

# ON THE EDGE OF THE NUCLEAR ABYSS

## Why Aotearoa New Zealand must stay nuclear-free

Threats to life on earth from nuclear dangers are now greater than ever before, as there are now nine states with nuclear weapons, instead of two, reports **LARRY ROSS**. Also, the leadership of the world's most powerful country, the U.S., has a new permissive attitude to using nuclear weapons, and threatened seven countries it might potentially target with them, as if there's nothing long-term and extraordinarily damaging in their use, and as if there's no potential for nuclear retaliation to escalate out of control. There is great value in Aotearoa New Zealand's nuclear-free policies and practices for both national and international security, as an example to the world of safer, saner ways to resolve conflict. With few challenges from mass media to the new "nuclear strategy," education on nuclear dangers is essential, to avoid a major nuclear catastrophe.

"We live on the edge of the nuclear abyss," said Lord Louis Mountbatten, UK Chief of Defence in 1979. Since 1945, many famous people, including nuclear experts like Dr Helen Caldicott have warned humanity with similar words.

Yet conventional wisdom has it that with the end of the Cold War, the major nuclear dangers are over, we've got the nuclear threat under control, and there's nothing to worry about. National's attitude was summed up by former Party leader Don Brash, in his comment to visiting U.S. Senators in 2005 that we can get rid of New Zealand's nuclear-free legislation "by lunchtime." It's possible, new National Party leader, John Keys, could become Prime Minister of Aotearoa New Zealand after the next election. As National knows it's pro-nuclear, pro-U.S. Iraq war lost it votes, John Keys now claims: "New Zealand's nuclear-free legislation should stay ... (but) ... changing circumstances will always dictate a need for fresh thinking and new ideas." (NZNP Press Release 30/11/06).

Keys further softened his "new" anti-nuclear stance by adding: "I have a much more positive view of the United States and its role in world affairs than most ministers in the Clark Government." In other words the illegal U.S.-led invasion of Iraq based on a litany of lies, killing 655,000 Iraqis so far, creating chaos and civil war is "a positive role"? The Bush Government created a similar litany of lies about Iran, its legal nuclear enrichment plans, and prepared plans to "shock and awe," mass bomb it. It also blamed Iran and Syria for events in Iraq, then wants talks with these nations to help it out of the crazy war it started.

All this suggests the actions of an out-of-control rogue state, rather than a responsible super power, "playing a positive role in world affairs." National still seems to have a dangerous blind spot when it comes to the realities of international affairs and U.S. policy. John Keyes may wish to reverse a vote-losing policy, but does he really understand the national and international value of New Zealand's priceless nuclear-free policies? Can he be trusted to preserve this?

### Some dangers if nuclear-free policies reversed

1. In wartime, ports that may harbour U.S. or UK nuclear warships could become targets for sabotage, by conventional or nuclear attack particularly if a war became nuclear. If we repealed our Nuclear Free law and hosted nuclear warships, New Zealand would become a potential target. Some politicians and media avoid the weapons and war issues and focus attention on the alleged "safety" of nuclear powered warships. Few mention there are now nine nuclear weapon states and the nuclear risks are increasing.
2. If New Zealand became a nuclear target by hosting nuclear warships, we could experience many deaths, destruction of infrastructure and radiation of land, animals and crops. That could destroy our agricultural trade for the foreseeable future. Is hosting nuclear warships to please rogue allies in order to gain alleged benefits, worth these risks?
3. The U.S. has launched a war against Afghanistan, an illegal war on Iraq, supported an Israeli war on Lebanon, and talks of war against Iran, that could become nuclear. As George Bush says: "All options are on the table." If a new New Zealand Government took "a positive view" of this madness it would no

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doubt soon find that due to “changing circumstances” it needed to reverse our nuclear-free policies and welcome its allies’ nuclear warships and participate in their wars.

These are a few of the questions an honest politician should consider and answer. These key questions deal with the real issues of nuclear warships, nuclear war and the increasing nuclear risks to those countries involved in supporting these wars. So far, National has avoided the key issues and confined itself to questions on the safety of nuclear power and nuclear propulsion.

