Daniel Ellsberg.

The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner

Published: 12-05-2017

About The Doomsday Machine

Shortlisted for the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction
Finalist for The California Book Award in Nonfiction
The San Francisco Chronicle’s Best of the Year List
Foreign Affairs Best Books of the Year
In These Times “Best Books of the Year"
From the legendary whistle-blower who revealed the Pentagon Papers, an eyewitness exposé of the dangers of America's Top Secret, seventy-year-long nuclear policy that continues to this day.

Here, for the first time, former high-level defense analyst Daniel Ellsberg reveals his shocking firsthand account of America's nuclear program in the 1960s. From the remotest air bases in the Pacific Command, where he discovered that the authority to initiate use of nuclear weapons was widely delegated, to the secret plans for general nuclear war under Eisenhower, which, if executed, would cause the near-extinction of humanity, Ellsberg shows that the legacy of this most dangerous arms buildup in the history of civilization--and its proposed renewal under the Trump administration--threatens our very survival. No other insider with high-level access has written so candidly of the nuclear strategy of the late Eisenhower and early Kennedy years, and nothing has fundamentally changed since that era.

Framed as a memoir--a chronicle of madness in which Ellsberg acknowledges participating--this gripping exposé reads like a thriller and offers feasible steps we can take to dismantle the existing "doomsday machine" and avoid nuclear catastrophe, returning Ellsberg to his role as whistle-blower. The Doomsday Machine is thus a real-life Dr. Strangelove story and an ultimately hopeful--and powerfully important--book about not just our country, but the future of the world.

Reviews

"The Doomsday Machine is being published at an alarmingly relevant moment, as North Korea is seeking the capability to target the United States with nuclear missiles, and an unpredictable president, Donald Trump, has countered with threats of 'fire and fury.'" – New York Magazine

"A groundbreaking and nightmare-inducing account of how the whole mad system works." – Esquire

“One of the best books ever written on the subject--certainly the most honest and revealing account by an insider who plunged deep into the nuclear rabbit hole's mad logic and came out the other side.” – Fred Kaplan, Slate

“Daniel Ellsberg’s The Doomsday Machine (Bloomsbury) unpacks the power of our atomic arsenal.” – Vanity Fair

“Ellsberg, the dauntless whistle-blower, has written a timely plea for a reassessment of a weapons program that he describes as 'institutionalized madness.'” – Best Books of the Year 2017, The San Francisco Chronicle

“A passionate call for reducing the risk of total destruction . . . Ellsberg's effort to make vivid the genuine madness of the 'doomsday machine,' and the foolishness of betting our survival on mutually assured destruction, is both commendable and important.” – Editor's Choice, New York Times Book Review
“Brilliantly and readably tackles an issue even more crucial than decision-making in the U.S. intervention in Vietnam, which is policy on the handling of nuclear weapons.” – 10 Excellent December Books, Huffington Post

“This candid and chilling memoir describes how Ellsberg came to recognize that the U.S. military’s approach to preparing for nuclear war was terrifyingly casual. If war came, the United States was ready to obliterate not only the Soviet Union but also China--a plan that would have immediately produced 275 million fatalities and then led to another 50 million, owing to the effects of radiation.” – Foreign Affairs, "Best Books of the Year"

“Gripping and unnerving . . . A must-read of the highest order, Ellsberg's profoundly awakening chronicle is essential to our future.” – starred review, Booklist ("High Demand Backstory")

“Ellsberg's brilliant and unnerving account makes a convincing case for disarmament and shows that the mere existence of nuclear weapons is a serious threat to humanity.” – starred review, Publishers Weekly

“Noted gadfly Ellsberg returns with a sobering look at our nuclear capabilities . . . When the author hurriedly copied the contents of his RAND Corporation safe to reveal, in time, what would become known as the Pentagon Papers, that was just the start of it. He had other documents, even more jarring . . . Especially timely given the recent saber-rattling not from Russia but North Korea and given the apparent proliferation of nuclear abilities among other small powers.” – Kirkus Reviews

“His point is simple: We and our political leaders must stop thinking of nuclear war as a manageable risk. We must stop thinking of the possibility of nuclear war as normal.” – St Louis Post-Dispatch, "Our Favorite Books of 2017"

“The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner blends personal recollections and historical analysis with a set of considered proposals for reducing the threat of apocalyptic war. Many years in the making, it's a book that arrives at an opportune moment.” – San Francisco Chronicle

