

It was two nuclear bombs dropped on Japan by the USA that finally saw the end of World War Two in 1945. In the years after the war, successive New Zealand (NZ) governments strengthened our military ties with the USA, in effect embracing nuclear weapons. We supported the USA, Britain and France by sending our soldiers to observe their nuclear tests in the Pacific in the 1950's and 60's.

It was not until the mid 1960's that the government began to push back against nuclear testing in the Pacific. The decades of testing since the war had provided ample evidence that the nuclear tests were extremely harmful to the people and environment of the Pacific. One group badly impacted were the Pacific island people of the Marshall Islands. Their islands had been poisoned by radioactive fallout from an American test, leading to many deaths. Despite asking for help, the USA looked the other way.

The NZ government, under pressure from protestors, began to be a more vocal opponent of nuclear testing, especially at Mururoa Atoll, a French nuclear test site. In 1973 the NZ government sent two naval frigates to Mururoa as a clear protest sign, trying to bring an end to atmospheric testing. Over the next decade, the NZ people showed the government that they were very much against nuclear weapons. They protested nuclear powered ship visits, sailed their own boats to Mururoa and marched down city streets. In 1987 the NZ government declared the country a nuclear-free zone, the first place in the world to do so.



Governing and equity
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Questions (look in the text for highlight clues!)

- 1) What decade saw NZ become nuclear free?
 - a) 1960's
 - b) 1970's
 - c) 1980's
- 2) Why did New Zealand support the USA, the only country to ever use nuclear weapons in war?
- 3) What were two (2) ways that NZ governments showed support for nuclear weapons?
 - 1)
 - 2)
- 4) What were two (2) ways that NZ governments protested against nuclear weapons?
 - 1)
 - 2)
- 5) Which of these nations tested nuclear weapons at the Marshall Islands?
 - a) USA
 - b) France
 - c) Britain
- 6) What are three (3) ways that New Zealand citizens protested nuclear weapons?
- 7) What was a piece of evidence that suggests nuclear tests were harmful?

Word Salad

Find the meaning of these words and put each of these words into a sentence.

- 1) successive
- 2) embracing
- 3) ample

Position Words (Prepositions)

For each sentence find the word that shows the position of something.

- 1) The nuclear fallout drifted across the island.
- 2) The boat settled on the mud.
- 3) The explosive light went through his hands.

The French government was responsible for blowing up the anti-nuclear protest ship, Rainbow Warrior, in Auckland's Waitemata Harbour in 1985.

