Chapter 3

Hedley Bull and Arms Control

Robert O'Neill

A New Field

The challenging and sensitive field of arms control proved to be Hedley Bull's route to international prominence. In the mid-1950s many people who had the knowledge to think about nuclear weapons believed that the world was heading for danger. Nuclear warheads were growing rapidly in numbers and explosive power. New types of nuclear systems were proliferating, from air-dropped bombs to ballistic missiles. Submarine-launched missiles were also under development. Although the nuclear arsenal of the United States was large, that of the Soviet Union was promising to burgeon. This trend, plus the higher degree of secrecy that the Soviets could maintain, encouraged some influential Westerners to take the pessimistic view that unless the United States pressed ahead with a much stronger rearmament program, it would find itself outclassed by Soviet throw weight. The missile-gap controversy was beginning to open up. And the proliferation issue was already emerging. Britain had its own tested and proved nuclear weapons, France was known to be developing them, China (the United States' main opponent in the recently halted Korean War) was another clear possibility, and then there were several other advanced states such as Italy, the Federal Republic of Germany and Sweden (not to mention Australia) which could credibly attempt to build their own nuclear weapons.

Perhaps even more important than the vertical proliferation issues (size and types of weapons held by a single power) and the horizontal proliferation issues (numbers of states with their own nuclear weapons) was the basic question: 'What rational purpose did nuclear weapons serve?' By the mid-1950s these three sets of issues were becoming matters for public discussion and policy debate in the West. Leading politicians, academics, journalists, churchmen, retired armed service officers and diplomats were airing their thoughts in the newspapers, on radio, through public meetings and forums, and even via the relatively new medium of television. Any major set of problems which had the potential to threaten the security of whole nations and alliance systems was bound to attract the interest of major philanthropic foundations in the United States and Western Europe. Those who were seriously interested in these problems could now hope to obtain significant financial backing for undertaking

major research and analytical projects in the field of nuclear weapons policy. Their results would pass immediately into the public domain. Because this was a relatively new field, one in which there were few practitioners to dominate the discussion, newcomers could achieve prominence in a way that they could not in, for example, the fields of major naval warfare, or tank strategy. Bold individuals and groups of concerned, but not yet necessarily very expert, investigators could compete for foundation funding and then, once winning a grant, they could move ahead with attempting to develop better policies in the field of nuclear weapons.

A New Investigator

One of these individuals was Philip Noel-Baker, a former minister in the Attlee Government who was deeply committed to the cause of disarmament and had achieved international prominence through his writings on the subject during the 1920s and 1930s. Noel-Baker was a Quaker with a distinguished record of ambulance service during the First World War, a former Olympic athlete (Captain of the British track team at the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris which was the subject of the 1981 film *Chariots of Fire*) and a former holder of the Sir Ernest Cassell Chair in International Law at the University of London. He was committed to an ambitious task in the 1950s: the production of a book on the arms race and how it might be checked. He also had plans for a further book on the major disarmament conferences sponsored by the League of Nations in the inter-war years. Noel-Baker recognised that he needed assistance with a project of this magnitude and looked around for a young scholar whom he could respect and whose wits matched his own. He was guided to a newly appointed Assistant Lecturer in International Relations at the London School of Economics, the recent Oxford graduate Hedley Bull, and a working partnership was formed in 1956, the year in which the Olympic Games were held in Australia.

His First Task

Despite Noel-Baker's impressive record as a thinker, scholar and politician, the young scholar from Sydney was sceptical about the feasibility of his senior colleague's grand design for general and complete disarmament. Bull's first task, probably for Noel-Baker's next project rather than the volume he published in 1958, *The Arms Race: A Programme for World Disarmament*, was to go through the records of the disarmament conferences of the 1930s to see if they had been successful in narrowing differences to the extent that there was some prospect of a significant agreement. Bull soon saw that the differences between the major states remained wide, and they increased as international tensions grew in East Asia and in Central Europe. There was no real prospect of success by moving along that path. If disarmament were to come at all (as Bull hoped it might but in lasting form), it would be limited in its scope and would endure only where

mutual advantage between negotiating partners was realised. Bull questioned the feasibility of the whole international community agreeing suddenly to dispense with all means of defending national sovereignty, national interests or even of administering a sharp lesson to an annoying neighbour. Noel-Baker and Bull parted company in 1957. Although the partnership had not been fruitful, the experience had aroused Bull's interest in the problems of disarmament and he was soon to have the opportunity to develop his own line of thinking for an influential and appreciative audience.

