10th Annual
FRANK K. KELLY LECTURE
ON HUMANITY’S FUTURE

BREAKING FREE FROM NUCLEAR DETERRENCE

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(Royal Navy, Ret.)

NUCLEAR AGE PEACE FOUNDATION
Committed to a World Free of Nuclear Weapons

building a more peaceful world free of nuclear weapons
Frank K. Kelly Lecture
ON HUMANITY’S FUTURE

The Frank K. Kelly Lecture on Humanity’s Future was established by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in 2002. The lecture series honors the late Frank K. Kelly, a founder and senior vice president of the Foundation, whose vision and compassion are perpetuated through these lectures. Each annual lecture is presented by a distinguished individual to explore the contours of humanity’s present circumstances and ways by which we can shape a more promising future for our planet and all its inhabitants.

Mr. Kelly gave the inaugural lecture in 2002 on “Glorious Beings: What We Are and What We May Become.” The lecture presented in this booklet, “Breaking Free from Nuclear Deterrence,” the tenth in the series, was presented by Commander Robert Green (Royal Navy, Ret.) at Santa Barbara City College on February 17, 2011.

The 2010 lecture was presented by Ambassador Max Kampelman on “Zero Nuclear Weapons for a Sane and Sustainable World.” The 2009 lecture was presented by Frances Moore Lappé on “Living Democracy, Feeding Hope.” The 2008 lecture was given by Colman McCarthy on “Teach Peace.” The 2007 lecture was delivered by Jakob von Uexküll on “Globalization: Values, Responsibility and Global Justice.” The 2006 lecture was presented by Nobel Peace Laureate Mairead Corrigan Maguire on “A Right to Live without Violence, Nuclear Weapons and War.” The 2005 lecture was delivered by Dr. Robert Jay Lifton on “America and the Human Future: Surviving Vietnam, 9/11, and Iraq.” The 2004 lecture in this series was presented by Dame Anita Roddick on “Kindness as a Key to Humanity’s Future.” Professor Richard Falk gave the 2003 lecture on “American Civil Liberties and Human Rights Under Siege.”

Frank lived a remarkable life. He was a science fiction writer (later inducted into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame), a journalist, a soldier in WWII, a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University, a speechwriter for Harry Truman, the assistant to the US Senate Majority Leader, vice president of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions and the author of 10 books. He co-founded the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in 1982.

Beyond all of his achievements, Frank exhibited a remarkable faith in humanity and its future. He lived with a spirit of optimism and hope. He was a visionary advocate for humanity and inspired many people through his writing and teaching to take action on behalf of humanity. Frank’s life brought dignity to being human and his spirit will continue to inspire our efforts to create a more peaceful future.

The Frank K. Kelly Lecture series is endowed to carry forward Frank’s vision. If you would like to support the series by adding to the endowment, or if you would like to learn about the unique opportunities to support a specific upcoming lecture, please let us know. We also invite you to explore the entire Frank K. Kelly Lecture series and the work of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation by visiting our website: www.wagingpeace.org.

Special thanks to the James S. Bower Foundation.
The Frank K. Kelly Lecture on Humanity’s Future honors Frank King Kelly, one of the founders of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. Frank died in 2010, just one day before his 96th birthday. He was a man of boundless optimism. He believed that humanity has a great future and that everyone deserves a seat at humanity’s table.

In 2011, we have seen images of the people of Tunisia, Egypt and other countries in the Middle East taking to the streets demanding change. They remind us that often it is necessary to stand up for what one believes before it is possible to claim one’s seat at humanity’s table. The protesters in the Middle East have inspired many of us by their courage and commitment in demanding the departure of long-time dictators.

As Frank Kelly recognized, and as we all should, humanity’s future is threatened by nuclear arms, which are weapons of terrorism, whether in the hands of terrorists or those of the leaders of great nations. Nuclear weapons imperil civilization and the human species itself. The great challenge of the Nuclear Age is to abolish nuclear weapons. History gives us some cause for hope.

In the 19th century, humanity triumphed by abolishing institutionalized slavery.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the women’s rights movement won its struggle and humanity triumphed.

In the 20th century, there were also great movements for independence from colonialism and for human and civil rights, bringing new triumphs for humanity, including the creation of the United Nations and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In the 20th century, the Berlin Wall fell, the Soviet Union split apart and South African apartheid was overcome. Humanity triumphed.

These movements were led by courageous leaders, including Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, Mahatma Gandhi, Eleanor Roosevelt, Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr., to name only a few.

But the 20th century also gave rise to two World Wars, to countless other wars, to the holocaust, and to Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In the 21st century, we must abolish nuclear weapons before they abolish us, and find better ways to achieve security than by the force of arms.

Peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons are the principal goals for which the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation has educated and advocated for nearly three decades. We have been a voice of reason and conscience and an instigator of thought and action on this critical issue. If humanity is to have a great future, it cannot afford continued complacency. It must awaken and engage in confronting ongoing nuclear dangers. Nuclear weapons are a genie that must be returned to the bottle. Peace is an imperative of the Nuclear Age.

Our lecturer is Robert Green, a retired British Royal Navy Commander who now lives in Christchurch, New Zealand with his wife, Dr. Kate Dewes. During his service as a bombardier-navigator, Commander Green had operational responsibility for nuclear weapons. He left the Royal Navy in 1982, after serving for 20 years. Since that time he has been an ardent campaigner for a world free of nuclear weapons. He played an important role in obtaining the World Court’s Advisory Opinion on the illegality of nuclear weapons. I had the pleasure of working with him and Kate in the Middle Powers Initiative, a coalition of eight international civil society organizations seeking to encourage middle power countries to put pressure on the nuclear weapon states to fulfill their nuclear disarmament obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Commander Green is one of the more intelligent and dedicated individuals working for a nuclear weapons-free world. He is the author of The Naked Nuclear Emperor and, more recently, Security without Nuclear Deterrence. His concerns with nuclear deterrence go to the very heart of the justification for nuclear weapons. If deterrence is flawed, so is our common security and that of our country and our world. His topic is of vital importance to all of us who care about creating a safer and more secure future for humanity.

Following Commander Green’s Kelly Lecture, we have included in this booklet the “Santa Barbara Declaration, Reject Nuclear Deterrence: An Urgent Call to Action.” This Declaration was created and adopted at a Nuclear Age Peace Foundation Conference on the Dangers of Nuclear Deterrence held in Santa Barbara on February 16-17, 2011.
2011 FRANK K. KELLY LECTURE ON HUMANITY’S FUTURE

Breaking Free From Nuclear Deterrence
By Commander Robert Green, (Royal Navy, Ret.)

When David Krieger invited me to give this lecture, I discovered the illustrious list of those who had gone before me – beginning with Frank King Kelly himself in 2002. I was privileged to meet him the previous year when my wife Kate Dewes and I last visited Santa Barbara. So I feel quite a weight on my shoulders. However, this is eased by an awareness of the uplifting qualities of the man in whose memory I have the huge honor of speaking to you this evening.

As I do so, I invite you to bear in mind the following points made by Frank in his inaugural lecture:

• “I believe that we human beings will triumph over all the horrible problems we may face and over the bloody history which tempts us to despair.”

• Some of the scientists who brought us into the Nuclear Age made us realize that we must find ways of living in peace or confront unparalleled catastrophes.

• A nun who taught him warned him he would be tested, that he would “go through trials and tribulations.”

As President Truman’s speechwriter, Frank discussed the momentous decisions Truman had to make – including this one:

• “When I asked him about the decision to use atom bombs on Japan, I saw anguish in his eyes. He made it clear that he felt the weight of what he had done.”

• “My experience in the Truman era indicated to me that the American people were not well informed about what was really going on in other countries and in the United States.”

I have done my best to take all this wisdom to heart in what I now have to say about breaking free from nuclear deterrence.

First, I will try to answer two challenging personal questions. People often ask why I am the only former British Navy Commander with experience of nuclear weapons to have come out against them. Others in the peace movement ask why it took me so long.

A Child of the Nuclear Age

In some ways, I am a child of the Nuclear Age. I was five days past my first birthday when 24-year-old Theodore Van Kirk, navigator of the Enola Gay, helped conduct the first nuclear atrocity, on Hiroshima. In 1968, I too was a 24-year-old bombardier-navigator when told that my Buccaneer strike jet pilot and I had been chosen as a nuclear crew in our squadron aboard the aircraft-carrier HMS Eagle. After being cleared to see top secret information, and indoctrinated about the honor and heavy responsibility of this role, we were given our target: a military airbase on the outskirts of Leningrad. We had to plan how to get there undetected from somewhere in the Norwegian Sea. This meant choosing the shortest route, over Sweden – a neutral country with very capable air defense. Our mission was to deliver a ten-kiloton WE177 tactical nuclear bomb, and then try to get back to our carrier, or at least bale out over Sweden or Norway. When I discovered there would not be enough fuel because the target was at the limit of our aircraft’s range, my pilot shrugged and said: “Well, Rob, if we ever have to do this, by then there won’t be anything to go back for.” So we submitted our flight plan, and celebrated our initiation into the nuclear elite.

