cannot move the world from anywhere. What you can do is move yourself. And that's what I think we should do."

MOVE YOURSELF, CANADA

Gwynne Dyer proposes a move out of NATO, into neutrality.

BY LYNNE SAMPSON

an example to Warsaw Pact countries. In talks with Soviet officials on his last trip to Moscow, he discovered there is a possibility the Soviet Union would release some of its allies from the pact. "The Soviets have come increasingly to recognize that the present alliance system is very dangerous to their health," he says, "and that as Soviet and Russian patriots they ought to do something about it. The interests of socialism are no longer the highest interests. It is the survival of mankind."

Under these circumstances, a Canadian example could be very useful to Eastern European countries, in showing them how to become and remain neutral, says Dyer.

neighbours. Canada would have to ensure its waters, land, and airspace could not be used as bases for the superpowers to spy on or attack each other. "A neutral Canada could not afford to be a disarmed Canada," Dyer says.

Dyer believes Canada could fulfill its obligations with the armed forces it now has, if they were withdrawn from Europe. Conscription for Canadian defence would not be necessary, he says, since Canada's geography and size make invasion by the Soviets or anyone else almost impossible. "It's just too far. You might get a battalion of paratroops on the Alaska highway, but they're never going to occupy Moose Jaw — even if they needed towns like Moose Jaw."