



CEC CSC

'Picking The Low Hanging Fruit'

Memo on NATO's tactical nuclear weapons and more European church and civil society support for the U.S. policy towards a nuclear weapon free world

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Introduction: a window of opportunity

In the last six years, a window of opportunity to advance the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons has sprung open. This memo argues why civil society and churches should become more active, especially in Europe. The focus is on the Cold War legacy of still some 150 à 200 U.S. tactical nuclear weapons (TNW)¹ deployed in five NATO member states in Europe: Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and Turkey. Reducing the number of countries in the world with nuclear weapons on their territory from 14 to 9 would be a substantial contribution to strengthening the global non-proliferation regime. Reducing reliance on nuclear weapons in security strategies is even an agreement made by almost all countries in the world during the 2010 nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. European actors can support this process by advocating for the withdrawal of all remaining TNW from the territories of these five countries in Europe. In this way, they could help reinvigorate President Obama's commitment to a world without nuclear weapons, made in his first term. This memo describes what has led to the current situation, informs about ecumenical efforts so far, and calls for seizing the opportunity now.

1. Political context: a new debate since 2007, but a late response from Europe

On 4 January 2007, George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn published their first op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* with a surprising call for a world without nuclear weapons.² This started a new debate in the U.S., the main argument being that the Cold War deterrence system cannot be replicated in a multi-polar world facing new threats like further nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism. The plea for 'zero' was soon endorsed by many security veterans in the U.S. However, it took one and a half years before a similar group of European former statesmen and security veterans published a supportive op-ed (it was a group from the U.K.). Today, op-eds by comparable groups from 12 countries have been published, most of them from Europe.³ However, even after

¹ Often called theatre nuclear weapons (also 'TNW'), which relates to their original Cold War role on the battlefield, the theatre being Europe, or non-strategic nuclear weapons (NNSW), which is *not* a clear definition.

² <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB116787515251566636.html>. See also http://www.nti.org/c_press/A-World-Free-of-Nuclear-Weapons.pdf.

³ A list of statements organized by country can be found on the Pugwash website, see http://www.pugwash.org/reports/nw/nuclear-weapons-free-statements/NWFW_statements.htm. Another list - not complete - is on the website of the Nuclear Security Project: http://www.nuclearsecurityproject.org/site/c.mjJXJbMMIoE/b.3506933/k.C34D/Articles_and_Opeds.htm. For a complete list, with related statements added plus comments by the author, see *Fact Sheet* by Laurens

President Obama outlined his agenda towards 'zero' in his Prague speech on 5 April 2009, political support from Europe has remained lukewarm, with both the EU and NATO divided. Europe is especially divided about what could be its own main contribution: the withdrawal of the remaining U.S. TNW (all freefall B61 nuclear bombs) from the five non-nuclear European NATO member states where they are still stationed, two decades after the end of the Cold War.

2. Germany lifting the taboo in NATO in October 2009

The country that has been most active is Germany. Two years after the first call by Kissinger et al., a German 'group of four' (Helmut Schmidt, Richard von Weizsäcker, Egon Bahr and Hans-Dietrich Genscher) published an op-ed in the *International Herald Tribune* (9 January 2009) with a strong endorsement for going to zero nuclear weapons.⁴ They also explicitly stated that "*all remaining U.S. nuclear warheads should be withdrawn from German territory.*" However, the breakthrough came in October 2009 with the coalition agreement of the new German government making the commitment to this goal official government policy. This lifted the taboo on publicly discussing the withdrawal of TNW in NATO.

3. NATO's 2011/2012 Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR)

As a result, countries like Norway, the Netherlands and Belgium expressed various forms of support, especially by advocating a discussion on the foreign ministry side (instead of solely defence) of NATO's nuclear policy while NATO was developing a new Strategic Concept. This created a new impetus but also proved divisive. (For the U.S. effort to formulate in consensus, in April 2010 in Tallinn, see par. 6). When in November 2010, at the NATO summit in Lisbon, the new Strategic Concept was agreed, the TNW issue had not yet been resolved. NATO then decided to undertake a 'Deterrence and Defence Posture Review' (DDPR) to review the 'appropriate mix' of nuclear and conventional forces, and missile defence. In private, some senior officials in NATO acknowledged that it would essentially be a *nuclear* posture review, NATO's TNW in Europe being one of the main (and most divisive) issues. The DDPR was to be concluded at the NATO summit in Chicago, May 2012, - if agreement could be reached, which was not certain. (For the outcome, see par. 10).