Thirty years later, I was shocked to land at my target, to attend an anti-nuclear conference on European security on the eve of the 21st century. During the taxi drive into St Petersburg, I understood how my bomb would have caused massive civilian casualties from collateral damage. On TV that evening, I apologized to the citizens of Russia’s ancient capital. Then I told them I had learned that nuclear weapons would not save me – or them.

Back in 1972, after retraining in anti-submarine warfare, I was appointed as senior bombardier-navigator of a Sea King helicopter squadron aboard the aircraft-carrier HMS Ark Royal. Our task was to use variable-depth sonar, radar and other electronic sensors, plus a variety of weapons, to detect and destroy enemy submarines threatening our ships. However, our lightweight anti-submarine torpedoes were not fast enough and could not go deep enough to catch the latest Soviet nuclear-powered submarines. So we were given a nuclear depth-bomb, an underwater variant of the WE177 design.

The problem was that, if I had dropped one, it would have vaporized and irradiated one Soviet submarine, a large volume of ocean – and myself. This was because, unlike a strike jet, a helicopter was too slow to escape before detonation. So it would have been a suicide mission. Also, my leaders ignored the fact that there would have been heavy radioactive fallout from my bomb, plus the submarine’s nuclear power plant and any nuclear-tipped torpedoes it carried. And I might have escalated World War 3 to nuclear holocaust. All this, just to protect my aircraft-carrier.

This time I did complain. I was reassured there would almost certainly be no need to use nuclear depth-bombs;
no civilians would be involved; and the Soviets might not even detect it.

Besides, I had a glittering career ahead of me, and did not want to spoil my prospects, did I? As I was ambitious, and no-one else raised concerns, I fell silent. In due course, I was promoted.

However, the experience of such military incompetence and irresponsibility shocked me into a less trusting, more questioning frame of mind. That potent military tradition, carefully nurtured to carve out and hold down the British Empire, was immortalized in Tennyson’s Crimean war poem *The Charge of the Light Brigade* about an earlier suicide mission: “Thyrs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die.” That attitude was alive and well, in an all-volunteer Royal Navy. This was when I realized the significance of the fact that, unlike most of my colleagues, I had no military pedigree. My father worked in the Ministry of Agriculture. His father was a priest and divinity teacher at Trinity College, Dublin; and my paternal great-grandfather was an engineer. On my mother’s side, her father came from a line of professional gardeners and horticulturalists.

**UK Polaris Replacement and Falklands War**

In 1979, Margaret Thatcher swept into 10 Downing Street as Britain’s first woman Prime Minister. I was working just across the street as a newly promoted Commander, in the Ministry of Defense. In my position as Personal Staff Officer to the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Policy), I watched my Admiral facilitate the internal debate on replacing the four Royal Navy’s role was pivotal. So the war was directed from Northwood by my boss, Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse. At one point the outcome was in the balance: our ships were being sunk, and some friends and colleagues killed. If Argentine strike aircraft or submarines had sunk an aircraft-carrier or troopship before the landing force got ashore, the British might have risked defeat. What would Mrs Thatcher have done? Until then, she had been the most unpopular Prime Minister in British history. Now she had become the “Iron Lady,” and needed a military victory to save her political career.

Polaris had not deterred Argentine President Galtieri from invading the Falkland Islands. With victory in his grasp, would he have believed, let alone been deterred by, a threat from Mrs. Thatcher to use nuclear weapons against Argentina? Yet after I left the Navy I heard rumors of a very secret contingency plan to move the British Polaris submarine on patrol south within range of Buenos Aires. The submarine was fitted with 16 launch tubes, each housing an intercontinental ballistic missile equipped with three 200-kiloton warheads. Then came corroboration, from France. François Mitterrand was President in 1982. In 2005, his psychoanalyst’s memoirs revealed that in his first counselling session Mitterrand had just come from an extremely stressful phone call with Thatcher. A French-supplied Exocet missile fired from a French-supplied Argentine Navy Super Etendard strike jet had sunk a British destroyer. Mrs. Thatcher had threatened to carry out a nuclear strike against Argentina unless Mitterrand ordered his brother, who ran the Exocet factory, to release the missile’s acquisition system frequencies to enable the British to jam them. Mitterrand, convinced she was serious, had complied.

