

# Transforming the security agenda: lessons and hopes for the future

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## Two transitions and a treaty

- USA/ USSR nuclear stand-off: Cold War
- A brief history of Civil Defence
- The Nuclear ban Treaty
- What next and what do we need to do?

## USA/ USSR nuclear stand-off: 1962 and beyond

- Crisis/ threat
  - Cuban Missile Crisis – brink of nuclear war
- BUT: positive changes/ transitions
  - Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, 1963 (why?)
    - Ban on nuclear weapons testing in atmosphere
  - Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, 1968 (why?)
    - Ban on new states developing nuclear weapons
    - Commitment to disarm by the nuclear states
  - Outer Space Treaty (1967), first nuclear weapons free zone (1967), Seabed Arms Control Treaty (1971), ABM Treaty (1972)


Cuban Missile Crisis – several near misses: Soviet submarines armed with nuclear torpedoes; shooting down of US U-2 spy plane; UK nuclear forces on alert

## A brief history of civil defence

- 1950-1960s Regional seats of govt – assumed all out nuclear strike, 3-4 weeks of warning – ‘care and maintenance’
- 1979 Conservative Gov’t review – the beginning of the end
- 1980: warning reduced to 7 days
- (UKWMO) modernised, improved Wartime Broadcasting Service, ‘Green Goddess’ fire engine update, ££ for EPOs; SRHQ (bunkers) secretly upgraded.
- Protect and Survive; The War Game; ‘Hard Rock’ exercise;
- NFZ movement and CND upsurge (Cruise and Pershing-II)
- 1982 London After the Bomb; BMA objections, public ridicule

United Kingdom Warning and Monitoring Organisation (UKWMO) was to be modernised, improvements were to be made to the Wartime Broadcasting Service (WTBS) and the ‘Green Goddess’ fire engines were overhauled EPO= emergency planning officers

## 1960s - 1980s: 1500 (!) Royal Obs Corps nuclear monitoring bunkers

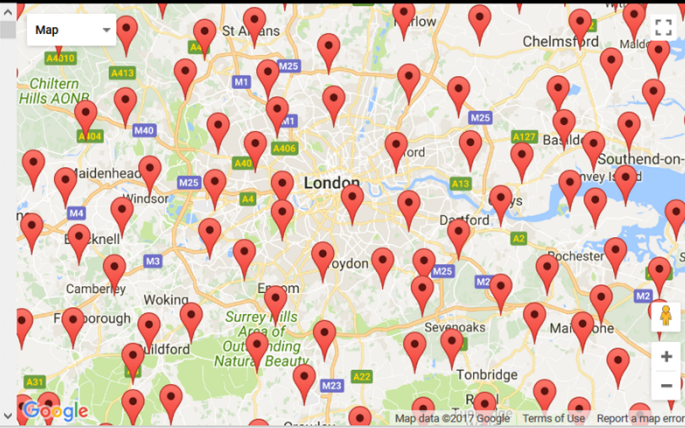
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Chilmark Regional Bunker Wiltshire – staff of over 120

REGIONAL GOVERNMENT HEADQUARTERS



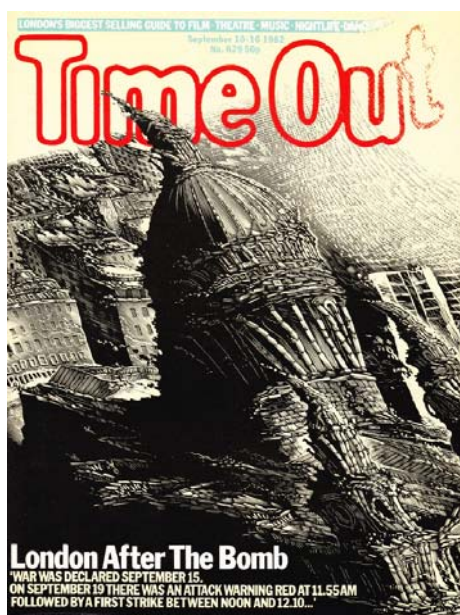
*Left:* A section of the suite of offices provided for the Regional Commissioner's secretariat. The typical 1980s deco, and the quality of the fitting-out, is clearly evident in this photograph. Compare this with the sparseness of the equivalent Regional War Rooms of the 1950s or the Regional Seats of Government of the subsequent decades.

*Below:* Corridor of power: the central spine corridor on the lower level of the bunker. Excluding the service area, this passage runs the full length of the building and terminates at stairwells at each end. The door to the immediate left is to the military communication suite, the first room on the right housed the uniformed services and is followed by the secretariat offices, the BBC studio and the strong-room.



*Above:* The server in the headquarters' restaurant. The high standard of fixtures and fittings within the bunker is evident here too. Note the stainless steel fittings (including refrigerators and deep freezers in the background) and the tastefully tiled floor.