4. NATO divided on TNW withdrawal, but not as deeply as it seems

A March 2011 report by the Dutch ecumenical peace organization IKV Pax Christi, based on interviews with all 28 NATO member states representations in Brussels, showed that a large majority of NATO member states were either in favour of ending TNW deployment in Europe (14 member states, or half of NATO's membership) or would not block a decision to that end (10 member states). (For individual countries, conditions and scenarios varied). Only three were flatly opposed, France being the most vocal.⁵ The report concluded that making this potential majority for withdrawal more visible would require new means for guaranteeing alliance cohesion, 'burden sharing' and the link with the U.S. guarantee other than through TNW stationed in Europe.

Hogebrink on the website of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches: <http://csc.ceceurope.org/issues/nuclear-disarmament/> .

⁴ <http://www.iht.com/articles/2009/01/09/opinion/edschmidt.php?page=1>

⁵ See <http://www.nonukes.nl/documentation/withdrawal-issues:-what-nato-countries-say-about-the-future-of-tactical-nuclear-weapons-in-europe> .

5. The positions of the five host countries

The positions of governments in the five hosting countries are not identical. Germany is the most outspoken about its commitment to have TNW withdrawn from its territory, but all seem to make final decisions dependent on the outcome of the debate in NATO. There are differences in the extent to which Russian reciprocity is seen as a precondition.

- The official *German* position of October 2009 in favour of withdrawing TNW (see par. 2), though still controversial within the German government (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs being more engaged than the Ministry of Defence), did not link withdrawal of TNW in Germany to Russian reciprocity. In 2010, this position received full support of the German 'Bundestag' (Resolution 24 March 2010, endorsed both by government parties and opposition)⁶. Meanwhile, Germany has modified its position and makes Russian reciprocity a requirement for changes in NATO's nuclear posture, though it would probably apply a less stringent interpretation of the reciprocity requirement than other NATO allies. In December 2012, the German government pledged to continue working towards withdrawal of TNW from Germany. All opposition parties, the SPD, Greens and the Socialists ('Die Linke'), oppose modernization of the B61.
- In April 2010, the *Dutch* Parliament has asked the Dutch government "*to inform the U.S. government that it is no longer attached to the protection of the European continent through the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe and considers their withdrawal desirable.*" (Motion 21 April 2010). In a more recent motion, the Parliament went a step further, noting "*that the dialogue within NATO and with Russia has not or has hardly brought any progress (...)*", *opposed modernisation of TNW and stated that no resources should be invested, and requested from the government "to formulate as a hard goal the removal of TNW from Europe.*" (Motion 20 December 2012). The motion had been watered down to accommodate concerns by foreign minister Frans Timmermans, who wanted Russian TNW to be included and to read the motion as asking for removal as a result of negotiations. The Dutch government supports withdrawal, but only in a NATO context. Is opposed to unilateral steps, although earlier in 2012 as a member of parliament Timmermans has endorsed such more radical steps.⁷ In the Spring of 2013, a new government paper will be presented.
- The *Belgian* position is comparable to the Dutch. The government is in favour of withdrawing TNW, but in a NATO context. This implies some kind of reciprocity from Russia. Most likely, if the U.S. government would announce withdrawal, Belgium would welcome this, but it will not take the initiative.
- *Italian* and *Turkish* positions are ambivalent. Both countries have welcomed Obama's Prague speech, but TNW are not a political priority. Moreover, both are also oriented toward the Middle East. Italy hosts almost half of U.S. TNW still in Europe but seems not attached to their military or political value. However, NATO cohesion comes first. Politically, Italy is instable. Turkey borders both on Iran and Russia. Turkey was part of a group of seven NATO members advocating further reductions of TNW. It is likely to

⁶ <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/011/1701159.pdf> . ('Die Linke' abstained, not having been consulted).

⁷ See Wilbert van der Zeijden articles: http://www.natowatch.org/sites/default/files/enter_timmermans.pdf and <http://www.nonukes.nl/en/news/dutch-parliament-to-mfa:-make-removal-tnw-a-hard-goal> .

accept withdrawal, provided this is based on NATO consensus, but will not actively pursue this. Turkey's status as hosting nuclear weapons is not easily reconciled with its support of a Middle East Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction

6. The U.S. position so far

So far, the U.S. administration has been leaning towards withdrawing its TNW, but not without NATO consensus. In April 2010, at a NATO foreign ministers meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton tried to establish a NATO consensus with five 'principles', with still represent U.S. policy today.⁸ One of them was that as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. The most important 'Clinton principle' was that *"in any future reductions, our aim should be to seek Russian agreement to increase transparency on non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, relocate these weapons away from the territory of NATO members, and include (them) in the next round of U.S. Russian arms control discussion (...)."* Reciprocity of some form is also a condition for most NATO member states. For Washington, unity in NATO seems to be its first priority, at least so far.

