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MAINTAINING PEACE WITH FREEDOM: NUCLEAR DETERRENCE AND ARMS CONTROL

by Lorne Green

The Canadian forces at present have no nuclear roles. It was not always so. For two decades, from November 1963 until June 1984, Canadian Forces had nuclear capabilities of one kind or another. Over the years, however, the Honest John and Bomarc missiles were disposed of, the CF-104 aircraft were converted from the nuclear strike to conventional attack role, and nuclear air defence weapons were no longer required because the CF-101 was replaced by the CF-18 in 1984. Today, there are no nuclear weapons on Canadian soil. Nevertheless, along with our partners in the West, we in Canada must still rely on nuclear deterrence to assure peace with freedom. With a population concerned about security in an increasingly complex world, it is important to understand the basis for our defence, for deterrence, and in particular, for nuclear deterrence.

PEACE PLUS . . .

The peace with freedom enjoyed by Canadians cannot be taken for granted. The kind of peace we seek goes beyond the absence of war alone; Pope John Paul said, during his visit to Britain, that peace "involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations. It involves collaboration and binding agreements." It can never be a frozen state; it must be created and maintained through continuing effort because there will always be forces working for its destruction.

Could there be in Canada a peace that was truly fulfilling if that peace were imposed on the members of our society at the expense of individual free-

dom? Canadians have the opportunity for self-realization through the exercise of considerable autonomy. As E.F. Schumacher wrote, "only when a man makes use of his power of self-awareness does he attain to the level of a person, to the level of freedom. At that moment he is living, not being lived."¹ Of course there are forces which are necessary for social order, but the individual in our society needs extra space, space for self-realization. Albert Schweitzer had a deep understanding of what he called 'the reverence for life' and recognized in men and women "a need to create by their own activities spiritual and material values which shall help to a higher development of individuals and of mankind."² Peace for Canadians is bound up with individual freedom and we are blessed with more opportunities than most for the exercise of personal freedom, and the enjoyment of individual and national peace. Freedom, like peace, cannot be taken for granted, however, and is subject to forces of decay if it is not defended and cultivated. Accordingly, so long as we live in an imperfect world we must take those minimum measures necessary to protect the values we hold dear.

PEACE AND FREEDOM UNDER THREAT

It is an unfortunate fact of our time that there are real and serious threats to Canadian security; they come from those who, because of intolerance or insecurity, would seek to impose their own political, social, or economic values on others at the price of peace, of freedom, or of both. The East/West confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact takes place in a region that is something of an excep-

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tion: a region at peace in a war-torn world. I believe that it is at least probable that nuclear deterrence is responsible for the prevention of war in those regions under the nuclear umbrella, including Canada. Canadians have a duty not only to defend themselves from the cataclysm of war; they must also bear witness to the moral basis of a free society.

Lord Chalfont has spoken tellingly of a young man who took part in a demonstration on a university campus in the United States. He carried a banner on which was inscribed, "Nothing is worth dying for." This young man was a student in a university where freedom of intellectual enquiry is guaranteed; he was enjoying freedom of assembly, and freedom to express his dissenting views. He could sleep at night without fear of a midnight knock at the door. Could he have really believed that none of these things was worth fighting and dying for? Canada is blessed by peace with freedom but this country could not be what it is if Canadians were not prepared to defend those values.

The defence of what Canadians strive for cannot begin or end on our Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic shores. Canadian values are threatened farther afield. They are threatened, for example, by international terrorism; they are imperilled if the democratic values of other nations, in Western Europe and elsewhere, are under threat.

While it is difficult to arrive at reliable figures for Soviet expenditures on defence, it is clear that the *burden* of Soviet defence, relative to its overall economy, is much larger than that of Western nations. It does not seem plausible to me, given the size of Soviet conventional and nuclear forces, and the nature of their deployment, that these can be for defence alone; therefore they pose a threat to the security of democratic governments.

Does it really matter to the well-being of Canadians if other democratic nations are threatened; is our future in North America really bound up in the fate of the 'old world' for example? Could Canada be as secure if Britain were to arrive at the level of freedom of Czechoslovakia, or if France became like Poland? Democratic values that we hold dear are shared goals of our partners in the West; they are under threat everywhere when they are imperilled anywhere.

