

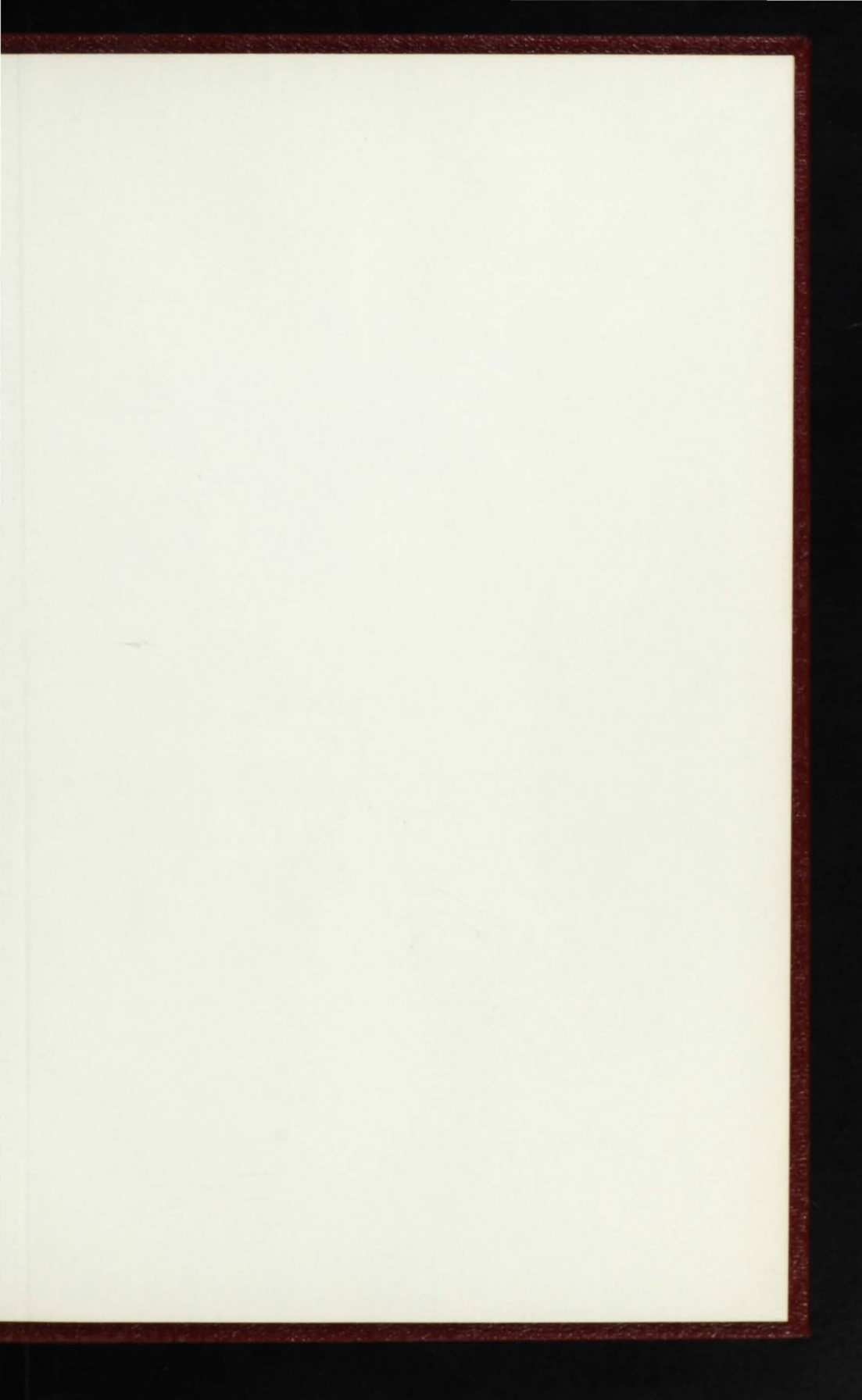
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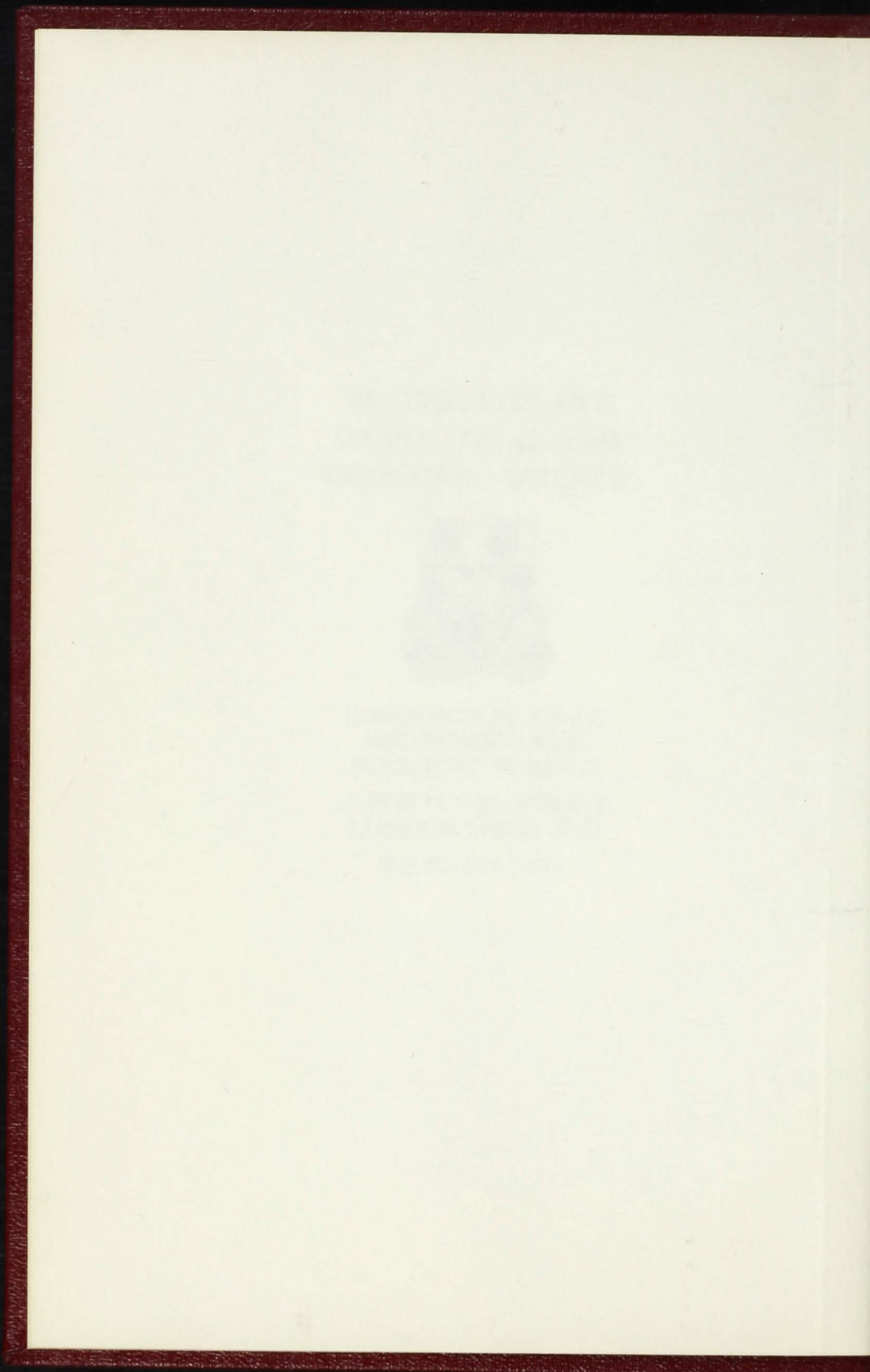