“Ellsberg’s book, perhaps the most personal memoir yet from a Cold Warrior, fills an important void by providing firsthand testimony about the nuclear insanity that gripped a generation of policymakers . . . The Doomsday Machine is strongest as a portrait of the slow corruption of America's national security state by layer upon layer of secrecy. He relates how the Cold War, the nuclear build-up and trillions of dollars of defense spending were compromised by information purposely withheld from the policymakers and politicians who debated and shaped our path” – Washington Post

“History may remember Ellsberg as the whistleblower who leaked the Pentagon Papers and helped end the Vietnam War, but his alarmingly relevant new book should also assure his legacy as a prescient and authoritative anti-nuclear activist. The Doomsday Machine, which takes its title from Dr. Strangelove, reads like a thriller as Ellsberg figures out that America's pledge never to attack first was fiction and that the so called 'fail-safe' systems are prone to disaster.” – Los Angeles Review of Books
“Ellsberg writes briskly in the service of opinions formed by long and sober study. What he means is never in doubt and it is always interesting . . . He is a vigorous writer with a gift for dramatic tension and the unfolding of events as they cascade toward disaster.” – Thomas Powers, New York Review of Books

“Ellsberg presents his thoughts on how best to dismantle a program that could lead to global annihilation, while once again proving how deeply disturbing and radically ignorant our country's leaders are when it comes to thermonuclear warfare.” – SF Weekly

“The Doomsday Machine is chilling, compelling and certain to be controversial.” – Minneapolis Star Tribune

“Is it really necessary to declare that a knowledgeable, detailed and passionate book about the odds-on danger of cataclysmically destroying all human life on earth is important? Daniel Ellsberg's The Doomsday Machine demands to be widely read. Its claims should be examined by experts, corroborated, rebutted, taken up by Congressional committees (alas, unlikely) and generally forced into public consciousness . . . The Doomsday Machine is engrossing and frightening.” – Peter Steinfels, America Magazine

“In the era of barbed insults regarded as precursors to nuclear threat, the warnings yielded by The Doomsday Machine have become required reading. . . . Daniel Ellsberg's title evokes Kubrick's film on purpose, a metaphor that culminates in his definition of the 'Strangelove Paradox.' The United States has thousands of 'Doomsay Machine' weapons and hundreds of 'fingers on the button.' The question the reader must ask, now mortified by the necessary horrors of Ellsberg's masterpiece, is how to save the world” – Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

“The Doomsday Machine is, in fact, a Bildungsroman, a tale of one intellectual's disillusionment with the country in which Ellsberg had placed so much trust. It reveals how the horrors of US nuclear war planning transformed a man of the establishment into a left-wing firebrand.” – Los Angeles Times

“[The Doomsday Machine is] an important tome that's as optimistic as it sounds. It's vital reading that reminds people that both poor planning--such as the US under Dwight Eisenhower having no contingency in place for only bombing the USSR into dust, but it being a package deal with China, something that confirmed the rigidity of these planners as well as their blithely democidal tendencies--and the potential for simple mistakes still run rampant in US nuclear policy.” – antiwar.com

“Gripping . . . The Doomsday Machine is essential reading--both a terrifying 'Doctor Strangelove' saga and a hopeful consideration of future scenarios.” – Mercury News

“Ellsberg's book is essential for facilitating a national discussion about a vital topic.” – starred review, Library Journal

“Alarming, galvanizing, and brilliantly written.” – Barnes & Noble Review

“Given the current crises, both domestic and international, the timeliness of Ellsberg's exposures-and warnings-is unnerving... The Doomsday Machine is not for the faint of heart, but its sense of urgency should make it required reading, and-more importantly-a call to action.” – BookPage
“From a close insider’s perspective, he describes how the U.S. came to create and adjust this potentially world-destroying arsenal, how presidents have used it to threaten foreign leaders, and the responses of other nuclear powers. We have narrowly avoided many previous crises, but he fears that the current U.S. administration could charge straight into a worst-case scenario. This book deserves to be widely read, discussed and acted upon.” – Shelf Awareness

“In his recent book The Doomsday Machine, Daniel Ellsberg reports that the basic elements of US preparations for nuclear war have been little changed over the past three generations . . . Ellsberg’s warning needs to be taken seriously.” – Truthout

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BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS (DEC. 21, 2018).