These nightmarish rumors led me to confront the realities of operating nuclear weapons for a leader in such a crisis. Defeat would have been unthinkable for the British military, and would have ended Mrs. Thatcher’s career. She was a true believer in nuclear deterrence. Yet if she had threatened Galtieri with a nuclear strike, he would have publicly called her bluff and relished watching President Reagan try to rein her in. The Polaris submarine’s Commanding Officer, briefed by me before going on patrol, would have been faced with a shift of target. Had he obeyed the order, Britain would have become a pariah state, its case for retaining the Falklands lost in the international outrage from such a war crime, especially against a non-nuclear state. Nuclear deterrence failure would have compounded the ignominy of defeat.
Redundancy, Roof-thatching and Murder

Back in 1982, on terminal leave after the British retook the Falkland Islands, I was 38 years old, with no qualifications except my rank and experience. Tired of weekend commuting to high-pressure jobs in London, I decided to try my luck and find local work which allowed me to be home every night. So I became a roof thatcher, enduring many painful jokes with stunned former colleagues. For eight idyllic years, I loved working with my hands in the open air restoring fine old houses, with a bird’s eye view of some of the most picturesque parts of southwest England.

Thatching proved vitally therapeutic in 1984, when my beloved aunt Hilda Murrell was murdered. My mother’s unmarried elder sister, she had become my mentor and close friend after my mother died when I was a 19-year-old Midshipman. Hilda was a Cambridge University graduate, and a successful businesswoman who ran the family rose nurseries. In retirement she became a fearless environmentalist and opponent of nuclear energy and weapons. At the age of 78, she applied to testify at the first British public planning inquiry into a nuclear power plant. Mrs. Thatcher was determined to introduce a programme of reactors of a design which failed at Three Mile Island. Hilda, who had a formidable network of establishment contacts, did her homework about the insoluble problems of nuclear waste. A true patriot, she was not prepared to let the nuclear industry ruin and poison her country – and potentially the rest of the planet – with nuclear weapons.

Rumors of nuclear conspiracy swirled around an incompetent police investigation into her bizarre murder. Then in December 1984, a maverick member of parliament announced in the House of Commons that I had been suspected of leaking secret documents about the controversial sinking of the Argentine cruiser General Belgrano in the Falklands War, and hiding them with my aunt. I had done nothing so stupidly treasonable; yet several reliable sources announced in the House of Commons that I had been suspected of leaking secret documents about the controversial sinking of the Argentine cruiser General Belgrano in the Falklands War, and hiding them with my aunt. I had done nothing so stupidly treasonable; yet several reliable sources agreed that State security agents had allegedly searched her house. A cold case review resulted in the 2005 trial and conviction of a petty thief, who was 16 years old in 1984. I have evidence that he was framed; and I am completing a book about this.

First Gulf War and Breakout

Implicating me in Hilda’s murder radicalized me. Then after Chernobyl, I took up her anti-nuclear energy torch. I learned that the nuclear energy industry had begun as a cynical by-product of the race to provide plutonium for nuclear weapons. My case for supporting nuclear deterrence crumbled with the Berlin Wall. However, it took the 1991 first Gulf War to break me out of my indoctrination.

From the moment in November 1990 when the US doubled its original figure for ground forces to eject Iraqi forces from Kuwait, I realized this was to be a punitive expedition. My military intelligence training warned me that the US-led coalition’s blitzkrieg strategy, targeting Iraq’s infrastructure as well as the leadership and military, would give Saddam Hussein the pretext he needed to attack Israel in order to split the coalition and become the Arabs’ champion. If personally threatened, he could order the launch of Scud ballistic missiles with chemical or biological warheads. If such an attack caused heavy Israeli casualties, Prime Minister Shamir would come under massive pressure to retaliate with a nuclear strike on Baghdad. Even if Saddam Hussein did not survive (he had the best anti-nuclear bunkers Western technology could provide), the Arab world would erupt in fury against Israel and its allies, its security would be destroyed forever, and Russia would be sucked into the crisis.

“The Israeli people, cowering in gas masks in basements, learned that night that their so-called ‘deterrent’ had failed in its primary purpose.”

In January 1991, I joined the growing anti-war movement in Britain and addressed a crowd of 20,000 in Trafalgar Square. A week later, the first Scud attack hit Tel Aviv two days after the Allied blitzkrieg began. For the first time, the second city of a de facto nuclear state was attacked and its capital threatened. Worse still for nuclear deterrence, Iraq did not have nuclear weapons. The Israeli people, cowering in gas masks in basements, learned that night that their so-called “deterrent” had failed in its primary purpose. Thirty-eight more conventionally armed Scud attacks followed, causing miraculously few casualties. When US satellites detected Israeli nuclear armed missiles being readied for launch, President Bush rushed Patriot missiles and military aid to Israel, which was congratulated on its restraint.

