

DID YOU KNOW?

- An atomic bomb is the oldest form of a nuclear weapon. It relies on nuclear fission reactions. Modern nuclear bombs use fission and fusion processes.
- Nine countries with nuclear weapons: U.S., Russia, China, North Korea, France, U.K., Pakistan, India, and Israel.
- Based on publicly available information 13,000 nuclear warheads are estimated to be in existence.
- The United States' B83 has a maximum yield of 1.2 megatons, making it 60 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Nagasaki.
- The Soviet Union once made the Tsar Bomba, which had a yield of 50 megatons—around 2,500 times more powerful than the bomb that destroyed Nagasaki.

INSIDE THIS  
ISSUE:

USCCB on Nuclear Weapons	3
War & Peace under CST	4
What Can I Do?	4
SCJ Response	4
What and Where is the Flotilla?	5
Ukraine-Russia	5

# Reign of the Sacred Heart

WAR & PEACE ISSUE

MAY 2024

## Mutual Destruction Under Nuclear Weapons

by Fr. Duy Nguyen, SCJ

There are few clear memories that stand out from my time in the Chicago public schools and one of them is a question raised by my elementary school teacher in 7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies: “Do you think it was right for the U.S. to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?” In the assignment, I wrote that it was the right action because it made Japan surrender and prevented the war from continuing. There were comments she wrote when she returned my paper, and it was along this line of thought: “It was not right

for civilians to die from the atomic bombs.”

Typical of an adolescent mind who did not have a grasp of the world and was not introduced to the Catholic Social Teachings, I set aside my teacher’s remark. I was just happy I passed the assignment. Decades later, I realized that her comment helped impact my ethics.

In war, there are always civilian casualties, whether intended or not. We need not look further than the current crises – war between Israel and

Hamas, and war between Ukraine and Russia where aid workers, townspeople, concertgoers, and families have been tragically killed. Even in Chicago and other major cities, innocent bystanders die from gang wars over territory.

What exacerbates the death toll is the threat of nuclear weapons. The two atomic bombs used in Japan were an earlier form of nuclear weapon. But modern nuclear weapons, that

*continues on pg. 2*

## Has World War III Already Begun? - Fr. Robert Bossie, SCJ

World wars begin incrementally and from seemingly distinct venues. That is why, when looking at current events, some have been saying that World War III has already begun. It just hasn’t been acknowledged yet. And such a war will easily escalate into nuclear war including nuclear winter in which debris blocks out the sun making it impos-

sible to grow sufficient food for 8+ billion people.

Consider for example the ongoing and escalating conflict between NATO (the US and its allies) and Russia over Ukraine which could easily turn nuclear if Russia feels its homeland is threatened. In fact, Russia already has threatened the use of smaller tactical nuclear

weapons, moving nuclear weapons into space, deploying hypersonic missiles which cannot be tracked by radar if its national integrity is threatened. The Bush and Trump administrations have abrogated nearly all the key nuclear arms control treaties, and the Biden administration has demonstrated no interest in reviving any of them. Last year, Russia

*continues on pg. 2*

## Mutual Destruction continued from pg. 1...



*"We ask the risen Jesus, who turns death into life, to change hatred into love, vengeance into forgiveness, war into peace. Yes, Christ is our peace, and through him we implore peace for all the world."*

**-Pope Francis**



combine fission and fusion reactions, are more devastating. Catholic tradition teaches that war is always the last resort after peace talks and efforts at a common path forward have been exhausted. But why are those in positions of authority quick to include nuclear missiles as an option? The use of nuclear weapons makes it impossible for any war to be just.

War is an impediment for the flourishing of humanity. PTSD, destruction, deaths, devastations, and losses are a consequence of warfare. As the saying goes, "there are no winners in war, only survivors."

## World War III Already Begun continued from pg. 1

withdrew from the onsite inspection portion of the new START treaty which was the only remaining disarmament treaty between the US and Russia.

After all, nuclear armed NATO is now at Russia's border which, at the end of the cold war NATO promised would never happen. One need only consider what the US' response would be if

Every pope since 1945 has condemned the use of nuclear weapons, perhaps except for Pope John Paul I, whose papacy lasted 33 days. However, he did promote the pursuit of peace in his brief tenure. Pope Pius XII stated in 1948 that "the atomic bomb was the most terrible weapon that the human mind has ever conceived." He described the aftermath of the atomic bombings as a "black blanket of death." Pope John Paul II stated that, "Our future on this planet, exposed as it is to nuclear annihilation depends upon one single factor: humanity

must make a moral about face."