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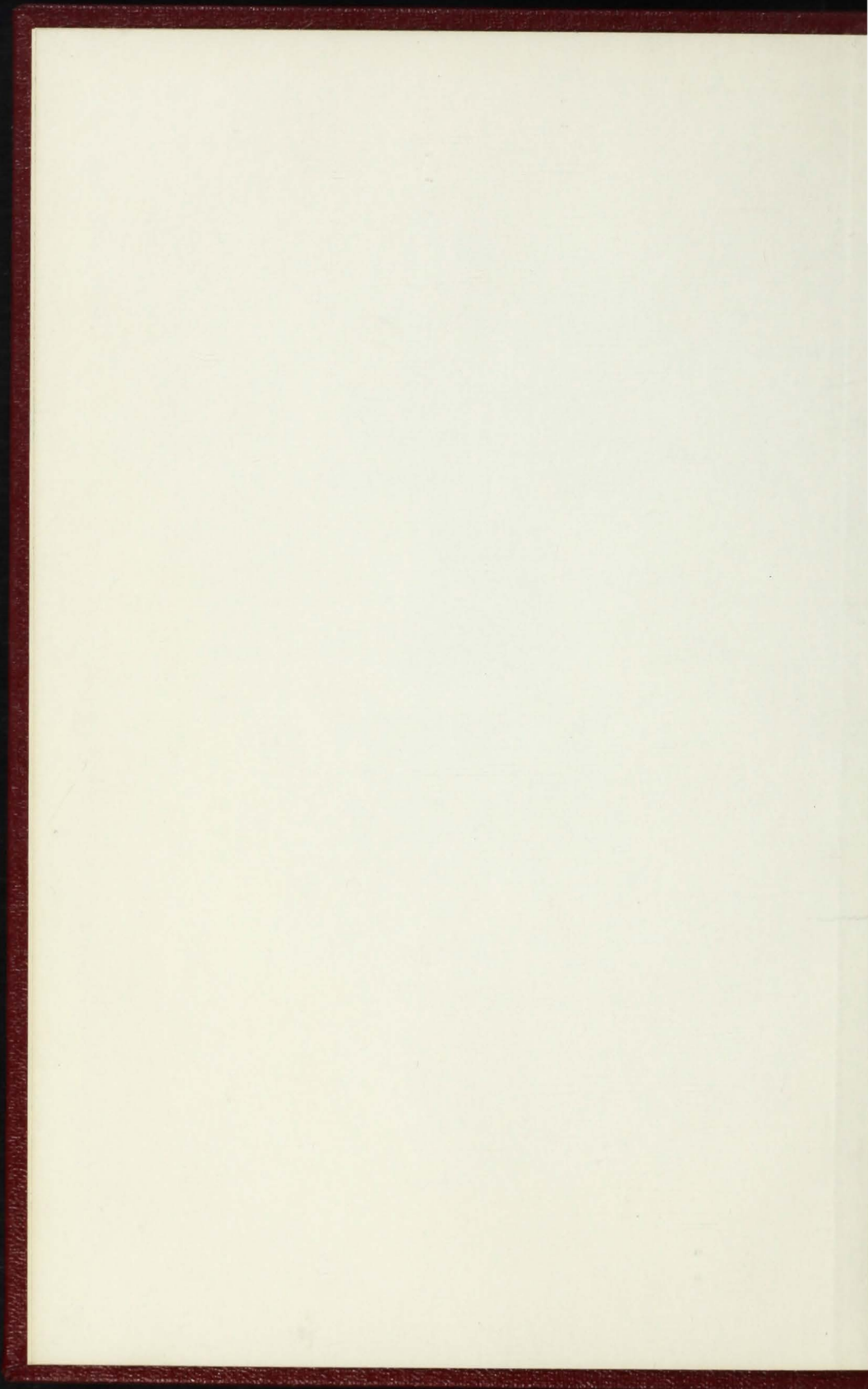




