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Inaugural Lecture

of

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"Nuclear Ethics, Realism and Utopianism:

the 'permanent dialogue' revisited

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Introduction

There are two reasons for the timing of this Inaugural Lecture. The first is quite trivial and the second more serious.

My first Inaugural lecture was given in Aberystwyth in 1997 and was preceded the week before by an Inaugural lecture given by the Professor of English, Professor Hammond. Professor Hammond is a very proud Scot and he turned up to give his lecture on 'Robbie Burns' in a kilt and full Scottish regalia with bagpipes playing in the background. During his lecture he sang, danced, recited poetry and told a number of very funny stories about the life of his subject – some of them quite ribald. Everyone who was present agreed it was the best Inaugural lecture in living memory!

A week later it was my turn and not surprisingly I suffered a great deal by comparison. After my lecture, an elderly lady from the town came up to me, put her hand on my arm and said: 'That was quite interesting, Professor, but it would have been nice to see you dance. And then with a twinkle in her eye, she said: 'Professor Hammond has very good legs, you know'!

So I wanted this lecture to be the first of the academic year to avoid the same embarrassment!

The second and more important reason for the lecture at this time is that this week is the 40th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis. The events of October 1962 had a tremendous impact on everyone who lived through those highly dangerous 13 days. In my case the impact was rather longer lasting. It led me to go on to do one of the first Strategic Studies courses in Britain here at Swansea and then subsequently to undertake research into the history, ethics and politics of weapons of mass destruction which has continued over the last 35 years. It has been a great priviledge for me to return to Swansea where it all began to follow in the footsteps of such eminent scholars as John Rees, Jack Greenleaf, George Boyce, Richard Taylor and my predecessor Neil Harding. I'm also grateful to all my colleagues for their friendship and support since I returned to Swansea.

It was as a student that I first came across the work of the American political scientist, Stanley Hoffmann. In a major article in the APSR in 1966, Hoffmann argued that whoever studies contemporary international relations cannot avoid hearing, behind the clash of interests and ideologies, a kind of **permanent dialogue** between Rousseau and Kant.[1]

Rousseau represents the tradition of Classical Realist thinking - the tradition of Thucydides, Hobbes and Machiavelli - which emphasises the importance of power politics and denies the possibility of fundamentally transforming the international system permanently in a more peaceful direction. For Rousseau, while there was an important moral dimension to international politics, power was always likely to emerge supreme. Kant, in contrast, represents the tradition of liberal, or what has become known as 'Utopian' thinking - which emphasises the opportunity for progress towards a more rational and moral order in international politics. Kant recognised the brutal nature of inter-state politics but he was unwilling to rule out a future world in which 'politics bends the knee to morality'.[2]

These apparently opposing themes are the main focus of E.H.Carr's study of <u>The Twenty Year Crisis</u> - which is generally regarded as one of the classic texts in the

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[1] S Hoffmann, 'Rousseau on War and Peace'. American Political Science Review (June 1993) p333.
[2] I Kant, <u>Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical essay</u> (London: Allen and Unwin, 1903).

International Politics literature.[3] In this book, written in 1939, Carr was concerned to argue for the higher wisdom of Realist thinking and the dangers associated with exaggerating the role that morality was likely to play in world politics.

Despite his support for Realism, however, one of the main purposes of Carr's book, which is often forgotten by students of international relations, was to redress the balance between Realist and Utopian thinking which he believed had become upset by the dominance of Utopianism in the inter-war period, especially, after the Abyssinian and Manchurian crises in the 1930s, which demonstrated some of the unrealistic aspirations associated with the League of Nations. Carr was concerned to argue that if an orderly procedure was to be established in International Relations, which he did not rule out, some way had to be found for basing its operation, not on pure power alone, but, in his words, 'on that uneasy compromise between power and morality', which he argued, 'is the foundation of all political life'. This reflected the profound influence on Carr's thinking of the German historian, Friedrich Meinecke and the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr - both of whom were concerned to seek a balance between ethical and coercive forces in their writings on International Politics.[4]

The main purpose of this lecture is re-visit the 'permanent dialogue' between Realist and Utopian thinking in relation to what remains, in my view, one of the most important questions of the contemporary world: the role of nuclear weapons. Such weapons may be in some ways relatively less central to our thinking about about International relations than they were during the cold war but, as the contemporary debate over nuclear proliferation and weapons of mass destruction reminds us, they remain a critical issue in world security.