### Benefits of being independent of big power politics

Kiwis have been given a few years grace on this issue because Labour won the last election, though barely. Hopefully there’s still time to educate the public and National Party politicians about nuclear issues, such as the real and growing nuclear war threats. We were very lucky when the U.S expelled New Zealand from ANZUS for our impudence in banning their wonderful benign, ultra-safe nuclear warships from our ports. That gave us time and a degree of independence to make up our own minds about such wars as Iraq, Lebanon and the probable war on Iran.

Our nuclear-free laws banning military support for those controlling nuclear weapons, also helped New Zealand stand firm for negotiated peaceful solutions. New Zealand’s major and traditional allies, the United States, Britain and Australia, are all engaged in an illegal war in Iraq. It’s been a great evolution of New Zealand’s foreign and defence policy to be able to stand on principal and say “no” to allied pressures to join the Iraq war. We have also made a name for ourselves as trusted, independent UN peacekeepers, and instigators of peaceful solutions in conflicts such as in Bougainville and the Solomons. It’s unlikely we would have reached this independent state, without having made our Nuclear Free Declaration in 1984, and rendering it into law in 1987.

It’s been a great success, and I think most New Zealanders prefer being a more independent country than we were prior to 1984, when it was “all the way with LBJ,” and before that when it was “all the way with Britain and Empire, right or wrong.” There’s something refreshing about New Zealand not remaining an unthinking automaton in a form of military serfdom, ready to always answer “yes” when the war calls come. However we must be aware and diligent, as there are still some kiwis, who yearn to return to the days of glory, and super patriotism to the great foreign deity and the heroics of the battlefield. New Zealand’s independence from big power politics and contribution to peaceful solutions to conflict is appreciated in international forums. We must ensure it’s kept this way.

### Need to educate on nuclear dangers

We are still teetering on the edge of the nuclear abyss as Mountbatten warned. President Kennedy warned the UN in 1962: “The world hangs by a thread under a nuclear sword of Damocles, ready to be cut at any time by accident, miscalculation or act of madness.” Today over 40 years later, the situation is worse, some say much worse. Dr Helen Caldicott has warned she expects a nuclear war before the end of the Bush presidency in 2008.

The main reason for this is that the Bush regime has decided to revise the rules covering nuclear warfare. No longer are nuclear weapons to be regarded with fear and loathing; no longer, according to the Bush vision should we proceed to nuclear disarmament as promised by the Nuclear Non-proliferation treaty (NPT). The U.S. regards nuclear non-proliferation as applying only to others, not to itself. No longer are nuclear weapons to be thought of as an unthinkable device to be used only as a last resort if attacked. The once prevalent idea that nuclear weapons are global suicide weapons, seems to have been banned from our media.

But the reality is, once some nation uses a nuclear weapon in anger, or by accident or miscalculation, it can cause a response by one or more countries. Then a chain reaction of nuclear response is possible. In this volatile, fast-moving situation, nuclear strategists believe if they don’t use their nuclear missiles and bombs, the enemy will launch a pre-emptive nuclear strike and catch them in their nuclear silos. They believe a sudden pre-emptive nuclear strike could win the war if their enemies don’t launch their nuclear missiles in anticipation. This is a very mad, irrational situation. It’s no longer cavemen with clubs, or knights in shining armour playing with bows and arrows,

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swords and spears. World War I, “the slaughter to end all wars,” led to World War II with 50 million killed. Today it’s millions of armed high-tech humans with cavemen emotions and trained robotic responses gambling with gigantic global death devices that can end life on earth in an afternoon. Is this progress and “a positive role in world affairs?”

**Cuban missile crisis saved by saying no**

There have been several incidents where nuclear war has almost happened by accident or miscalculation as President Kennedy warned. In the famous 1962 Cuban missile crisis, the Russians threatened to station nuclear missiles in Cuba. The U.S. and Russia came within a whisker of global nuclear war against each other. Some saner heads around at that time, including President Kennedy, saved the human race by saying “no” to the gung-ho Pentagon generals, who were keen for a nuclear response. The saner ones believed there must be another way, a better way to solve this crisis than destroying each other and the world.

