



**An international workshop organized
by**

**Pugwash Conferences on Science and
World Affairs**

**with the support of the Flemish Peace
Institute**

**Brussels (Belgium), Flemish Parliament
25-26 September 2014**

Issues related to the future of nuclear weapons in Europe formed the basis of a Pugwash workshop which took place in Brussels 25-26 September 2014 at a time of heightened tensions between Russia and NATO perhaps unparalleled since the end of the Cold War. While participants recognized the complications the Ukraine situation posed for future progress on issues related to nuclear arms control and disarmament, the meeting's focus was on possible steps to remove the US tactical nuclear weapons that remain based in five European countries (Belgium, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, and Turkey). The goal was to identify the ways in which progress in this area might contribute to increased security and stability for all sides, and the role that various related steps may play in contributing to confidence building and progress in other areas.

The actual military utility of US nuclear weapons based in Europe is limited since few believe that a) any use of these weapons would be considered 'tactical' due to the profound strategic implications of any deliberate nuclear use, b) they are largely de-alerted and it is understood it would take at a minimum one month to prepare them for use; and c) many question whether NATO nuclear command structures would ever be invoked in the event of any international situation grave enough in which nuclear use were to be contemplated (most likely US or UK nuclear weapons systems would be used by direct order of their own governments).

The perceived political utility of the basing of these weapons in Europe draws from the symbolism they provide. Consideration should be given to meeting in other ways the perceived symbolic needs of those NATO countries who most clearly articulate this link – including those who are among the newer members of NATO.

In fact, the continuing presence of US nuclear weapons on European soil has negative effects. The failure to remove these weapons from Europe over the past 25 years has been viewed by some as a grave mistake, contributing to the increased tensions between US/Europe and Russia. Arcane NATO secrecy rules limit democratic debate in host nations on these issues where despite overwhelming public antipathy toward these weapons is not able to be properly debated in national parliaments and in the public sphere. Secrecy and constraints on governmental officials in those countries should be revised. This is critical since the basing arrangements rely on bilateral agreements between the US and the host countries, and the policy makers in those countries should be able to have an open discussion with their publics to whom they are primarily responsible on any benefits and also the potential dangers of basing these weapons on their national territory. For example, it

was noted that even when the Dutch government sought clarification over who would bear costs for any accident or use of these weapons on their territory, the USA expressed diplomatic displeasure at the question being raised. A similar question raised with the Belgian government has been ignored so far.

A norm against basing one's nuclear weapons on the soil of any other country is timely and necessary. This is important to do now, before other countries seek to follow suit.

In the lead up to the forthcoming 2015 NPT Review Conference, European states should consider very carefully the contributions the NPT makes to international security. While the non-proliferation angle of the treaty has received the lion's share of emphasis in recent years, the nuclear disarmament commitments were integral to the treaty's structure. Given the lack of progress made on the results of recent Review Conferences, Europe can do a great deal to create an environment at the next Review Conference that could help avert a potentially very negative outcome.

Transparency measures should be encouraged. Steps can be taken either in the P5 process, at a NATO level or unilaterally to demonstrate goodwill through increased transparency. This can be done, as mentioned above, by releasing government officials in host countries from outdated secrecy requirements. Host countries can do more to highlight for their citizens the cost/benefits of such arrangements, and they can provide detailed information about costs for the host countries resulting from planned modernization of the US B61 bombs.

Host countries should also be more explicit with their citizens about the qualitative changes in capability that will come as a result of the planned US modernization. These weapons will have increased accuracy and features that change traditional calculus over the likelihood of their possible use. The USA and NATO should be more explicit about the possible impacts of the basing of these weapons in Europe, especially at a time of heightened tensions.

The importance of addressing issues related to conventional forces becomes intertwined with discussions regarding stability and security in the European theatre. The development of conventional weapons with increased precision and destructive capability needs to be discussed in a transparent way. Discussions could take place on a follow on for the CFE treaty, which has provided many important benefits including transparency.

Pugwash has long recognized the great threat nuclear weapons pose to humanity, in fact this was the core theme of the Pugwash founding document, the 1955 Russell-Einstein manifesto. Newer studies have demonstrated the grave environmental and transnational impact of any possible accidental or intentional use of nuclear weapons. This renewed focus, furthered by key intergovernmental meetings hosted by governments in Norway, Mexico and later this year, Austria, should reinvigorate the debates in Europe about the dangers of hosting US nuclear weapons on their soil. The modality for discussing the legitimacy of nuclear weapons is welcome and timely and can provide impetus for pursuing a ban treaty, nuclear weapons convention, or in the shorter-term perhaps exploration of codifying the existing norm against nuclear use (perhaps through renewed discussions of no-first use, either in the P5 or NATO context).

