Back from the Brink: A Call to Prevent Nuclear War

We call on the United States to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by:

- ⇒ **renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first**
- ⇒ **ending the sole, unchecked authority of any President to launch a nuclear attack**
- ⇒ **taking US nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert**
- ⇒ **cancelling the plan to replace its entire arsenal with enhanced weapons**
- ⇒ **actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals**

Since the height of the Cold War, the U.S .and Russia have dismantled more than 50,000 nuclear warheads, but **15,000 of these weapons still exist** and they pose an intolerable risk to human survival. 95% of these weapons are in the hands of the United States and Russia; the rest are held by seven other countries, the United Kingdom, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea. https://fas.org/issues/nuclear-weapons/status-world-nuclear-forces/

The use of even a tiny fraction of these weapons would cause worldwide climate disruption and global famine. As few as 100 Hiroshima sized bombs, small by modern standards, would put at least 5 million tons of soot into the upper atmosphere and cause climate disruption across the planet, cutting food production and putting 2 billion people at risk of starvation. http://www.psr.org/assets/pdfs/two-billion-at-risk.pdf

A large scale nuclear war would kill hundreds of millions of people directly and cause unimaginable environmental damage. http://www.psr.org/assets/pdfs/projected-us-casualties-and-destruction.pdf It would also cause **catastrophic climate disruption dropping temperatures across the planet to levels not seen since the last ice age.** Under these conditions the vast majority of the human race would starve and it is possible we would become extinct as a species. http://climate.envsci.rutgers.edu/pdf/RobockNW2006JD008235.pdf

Despite assurances that these arsenals exist solely to guarantee they are never used, **there have been many occasions when nuclear armed countries have prepared to use these weapons, and war has been averted at the last minute.** http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/attach/2015/04/Close%20Calls%20with%20Nuclear%20Weapons.pdf

Nuclear weapons do not possess some magical quality that prevents their being used. As former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara said, speaking about the Cuban Missile Crisis, "In the end, we lucked out — it was luck that prevented nuclear war." Our current nuclear policy is essentially the hope that our good luck lasts.

Furthermore, the danger of nuclear war is growing as climate change puts increased stress on communities around the world increasing the likelihood of conflict. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/once-again-climate-change-cited-as-trigger-for-war/

The planned expenditure of $1.7 Trillion to enhance our nuclear arsenal will exacerbate these dangers by fueling a global arms race and it will divert crucial resources. http://www.psr.org/assets/pdfs/us-nuclear-buildup.pdf In July of 2017, 122 nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The United States should embrace this call for nuclear disarmament as the centerpiece of our national security policy.

Coalition for Peace Action (CFPA)

www.peacecoalition.org

609-924-5022

40 Witherspoon Street
Princeton, NJ 08542