Meanwhile, in Britain, the Irish Republican Army just missed wiping out the entire Gulf War Cabinet with a mortar-bomb attack from a van in central London. A more direct threat to the government could barely be imagined. What if instead they had threatened to use even a crude nuclear device? A counter-threat of nuclear retaliation would have had zero credibility.

Coming out against nuclear weapons was traumatic. My conversion was no sudden Damascene experience. I knew about indoctrination, the Official Secrets Act and top security clearances, linked to the carrots and sticks of a career requiring me uncritically to accept the nuclear policies of my government. My circumstances were unique. I went through a process of cumulative experiences, including the murder of my aunt and mentor in which British state security agents were allegedly involved. Nuclear weapons and power seem to make superficially democratic governments behave badly.

Belatedly forced to research the history of “the Bomb,” I learned that the British scientific-politico-military establishment initiated and spread the nuclear arms race. Having alerted the United States to the feasibility of making a nuclear weapon, Britain participated in the Manhattan Project. On being frozen out of further collaboration by the 1946 McMahon Act, it began to develop its own nuclear arsenal. Thus Britain became a role model for France, and later Iraq and India: the first medium-sized power with delusions of grandeur to threaten nuclear terrorism. Also, I learned that nuclear deterrence does not work; it is immoral and unlawful, and there are more credible and acceptable alternative strategies to deter aggression and achieve security.

Legal Challenge to Nuclear Deterrence

Having given up thatching as the 1991 Gulf War loomed, after my breakout I became Chair of the British affiliate of the World Court Project. This worldwide network of citizen groups helped persuade the United Nations General Assembly, despite desperate countermoves by the three NATO
nuclear weapon states, to ask the International Court of Justice for its Advisory Opinion on the legal status of nuclear weapons. In 1996, the Court confirmed that the threat, let alone use, of nuclear weapons would generally be illegal. For the first time, the legality of nuclear deterrence had been implicitly challenged.

One aspect of the Court’s decision was especially important. It confirmed that, as part of international humanitarian law, the Nuremberg Principles apply to nuclear weapons. This has serious implications for all those involved in operating nuclear weapons – particularly military professionals who, unlike a President or Prime Minister, really would have to “press the button.” What is at stake here is a crucial difference between military professionals and hired killers or terrorists: military professionals need to be seen to act within the law. Nuclear weapons should be stigmatized as chemical and biological weapons have been, so that no military professional is prepared to operate them.

The next year, recently retired General Lee Butler spoke out far more powerfully than I could. He is still encouraging me to keep going. Then in 1999 I found myself with David Krieger in a delegation to Tokyo not only with Lee Butler, but Robert McNamara too. In a heretical team of that calibre, I knew what I was doing was right.

**Why Nuclear Deterrence is a Scam**

It was the American writer H. L. Mencken who quipped: “There’s always an easy solution to every problem: neat, plausible, and wrong.” Nuclear deterrence fits this nicely. To make it acceptable to political leaders and those in the military who have to operate them, the appalling effects of even the smallest modern nuclear weapon have been played down, and that “there would almost certainly be no need to use them.” In fact, they are not weapons at all. They are utterly indiscriminate devices combining the poisoning horrors of chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, plus inter-generational genetic effects unique to radioactivity, with almost unimaginable explosive violence. Yet nuclear deterrence is not credible without the will to use them. This is why a state practising nuclear deterrence is actually conducting a deliberate policy of nuclear terrorism.

My next fundamental objection relates to the fact that, if deterrence based on conventional weapons fails, the damage is confined to the belligerent states and the environment recovers. What is at stake from nuclear deterrence failure is the devastation and poisoning of not just the belligerents, but potentially most forms of life on Earth.

“Nuclear deterrence is a scheme for making nuclear war less probable by making it more probable.”

Closely related to this is a crazy reality: nuclear deterrence is a scheme for making nuclear war less probable by making it more probable. The danger of inadvertent nuclear war is greater than we think, when nuclear deterrence dogma demands that the United States and Russia persist with over 2,000 nuclear warheads between them poised for launch at each other inside half an hour. What are they playing at, over twenty years after the Cold War ended and when they are collaborating in the so-called “war on terror”? I now suspect that nuclear deterrence is an outrageous scam, devised sixty years ago by the US military-industrial monster dominating US politics and foreign policy. President Barack Obama’s vision for a nuclear weapon-free world, in his Prague speech in April 2009, was immediately contradicted by a caveat: “...as long as these weapons exist, we will maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to deter any adversary, and guarantee that defense to our allies...” This is old, muddled thinking, because a rational leader cannot make a credible nuclear threat against a nuclear adversary capable of a retaliatory strike. And a second strike is pointless, because it would be no more than posthumous revenge. This is why enthusiasm for a nuclear weapon-free world is hypocrisy if some nuclear weapons will be kept “for deterrence as long as anyone else has them.”

