

HOW THE CHURCH HAS KEPT THIS ISSUE IN HER SIGHTS



“ The time has gone for finding ways to a ‘balance of terror’: the time has come to re-examine the whole strategy of nuclear deterrence. The Holy See has never countenanced this as a permanent measure, nor does it today. It again emphasises that the peace we seek in the 21st century cannot be attained by relying on nuclear weapons.”

Archbishop Celestino Migliore, permanent observer at the UN, May 2005.



To remember Hiroshima is to abhor nuclear war

John Paul II on a visit there in 1981

“ The stockpiles which exist in various countries should be reduced equally and simultaneously by the parties concerned. Nuclear weapons should be banned and replaced by disarmament.”

John Paul II, to the UN in 1982

“ The whole world must say ‘no’ to nuclear conflict, ‘no’ to weapons of mass destruction, ‘no’ to an arms race which robs the poor and vulnerable, and ‘no’ to the moral danger of a nuclear age which places before humankind indefensible choices of constant terror or surrender.”

America’s Bishops: The Challenge of Peace, 1983

“ The gravest consequences for mankind lie ahead if the world is to be ruled by the militarism represented by nuclear weapons rather than by the International Court of Justice.”

Archbishop Renato Martino, Holy See Representative to the UN, October 1997.

Some final words . . .

■ The Trident missile systems on our subs aren’t ‘independent’. They depend on technology from America to fire them. It is a US firm (Lockheed Martin) which largely owns the Berkshire centre where our nuclear weapons are developed. The same firm provides technical engineering support for Trident, under a contract awarded by the US Navy. And it is a US company, Haliburton Corporation, which owns the nuclear submarine refit and maintenance yard in Davenport.

■ ‘Deterrence’ means ‘threat’. So potential enemies have to believe we have the will to carry it out. That fails any moral test. To attain security by threatening to kill millions of innocents — and destroy our planet — is fundamentally un-Christian.

■ The use of nuclear weapons would be a violation of all the rules of conduct in war, which prioritise the protection of the innocent. Even combatants are to be free from ‘cruel and inhuman’ treatment’ (such as exposure to radiation). So our use of Trident, even in a retaliatory situation, would violate our obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty — as well as the principles of a just war.

What you can do

Write to your MP urging him/her to oppose the Trident upgrade at every opportunity.

Speak out whenever the subject comes up. **Pray** for a safer world.

Be active — join **Pax Christi** (www.paxchristi.org.uk), **CND** (www.banthebomb.org), or . . . the **J & P movement** (www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk).

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UNHOLY!

From the Paisley Diocesan Justice & Peace Core Group

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TRIDENT, THE CHURCH AND YOU



Cardinal Keith O’Brien writes: Page 2

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The Government has launched a consultation exercise on the upgrade of the Trident nuclear defence system.

The Church is part of this debate, at all levels from the Vatican to local hierarchies and campaigning groups. The Paisley Diocesan Justice & Peace Group recognises that a whole genera-

tion has known nothing else than a defence system based on weapons of mass destruction, and has published this

leaflet to re-state some of the Church’s teaching. It wishes to thank its sister core group in the St Andrews & Edinburgh archdiocese, and the J & P National Commission, for their co-operation and the use of material featured by the former in a study guide last December.

Shame can spur us on

NUCLEAR weapons have an awesome power for destruction. The use of even one of them would mean the death of thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of people and we already have hundreds of such weapons, capable of destroying our planet many times over.

Vatican Council 11, in the document *Gaudium et Spes*, warned that the use of such weapons must never be contemplated: 'every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man himself, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation'.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church repeats these words. Pope John Paul II described the Catechism as the 'statement of the Church's faith' so we should be in no doubt about this issue being an issue of faith.

We here in Scotland have a duty to lead the way in campaigning for change, because we have the shameful task of housing these horrific weapons.

WITH the Trident system fast becoming obsolete, and the debate concerning its replacement in full swing, now is the time for all men and women of Easter faith to raise our voices.