**Beyond
Nuclear
Deterrence**

Edited by **Richard L. Halliday**

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Beyond Nuclear Deterrence

Denis Healey

Fabian Tract 510

Beyond Nuclear Deterrence

“The only man in the world who believes that Star Wars might make nuclear weapons “impotent and obsolete” is President Reagan himself. None of his officials who are working on the Star Wars project believe that.”

“There is now a growing feeling among military experts that NATO must look in a different direction — towards a non-provocative strategy of conventional deterrence which could protect NATO territory without using nuclear weapons if deterrence should fail. We in the Labour Party share this feeling.”



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Beyond Nuclear Deterrence

This pamphlet is an attempt to explore the nuclear dilemma which faces the world 40 years after the first atomic bomb was dropped at Hiroshima. In the course of it I shall try to put some flesh on the bones of the Labour Party's policy for defence and disarmament. It will be based on texts drawn from recent remarks by President Reagan and his Secretary for Defence, Caspar Weinberger.

In his seminal speech in March 1983 when President Reagan launched his Star Wars concept, he said: "The human spirit must be capable of rising above dealing with other nations by threatening their existence"; and he made it clear that he did not believe that peace could rest much longer on the threat of mutual suicide. I agree with him.

Secretary Weinberger carried the logic of Reagan's remarks further in a speech he made on 9th October 1985 when he said: "The world has changed so profoundly since the 1950s and 1960s when most of our strategic ideas were formulated, that many of these concepts are now obsolete". He specifically rejected NATO's current strategy of flexible response by saying . . . "our position on the uses of military power represents a rejection of received wisdom about limited war and gradual escalation". And he described what he saw as the Reagan Administration's commitment to make conventional deterrence work.

The insights and objectives thus described by the President and his Defence Secretary are very much those on which the Labour Party bases its policies for defence and disarmament. Unfortunately the policies developed over the last few years in Washington, far from fulfilling these objectives, move in precisely the opposite direction. For example, the deadlock at the Geneva Summit over President Reagan's Star Wars programme now threatens the world with an accelerat-

ing arms race in both offensive and defensive weapons. And this is something which the President warned his hearers very firmly against in his initial speech. In March 1983 he said: "If defensive systems were paired with offensive systems they could be viewed as fostering an aggressive policy and nobody really wants that".

Yet the United States is now committed to pursuing its Star Wars defensive programme simultaneously with introducing new offensive nuclear weapons into its arsenal, such as the D5 submarine-launched missile, the MX ground-based missile and perhaps the Midgetman mobile missile. The Administration has said that the period in which "defensive systems will be paired with offensive systems" may last for several decades or longer. Indeed no one has yet suggested how it could be brought to an end once it gets under way — short of a nuclear holocaust. Mr Gorbachev has made it absolutely clear that the Soviet Union sees no alternative but to follow suit in both defensive and offensive systems.

I believe nevertheless that it is both possible and necessary to carry the logic of the American statements I have quoted to a conclusion in practical policies for defence and disarmament.

It may be useful to put the problems we face today in the perspective of the history of nuclear strategy and diplomacy over the last 40 years.

The roots of the nuclear problem

Nuclear weapons have not prevented war outside Europe, even wars in which the superpowers were involved, like the Soviet war in Afghanistan, the American war in Vietnam and the war between China, North Korea and the United Nations in the 1950s. At this very mo-

Nevertheless it is difficult to believe that the post-war settlement in Europe would have survived so long without the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons.

ment, fighting is going on in the Gulf between the Iraqis and Iranians which some believe has already cost a million lives.

Nevertheless it is difficult to believe that the post-war settlement in Europe would have survived so long without the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons. Yalta and Potsdam divided this historic continent into two against the will of most of its peoples along a line which ran through the middle of Germany, its most powerful state. Yet that settlement has already lasted twice as long as the 1918 settlement. The deterrent effect of nuclear weapons must have contributed to this result.