Ironically Hedley was nearly claimed by the arms race of the Cold War itself. In 1957 he received call-up papers from the British Government for national service. All Commonwealth citizens below the age of 26, living in and paying taxes to the United Kingdom, were eligible at that time for British military service. Hedley thought briefly that he might actually have to don a uniform and be trained by the British Army, a prospect that he did not altogether shun. However his head of department at the London School of Economics (LSE), Charles Manning, was horrified at the prospect of losing Bull for two years, not to mention being apprehensive at the degree of risk to which Hedley might be subjected personally during his period of service. Manning used his extensive network of contacts to see that Bull was elected to a Rockefeller fellowship for 1957–58 which would take him out of the United Kingdom for the crucial period until he had passed his 26th birthday.

This was a very fortunate move from Hedley's perspective, enabling him and his wife Mary to spend nearly 12 months among leading scholars in the field of Strategic Studies in the United States before returning to the United Kingdom via Australia, re-uniting with families and friends. He went first to the Center for International Affairs at Harvard, directed then by Robert Bowie. He also had ample opportunity for interchange of ideas with other Harvard scholars such as Tom Schelling and Henry Kissinger. He visited Herman Kahn at the Hudson Institute, who was developing the central ideas in his celebrated book *Thinking about the Unthinkable*, a volume which dealt with the consequences of the actual use of nuclear weapons in war. Bull was in strong disagreement with many of Kahn's views, but admired the rigour of the research which went into the production of his publications.

In the New Year Hedley and Mary moved on to spend six weeks at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC where Hedley came to know several other leaders in the field such as Paul Nitze and Robert Osgood. Their next stay was for four months at the University of Chicago, where Hedley had lively discussions with Morton Kaplan. At the end of May they drove to San Francisco, via Yellowstone National Park, for a few weeks at the University of California, Berkeley before crossing the Pacific to Sydney in July 1958. After a few weeks with family and friends, they embarked once more

for Britain. Hedley found on his return to London that, as a result of his travels and the quality of the people he had formed links with, he was regarded as the person who knew most about the American scene in international security among London academics. This cachet made him particularly interesting to the Director of the recently established Institute for Strategic Studies (ISS), Alastair Buchan. Bull naturally was keen to take part in Institute activities and he found a ready reception.

The ISS (to be known as the IISS once it had added the word 'International' to its title in 1964) had been founded by a group of British scholars, journalists, churchmen, former civil servants, diplomats and armed service officers known as the Brighton Conference Association. They had come together at Brighton in January 1957 to grapple with the question of whether nuclear weapons served a rational purpose and if so, how they might be incorporated into Western strategic doctrine without counter-productive effect. The group had played a useful part in helping Noel-Baker with his book. By late 1958 this group had sufficient funds and sense of purpose to establish the new Institute and to attract Buchan to be its executive head. In 1958–59 Buchan came to know Bull well and was very favourably impressed by his capacity to argue forcefully, his knowledge of international history, and his very pragmatic approach to the issues of what would and what would not gain political support in the international arena.

In the meantime Noel-Baker had achieved a great impact with his publication of *The Arms Race* in the same year. The book had a strong appeal to many on the liberal and socialist sides of politics, to those who saw the Second World War as having been caused by the League of Nations having too little power and authority rather than too much, and to those who saw nuclear weapons in particular as a means of dominating international affairs. In 1959 Noel-Baker was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace and his influence in his own circle was strengthened thereby. In 1961 he won the Schweitzer Prize for *The Arms Race*.