[3] E H Carr, The Twenty Year Crisis 1919-1939 (London: Macmillan, 1983) p11.
[4] See R W Sterling, Ethics in a World Power: the political ideas of Friedrich Meinecke (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958) and R Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics in Politics (London: SCM Press, 1963).

I want to look at this continuing dialogue: <u>Firstly</u> by focusing on the pressures which have emerged since 1989 for a re-evaluation of cold war deterrence policies; <u>Secondly,</u> by considering the re-emergence of the ethical debate about nuclear weapons in recent years; and <u>Thirdly,</u> by looking at one of the more interesting policy alternatives that has been put forward recently, which may be regarded as part of the on-going search for Carr's 'uneasy compromise, between Realism and Utopianism.

Perhaps I ought to emphasise, at the outset, that I use the term 'Utopian' not in a derogatory sense, to mean wishful thinking, but as a label for a school of thought based on Enlightenment ideas of the possibility of developing a more rational and moral international order.

Pressures for a Re-evaluation of Cold War Deterrent policies

One of the most striking features of the post-cold war world has been a re-evaluation of the role of nuclear weapons in world politics and the attempt, at least in the early post cold war period, to marginalise these weapons. During the cold war nuclear weapons were very much at the centre of the strategic stage. In many ways they dominated much of the thinking and theorising about International relations. Security thinking focused largely on the theory and practice of deterrence, limited war, arms control and crisis management.

In the immediate aftermath of the cold war an attempt was made to push them more into the wings. This process of marginalisation began with the 1987 INF Treaty banning ground-based theatre nuclear weapons in Europe which was followed in 1991 with an Agreement to eliminate shorter-range, tactical nuclear weapons. Two Strategic Arms Reduction Agreements (START1& 2) were also signed in 1990 and

1993 respectively, which, were designed to reduce the number of American and Russian strategic weapons from around 20,000 to 3,500.[5] START 2 was never ratified but it formed the basis for continuing reductions in nuclear weapons until it was replaced by the May 2002 Agreement between Bush and Putin designed to reduce numbers to about 2000 on both sides. If implemented this will represent a ten-fold reduction in the period since 1989. Other positive developments in the early post cold war era included the indefinite extention of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995 and the signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in September 1996 after nearly 30 years of sporadic negotiation.

This important process of, what has been called, 'co-operative de-nuclearisation' reflects a particular concern in the late 1980s and early 1990s about what many regarded as the questionable emphasis in deterrence thinking on rationality and on the de-stabilising consequences of the kind of war-fighting nuclear strategies which had been adopted by the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective alliances, especially during the later stages of the cold war. [6] These so-called countervailing strategies, with their emphasis on matching military capabilities, helped to accelerate the arms race and contributed to a widespread questioning of nuclear deterrence both by the general public and, significantly, as I will try to show a little later, within the strategic studies community itself.[7]

This anxiety about the efficacy of nuclear deterrence has deepened in recent years with the growing worries that so-called rogue states and terrorist groups like Al Quaida may be un-deterrrable.

Early Post-Cold War Arguments in Favour of Denuclearization

A number of studies were published in the immediate post-cold war period by nuclear historians who, for the first time, had access to the documents on nuclear decision-making. As the veil of secrecy over cold war nuclear mishaps lifted it became possible to see more fully the consequences which could arise from human error, equipment failure and questionable practices by governments.

Most notable was research by Bruce Blair in the early 1990s on the command and control of American and Soviet nuclear forces in which he produced convincing evidence that the possibilities of miscalculation associated with nuclear deterrence were far greater than had been appreciated at the time.[8] According to Blair there were a number of occasions in the cold war when there was a distinct possibility that nuclear war could have broken out as a result of either the unauthorized use of nuclear weapons or by accident.

This new evidence about nuclear accidents by Blair and others raised new questions over the risks and uncertainties inherent in deterrent policies. Critics of these policies pointed out that during the cold war over one hundred incidents involving nuclear mishaps had been documented. Apart from Chernobyl, Windscale and Three Mile Island, what struck me in my own research in this area was the number of accidents with nuclear weapons which came very close to catastrophe.[9] These included aircraft crashing onto nuclear weapons storeage facilities, fires which engulfed nuclear weapons and the explosion of the fuel tanks of missiles with

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[5] As yet START 2 has not been implemented.

[6] For a discussion of the process of marginalising nuclear weapons in the 1990s see G Allison et al., Cooperative Denuclearization: from pledges to deeds (Cambridge, Mass: Center for Science and International Affairs, 1993).