Despite this, there have been growing doubts, not just in the unofficial peace movements but right at the heart of the NATO institutions, both about the strategies on which nuclear deterrence is based and about the role of nuclear weapons in relations between Russia and the West. These doubts have a long history, reaching back to the end of the Second World War.

When the leaders of the United States and Britain began to realise that it might be possible to use atomic energy as the basis for a weapon, the debate at that time was in many respects rather similar to the debate surrounding President Reagan's Star Wars policy. In Britain there were powerful figures in Churchill's cabinet, some on the right wing of politics like Lord Anderson and Professor Lindemann, who tried to persuade Churchill to tell the Russians about the atomic bomb before it was used. He refused.

But before long the Russians had been given the secrets of the bomb by their spies in Britain and the United States. The fact that they were never approached by their Western allies on a weapon which they knew to be under development may have been one of the factors which helped to produce the cold war after 1945.

After the bomb had been used against Japan the American Secretary of War, Colonel Stimson, warned Truman: "Relations with Russia could be irretrievably embittered if we fail to approach Moscow now on limiting the bomb as an instrument of war". A year later the Acheson-Lilienthal report proposed "a plan under which no nations would make atomic bombs or the materials for them". This plan foundered when Bernard Baruch insisted it should be backed by "swift and sure punishment" for violations of the treaty.

Then as now Washington was divided on nuclear weapons. In April 1945 America's Secretary of State, James Byrnes, told Truman that the atomic bomb would allow the United States to dictate its own terms at the end of the war. He was later to admit: "The Russians don't scare easy".

Perhaps we can learn something from the mistakes of those early years. As it was, by the end of 1946 the pattern of the cold war had set and strategic considerations dominated nuclear thinking on both sides.

The nuclear arms race under way

When the war ended, all the Red Army needed to reach the Rhine was boots. The United States was pulling its troops out of Europe very fast. Britain was demobilising. No other Western European country was providing significant forces and Germany was disarmed. Four years later, the United States was persuaded to extend its nuclear umbrella over Western Europe, through NATO. That has been the foundation of Western European security ever since.

During the early post-war years, the possibility of actually dropping nuclear weapons on the Soviet Union before Russia had built up a nuclear stockpile of its own was discussed in Washington. The Joint Chiefs of Staff produced plans for attacking the Soviet Union which, thanks to the Freedom of Information Act, are now available to the public. In 1948 they had a plan for dropping nuclear weapons

on twenty Soviet cities. In 1954 they had a plan for dropping a thousand nuclear bombs on the Soviet Union. Yet the American government never adopted these plans, even at a time when it had practically a monopoly of nuclear weapons.

By 1955, ten years after Hiroshima, the Russians still had only 20 nuclear bombs. Thereafter Russia's nuclear arsenal expanded very fast — in some fields faster than the Americans; it was the Russians who first put a satellite into space. By 1960 they had inter-continental missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and 300 nuclear bombs.

Although at that time the Americans still had 20 times as many nuclear weapons as Russia, Christian Herter, who succeeded John Foster Dulles as America's Secretary of State, said in public that the United States would never actually use its nuclear forces against the Soviet Union unless its own survival was directly at stake. In other words the nuclear deterrent was already unreliable so far as America's allies were concerned. Until President Reagan and Secretary Weinberger, no American statesman since then has expressed such doubts while in office although many have done so after retiring — notably Henry Kissinger and Robert McNamara.

The total nuclear stockpile of the two great powers together is now over 50,000 — the equivalent of well over a million Hiroshimas.

Meanwhile both sides have enormously increased the number of their nuclear weapons, especially in the ten years between 1970 and 1980. The United States increased the number of its strategic warheads in that decade from 4,000 to 10,000, and the Soviet Union from 1,800 to 6,000. In 1985 America had 11,000 strategic nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union 9,000. On top of that both sides have a great number of tactical nuclear weapons. The total nuclear stockpile of the two great powers together is now over

50,000 — the equivalent of well over a million Hiroshimas.

There has never been a period during this long miserable story in which either side seemed likely to have a meaningful superiority over the other in the strategic nuclear field. All the experts including even Richard Perle, the Pentagon's prime hawk, agree that there is now effective strategic parity between the United States and the Soviet Union. Nevertheless the arms race continues unabated. By 1990, unless there is agreement on stopping the race, each side will have over 13,000 strategic nuclear weapons, if they observe the Salt II agreement; if they do not observe it, each side will probably have about 20,000 strategic nuclear weapons.

The fear of a first strike

Many years ago Winston Churchill asked what was the point of buying more bombs simply to make the rubble bounce. We must ask today, why on earth are both sides acquiring these colossal arsenals when they could not actually use them without committing suicide. Scientists now agree that the explosion of all these nuclear weapons would produce a nuclear winter in which human life in the northern hemisphere would become extinct. Depending on the nature of the targets attacked, the height of the bursts and the weather, the explosion of even a small fraction of existing weapons could have a similar result.

Yet the reason for the continuing arms race is all too obvious. Whatever the original reason for the increase in stockpiles it has led some people on each side to shift from the idea of having nuclear weapons in order to deter a war to the idea of having nuclear weapons in order to fight a war — in which, to use the American word, it can "prevail".