Hedley Bull, far from being intimidated by this acclamation for what he regarded as a seriously flawed work, saw it as all the more reason for mounting a strong attack on Noel-Baker's ideas. In 1959 he published a long review of *The Arms Race* in *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* which, while paying Noel-Baker proper respect for his distinguished career, was strongly critical of his current line of thinking.¹

Initial Exposition of His Ideas

Bull used this opportunity to lay out his thinking on the role that disarmament could play in securing peace more adequately than it had in the past. He was Clausewitzian in his approach, arguing that wars were caused by political tensions rather than the mere accumulation of arms. Hence peace had to be sought more through political agreement and understanding than disarmament. He was

opposed to the development of any one central world authority, as some (including Noel-Baker) were arguing that the United Nations should become. Bull feared that such a body would be too powerful and oppressive. He preferred a diversity of centres of power which might lead to friction and wars from time to time, but one which also enabled freedom and individuality to survive in the international community.

He also dismissed the notion that states would substantially disarm by mutual agreement, as most governments and their electorates believed that they needed weapons for the defence of their liberty or to hit back at others who seriously infringed their freedom of action. Where disarmament had some real prospects, Bull argued, was in the field of limited scope agreements, presciently pointing the way to the limited, strictly defined arms control agreements of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s such as SALT I and II, the Partial Test Ban Treaty, the ABM Treaty and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty itself. This latter treaty, through attempting of necessity to be universal in its membership, did not fulfil Bull's criteria for success as fully as the others. Unsurprisingly it has remained weaker in its effect and has been defied by notable proliferating powers. It has also been frustrated, as many have argued including Bull, by the tardiness of the five declared and accepted nuclear weapon states to reduce their own nuclear arsenals.

Bull made a distinction between nuclear weapons intended for deterrence and those intended for use in combat. He accepted the need for weapons to serve the first purpose, invalidating Noel-Baker's claim that 'if war is an anachronism then armaments are too'. It was the very frightfulness of nuclear weapons that made war anachronistic. They had a continuing and positive role to play—to make war less frightful would be to make it more probable Bull argued. Bull however refused to accept that nuclear weapons should be developed as a means of combat. Their effect would be too horrible, and the use of low yield nuclear weapons in the early stages of a conflict was likely to encourage others to escalate their usage of them, resulting in a holocaust. To that extent, Bull shared Noel-Baker's view of nuclear weapons. He recognised them as a formidable problem for statesmen and diplomats to deal with, and for defence ministries and armed services to keep tightly under control, but in the context of the world order then extant in the 1950s Bull thought that the objectives of the nuclear abolitionists such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament were futile.

Bull came quite early to believe that it would be morally wrong and militarily counter-productive to be the first to use nuclear weapons, particularly in a conflict between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact. He joined those who advocated a 'No First Use' agreement between both sides and put himself into a position of lasting difference with United States and NATO policymakers. Western leaders, looking at the unfavourable balance of their conventional forces with those of the Warsaw Pact, believed that a credible

threat to use nuclear weapons first in reply to any Soviet use of massive force in Europe or elsewhere was a vital part of deterrence. And the fact that the Soviets continued to advocate such a 'No First Use' agreement made it seem only less desirable from a NATO perspective. Bull did not constantly harp on the matter, but he regularly drew fire from NATO-member officials such as Sir Michael Quinlan when he expressed his viewpoint in international conferences.

The logic of his stance on nuclear weapons as disincentives to war led Bull to oppose the idea of strategic defence against an enemy's nuclear weapons. He was explicit on this point in his review article of 1959 and he kept to these views, especially during the heated debates of the 1970s and 1980s on programs such as US President Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI).

Working with the Institute for Strategic Studies

Thus by 1959 Bull had set forth his views on the desirability and scope of arms limitation agreements in the nuclear era, and his thoughts achieved resonance among specialists in Western Europe and North America. They were particularly interesting to Alastair Buchan, who was putting together a team of leading analysts to make a major attempt to develop more rational Western policies on the roles and use of nuclear weapons in order to minimise their dangers. A key person in any such team, of course, is the rapporteur or author of the final report, and Buchan saw in Bull the ideal person for this important job. It was vital to the newly founded ISS for its product to be regarded as of the highest quality. As the project progressed in 1959–60, the senior members of the team, including Michael Howard and Richard Goold-Adams, became increasingly impressed by the presentations that Bull made at discussion meetings and they encouraged him to expand and deepen his efforts. The group met every few weeks to hear and discuss a paper prepared by Bull. The group's enthusiasm mounted. Participants could see not only that in each of these papers they had close to a chapter for the resulting book, but also that they could be confident that the book would achieve a major impact.

