

# **INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS SEPT 26TH**

**GLOBAL WARMING CAN MAKE THE WORLD UNINHABITABLE IN 150 YEARS.**

**NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAN DO IT IN 45-90 MINUTES.  
WE'VE NEVER BEEN THIS CLOSE FOR THIS LONG.**

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Global Warming will take about 100-150 years to make the planet uninhabitable for humans if we don't do anything about it.

Nuclear weapons can make the world uninhabitable in 45-90 minutes, and do it out of computer error.

On 26<sup>th</sup> September 1983 it very nearly happened. (the world nearly ended TWICE in 1983, the second time because the 'Able Archer' exercises, which rehearsed nuclear war were thought by the Soviet Union to be the real thing).

We owe our continued existence on 26<sup>th</sup> Sept 1983, to an obscure Russian Colonel, Colonel Stanislav Petrov, who happened to be on duty that night because he was filling in for someone else. As sirens wailed and lights flashed, and his computers indicated a series of US launches from North Dakota, he said he had a 'gut feeling' that 'there was a mistake somewhere'. He was dead right – it had been light reflecting off unusual vertical cloud formations directly over US launch sites that looked to Soviet satellite surveillance exactly like a bunch of US missile launches.

Had Colonel Stan reported it as a launch, an unstoppable computerized sequence would have been initiated that would have launched between 10 and 15,000 warheads at the US its NATO allies, Japan and Australia. Civilization would have been destroyed.

## International Day For The Total Elimination Of Nuclear Weapons September 26th

Written by John Hallam

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Sept 26<sup>th</sup> was made into the International day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear weapons by UNGA resolution in 2013. A High Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament will take place at UN Headquarters NY on 26<sup>th</sup>. Governments have been urged to attend at the highest level.

Colonel Stan's brush with the apocalypse wasn't the only one – terrifying incidents have also taken place in US nuclear command and control centers, notably one in which US defense secretary Brzezinski was woken at 3am with the news that 2000 Soviet warheads were incoming. It turned out to be a malfunction in a chip in Colorado. The mistake was discovered seconds before Brzezinski would have woken Carter with a request for a launch.

The world also nearly ended because of a Norwegian research rocket that was mistaken for an incoming US first strike on the Kremlin in 1995.

There are upwards of a dozen occasions on which the world has come so close to a massive nuclear launch that ....in some parallel universe it is cold and dark and humans aren't there any more.

Fast forward to now.

It's generally held amongst nuclear weapons 'wonks' that we are closer to nuclear weapons use of some kind than we have been since the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1963, when the 'odds' of nuclear war were estimated by Kennedy as between one in three and 50/50.

That does NOT mean the world is necessarily going to end tomorrow. We hope and pray that absolutely nothing happens.

It DOES mean we should be very very concerned and should absolutely prioritize doing something about it. There are a whole lot of commonsense measures that can be taken to make an accidental (or not so accidental) apocalypse – out of madness, malice, miscalculation,

malfunction or malware – less probable.

Not using nuclear weapons to blackmail others would be one thing.

Refraining from highly provocative military exercises close to Russian borders (and obtaining a commitment from them to do the same) would be another.

Better, or resumed, mil-to-mil communication would be another.

Taking nuclear weapons off high alert.

Mutual (or even unilateral) 'No-first-use' commitments.

These are immediate term band-aid fixes that nonetheless might just prevent the accidental end of everything.

Australia should be vigorously promoting all of these measures – measures that cost little or nothing, and do not affect our balance of trade.

The ultimate fix is of course, to eliminate nuclear weapons altogether.

This is best done via the TPNW or 'Ban Treaty' which far from 'undermining' the NPT, strengthens it and fulfills Art VI.

Australia should be signing the TPNW, ratifying it, and urging others to do likewise. We urge Australia and ALL governments including especially the nuclear weapon states themselves to

sign, ratify and above all to implement the TPNW.

Our future depends on it.

John Hallam

People for Nuclear Disarmament

<https://www.pndnsw.org.au>

Human Survival Project

<https://www.facebook.com/Human-Survival-Project-388802504634024>

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## **Speech for Sept 26, International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (Delivered Sept 21, International Day of Peace, Martin Place Sydney)**

I want to talk about a day that's just 5 days down the track from today, the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Because the two days are so close they are often marked at the same time.