Facing Nuclear Reality

35 years after The Day After

A Bulletin special report by Dawn Stover

In 1982, a 40-year-old insurance salesman who sold policies to professional athletes traveled from his home in Lawrence, Kansas, to New York City on a business trip. Shortly before he left, Bob Swan, Jr. —the father of two young daughters, and a man increasingly concerned about the possibility of a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union—mentioned to his then-wife Jane that he had had a dream about a film that portrayed an American family and a Russian family in the aftermath of nuclear war and “showed the total absurdity” of such a war. While he was in New York, Swan attended a huge march for nuclear disarmament that was life-changing for him. “When I got back from this amazing experience,” Swan told me when I visited him at his home a few months ago, one of the first things his wife said was: “They announced while you were gone, they’re going to make that film you dreamed about. They’re going to film it in Lawrence.”

The television movie The Day After depicted a full-scale nuclear war and its impacts on people living in and around Kansas City. It became something of a community project in picturesque Lawrence, 40 miles west of Kansas City, where much of the movie was filmed. Thousands of local residents—including students and faculty from the University of Kansas—were recruited as extras for the movie; about 65 of the 80 speaking parts were cast locally. The use of locals was intentional, because the moviemakers wanted to show the grim consequences of a nuclear war for real middle Americans, living in the real middle of the country. By the time the movie ends, almost all of the main characters are dead or dying.

ABC broadcast The Day After on November 20, 1983, with no commercial breaks during the final hour. More than 100 million people saw it—nearly two-thirds of the total viewing audience. It remains one of the most-watched television programs of all time. Brandon Stoddard, then-president of ABC’s motion picture division, called it “the most important movie we’ve ever done.” The Washington
Post later described it as “a profound TV moment.” It was arguably the most effective public service announcement in history.

“For those of us who live in Lawrence, it was personal... and it didn’t have a happy ending.”

It was also a turning point for foreign policy. Thirty-five years ago, the United States and the Soviet Union were in a nuclear arms race that had taken them to the brink of war. The Day After was a piercing wakeup shriek, not just for the general public but also for then-President Ronald Reagan. Shortly after he saw the film, Reagan gave a speech saying that he, too, had a dream: that nuclear weapons would be “banished from the face of the Earth.” A few years later, Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, the first agreement that provided for the elimination of an entire category of nuclear weapons. By the late 1990s, American and Russian leaders had created a stable, treaty-based arms-control infrastructure and expected it to continue improving over time.

Now, however, a long era of nuclear restraint appears to be nearing an end. Tensions between the United States and Russia have risen to levels not seen in decades. Alleging treaty violations by Russia, the White House has announced plans to withdraw from the INF Treaty. Both countries are moving forward with the enormously expensive refurbishment of old and development of new nuclear weapons—a process euphemized as “nuclear modernization.” Leaders on both sides have made inflammatory statements, and no serious negotiations have taken place in recent years. 

More

Nuclear Weapons: An Absolute Evil

Anne Baring – TRANSCEND Media Service

“A number of studies by meteorologists and other experts from both East and West predict that use of nuclear weapons would result in fire storms with very high winds and high temperatures. The resulting smoke and dust would block out sunlight for a period of many months. Temperatures in many places would fall far below freezing, and much of the earth’s plant life would be killed. Animals and humans would then die of starvation.”

Nuclear Weapons: An Absolute Evil, by John Scales Avery, Danish Peace Academy, 25 Jan 2018

https://www.annebaring.com/anbar73_bookreview.html
Last week, Russian President Vladimir Putin issued a warning. As the New York Times described it: “If the United States deploys new intermediate-range missiles in Europe after withdrawing from a nuclear treaty prohibiting these weapons, European nations will be at risk of ‘a possible counterstrike.’” It was the sort of threat that, in the previous century, would have raised the level of everyday nuclear fears in this society, too. I remember them well -- from the “duck-and-cover” experiences of schoolchildren huddling under desks that were somehow to protect them from nuclear annihilation to the vivid nightmares of my teen years. (Yes, in a dream at least, I saw and felt an atomic blast.) This was the world of the Cold War in which I grew up.