In 1960 the ISS held its second annual conference, at Oxford, on the theme of arms control. Bull was appointed rapporteur for the conference. The rapporteur was not just a reporter of the proceedings, but was given a full plenary session at the conclusion of proceedings both to sum up what the conference had achieved and to give his own thoughts on the main topics under discussion. As Michael Howard, one of the conference participants, has recorded in his memoirs:

The text he [Bull] provided for discussion, later published under the title *The Control of the Arms Race*, was to become a classic. Hedley was an abrasive young Australian who had no time for the woolly cant that well-meaning liberals had accumulated around the topic over the past half-century, and to watch him deftly despatch their sacred cows was a

sheer joy. We could not reinvent the world he argued: we live inevitably in a world of mistrustful sovereign powers, and the best we could do was to make it possible for them to distrust one another a little less. It would not be too much to say that his little book revolutionised thinking on the subject. It should still be the point of departure for both academics and bureaucrats.²

Fortified no doubt by his reception from some of the North Atlantic community's leading thinkers in this field, Bull handed the manuscript to Buchan and the ISS published it in 1961 under the title *The Control of the Arms Race*. It was the Institute's second book in a long and distinguished series titled *Studies in International Security*. As Michael Howard has said, this volume established him as the leading newcomer in the field of nuclear arms control policy. It also helped to publicise the idea of arms control rather than disarmament, moving the policy debate into a much more fruitful course. In the following year Bull was promoted to be a Reader in International Relations at the LSE. His book appeared just after the Kennedy Administration had been elected to office in the United States. The incoming US Government was very interested in arms control and Bull received a wide readership on both sides of the Atlantic.

An Interval of Government Service

When Harold Wilson and the Labour Party won the British elections in 1964, the new government, at the urgings of the Party Conference, and no doubt with some impetus from Noel-Baker who remained an Member of Parliament and had become chairman of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Group of Labour MPs, decided to establish a branch of the Foreign Office specifically devoted to disarmament. The government then had to find a capable and not too ideological a person to be the minister responsible for this new activity. After looking at several, Wilson's choice finally rested on Alun Gwynne-Jones, a former army officer who had become the defence correspondent of *The Times* in 1961. Gwynne-Jones was appointed Lord Chalfont, enabling him to sit in the House of Lords. He was also a member of the ISS and knew of Bull's formidable expertise in his intended field. Chalfont recognised that he needed expert assistance in his new field and enlisted Hedley Bull to be the first Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Research Unit at the Foreign Office. Bull received two years leave of absence from the LSE and took up his new duties at the beginning of 1965.

This appointment required Bull to have access to papers which had been classified as 'for UK eyes only', a way of keeping them private from the Americans among others. Bull had already been thinking about taking British nationality to make international travel in Europe easier than with an Australian passport. He thought by taking this step he would facilitate his access in the Foreign

Office, but what he did not know was that the Australian Government did not recognise dual nationality (except for British nationals taking up Australian citizenship), and that by taking British nationality he would lose his Australian citizenship. This was a serious matter for him but by the time he found out about it, too much water had flowed under the bridge. Bull became the holder of a British passport, which he then retained for the rest of his life despite a period of ten years in Australia (1967–77) when he was a Professor of International Relations at The Australian National University in Canberra.

Bull inevitably got into scrapes with the formal bureaucratic procedures of the Foreign Office. Believing that many papers were given security classifications way beyond what the material they contained justified, he was not above opening his briefcase while on a bus or the underground and pulling out a file conspicuously marked 'SECRET'. On at least one of these occasions someone with high official access caught Bull in this infringement of security rules and reported him to the Foreign Office. Bull was duly carpeted and had to agree to mend his ways.