Today things have radically changed with the Bush regime’s right-wing extremists, coupled with right-wing Pentagon generals. With their faulty thinking, they have decided nuclear weapons should be useable and not just

in principle. They have devised the plans and situations, where they could use the U.S., UK and Israel’s great nuclear weapons advantage to achieve their extremely

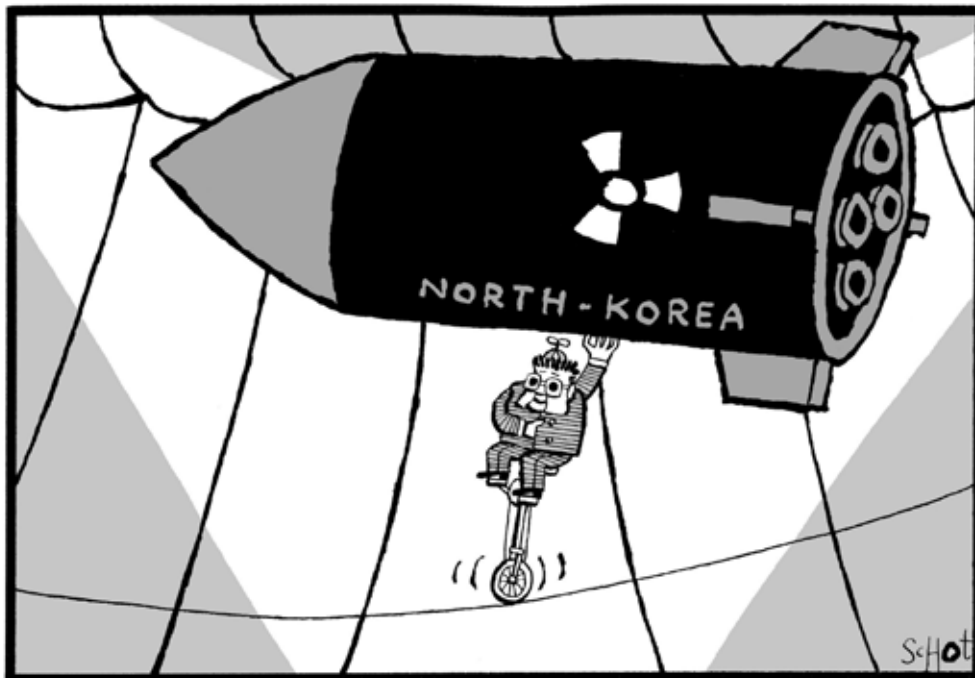
dangerous, insane, military objectives. Slyly and carefully, they are bringing nuclear weapons out of the closet, with propaganda to rival Goebbels’ propaganda in the Second World War. They have issued edicts saying nuclear weapons may be introduced into conventional warfare under certain conditions, and that the President may wage pre-emptive nuclear war against both nuclear and non-nuclear nations. The media presents this dangerous revolution in small print, without comment.

In their Nuclear Posture Review, 2002, the U.S. even named seven possible nuclear targets including non-nuclear nations, and also the nuclear states of China and Russia. It’s hair-raising, stupefying stuff. Again the media were both accepting and silent about this extraordinarily, threatening new stance. Mass media in the U.S., and even some media in New Zealand do their best for the Bush Regime, portraying this new nuclear insanity as a perfectly normal development in the best of all possible worlds. The very quiet, “business-as-usual” way it was done was brilliant propaganda. Adolph Hitler himself would envy the new sophistication in pro-war propaganda and the adept way mass media accepted the new doctrines of nuclear war permissiveness.

Criticism? Not likely because the pro-war propagandists are trying to condition and mould people’s minds to accept as truth, whatever the Bush regime decides to tell the public. Bush neocon extremism has become the normal order of the day. Media make no comment, little if any criticism is allowed. In other words, Neoconservative nuclear extremism and all the lies that go with it, are being rammed down your throat whether you like it or not.

What they choose to call “terrorism” is portrayed as a threat and an enemy. But nuclear weapons are portrayed

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IS THERE A PSYCHIATRIST IN THE AUDIENCE?

no longer as a general threat, but as something we can use when wise President, George Bush, in consultation with his fundamentalist God, decides there's a threat that requires a nuclear response. Bush and his entourage, tell us what's right and moral, who we are to regard as enemies, who we should make war against and kill, and if they think necessary, why they must use nuclear weapons against them.

With this new psychopathic nuclear ideology, unchallenged by the media at large you can see the extent and depth of the new nuclear threats. It's easy to understand why so many experts like Dr Helen Caldicott are deeply worried by the situation. At least in the past our nuclear strategists were a little saner, more aware and cautious, regarding the dangers of using nuclear weapons.