Sept 26 has officially been the UN recognized International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons since a General Assembly resolution in December 2013 – 30 years after the Sept 26 1983 event it commemorates.

What nearly happened on Sept 26 1983?

The world nearly ended, that's what happened. In fact it came close to ending twice that rather eventful year – it nearly ended once again in early November '83, with the NATO 'Able Archer' exercises. Able Archer was a rehearsal for WW-III. The problem was that the Kremlin did not think it was a mere rehearsal. We owe our survival through that event to a double-agent embedded in the highest echelons of NATO. He's still in jail for having leaked NATO battle plans to the Kremlin (thereby showing the Kremlin that Able Archer WAS a mere rehearsal not the real thing). He deserves the Nobel.

What took place on Sept 26<sup>th</sup> 1983 is best portrayed (with human interest and even a tragic love story) in the Movie 'The Man Who Saved the World'. (Google it).

Basically the story is this:

Colonel Stan Petrov (the hero) is on duty on the graveyard shift at Serpukhov-15, an early warning satellite ground station outside Moscow. He isn't normally scheduled to be on duty that night – he's swapped his shift with someone else who has rung in sick. Rumor has it the guy was having a birthday party. Whatever, his mate wanted to be someplace other than deep underground watching radar screens and waiting (hopefully in vain) for the world to end.

Soon after Colonel Stan started what was expected to be an uneventful night however, sirens started to wail, lights flashed and a big screen lit up showing the US had launched.

The apocalypse was (according to the computer) approaching at 3 times the speed of sound and would arrive in roughly 20 minutes. If it was real they could expect to die.

Had the person who was normally on watch been doing it that night, being junior to Colonel Stan he'd have 'gone by the book', buttons would have been pressed and an unstoppable computerized sequence would have kicked in launching between 10 and 15,000 warheads at the US and its allies including Australia.

However, the Colonel had a feeling in his gut that there was a mistake somewhere...something wasn't quite right.

At that time it was just a hunch.

He picked up the red phone and said confidently 'I am transmitting false data'.

'Are you sure? Said the voice at the other end sounding not at all confident.

'Yes' lied Colonel Stan. He wasn't at all sure. The next 20 minutes as they ticked out, were the most stressful a human can endure.

The terrifying minutes ticked out. Nothing happened. There were no incoming missiles. Men wept.

Rumor has it that later on the Colonel downed a bottle of vodka. His immediate superior, General Votintsev, arrived in the bunker, demanding to know (a) how come the world had nearly ended (b) why it hadn't. He suggested Colonel Stan should get a medal.

It turned out to have been sunlight reflecting off a highly unusual formation of vertical clouds over US launch sites that looked to Soviet surveillance satellites, exactly like US launches.

Had Colonel Stan not been on duty that night, we'd have been toast – courtesy of a glitch in satellite surveillance.

Fast forward to now.

Back then in 1983, the hands of the iconic 'Doomsday Clock' were at 3 minutes to 'midnight', midnight being the fiery end of civilization.

They have been at 2 mins to midnight since January 2018. They are unlikely to be moved further forward because time is metaphorically and literally, running out.

The other day, a group of 100 retired Generals, secretaries and ministers of defense, secretaries and ministers of foreign affairs, and the odd retired prime minister, signed on to a declaration that said the world is closer to global thermonuclear war than it has been since 1962 (with the possible exception of Sept 26 1983 itself).

A few days before that the Russian foreign minster Ivanov had said that (nuclear) war with NATO was/is a distinct possibility.

There has been a steady trickle of warnings from former US and Russian commanders of nuclear forces (Generals Cartwright and Pavel Zolotarev), and retired secretaries of defense (William Perry). Mikhail Gorbachev and the Pope have warned of it.

Nuclear war is emphatically NOT 'yesterdays' nightmare. It is a very current possibility. It is indeed the single most immediate threat to the continuance of so called 'civilization' and of humans as a species.