Efforts for new formal negotiations with Russia that include TNW are required by a U.S. commitment linked to the ratification and entry into force of the New START Treaty.⁹ However, such negotiations are considered unlikely by many analyst and officials: too complicated, and for Russia the removal of all U.S. nuclear weapons from non-U.S. territory is a 'conditio sine qua non'. Some (former) U.S. officials argue that withdrawal should not be made dependent on Russia.¹⁰ Some NATO allies who favour TNW withdrawal have (mostly in private) criticised the U.S. for being too passive. (For today's U.S. position, see par. 12).

7. Modernization of aircraft and nuclear bombs

Four of the five host countries of U.S. TNW also fly nuclear missions with their own 'dual capable' aircraft¹¹, which must be replaced in this decade or shortly thereafter. Germany has already decided to replace its dual-capable Tornados by non-dual-capable Eurofighters. Other countries face skyrocketing costs and delays of the U.S. Joint Strike Fighter program (the only airplane in design intended to fit this requirement) and are postponing decisions.

Also the aging B61 free-fall nuclear bombs are scheduled to be modernized. This is a U.S. responsibility, but it has become politically controversial in Europe, esp. in Germany and the Netherlands (see par. 5). Therefore, some officials and politicians have argued that modernization (the politically controversial word is avoided!) should be based on NATO consensus. Moreover, the new B61 will have new military capabilities, which goes against official U.S. policy. Last but not least, current budget concerns - both in the U.S. and in European NATO allies -

⁸ See http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2010_05/NATO .

⁹ This was required by a U.S. Senate resolution in December 2010. In February 2011, when the new treaty entered into force, President Obama committed the U.S. to seek initiating such talks within a year. As expected, this proved not to be feasible.

¹⁰ See the article by Edmund Seay in *Arms Control Today*, November 2011: http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2011_11/NATO_Incredible_Nuclear_Strategy_Why_US_Weapons_in_Europe_Deter_No_One .

¹¹ Aircraft that can fly both conventional and nuclear missions.

may turn out to be powerful arguments by themselves. The costs estimates of modernizing the B61 have gone up from 6 to 10 billion U.S. dollars (2012).

8. The April 2011 'Non-paper' on TNW

So far, the focus in NATO has been on limited measures that will not endanger alliance cohesion. However, small steps could lead to more. An example was a 'Non-paper' on TNW that during the April 2011 NATO foreign ministers meeting in Berlin was circulated by Poland, Norway, Germany and the Netherlands and endorsed by six other countries.¹² It proposed seven specific measures for increasing transparency and confidence building with Russia as part of a broader debate while avoiding formal negotiations. This 'Non-paper' leaned heavily on the NATO-Russia Council as the venue to pursue this, but little was and is happening there, NATO being divided and Russia showing no interest. The 'Non-paper' was unacceptable for Russia and for some NATO members as well. But what is the alternative? Therefore, some of its reciprocity proposals are likely to re-emerge in the suggestions to be made by the new NATO arms control committee tasked to do so.¹³

9. Russian TNW

Russian stockpiles of TNW are larger than those of NATO. Their role in current Russian military doctrine (revised in 2010) is not clear, but it is generally assumed that they serve as compensation for Russia's conventional weakness and as a bargaining chip for getting concessions from NATO on other issues. There are good reasons for urging Russia for more transparency, relocation to safer locations, drastic reductions, and ultimately elimination. However, creating a formal linkage with U.S. withdrawals may delay progress on both sides. Russia will certainly create additional linkages with conventional disparities, non-nuclear strategic missiles ('Prompt Global Strike'), and missile defence plans in Europe, to which Russia is strongly opposed.

Russian analysts deny that the kind of reciprocity demanded by NATO is feasible, because of the large differences in infrastructure and the likelihood that NATO will refuse the kind of verification measures that would be needed for significant transparency of TNW stockpiles.¹⁴

10. Outcome of NATO's Deterrence and Defence Posture Review (DDPR)¹⁵

Senior NATO officials believe that the division in NATO about its TNW is a potential threat to NATO's future. Still, the DDPR has produced produce little. Any NATO decision about common policy requires consensus. However, the outcome of the May 2012 summit in Chicago showed that no consensus was possible, despite the many months of internal debate that had been spent. Not

¹² To be found here: <http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/nuclearweapons/nato-nonpaper041411.pdf> .

