



Nuclear weapons By Peter G. Cohen

They are not a deterrent to terrorists, whom security experts regard as the greatest danger to our nation. They do not deter attacks from other nations, because very few want to attack us, and our overwhelming conventional forces are more than enough for our defense.

What nuclear weapons actually do is cost us a great deal of money. Just to maintain the warheads will cost us \$7.6 billion next year and \$2.5 billion more to prevent proliferation.

As we trim our federal budget other urgently needed programmers will be cut, while nuclear weapons funds are defended in the name of National Security and for the benefit of senators and representatives who have facilities in their districts.

Some Congress people hope to spend at least \$100 billion in the next decade on “modernizing” the planes, missiles and submarines that are ready to deliver the warheads to an unidentified “enemy.”

Nuclear weapons are completely indiscriminate. They incinerate adults, children and pets in the target area without regard for innocence or guilt. The radioactive fallout drifts for miles on the shifting winds and all scientific studies done since Chernobyl and now Fukushima acknowledges that, even though mortality figures differ.

Even the Pentagon acknowledges that a relatively “limited” nuclear war would create so much radioactive soot that it would drift around the earth for years, blocking the sun and reducing crop yields, thus causing widespread famine.

At the same time, the great heat of a nuclear fireball and the following firestorm carries radioactive materials into the stratosphere, where they fatally weaken the ozone layer, causing blindness, skin cancer, and damaged immune systems. It would also destroy aquatic ecosystems, resulting in reduced ocean productivity for years.

For those who are concerned that a nation might try to cheat a Nuclear Weapons Convention, a world system of sensors is now in place. While it is almost impossible to produce a nuclear weapon without testing, this worldwide system will make any nuclear weapons test immediately known to all.

The generals and admirals, the senators and representatives, the nuclear laboratories and plants, believe that they are defending America. Their experts can calculate the kilotons and megatons of explosive power in each of the weapons systems. But they do not represent the human future, or the millions who would disappear instantly in the fireball or slowly succumb to radiation disease. It is up to people of conscience to make their voices heard.

It is up to mothers and grandmothers to say that it is intolerable and criminal that more than 20 years after the end of the Cold War, Russia and the United States still have more than 3,300 warheads targeted on each other and thousands more that can quickly be brought back and deployed. We must then accept the idea that we, or our children and grandchildren, sooner or later, will be incinerated in a flash, poisoned by radioactive fallout, or sick and starved in misery by a nuclear winter.

We are investing in a worldwide holocaust that will incinerate, sterilise and starve distant people who have nothing to do with the nations involved in the war, accident, or act of nature that detonates these weapons. The Creator has given us this beautiful, abundant planet and the miracle of human life. Human cleverness has provided us with the tools of worldwide suicide.

Can we admit that we have gone too far? That human, mechanical or natural failures can plunge us into the final fire? That the only recourse is to overcome our fears, our dream of domination, and our attachment to the profits of death?

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