

reducing the resolve to resort to nuclear weapons if required. Rather, an improved conventional deterrent would reduce the likelihood that nuclear weapons would ever have to be used.

IS NUCLEAR DETERRENCE MORAL?

There has been lengthy and sometimes heated debate over whether it is moral to rely on nuclear weapons to deter the outbreak of war. A former British Defence Secretary, John Nott, stated this view:

In my judgement it would certainly be immoral to contemplate the first use of strategic nuclear weapons in order to make a pre-emptive strike or in support of aggression generally. But the conditional threat of their use in response to aggression is an entirely different question. If by the credible threat of a nuclear response we successfully deter war, then I believe that the good that comes from this must exceed the risks, in spite of the moral complexities involved.⁵

The Anglican Bishop of London, England, the Rt. Rev. Graham Leonard, in addressing this issue drew a distinction between moral *values*, which describe what is good, and moral *obligations*, which describe our duties in particular situations. Sometimes we are torn between what we believe to be good, and what we consider to be a moral obligation in the interest of preserving basic human values under threat. This sort of judgement can be agonizingly difficult, but cannot be avoided. Bishop Leonard, while recognizing the appalling prospect of nuclear war, concluded that the possession and use of nuclear arms can be morally acceptable as a way of exercising moral responsibility in a fallen world.⁶ In this fallen world we have no choice but to face up to the fact that wars continue to happen, nuclear weapons exist, the knowledge of how to make them will not disappear, and there are states which threaten the peace and freedom of others. Conventional and nuclear forces, to deter and to defend, are a necessary condition of our age, as regrettable as that may be. Pope John Paul said at the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament in June 1982, "In current conditions, deterrence based on balance, certainly not as an end by itself but as a step on the way towards a progressive disarmament, may still be judged morally acceptable."

Of course nobody likes nuclear weapons, whose enormous destructive potential is profoundly dis-

turbing; we all would strongly prefer a situation where nuclear arms could be safely abolished. They cannot, however, be wished away. To linger over the potential devastation they can wreak does nothing to show how best to reduce dependence on them. The Harvard Study Group, in its book *Living With Nuclear Weapons*, states that "all the pictures of Hiroshima and the visions of future disaster can tell one is what to avoid — not how to avoid it."⁷ In any event, as Hans Morgenthau has pointed out, while it is theoretically possible to outlaw nuclear weapons, the technological knowledge and ability to make them cannot be abolished. So long as mistrust exists between nations, the threat of nuclear war would remain, even if all the nuclear stockpiles were eliminated.

THE SEARCH FOR A SECURE BALANCE AT LOWER LEVELS

Canada and its partners in the West do not want more than the minimum forces necessary to maintain peace with freedom. They seek to raise the nuclear threshold, both through improved conventional posture and through negotiated nuclear arms control. With so much media attention drawn to allied nuclear force modernization programmes, segments of the public can sometimes lose sight of the fact that there have been significant unilateral decreases in the West's nuclear stockpiles. It is a little known fact, for example, that the total megatonnage of the American strategic arsenal has been decreasing for years. In addition, NATO's nuclear stockpile in Europe has been shrinking in recent years. Indeed, force modernization has itself provided a way, in some instances, of decreasing the nuclear stockpile. For example, the introduction of the conventionally-armed Patriot air defence system in Europe has allowed the phasing out of the nuclear-armed Nike-Hercules system. In 1979, when the famous 'two-track decision' was taken, 1000 tactical nuclear weapons were unilaterally removed from Europe. A further 572 weapons are being removed as 572 new ground-launched cruise and Pershing II missiles are being deployed. In October 1983, at Montebello, Quebec, NATO Ministers decided to reduce NATO's nuclear stockpile in Europe by a further 1400 weapons.

What then of the new weapon systems — NATO's Cruise and Pershing II missiles and the modernization programmes of the United States, Britain and France? Is all this necessary if NATO can afford to shed itself of some systems? It must be borne in mind that Soviet force modernization and a build-up at all levels has proceeded steadily for years. It