



### Language

The ideological and military conflict between the USA and USSR, with their respective blocs and spheres of influence, shaped much of global politics from the later 1940s until the end of the 1980s. This conflict also largely determined the nature of the nuclear arms race and framed the context in which peace movements could operate in the west, as set out in the introduction to D.3.

The end of the cold war with the dismantling of the Soviet bloc, and subsequent break-up of the USSR itself at the end of 1991, dramatically changed the context for both military policy and prospects for limiting arms. A change of direction in Soviet policy towards more extensive agreements to reduce the dangers of nuclear confrontation, and greater cooperation with the west, had in fact already been initiated by President Gorbachev from 1985, alongside liberalization of Communist Party rule. The INF treaty to limit 'intermediate nuclear forces' and to remove Soviet SS20 and US Cruise and Pershing II missiles, which had been the focus of confrontation in Europe since the early 1980s, was signed in 1987. The 1991 START I Treaty between the US and USSR agreed to a reduction in strategic nuclear weapons (warheads and missiles) by both sides. The Warsaw Pact also agreed in 1991 to dissolve itself and Soviet troops and weapons were withdrawn from Eastern Europe. NATO, however, remained and gradually extended membership to East European countries.

The dissolution of the USSR in December 1991, under pressure for independence from some constituent republics, especially Ukraine, Belarus and Russia under Boris Yeltsin, its President in 1991, meant that Gorbachev lost his role as President. The end of the USSR could have threatened the process of nuclear arms control. One immediate result was that there were 'Soviet' nuclear weapons in four states: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. However, the Russian government inherited both the international rights and obligations of the USSR, and also the bulk of the nuclear arsenal, and control of the codes authorizing use of nuclear weapons passed to Yeltsin. The other republics agreed to transfer their nuclear warheads to Russia, and were aided by US funds in carrying out this important process.

### Arms Control and Disarmament: the 1990s and 2000s

Russia continued after 1991 to cooperate in negotiations to reduce nuclear stockpiles: Yeltsin and George H. Bush signed START II in 1993, requiring further cuts by 2003; but despite Senate ratification (often a stumbling block for US adherence to agreements) the treaty became void because Russian ratification depended on US commitment to maintain the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty to limit development of missiles designed to shoot down incoming missiles. US commitment to the ABM Treaty had been breached by Reagan's 'Star Wars' research programme in the 1980s, though the US did not formally abrogate the ABM treaty until 2002 under George W. Bush. Although START II lapsed, START I did take effect in 1994 and included a process of verification, which remained operative until December 2009, when the treaty expired

In the broader field of arms limitation and disarmament, however, the 1990s were a decade of significant progress, reflecting a general move towards greater international cooperation and an extension of the role of international law. One major achievement in relation to nuclear weapons was that the goal of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was agreed in 1996, after decades of fruitless negotiations at the UN (although subsequently the US Senate refused to ratify it). The CTBT outlawed not only tests in the atmosphere, which had created harmful radiation round much of the globe in the 1950s and 1960s and been ended by signatories of the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty, but also tests underground and under the oceans. Moreover, UN treaties on other types of weapon were also achieved. The most important, in terms of limiting destructive potential in war, was the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention. But a conventional arms treaty to ban anti-personnel landmines, agreed in 1997 (see D.6.), not only had global humanitarian significance, but emerged from a political process uniting civil society groups and some governments that created a model for other disarmament initiatives, notably the successful mobilization to achieve the UN Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons passed in 2017 (see below).

The willingness of both Washington and Moscow to engage in serious nuclear arms limitation decreased in the 2000s. George W. Bush adopted a more hawkish military policy both in relation to Russia and to the Islamic world - reacting to the shock of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Centre by invading first Afghanistan (where the architects of the attack, Al Qaida, were based) and then Iraq in 2003 to oust Saddam Hussein. Vladimir Putin, the new leader of Russia, increasingly sought to re-establish Russian power and prestige, reacted against the



extension of NATO and the EU to Eastern Europe and the Baltic Republics, and put pressure on former Soviet republics.

The US and Russia did agree the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT) in 2002, but the lack of detail in the treaty limited its real significance and it was not linked to verification. Bush further undermined relations with Russia when in 2007 he announced plans to deploy anti-missile defences not only in parts of the US and in the UK, but also in Poland and the Czech Republic. This move was strongly rejected by Moscow and also met with protests from peace movements. The election of President Obama, however, meant that the US Administration acted to maintain a nuclear arms limitation arrangement with Moscow, and as START I lapsed, New START (which also superseded SORT), and which did contain verification provisions, was signed in Prague in 2010.