While Bull found the work of the Arms Control and Disarmament Research Unit interesting, he, unsurprisingly, did not take to bureaucratic life. He saw that he was too junior and too much of an outsider to be able ever to have a major influence on British Government policies on nuclear weapons. Therefore he did not delude himself that he had made a permanent change in his profession and working environment. Nonetheless, building the Unit gave him a chance to identify and bring in experts such as Geoff Jukes, Jim Richardson (another Australian) and Ian Bellany (all three of whom were subsequently to hold posts at The Australian National University). The post also gave him opportunities for dialogue with important foreign specialists in this field, especially in the United States. The Unit gave valuable support to the British delegation to the Geneva arms control negotiations, especially on non-proliferation matters in the years while the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was being put together. Bull's interest in strategic defences, especially his concern that they might make nuclear weapons more usable rather than less, led him to follow this issue closely in his contacts with the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, long before the Strategic Defence Initiative was announced by Reagan.

His Return to Australia

By 1967 Bull faced a serious decision. Either he returned to the LSE or he became a long-term professional member of the Foreign Office. Fortunately his dilemma was resolved by a very welcome invitation from Australia. Bruce Miller, the Head of the Department of International Relations in the Research School of Pacific Studies at The Australian National University, Canberra, had been able to open the way for a second full professorship to be established there, with Hedley Bull in mind as the person who should hold it. In the way of these things

it was a short-lived opportunity and Bull had to make up his mind quickly before the vagaries of University politics allowed another department to claim the necessary funds. Once he had taken the decision to accept and move back to Australia all went well with the appointment process and Bull was soon in Canberra, which was to be his base for the next decade.

Although I had met Hedley while I was a graduate student at Oxford in the early 1960s our paths did not overlap until he returned to Australia, by which time I had completed my studies at Oxford and served for a year as an infantry officer in the Vietnam War. I remember expressing some surprise to him that he had given up a readership at the LSE for The Australian National University Chair, given that in Canberra he would find it so much harder to stay in touch with leading scholars and practitioners in the arms control debate. In reply he pointed to the working advantages he would enjoy at The Australian National University by comparison with those of the LSE: more opportunities to travel, more study leave and fewer teaching obligations. He added that he probably would not stay in Canberra for the rest of his working life.

And so it happened. Bruce Miller in 1969 invited me to forsake the teaching of military history at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, and join his department as a senior fellow. I arrived two years after Hedley and quickly learned to work with him on a number of fronts. He was keen that I should take over the headship of the newly founded Strategic and Defence Studies Centre (SDSC) from its then head, Tom Millar. Tom had just taken on the Directorship of the Australian Institute of International Affairs, holding the two positions simultaneously. Tom had not foreseen such pressures to bring a newcomer into his position in the Centre, but Hedley and Bruce had a clear plan in mind and it was implemented with effect from the beginning of 1971.

While the work of the SDSC was focused largely on Asian and Pacific security issues (the Vietnam War was still in progress), I was keen to give it more of a global and a theoretical perspective. This took time, not least because Hedley was away on study leave in 1971–72 and I had my first study leave in 1973. The following year seemed a good time for holding a major conference on global security issues and I sought Hedley's advice on a topic for the gathering. He had already been thinking of the need for new ideas to be developed for discussion at the first review conference to be held under terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1975. He put that set of issues forward as a policy-related matter to which we as academics could make a contribution, while at the same time we might be able to develop a dialogue with several of the key arms control specialists from the Australian Departments of Defence and Foreign Affairs. I was happy to take up his suggestion and develop a conference accordingly.

The Centre had been augmented by the arrival of Des Ball who knew more than most about the American strategic missile program, its purposes and the political debate around the topic in the United States. Jim Richardson and Geoff Jukes had already followed Hedley to The Australian National University from the Foreign Office. Harry Gelber at Monash University was an expert in Chinese nuclear matters, Peter King at the University of Sydney was working on the Strategic Arms Limitation negotiations and Arthur Burns (also at The Australian National University) had focused his work on great power relations, including their strategic nuclear policies. I invited them all to present papers and we thus had a credible team for an ambitious project. With those academics and a good mixture of government officials, foreign diplomats based in Canberra, relevant journalists and other academics, we held the conference on 24 and 25 July 1974. I edited the proceedings as the Centre's first book (*The Strategic Nuclear Balance; an Australian Perspective*) and it appeared early in 1975.