Although President Harry Truman stood by his decision to end the war, save American lives, and send a message to the Soviet Union, his grandson, Clifton Harry Daniel said that his grandfather regretted "the loss of women and children." According to the Secretary of Commerce, Henry Wallace, when Truman was asked about the possibility of dropping the third atomic bomb, he stated that "the thought of wiping out another 100,000 people and

*continues on pg. 3*

US maintains a policy to use nuclear weapons first if it decides to do so.

Or consider Israel-US genocidal behavior toward the Palestinians which has drawn in other Arab countries. Meanwhile, Israel attacked the Iranian consulate in Syria which is considered a direct attack against the nation of Iran. President Biden (and presidential candidate Trump) have acknowledged the unbreakable bond between the US and Israel especially because Israel, which has 90 nuclear weapons, is

*continues on pg. 3*

**Mutual Destruction** *continued from pg. 2...*

killing all those kids was too horrible.”

President Ronald Reagan once said that “A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. The only value in our two nations possessing nuclear weapons is to make sure they will never be used. But then would it not be better to do away with them entirely?”

In the address to the UN General Assembly in 1961, President John F. Kennedy spoke, “For a

nuclear disaster, spread by wind and water and fear, could well engulf the great and the small, the rich and the poor, the committed and the uncommitted alike. Mankind must put an end to war--or war will put an end to mankind.” He proposed the cessation of the production of fissionable materials for use in weapons and a gradual destruction of existing nuclear weapons and conversion of them for peaceful uses.

Whether a person agrees/ disagrees with the moral

thing is certain: nuclear war must be avoided at all costs. Although there were a few other countries developing nuclear weapons during World War II, the U.S. was the only country that succeeded. Now there are nine known countries with nuclear weapons. The use of these destructive weapons is an existential threat to our planet, our only home.

How would a world without nuclear weapons be realized? It is hoped that swords can be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks; no nation shall raise a sword against another, nor shall they train for war again (Is 2:4). We can start by moving away from the threat of mutual destruction.

**USCCB on Nuclear Weapons**

Nuclear war is rejected in Church teaching because the use of nuclear weapons cannot ensure noncombatant immunity and their destructive potential and lingering radiation cannot be meaningfully proportionate. While possession of a

minimal nuclear capability may deter the use of nuclear weapons by others, the Church urges that nuclear deterrence be replaced with concrete measures of disarmament based on dialogue and multilateral negotiations. In its nuclear policy

the U.S. should commit to never use nuclear weapons first and to reject use of nuclear weapons to deter non-nuclear threats. The U.S. and other nuclear powers must move away from reliance on nuclear weapons for their security. A global ban is more than a moral ideal; it should be a policy goal.

- USCCB

**World War III Already Begun** *continued from pg. 1*

essentially the US’ agent in the Middle East.

On top of this, tensions between the US and China (which is aligning itself ever more with Russia) are on the edge of a major conflict over Taiwan and the South China Sea. The US claims it is protecting international waterways there but what would be the US response if Chinese

naval vessels plied the sea lanes around Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico.

The nations of the world are realigning themselves from a US, unipolar world, to a multi-polar world in which Russia and China and India are serious competitors with the US. All these nations are willing to risk all-out war, even nuclear war, to achieve their ends. Into this already vola-

tile mix, the climate crisis (extreme storms, drought, fires, migration, etc.) is creating ever greater competition for essential human resources (food, fuel, land, water, etc.) making the likelihood of full-blown world war a greater and greater possibility. In this way, climate change and nuclear war are intertwined threats to all life as we know it.

It is unmistakably clear that the peoples of the

world have to emphasize cooperation over competition to create a sustainable and equitable world. There is no other option or we will face the end of life as we know it. As famed author and activist Arundhati Roy has said, “Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day I can hear her breathing.”

## War and Peace under Catholic Social Teaching - Dn. Paul Hoang, SCJ

War is a grave and serious sin against the 5th Commandment. Catholic Social Teaching thoroughly condemns war and terrorism as failure of humanism and defeat of humanity. Pope Pius XII warned, “nothing is lost by peace; everything is lost by war” while Pope Paul VI pleaded for peace at the United Nations assembly in 1965, “no more war, war never again!”.

While the Church allows for war as a last resort with strict criteria under Just War Theory, they are increasingly difficult to meet in the modern era. These criteria are: 1) Just Cause, 2) Proportionality, 3) Legitimate Authority, 4) Prospect of Success, and 5) As Last Resort (CSDC #500).

Due to the severe human cost of war, especially civilians, all parties involved have duties to protect the innocents through humanitarian aid and respect of human dignity. Catholic Social Teaching calls for disarmament against excessive stockpiling and trading of arms, even as deterrence

against excessive stockpiling and trading of arms, even as deterrence strategy, “the arms race does not ensure peace. Far from eliminating the causes of war, it risks aggravating them” (CCC #2315). The Holy See was among the first signers of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 9/20/2017.