The false missile alert in Hawaii not so long ago shows us just how ill-equipped conceptually we are to deal with a real nuclear threat. If the 4 minute warning arrives by tweet (as it did then) (assuming the innards of every phone and the network itself haven't yet been fried by EMP), then millenials will spend the 4 minutes that they haven't got not looking for a fallout shelter (anyway there are few left unless you are Swiss), but trying to determine if its a joke or if their neighbor has got the warning too.

Then the 4 minutes will be over and they will be vaporized, or crushed under the rubble.

If you'd like to see how a conventional war in Europe might go nuclear and escalate into a civilization-destroying apocalypse, just google 'Plan A'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jy3JU-ORpo>

Its a simulation done at Princeton University by a group of nuclear weapons experts based on whats known of US and Russian current strategic planning and arsenals. Its 4 and a half minutes long.

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For a more detailed, in-depth view of one way the apocalypse could unfold, watch 'Inside the war Room' by the BBC, from 2014. It shows how conventional war in Estonia could lead via a 'WW-I style escalation sequence' to WW-III. Its a full hour, and now incongruously punctuated with ads.

<https://vimeo.com/154370371>

The world is trembling on the brink (indeed its been doing so for some years), as perilously or more perilously in spite of smaller arsenals than it ever was even in Colonel Stan's time. (Colonel Stan died in 2017. He'd be heartbroken to see how things have now developed.).

Something can be done about it.

Our Government could do more, much more, about it.

They need to hear from us.

Tell Sco Mo, Marise Payne, and Penny Wong how concerned you are . Scared shitless even.

Write to them longhand on paper. Post or fax it.

Demand we sign and ratify the Ban Treaty.

Demand we get others to do so – starting with our 'great and powerful' ally.

Demand we do more on nuclear risk reduction.

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Say you don't want a nuclear umbrella or extended deterrence.

Make sure you copy it to your local member.

Get active.

Join ICAN or IPAN or MAPW or PND.

Work to ensure that ten years down the track we are all still HERE, and that global warming hasn't been 'solved' by an abrupt nuclear winter in which we all get to freeze in the dark if we weren't vaporized in the first 45 minutes.

Remember – global warming makes the planet uninhabitable in about 100-150 years.

Nuclear weapons can do it in 45-90 minutes.

Do something.

John Hallam

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**ALL DELEGATES  
SEPT 26TH HIGH LEVEL UN MEETING ON NUCLEAR  
DISARMAMENT  
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF  
NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

Dear Delegate,

September 26<sup>th</sup> is the [International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons](#) . On that

day a

[Hi](#)

[gh Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament](#)

will take place in UNHQ-NY, at which Governments should be represented at the very highest level possible – preferably at Presidential, Prime Ministerial or other Ministerial level.

**I am writing to urge that your country be represented at the highest possible level at that meeting on this matter of truly existential importance, as urged by the UNSG himself in his statement about Sept26th** (text below, after this memo) and to use the occasion to announce or support nuclear-risk-reduction and disarmament measures.

The real risk of widespread use of nuclear weapons, an event that would likely end what we call civilization, is as high right now as it has been since the Cold War.

In January 2018 a committee of Nobel laureates and nuclear weapons experts re-set the **Doomsday Clock**

hands to 2 minutes to figurative 'midnight', which is as close as it has ever been, indicating the extremely high existential threat to humanity from nuclear weapons and climate change.

Since January 2018, nuclear risk factors have worsened, the latest increment being the demise of the INF Treaty, the likely demise of New START, and the likelihood of a subsequent unrestrained arms race.

Back in 1983, at half past midnight Moscow time on Sep 26, the world came close to ending, as Soviet surveillance satellites mistook the reflections of sunlight off vertical high clouds directly over North Dakota for US ICBM launches. Fortunately the officer on watch at the time, Colonel Stan Petrov, thought there was 'a mistake somewhere' and declined to take actions that would likely have resulted in the launch of over 10,000 nuclear warheads, due to the fact that the Soviet Union and USA had launch-on-warning policies. Colonel Petrov's actions are re-enacted in the movie ['The Man Who Saved the World'](#), which highlights that the USA and Russia have the same risky policies today that could lead to an inadvertent nuclear war.