[7] See M. MccGwire, 'Deterrence: the problem - not the solution', International Affairs, 45:1:,1986.

[8] B Blair, Strategic Command and Control: Redefining the Nuclear Threat (Washington DC: Brookings, 1985) and The Logic of Accidental Nuclear War (Washington DC: Brookings, 1993).

[9] C Flavin, Reassessing Nuclear Power: The Fallout from Chernobyl, (New York: Worldwatch Institute, 1987).

nuclear warheads connected.[10]   One of the most worrying of these recorded incidents occurred in 1962 when an American B-52 bomber broke up in mid-air releasing two nuclear weapons. [11]

One of these was a 24 megaton bomb, many times more powerful than the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs, which was later found hanging from its parachute with 5 of its 6 safety catches tripped. Some have seen this as a vindication of the effectiveness of the electronic safety devices used to prevent premature explosions. Others have argued, with more justification that a major disaster was avoided more by luck, than technical ingenuity.

Worries about the 'limits of safety' were also highlighted in research published by Scott Sagan in 1993.[12] Sagan pointed to a number of concrete examples during the Cuban Missile crisis in 1962 and the Indo-Pakistan war in 1990 when military forces by-passed normal political control over nuclear weapons.[13]

The main thrust of Sagan's research is that military establishments in general are prone to pre-emptive strategies and with the proliferation of nuclear weapons taking place to countries with limited or no civilian control over the military, this poses a great danger for the future. Contrary to those like Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer who have argued that nuclear proliferation was likely to bring greater caution amongst hostile states, Sagan is much more pessimistic   about   the consequences of the spread of nuclear weapons.[14] The very primitive and

dangerous designs for a nuclear weapon found by the UN inspectors in Iraq after the Gulf War and also the growing fears about the theft of weapons-grade materials in Russia seems perhaps to support Sagan's pessimism.[15]

These worries about nuclear proliferation, were important in helping to establish an early post-cold war consensus on the need to de-emphasise nuclear weapons. It was one of the major reasons why the influential Canberra Commission came out in favour of the total abolition of nuclear weapons in their report published in 1996 following public concern over French nuclear testing in the Pacific.[16]

Significantly also, a number of quite hard-headed strategists and defence chiefs, who were strong supporters of nuclear deterrence during the cold war, went on record in the 1990s arguing that nuclear proliferation posed major new dangers which required an urgent change of policy.[17] In the late 1990s, 60 retired Generals and Admirals from 17 countries added their voices to the call for the elimination of nuclear weapons. These included three former Supreme Allied Commanders in Europe, with responsibility for NATO nuclear policy, and also General Lee Butler, who had been head of US Strategic Command in the early 1990s and therefore a key figure in American nuclear planning.[18] In their declaration these highly experienced senior officers, argued that nuclear proliferation was the most serious

[10] See S Sagan, 'The Perils of Proliferation', op. cit.
[11] See John Baylis and robert O'Neill, ed., Alternative Nuclear Futures. The Role of nuclear Weapons in the Post-Cold War World, (Oxford: OUP, 2000), p.73
[12] S Sagan, The Limits of Safety: Organizations, Accidents, and Nuclear Weapons (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).
[13] See also S Sagan, 'The Perils of Proliferation: Organization theory, Deterrence Theory, and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons', International Security Vol. 18, No. 4, Spring 1994.
[14] See K Waltz, The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More may be better', Adelphi Paper No. 171 (London: IISS, 1981); John Mearsheimer, 'The Case for a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrence', Foreign

Affairs, Vol. 72, No 3, Summer 1993; and David Karl, Proliferation Pessimism and Emerging Nuclear Powers'. International Security, Vol. 21, No. 3, Winter 1996/7.
[15] One of the UN inspectors is reported to have commented: 'I wouldn't want to be around if it fell off the edge of the desk.' See G Milhollin, 'Building Saddam Hussein's bomb', New York Times Magazine, 8 March 1992.
[16] Report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, (Canberra: National Capital Printers, 1996).
[17] See R O'Neil, 'Britain and the Future of Nuclear Weapons', International Affairs, Vol. 71, No 4, October 1995.
[18]See George Lee Butler, 'Time to end the age of nukes', The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, March/April 1997.

danger facing the world in the post cold war era which could only be combated if nuclear weapons were abandoned by the nuclear powers.[19]

Another set of arguments in favour of de-emphasising nuclear weapons, was put forward by other influential members of the largely 'realist', strategic studies community, including Paul Nitze, the doyen of American nuclear strategy during the cold war. Nitze has argued that, with the 'Revolution in Military Affairs' that has taken place in recent years, conventional weapons are now so powerful and accurate that nuclear weapons are no longer needed.[20] Significantly, Nitze bases his argument, not only on American interests, but on the same kind of moral arguments traditionally used by anti-nuclear supporters. He argues that the idea that the future peace and well-being of the world should rest on the threat of nuclear annihilation of large numbers of civilians is morally unacceptable. Some of this thinking has also been evident in recent debates in the US about the value or otherwise of Ballistic Missile Defences.

