

NATO Reform Report calls for Pre-emptive Nuclear Option

By [Lester Haines](#)

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A group of former senior military officials has said that Nato must be prepared to launch pre-emptive nuclear strikes to “ward off the use of weapons of mass destruction by its enemies”, the Telegraph reports.

The authors of the “blueprint for reforming Nato” – which was written after its authors were “briefed by senior serving military officials who are unable to speak publicly about their concerns with Nato’s military strategy” – include the former British chief of the defence staff, Lord Peter Inge, and US General John Shalikashvili, former Nato commander in Europe and chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff.

In it, they stress the need to rethink “Nato’s approach to defending its members and their interests” and describe first-strike nukes as an “indispensible instrument” against foes bearing WMDs. The report says: “The risk of further proliferation is imminent and, with it, the danger that nuclear war fighting, albeit limited in scope, might become possible.

“The first use of nuclear weapons must remain in the quiver of escalation as the ultimate instrument to prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction.”

Inge reportedly comments: “To tie our hands on first use or no first use removes a huge plank of deterrence.”

To make the pre-emptive strike option viable, the report proposes a major shake-up of the way Nato operates, including “abandoning consensus decision making so fast action can be taken without the threat of vetoes and caveats imposed by some nations”.

It also suggests military action “without ratification by the UN” when “immediate action is needed to protect large numbers of human beings”.

The report, which has been delivered to Nato and Pentagon officials, may be discussed at a Nato summit in Bucharest in April, the Telegraph notes.

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