### **The Spread of Nuclear Weapons and the Role of the Non-Proliferation Treaty from 1968 to 2020**

Although the US-Soviet confrontation dominated world politics up to 1990, the invention of 'the Bomb' also created the danger that many countries would start to acquire their own atomic and possibly hydrogen bombs as an essential aspect of defence. The danger of nuclear proliferation is an issue spanning the cold war years and the last three decades.

This danger was highlighted in the 1950s by the fact that Switzerland and Sweden, with long standing policies of neutrality, both started atomic weapons research and came close to adopting a nuclear military stance in the 1950s. US military alliance policy did in fact play a role in limiting the number of nuclear weapon states by promising to retaliate if allies in Europe and Asia suffered a nuclear attack, although this also often meant deploying US nuclear weapons in these allied countries, as in Western Europe and South Korea. However, the UK government decided in the 1940s to develop its own nuclear force - British scientists had been involved in the wartime research into creating the atomic bomb. This US commitment was not enough either to stop France developing its own nuclear 'force de frappe'.

During the 1960s the interests of the US and Soviet governments coincided with the goals of 'arms control' advocates (seeking to stabilize nuclear deterrence and avoid war by accident or miscalculation) on the key issue of stopping the spread of nuclear weapons. This was also the aim of many peace movements. British CND called for unilateral British nuclear disarmament partly as a means to prevent the spread of the 'Bomb'. Peace activists in Switzerland and Sweden campaigned against their governments developing nuclear weapons. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) agreed in 1968, which came into force in 1970, did bind almost all signatories not to develop nuclear weapons. But it also met the interests of established nuclear weapon states by making special provision for them to keep their arsenals, although Article 6 required them to make moves towards reducing them. Three such states, the US, USSR and UK, signed the treaty in 1968; but its provisions enabled France to join the NPT later as a nuclear weapon state, and China to do so eventually in 1992.

Therefore, by the end of the 1960s it was established that the only countries likely to seek nuclear weapons were either those asserting their own claims to great power status (the UK and France were in part reacting to the ending of their empires), or those embroiled in national conflicts seriously threatening their security. China, after breaking with the USSR in the 1960s, fell into both categories; so did India, which felt threatened by the Chinese Bomb and had fought a war over the Sino-Indian border. Pakistan, involved in long-term conflict with India (especially over Kashmir), reacted to India's nuclear weapons by developing its own. Israel, at war with its Arab neighbours) secretly created nuclear weapons, whilst denying to the world that it has done so.

The NPT was regularly reaffirmed at the five yearly NPT Review Conferences in the decades after it was signed, until in 1995 all the parties to the Treaty agreed to extend it indefinitely, linked to provisions to strengthen it further. These provisions were subject to further negotiation at subsequent Review Conferences. The International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) has a central role in monitoring the peaceful nuclear energy programmes of all signatories, to check that they do not create and divert fissile material to military purposes. It therefore provides a key means of verifying compliance by all those who adhere to the NPT, although the technical and political complexities of the task can result in actual or alleged failures in detection of breaches by national governments.

At one level the NPT is an unusually successful arms control treaty, with 191 countries adhering to it - three non-signatories are the nuclear weapon states India, Pakistan and Israel. Moreover, many of the signatories have strengthened their commitment to renounce production and deployment of nuclear weapons by joining nuclear weapon free zones, provided for under Article 7 of the NPT. The first such zone was created in Latin America and the Caribbean as early as 1967 in the Tlatelolco treaty. The 1985 Rarotonga Treaty created a nuclear weapon free



zone in the South Pacific; and the 1995 Treaty of Bangkok one in Southeast Asia. The 1996 Treaty of Pelindaba marked a nuclear weapon free zone in Africa - made possible after the nuclear weapon ambitions of the apartheid regime in South Africa were renounced by the new government under Nelson Mandela. Finally five former Soviet republics, including Kazakhstan, combined in a nuclear weapon free zone in Central Asia in the 2006 Treaty of Semipalatinsk.

### **Proliferation of the Bomb despite the Treaty**

But increasingly the limitations of the Treaty have become more obvious. It does not of course necessarily stop every signatory from cheating, especially if a change of regime inside the country, or alterations in regional or international politics, make acquiring nuclear weapons seem a national priority. Three countries, which at some point joined the NPT, have become the focus of international crises: Iraq, Iran and North Korea.