Working for peace is never separated from announcing the Gospel. Christ is our peace, the Prince of Peace. Jesus promises us peace (Jn 14:27) and calls the peacemakers blessed (Mt 5:9). He warned that those “who draw the sword will die by the sword” (Mt 26:52). The Church is the sacrament and instrument of peace in the world. Peace is the fruit of justice and love. As Catholics, we are called to wage peace through prayer, dialogue, reconciliation, solidarity, promotion of justice, and non-violent resistance.

### What Can I Do?

#### 1. Learn about the Issue

[10 Facts about Nuclear Weapons](#)

[Nuclear Weapons Solution](#)

[Building a world without nuclear weapons: An urgent Imperative](#)

#### 2. Use Your Keyboard

[Write to your Representative and Senators](#)

#### 3. Organize a group discussion

[Nuclear Weapons and Our Catholic Response](#)

#### 4. Pray

[Prayer for Disarmament](#)

### SCJ Response

The US Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart views the existence of nuclear weapons as one of two existential threats to humanity.

Members of the US Province met during the 2023 Provincial Chapter and agreed to submit a proposal to the 2024 General Chapter for the administrative leaders to establish an international commission to help the international SCJ entities to have their countries sign the U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). If their countries are already signatories, that these SCJ entities encourage their governments to pressure the nine nuclear weapon states and/or other non-signatories to adopt the treaty.

Dehonian spirituality (*Welcoming the Spirit of Sint Unum, Adveniat Regnum Tuum, Ecce Venio*) calls us to intercede in this threat to all life.

Our future as Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the future of all life as we know it necessitates, we do so in all of our life and ministry and we do so collectively, systemically, and comprehensively.

Last month, the JPR Commission contributed to the humanitarian aid efforts to the Palestinians of Gaza by making a small donation to Cassandra Dixon's costs for travel aboard one of two passenger ships along with a cargo ship carrying emergency aid. She is from Madison, Wisconsin who has extensive experience in past years volunteering in the West Bank. She was one of many volunteers among aid workers helping as part of the Freedom Flotilla Coalition. Unfortunately, the ships are currently prohibited from sailing out of Istanbul due to pressure from the U.S. and Israel.

### [Israel-Hamas Conflict](#) [Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza](#)



**The Priests of the Sacred Heart:  
Justice, Peace and Reconciliation**

[JPR Website](#)

## What and where is the flotilla of aid to Gaza?

by Fr. Wayne Jenkins, SCJ

The Freedom Flotilla Coalition is a global grassroots movement working to end the blockade of Gaza. It has gathered civilians including lawyers, journalists, medical doctors, and nurses to be on the convoy of three ships that are ready to depart from the Tuzla seaport near Istanbul. One of the ships, the Akdeniz RoRo contains over 5,000 tons of aid for the beleaguered Palestinians in Gaza.

The Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) is the primary organizer for the cargo ship with two ships for the passengers.

The flotilla was scheduled to leave on Friday, April 26th for Gaza with the blessing of the United Nations who called upon Israel to follow international law and allow the safe passage of the flotilla. Likewise, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to permit unimpeded access for humanitarian aid.

The Guinea-Bissau International Ships Registry (GBISR) had agreed to allow the flag of Guinea-Bissau to fly with two vessels which included the cargo ship. Guinea-Bissau decided to remove its flag from the flotilla. Without the authorization of a country to sponsor the Freedom Flotilla Coalition, the three ships remain on the docks at the Tuzla seaport. The Freedom Flotilla Coalition viewed this as unusual and a political move and vowed to continue fighting this illegal siege to reach the people of Gaza.

### [Flotilla](#)

## Ukraine-Russia

Coverage of the anti-war protests on college campuses have dominated mainstream media news outlets overshadowing the developments of the existing war between Russia and Ukraine.

The current crisis between the two countries did not emerge with the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and morphed into a full-blown Russian invasion in 2022, but its origin has deep and complex historical roots. Click below to learn more.

[Brief History](#)  
[Conflict at the Crossroads](#)  
[NATO Expansion the Cause?](#)  
[NATO Chief](#)

Below is a letter seeking to end the conflict and bloodshed between Israel and Hamas, initiated by the Catholic Advisory Group of Churches for Middle East Peace, with assistance from FAN, Pax Christi, and Maryknoll. Aware of the violence, deaths, humanitarian crisis, and history that plagued the lands, some members of the JPR commission signed the letter, which will be delivered to the White House on May 19, 2024.

[Sign-On Letter from US Catholics](#)