Enter this debate and demand that these weapons be replaced, but not with more weapons. Rather, replace Trident, as the Holy Father has said, with projects that bring life to the poor.

*Keith Patrick O'Brien,
Cardinal Archbishop of
St Andrews & Edinburgh*

1. You can't disinvent the Bomb

You can't disinvent torture racks or gas chambers either. But you can dismantle them, recognise they are totally immoral, and refuse to make or use them.

2. The Bomb has given us 60 years of peace

Millions have died since the Second World War, in 172 conflicts and 12 major wars. Europe has escaped the worst of this but that is due to its political and economic integration — not 'the Bomb'.

3. Without atomic bombs, we are open to attack from a nuclear enemy

Every country in the world could make this claim. It would be insanity for all of them to have nuclear arsenals. The only answer to nuclear bullying is to eliminate all nuclear weapons via strictly observed and internationally enforceable agreements.

4. What about job losses if we abandoned the Bomb?

If we spent the same amount on socially useful and labour-intensive production as we do on defence, we would actually increase employment. And look at all the jobs generated by Belsen, Dachau and the other German concentration camps. Was that an argument for keeping them? As for the skills of those who build and maintain nuclear weapons, these could be put to good use in



Answers for an apocalyptic age

industry and life-enhancing productivity.

5. Having the Bomb gives us a permanent seat on the UN Security Council

If that justifies our having the Bomb, it tells the rest of the world they must go nuclear in order to join the Big Boys' Club. But the fact is that the permanent members are the victorious allies from the Second World War.

6. If Hitler had had the Bomb, he would have used it

Probably. Nuclear deterrence does not work when an insane dictator is on the loose. So there's another reason to eradicate all weapons of mass destruction.

7. We need them to stop rogue states from acquiring them

If the Bomb is a legitimate means of defence for us, it must also be legiti-

mate for every other country in the world. Meanwhile the 'rogue states' are actually the nuclear powers. International humanitarian law forbids the deployment of WMDs.

8. Nuclear weapons are merely a deterrent

The fact that we are prepared to use them if necessary is in itself sinful. It means we are conditionally committed to the massacre of millions. That's the downside of 'deterrence'.

9. Refusal to consider the Bomb is no better than appeasement

'Appeasement' is merely following the lead of other nuclear powers rather than making our own moral choice for disarmament. The latter course would be in line with the Geneva and Hague Conventions, which outlawed nuclear weapons. We would have the force of international law behind us.

10. Hiroshima and Nagasaki shortened the war

The claim that these bombs saved thousands of lives is a myth. Japan indicated in May 1945 that it was ready to surrender. America knew this but feared that a Russian invasion of mainland Japan would lead to a joint occupation, as in Germany. The war continued — and Allied soldiers continued to die — while work on the bomb was speeded up. The nuclear attacks of August 6 and 9 brought the swift and unconditional surrender that put America in the driving seat.



On its way: Is this missile really a way to keep the 'peace'?

Taking action: Cardinal O'Brien with (extreme left) Moderator Alan McDonald sign the Churches' petition against the Trident upgrade



Picture: Paul McSherry

Pope: No victors, just victims

POPE Benedict XVI asked, in his Message for World Day of Peace last January 1: 'What can be said about those governments which count on nuclear arms as a means of ensuring the security of their countries? This point of view is not only baneful but also completely fallacious.

'In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims. The truth of peace requires that all agree to change their course by clear and firm decisions, and strive for a progressive and concerted nuclear disarmament.' Scotland's Bishops took up the theme in Holy Week:

'The use of weapons of mass destruction would be a crime against God and against humanity: it must never happen. The Church teaches that it is immoral to use weapons of mass destruction in an act of war... Equally, storing and accumulating such weapons gives rise to strong moral reservations. Far from eliminating the causes of war, it risks aggravating them... We urge the UK Government not to invest in a replacement for the Trident system, and to begin the process of decommissioning these weapons with the intention of diverting the sums spent on nuclear weaponry to programmes of aid and development.'