

# NUCLEAR WEAPONS



## A Clear & Present Danger

# TIME TO TAKE STOCK & ACT

WITH THE END OF THE COLD WAR CAME GREAT HOPES OF A NUCLEAR FREE FUTURE.

25 YEARS LATER HOPE HAS GIVEN WAY TO ALARM.

BUT ALARM MAKES POSSIBLE A NEW BEGINNING.



### THE BAD NEWS

Politicians and military leaders sound increasingly belligerent and defence doctrines more dangerous... It all looks as if the world is preparing for war.  
**Mikhail Gorbachev, 27 January 2017**



### THE GOOD NEWS

On 23 December 2016, the UN General Assembly approved a historic resolution to launch negotiations in 2017 on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons.

## It's now two and a half minutes to midnight

SINCE 1947, THE BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS (BAS) HAS MAINTAINED THE DOOMSDAY CLOCK AS A SYMBOLIC COUNTDOWN TO POSSIBLE GLOBAL CATASTROPHE.

### 1953: 2 MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT

The Cold War is at its height – the US and the Soviet Union test their first hydrogen bombs six months of each other.

### 1991: 17 MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the first nuclear disarmament agreements, the Cold War comes to an end.

### 2017: 2½ MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT

*In 2017, we find the danger to be even greater, the need for action more urgent. It is two and a half minutes to midnight, the Clock is ticking, global danger looms. Wise public officials should act immediately, guiding humanity away from the brink. If they do not, wise citizens must step forward and lead the way (BAS).*



The world is a radically different place from what it was 20, let alone 30 or 50 years ago.

# SOME WORRYING TRENDS

## NEW COLD WAR

- Downward spiral in US-Russia relations.
- NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe
- Russian military pressure on Ukraine, and annexation of Crimea.
- Disarmament talks at a standstill.



## NUCLEAR ARMS BUILD-UP

- US is undertaking a \$1 trillion overhaul of its nuclear arsenal.
- Moscow is building a new generation of nuclear bombers, ballistic missiles and submarines.
- On becoming President, Donald Trump twittered: 'The United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability', and a day later: 'Let it be an arms race.'