The On-going Ethical Debate

These developments have contributed to a new and interesting ethical debate about nuclear weapons which has re-surfaced in recent years. The main characteristic of this debate, not surprisingly, much like those in the 1950s and 1960s, has been the fundamental disagreement between different schools of thought on the moral implications of nuclear weapons. For some Realist writers, like their predecessors during the cold war, the laws of morality cannot be, indeed should not be, applied to nuclear weapons or indeed to any weapons of war. Given the cultural diversity of the world in which we live and the lack of consensus on a universal moral code,

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ethical issues are regarded as being irrelevant to policy decisions about the use of, or threat to use, nuclear weapons.

According to this Machiavellian view, a nation's national interests are - or should be - all that it considers in its interactions with other nations. In a dangerous world, prudence is seen as having a higher priority than morality.[21] Werner Jaeger reflects this view when he argues that 'the principle of force forms a realm of its own, with its own laws, distinct and separate from the laws of moral life.'

Amongst those other Realists and Utopians who hold the alternative and, I think, more sustainable view that nuclear weapons do raise important moral problems, the most interesting and profound debate has been waged between, and within, the Deontological and Consequentialist schools of thought.[22] The Deontological, or 'rules-oriented approach, classes actions in terms of their 'kind', regardless of their consequences. According to this view, the use of nuclear weapons, with their immense destructive capability and lingering genetic and ecological effects is morally unacceptable under all circumstances. Equally, for many, although not all, rules-oriented philosophers, nuclear deterrence, as a form of 'hostage-taking', is regarded as just as immoral as nuclear use. This is summed up in Jefferson McMahon's comment that 'what is immoral to do, is immoral to threaten'.[23] Many of those supporting this view, tend to regard total nuclear disarmament as the only moral approach to adopt.

Although there are different strands of Consequentialist moral thinking, and different judgements about nuclear use, most consequentialist writers support nuclear

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[19]Statement on Nuclear Weapons by International Generals and Admirals,6 October 1996. See P. Taylor, 'Generals who learnt to hate the bomb', The Sunday Times, 8 December 1996.

[20] P Nitze, 'A Conventional Approach', UN Naval Institute Proceedings, May 1994 and 'Is it Time to Junk Our Nukes?' The Washington Post, January 16, 1994.

[21] Assumptions of moral neutrality were an important feature of the early strategists who wrote about nuclear weapons. See J C Garnett, 'Strategic Studies and its Assumptions', J Baylis et al., Contemporary Strategy: Theories and Concepts Vol. 1 (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1987).

[22] For a discussion of this debate see D Lackey, 'Immoral Risks: '

[23] J McMahon, 'Deterrence and Deontology' in Hardin et al (eds) Clear Deterrence: Ethics and Strategy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p158.

deterrence, as opposed to nuclear use, on the grounds that it's consequences are good. It helps to keep the peace. Prudence is seen, not in opposition to morality, but as an important moral good in its own right. During the cold war this was reflected in Henry Kissinger's frequently expressed comment that 'Peace is the supreme morality'.[24]

In the context of the post-cold war era, this Consequentialist view has been the subject of a very lively debate because it begs the very important question of whether deterrence did actually keep the peace between 1945 and 1989. For writers, like John Mueller, nuclear weapons were largely irrelevant.[25] The 'long peace' of the cold war era was more likely to have been the result of the fear of repeating the immense destruction of the second world war rather than any particular anxiety over nuclear weapons. According to this view they were not necessary in the cold war, and even less necessary in the post cold war period, because of the rapprochment which had taken place between the US and Russia. Critics also argue that such weapons are of little value against the new security threats of the new century, especially those that have emerged since September 11th..

