



# Speak Out Now

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## The Threat of Nuclear War Still Hangs Over Our Heads

Just before launching the invasion of Ukraine in February, 2022, Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, warned that any nation that interfered would "face consequences greater than any you have faced in history." Then he put Russia's nuclear forces on high alert.

The risks of nuclear war are real. The United States and Russia each have a nuclear arsenal of over 6,000 weapons. Today's nuclear weapons are many times more powerful than the bombs dropped on two cities in Japan in 1945. Seven other governments, including France, China, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, India, Israel, and North Korea, together have about 1,500 weapons. And Iran seems on the verge of developing a nuclear arsenal.

August 6 is the 77<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S. nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, Japan and August 9 is the 77<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S. nuclear bombing of Nagasaki, Japan. This was the only time that nuclear weapons have been used. Hundreds of thousands of people died in these bombings. And, in the months and years that followed, tens of thousands more died and suffered the horrible effects of radiation exposure - leukemia, thyroid, breast cancer and many other cancers. Birth defects in humans and animals in the area continued for decades.

It was the closing days of World War II. The Germans and their allies in Europe had already been defeated. The U.S. government had claimed that it was developing these horrifying weapons only because the Germans were doing the same. Prior to the decision to launch a nuclear attack, it was known that the Japanese Emperor was trying to initiate an end to the war. But this was ignored.

Instead, Democratic Party President Harry Truman claimed that many U.S. troops, as well as Japanese people, would die in an invasion of Japan, and that the nuclear assault on two Japanese cities would avoid that. So, the U.S. military chose to target Japanese civilian populations twice in four days! By destroying these two cities without warning, they showed the world, in particular the Soviet Union, that they had the most destructive and terrifying weapons in history and were willing to use them.

The U.S. emerged from World War II as the strongest economic and military power in the world. Whatever words the U.S. politicians uttered about freedom and democracy, their actions spoke louder. They said that they oppose tyranny, but their actions are really aimed at ensuring that the world is safe for the U.S. banks and corporations to dominate the world economy.

Since the end of World War II, the U.S. has sent its military to wage war against the people of North Korea, Vietnam (and Laos and Cambodia), Iraq and Afghanistan. U.S. military forces and the C.I.A. have been repeatedly used to overthrow governments which have not submitted to the economic and political interests of U.S. domination.

Following the end of World War II and the redivision of the world among the victors, the alliance between the U.S. and the Soviet Union ended. The Cold War against the Soviet Union began. This led to the nuclear arms race, and the proliferation of these weapons of true mass destruction. And along with this came the threat to use them. The use of nuclear weapons was considered during the Korean War in the 1950s. And in 1962, U.S. President Kennedy took the world to the brink of nuclear war over Cuba's relationship to the Soviet Union. The possible use of nuclear weapons was also considered during the U.S. war against Vietnam.

There have been numerous treaties established between Russia and the U.S. to control the use of these weapons. And following the collapse of the Soviet Union, a program of dismantling some of the nuclear arsenals began. But, as recent events have shown, the threat of nuclear war is not over.

The global domination of the U.S. is being challenged. And with that brings the threat of war - nuclear war. The insatiable demand for profits that capitalism generates means that those in power see no limits. They are creating climate catastrophe, literally destroying the planet. And it is this competition that leads to the wars we see today that could lead to larger wars of unimaginable destruction.

We can't afford to leave our fate and future in the hands of the people who rule the world today.