19APRIL 2016

PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT NSW

END OF CIVILISATION?

...NOT AN ELECTION ISSUE!

The potential end of civilisation and the greatest short-medium term threat to humans as a species is unlikely to be a top-ranking election issue – or to be debated in the upcoming july 2 election at all. The election will predictably be dominated by economic management, by the legislation whose rejection by the Senate triggered the double-dissolution, by the usual political name-calling, and perhaps by a certain 'spin' on security issues.

But just maybe global nuclear weapons issues and the possibility of global nuclear war SHOULD be on the political agenda. The issue to end all issues.

Back in 2010, Gareth Evans International Commission on Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament noted that while the risk of nuclear war remains very much on the agenda and seems now to be growing not diminishing, it is even more concerning that on the whole it doesn't show up in political debate. It was Evans who said that nuclear war risks remain the greatest short to medium term risk to civilisation and the human species.

Since then there has been a steady trickle of distinguished and highly placed people, including former commanders of both US and Russian nuclear forces, who have warned of a growing risk of global catastrophe.

Most recently, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists 'Doomsday Clock' has been set at three minutes to 'midnight' (midnight being the end of the world), for two years running. At its most recent 'doomsday clock seminar' the nobel-prize-studded Board of Sponsors noted that its decision to keep the hands of the clock at 3 mins to midnight was an expression of 'dismay' at the lack of political focus on nuclear risks.

The risk of nuclear weapons use- more accurately of the use of the high-alert arsenals held by the US/NATO and Russia – is real and growing. Such use would indeed be the 'end of the world' at least as we know it. This does not mean that the apocalypse is going to take place tomorrow. We all hope fervently that it will never take place.

It does however mean that a real risk exists that will not disappear if we just don't talk about it during elections. Nuclear risk, realistically, is unlikely to be a front running election issue in the July 2nd election. BUT IT SHOULD BE.

People for Nuclear Disarmament would urge anyone who thinks as we do that the mere possibility of the end of everything ought to attract the focus of some political minds, to write to local members and candidates to urge them to make this issue the issue to end all issues.

John Hallam

jhjohnhallam@gmail.com

johnhallam2001@yahoo.com.au

9810-2598 (leave message)

9319-4296 (do not leave message)