¹³ On 7 February 2013, in her remarks to a workshop on TNW in Warsaw, U.S. Acting Under Secretary for Arms Control and International security Rose Gottemoeller mentioned several of the transparency and confidence building measures that were also in the Non-paper. See <http://www.state.gov/t/us/204785.htm> . For the new arms control committee, see Oliver Meier's recent article <http://armscontrolnow.org/2013/02/26/nato-agrees-on-new-arms-control-body/> .

¹⁴ Igor Sutyagin, *Atomic Accounting: A New Estimate of Russia's Non-Strategic Nuclear Forces* (2012). See <http://www.rusi.org/publications/occasionalpapers/ref:O509A82F347BFC/> .

¹⁵ For an analysis by Laurens Hogebrink, see <http://www.nonukes.nl/actueel/nato's-deterrence-and-defence-posture-review-shows-that-consensus-is-not-possible> . The text of the DDPR can be found here: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87597.htm?mode=pressrelease .

changing the status quo for the next years was considered the easiest way out. Germany's efforts to make some progress failed and some other hosting countries were disappointed as well. And unfortunately, for the U.S., in an election year, a show of unity in Chicago was more important than advancing Obama's Prague agenda.

The DDPR resulted in:

- No change in NATO's nuclear posture, as it *"currently meets the criteria for an effective deterrence and defense posture"*.
- Green light for modernization, as it was added that *"in the current circumstances (...) the plans for their (= capabilities, LH) development are sound."* Elsewhere, the text added that *"all components of NATO's nuclear deterrent will remain safe, secure and effective (...)"*. This was worse than expected. It suggested that NATO already has agreed with what is called the Life Extension Program (= modernisation) of the B61.¹⁶
- Despite expectations of change, NATO's declaratory policy was not adjusted to the new 'negative security assurances' in the 2010 U.S. Nuclear Posture Review stating that the U.S. will not (threaten to) use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states that are party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and comply with their obligations. France opposed any change, seeing declaratory policy as a national responsibility of nuclear weapon states, not a NATO task. The DDPR only recognized that the three nuclear powers in NATO have their own declaratory policies. Germany lost.¹⁷
- Potential reductions of NATO's TNW were made dependent of reciprocal steps by Russia, *"taking into account the greater Russian stockpiles of non-strategic nuclear weapons stationed in the Euro-Atlantic area."* Many had warned against such a link with Russian reductions, as this could be a recipe for deadlock, because of the complications of new negotiations. Moreover, NATO failed to make any suggestion for transparency and confidence building measures.
- NATO's existing new arms control committee was ended, to be replaced by another committee with a mandate still to be agreed. Again, France got its way.

Despite the disappointments, some officials argued that it could have been worse

11. Back to the 'dual track' decision of 1979? And why the condition of 'reciprocity' after two decades of unilateral actions?

The formal 'linkage' with Russian TNW suggests a parallel with the missile crisis in the 1980s. NATO's 1979 'dual track' decision included both the decision to deploy a new missiles and a negotiation offer by NATO to the USSR that was not feasible by itself but disciplined NATO allies into remaining united. Moreover, the comparison now made between NATO's new arms control committee and the 'Special Consultative Group on Arms Control' established in 1979 to 'sell' the deployment of new missiles is worrying. Are we still in the Cold War?

It should be more widely known that all nuclear disarmament steps made by NATO, the U.S. and Russia in the two decades after the Cold War - until the New

¹⁶ Earlier approval had already been given in April 2010, without much awareness of it in NATO. See Hans Kristensen's *Nuclear Policy Paper No. 11* on http://www.basicint.org/issues/projects/nato_publications .

¹⁷ See Oliver Meier's March 2012 article on the German position prior to Chicago: <http://armscontrolnow.org/2012/03/14/germany-pushes-for-changes-in-natos-nuclear-posture/> .

START Treaty! - were unilateral. The most important nuclear disarmament steps in history were the unilateral (but parallel) decisions of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R./Russia to eliminate thousands of TNW in Europe, the so-called Presidential Nuclear Initiatives (PNI's) of 1991/92. Why suddenly return to reciprocity as a condition? Why does 'disparity' matter today, while it did not matter with the unilateral (partial) U.S. withdrawals of TNW from the UK, Turkey and Greece between 1994 and 2005?¹⁸ Moreover, none of these decisions required advance NATO consensus; there were merely announced.