For the purpose of this chapter I shall focus on Hedley's contribution to that volume because it was succinct and wide-ranging, covering all of the major nuclear weapons issues before national governments in the 1970s and 1980s. He, of course, in the years since the publication of *The Control of the Arms Race*, had continued to write articles and papers for bodies such as the IISS (no longer just the ISS) and leading international journals on the broader issues not only of arms control but also of world order. He brought his thinking as of mid-1974 together in a concluding address to the conference.³

Bull (in this address) regarded the trend of world events as troubling in that an increased emphasis was being placed on nuclear weapons both by those states which had them (through technological advances, increased accuracy, reduction in sizes of warheads and so forth) and by those who aspired to have them, among which he included India. 'The nuclearisation of international politics appears to have accelerated.' His outlook generally was pessimistic: there was little prospect of nuclear disarmament, but the stability of deterrent balances should not be taken for granted. We were headed for trouble, he argued, and salvation lay only in three sets of measures which the international community, especially the nuclear weapons states, might take.

First, the nuclear weapons states had to put these systems more into the background of their strategic policies. To Bull this seemed unlikely and events of the 1980s (the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe, the unveiling of President Reagan's plan for strategic defences, and the general high profile of debate on the relative strengths and war fighting capacities of American and Russian nuclear weapons) proved him to be correct.

Second, potential proliferators had to exert greater restraint. The obstacles in their path (lack of technical knowledge, cost and strength of the nuclear guarantees offered by friendly nuclear weapon states) were diminishing and the

example that had been set by India through its 'peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE)', which occurred only two months before the conference, was a further stimulus to proliferation. Bull thought the stated rationale for the PNE, economic gain, was contemptible whereas security was a perfectly respectable objective for India (and others—like the existing nuclear weapons states) to attempt to achieve. As we have seen over the past two decades, a number of potential proliferators (including South Africa and Libya) have, after taking serious thought, abandoned their nuclear weapons projects. Restraint remains a potent factor. But several other states (including Iraq, India, Pakistan, Iran and North Korea) have gone in the opposite direction, opting for strengthened military security over restraint. We in the early twenty-first century now stand before the prospect of possession of nuclear weapons becoming the norm for middle powers in troubled regions. Tensions between restraint and the desire to have nuclear weapons remain strong and break-out by more potential proliferators is a definite possibility. Thus Bull's second requirement for a better foundation for international security has not been fulfilled.

Third, he argued, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (an 'already tottering structure') needed to be strengthened. Bull recognised that further proliferation would take place: 'it is not credible that the most destructive weapons of the age will remain permanently the monopoly of the handful of states that first developed them.' The most feasible aim for the NPT regime was to slow the process of proliferation down, and this required not only the co-operation of the nuclear weapons states through keeping these weapons off centre stage, but also awareness on the part of potential proliferators that the more states had them, the more difficult it would be to inhibit their use in war. On the other hand, Bull recognised, it was pointless to preach nuclear abstinence to India or other proliferators who had already decided that they heeded nuclear weapons to strengthen their security and independence. 'If nuclear weapons were not important in enabling states to provide for their security, their prestige or their national independence, the problem of controlling the spread of nuclear weapons would be more easily soluble than it is.'

Thus Bull left us with no optimistic prospect. The thrust of his arguments was that the nuclear weapons states were unlikely to disarm; proliferation was likely to continue, albeit slowly; the NPT regime would continue to totter; and the world would move slowly to a more dangerous condition with more and more hands on a nuclear button. He characterised his own view as being based 'on general grounds of historical pessimism' and he was right in choosing this basis of argument. The long-term prospect for reduction of the nuclear threat 34 years later remains bleak, probably even bleaker than it was in 1974. Bull, at least, did not have to analyse international security developments in an era like that of the present, in which it is possible that terrorists might gain possession of nuclear warheads. These extremely destructive weapons in the

hands of people who are perfectly willing to die in their attempts to injure their enemies, and for whom deterrence has no meaning because they lack any essential base whose security has to be preserved, have created a new and very serious dimension to the nuclear threat. Bull's 'historical pessimism' remains a fitting *leitmotiv* for the future as far as nuclear weapons are concerned.