The deception deepens when the nuclear weapon states, aware that extremists armed with weapons of mass destruction cannot be deterred, plan pre-emptive nuclear attacks in “anticipatory self-defense” of their “vital interests” – not last-ditch defense of their homeland. Thereby, their unprovable claim that nuclear deterrence averts war is cynically stood on its head.

Extremists would not only not be deterred by nuclear weapons. They could provoke nuclear retaliation in order to turn moral outrage against the retaliator and recruit more to their nightmarish causes.

**Consequences of Nuclear Deterrence Failure**

With such an irresponsible example from the five recognized nuclear weapon states, it is no surprise that India and Pakistan are trying to emulate it, locked toe to toe in hostile rivalry. Indian governments became convinced that the fetishistic power of nuclear deterrence held the key to guaranteed security and acceptance as a great power; whereupon Pakistan promptly followed suit.

I will never forget a public meeting in Islamabad in 2001. The nuclear physicist Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy had persuaded General Aslam Beg, one of the “fathers” of Pakistan’s Bomb, to join a panel with himself and me. Beg warned against raising awareness about the effects of a nuclear strike on a Pakistan city, “in case it scares the people.” He had a simplistic faith in nuclear deterrence, ignoring all the added dangers of a nuclear standoff with India. He is not alone: my experience is that most believers in nuclear deterrence refuse to discuss the consequences of failure. I will now confront them.

**Economic Consequences.** In April 2005, an internal report for US Homeland Security appeared on the web. Titled *Economic Consequences of a Rad/Nuc Attack*, the report examined what it would take to recover from the detonation of just one nuclear device in various cities. Much depends on the size of bomb and level of decontamination, but the economic consequences for New York alone would be around $10 trillion. That is roughly the annual Gross Domestic Product of the entire US economy. Just one nuclear bomb, on one city.

**Environmental and Agricultural Consequences.** A deeply disturbing article, published in January last year in *Scientific American*, reported on recent climate research about a regional nuclear war between India and Pakistan in which about only 100 Hiroshima-size nuclear devices would be detonated over cities. Apart from the mutual carnage and destruction across South Asia, enough smoke from
firestorms – let alone radioactive fallout – would be generated to cripple global agriculture. Plunging temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere would cause hundreds of millions of people to starve to death, even in countries far from the conflict.

**Health Consequences.** In 2004, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War published their findings regarding casualties from a Hiroshima-size nuclear warhead detonated over New York. Total fatalities were estimated at about 60,000. Another 60,000 would be seriously but non-fatally injured. These would clearly utterly overwhelm any hospitals surviving the explosion. Again, this is just one nuclear weapon on one city.

In 1985, the Pentagon accepted the theory of “nuclear winter” was valid. However, its response was reflected in this statement to Congress by US Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle: “Rather than eliminating nuclear weapons, the most realistic method of preventing nuclear winter is to build enough weapons to make sure that the Soviets will be deterred from attacking.” Redundant warhead numbers have been cut, but little has changed in such thinking.

**Nuclear Deterrence Does Not Work**

In London in 2008, Kate and I attended one of the last public lectures by Sir Michael Quinlan. Known as the British high priest of nuclear deterrence, he advised successive governments on how to justify nuclear deterrence. Almost twenty years after the end of the Cold War, he asserted that rejecting any threat or use of nuclear weapons amounted to “full-blown pacifism.” Ignoring conventional deterrence options, Quinlan swept aside any objections that:

- Nuclear deterrence has a credibility problem;
- It incites nuclear arms racing and the spread of nuclear weapons;
- Nuclear weapons cannot be used indiscriminately or proportionately; and
- Nuclear weapon use would inevitably risk escalation.

He failed to take into account the environmental and health consequences of even a limited nuclear exchange, avoiding any mention of the word “radioactivity”; and he dismissed abolition as unrealistic. In light of the World Court Advisory Opinion, Kate asked him for a legal use of nuclear weapons. Revealing his disturbing Cold War mindset, he gave the Russian naval base at Murmansk.

The 2009 report *Eliminating Nuclear Threats* by the Australia-Japan International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament challenged the assumption that nuclear weapons have deterred major war. It acknowledged that avoidance of nuclear war has been due more to luck than deterrence. It agreed that nuclear weapons are worse than useless to deter terrorists.

It correctly argued that, just because nuclear weapons cannot be uninvented, this does not mean they should not be outlawed and abolished as chemical and biological weapons have been.