I’ve always believed that the last of such Cold War nuclear fears manifested themselves on September 11, 2001, when those towers in lower Manhattan collapsed amid a horrifying cloud of smoke and ash -- and the place where it all happened was promptly christened Ground Zero, a term previously reserved for the spot where a nuclear blast had gone off. Somehow, on that day, something was called back to life from those Cold War years in which newspapers regularly drew imagined concentric circles of atomic destruction from fantasy Ground Zeros in American cities, while magazines offered visions of our country as a vaporized wasteland. In the chaos and destruction of that moment, there was perhaps a subliminal feeling that the U.S., the first country to use an atomic weapon, had finally experienced some kind of payback. As Tom Brokaw, chairing NBC's nonstop news coverage, said that day, it looked “like a nuclear winter in lower Manhattan."

In Donald Trump’s upside-down world, the trek of a few thousand desperate migrants, some carrying tiny children or even babies, across thousands of miles of Honduras, Guatemala, and now Mexico is treated as if it were potentially a major invasion of (if not a nuclear attack on) the United States. As the president dispatches the U.S. military to the border, claims that ISIS-like Middle Easterners lurk in that caravan, and blames the Democrats for it all, who has time to think about an actual catastrophe?

Fortunately, TomDispatch regular Michael Klare does and he has news for us. As the U.S. prepares to withdraw from a classic Cold War nuclear treaty, it’s time to start ramping up those fears again. After all, we’re now in a new world of expanding global rivalries and potential madness in which impoverished migrants from Honduras are the least of our problems. Tom
When it comes to relations between Donald Trump’s America, Vladimir Putin’s Russia, and Xi Jinping’s China, observers everywhere are starting to talk about a return to an all-too-familiar past. “Now we have a new Cold War,” commented Russia expert Peter Felgenhauer in Moscow after President Trump recently announced plans to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. The Trump administration is "launching a new Cold War," said historian Walter Russell Mead in the Wall Street Journal, following a series of anti-Chinese measures approved by the president in October. And many others are already chiming in.

Recent steps by leaders in Washington, Moscow, and Beijing may seem to lend credence to such a “new Cold War” narrative, but in this case history is no guide. Almost two decades into the twenty-first century, what we face is not some mildly updated replica of last century’s Cold War, but a new and potentially even more dangerous global predicament.

The original Cold War, which lasted from the late 1940s until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, posed a colossal risk of thermonuclear annihilation. At least after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, however, it also proved a remarkably stable situation in which, despite local conflicts of many sorts, the United States and the Soviet Union both sought to avoid the kinds of direct confrontations that might have triggered a mutual catastrophe. In fact, after confronting the abyss in 1962, the leaders of both superpowers engaged in a complex series of negotiations leading to substantial reductions in their nuclear arsenals and agreements intended to reduce the risk of a future Armageddon.

What others are now calling the New Cold War -- but I prefer to think of as a new global tinderbox -- bears only the most minimal resemblance to that earlier period. As before, the United States and its rivals are engaged in an accelerating arms race, focused on nuclear and “conventional” weaponry of ever-increasing range, precision, and lethality. All three countries, in characteristic Cold War fashion, are also lining up allies in what increasingly looks like a global power struggle.

But the similarities end there. Among the differences, the first couldn’t be more obvious: the U.S. now faces two determined adversaries, not one, and a far more complex global conflict map (with a corresponding increase in potential nuclear flashpoints). At the same time, the old boundaries between “peace” and “war” are rapidly disappearing as all three rivals engage in what could be thought of as combat by other means, including trade wars and cyberattacks that might set the stage for far greater violence to follow. To compound the danger, all three big powers are now engaging in provocative acts aimed at “demonstrating resolve” or intimidating rivals, including menacing U.S. and Chinese naval maneuvers off Chinese-occupied islands in the South China Sea. Meanwhile, rather than pursue the sort of arms-control agreements that tempered Cold War hostilities, the U.S. and Russia appear intent on tearing up existing accords and launching a new nuclear arms race.

These factors could already be steering the world ever closer to a new Cuban Missile Crisis, when the world came within a hairsbreadth of nuclear incineration. This one, however, could start in the South China Sea or even in the Baltic region, where U.S. and Russian planes and ships are similarly engaged in regular near-collisions.
Why are such dangers so rapidly ramping up? To answer this, it’s worth exploring the factors that distinguish this moment from the original Cold War era. MORE

http://www.tomdispatch.com/authors/michaelklare/

It’s a Tripolar World, Baby

Michael T. Klare, a TomDispatch regular, is the five-college professor emeritus of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College and a senior visiting fellow at the Arms Control Association. His most recent book is The Race for What’s Left. His next book, All Hell Breaking Loose: Climate Change, Global Chaos, and American National Security, will be published in 2019.