Bull's work was certainly not a political platform for those activists such as those of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament who wanted to boost their following by attacking the causes of public neuroses. Rather, he provided a deeply informed and realist brief for those who had to bear the burden of international negotiations. Time and again he was to point out the futility of railing at nuclear weapons states and those who were on their way to achieving this status. In a matter as crucial as national security, government leaders were most unlikely to be swayed by foreign opinion, particularly that which emanated from liberal-thinking non-governmental organisations which had nothing with which to trade in the field of nuclear weapons policy. On the other hand he left us with this cheerless prospect of further proliferation, a weakening NPT regime and obduracy on the parts of existing nuclear weapons states. It is not surprising that humankind has not lain down and accepted this philosophy. Change might be very hard to achieve by way of nuclear disarmament, but something has to be attempted, many have argued and many more will continue to argue into the future.

As Montague Burton Professor at Oxford

By 1976 Bull had published most of his work on arms control. His focus had shifted to the nature of international order. His second book, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*,⁴ appeared in 1977 at the time of his re-location to Oxford, succeeding Alastair Buchan as the Montague Burton Professor of International Relations. He was to move increasingly into the realms of the international society of states and away from those of international security. However he did remain active in the International Institute for Strategic Studies and was a powerful source of advice and ideas on the Institute's own endeavours in the late 1970s and 1980s to analyse the arms control problems of the SALT and START eras. Both I and my predecessor as Director of the Institute, Christoph Bertram, found his counsel invaluable because Hedley always had new ideas to impart

His work on arms control as a whole was based on his belief that the great powers would continue to compete for control in international affairs, and that the developing states would refuse to accept the injustices inflicted on them as newcomers to the international system. He also had a keen awareness for what Government leaders and their advisers would tolerate and accept from others by way of serious argument and criticism applied to their own policies. He abjured the more technical aspects of the arms control debate which came to the

fore as weapons and missile technology continued to develop. He was no believer in strategic defences, arguing that if effective they would make nuclear war more rational and hence more probable.

Bull's work in this field demonstrates how far a very intelligent and logical person could progress in a new field of international security. As arms control was really developed only in the 1950s and 1960s, it was a topic on which a newcomer could make rapid progress, but few managed to approach Bull's standard of work. Many were drawn into the field because they had clear policy aims: usually to eliminate nuclear weapons or, less frequently, to utilise nuclear superiority to limit and weaken the other side. Bull initially lacked the usual background of experience in government or the armed forces. His area of academic knowledge was more philosophical and historical than political. The opportunity he had to work with Alastair Buchan, Michael Howard, and other senior persons in the ISS team was a major advantage, but he would not have gone far had his colleagues not been highly impressed by his qualities of thought and argument. This background, plus the publication of *The Control of the Arms Race* while he was still young (30 years of age), put him in an excellent position to establish arms control as a policy specialty within the British Foreign Office. The contacts he then made across NATO Europe and on the other side of the Atlantic, together with the ideas he drew from them for comparison with his own, equipped him to remain a leading arms control thinker on the world stage for the following decade and on some matters even longer.

Even moving to Australia in the late 1970s did not cut him off from active participation in the North Atlantic debate, because he continued to have excellent travel opportunities and a year of study leave in both 1971 and 1975. There was no Internet in those days of course, but airmail and the telephone played important roles for Hedley as he settled into his new working environment in the late 1960s.

By the mid-1970s Bull found that arms control had lost some of its fascination. He travelled increasingly to India and became both interested in and impressed by the arguments of leading Indian scholars on the need for reform in the international system, such as it was then. Coming from a former British imperial dominion himself, Bull had some natural sympathy for the underdogs in international politics and began to ask himself by what right did mainly Western, white European great powers, or those derived from them such as the United States, dominate in international councils and derive greater benefits from the existing world order than the poorer, newly independent states of Asia, Africa and Latin America. His work on the nature of international society led him into the two major projects at Oxford which each resulted in edited books: *The Expansion of International Society* and *Intervention in World Politics*.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s Bull also came to believe that the US alliance system was in decline. And indeed it was subject to a great deal of internal friction during these years, as the Reagan Administration began to re-emphasise US military power and his Administration's willingness to use force. Bull sided with those European leaders who claimed a stronger role in shaping alliance policy, and emphasised the second track of the 'twin-track' approach to relations with the Warsaw Pact which NATO claimed to have adopted: increased willingness to negotiate, especially to control the numbers and types of weapons envisaged for both deterrence and operational use. Bull argued that a bigger effort to achieve more comprehensive arms control agreements would be essential to the gaining and retention of public support for NATO policies in Western Europe. Fortunately the Americans took some note of the strength of these attitudes among their European allies, and in the mid and late 1980s adopted a less strident line. Sadly most of this re-orientation of policy took place after Bull's death in 1985.