The movie has been shown a number of times at the UN. Colonel Petrov himself (as recorded in the movie) has visited the UN.

Exactly 30 years after Sept 26 1983, in 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution making Sept 26th the [International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons 26 September](#) and establishing a high – level meeting at the level of Prime Ministers, Foreign and Defense Ministers or Ambassadorial level on that day.

NGOs also participate prominently in this meeting, as they do in a number of other UN disarmament meetings. The event will be live-streamed on <http://webtv.un.org/>

It is this meeting we urge your governments to prioritise.

It is above all the ACCIDENTAL outbreak of nuclear war via precisely such miscalculation, mistake, malfunction, or malware, (as it was on Sept26th 1983) that remains the most probable route to a potentially civilization-ending catastrophe.

Efforts on nuclear risk reduction are of key importance. These worthy efforts need to be stepped up and given a much higher profile. Risk reduction measures include no-first-use commitments, lowering of operational readiness of nuclear weapon systems and increased decision-making times, better or resumed military to military communications, and implementation of a repeated commitment to establish a joint US-Russia nuclear risk reduction/data exchange centre in Moscow.

Serious consideration should be given to a First Committee resolution reaffirming that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought, and concluding that all options to initiate nuclear warfare should be unequivocally renounced. It could also endorse specific measures such as de-alerting, No-First-Use, and improved or resumed military to military communication.

John Hallam

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Alan Ware,

World Future Council,

London, UK,

Peace and Disarmament Program Coordinator

Aaron Tovish, (Formerly Mayors for Peace)

Zona Libre, Mexico

## UN Statement on International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

<https://www.un.org/en/events/nuclearweaponelimination/>

Achieving global nuclear disarmament is one of the oldest goals of the United Nations. It was the subject of the General Assembly's first resolution in 1946, which established the Atomic Energy Commission, which was dissolved in 1952, with a mandate to make specific proposals for the control of nuclear energy and the elimination of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. The United Nations has been at the forefront of many major diplomatic efforts to advance nuclear disarmament since. In 1959, the General Assembly endorsed the objective of general and complete disarmament. In 1978, the first Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament further recognized that nuclear disarmament should be the priority objective in the field of disarmament. Every United Nations Secretary-General has actively promoted this goal.

Yet, today nearly 14,000 nuclear weapons remain. Countries possessing such weapons have well-funded, long-term plans to modernize their nuclear arsenals. More than half of the world's population still lives in countries that either have such weapons or are members of nuclear alliances. While the number of deployed nuclear weapons has appreciably declined since the height of the Cold War, not one nuclear weapon has been physically destroyed pursuant to a treaty. In addition, no nuclear disarmament negotiations are currently underway.

Meanwhile, the doctrine of nuclear deterrence persists as an element in the security policies of all possessor states and many of their allies. The international arms-control framework that contributed to international security since the Cold War, acted as a brake on the use of nuclear weapons and advanced nuclear disarmament, has come under increasing strain. Most recently,

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on 2 August 2019, the United States' withdrawal spelled the end of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, through with the United States and the Russian Federation had previously committed to eliminating an entire class of nuclear missiles.

Frustration has been growing amongst Member States regarding what is perceived as the slow pace of nuclear disarmament. This frustration has been put into sharper focus with growing concerns about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of even a single nuclear weapon, let alone a regional or global nuclear war.

The General Assembly commemorates 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. This Day provides an occasion for the world community to reaffirm its commitment to global nuclear disarmament as a priority. It provides an opportunity to educate the public - and their leaders - about the real benefits of eliminating such weapons, and the social and economic costs of perpetuating them. Commemorating this Day at the United Nations is especially important, given its universal membership and its long experience in grappling with nuclear disarmament issues. It is the right place to address one of humanity's greatest challenges; achieving the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/32 and subsequent resolutions, the purpose of the International Day is to further the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons through enhancing public awareness and education about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the necessity for their total elimination. In so doing, it is hoped that these activities will help to mobilize new international efforts towards achieving the common goal of a of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

**UN Secretary-General António Guterres**