Follow TomDispatch on Twitter and join us on Facebook. Check out the newest Dispatch Books, Beverly Gologorsky's novel Every Body Has a Story and Tom Engelhardt's A Nation Unmade by War, as well as Alfred McCoy's In the Shadows of the American Century: The Rise and Decline of U.S. Global Power, John Dower's The Violent American Century: War and Terror Since World War II, and John Feffer's dystopian novel Splinterlands.

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The eye-opening true story of the government's secret plans to survive and rebuild after a catastrophic attack on US soil—a narrative that spans from the dawn of the nuclear age to today.

Every day in Washington, DC, the blue-and-gold 1st Helicopter Squadron, code-named “MUSSEL,” flies over the Potomac River. As obvious as the presidential motorcade, the squadron is assumed by most people to be a travel perk for VIPs. They're only half right: while the helicopters do provide transport, the unit exists to evacuate high-ranking officials in the event of a terrorist or nuclear attack on the capital. In the event of an attack, select officials would be whisked by helicopters to a ring of secret bunkers around Washington, even as ordinary citizens are left to fend for themselves.

For sixty years, the US government has been developing secret Doomsday plans to protect itself, and the multibillion-dollar Continuity of Government (COG) program takes numerous forms—from its plans to evacuate the Liberty Bell from Philadelphia and our most precious documents from the National Archives to the plans to launch nuclear missiles from a Boeing 747 jet flying high over Nebraska.

In Raven Rock, Garrett Graff sheds light on the inner workings of the 650-acre compound (called Raven Rock) just miles from Camp David, as well as dozens of other bunkers the government built its top leaders during the Cold War, from the White House lawn to Cheyenne Mountain in Colorado to Palm Beach, Florida, and the secret plans that would have kicked in after a Cold War nuclear attack to round up foreigners and dissidents, and nationalize industries.
Equal parts a presidential, military, and political history, Raven Rock tracks the evolution of the government’s plans and the threats of global war from the dawn of the nuclear era through the present day. Relying upon thousands of pages of once-classified documents, as well as original interviews and visits to former and current COG facilities, Graff brings readers through the back channels of government to understand exactly what is at stake if our nation is attacked, and how we’re prepared to respond if it is.

Thermonuclear Monarchy: CHOOSING BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND DOOM by Elaine Scarry (Harvard University)

From one of our leading social thinkers, a compelling case for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

During his impeachment proceedings, Richard Nixon boasted, “I can go into my office and pick up the telephone and in twenty-five minutes seventy million people will be dead.” Nixon was accurately describing not only his own power but also the power of every American president in the nuclear age.

Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon each contemplated using nuclear weapons—Eisenhower twice, Kennedy three times, Johnson once, Nixon four times. Whether later presidents, from Ford to Obama, considered using them we will learn only once their national security papers are released.

In this incisive, masterfully argued new book, award-winning social theorist Elaine Scarry demonstrates that the power of one leader to obliterate millions of people with a nuclear weapon—a possibility that remains very real even in the wake of the Cold War—deeply violates our constitutional rights, undermines the social contract, and is fundamentally at odds with the deliberative principles of democracy.

According to the Constitution, the decision to go to war requires rigorous testing by both Congress and the citizenry; when a leader can single-handedly decide to deploy a nuclear weapon, we live in a state of “thermonuclear monarchy,” not democracy.

The danger of nuclear weapons comes from potential accidents or acquisition by terrorists, hackers, or rogue countries. But the gravest danger comes from the mistaken idea that there exists some case compatible with legitimate governance. There can be no such case. Thermonuclear Monarchy shows the deformation of governance that occurs when a country gains nuclear weapons.

In bold and lucid prose, Thermonuclear Monarchy identifies the tools that will enable us to eliminate nuclear weapons and bring the decision for war back into the hands of Congress and the people. Only by doing so can we secure the safety of home populations, foreign populations, and the earth itself.