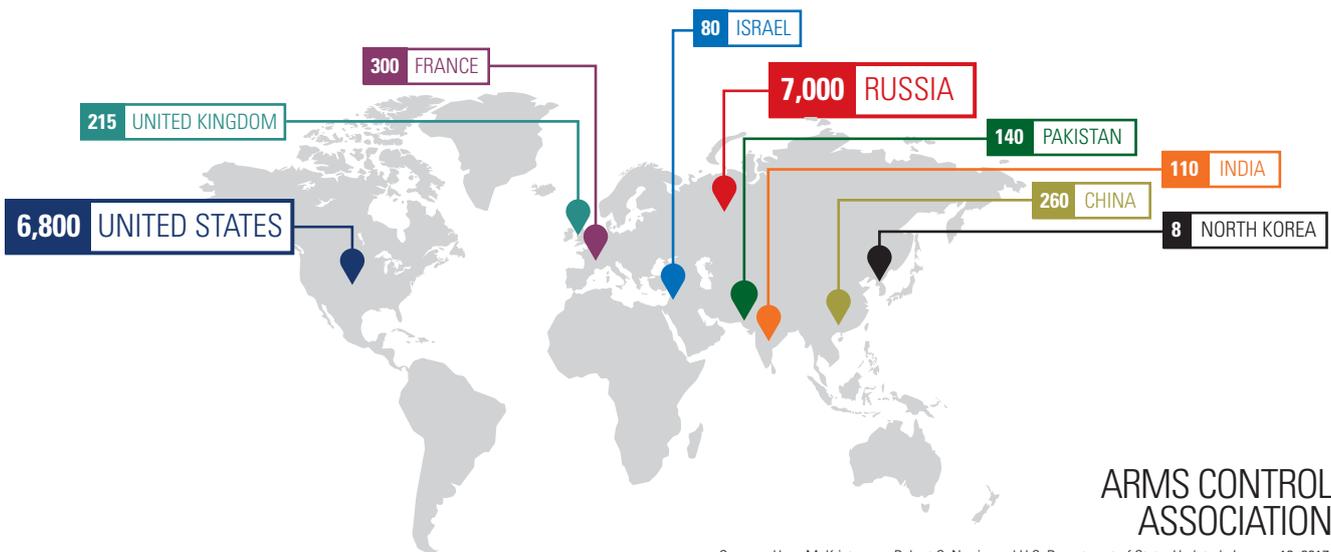
## FLASHPOINTS

- South China Sea: China has built artificial islands and infrastructure, and is testing weapons and equipment in the disputed waters – the Trump administration has labelled this 'illegal and unacceptable'.
- Korea: North Korea may soon test an intercontinental ballistic missile. The US says it will shoot down any North Korean missile fired at the United States or any of its allies.
- India-Pakistan: These two nuclear weapon states have fought three wars, and the Kashmir dispute is unresolved. Amid escalating tensions, India recently tested its most powerful nuclear-capable missile.
- Middle East: In a region of bloody conflicts and foreign military interventions, the breakdown of the Iran nuclear deal could unleash a regional nuclear arms race.

## OTHER RISKS

- According to former US Defence Secretary William Perry, the risks of a nuclear catastrophe – in a regional war, terrorist attack, by accident or miscalculation – are greater now than during the Cold War.

## WORLD'S NUCLEAR ARSENALS



ARMS CONTROL ASSOCIATION

Sources: Hans M. Kristensen, Robert S. Norris, and U.S. Department of State. Updated: January 19, 2017.



# MORE HOPEFUL SIGNS

## Humanitarian Pledge

The 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has greatly disappointed. We now have 9 nuclear weapon states compared to 5 back then. Sadly, the pledge of nuclear armed states to negotiate nuclear disarmament has not been honoured.

A deep divide now separates nuclear-haves and nuclear-have-nots. Mounting evidence on the catastrophic effects of nuclear weapons has greatly strengthened the resolve of many governments to reassert the imperative to disarm.

Encouraged by the pioneering work of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and other civil society initiatives, three major conferences, were held in Norway, Mexico and Austria in 2013 and 2014.

The concrete outcome has been a humanitarian pledge endorsed by 127 governments, which commits them to 'stigmatise, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons'.

# RELIGIOUS LEADERS SPEAK OUT

Leaders of the world's main religions, including Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism, have repeatedly warned of a possible nuclear weapons catastrophe and urged leaders to move towards abolition of nuclear weapons.

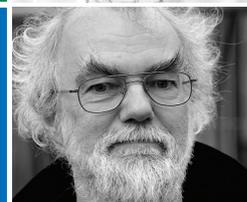
*An ethics and a law based on the threat of mutual destruction are self-contradictory. . . There is an urgent need to work for a world free of nuclear weapons. . . with the goal of a complete prohibition of these weapons.*

**Pope Francis** at the UN General Assembly, 25 September 2015



*[Nuclear weapons] will always kill the innocent. . . To threaten such an outrage. . . is to begin to lose one's moral and human dignity. To work for a world free from nuclear arms is to work for the sake of that moral and human dignity.*

**Dr Rowan Williams**, Archbishop of Canterbury, 24 September 2009



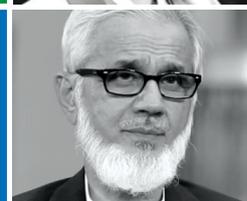
*In Buddhist ethics, protecting innocent life is a high value. Nuclear weapons offend this value. . . [they] are immoral. Let us work together to rid the world of all of them.*

**Dr. Chung Ohun Lee**, Won Buddhism International



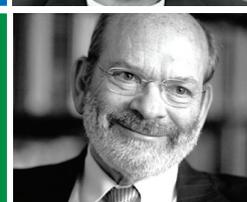
*Nuclear weapons. . . are weapons of mass destruction. They make no distinction between combatants or non-combatants.*

**Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi**, Fiqh Council of North America



*. . . it is our duty to cherish and protect creation, to learn to love and care for one another, it is time to beat our nuclear swords into ploughshares, and not stop beating until they are musical instruments.*

**Rabbi Peter Knobel**, Central Conference of American Rabbis



## TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

On 23 December 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted a ground-breaking Resolution (with 113 countries in favour, 35 against and 13 abstaining). It called for negotiations on an international treaty to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons, beginning in March 2017 and continuing in June-July 2017.