### The new nuclear abyss

But the Neoconservatives are different. They have tied this nuclear strategy to their extremist views of the world outside the U.S. and built it in into their plans and doctrines as if there were no real or extraordinary dangers in the use of nuclear weapons. They are treating the U.S.'s nuclear weapons superiority as a tool to use in their objectives of achieving global domination and control of Middle East oil fields. We are still on the edge of the nuclear abyss because little has changed. Russia and the U.S. still have thousands of the nuclear missiles on a "launch-on-warning" status. They can be launched at each other in minutes "by accident, miscalculation or act of madness," as President Kennedy warned in 1963. Although they claim to have reached an agreement to retire some weapons, these can quickly be restored to action if one or both sides say there's a crisis.

There are now nine nuclear weapon states. It's no longer just two, but now nine different sets of military and political fingers on the buttons of planet-destroying nuclear arsenals. Thus the risks of nuclear war by accident, miscalculation, anger, calculated pre-emptive strike or escalation of a conventional war or madness has greatly increased. All it takes is just one mistake, or just one intentional act of nuclear madness to end life on earth in an afternoon, because of nuclear overkill. With at least 27,000 nuclear weapons we know about in the world, the human race has more than enough to kill every person on earth many times over. As mankind has a long history of some 5,000 wars – with each side using every weapon they can find in desperate attempts to prevail over feared and hated enemies, it's amazing we have until now survived over 60 years without using nuclear weapons. We've gambled with our 27,000+ nuclear weapons and won. So we keep on even more recklessly and mindlessly. But gambler's luck inevitably runs out.

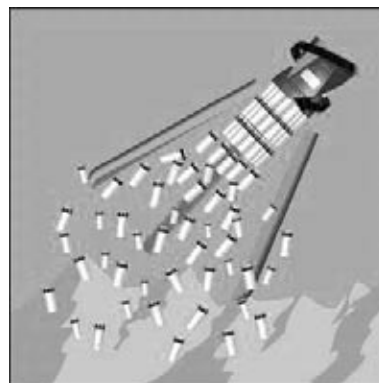
### Depleted Uranium – Slow motion nuke war

However, unknown to most, we are already engaged in a form of slow-motion nuclear war with Depleted Uranium (DU) weapons. These have been used by the U.S., and

UK, in four wars, and by Israel in Lebanon. DU weapons are preferred by some military because the DU coating on shells, bullets and bombs makes them penetrate heavier metal more easily and then explode into a mist of radioactive particles that kill, and kill and kill for a half-life of 4.5 billion years. During all that time the particles contaminate and poison wherever they reach, as they drift around the world killing and causing all kinds of radiation diseases.

Military establishments like the Pentagon and in the UK don't worry about the long-term effects. They don't worry about contaminating and killing endless future generations, or even their own soldiers. Their job apparently is to kill and win today for "freedom and democracy," not to worry about tomorrow. Most politicians in the U.S. and UK agree with this proposition. That's why George Bush and Tony Blair approved the use of DU-coated weapons wherever they want, such as the tons they used in their illegal Iraq war. The U.S. and UK claim DU weapons don't have long-term effects on the land and humans. This is similar to the U.S. claim during the Vietnam war, that Agent Orange was only a defoliant and not injurious to human health. In both case the U.S. and UK knew they were lying and that it killed humans, both quickly, and slowly, painfully by disease.

Slowly, by stealth, the idea of using nuclear materials in weapons of war has been planted in the public mind. The extreme, present and long-term dangers, hardly get a mention by the mass media in most Western countries. People really have no idea what this means and where it will lead the human race. The mass media won't tell them. This is why it's urgent and important to have a public education campaign on nuclear and war issues. I am on-call to speak anywhere in New Zealand in the future if expenses are paid. You can reach me at my email: [nuclearfreenz@lynx.co.nz](mailto:nuclearfreenz@lynx.co.nz) Or by phone (03) 337 0118 in Christchurch or at P.O. Box 18541, Christchurch. For more info about wars, nuclear issues, 9/11 and related issues, please visit [www.nuclearfreenz.org.nz](http://www.nuclearfreenz.org.nz) ■ PE



Clusterbombs (used recently by Israel in 2006 on Lebanon) contain DU, as did those the U.S. used in the invasion of Iraq.

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