



Speak Out Now

August 5, 2024

mail@speakoutsocialists.org

speakoutsocialists.org

IG:@sonsocialists

Nuclear War: An Increasing Threat to the World

Seventy-nine years ago, on August 6 and 9, 1945, the first nuclear weapons were dropped on civilian populations. Tens of thousands of lives were incinerated in the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States. Hundreds of thousands suffered and died from the effects of the bombs. Radiation burns scorched the bodies of young and old. Birth defects and cancers continue to impact people's lives today.

Today, we seem to be closer to nuclear war than we have been in decades. At least nine countries possess nuclear weapons. The U.S. and its NATO allies, the United Kingdom and France, are upgrading their nuclear armaments. The Russian war in Ukraine has increased the risk of nuclear warfare. China and Iran are expanding their nuclear capabilities, while North Korea continues to test missiles. Israel's regional aggressions threaten to trigger a wider, possibly nuclear, war. Local conflicts involving nuclear powers, like India and Pakistan, could grow into regional and world wars.

This all started with the U.S. in World War II. The U.S. did not need to use these weapons to win WWII. The war in Europe had already ended, and the U.S. knew that the Japanese Emperor wanted to end the war in the Pacific. The U.S. government had options. But it chose to demonstrate its power to the world, especially to the USSR. To achieve this goal, it obliterated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In its pursuit of global dominance, it slaughtered civilians, and opened up a new threat that has never left us.

Since then, the number of nuclear weapons has increased tremendously, first through the arms race between the U.S. and the USSR, and then to at least seven other countries. Testing in the southwest U.S., and in places like the Marshall Islands, has caused permanently high levels of radiation and caused cancers and other radiation-related diseases. Populations have been forcibly relocated.

The U.S. government continues to expand its nuclear weapons programs.

Under the Biden administration, funding for its nuclear arsenal increased 22%—to the largest budget since the Cold War. A Trump administration is likely to increase this yet again. The currently planned nuclear weapons programs will cost \$750 billion over the next decade, and the total cost over the next 30 years could surpass \$2 trillion.

Already, the U.S.'s stockpile of nuclear weapons is over 7,000 warheads, of which over a quarter are deployed, ready to be used within minutes of an order to launch. Most of the weapons in the U.S.'s arsenal are 10-30 times stronger than the bombs that obliterated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Some are 80 times as powerful. Today's nuclear weapons, if used on a large scale, would kill millions upon impact, and likely trigger a nuclear winter, caused by massive fires around the world throwing ash into the atmosphere and blocking the sun. This would lead to famine and other effects that would destroy human societies as surely as today's global heating, but much more quickly.

This is not a deterrent to those who sit in power, as they search for ways to protect their wealth and their global dominance. Capitalist regimes have been willing to annihilate huge civilian populations to achieve their goals. Today, the U.S., Germany, and others support the Israeli genocide being executed in Palestine. These and other capitalist nations, including Russia and China, also stoke the global heating that is destroying environments around the world, and our future. We can't count on them to prevent the next nuclear war.

The national ruling classes of the world are locked in an endless struggle for dominance. The working people of the world don't benefit from this. We are the ones that do the work to keep the system running, and we can bring it to a halt if we choose to. As the imperialists gamble away on mutually assured destruction, we need to look out for our own interests, those of the vast majority of the world, and refuse to accept this as our future.