The signatories to the North Atlantic Treaty affirmed that an armed attack against one or more of them, in Europe or in North America, shall be considered an attack against them all. In the same way that the national security of all states in NATO is

threatened when one is attacked, so too are the values of all threatened. Who else could be expected to join us in the defence of our freedoms except those nations that share the same values? The loss of democratic states to Soviet influence would fundamentally alter the balance of world power and make it much more difficult for Canada to remain the sort of country Canadians want it to be. Therefore, Canadian peace with freedom is bound up with the defence of peace with freedom in Europe and elsewhere.

Canada's geographic and political situation involves us in the East/West confrontation. It obliges us to face up to the threat and take the measures necessary to defend the kind of Canada we wish this country to be.

COLLECTIVE SECURITY

No nation is made more secure by voluntarily renouncing its defence, or by allowing others to deprive it of its sovereignty or values. Accordingly, Canada has freely chosen to combine with like-minded nations to deter the outbreak or threat of war through collective security arrangements. The defence of each is made stronger through the collective effort. A military alliance with like-minded countries offers a more effective and less costly means of defending Canada and Canadian interests than anything we could do on our own. Indeed, by contributing to the overall defence capabilities each of the participants in an alliance acquires greater flexibility in the choice of roles for its national forces; a degree of specialization is possible on the part of individual alliance members provided that the alliance capability as a whole remains complete and balanced. Canada, then, relies on the collective strength and influence of alliance to guarantee its security, as do all its partners.

These benefits require certain responsibilities. As Hans Morgenthau has pointed out, "what collective security demands of the individual nations is to fore-sake national egotisms and the national policies serving them. Collective security expects the policies of the individual nations to be inspired by the ideal of mutual assistance and a spirit of self-sacrifice which will not shrink even from the supreme sacrifice of war should it be required by that ideal."³ Canada freely accepts the risks and responsibilities, along with the benefits of its collective security arrangements. The risks, responsibilities and burdens of going it alone would be much greater, and the outcome much less certain.

At the same time, Western collective security arrangements give the participants major opportunities to influence the collective development of a whole range of security measures, including arms control. In an address to the Empire Club of Toronto on 15 January 1987, Minister of National Defence Perrin Beatty pointed out that it is because of its preparedness to share the burden in the North Atlantic Alliance that Canada became part of the Helsinki process, and thereby participated in the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe and contributed to its success. Our role in NATO ensures that Canada actively participates in the CSCE process, takes part in the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) Talks in Europe, and is a partner in NATO consultations on nuclear arms control.

DETERRENCE AND THE NUCLEAR CONTRIBUTION

To understand why we rely, in the final analysis, on nuclear weapons to prevent intimidation or the actual outbreak of war, it is essential to understand the basis of the West's deterrent strategy. The West seeks, through the maintenance of credible forces, to convince a potential aggressor that attack, or the threat of attack, at any level, would not be worth the costs; the risks involved in initiating or conducting war would be greater than any conceivable gains. To be effective, those deterrent forces must be credible. This is ensured by deploying forces that are adequate, modern and survivable. At the same time, it is not necessary to match the potential aggressor weapon for weapon; the defender must demonstrate the capability and determination to use those forces, in a timely and flexible fashion, should deterrence fail. A credible deterrence requires, *inter alia*, a strong, diverse and flexible military posture.

Nuclear weapons serve a fundamental political purpose. The members of NATO consider that the use of nuclear weapons in their defence would represent a basic qualitative change from conventional warfare. Thus, the possession of nuclear arms as part of NATO's deterrent forces, and the evident intent to use them as necessary should deterrence fail, conveys a political signal: the West is determined to take whatever measures are necessary to maintain the integrity of its territory. NATO would seek to end enemy aggression at the lowest possible level of violence. It is a fundamental principle of NATO that political control over the use of nuclear weapons must always be maintained.

So long as the security of NATO countries is threatened by an Eastern conventional force advantage, and the Soviet Union relies on nuclear weapons to back up that threat, NATO must continue to rely on nuclear deterrence. NATO, as a defensive alliance, has always been pledged to the no-first-use of *force*. If, however, the East were to attack, NATO must reserve the right to use nuclear weapons first. Again, the purpose of the nuclear first-use option is to make clear to the aggressor that attack, or the threat of attack, at any level, would not be worth the inherent risks of escalation.

NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General Bernard Rogers, has elaborated on the flaws in the 'no-first-use' of nuclear weapons policy:

The military reality that, even with adequate conventional capabilities NATO could never be *certain* of defeating a conventional attack without escalation argues persuasively against discarding Flexible Response in favour of a 'no-first-use' policy with regard to nuclear weapons. Furthermore, a 'no-first-use' policy would forfeit a tactical advantage of NATO's defences, inasmuch as the very possibility of a NATO resort to nuclear weapons serves to restrain the tactical massing of Warsaw Pact conventional forces preparatory to an attack. A 'no-first-use' policy would also be perceived as a weakening of the American commitment to European security, implying a 'decoupling' of the fate of Western Europe from the US strategic nuclear umbrella.

In an even broader sense, the most serious flaw of a 'no-first-use' policy is that it would eliminate the uncertainty regarding the employment of nuclear weapons which is fundamental to NATO's deterrent strategy. Flexible Response prevents a potential aggressor from predicting, with confidence, NATO's specific response to aggression. Leaving open the possibility of a NATO nuclear response would cause a potential aggressor to deliberate whether the risks of attack could ever be outweighed by any potential gains. Removing this uncertainty by declaring a 'no-first-use' policy would seriously weaken the NATO deterrent.⁴

Increases in the conventional capabilities of the West can, however, raise the nuclear threshold, while fully reserving the nuclear option and without

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

was the Soviet deployment of the modern SS-20 missile system that prompted Helmut Schmidt, then Chancellor of West Germany, to urge a NATO response, which would assure the viability of NATO's deterrence and defence at a comparable level. In addition, the build-up of Soviet air defences has required improvements in NATO systems in order to ensure that the deterrent strategy of the West remains credible. By preventing an imbalance of forces, modernization programmes are an important factor in making reasonable arms control negotiations possible. To take but one example, it is hard to imagine that the Soviet Union would have agreed in principle to the elimination of SS-20 missiles from Europe without NATO's new INF deployments. (This leads one to wonder why the Soviet Missiles were put there in the first place, at a time when NATO had no comparable missile systems.)

Unilateral gestures are not sufficient. The nuclear arms control negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union are vital to achieving balanced reductions. Negotiated agreements that are equitable, balanced and verifiable are necessary to assure both sides that their security is not imperilled. The essential criterion is strategic stability. In this process, negotiators must be mindful of the relationship between nuclear and conventional forces; the West could not afford to see the nuclear deterrent forces negotiated down to a level where the conventional imbalance made war more likely. That is why conventional force reductions that take account of the asymmetries in favour of the Soviet Union are so important to strategic stability.

Western nations are, of course, seeking to improve their conventional posture, but this is a costly and lengthy process. One must bear in mind important demographic factors, such as the declining birthrate in the Federal Republic of Germany, and public expectations of certain levels of social welfare and economic development. There is intense competition for finite resources. It may be tempting to suggest that the elimination of nuclear weapons would be worth the extra sacrifice, but would the social costs be affordable in the foreseeable future?

FOR CANADA'S PART . . .

What of Canada's experience in North America. Canada, situated between the two great nuclear powers, would be profoundly affected by Soviet aggression against this continent. Soviet nuclear weapons, carried by missiles or aircraft, even if directed solely at targets in the United States, would pass over Canada and, given the proximity of those targets,

pose a clear risk of destruction for us also. Canada cannot stand aloof from the threat to North America. If nuclear attack is to be prevented by the convincing threat of nuclear retaliation, then the earliest warning possible is essential; Canada is making an important contribution through our partnership with the United States in NORAD.

Canada cooperates with alliance partners who are nuclear powers or who bear the risks and responsibilities of nuclear weapons based, for sound military reasons, on their soil. While there are no nuclear weapons based in Canada, the country does its part to ensure that the deterrent remains credible at all levels. For example, Canadian ports are open to the nuclear-capable ships of our allies. Another example of Canadian cooperation is the testing of unarmed US cruise missiles over Canadian territory. In these ways, Canadian security is strengthened by ensuring that the nuclear deterrent forces of our allies, upon which we rely, are effective.

Whether or not the Soviet Union has designs on the territory of Western nations, without the NATO nuclear deterrent the Soviet Union would be able to use its military preponderance to pursue political goals and thus threaten the freedom of Western nations through intimidation. Under these circumstances, could the nations of the West be assured that their fundamental social, economic and political values would remain unimpaired?