In 1983, Bull returned to arms control, giving a final overview of the five ideas (which he believed to have been the essence of the new approach of 1958–61) in his well-known article 'The Classical Approach to Arms Control Twenty Years After'. The five ideas were:

- Arms control is not an end in itself but a means to an end—namely security against nuclear war.
- Arms control depends for its success on there being some perceived area of common interest between the antagonistic powers.
- Arms control and defence strategy are not mutually contradictory by nature and must be developed in harmony within the framework of an overall security policy.
- Arms control embraces a wider area of military policy than simply that which is covered by formal agreements.
- The most important immediate goal of arms control is to stabilise the relationship of mutual deterrence between the superpowers.

These five ideas remain of high relevance, notwithstanding the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. The West might no longer stand in danger of suffering defeat at the hands of a massive Warsaw Pact conventional force, but recent events in the Middle East point to the limitations on Western and particularly US conventional fighting power. While many may think that nuclear weapons no longer have any justifiable role in international politics and that we would be better off without them, we are a long way from this view being adopted by Western governments. In the meantime, as the framework of international order comes under attack by sub-national extremist groups, the menace of nuclear weapons to the leading powers of the current system grows increasingly strong.

As mentioned above, Bull remained active in the International Institute for Strategic Studies, serving both as a Council member and a member of the Executive Committee. As his illness became more serious in 1984–85, if anything he increased his level of participation in the Institute's work. I do not think he missed a meeting of either Council or Executive Committee in his last several months of life, even though he was weary and sometimes in pain. He gave everyone he came into contact with in those days heart to tackle more effectively whatever problems were absorbing their attention and energy. He remains an example in so many ways for all who were fortunate to work with him over three decades and more.

Bull's impact in the field of arms control policy was, on the whole, an indirect one. His work for the British Foreign Office is an exception to this judgement, of course, but he was in the British Government's service for just over two years. He will be remembered for his contributions to conferences of leading specialists, his journal articles, *The Control of the Arms Race*, his informal conversations with many who were in government service and above all for his teaching. At Oxford he had an opportunity to teach outstanding graduate students from around the world about international security and arms control. There are many who are still in the service of foreign and defence ministries, armed services, news media, universities and research institutes or, like myself, now in the ranks of the retired, who will always be grateful to Hedley Bull for the quality of his thought, his critical abilities and willingness to use them, his ready sense of humour and his intellectual energy. He was a rare phenomenon and deserves to be remembered and held in the highest regard. On looking at his independence and impact, it is not difficult to see why he made his colleagues feel proud to have chosen the same profession and field as himself.⁵

ENDNOTES

¹ For the text of Hedley Bull's review of *The Arms Race* see his 'Disarmament and the International System' *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 5, no. 1, May 1959 or Chapter Two of *Hedley Bull on Arms Control*, Macmillan, London, 1987, selected and introduced by Robert O'Neill and David Schwartz. This second volume is an anthology of Bull's main writings on arms control. It does not pretend to be a complete coverage of Bull's work in this field.

² Michael Howard, *Captain Professor: A Life in War and Peace*, Continuum, London, 2006 p. 165.

³ Robert O'Neill (ed.), *The Strategic Nuclear Balance: An Australian Perspective*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, The Australian National University, 1975, pp. 130–48. Hedley Bull re-wrote this address and published it in *International Affairs*, vol 51, April 1975, pp. 175–84, under the title 'Rethinking Non-Proliferation'.

⁴ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, Macmillan, London and Basingstoke, 1977.

⁵ The author is grateful to Mrs Mary Bull for her comments on the first draft of this chapter and for the additional information she provided.