

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists' Doomsday Clock is now 85 Seconds to Nuclear Midnight, precariously close to the end of everything we ever did or loved. Nuclear weapons are a grave and growing threat to human existence. They are the enemy of all humankind. Survivors will die prolonged and painful deaths from radiation sickness, burns, trauma, starvation, disease, and exposure. There will be no aid or relief. "The living will envy the dead," as Nikita Khrushchev put it.

President Kennedy warned at the United Nations in 1961: "Today, every inhabitant of this planet must contemplate the day when this planet may no longer be habitable. Every man, woman and child lives under a nuclear sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by accident or miscalculation or by madness. **The weapons of war must be abolished before they abolish us.**"

Based on an annual non-zero probability of occurrence, nuclear war is mathematically inevitable unless we make it impossible. And we know how to dismantle nuclear weapons, having done it thousands of times. Unlike climate change, nuclear risk can be entirely eliminated. Do our children and descendants not deserve that?

All of the guard rail treaties that at least reduced risk somewhat are gone: INF, ABM, Open Skies, and New START. In 1996 the World Court ruled that Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) requires nuclear abolition ("complete nuclear disarmament") but the NPT has been rendered non-functional by the nuclear powers. That requirement is reinforced by the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, now in force for 5 years.

It is widely recognized that nuclear weapons do not keep us safe or deter nuclear war. Rather they increase tension and uncertainty, which heighten risk. Remember the Hawaii scare?

General Lee Butler, former head of Strategic Air Command over all nuclear weapons targeting said we survived by Luck and the Grace of God. He thought God's Grace was probably at an end and Luck always runs out. Beginning with a speech at the National Press Club in 1996, he calls for the outright abolition of nuclear weapons.

Finally, recall that Albert Einstein warned: "Everything has changed but our modes of thinking. Hence, we drift towards unparalleled catastrophe." Until now, thinking has not changed and we no longer drift — we barrel ahead toward nuclear disaster.

Citizens of the World clearly need a new paradigm of cooperation and nuclear weapons elimination.

SJ4 attempts to embody the change we need, and Legislators, we need your help to go on.

SJ4 is similar to resolutions that have passed in 7 state legislatures, and 70 counties and municipalities across the U.S (4 in Maryland), urging our government to support the

UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), now ratified by 74 nations, as well as the other 4 policy points of the national Back from the Brink (BFTB) campaign:

1. Negotiating nuclear disarmament with the other 8 nuclear nations, leading to endorsement of the TPNW
2. Renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first
3. Ending presidential sole authority to initiate a nuclear launch
4. Taking nuclear weapons off of hair trigger alert
5. Ending the expensive, destabilizing plans to modernize our nuclear weapons arsenal

HJ7 and SJ4 are necessary prescriptions of hope and survival for all humankind. They are not sufficient, but crucial in the movement to turn back the Doomsday Clock.

Please pass SJ0004.