An absolute precondition of victory in a nuclear war would be the ability to destroy the enemy's retaliatory forces in a surprise attack — or "first strike". The technical feasibility of a successful first strike may appear closer today in theory. Both sides

have discovered how to pack a lot of warheads into a single launcher. In 1945, it took 700 pounds of nuclear explosive to produce a kiloton explosion. By 1972 it took only 11 pounds for a kiloton explosion. No doubt the miniaturisation of nuclear weapons has gone further since then.

On top of this miniaturisation, the multiple independent re-entry vehicles (or MIRVs) which can be packed into a single nuclear missile are quite extraordinarily accurate. An increase of 10 per cent in accuracy is equivalent to an increase of a 100 per cent in destructive power against a hard target. In fact it is now technically possible for each side to plan for carrying out a first strike against its enemy's fixed bases on land.

Thus each side thinks it has an incentive to increase the number of its nuclear missiles so as to have too many targets for an enemy first strike to cover, or so as to be able to destroy the increasing number of enemy nuclear weapons in its own first strike. And each side can avoid the vulnerability of fixed bases on land by making its land-based missiles mobile or by putting its missiles at sea or in aircraft. Moreover the moment either side thinks its enemy might be on the point of acquiring the capability for a first strike it may be tempted to pre-empt that first strike.

In my opinion the idea that any government would authorise a first strike even with the weapons which may soon be available, never mind with its existing weapons, is a fantasy. A first strike at present would require the explosion of at least 1,000 warheads on land, with a high probability of causing a nuclear winter. Even so, it would leave undamaged sufficient enemy missiles to wreak intolerable retaliation. The whole of his submarine-based missiles as well as most of his airborne missiles would escape entirely; these alone would suffice to blow up the world several times over.

Unfortunately there is a tendency for the military on each side grossly to exaggerate the enemy capability because it is the best way of getting money for themselves. The United States Air Force

first sought to deceive public opinion on this issue as far back as Eisenhower's time by claiming that Russia had 300 ICBMs, when the Samos satellite showed it only had 60. President Eisenhower, however, had sufficient experience to be deeply distrustful of the "military-industrial complex". He was not taken in.

Unfortunately nuclear strategy in the West today tends to be determined by tiny elites of middle-ranking bureaucrats and staff officers who have no personal experience of world war and are obsessed by esoteric theories . . .

Institutional and technological dangers

Unfortunately nuclear strategy in the West today tends to be determined by tiny elites of middle-ranking bureaucrats and staff officers who have no personal experience of world war and are obsessed by esoteric theories — any civil servant or service officer who like me went right through the last war was forced to retire at least five years ago. These elites are predominantly civilian and are under no effective political control, partly because of the enormously rapid turn-over of defence ministers in most countries. The Tories had nine in thirteen years between 1951 and 1964; since 1979, they have had four in six years.

President Reagan has often shown ignorance of the most fundamental facts on which nuclear strategy must be based. My impression is that the Soviet leaders keep themselves far far better informed.

Effective political control of nuclear strategy requires not only that the minister should work at the problem himself. He must also engage the interest of his Prime Minister and other key members of the Cabinet, which is not always easy. President Reagan has often shown ignorance of

the most fundamental facts on which nuclear strategy must be based. My impression is that the Soviet leaders keep themselves far better informed.

So far this bizarre black comedy has not had any catastrophic effects in the real world because till now the strategic nuclear balance between Russia and the USA has been invulnerable to quite large variations in their relative capability, and to big differences in the composition of their forces. But the new weapons already under development on both sides, and in some cases already deployed, could upset that stability.

Each side depends for knowledge of its enemy's capacity and for early warning of attack largely on spy satellites; but each side is trying to develop systems for destroying spy satellites — "Asats" — which would rob the enemy of his eyes and ears and greatly increase the chances of carrying out a surprise attack. Secondly, many of the new missiles can hit their targets so fast that the decision how to react to them will have to be taken not by human beings but by computers; this would be particularly true of the US Star Wars systems.

The first time a possibly ambiguous warning that missiles were on their way hit the monitor screens there would be no time for the base commander at Molesworth to consult his own President, never mind for President Reagan to consult Mrs Thatcher. A situation in which the survival of the human race depends on the micro-circuits of the computers rather than the human brain is a worrying one for anyone who knows how often computers can go wrong — the episode of the Korean airliner was one recent example.

Both sides are also producing a large arsenal of new weapons such as Cruise missiles which are designed to carry both nuclear and conventional warheads. If either side detected a 100 Cruise missiles on its monitors it would have to assume they were carrying nuclear warheads rather than conventional ones and react in kind, because if it waited to find out it might be dead. Another danger of Cruise missiles is that they are easily hidden — particularly at sea — and would make it

much more difficult to verify a disarmament agreement.

The only man in the world who believes that Star Wars might make nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete" is President Reagan himself.

The third dangerous new development is the attempt to produce a comprehensive defence against strategic nuclear attack. The only man in the world who believes that Star Wars might make nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete" is President Reagan himself. None of his officials who are working on the Star Wars project believe that. What they think it may be possible to do — perhaps within ten years — is to produce some defence for most of America's land-based intercontinental missiles against a Soviet first strike, although that defence would probably be based at first on land rather than in space.

