

**2022 World Conference against A and H Bombs  
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**Greetings to this important conference. We renew today our commitment to you all – that our work for nuclear abolition will continue until victory.**

**For many years after the cold war, it almost seemed as if nuclear weapons had gone away. The danger receded; the threat became almost abstract. Our movements continued to raise awareness of the nuclear arsenals, the risk of accidents, of proliferation, the massive waste of money and the falseness of so-called deterrence theory. But our voices were not always heard. We continued our struggle for global nuclear abolition, but the imminent threat that was felt so acutely at times in previous decades: the Cuban missile crisis, the 1980s with cruise and Pershing missiles coming to Europe, that time of danger seemed to many people to be over. How wrong they were.**

**The global situation has changed, and changed more rapidly than anyone could have imagined, to the extent that nuclear war is once again a real possibility. Indeed, I would say that we are in a uniquely dangerous situation; because never before**

**has the world been at such great risk of nuclear war. And I don't believe I am overstating the case.**

**When the US used two atom bombs in 1945, on Hiroshima and on Nagasaki, an estimated 340,000 people died as a result. That was a catastrophe, and an unnecessary catastrophe, because Japan was already trying to surrender. But at that time only the US had nuclear weapons. There was no possibility of a nuclear war breaking out.**

**And then think about the Cuban Missile Crisis when it seemed that the world was on the brink of disaster; the two leaders, Kennedy and Khrushchev had the wisdom to negotiate to bring about a solution which dealt with the security concerns of both sides. Wisdom and dialogue prevailed and nuclear war was averted.**

**But look at the situation now: what are the unique factors that make nuclear war so much more likely? Firstly, there is a terrible and brutal war taking place in Ukraine, people are dying, homes and infrastructure torn apart. A war like this is the context in which nuclear weapons could become the next stage in military escalation.**

**Secondly, where are the calls for peace, the negotiation, the concern for saving every human life, that we should be hearing from our leaders? It's just not there. What we've been hearing, even when it was still possible to prevent this war, is bellicose rhetoric, followed by escalatory movements of troops, weaponry and munitions that can only make matters infinitely worse. We've seen the most heartbreaking coverage of the sufferings of the Ukrainian people, and at the same time we have wall to wall coverage promoting warfare, even**

**encouraging people to go and fight. Every single death is a tragedy and the media and politicians who suggest otherwise and pursue policies that will lead to more slaughter should be ashamed of themselves.**

**This is the reality of war and it has to stop. But we know that the reality of nuclear war would be so many times worse. The bomb dropped on Hiroshima was actually a small nuclear bomb in today's terms. Can you imagine what today's bombs would do to our cities across the world? The mayor of London recently said that London is well-prepared if Putin launches a nuclear attack. There is no way to be prepared for a nuclear attack. You have to stop it happening.**

**That is our most urgent task as a movement, because it is in this time of escalating war, with nuclear arsenals on both sides – that we have to do everything possible to prevent nuclear use.**

**And of course, the recent policies of nuclear weapons states are not making it easy. For some decades we had seen gradual reductions in nuclear weapons, but now we are seeing modernisation programmes on all sides – like Britain's Trident replacement. In some cases we are even seeing increases – like Boris Johnson's nuclear arsenal increase last year with an increase in the number of nuclear warheads of over 40%. At the same time he declared an increased number of scenarios in which he would consider using nuclear weapons, even against non-nuclear states. And this year he has agreed to the US bringing nuclear its nuclear bombs back to Britain under the guise of NATO. Now we are truly on the front line in a US/Russia nuclear war.**

**Worst of all is the sanitizing of the idea of nuclear use. Former president Trump had a lot to answer for this: he not only talked of so-called ‘usable’ nuclear weapons, he also produced them and deployed them in his last year of office. So now the idea that they will never be used – the mutually assured destruction theory of the cold war – has gone. We hear of tactical nuclear weapons, as if you could use a small one on a battlefield and everything would be fine elsewhere. This is complete nonsense – and criminally dangerous nonsense.**

**So, what can our leaders be thinking?**

**There are 12,000 nuclear weapons, held by NATO states, US, France and UK, and Russia. With delivery systems capable of intercontinental delivery, these can be focused on Ukraine, but within minutes they can also fire on London, New York, Paris, Moscow and indeed pretty much anywhere else. The one thing we can be sure of, is that having nuclear weapons makes you a target.**

**So, what can we do?**

**We must build pressure on governments to change course. We must make people aware of the consequences of nuclear war, the existential threat that we face. We must get out on the streets and shout it out, people need to hear this, whether or not they want to.**

**We must build the peace movement here and internationally – there are huge protests taking place for ending this war and there can be huge protests again against nuclear weapons: we must have the courage and confidence to do this again, and succeed, as we did in the 1980s.**

**All our work, all our actions in these terrible days, must be to secure a future for humanity, for all peoples.**

**It is truly now, above all else, the time to Protest and Survive.**

**No more Hiroshimas – No more Nagasakis!**