

In 1963 the Cuban missile crisis brought us very close to nuclear war. It was so close that many American households built bomb shelters (thinking (falsely) that those could protect us). I was 13 years old at the time and helped haul a couple hundred cement blocks from the driveway where a truck deposited them to the basement where we built the shelter. After we built wide bunk beds (we were 6 in the family) and multiple shelves, Mom provided canned tomatoes, pickles (from our garden) and multiple other foodstuffs that could feed us for a week to 10 days.

Do children of that era have PTSD somewhere in their psyche for that trauma? Quite possibly. Thankfully nuclear war did not happen--“Khrushchev blinked” some say.

Today there are nine nuclear weapons states and Russia has threatened to use them in Ukraine. That and the technological advances in weapons systems are very worrying. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists has set the clock to 89 seconds to midnight—the closest it has ever been. Deterrence has worked so far, but that depends on having rational leaders who do not make mistakes in judgement. We cannot count on that indefinitely and even in the short term here in the USA. The Back from the Brink campaign is the best way to reduce the risks of accidental war.

One might ask: Why is this national matter before the State of Maryland Legislature? First, because the federal government has not acted and we need to prod our Congressional delegation to push this matter forward. Second, Baltimore is very close to D.C. so would be destroyed if a nuclear bomb were dropped on D.C.

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