Other writers, like John Gaddis, have taken issue with this view, arguing that nuclear weapons have been a unique and indispensable element in creating caution between the great powers.[26] Despite the geostrategic changes which have taken place in world politics since 1989, those who support this view argue that in an uncertain and, in some senses even more dangerous world since September 11, nuclear weapons still have utility.It's often argued, for example, that Saddam Hussein was deterred from using chemical and biological weapons during the Gulf War because of back channel threats made by the United States that he would face a nuclear response. [27]

The problem with the debate about deterrence during the cold war and its consequences for the post cold period is that it is based largely on educated guesses and not on certain knowledge. It is very difficult to establish precisely which of the two arguments is true. Consequences viewed in advance are inevitably uncertain. How do ststes know exactly what the consequences of their actions will be? What Consequentialist supporters of deterrence tend to argue, howver, is that because it is impossible to disprove that nuclear weapons were, and remain, indispensable in helping to keep the peace, it would be morally irresponsible to throw away the apparent benefits of such weapons by prematurely trying to abolish them.

They also point to tentative empirical studies, like the one recently published by Lebow and Stein, which suggests that evidence exists that the existence of some nuclear weapons - as opposed to particular nuclear strategies - did help to keep the peace in various crises during the cold war.[28] These arguments, based on detailed empirical evidence from cold war crises, cannot be dismissed out of hand.

One of the key questions for those who study nuclear ethics is how to square Consequentialist approaches in favour of nuclear deterrence with the powerful Deontological arguments against - especially the moral problems associated with , what Richard Falk describes as 'the terrorist logic', inherent in nuclear deterrent

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[24] For a discussion of this argument see J Nye, Nuclear Ethics (London: Macmillan, 1986).

[25] J Mueller, Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

[26] J Gaddis, The Long Peace: inquiries into the history of the Cold War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[27] See Rt.Hon.Malcolm. Rifkind,'UK Defence Strategy: A Continuing Role for Nuclear Weapons' in The Framework of United Kingdom Defence Policy: Key Speeches on Defence Policy by the Rt.Hon. Malcolm Rifkind QC MP, 1993-95, (London: Brassey's,1995)

[28] See N Lebow and J Stein, We all lost the Cold War, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

policies, of making threats against innocent civilians?[29] Given the insights that the two approaches provide, it seems to me that a proper moral and prudential understanding of the role of nuclear weapons in world politics requires that both Consequentialist and Deontological arguments are taken into account.[30]

As Stephen Lee has argued in his study of **Morality, Prudence and Nuclear Weapons**:

'When one appreciates the force of both the consequentialist and deontological arguments concerning nuclear deterrence, one cannot clearly see that one is morally decisive in comparison with the other.'

The conclusion which arises from this more complex, but interesting, view of nuclear ethics, is a rather paradoxical one. It is that there are strong reasons both for continuing the policy of nuclear deterrence <u>and</u> for abandoning it. Both sets of arguments are of roughly equal persuasiveness and there is no clear objective criteria for judging between them. For Lee there is no escape from this tragic moral dilemma.

For other writers, like Joseph Nye, who accept the need to take both deontological and consequentialist views into account, there is a way to transcend this dilemma. Nye suggests that this can be done by making deterrence conform to the principles of traditional Just War theory, focusing on issues relating to non-combatants and proportionality in the use of force. For Nye this involves searching for policy alternatives which secure the advantages of deterrence while avoiding the disadvantages. Nye argues that support for nuclear deterrence must always be conditional. He suggests that a moral case can nevertheless be made for minimum deterrence – ie deterrence with small numbers of nuclear weapons – provided that the weapons are not targetted against innocent civilians. This, he argues, is what

has tended to happen since the end of the cold war. Minimum deterrence, as a form of 'just defence', is in Nye's view, morally defensible.

Nye's argument is an interesting one but it suffers from one significant problem. However hard governments might try to prevent civilian casualties, it is in the nature of the weapons themselves that, if deterrence ever failed, innocent people would inevitably be killed. For writers like Jonathan Schell, the only way to resolve this difficulty is to move beyond traditional views of deterrence. Writing towards the end of the cold war, Jonathan Schell argued that in his view there was a radical alternative policy that could help to balance the deontological opposition to deterrence and the consequentialist support for it. He proposed an arrangement which would ban completed nuclear weapons while allowing nations, as he put it, 'to hold themselves in a particular defined state of readiness for nuclear rearmament.' Schell called this idea 'weaponless deterrence', and he argued that a world of dismantled nuclear weapons would be a much safer world. Under such a system, 'factory,' he said,' would deter factory, blueprint would deter blueprint, equation would deter equation'.[31]

Schell's work was largely ignored by the realist strategic studies establishment in the 1980s but with the end of the cold war interest in his ideas has been revived. A major study of 'weaponless deterrence was carried out by Molander and Wilson of the RAND Corporation in the early 1990s.[32] They coined the phrase 'virtual nuclear arsenals' which has been the subject of considerable debate in recent years.

