

Written by John Hallam
Wednesday, 16 September 2020 15:52 -

PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

HUMAN SURVIVAL PROJECT

**SEPT 26 INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS
AND OCT 2 HIGH LEVEL MEETING**

**URGING GOVT TO AFFIRM THAT A NUCLEAR WAR CANNOT BE WON AND MUST
NEVER BE FOUGHT**

AFFIRM THE URGENCY OF NUCLEAR RISK REDUCTION

SIGN, RATIFY, AND URGE OTHERS TO SIGN AND RATIFY THE TPNW

Attn Senator Marise Payne, Foreign Minister

DFAT

Dear Senator Marise Payne:

I am writing to urge the government to use the opportunity afforded by the High Level Meeting scheduled for 2 October, on the occasion of the 26 September International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear

Weapons, to:

--Highlight the importance, and reaffirm, the Reagan-Gorbachev declaration of 1985/87, that '**A Nuclear war Cannot be Won and Must never be Fought**'.

--To press as a matter of existential urgency, for the implementation of nuclear (war) risk reduction measures, including but not limited to, No First Use, Lowering of alert status and increased presidential decision-making time, improved mil to mil communication, implementation of the five-times reaffirmed commitment to install a joint data exchange centre in Moscow, and avoidance of potentially provocative military exercises and statements.

--Renewal of the New START treaty and negotiation of a follow-on.

--Signature and ratification of the **Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** .(TPNW).

As you are no doubt well aware, Sept 26 1983, was 'The day the world nearly ended'. At half-past midnight on that day, Colonel Stanislav Petrov (who sadly died in 2017) averted global nuclear war by deciding that his computers, which were telling him that the US had launched, were wrong. His decision quite literally saved the world from an exchange of nuclear weapons that would undoubtedly have destroyed civilisation.

The possibility of accidental nuclear war, and the risk of nuclear war

more broadly, remains the number one risk (notwithstanding COVID-19) to civilisation and to humans as a species, closely followed by climate change.

Yet it has been largely forgotten.

In spite of the lower profile taken by nuclear war, it was the increased risk of this that has impelled the advisors to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists Doomsday Clock to set the hands at an unprecedented 100 seconds to midnight.

Even in 1983, the hands of the clock were only at 3 minutes to midnight.

Disturbingly, rhetoric between Trump and Putin suggests that both the US and Russia take the possibility of nuclear war and also of an arms race) quite lightly, and are willing to contemplate it.

Hence the importance of both a reaffirmation of the Reagan-Gorbachev Joint Statement that '**A Nuclear war Cannot be Won and Must never be Fought**' , and of nuclear risk reduction measures.

A memo urging such a reaffirmation was recently set to the entire General Assembly.

<http://www.pndnsw.org.au/articles/flashpoints/443-nuclear-war-cannot->

[be-won-and-must-never-be-fought.html](http://www.abolition2000.org/en/working-groups/nuclear-risk-reduction/be-won-and-must-never-be-fought.html)

A comprehensive list of nuclear risk reduction measures is listed on the Abolition 2000 website:

<http://www.abolition2000.org/en/working-groups/nuclear-risk-reduction/>

We continue to urge you to reverse Australia's destructive stance on the TPNW, and to sign and ratify it immediately and to encourage other governments especially those of nuclear weapons states to do likewise. The TPNW far from undermining the NPT, complements and reinforces it – indeed, it is arguable that signature and ratification of the TPNW is a measure (though not the only measure) of commitment to the aims and objectives of the NPT. Far from the NPT being undermined by signature and ratification of the TPNW, FAILURE to sign the TPNW undermines the NPT.

Especially in the current atmosphere in which nuclear threats are carelessly bandied around whilst the real risk of a nuclear exchange escalates alarmingly, the TPNW makes it clear that the use and the possession of nuclear weapons is entirely unacceptable.

You are urged to do as much as you possibly can of the above 'wish list'. Really, you should do all of it, both risk reduction, reaffirmation of Reagan-Gorbachev, AND the TPNW.

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