

How About Raising the Issue of How to Avert Nuclear War?

74 years ago, on August 6th and 9th, 1945, the U.S. government dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, incinerating hundreds of thousands of people at ground zero, with an even higher death toll in the following days, weeks and months from radiation sickness and burn injuries. This first use of nuclear weapons began an arms race with unprecedented consequences. Most of us alive today cannot remember a time before the threat of nuclear annihilation became part of our collective and individual nightmares.

This existential threat has never been more present, as Dr. Lawrence Wittner, Professor/Emeritus at SUNY/Albany, argues in his appeal to the moderators of our presidential debates, excerpted below. *(Read the entire article here:*

<https://portside.org/2019-08-01/how-about-raising-issue-how-avert-nuclear-war/>.)

You mass media folks lead busy lives, I'm sure. But you must have heard something about nuclear weapons—those supremely destructive devices that, along with climate change, threaten the continued existence of the human race... Do I exaggerate? Consider the following:...In May 2018, the Trump administration unilaterally withdrew from the laboriously constructed Iran nuclear agreement that had closed off the possibility of that nation developing nuclear weapons. This U.S. treaty pullout was followed by the imposition of heavy U.S. economic sanctions on Iran, as well as by thinly veiled threats by Trump to use nuclear weapons to destroy that country.irate at these moves, the Iranian government recently retaliated by exceeding the limits set by the shattered agreement on its uranium stockpile and uranium enrichment.

At the beginning of February 2019, the Trump administration announced that, in August, the U.S. government will withdraw from the Reagan era Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty—the historic agreement that had banned U.S. and Russian ground-launched cruise missiles—and would proceed to develop such weapons. **[Note: this was done, on Friday, August 2nd.]** On the following day, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared that, in response, his government was suspending

its observance of the treaty and would build the kinds of nuclear missiles that the INF treaty had outlawed.

The next nuclear disarmament agreement on the chopping block appears to be the 2010 New START Treaty, which reduces U.S. and Russian deployed strategic nuclear warheads to 1,550 each, limits U.S. and Russian nuclear delivery vehicles, and provides for extensive inspection. According to John Bolton, Trump's national security advisor, this ...treaty, scheduled to expire in February 2021, is "unlikely" to be extended... **If the treaty is allowed to expire, it would be the first time since 1972 that there would be no nuclear arms control agreement between Russia and the United States...**[emphasis added.]

...Instead of honoring the commitment, under Article VI of the 1968 nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, to pursue negotiations for "cessation of the nuclear arms race" and for "nuclear disarmament," all nine nuclear powers are today modernizing their nuclear weapons production facilities and adding new, improved types of nuclear weapons to their arsenals. Over the next 30 years, this nuclear buildup will cost the United States alone an estimated \$1,700,000,000,000—at least if it is not obliterated first in a nuclear holocaust...The U.S. government and others are increasing the role that nuclear weapons play in their "national security" policies. Trump's glib threats of nuclear war against North Korea and Iran are paralleled by new administration plans to develop a low-yield ballistic missile, which arms control advocates fear will lower the threshold for nuclear war.

Therefore, when it comes to presidential debates, dear moderators, don't you—as stand-ins for the American people—think it might be worthwhile to ask the candidates some questions about U.S. preparations for nuclear war and how best to avert a global catastrophe of unprecedented magnitude?

RESIST THIS ENDLESS WAR

Sunday, August 4 and August 11, 2019

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