BOOK DETAILS

- Hardcover
- February 2014
- 6.5 × 9.6 in / 592 pages

ENDORSEMENTS & REVIEWS

“The premise of this book is as relevant as it is horrifying, that the power to inflict great harm doesn’t belong to those that it supposedly protects. I congratulate Elaine Scarry on her intellectual courage and moral clarity and in proposing the only possible way out.” — Marcelo Gleiser, author of A Tear at the Edge of Creation

“A really remarkable work, ranging across ethics, law and politics to pose genuinely radical challenges to the confused and potentially lethal systems that pass for democracy in our world. A painfully timely intervention.” — Rowan Williams, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge and former Archbishop of Canterbury

“Elaine Scarry offers a coruscating critique of current policies, arguing that they are antithetic to the spirit of the U.S. constitution, and indeed to basic democratic principles. This eloquent and scholarly book offers a compelling case for swifter progress toward their elimination.” — Martin Rees, astronomer royal of England

“Even someone unpersuaded by Elaine Scarry’s constitutional analysis cannot avoid being gripped by her stark depiction of how utterly incompatible our eighteenth-century constitutional structure and the social contract it embodies are with our twenty-first-century weapons of mass destruction, weapons that can annihilate tens of millions of human souls in the blink of an eye and at the whim of a single individual, consulting with no one. A sober and haunting meditation on this tension between our institutions and our capacities, Scarry’s book requires any thoughtful reader to revisit the basic postulates and the deepest human purposes of our system of government.” — Laurence H. Tribe, professor of constitutional law, Harvard Law School

“A few years ago General Lee Butler, former head of the U.S. Strategic Command, condemned the ‘faith in nuclear weapons’ to which his life had been wrongly dedicated and the ‘breathtaking audacity’ in maintaining them when ‘we should stand trembling in the face of our folly and united in our commitment to abolish its most deadly manifestations.’ In this fascinating study, Elaine Scarry adds rich historical, philosophical, literary, and legal depth to Butler’s grim warnings, with novel and provocative insights. That we have escaped disaster so far is a near miracle. Scarry’s remarkable contribution should inspire us to abolish this colossal folly.” — Noam Chomsky


“Elaine Scarry is right: Americans live in a thermonuclear monarchy.” — Kennette Benedict, Bulletin of Atomic Scientists

“Scarry’s assault on the reigning complacency about nuclear weapons rests on her belief in the capacity of an interpretation to reconfigure the world.” — Nathan Schneider, Chronicle of Higher Education

“Thermonuclear Monarchy is a work of deadly serious political science by an analyst dwelling on the constitutional implications of giving a democratically elected president sovereign-like autocracy.” — Nick Smith, Engineering & Technology (U.K.)
“Scarry’s book requires any thoughtful reader to revisit the basic postulates and the deepest human purposes of our system of government.” — Laurence H. Tribe, Professor of Constitutional Law, Harvard Law School

MARCH 23, 2016

**A World War has Begun: Break the Silence**

by JOHN PILGER

http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/03/23/a-world-war-has-begun-break-the-silence/

Extended Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpnBCKjxHho&feature=youtu.be

I have been filming in the Marshall Islands, which lie north of Australia, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Whenever I tell people where I have been, they ask, “Where is that?” If I offer a clue by referring to “Bikini”, they say, “You mean the swimsuit.”

Few seem aware that the bikini swimsuit was named to celebrate the nuclear explosions that destroyed Bikini Island. Sixty-six nuclear devices were exploded by the United States in the Marshall Islands between 1946 and 1958 — the equivalent of 1.6 Hiroshima bombs every day for twelve years.

Bikini is silent today, mutated and contaminated. Palm trees grow in a strange grid formation. Nothing moves. There are no birds. The headstones in the old cemetery are alive with radiation. My shoes registered “unsafe” on a Geiger counter.

Standing on the beach, I watched the emerald green of the Pacific fall away into a vast black hole. This was the crater left by the hydrogen bomb they called “Bravo”. The explosion poisoned people and their environment for hundreds of miles, perhaps forever.

On my return journey, I stopped at Honolulu airport and noticed an American magazine called *Women’s Health*. On the cover was a smiling woman in a bikini
swimsuit, and the headline: “You, too, can have a bikini body.” A few days earlier, in the Marshall Islands, I had interviewed women who had very different “bikini bodies”; each had suffered thyroid cancer and other life-threatening cancers. Unlike the smiling woman in the magazine, all of them were impoverished: the victims and guinea pigs of a rapacious superpower that is today more dangerous than ever.