The State Department's official pamphlet about Star Wars says that its purpose is not, as President Reagan claims, to replace the nuclear deterrent, but to strengthen or "enhance" it. The possibility that Star Wars may have this limited ability for defending missile sites is an incentive for the other side to increase the number of its own missiles. Mr Gorbachev has made that very clear.

In any case, if America is really worried about the vulnerability of its ICBMs it would be cheaper simply to scrap them and follow the advice of the poet: "Put these missiles out to sea / Where the real estate is free / And they're miles away from me."

The main reason why they do not take this obvious step is that American defence policy is still dominated by inter-service rivalry. The US Air Force does not want to give up part of the strategic triad in favour of the US Navy. Star Wars is only one of the malign consequences of this rivalry.

Unfortunately some Russians seriously believe — as President Reagan warned they might — that the purpose of Star Wars is to protect America's land-based

missiles against a ragged response by the Soviet missiles which survived an American first strike. In other words they suffer from a mirror image of American fears of a Soviet first strike. Moreover American scientists now suggest that the sort of space-based systems America is trying to develop could be used as easily for attack as for defence. Indeed if the laser weapons were used to incinerate cities, they could produce the equivalent of a nuclear winter no less than nuclear weapons. That is why Russia insists so firmly on implementing the Shultz-Gromyko agreement to prevent the arms race in space.

The case for a nuclear freeze

If you take the risk of instability seriously, by far the most important task in the field of disarmament is to stop the nuclear arms race in its tracks immediately by halting the modernisation of nuclear forces.

Stupendously excessive as they are, the existing arsenals of nuclear weapons are not likely in themselves to produce a war. But the weapons on the way could well destabilise this situation. That is why in the Labour Party we so strongly support a freeze on nuclear weapons as a first step to their reduction. We want a freeze on the testing and deployment of all new systems both offensive and defensive. We think it could be achieved by some fairly simple technical methods if the two sides agree on the objectives and on the cut-off points.

The first step would be a comprehensive test ban treaty which would prevent either side from testing new types of nuclear warheads. Scientific advances have made it possible to detect and measure nuclear tests even down to a few tons in yield, especially if you can put some of the new sensing devices in Soviet and American territory, where they could be manned by neutrals. Six non-aligned countries, including Sweden and India, have already offered to man such stations. The other way you could guarantee the freeze is by banning all tests of the components of new nuclear delivery systems which can be observed by so called "national means", for example spy satellites.

Gorbachev and his Chief of Staff Akhromeyev have both suggested in public statements that they would be prepared to permit research in laboratories providing there was a ban on observable tests. As far as I know the Russians have not yet put this proposal formally in the arms talks in Geneva. I very much hope they will.

If you once got an agreed freeze, backed by a ban on the testing of new delivery systems and a ban on all nuclear tests, then it would be much easier to attack the problem of cutting existing arsenals.

A ban on such testing would let Mrs Thatcher off the hook on which she unwisely impaled herself by agreeing to support Star Wars research, in the mistaken belief that it was impossible to monitor any sort of research.

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Both sides have already agreed a 50 per cent cut in existing strategic weapons, although each side's specific proposals are heavily slanted to favour its own particular interests. The job of negotiations would be to reconcile these differences.

Must NATO use nuclear weapons first?

This brings us to a problem which directly affects Britain's security. NATO is likely to continue to need to possess nuclear weapons to deter nuclear attack so long as the Soviet Union possesses them. But, supposing you got a ban on the modernisation of nuclear weapon systems and on strategic defence together with a big cut in existing arsenals which institutionalised nuclear parity at a much lower level, could America's remaining nuclear forces continue to deter a purely conventional attack on her European allies?

It is worth noting that the allies seem less worried than the US about the effect of deep cuts in nuclear weapons on their own security. And all the European governments secretly share President Mitterrand's hostility to Star Wars. Indeed, the Europeans take the prospect of another world war less seriously than the Americans — something which is already causing trouble in the US Congress.

The risk of relying on nuclear deterrence is that you might be involved in a conflict which nuclear weapons have not deterred, and to which a nuclear response is not appropriate.

In fact there has been no time since the end of the Second World War when Western intelligence believed that the Russians were planning to launch an all-out invasion of Western Europe. NATO has always believed that the real danger of war with the Warsaw Pact lies not in an attack out of the blue in Central Europe, but from the spill-over of a conflict between Russia and the West in some other area, like the Middle-East, or of internal fighting inside Eastern Europe like the Berlin rising or the invasion of Hungary. In such a situation nuclear deterrence is of limited value, because once the fighting has begun, deterrence has failed in its main purpose. The risk of relying on nuclear deterrence is that you might be involved in a conflict which nuclear weapons have not deterred, and to which a nuclear response is not appropriate.

Recent students of Soviet strategic thinking, like C.N. Donnelly, of the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, reach the same conclusion by a different route. He argues that Russia is pursuing its aims in Europe by all means short of direct armed conflict but that if war were to break out unexpectedly Russia is determined to win quickly without using nuclear weapons "before sufficient time has elapsed for the United States to commit itself to a strategic nuclear war".

