

"Making Weapons, Talking Peace" new book by Herbert York

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"MAKING WEAPONS, TALKING PEACE" NEW BOOK BY IGCC DIRECTOR HERB YORK

Herbert York, the director of the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation headquartered at the University of California, San Diego, gives an insider's account of the politics and problems of the nuclear arms race in his new book "Making Weapons, Talking Peace" (Basic Books, 1987).

"The book is a memoir of my participation in the arms race and my conclusions concerning what it's all about and what it means," York said. "It starts with the Manhattan Project and ends with the period where I was ambassador to the Comprehensive Test Ban negotiations."

His involvement with nuclear weapons began when he joined the Manhattan Project to build the first atomic bomb in the 1940's as a 21-year-old physics graduate from the University of Rochester. As part of a team of scientists, first in Berkeley, California, and later at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and Los Alamos, New Mexico, York was a colleague of some of the pioneers of the atomic age--Enrico Fermi, Edward Teller, E. O. Lawrence, and Robert Oppenheimer.

In his book, York recalls the excitement he felt as an idealistic young researcher working on a weapon he correctly believed would hasten the end of World War II. He and many others assumed the atomic bomb would mean the end of war altogether, since its power was so terrible no nation would risk using it.

"Later, I came to be aware of the fact that that notion had come up in history repeatedly and had been proven to be false," York said. "After first believing that we had made war obsolete, I tended to move away from that view, but in later years I've moved back toward it, at least in part."

York noted that it has now been more than 40 years since European nations have warred with each other, although there have been several wars in other parts of the world.

"War is not totally obsolete; there are still as many small wars as there ever were," York said. "But the leaders of the great nations are all frightened by the possibility (of nuclear war), and it does have a stabilizing effect."

York should know because he rose through the ranks to hold high-level government positions concerned with science, technology and defense under the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Carter administrations.

In 1952 he initiated and directed the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, a post he held until 1958. Under Eisenhower he was named the first Director of Defense Research and Engineering. Carter appointed him ambassador to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty negotiations with the Soviet Union. He was also the first Chancellor of UCSD, serving from 1961-1964.

York has served on a variety of scientific advisory committees including the Presidential Science Advisory Committee in 1957-58 and again from 1964-68.

Since 1973 he has been director of the Program on Science, Technology and Public Affairs at UCSD. In 1983, he was appointed to head the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, a statewide unit of the University of California, headquartered at UCSD.

He is the author of two previous books: "Race to Oblivion" (Simon & Schuster, 1970), and "The Advisors: Oppenheimer, Teller and the Superbomb," (W.H. Freeman, 1973).

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