Hard-pressed publishers are always looking for new bestsellers. MARTIN WALKER looks at their latest boom industry

## Sales rise before the bomb drops

*Peter Keen's comment on the usefulness of the Government's civil defence handbook*





Looking something less than secure in their "domestic nuclear shelter" are authors of *London After the Bomb*: Dr. Philip Webber, Neil Turck and Dr. Graeme Wilkinson.

## WHEN IS IT SAFE TO COME OUT?

It is Home Office policy to give the 'all-clear' message in a locality when the radiation level has fallen to a dose rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$  rad per hour. This figure is calculated on the assumption that people would still spend six to eight hours inside every day so that the daily dose would not exceed 10 rads, which is assumed to be the body's recuperation rate. Although this dose is considered to be 'safe' and the all-clear would be given at this point, this *daily* dose of radiation is higher than the permitted *yearly* dose for radiation workers in peacetime, and the accumulated dose of several days working in the open air is certainly large enough to cause sterility and damage to the bone-marrow. Because of fall-out, there are few areas where our family in an improvised shelter could survive the two-week shelter period. Also, in



many areas a two-week shelter period would not be long enough. Over a large area of London, radiation would be so high that it would take much longer than two weeks for the dose-rate to fall to  $\frac{1}{2}$  rad per hour.

## AFTERMATH

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world in utter chaos: roads blocked by overturned cars and fallen telegraph poles; bricks, roofing tiles and broken glass everywhere; a smell of burning in the air from smouldering fires all over the city; and the stench of putrefying bodies lying where they have fallen or been thrown by the blast.

All the services we rely on today will, if they are running at all, be very limited. There will be no piped water, no sewage disposal system, no food in the shops, no heating or lighting, little or no medical

care, no telephones or postal system. Money will have no value. Law and order will have broken down and martial law will be in force. Survivors will also face the inescapable dangers of radiation.



## A brief history of civil defence-2

- 1983 New Regulation: plans for nuclear attack 'up to date'
- Local Govt MUST take part in exercises
- Create 'emergency centres' (not bunkers or war rooms)
- 75% then 100% HO funding for emergency planning teams
- Civil Defence plans no longer secret
- 1986 Home Office Planned Programme of Implementation PPI  
nuclear plans written to an 18 month timetable
- Emergency feeding; burial; law & order; housing ('rest centres');

## USA/ USSR nuclear stand-off: 1980 and beyond

- Crises/ threats
  - Serpukhov-15/ Able Archer-83 – NATO war exercises that nearly went 'real'.
- Positive changes/ transitions
  - 1982 UK Hard Rock civil defence exercise fiasco (CND Hard Luck)
  - Reykjavik Summit: Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev, 1986
  - Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty, 1987
    - Ban on all intermediate-range nuclear weapons – leading to large reductions in Europe
  - Large falls in nuclear arsenals – START-1 Treaty 1991
    - Global totals: from 64,000 warheads down to 28,000 from 1986 to 1996
  - Helped contribute to end of Cold War

- Serpukhov-15 – Soviet early warning system falsely detected US nuclear weapons attack
- Able Archer-83 – NATO military exercises falsely seen by Soviets as prelude to major attack
- NATO did not immediately realise how perilous the situation was –Reagan announced 'Star Wars' program in 1984. Gorbachev became Russian leader in 1985

## USA/ USSR nuclear stand-off: why did it reduce?

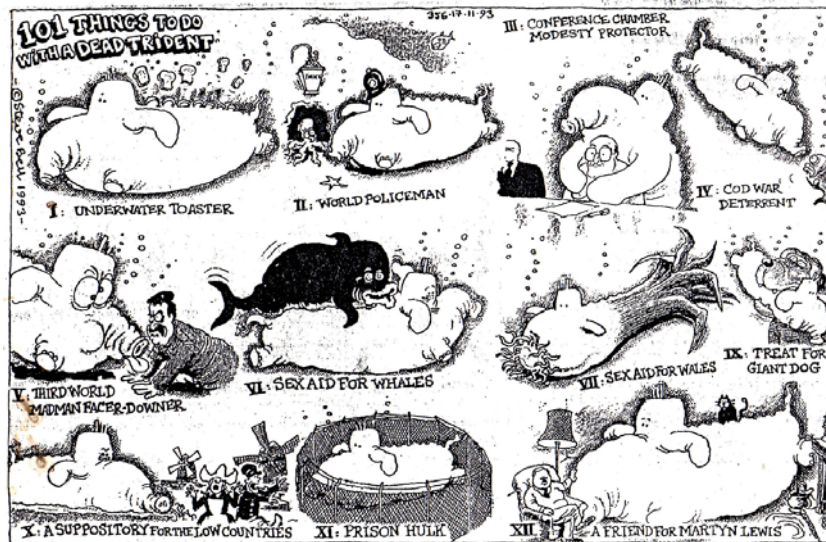
- Reagan deeply affected (says Colin Powell) by:
- 1951 film: The Day the Earth Stood Still: Aliens warn earthlings to settle their conflicts or galactic powers will destroy earth.
- 1983 War Games: computer hacker nearly starts nuclear war; The Day After: Kansas in the aftermath of nuclear war.
- Spending on both sides enormous
- 40% of USSR budget!
- BUT Reagan also supported Star Wars missile defence – this undermined (and still does) further nuclear reductions.
- Chernenko – Gorbachev transition

- Here come the little green men...