The idea of 'virtual nuclear arsenals', or 'weaponless deterrence', represents an interesting, if controversial, new approach to nuclear arms control and disarmament.

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[29] R Falk, 'Nuclear Weapons and the End of Democracy', <u>Praxis International</u>, 2, No. 1 (April, 1982).
[30] S Lee, <u>Prudence, Morality and Nuclear Weapons</u>, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[31] J Schell, <u>The Abolition</u> (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1984).
[32] R C Molander and P A Wilson, 'On Dealing with the Problem of Nuclear Chaos', <u>The Washington Quarterly</u>, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1994 and <u>The Nuclear Asymptote: On containing Nuclear Proliferation</u>, MR-214-CC (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 1993).

It rests on the assumption that because of the spread of civilian nuclear power and the advances of nuclear technology in general - the aspirations normally associated with nuclear disarmament - that is the total elimination of all the capability to build nuclear weapons - appears not to be feasible.

It may be a cliché but nuclear weapons cannot be disinvented. Even if total nuclear disarmament took place, some form of nuclear deterrence would continue to exist, because the knowledge to produce nuclear weapons would still exist. Such a world might be even more dangerous because of the continuing fear and distrust associated with states or terrorist groups developing nuclear weapons in secret. If this is accepted, a more practical solution may be to aim for a 'weaponless deterrence regime' which would involve an international agreement banning the existence of all assembled, ready-for-use nuclear weapons. The idea is that warheads and delivery vehicles should be decoupled, electronically tagged, and placed at separate storage sites under international control. Supporters argue that this process would clearly take time - possibly 10-15 years - and it would need to be done in a number of distinct phases, designed incrementally to build confidence.

This clearly represents a rather different view of disarmament than the way it has been traditionally conceived. The idea behind 'weaponless deterrence' is that dismantled weapons would not be available for immediate use but existing nuclear states would still retain the reassuring knowledge that they could be re-assembled if attempts were made by rogue states to 'break out' of the regime. A form of what George Bundy called 'existential deterrence', or what might be described as 'background deterrence', would therefore continue to operate.[33]

As an approach to disarmament, the idea behind this proposal is that nuclear weapons capability is not one of 'either-you-have-it-or-you-don't'. It is one of degree. As many as 40 countries now have the knowledge to develop nuclear weapons. The key question is how long it will take states or even non-state actors to produce nuclear weapons? The concept of 'Weaponless Deterrence' is designed to respond to this reality.

Those who support this position, argue that there are a number of advantages with a regime of this sort. Firstly, 'weaponless deterrence' would be a significant further step in marginalising nuclear weapons in world politics. They would go way beyond the existing START 2 and recent Bush-Putin proposals which will still leave many thousands of weapons in existence and many thousands in reserve if, and when, they are implemented. The act of dis-assembling weapons would also require significant changes in traditional strategic planning - away from some of the more provocative, 'launch-on-warning' nuclear doctrines of the cold war, which in some respects are still retained.[34] This, it is argued, would clearly be a step forward.

Secondly, 'weaponless deterrence' would help to eliminate the day-to-day risks of nuclear accidents which are a continuing possibility, even with the reduced numbers of nuclear weapons held by the nuclear powers. If nuclear weapons were dismantled this would dramatically reduce the risks posed by operational nuclear forces. There is little doubt that nuclear safety has been improved as a result of the end of confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The dangers, however, of limited command and control arrangements, were one of the main worries which emerged with the India and Pakistan stand-off earlier in the year.[35]

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[33] The term 'existential deterrence' was coined by McGeorge Bundy.

[34] M Brown, 'Nuclear Doctrine and Virtual Nuclear Arsenals', in M Mazarr ed., Nuclear Weapons in a Transformed World, op. cit.

[35] See B Blair, 'Command, Control, and Warning for Virtual Arsenals', in M Mazarr ed., Nuclear Weapons in a Transformed World, op. cit.