12. After the DDPR: prospects for 2013

The re-election of President Obama in November 2012 may reopen the window of opportunity. There are reports of further cuts in an 'Implementation Study' still to be signed. It is interesting that formal negotiations with Russia do not seem to be the first option, but rather reductions as part of an informal agreement (perhaps similar to the PNI's of 1991/92?).¹⁹ In his *Inaugural Address* in January 2013, Obama fully ignored what four years before was announced as a top priority. During their confirmation hearings early 2013, new Secretary of State John Kerry said that it may take many centuries to eliminate nuclear weapons; Secretary of Defense (nominated) Chuck Hagel somewhat retired from his earlier support of a Global Zero report. In his *State of the Union* on 12 February 2013, President Obama again ignored his earlier calls for 'zero'. Is this part of an effort to avoid Senate approval of a treaty, by making unilateral but reciprocal cuts? Informal talks with Moscow will soon be resumed (see also footnote 13).

So far, the Russian position shows little flexibility. On the one hand, after Obama's re-election some new openness for talks is shown. On the other hand, old conditions like withdrawal first of all U.S. nuclear weapons to U.S. territory and including missile defence are repeated. A call for multilateral talks (the inclusion of the other nuclear weapons states) has even been added as a further complication.²⁰

Finally, NATO remains divided. It took until February 2013 for NATO to agree on the mandate of the new arms control committee that the DDPR has called for. Some analysts fear that some NATO states may come with unilateral moves. And indeed, this is precisely what some peace organisations and politicians advocate, after two years of NATO failing to agree. Does consensus mean: Germany loses and France wins?

13. A political process that is very different from the 1980s

As a result of President Obama's re-election, his Prague agenda of April 2009 may be revitalized, as a second-term President has more leeway. However, in three respects the new momentum since 2007 differs from the early 1980s as to the political process:

¹⁸ See footnote 15.

¹⁹ For instance, see an article about the forthcoming 'implementation study' of the Pentagon: http://www.publicintegrity.org/2013/02/08/12156/obama-administration-embraces-major-new-nuclear-weapons-cut?utm_source=iwatchnews&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=rss .

²⁰ <http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/russia-calls-talks-nonstrategic-nukes/> .

- The initiative and political pressure do not come from 'below' (mass movements, churches, civil society) but from 'above': senior (former) politicians and officials.
- The interaction between opponents and proponents of a nuclear free world and specifically TNW withdrawal may be more elitist, but it is quite intense.²¹
- Today, the problem is not hard-line U.S. policy vs. Europeans trying to mitigate this, it is the other way around: the U.S. government has been calling for bold steps towards a world without nuclear weapons, and Europe's response has been divided and hesitant.

Still, there are parallels in using arms control for disciplining allies into unity, see par. 11.

14. Churches responses

At the level of international ecumenical organizations and the Roman Catholic church, several initiatives in support of Obama's nuclear weapons free world policy have focused on Europe:

- In July 2009, the general assembly of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) in Lyon (France) endorsed President Obama's call for a world free of nuclear weapons and appealed to NATO states with TNW on their soil to signal that their role must be ended.
- On three occasions, the WCC, CEC, and the national councils of churches in the U.S. and in Canada have jointly addressed NATO, asking (among other things) for the withdrawal of U.S. TNW from Europe. For arguments, including the question of how to deal with the problem of Russian TNW, see their third letter, dated 11 March 2011.²² (See also next par.). In his reply to WCC general secretary Olav Fykse Tveit, NATO secretary general Anders Fogh Rasmussen expressed his interest in continuing the discussion and invited further comments (letter dated 28 March 2011).
- In 2010, the Church and Society Commission of CEC issued two extensive statements, both of which were informed by expert meetings held in Brussels. The first, issued in March 2010, addressed the EU policy towards the forthcoming Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in May 2010. The second, issued in July 2010, offered analysis and recommendations concerning NATO nuclear policy in the context of the revision of its Strategic Concept, to be adopted in November 2010.²³
- In April 2010, the (Roman Catholic) Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community issued a statement to the May 2010 NPT Review Conference.²⁴
- Pax Christi International has been quite active in advocating TNW withdrawal.²⁵

²¹ To mention one example: in July 2011, an international group of some 25 experts from NGO's and think tanks, and former government officials issued a joint letter to NATO's Secretary General Rasmussen with proposals for changes in NATO's declaratory policy and for TNW withdrawal, and opposing modernisation of DCA and B61 bombs in Europe. See <http://www.armscontrol.org/system/files/DDPRltrSGNATO.pdf> .