“Just because nuclear weapons cannot be uninvented, this does not mean they should not be outlawed and abolished as chemical and biological weapons have been.”

Surprisingly, the report, chaired by former Foreign Ministers of Australia and Japan, also questioned the need for extended nuclear deterrence, arguing that conventional deterrence was adequate. Yet, having admitted that extended nuclear deterrence undermines progress towards a nuclear weapon-free world, it failed to follow the logic of its criticisms. No doubt this was because, unlike New Zealand, Australia and Japan continue to fall for the hoax of nuclear deterrence.

The report should have concluded that extended nuclear deterrence does not make Japan or Australia secure, and is not credible. The misnamed “nuclear umbrella” has helped the US maintain its military alliances and bases in both countries for its own purposes. However, the “umbrella” is really a *lightning rod for insecurity*, because the US risks being pushed past the nuclear threshold when its own security is not directly threatened.

Why would any state attack Australia or Japan, let alone with nuclear weapons? If it did, the US would almost certainly not respond with nuclear weapons because it would risk inevitable, uncontrollable escalation to full-scale nuclear war. Instead, if the US decided it was in its national interest to come to their defense, it would rely on its formidable conventional firepower.

Nuclear deterrence has not prevented non-nuclear states from attacking allies of nuclear weapon states. Examples include China entering the Korean War when the US had a nuclear monopoly in 1950; Argentina invading the British Falkland Islands in 1982; and Iraq invading close US ally Kuwait in 1990, and attacking nuclear-armed Israel with Scud missiles in 1991. In all these cases nuclear deterrence failed. The US in Korea and Vietnam, and the USSR in Afghanistan, preferred withdrawal to the ultimate ignominy of resorting to nuclear weapons to secure victory or revenge against a non-nuclear state.

**Safer Security Strategies**

The main security threats in the 21st century include climate change, poverty, resource depletion and financial crises as well as terrorism. Nuclear deterrence, provoking hostility and mistrust, prevents rather than assists the global non-military cooperation required to solve them.

For all these reasons, all but about 35 states feel more secure without depending on nuclear deterrence. After Japan and Australia’s admirable leadership through co-sponsoring their recent report, they, South Korea and NATO’s non-nuclear members should therefore join the 140 states now supporting negotiating a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

In Britain, a defense budget crisis has revived the debate about replacing Trident, and uncritical British support for US foreign policy. Indeed, the black hole in defense spending has been caused by desperate attempts to keep up with the Americans. Such poor decisions were driven by British nuclear dependence on the US.

Instead, making a virtue from necessity, the British government should reassert its sovereignty and announce that it will rescue the dysfunctional nuclear non-proliferation regime by becoming the first of the recognized nuclear weapon states to rely on safer and more cost-effective security strategies than nuclear deterrence.

A new world role awaits the British. By far the best-placed candidate for “breakout,” Britain’s nuclear arsenal is the smallest of the recognized nuclear weapon states; and they are deployed in just one system, a scaled down version of Trident. Its government has to decide by 2016
whether to replace Trident with whatever the US decides. The minority Liberal Democrats, in coalition with the Conservatives, oppose Trident replacement. The alternative – nuclear-tipped Cruise missiles launched from attack submarines – has been ruled out, because the Obama Administration is scrapping its nuclear-armed Tomahawk missiles.

All Britain has to do is decide not to replace its four Vanguard class Trident-armed submarines. British “breakout” would be sensational, transforming the nuclear disarmament debate overnight. In NATO, Britain would wield unprecedented influence leading the drive for a non-nuclear strategy. British leadership would create new openings for shifting the mindset in the US and France, the other two most zealous guardians of nuclear deterrence. This would heavily influence India, Israel, Pakistan and states intent on obtaining nuclear weapons. The way would then open for a major reassessment by Russia and China, for all nuclear forces to be stood down, and for negotiations to begin on a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

““The key is to see nuclear disarmament as a security-building process.””

The key is to see nuclear disarmament as a security-building process, moving from an outdated adversarial mindset to a co-operative one where nuclear weapons are recognized as an irrelevant security liability. Mikhail Gorbachev was the first leader of a nuclear weapon state to understand this. In 1986, three years before the Berlin Wall was torn down, he briefly broke the grip of Cold War security thinking. Tragically, the opportunity to abandon Mutual Assured Destruction at the Reagan/Gorbachev summit in Iceland was defeated by the US military-industrial complex’s vested interests over ballistic missile defense, and the spurious US need to extend nuclear deterrence to its allies. Here was an example of how nuclear deterrence undercuts the political stability its proponents claim it creates.