This historic decision signalled an end to two decades of paralysis in multilateral nuclear disarmament diplomacy.

Just hours before, the European Parliament called on EU member states to 'participate constructively' in the coming negotiations.

The proposed treaty is expected to prohibit the development, production, testing, acquisition, stockpiling, and transfer of nuclear weapons.

The road ahead will not be an easy one. Much work is being done to address the hard questions:

- Will nuclear armed states seek to obstruct the negotiations?
- Will non-nuclear states be able to withstand the pressure to rethink their support for the treaty?
- What precise weapons and activities will be prohibited?
- How long will it take to achieve complete nuclear abolition?
- How will the treaty be implemented and verified?
- How will breaches of the treaty be dealt with?

### RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE:

If, as is likely, the nuclear states refuse to sign the treaty, even after it has come into effect, two strategies will be crucial to further progress:

- **Mobilise social movements and public opinion everywhere**, including countries that have nuclear weapons; and
- **Exert unrelenting pressure on allied governments** to break ranks, extricate themselves from all nuclear entanglements, and sign up to the treaty.



# AUSTRALIA'S NEGATIVE ROLE



**Both Coalition and Labor governments claim to support nuclear disarmament. Their actions suggest otherwise.**

**Australian governments have:**

- Consistently harboured the illusion that US nuclear weapons underwrite Australia's national security.
- Strengthened the US military alliance at every step – supported US wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and elsewhere; blindly followed the US in its 'war on terror'; agreed to US marine forces operating in Darwin as part of the US policy of containing China.
- Continued to host the top-secret Pine Gap military facility in Central Australia, which enables the United States to target nuclear missiles and support US and Japanese missile defence. This makes Pine Gap a likely nuclear target.
- Refused to criticise any significant aspect of the US nuclear posture, or its current nuclear modernisation programs.

- Failed to implement any of the key recommendations made by the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (created by the Keating government), or by the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (established by the Rudd government).
- Progressively weakened Australia's nuclear safeguards regime in order to promote uranium exports, and agreed to sell uranium to India, a nuclear weapon state which has refused to sign the NPT.

Most shamefully, Australia has been busy trying to thwart a ban on nuclear weapons, simply to demonstrate that it remains America's most faithful ally.

AUSTRALIA  
CAN DO BETTER

5 KEY  
STEPS

- 1 Actively support efforts to establish a treaty to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.
- 2 Work with like-minded countries and international organisations to develop an effective long-term disarmament agenda.
- 3 Set new policy priorities: engagement with Asia; reduction of military budgets; UN reform; and peaceful settlement of disputes, with the focus on dialogue, mediation, reconciliation, economic cooperation and post-war reconstruction.
- 4 Terminate any arrangements that link Australia to US nuclear strategies, policies, facilities, and deployments.
- 5 End uranium exports and other nuclear activities likely to add fuel to nuclear ambitions at home and abroad.

## WE CAN ALL DO OUR BIT

- We can engage in respectful conversation with family, friends, colleagues and others we are in touch with.
- We can pass on this pamphlet to others who may be interested (soft and hard copies are available on request).
- We can keep regularly informed about world events and Australia's role.
- We can encourage discussion groups, forums, workshops and other educational activities (Speakers and resources available on request).
- We can pass on information through Facebook, Twitter and other social media.
- We can write letters (however short) to newspapers, local papers, the ABC and other mass circulation media
- We can communicate with our local member of parliament by letter, phone, or face to face meetings.
- We can support petitions and campaigns now getting under way.

**For further information: Pax Christi Vic, PO Box 31, Carlton South 3053, Email: [pax@paxchristi.org.au](mailto:pax@paxchristi.org.au)**

Name:

Email:

Address:

- Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ printed copies / soft copy of this pamphlet (no cost involved).
- Please send me information about Pax Christi and forthcoming events – forums, lectures, workshops.
- Please let me know how I can donate to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) in Australia.



This pamphlet has been produced by Pax Christi Victoria as a contribution to an overdue national conversation. It is addressed to all Australians, Christians, people of other faiths, and those of no religious faith. Pax Christi is an international Christian peace movement committed to peace with justice and respect for the dignity of the human person. In Victoria it has played a pioneering role in nuclear disarmament and other security issues since the mid-1970s.