Iraq ratified the NPT in 1969, but Israel, convinced the Iraqi government was committed to secretly developing nuclear weapons, bombed Iraq's Osiraq research reactor in June 1981. The Iraqi government then initiated a programme of extensive experimentation in other possible processes of acquiring fissile nuclear materials, which did for some time elude IAEA inspectors. Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War, and the subsequent role of the UN Special Commission on Iraq, in tandem with the IAEA, led to the dismantling of weapons grade production and removal of fissile materials. Claims by the US and UK governments in 2003 that Saddam Hussein then had the ability to use nuclear weapons were proved in the aftermath of the war on Iraq to be wrong.

Iran has been a long standing party to the NPT. Its adherence to the treaty was first questioned in 2002-3 by the US, engaged in a political and economic confrontation with Iran since the overthrow of the Shah and the rise of a new Islamist government in 1979. It was clear that Iran was engaged in a uranium enrichment programme which could open the way to developing its own nuclear bombs. The Iranian government asserted its right to engage in enrichment under Article Four of the NPT, which gives all parties the right to research and develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Although the right to enrichment is not specified, it can be argued that it is implied. The US has refused to accept this in relation to Iran.

US and western concern about Iran has been linked to Iran's role in the Middle East as backer of Shia Muslim political and armed groups, and also as an increasingly major regional power. There is evidence that in negotiations with the EU in 2005 Iran offered to accept restrictions on enrichment, but the EU team did not probe the genuineness of this offer, at least partly because they knew the US would not accept any compromise. (Gareth Porter, *Manufactured Crisis: The Untold Story of the Iran Nuclear Scare*) Some commentators believe that Iran has had a policy of using its potential to become a nuclear weapon power to strengthen its strategic position, but that it has not so far wanted to create an actual nuclear force. Certainly the Iranian government was willing to negotiate with the Obama Administration and the EU to reach the 2015 'Iran deal'. This required intensified IAEA inspection of Iran's nuclear facilities to check agreed limits to enrichment and prevent weapons development, but also offered the important economic incentive of an end to US and UN economic sanctions. The 2015 agreement was nullified by President Trump in 2018, although the IAEA insisted that Iran had observed the agreed limits.

A more clear cut case of potentially disastrous nuclear proliferation is posed by North Korea. The draconian and secretive Communist regime initiated by Kim Il Sung in North Korea (that has since his death in 1994 remained under Kim family rule) eventually joined the NPT in December 1985, but refused to reach an agreement with the IAEA on inspection and safeguards. It later made acceptance of safeguards dependent on the US removing nuclear weapons from South Korea. President George H. Bush initiated the withdrawal of about 100 nuclear weapons from South Korea in 1991, as part of his wider arms limitation strategy. This opened the way to an agreement to denuclearise the Korean peninsula and to North Korea reaching a safeguards agreement with the IAEA. However, in 1992 the US criticized the North Korean missile programme; and North Korea from 1992 to 1994 failed to comply with key IAEA demands for inspection. The US nevertheless reached an agreement with North Korea in 1994 on a three stage process of dismantling the nuclear weapons it had acquired, in return for normalizing diplomatic and economic relations, and help with building two nuclear reactors for peaceful purposes.

US cooperation with North Korea ended in 2002, when George W. Bush denounced North Korea (along with Iraq and Iran) as part of an axis of evil. After North Korea admitted it was enriching uranium, US support for building two reactors was withdrawn. The North Korean regime then withdrew from the NPT in 2003, declared it had nuclear weapons in 2005 and conducted a nuclear test underground in 2006. Missile testing began in 2011 and in January 2016 North Korea claimed (debatably) to have tested an H bomb. Since the end of 2011 the government has been headed by Kim Jong Un.



### **The NPT: Conflict between Nuclear Weapon States and other Signatories**

A central objection to the NPT is that it has not achieved limits either on the size of the nuclear arsenals of nuclear weapon states who are signatories, or on their major investment in upgrading these arsenals, despite Article Six in the original treaty which committed them to take steps towards nuclear disarmament. Specifically it required them 'to pursue disarmament negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament...' This gap between treaty commitment and military practice has become a source of increasing friction in the 21st century between the great majority of signatories, who have renounced nuclear weapon policies, and the nuclear powers (and US allies who come under the US 'nuclear umbrella'). The political and military conflicts in the Middle East also highlighted the dangers of more states in the region acquiring nuclear weapons. A resolution on a Middle Eastern Nuclear Free Zone, which had long been promoted by Arab states at the UN, was adopted at the 1995 Review Conference and became part of the review process. It has remained an unrealized aspiration.