Much can and should be done unilaterally and bilaterally. States can reaffirm their goal of a nuclear weapons free world, and they can begin to articulate their way forward toward this goal. Non-

nuclear weapons states can play a role in this – it was pointed out that Mongolia spent a period of 8 years negotiating a series of bilateral understandings about its commitment to be a nuclear free state. It was pointed out that Austria is a 'mini-nuclear weapons free zone' as a result of its national constitutional commitment to be nuclear free.

The role of other states with nuclear weapons states in or affecting the region obviously need to be discussed. The trends toward modernization of the US, UK and French arsenals more generally raise deep concerns. The presumably large numbers of Russian substrategic nuclear weapons continue to pose in the minds of many a deep challenge. Steps such as basing the Russian TNW further away to the East (for example, behind the Urals), and increased transparency regarding their operational status (separate storing of warheads from delivery vehicles, etc) might provide a needed CBM. It was noted that Russia had stated on various occasions that before it becomes ready to discuss reductions or re-deployments of such weapons, the US should follow its example and withdraw all its weapons, currently stationed in Europe, to its own territory. US reaction to that has been negative, but nobody has so far seriously tried to think imaginatively, whether the two positions are as irreconcilable as they appear.

Participants from various perspectives expressed the belief that despite increased tensions the many and serious issues related to the basing of US nuclear weapons should be given renewed consideration with a view toward removing them back to US soil without further delay. The benefits of such a step far outweighs any perceived benefit to this anachronistic and destabilizing force posture, and could, in itself play a role of CBM, which are much needed in the current period of severe turbulence between NATO and Russia.

The Future of Nuclear Weapons in Europe

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Abstract

The purpose of this workshop will be to discuss the rationale behind the presence of tactical nuclear weapons in five non-nuclear-weapon countries in Europe, as well as the feasibility of their potential removal. This subject will be inspected in the broader context of (1) the changing European security context and the role of nuclear weapons therein, (2) the presence of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons in nuclear-weapon countries in Europe, and (3) the recent political developments and their influence on the nuclear disarmament agenda.

Draft programme

Thursday 25 September 2014

12.30-14.00 Registration and lunch

14.00-14.30 Welcome and Introduction: **Tomas Baum (Belgium), Bob van der Zwaan (the Netherlands), Paolo Cotta-Ramusino (Italy)**

14.30-16.00 Session 1: The changed security context and the role of nuclear weapons in Europe

Presenters (10' each): **Steven Miller (US); Alexander Nikitin (Russia)**

Respondents (5' each): **Sverre Lodgaard (Norway)(tbc); Uta Zapf (Germany); Theo Peters (The Netherlands)**

55 minutes discussion

16.00-16.30 Coffee break

16.30-18.00 Session 2: The remaining US tactical nuclear weapons in Europe

Presenters (10' each): **Hans Kristensen (US/Denmark); Liviu Horovitz (Romania)**

Respondents (5' each): **Sigurd Schelstraete (Belgium), Giorgio La Malfa (Italy), Mustafa Kibaroglu (Turkey), Ted Seay (US)**

50 minutes discussion

19.00 Dinner

Friday 26 September 2014

8.30-9.00 Coffee

9.00-10.30 Session 3: The French, British, and Russian nuclear weapons in Europe

Presenters (10' each): **Bernard Norlain (France); Oliver Meier (Germany)**

Respondents (5' each): **Sergey Batsanov (Russia), Martin Butcher (UK), Francesco Calogero (Italy), Tytti Erastö (Finland)**

50 minutes discussion

10.30-11.00 Coffee break

11.00-12.30 Session 4: Towards a nuclear weapon free zone in Europe ? European attitudes towards a ban on nuclear weapons ?

Presenters (10' each): **Alexander Kmennt (Austria); Tom Sauer (Belgium)**

Respondents (5' each): **Ernst Ulrich (Germany), Karoliina Honkanen (Finland), Francesco Lenci (Italy)**

55 minutes discussion

12.30-14.00 Lunch