

APPENDIX I

Keynote Address
by the Right Honourable
Denis Healey,
Member of Parliament, UK
Ottawa, 17 October 1985

The subject you have asked me to talk about, in introducing this conference, is really: Can we get beyond nuclear deterrence on which many of us believe the peace of the world has rested for the last 40 years? I want to start by talking a little bit about how this whole situation developed at the end of the war, and about the problems that we face at this moment, and then put some timid but perhaps pertinent suggestions about how we might hope to escape from those problems.

I personally belong to that large group of people who believe that the post-war settlement in Europe would not have lasted 40 years without the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons. After all, the First World War was followed by the Second, despite more favourable circumstances after 1918 than we have known since 1945 when the Second World War ended with a divided Europe — divided across the middle of the most powerful country, namely, Germany. I personally believe that the existence of nuclear weapons has been one of the things which has preserved the post-war settlement for this long period.

It has not, of course, prevented wars outside Europe. Many millions of people have died in wars in other parts of the world since 1945. The latest estimate that I saw is that a million human beings have been killed in the fighting between Iraq and Iran in the last three years, which is a rather daunting figure. Some of these wars outside Europe have directly involved the great powers themselves, such as Korea, the war in Vietnam and the war now going on in Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that most of us believe that peace in Europe has depended greatly on the existence of nuclear deterrents on both sides, there is a growing feeling that the situation cannot last much longer. President Reagan has joined the nuclear disarmers in arguing that we cannot really expect world peace to be protected indefinitely by the threat of mutual destruction.