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PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

HUMAN SURVIVAL PROJECT

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**NORTH KOREA – TEST OR NO TEST – CAN'T DESTROY THE WORLD.
RUSSIA AND THE UNITED STATES CAN.**

Whether the DPRK (North Korea) tests or not in the next few weeks, and whether or not it perfects a delivery system that can loft is currently rather small warheads to the United States or even to Australia (with the most likely target being Pine Gap), it cannot by itself destroy the world or terminate civilization and/or the human race.

It has been suggested that the DPRK may be developing an 'EMP weapon' that would be small, and would unleash a 'blast' of electromagnetic energy over the US, crippling communication and power systems. However this proposition seems highly dubious as the 'ideal' EMP weapon is not small at all but very large – well beyond current DPRK abilities.

The DPRKs arsenal seems unlikely to consist of more than 25 (probably less) roughly Hiroshima-size warheads, most likely deliverable at present by medium-range Rodong or scud missiles, able to reach Seoul, Tokyo or Beijing, or US bases in Okinawa. The DPRK might possibly also be able to reach the Carl S. Vinson, but this probably requires better accuracy than it is capable of.

This doesn't mean that one should lightly mess with the DPRK – its modest arsenal is quite enough to kill hundreds of thousands in large cities, and would presumably be used only where it was felt that regime change was imminent.

The US and Russia on the other hand, have nuclear arsenals of a number of thousands of weapons of a wide range (tactical to hundreds of kilotons) of sizes. They and even more so China also have a small number of very large warheads (the Chinese DF-5 is 5 megatons), that really are EMP – weapons. Exploded roughly 400Km out in space, these would make electronic scrap of the worlds entire communications, cyber, and financial infrastructure, taking us essentially back to medieval times. This could be achieved with as few as 5 warheads. While the DPRKs ability to do this is doubtful, that of the US, Russia, and China is not.

The use of a number of thousands of relatively large (10-20 times the size of any DPRK warhead) warheads by the US and Russia, particularly against cities or military targets in or near cities, would, depending on exact targeting strategies, and exactly how events unfolded, kill as many as a number of billions of people in less than two hours.

The burning of cities would then loft black soot into the upper stratosphere, blotting out the sun for decades and lowering temperatures to below those of the last ice-age.

The world has come close to a US-Russia nuclear exchange – largely by accident or miscalculation – on over a dozen occasions. Even last November, immediately prior to the

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election of Trump, US-STRATCOM was apparently at DEFCON-3. (we are now at DEFCON-4 – DEFCON-5 is 'normal'.)

A nuclear war between India and Pakistan, using 100-200 roughly Hiroshima – sized weapons, could cause the death over the next decade, of as many as 2 billion mostly poorer people by famine from crop failure due to the global climatic impact.

The DPRK is an ugly, paranoid regime that does not tolerate dissent. Kim executes his relatives with anti-aircraft guns. They do have a dozen to just over 20 smallish warheads of uncertain reliability deliverable by not very reliable, not very accurate, medium range missiles. They are working on improving their capabilities and no doubt they will do so whatever Donald tweets.

But the US and Russia, not the DPRK, have the unique capability to end civilization and possibly humans as a species.

And the only sure way to assure human survival is to eliminate nuclear weapons as UN conferences that took place in March and will take place again in June-July, seek to do, and to implement a range of short-term nuclear risk reduction measures. If Australia is to make a real contribution to human security it should participate in these events with a view to furthering the prohibition and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

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