These tensions came to the fore at the 2015 NPT Review Conference, which failed to reach agreement on a final document because of failure to convene a conference on a Middle Eastern zone free of weapons of mass destruction, as had been agreed in 2010. Many non-nuclear weapon states also stressed the disastrous humanitarian consequences of nuclear war and began to press for total nuclear disarmament at the UN. This led in 2017 to 122 states voting at a special UN conference to pass the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) - the first multilateral nuclear weapons treaty since the CTBT. All the nuclear weapon states boycotted the conference, and the 26 US military allies have also opposed the TPNW.

The NPT Review Conference due to be held in April-May 2020 was, therefore, widely predicted to be a crisis point for the treaty. The US and its allies had abandoned commitments agreed in 1995, 2000 and 2010 and established a new approach of 'Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament', designed to shift some of the responsibility for progress onto non-nuclear weapons states. As a result of the Covid-19 corona virus global crisis, the conference has been postponed.

### **Confrontations between Nuclear Weapon States and Dangers of War**

Despite the bold and far reaching goals of the 2017 UN treaty to ban nuclear weapons, the prospects for progress in limiting nuclear weapons are bleak in 2020 - the 75th year since the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Mikhail Gorbachev warned in April 2017 that another Cold War between Russia and the West was looming, as NATO troops and armaments were moved to the borders of Russia, for example in Estonia, and relations worsened. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, which used its annually adjusted 'doomsday clock' to warn of impending nuclear disaster during the worst periods of the cold war, moved the clock to two and a half minutes to 'midnight' in January 2017, responding in part to renewed North Korean nuclear tests, new tensions between Russia and the west, and the election of President Donald Trump. Since then the Bulletin has moved the clock even nearer to world destruction: from 2 minutes to midnight in 1919, to 100 seconds in January 2020. This is the most pessimistic forecast since the clock was invented in 1947, although the Bulletin now factors in the danger from climate change, so the comparison with the cold war period is not exact.

One reason for anxiety is the increased military confrontation between the US and Russia. Both have engaged in major modernization of their nuclear arsenals. President Obama, despite speaking about the ideal of a nuclear weapon free world in 2010, initiated a major ten-year programme to produce new bombers, land-based and submarine-based missiles to carry nuclear warheads. Moreover, the process of nuclear arms control between the US and USSR has been almost totally abandoned under the Presidency of Donald Trump. The US has pulled out of the 1987 INF Treaty limiting, citing cheating by Russia, and refusing to explore possible renegotiation, raising the spectre of new missile deployments in Europe. After the treaty ended in 2019 the US was poised to test several medium-range missiles.

The Trump Administration seemed, moreover to question its adherence to the CTBT, when it accused Russia of violating the treaty through 'nuclear weapons-related experiments'. Washington also levelled accusations of cheating at China. It is arguable the US itself engages in similar experiments. ('Sub-critical' tests are allowed under the CCTB, but cannot always be distinguished from small explosions which would be in contravention). The New START treaty covering long range missiles is due for renewal in 2021. It is extremely unlikely Trump will renew it if he gains a second term as president, given his antipathy to any treaty signed by Obama, and his drive to increase US military strength. He has also suggested China should be included, which would seriously complicate





negotiations, even if China agreed to talk.

A second reason for fearing a new nuclear arms race is the rising tension between the US and China. The Trump Administration's initial focus was on economic pressure on China to stop unfair trade practices. Trade war has since threatened to turn into arms confrontation. Trump has called for China to join in talks on limiting nuclear weapons. Indeed, whereas in the past the Chinese government has focused primarily on becoming an economic and technological superpower and maintained quite a small nuclear force, it has under Xi Jinping begun to increase and upgrade its nuclear arsenal as well as deploying Chinese naval forces more aggressively.

The possible breakdown of the NPT process discussed above is another reason for disquiet. It could encourage some ambitious national leaders to consider becoming nuclear weapon states. President Erdogan, for example, has suggested there is a strategic case for Turkey acquiring nuclear weapons.