The possibility of war in Europe is there, however small. NATO must have a military strategy for reducing that possibility to the minimum and for stopping the fighting without a nuclear holocaust if war should break out.

The possibility of war in Europe is there, however small. NATO must have a military strategy for reducing that possibility to the minimum and for stopping the fighting without a nuclear holocaust if war should break out.

Over twenty years ago when I became British Defence Secretary, NATO was committed to a "tripwire" strategy under which the first significant movement of Soviet troops across the dividing line would trigger all-out nuclear war. My American colleague Robert McNamara and I sought to find a strategy which would be morally more acceptable and politically more credible.

We persuaded NATO to adopt a strategy of "flexible response" under which if Western forces faced defeat in conventional fighting NATO would introduce nuclear weapons in discrete steps, giving the enemy the chance at each stage to stop fighting rather than invite escalation to the next rung on the ladder which led to all-out strategic nuclear war. At the time this was at least an advance on the tripwire strategy, which Germany was reluctant to abandon. Moreover the nuclear threshold had already been raised much higher by very substantial conventional forces of which by far the majority were provided by the European allies.

Over the last two decades, however, several factors have undermined the feasibility of flexible response. We now know that the electromagnetic pulses emitted by nuclear explosions could make communications between the battlefield and the high command difficult if not impossible. There is no evidence that NATO governments have yet agreed any guidelines for the use of nuclear weapons under flexible response. For both these reasons it would be impossible for NATO to

control escalation as flexible response requires.

Statements by leading Americans have cast doubt on the readiness of the US government to authorise even the first use of nuclear weapons. Other American statements appear to contemplate a nuclear war which is limited to European soil. For Germany even the limited use of nuclear weapons would mean the nuclear holocaust. And since the Warsaw Pact now has parity with NATO at every level of nuclear warfare it cannot be assumed that it would pay NATO to initiate the use of nuclear weapons at any level.

It is not surprising that many of those generals who have had responsibility for planning to fight a war in Europe have become highly sceptical of existing NATO strategy. General Rogers, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, has made it clear that he is doubtful whether the NATO governments would ever authorise any use of nuclear weapons in a European war. He has complained that they appear to want him to take the fateful decision and he is rightly unwilling to assume a responsibility which must belong to governments. He has also recently stated that he does not think it would be possible to keep a nuclear war in Europe limited; on the contrary, he believes it would escalate very fast into a general nuclear exchange.

On the other hand he says he would be forced to use nuclear weapons in the first few days of a large-scale conventional war because NATO is so inferior to the Warsaw Pact in conventional forces.

This view is widely disputed. The International Institute of Strategic Studies says again in its latest annual survey of the military balance that Russia's conventional superiority is not sufficient to tempt her to risk an all-out conventional attack on Western Europe. New estimates by the CIA of Soviet defences are much less frightening than they were a few years ago. And NATO's new estimates of the ready forces on both sides are much more optimistic than they used to be.

However, to judge the relative capability of the opposing forces in an actual war it is necessary to carry out a far more sophisticated analysis than a simple count

of weapons and manpower. Experts who have attempted this, notably Kaufman, Mearsheimer, Mako and Cordesmann, all suggest that NATO forces could provide an effective defence against even an all-out Warsaw Pact attack if comparatively small and inexpensive changes were made in their organisation, equipment deployment and strategy.

The road to a non-nuclear strategy

NATO itself has recently been discussing important changes in its conventional strategy. I believe however that the approach favoured by NATO officials of striking deep into Eastern Europe, perhaps with very expensive and sophisticated new weapons, is inappropriate, both because it could provoke a pre-emptive attack and because Soviet strategy and deployment are changing so as to provide fewer targets for such Western weapons to hit.

There is now a growing feeling among military experts that NATO must look in a different direction — towards a non-provocative strategy of conventional deterrence which could protect NATO territory without using nuclear weapons if deterrence should fail. We in the Labour Party share this feeling.

In any case, there is not much point in being able to hit targets 300 miles behind the front line if the Red Army can puncture the front line and then spread out widely in West Germany. Moreover, the Air-Land battle strategy which the American forces in Germany have adopted unilaterally involves the use of nuclear and chemical weapons as well as conventional weapons, so it is quite inconsistent with a strategy of conventional deterrence or defence.

There is now a growing feeling among military experts that NATO must look in a

different direction — towards a non-provocative strategy of conventional deterrence which could protect NATO territory without using nuclear weapons if deterrence should fail. We in the Labour Party share this feeling.

The first step would be one which already has wide support — from the Palme Commission for example. All nuclear weapons should be withdrawn from a strip, say, 150 kilometres deep on both sides of the dividing line. NATO commanders have long been worried by the presence in the front line of nuclear weapons which are inconsistent with any attempt at conventional defence and might be overrun in the first hour or so of a conflict; they talk of the “use or lose” dilemma.

Beyond this precondition for moving to a non-nuclear strategy lie three main fields for action to make better defensive use of NATO's conventional forces — reserves, barriers and equipment. Each of these would require some change in NATO's present tactical doctrines.