Conclusions

To conclude, I hope I have explained why I rejected nuclear deterrence, and why it is the last major obstacle to a nuclear weapon-free world. Finding our way back from the nuclear abyss, on the edge of which nuclear deterrence has held us hypnotized and terrorized for sixty-five years, will not be easy. As with all advances in human rights and justice, the engine for shifting the mindset has to come from civil society.

I recall what Mahatma Gandhi said in 1938, as he launched the final push towards evicting the British from India: “A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history.” The American anthropologist Margaret Mead added: “Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

A surprisingly small network of individuals drove the campaign to abolish slavery. As with nuclear deterrence, slavery’s leading apologists were the power elites of the United States, Britain and France. They argued that slavery was a “necessary evil,” for which there was “no alternative.” They failed, because courageous ordinary British, American and French citizens mobilized unstoppable public and political support for their campaign to replace slavery with more humane, lawful and effective ways to create wealth. The analogy holds for nuclear deterrence, which can and must be discarded for more humane, lawful and safer security strategies if civilisation and the Earth’s ecosystems are to survive.
A Call to Action

On February 16 and 17, 2011, the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation hosted a conference in Santa Barbara to address the dangers of nuclear deterrence. Participants included experts in nuclear proliferation, international law, the environment, former military personnel and peace activists who came from across the United States and as far away as New Zealand. On the final day of the conference, participants drafted the “Santa Barbara Declaration, Reject Nuclear Deterrence: An Urgent Call to Action.”

Add your name to the declaration today by visiting www.wagingpeace.org/goto/declaration.
Nuclear deterrence is a doctrine that is used as a justification by nuclear weapon states and their allies for the continued possession and threatened use of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear deterrence is the threat of a nuclear strike in response to a hostile action. However, the nature of the hostile action is often not clearly defined, making possible the use of nuclear weapons in a wide range of circumstances.

Nuclear deterrence threatens the murder of many millions of innocent people, along with severe economic, climate, environmental, agricultural and health consequences beyond the area of attack.

Nuclear deterrence requires massive commitments of resources to the industrial infrastructures and organizations that make up the world’s nuclear weapons establishments, its only beneficiaries.

Despite its catastrophic potential, nuclear deterrence is widely, though wrongly, perceived to provide protection to nuclear weapon states, their allies and their citizens.

Nuclear deterrence has numerous major problems:

1. Its power to protect is a dangerous fabrication. The threat or use of nuclear weapons provides no protection against an attack.

2. It assumes rational leaders, but there can be irrational or paranoid leaders on any side of a conflict.

3. Threatening or committing mass murder with nuclear weapons is illegal and criminal. It violates fundamental legal precepts of domestic and international law, threatening the indiscriminate slaughter of innocent people.

4. It is deeply immoral for the same reasons it is illegal: it threatens indiscriminate and grossly disproportionate death and destruction.

5. It diverts human and economic resources desperately needed to meet basic human needs around the world. Globally, approximately $100 billion is spent annually on nuclear forces.

6. It has no effect against non-state extremists, who govern no territory or population.

7. It is vulnerable to cyber attack, sabotage, and human or technical error, which could result in a nuclear strike.

8. It sets an example for additional countries to pursue nuclear weapons for their own nuclear deterrent force. Its benefits are illusory. Any use of nuclear weapons would be catastrophic.

Nuclear deterrence is discriminatory, anti-democratic and unsustainable. This doctrine must be discredited and replaced with an urgent commitment to achieve global nuclear disarmament. We must change the discourse by speaking truth to power and speaking truth to each other.

Before another nuclear weapon is used, nuclear deterrence must be replaced by humane, legal and moral security strategies. We call upon people everywhere to join us in demanding that the nuclear weapon states and their allies reject nuclear deterrence and negotiate without delay a Nuclear Weapons Convention for the phased, verifiable, irreversible and transparent elimination of all nuclear weapons.

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*Initial signer from The Dangers of Nuclear Deterrence Conference,
hosted by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Santa Barbara, February 16-17, 2011.
VISION
Our vision is a just and peaceful world, free of nuclear weapons.

MISSION
To educate and advocate for peace and a world free of nuclear weapons and to empower peace leaders.

YOUR VOICE CAN PROTECT OUR WORLD
Nuclear weapons threaten our common future. The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation works for the worldwide elimination of nuclear weapons in a phased, verifiable, irreversible, and transparent manner. We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with consultative status to the United Nations. Our goal is to educate and engage millions of people to move the world to abolish nuclear weapons.

Join us at www.wagingpeace.org.
Your voice counts.