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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SJ 2  
USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

Seven state legislatures have passed similar resolutions to SJ 2, and I hope that Maryland's General Assembly will join them. It addresses a threat to humanity so frightening that people have stopped talking about it. But only dialogue leading to action can save humanity.

Following a full-scale nuclear exchange, "a nuclear winter is caused by the black carbon smoke from the nuclear firestorms.... This makes Earth freezing cold even during the summer.... A recent scientific [paper](#) estimates that over 5 billion people could starve to death, including around 99% of those in the US, Europe, Russia, and China."<sup>i</sup> There would be no civilization anywhere on earth. Every person who knows these facts has a responsibility to help prevent such a catastrophe.

A nuclear exchange would most likely occur by accident -- by some combination of multiple human and equipment failures. Several times in the past few decades, close calls have occurred. It is dangerous to assume that the worst will never happen.

The ratcheting up of tensions between the U.S. and China and particularly between NATO and Russia increase the probability of some type of accidental use of a nuclear weapon. U.S. withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation treaty and Russian withdrawal from the Test Ban Treaty also heighten the danger level.

Yesterday, the *New York Times* began an editorial series of long articles on the risk of nuclear annihilation and how to prevent it.<sup>ii</sup> They state, "We have survived so far through luck and brinkmanship." It should be obvious that these factors cannot protect us forever. Disaster is inevitable while nuclear-armed nations have no treaty mechanisms and continue to build their arsenals.

SJ 2 calls upon our government to endorse the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, ratified by 70 nations, and to change outdated, dangerous, expensive policies from 1960's such as the first-use doctrine and sole authority of the President to initiate nuclear war. One person should not hold the fate of 8 billion in his hands.

Please don't look away from this issue. The General Assembly has an opportunity to make a small contribution to the survival of our species and to the sustainability of civilization. Your action will encourage other states to act similarly. Our Congressional delegation should hear from you that you urgently ask them to back away from brinkmanship and toward sanity.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://time.com/6290977/nuclear-war-impact-essay/>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/07/opinion/nuclear-weapons-nytimes.html>