There were unconfirmed reports during the 1990 conflict over Kashmir that Pakistan made initial preparations for a nuclear first-strike against India.[36] And in May/ June this year there was clearly very grave concern that the renewed conflict associated with terrorist activity across the 'line of control' could easily escalate to a nuclear conflagration. More stability, it is argued, would be achieved if both sides accepted greater transparency and agreed to some form of international inspection to verify their pledges. They would retain what they perceive as the benefits of deterrence against each other without creating the dangers associated with the ambiguities of the current situation.

And finally, 'weaponless deterrence', advocates argue, provides a more realistic approach to disarmament than total abolition. In the uncertain world in which we live, it seems highly unlikely that nuclear states will give up their nuclear weapons completely.In the early post-cold war period, at least, they were prepared to adopt wide-ranging measures to marginalise these weapons. In recent years also debates have taken place within governments about the merits of dis-assembly. Indeed this has already been an important part of the process of de-nuclearisation which has taken place.

Supporters of 'weaponless deterrence' to argue that it is not beyond the realms of possibility, that the nuclear powers might be prepared, cautiously, to take this process a stage further at some point in the future, even if it is not possible now,providing some form of 'background deterrence, remains as a safety net to deal with those states and terrorist groups which refuse to join the process. It remains a moot point whether nucleqa weapons have any significant role to play in dealing with international terrorism.

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[36] S Hersh, 'On the Nuclear Edge', The New Yorker, 29 March, 1993.

18

Over-all, a move in the direction of disarmament through dis-assembly, can be seen as an important means of trying to reduce the dangers to humanity posed by nuclear proliferation, while retaining some of the benefits which seem to accrue from deterrence. In this sense the policy does appear to reflect a moral position which takes account of both pro-deterrence consequentialism and an anti-deterrence deontological position. As such, it may be regarded as a contemporary example of what Anthony Giddins has described as 'utopian-realism' – combining the best of both approaches.

Many realists, however, have pointed out that there are a number of significant obstacles which make this option more utopian than realistic. Undoubtedly, the most intractable difficulty is that the nuclear powers themselves would have to believe that taking the process of marginalisation a significant stage further would be in their national security interests. So far, despite the process of 'co-operative denuclearisation' which has been taking place, all the signs are that the nuclear powers intend to keep their nuclear capabilities.

Even the Arms Control Agreement between Bush and Putin in May (2002) which promises to reduce nuclear weapons to around 2000 on each side, is rather ambiguous. Despite the two-thirds reduction, many of these weapons will be stored away rather than being destroyed. With the present international crisis and its new Nuclear Posture Review, the US also clearly sees the need for keeping, and perhaps increasing the number of small tactical nuclear weaponsas well as developing Ballistic Missile defences to deal with the perceived threat from 'rogue states.' Realpolitik is clearly at the heart of Bush Administration's approach to international security. Multilateral arms control, as a way to deal with the problem of nuclear proliferation, appears to have very little support in Washington at present.

19

Russia has also developed a new strategy in recent years that envisages nuclear weapons as a means to compensate for inadequacies in conventional weapons. Likewise China continues to oppose the US BMD system and is putting more emphasis in its defence policy on nuclear modernisation. All the evidence also suggests that India, Pakistan and Israel continue to see considerable utility in their nuclear capabilities.

Spport for a 'weaponless deterrence' regime' is also likely to depend on the answers to a number of other important questions. One of these is whether a monitoring and inspection regime can be devised which would provide sufficient confidence against cheating. Such a regime would have to be extremely intrusive and it is likely to be very costly. It is true that one of the great breakthroughs in the disarmament field in recent years has taken place with intrusive on-site inspection, but a 'weaponless deterrence' regime would represent the most daunting verification challenge so far.[37] Inspectors would have to monitor each of the separated components of nuclear weapons - some of which might have to be kept at sea.

Given the problem of trust in inter-state relations, verification would seem to be the single most important issue in determining the feasibility and desirability of this approach to disarmament.[38] As we have seen with Iraq and now with North Korea, however, effective inspection and trust remain very difficult to achieve in the kind of world in which we live.

Another problem arises from the spread of other weapons of mass destruction. Some, otherwise sympathetic, analysts have hesitated to endorse the idea of disarmament because they see nuclear weapons as an essential hedge against

biological and chemical weapons. Israel's undeclared nuclear capability is also often justified by their fear of the growing stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons by its neighbours.[39] There are currently more than 20 states that are rumoured to have a chemical and biological weapons capability and, although Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions were signed in 1972 and 1993, it remains very difficult to detect violations. This was one of the reasons the Bush Administration gave earlier this year for its decision not to sign up to a new Chemical Weapons Protocol. US officials continue to argue that operational nuclear weapons are a useful deterrent against the proliferation of these other weapons of mass destruction, ironically perhaps, just as some non-nuclear states continue to argue that chemical and biological weapons provide them with security against the nuclear powers.[40]

Conclusion

Given these formidable difficulties, what can be said in conclusion about the continuing 'permanent dialogue between Realism and Utopianism, especially in relation to the role of nuclear weapons and the prospects for further arms control and disarmament?