## Civil defence-the outcome

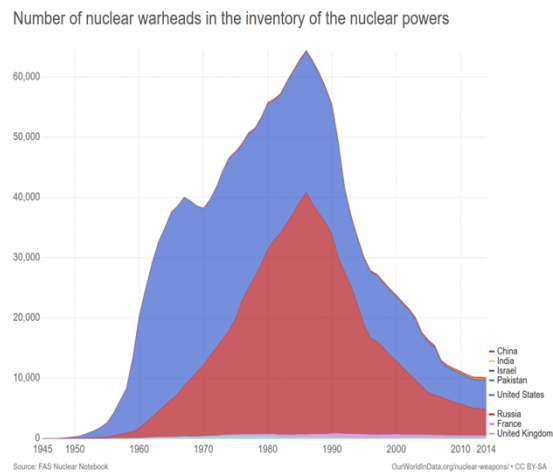
- 'Real planning' exposed 'real problems'
  - Eg: plans for emergency feeding using school kitchens;
  - no gas or water
  - so no emergency feeding possible
- 1989: Nuclear planners dispersed to district councils for 'all hazards'
- Nuclear civil defence quietly dropped
- 1991 ROC disbanded, siren system, SRHQs scrapped
- 'New realities': glasnost, end of Cold war

United Kingdom Warning and Monitoring Organisation (UKWMO) was to be modernised, improvements were to be made to the Wartime Broadcasting Service (WTBS) and the 'Green Goddess' fire engines were overhauled EPO= emergency planning officers





# Nuclear warhead numbers, 1945-2014



## 1997 and beyond – new approaches

- Crisis/ threat
  - Landmines killing thousands of people a year
- Positive change/ transition
  - Ottawa Treaty, 1997
    - Ban on all anti-personnel landmines
    - Campaign led by civil society
  - 162 nations now ratified treaty
  - 49 million mines have been destroyed
  - Of 61 countries with minefields:
    - 29 declared 'mine-free'; 32 have action plans to eliminate mines
  - Large drop in number of deaths
    - From 9,000 per year to 4,000 from 1999 to 2014

Treaty process driven by civil society organisations across the world

## 2007 and beyond: towards a new nuclear treaty - 1

- ICAN formed in 2007 – SGR as UK campaign partner
- Original idea a nuclear weapons convention
  - De-alerting; un-deploy; remove launchers; disable w/hs
- 2012 – preparation for Oslo humanitarian impacts conference – SGR produces key briefing material with Article 36, ICAN
- First international humanitarian fact based discussion:
  - immediate impact of detonation
  - wider consequences (health, environment)
  - capacity for emergency response.
- Key role of Norway, Austria, Mexico, Ireland, RSA, Costa Rica, NZ, Ireland; Civil Society; NGOs, survivors

Treaty process driven by civil society organisations across the world

## 2008 and beyond: towards a new nuclear treaty - 2

- Oslo conference March 2013: SGR, ICAN briefings circulated
  - 'Re-framing' of the debate – humanitarian impacts & laws instead of weapons 'control'
  - Scenario: Manchester 100kT detonation
  - Trident and nuclear winter
- Nayarit conference, Mexico: February 2014
- Vienna Conference: December 2014
  - Austria: landmark pledge to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons
- April-May 2015 NPT review conf - deadlock
- July 2017: 122 states sign to adopt treaty at UN

Treaty process driven by civil society organisations across the world

## 2017 – Nobel Prize awarded to ICAN !

- October 2017 – over 50 states have signed the Treaty
- Several have already ratified Treaty.
- Nuclear states continue to try to ignore it
  - And actively lobby against it

Treaty process driven by civil society organisations across the world



## Some lessons for today

- Crises create the conditions for rapid political positive (or negative) change
- So do long-standing failing processes such as the NPT
- Need inventive campaigns involving a wide range of people: survivors, NGOs, diplomats – new alliances
- The fiercest objections precede changes in policy
- Use of humour, stigma, vital to change the debate
- Organisations such as SGR, Medact are vital – the basic facts are routinely ignored or avoided by status quo.
- This new treaty presents a great new opportunity

## A Final Overview?

- 1960s – massive nuclear attack and everyone dies
- 1980s – maybe conventional war and then some survive with civil defence plans
- “..the nuclear arms race has no military purpose. Wars cannot be fought with nuclear weapons. Their existence only adds to our perils because of the illusions they have generated.”
- Abandon civil defence and retreat to deterrence
  - Nowhere else to go as nuclear war acknowledged as ‘the end’
- UK state now clinging on to Trident as an (obsolete) symbol of power
- Use the Nobel Prize and support of >122 nations to ban nuclear weapons.

Lord Mountbatten at Strasbourg. 1979 !!