Moreover, the prospects of nuclear weapons being used in a military crisis by existing nuclear weapon states have risen in recent years. The most dramatic example was the confrontation between President Trump and Chairman Kim Jong Un in 2018 over North Korea's testing of nuclear weapons and missiles, with both leaders escalating their aggressive rhetoric and military threats and displays of strength. This caused especial concern in the region - Japan for example felt vulnerable to North Korean missiles - but also threatened a global crisis. Diplomatic initiatives by the South Korean government in 2018 (arising out of the Winter Olympics hosted by Seoul) led, however, to improved relations between the two Koreas. Both Trump and Kim also switched to a more conciliatory mode. They met at an unprecedented nuclear summit in Singapore in June 2018, and also signed a joint agreement on improving relations and working towards denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Since then Trump has turned his attention elsewhere, but North Korea could well become a flashpoint again. The UN Assistant General Secretary for the Middle East briefed the UN Security Council in December 2019 about 13 North Korean missile tests that year (worsening North Korean relations with both South Korea and the US), and about the North Korean government's declaration that talks about denuclearization were 'off the table'. In 2020, 70 years after the outbreak of the Korean War, North Korean officials were reported making more extreme threats.

India has also engaged in military conflict with two other nuclear weapon states in 2019 and 2020. Conflicting Indian and Pakistani claims to Kashmir have led to several wars between the two states since 1947, and a major guerrilla struggle within Indian-administered Kashmir after 1989. Recent confrontations have been militarily small scale. The first in 2019 occurred after a Pakistan-based group killed 40 members of Indian security forces in Kashmir with a car bomb. The Indian government under Rajendra Modi, the right wing Hindu nationalist BJP leader, retaliated with an air strike against Pakistani territory near the Kashmir border, which prompted a Pakistani airstrike against a target inside Indian-controlled Kashmir. This led in turn to an air battle in which an Indian Wing Commander was shot down over Pakistan and taken prisoner. In a context of fears of serious escalation, both sides decided to end hostilities after the Wing Commander was returned safely to India. However, when the BJP revoked the special status of the Jammu Kashmir region in May 2020 and incorporated it fully into India, the Pakistan government threatened a military response, though it did not then carry out the threat. The fact that both countries have nuclear weapons may impose some caution, but also means a crisis could spiral out of control.

Secondly, India and China became embroiled in violent (though very low level) confrontation in Ladakh, part of the Sino-Indian border area in the Himalayas, in June 2020, and over 20 Indian soldiers died. The border area is not strictly defined, but there has been a build-up of Chinese troops and Chinese forces have been advancing and building fortifications and a radar tower, seizing territory once viewed as Indian. These measures are possibly in response to Indian road improvements in Ladakh, which would enable more rapid military advance to the border. The last deaths on the border had been 45 years earlier, though there had also been a confrontation in the Bhutan area of the border in 2017. As Beijing asserts its military as well as its economic power, and a militantly nationalist government in New Delhi was re-elected in 2019, there is a danger of a cold war between the two. Indeed, India has been moving closer to the US and signed a 3.5 billion dollar arms deal with Washington in February 2020, and like Washington has begun to boycott some Chinese IT and to limit previously very close economic ties.

The part of the world where multiple conflicts are intense, and the US is engaged militarily, is the Middle East. Since the US repudiated the 2015 deal with Iran in May 2018, relations between the two have deteriorated rapidly. The US imposed sanctions on Iran's oil industry in November 2018 and in May 2019 deployed an aircraft carrier and bomber force in the area. The US blamed Iran for attacks in May and June on commercial shipping off the coast of the United Arab Emirates and on two oil tankers near the Straits of Hormuz. In June Iran's Revolutionary Guard shot down a US surveillance drone, and in September Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen claimed



responsibility for a drone attack on Saudi Arabian oil production and processing facilities. In December 2019 the US blamed an Iranian-backed militia for a rocket attack on a US base in northern Iraq and responded with air strikes against the militia in Iraq and Syria, and in January a US air strike close to Baghdad airport killed the Iranian General Qassam Soleimani. Iran retaliated with an attack on two US bases in Iraq, but apparently there were no casualties.

This confrontation also led Iran first to threaten to enrich uranium to a higher level than agreed in the 2015 Deal, and then, in July 2019, to announce that it was doing so. During June and July 2020 there have been a number of explosions at Iranian nuclear plants and military bases. Even if some have been accidental, it is assumed in press reports that Israeli forces have engaged in sabotage designed primarily to slow down Iranian enrichment plans.

Russia is not directly involved in the political, economic and military confrontation between the US and Iran. It is militarily and political committed in Syria, after deciding in 2015 to offer military backing to President Assad. The US, which has supported the original opposition to Assad (before extremist Muslim factions entered the fight) also has military forces in Syria, despite avoiding under Obama major military engagement, even after Assad's forces used chemical weapons. The US has, however, been directly involved in air strikes against the most extreme Islamist faction, ISIS. The Syrian conflict illustrates the potential for the US and Russia to get embroiled in complex conflicts on opposing sides, and the dangers of escalation to direct great power confrontation. Although the US and Russia did set up a telephone line between their Operations Centres in Syria to limit disastrous miscalculation, there were alarming incidents reported in 2017. US General Holmes commented: 'Every day, we are a second or two away from miscalculation between airmen flying on top of each other with advanced weapons, which could lead to escalation'.