What we have seen since the end of the cold war is two distinctive but contradictory trends which reflect the perennial debate between Realism and Utopianism. There has been a very distinctive process of 'cooperative de-nuclearisation' and a broad consensus has developed in favour of international norms designed to restrict the spread of nuclear weapons. There has also been some support, even in establishment circles, for the total abolition of nuclear weapons. Significantly, unlike the very public campaigns for nuclear disarmament in the past, someof the running

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[37] D Kay, 'the Challenge of Inspecting and Verifying Virtual Nuclear Arsenals' in M Mazarr ed Nuclear Weapons in a transformed World, op. cit.
[38] M Mazarr, 'Unclear Weapons in a Transformed world', op. cit.

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[39] See Y Evron, Israel's Nuclear Dilemma (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).
[40] See S A Cambone and P J Garrity, 'The Future of US Nuclear Policy', op. cit.

this time has been made by experienced strategists and military officials who have traditionally been supporters of deterrence.

This support for total abolition and policies of de-nuclearisation are also reflected in the post-cold war resurgence of liberal and normative approaches to the study of international politics, similar to the utopian/liberal views expressed in the aftermath of World War 1 and 2. This is part of, what has been referred as 'the nomative shift' in International Relations. This has been particularly evident amongst critical theorists who have welcomed the trends towards the concept of co-operative security and who argue that it remains important to search for opportunities along traditional Kantian lines for a fundamental transformation in international politics.[41]

At the same time, however, despite the attempts to marginalise nuclear weapons which have taken place, it must be said that there appears to be very little evidence of official government support, especially at present, for total abolition or indeed for taking de-nuclearisation a significant stage further. Nuclear weapons remain firmly embedded in the realist-dominated security thinking and the strategic policies of the nuclear states. The search for nuclear, chemical and biological capabilities by a number of other states and possibly by non-state terrorist groups as well also continues - encouraged both by the determination of the established nuclear powers to hang on to their nuclear weapons and by the accelerating processes of industrial and technological globalisation. For those who adopt a Realist approach to international politics this is a more important reality than the limited process of de-nuclearisation which has taken place in recent years.[42] Rather than 'weaponless deterrence', strategic coercion and possibly military intervention appear to be the preferred options for dealing with the problem of nuclear proliferation at present.

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[41] For a discussion of Critical Security Studies see K Krause and M C Williams, 'Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies', in Mershon International Studies Review, Vol. 40, supplement 2, October 1996.

[42] See K Waltz, 'Thoughts on Virtual Nuclear Arsenals', op. cit.

For the moment, given the nature of contemporary world politics and the new nuclear postures being developed, it seems likely that, as Realists predict, nuclear weapons will remain with us for the foreseeable future. Indeed their significance in world politics appears to be growing. As when Carr wrote in the late 1930s, it remains important not to exaggerate the role that morality can play in International relations, especially at a time of global crisis. It's also important, however, to remember Carr's comment that: 'While Realism is the necessary corrective to the exuberance of Utopianism, utopianism must be involved to counteract the barrenness of Realism'.[43]

The problem at present, as when Carr wrote, is that the balance between Realism and Utopianism, ethics and coercion, is once again becoming upset, but this time by the contemporary resurgence of Realism, rather than Utopianism, as the dominant approach to international security. At such a time, in the context of the permament dialogue, the best we can do is to continue the search for a better balance between power and morality in the approach to nuclear weapons, than exists at present. The same can be said for the other pressing issues of international security that face us at present. In the case of nuclear weapons, this will involve intellectual tolerance and imagination in considering new ideas, like 'weaponless deterrence', designed to reduce the dangers associated with weapons of mass destruction, while at the same time recognizing that there are no risk-free or morally-pure options available in the diverse and complex world in which we live.

In such a world, the task of cultivating moral imagination is an important part of University education and it is one that the Department of Politics and International Relations here at Swansea is actively engaged in.

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[43] See E.H.Carr, The Twenty Year Crisis, op.cit.