I relate this experience as a warning and to interrupt a distraction that has consumed so many of us. The founder of modern propaganda, Edward Bernays, described this phenomenon as “the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the habits and opinions” of democratic societies. He called it an “invisible government”.

How many people are aware that a world war has begun? At present, it is a war of propaganda, of lies and distraction, but this can change instantaneously with the first mistaken order, the first missile.

In 2009, President Obama stood before an adoring crowd in the centre of Prague, in the heart of Europe. He pledged himself to make “the world free from nuclear weapons”. People cheered and some cried. A torrent of platitudes flowed from the media. Obama was subsequently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

It was all fake. He was lying.

The Obama administration has built more nuclear weapons, more nuclear warheads, more nuclear delivery systems, more nuclear factories. Nuclear warhead spending alone rose higher under Obama than under any American president. The cost over thirty years is more than $1 trillion.

A mini nuclear bomb is planned. It is known as the B61 Model 12. There has never been anything like it. General James Cartwright, a former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said, “Going smaller [makes using this nuclear] weapon more thinkable.”
In the last eighteen months, the greatest build-up of military forces since World War Two — led by the United States — is taking place along Russia’s western frontier. Not since Hitler invaded the Soviet Union have foreign troops presented such a demonstrable threat to Russia.

Ukraine – once part of the Soviet Union – has become a CIA theme park. Having orchestrated a coup in Kiev, Washington effectively controls a regime that is next door and hostile to Russia: a regime rotten with Nazis, literally. Prominent parliamentary figures in Ukraine are the political descendants of the notorious OUN and UPA fascists. They openly praise Hitler and call for the persecution and expulsion of the Russian speaking minority.

This is seldom news in the West, or it is inverted to suppress the truth.

In Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia – next door to Russia – the US military is deploying combat troops, tanks, heavy weapons. This extreme provocation of the world’s second nuclear power is met with silence in the West.

What makes the prospect of nuclear war even more dangerous is a parallel campaign against China. MORE http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/03/23/a-world-war-has-begun-break-the-silence/

This is an edited version of an address by John Pilger at the University of Sydney, entitled A World War Has Begun. Join the debate on Facebook

John Pilger can be reached through his website: www.johnpilger.com

Tell your senators to oppose Trump's war cabinet

Rick Wayman, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation 3-30-18  via mail.salsalabs.net  1:39 PM (49 minutes ago)

Tell Your Senators to Oppose Trump's War Cabinet
Two dangerous new appointments by President Trump have added even more urgency to the effort to take away the president’s ability to use nuclear weapons first.

John Bolton is an extreme hawk, and is set to become National Security Advisor on April 9. He has advocated military action against North Korea and Iran. Bolton was a top advocate of the regime change war in Iraq in 2003, which has had catastrophic consequences for Iraq and the wider Middle East, as well as for the U.S. His unbridled enthusiasm to repeat the debacle of preventive military action and regime change in both North Korea and Iran is a huge concern. Bolton’s new position unfortunately does not require Senate confirmation.

Trump also nominated Mike Pompeo to become the new U.S. Secretary of State. Pompeo is a staunch opponent of the nuclear deal that was negotiated among the U.S., Iran, Russia, UK, France, China, and Germany. In July 2017, Pompeo spoke in favor of regime change in North Korea. He said, “I am hopeful we will find a way to separate the [North Korean] regime from this [nuclear weapons] system… The North Korean people, I'm sure, are lovely people and would love to see him go.” A regime change war in North Korea would put the lives of millions of people across Northeast Asia, including U.S. soldiers and civilians, at risk.

While our members of Congress cannot do anything to block Bolton’s appointment, the Senate does have to confirm Mike Pompeo as Secretary of State.

Having Pompeo as our nation’s top diplomat would be disastrous. The Iran deal showed the power of diplomacy and true negotiations. Scrapping it would harm U.S. relations with the rest of the world, especially in the current opportunity for making progress with North Korea. U.S. withdrawal from the Iran deal would cast doubt on all international agreements we have made in the past and will try to make in the future.

Please take a moment to contact your senators and urge them to vote “no” to Mike Pompeo as U.S. Secretary of State, and let them know that you support Sen. Ed Markey’s bill to restrict the president’s first use of nuclear weapons.

THE SOLUTION

NUCLEAR WEAPONS ABOLITION NEWSLETTER #23, JANUARY 15, 2017.


#24 IN PREPARATION.

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Dick Bennett
Eaarth