The most important would be to make better use of NATO's existing reserves of trained manpower. If NATO's European reserves were organised and equipped even as well as those of neutral countries like Sweden, Switzerland and Finland the European allies could double their present contributions on the Central Front. Andrew Hamilton, a leading American analyst, calculates that Britain could in this way double its ground combat power in Central Europe for the cost of the Trident submarine programme alone.

Other analysts calculate that the defensive capability of NATO's existing forces could be increased some 40 per cent by the preparation of defensive positions in peacetime. I recently discussed with a Soviet General in Moscow General Rogers' proposal for laying pipes underground on West German territory which could be filled with an explosive slurry to create wide and deep tank traps in case of war. The Soviet General opposed it on the grounds that it would provide NATO forces with “an inviolable sanctuary” — the best recommendation possible, I would have thought!

The third main area for action would be the exploitation of the new technologies to improve defensive weapons. This would be far better than to develop expensive new weapons which may not work for deep strike against targets which may not be there. Already the Apilat Slingshot anti-tank missile can penetrate 30 inches of steel with 20 pounds of explosive at 1000 metres range.

In the coming months we are likely to see a flood of proposals along these lines for providing NATO with an adequate non-provocative conventional strategy. They will come from men on both sides of the Atlantic with personal experience of warfare and deep knowledge of the problem.

No one like me who, after six years as a soldier in war and six years as Defence Secretary in peace, has had the opportunity to discuss these problems with Russians and neutrals as well as with our allies can fail to conclude that security in the nuclear age will depend on working with one's political opponents as well as with one's friends.

Working with the Russians on security

No one like me who, after six years as a soldier in war and six years as Defence Secretary in peace, has had the opportunity to discuss these problems with Russians and neutrals as well as with our allies can fail to conclude that security in the nuclear age will depend on working with one's political opponents as well as with one's friends.

This obvious fact is almost universally accepted so far as disarmament and arms control are concerned. Every negotiation on arms control implies a readiness by each side to limit its own defence efforts for the sake of co-operation with its opponent.

I believe that the same insight should also be applied to defence itself. Indeed

the Stockholm negotiations on Confidence Building Measures — which were singled out at the Geneva summit as a field for early progress — involve mutual notification and observation of military manoeuvres.

Even the slightest acquaintance with the nuclear problem rams home the fact that each side is driven by fears which are the mirror image of the other's. Would it not be possible to exorcise those fears by openly exchanging knowledge of one another's defence preparations — which is largely available in any case by satellite photography and signals interception? Then defence policies could be adjusted to minimise unnecessary fears.

Let me end as I began with another quotation from the speech by Secretary

Weinberger on 9th October 1985. He then revealed that there should be regular talks between the military leaders of each nation and regular meetings at the highest levels of the Departments of Defence and State with their Soviet counterparts. It seems an excellent idea. On his side Mr Gorbachev has proposed that NATO and the Warsaw Pact should have such contacts.

Surely this is an area where an honest exchange of views can do nothing but good. If at present neither Moscow nor Washington is prepared to respond to the other's invitation, Britain and Western Europe should take the lead in pressing for military discussions between the two alliances. Mutual confidence is the only basis for real security in the nuclear age.

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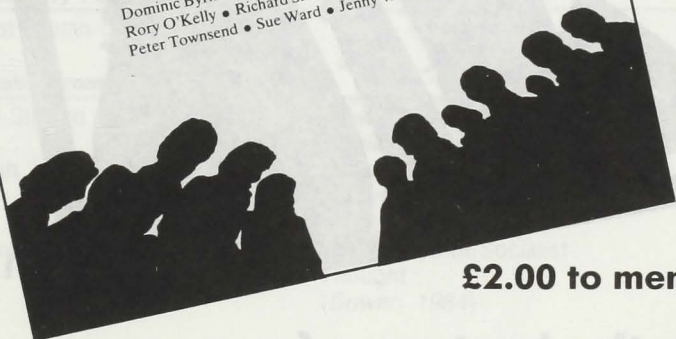
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Beyond Nuclear Deterrence

It is now widely accepted — even by President Reagan — that world peace cannot rest forever on the threat of mutual suicide that nuclear deterrence embodies. Yet the arms race continues because each side fears a first strike by the other. And the development of new systems such as the Star Wars programme threatens to upset the nuclear balance, destabilising the international situation.

Exploring the nuclear dilemma facing the world forty years after Hiroshima, Denis Healey advocates an immediate nuclear freeze on the testing and deployment of new systems, offensive and defensive. Only by this means, he argues, can the nuclear weapons race be stopped in its tracks. Once implemented, it would be much easier to achieve a reduction in existing nuclear arsenals.

But even with existing levels of weaponry, Denis Healey believes that there is danger that NATO's nuclear defence strategy could cause a war in Europe to escalate quickly beyond control into a nuclear holocaust. He argues for a non-provocative strategy of conventional deterrence and proposes 3 courses of action to make better use of conventional forces:

- more effective deployment of NATO's reserves of trained manpower;
 - the preparation of defensive positions;
 - the exploitation of new technologies to improve defensive weapons.
- He concludes by strongly arguing for regular contact between the military leaders of both superpowers which, if necessary, Britain and Western Europe should take the lead in organising.

This pamphlet is based on the text of Denis Healey's Fabian Autumn Lecture delivered on 26 November 1985.

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