One safeguard against a nuclear war by accident between Russia and the US is the Open Skies Treaty, signed in 1992 and in force since 2002, which allow reconnaissance flights over each other's territory. Republican Senate hawks have lobbied for US withdrawal, but European allies have urged the Trump administration to adhere to the treaty. Reports in April 2020 suggested the Administration was planning for the US to withdraw before the end of the year.

### **What Role for Peace Movements?**

It is clear that there is now potentially a major role for peace campaigning with a focus on the need to limit the dangers of the present nuclear weapons build-up and abandonment of existing treaties, but also on the longer term goal of reducing or dismantling the nuclear arsenals of existing nuclear weapon states, and preventing further proliferation. The most successful peace activity in recent years has focused on the UN and on strengthening international law in relation to nuclear weapons. This model of campaigning links up long established peace bodies and creates a global network of civil society groups. They then work in conjunction with sympathetic governments to achieve a specific goal. Networking and lobbying is supplemented by public demonstrations to highlight the issues and gain media coverage. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which was founded in 2007, played this role in promoting the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons adopted at a special conference of the UN. The 'World Court Project' had earlier (from 1986-96) campaigned to persuade national governments through the UN to request the International Court of Justice to issue an advisory opinion on the legality, under international law, of using or threatening to use nuclear weapons. The ICJ ruling confirmed that use of nuclear weapons would generally be illegal. Both these campaigns are discussed in detail in the references under D.5.c.i. below.

However, given the gap between UN resolutions and international law and the actual behaviour of many nation states, effective peace campaigning needs to challenge national governments and bring about changes in national policy. But even in those nuclear weapon states where such campaigning is politically possible (which it is not in Russia, China or Iran, and least of all in North Korea) major movements (as opposed to some specific targeted campaigns) have failed to develop, despite the dangerous international context. Some of the references under D.5.c.ii. below raise this issue in relation to the US and India .

There are a number of political reasons that can explain the absence of major peace protest about national policies. One is that campaigning against climate change has in the last few years absorbed the energies of many young people and radicals concerned about the future of the planet. (see Vol.2. C.3.) Another reason is that the rise of far right nationalistic parties and leaders in many parts of the world has become a focus for liberal/left resistance. In the US the election of Donald Trump at the end of 2016 mobilized women in defence of their rights to contraception and abortion and has overlapped with a new global feminist upsurge (see Vol. 2 F.5.) The 2018 mid-



term Congressional elections and the 2020 Presidential election have also become a focus for many on the left to campaign for the Democratic Party. Indeed, defeating Trump and hawkish Republican politicians can be seen as a prerequisite for reducing international tensions and restoring some forms of arms control.

Effective opposition to the British Bomb has often seemed more likely to succeed than in most other nuclear weapon states. The UK is not a super power and it is not threatened by a long term political conflict, so the case for an 'independent deterrent' is particularly weak. Indeed, after the end of the cold war some military figures were prepared to consider whether it would be more efficient to spend the money involved on other aspects of military defence. Moreover in the past the Labour Party has at times adopted the case for unilateral British nuclear disarmament, and Labour MPs have supported the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), which has continued to campaign against production and deployment of nuclear weapons since its foundation in 1958. However, when the Conservative government decided to upgrade the Trident missile fleet by buying an expensive new generation of US missiles in 2016, Parliament passed the measure. The greatest political threat to the UK Trident force comes from Scottish nationalism and the pressure for Scottish independence, since the Scottish Nationalist Party is opposed to Trident and the Trident base is in Scotland. Nationalist Party attitudes are discussed in references under c.ii.

Finally, the most committed and radical campaigners against nuclear weapons have continued in both the UK and US to undertake forms of nonviolent direct action at plants and bases linked to nuclear weapons. (See the references under D.5.c.iii). The US Plowshares and UK Trident Plowshares demonstrators embody this resistance, but there are other committed groups maintaining opposition to all aspects of US-UK nuclear strategy and deployment. Although those engaging in civil disobedience appeal to a higher moral and/or religious obligation, campaigners can in court also appeal to international law to strengthen both their political and legal case.

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