²² <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/wider-ecumenical-movement-incl-wcc/follow-up-on-the-adoption-of-natos-strategic-concept.html> .

²³ For these and other texts, see <http://csc.ceceurope.org/issues/nuclear-disarmament/> .

²⁴ This was a contribution of a COMECE Expert Group, see <http://www.comece.eu/site/en/publications/pubsec> .

²⁵ For statements, see http://www.paxchristi.net/international/eng/work_concern.php?wat=dd2 .

- In March 2012, in a letter to Russian President Medvedev, the WCC has submitted a discussion paper by the four councils about Russia's TNW. The paper was made public on the internet in May 2012.²⁶
- The WCC 10th Assembly, 23 October to 10 November in Busan (Republic of Korea), will provide another opportunity for addressing nuclear disarmament.

So far, these efforts have not raised much interest among member churches in Europe. For instance, the March 2011 letter by the four ecumenical councils to NATO was published on the websites of various U.S. churches, but not on those of most major churches in Europe. In so far as peace is still on the churches' agenda, other issues are given priority, like military intervention, 'Just Peace', cluster munitions and arms export. The concern for nuclear disarmament, which for decades has been very strong, seems to have faded.

N.B. It is notable that churches in S. Korea and Japan have become more engaged in this issue, being another part of the world where a form of 'extended nuclear deterrence' by the U.S. applies. This may be important for the WCC 2013 Busan Assembly.

15. Arguments by the churches

In their March 2011 letter to NATO, the four ecumenical councils summarize their arguments for withdrawal of U.S. TNW as follows:

"By eliminating this class of nuclear weapon based in non-nuclear-weapon states of Europe, NATO enhances the credibility of its arms control and non-proliferation policy in three ways: (a) NATO seizes the opportunity to reduce the number of countries in the world with nuclear weapons on their territory from 14 to 9; (b) NATO addresses doubts about its members' compliance with Articles I and II of the NPT which prohibit any transfer of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear states; and (c) NATO denies other countries the opportunity to acquire nuclear weapons by using a similar deterrence rationale."

Strengthening the non-proliferation regime by steps such as reducing the reliance on nuclear weapons in security strategies (a 2010 NPT commitment) and eventually ending nuclear deterrence is also a guiding principle for churches with other priorities than TNW in Europe, such as churches in the U.K. opposing British Trident modernization. In general, moral abhorrence of nuclear deterrence has been the position of churches for decades. Security should not rely on a readiness to destroy the world which God has entrusted to humankind.

16. Still no post-Cold War Europe debate

In international seminars, German officials advocating a more comprehensive and cooperative security policy in Europe are rarely echoed by others. For the churches, the lack of a real debate about Europe's future is disappointing. The last real debate about Europe's future was in the early 1970ies (the German 'Ostpolitik' and the Helsinki Agreements). A post-Cold War debate about Europe's security future has yet to take place. The TNW issue cannot be isolated from the question: what kind of new security community in Europe?

²⁶ See link on this page: http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/churches-regret-nato-dela.html?tx_ttnews%5Bsword%5D=regret%20NATO&cHash=c205df6349c4d70c41ba73b92c3555db .

17. Conclusion

The current challenge for churches and civil society in Europe is not in supporting large manifestations or other types of action which were common in the 1980ies. Today's political dynamics are quite different. Instead, churches could add their voice to the public debate and help build interest in this issue again among their own constituency, incl. national councils of churches, local congregations and church-related peace groups, all of this based on their long-standing commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The 'Just Peace' concept, as elaborated in the process leading towards the WCC International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Kingston, Jamaica, in May 2011, must be made politically operational in many fields of work for peace and justice. Clearly, the nuclear weapons issue should be one of these, as was expressed in the Message at the end of this Convocation. Allies could also be found in South Korea and Japan, in addition to the churches in North America.

The TNW debate should be part of the larger debate on

- how Europe can contribute to Obama's 2009 Prague agenda and to strengthening the non-proliferation regime;
- what kind of security structure is needed for Europe in the third decade after the end of the Cold War; and
- how, on the road towards 'zero' but with nuclear weapons still existing, the role of nuclear weapons can be reduced or eliminated in the security strategy of 'extended deterrence'.

Most experts and many senior officials agree that the remaining U.S. TNW in Europe no longer have a military role. As one diplomat put it: they are the low hanging fruit. Picking them would be a real European contribution to promoting Obama's Prague agenda.

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