Some allege that a sort of parallelism exists between the Soviet Union and the United States on the grounds that they are both superpowers with a common superpower morality. This leads to the question whether the relationship between the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact members is any different from the Western Europe/Canada/United States relationship. Are the NATO partners at a disadvantage because of the American military preponderance in the Alliance? In fact, there is a great difference between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The history of friendship, trust, and shared democratic values between the United States, its European partners and Canada, regrettably, are lacking between the Soviet Union and the nations of Eastern Europe. Once again we are reminded of Pope John Paul's words about peace involving mutual respect, confidence, and collaboration.

THE WAY AHEAD

How then does one square the hopes for a world one day free of nuclear weapons with continued reliance, for the foreseeable future, on nuclear de-

terrence? There is no contradiction between the two. Canada is vigorously engaged in the pursuit of conditions that will help to realize the ultimate goal, but it will not be achieved overnight. The world would *not* become a safer place if, through the negotiation of inequitable nuclear reduction agreements, the balance of forces was upset. There must be a careful, step-by-step process, which takes account of the overall force postures of both sides and, in addition, deals with underlying East/West tensions. The 'suspicion' factor is critical; each side should have all possible assurances that the terms of any agreement will be honoured. Therefore, adequate verification measures are essential to arms control, even though the negotiation of verification measures can be very complex.

It is all too easy to get carried away by numbers when considering arms control, thereby losing sight of the objectives of increased security and enhanced stability. It is possible, for example, to have fewer overall weapons but a more unstable situation because of the nature of the residual forces; it is essential to factor into the arms control equation the destructive capability of systems and whether or not by their nature or their deployment, they are conducive to stability.

Hans Morgenthau has observed that men do not fight because they have arms but rather, they have arms because they deem it necessary to fight:

Take away their arms, and they will either fight with their bare fists or get themselves new arms with which to fight. The technology of warfare would change, but not the incidence of war. Yet it could be plausibly argued that the threat of all-out nuclear war has actually been the most important single factor which has pre-

vented the outbreak of general war in the atomic age. The removal of that threat through nuclear disarmament might increase the danger of war without assuring that the belligerents, using non-nuclear weapons at the start, would not resort to such weapons in the course of the war.⁸

This is the nuclear peace that, paradoxically, requires the two superpowers to strive to cooperate in order to maintain strategic stability through arms control; for the breakdown of that stability would threaten them both and, indeed, the entire world.

It is clear, that arms control cannot carry all the weight of East/West relations; hand-in-hand with arms control must go the building of trust through conflict resolution, and the breaking down of political, social and economic barriers. Jonathan Schell, in his book, *The Fate of the Earth*, saw the solution as nothing short of the reinvention of politics, indeed, the reinvention of the world. Neither politics nor the world are going to be reinvented — but there is plenty of room for improvement and Canadian foreign and defence policies are dedicated to this end.

Arms control is a fundamental part of Canadian security policy. So too are Canadian defence efforts, and our participation in collective security arrangements. Nuclear deterrence has played a vital part in assuring peace for Europe and North America for decades. We cannot stand aloof from deterrence, which relies on nuclear weapons, because we find it unpleasant. Of course it is unpleasant, but not so unpleasant as war itself, or the loss of peace with freedom. Canada has been prepared to bear a share of the risks and responsibilities, as well as the benefits, that go with collective security arrangements. If we, and NATO, were to falter, the risks for Canada, and for all nations, would be greater than the risks inherent in maintaining a stable deterrent.

NOTES

1. E.F. Schumacher, *A Guide for the Perplexed*, Abacus Books, London, 1978, p. 40.
2. Albert Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1933, p. 180.
3. Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1966, p. 415.
4. Bernard W. Rogers, "Greater Flexibility for NATO's Flexible Response," *Strategic Review*, United States Strategic Institute, Washington, Spring 1983, p. 13.
5. John Nott, "The Morality of the Cost of Trident," *Peace and the Bomb*, The Coalition for Peace through Security, London, 1983, p. 55.
6. Graham Leonard, "The Morality of Nuclear Deterrence," *Peace and the Bomb*, The Coalition for Peace through Security, London, 1983, pp. 7-17.
7. The Harvard Nuclear Study Group, *Living with Nuclear Weapons*, Bantam Books, New York, 1983, p. 13.
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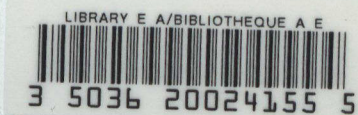
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Lorne Green is director of Nuclear and Arms Control Policy at the Department of National Defence. His article is a response to *Points of View #2*, "Nuclear Weapons and the Averting of War" by Robert Malcolmson.

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