Dear members,

Sixty years ago, in October 1962, the world came close to a nuclear war that, according to the US military, would have destroyed at least one third of the world, leaving the rest of our planet with a “nuclear winter”. In those times the US had approximately 5,000 nuclear strategic bombs and the USSR 300.

During the Cuban crisis, on October 27, 1962, the US Navy dropped a series of depth grenades on a Soviet B-59 submarine near the Cuban coast, unaware that the submarine was armed with nuclear-tipped torpedoes and that the captain had orders to use them if the submarine was damaged by depth charges or surface fire. As the submarine was too deep to receive radio communications, the captain of the submarine thought that war might already have started and was willing to launch the nuclear-armed torpedoes. Fortunately, the commander of the flotilla, who was also aboard the submarine at the time, objected.

This incident shows that even though the threat of mutual destruction can work as a deterrent, in extreme situations errors/accidents that could trigger a nuclear conflict are possible.

The war in Ukraine has taken the world to another extreme situation. Putin has implied that the use of nuclear weapons is possible. According to Russia’s
former president Dmitry Medvedev he is “not bluffing”. Others in the West suggest that he is. In reality nobody knows. And what if there is a misunderstanding or an accident? Currently, there are about 12,000 nuclear bombs in the world, and most of these bombs are much more modern and powerful than those available in 1962. That the survival of humanity could be threatened by the possibility of miscalculations or accidents is an unacceptable state of affairs.

Certainly, a first step to reduce the risk of nuclear annihilation is to stop the war in Ukraine. It is clear, however, that both Russia and the US are currently not willing to stop the fight. In the meantime, thousands of Ukrainian civilians are dying, and their country is being destroyed.

Ultimately, the only way to eliminate the risk of a nuclear war is the complete abolition of nuclear weapons, as proposed by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). This is one of the main goals of Science for Peace.

During the last month Science for Peace organized two very interesting webinars dealing with the Ukrainian war. In the first one we had the opportunity to listen to Richard Falk, and in the second to Michael Beer from Nonviolence International (see links below). I invite everybody to attend our next Webinar with Dr. Maria Stephan on November 7th at 5PM. The title of her talk is: Nonviolence and the quest for democracy: How to resist authoritarianism everywhere.

Jorge Films
President, Science for Peace

Upcoming Events

DR. MARIA STEPHAN
NOVEMBER 7TH
5–6 pm ET on Zoom

Nonviolence and the Quest for Democracy: How to Resist Authoritarianism Everywhere

Maria Stephan is an award-winning author and organizer whose work in academic, public service, and non-profit sectors has focused on the role of nonviolent action and peacebuilding in advancing human rights, democracy, and sustainable peace in the US and globally.

Register

Recent Events
Civil Resistance Tactics in the 21st Century: A Conversation with Michael Beer

Michael Beer, the Director of Nonviolence International, is a longtime global peace and human-rights activist. He has trained activists in many countries and often contributed to recorded discussions of nonviolence. He is the author of Civil Resistance Tactics in the 21st Century.

Understanding the Ukraine War: The Three Levels of Conflict with Professor Richard Falk

The conversation revolves around Falk’s contention that the Ukraine war is particularly dangerous and difficult to resolve because it involves conflict at three interrelated levels: Russia versus Ukraine, NATO (US) versus Russia (the geopolitical struggle), and Western Ukraine versus Donbass.

Recent Articles

Judy Deutsch: Nuclearism: Converging Disasters

Converging disasters: Unprecedented climate emergencies, methane leak from Nord Stream gas lines, interrupted energy supplies, wars -- Kyoto-exempt military is the largest single global emitter of greenhouse gases, Ukraine nuclear reactors in the battle zone. Shock doctrine response: more nuclear reactors, more coal.

Boris Kyrychenko:  

Alfie Hoar: Non-
Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

When it comes to the myriad of existential threats currently plaguing the international community, the threat of nuclear annihilation has made a concerning come back. “Humanity is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation.”

Aggressive Defence in Sweden? An Assessment of ‘Total Defence’

In light of the recent events in Ukraine, defence policy has again become a central interest for governments across the Western world. A lot of focus is given to military might when it comes to defence, but there are other methods for protecting one’s country. Sweden’s model of ‘total defence’ is one that, despite its notoriety, hasn’t garnered a lot of attention.

A Tribute to Chandler Davis

We lament the passing of Chandler Davis, one of the founders of Science for Peace in 1981. Chandler was a very special man, with a history of rock-bottom integrity, courage, and steadfast determination as well as perspicacity, wide knowledge, and the gift of wit. He had a very distinguished career as a mathematician and also was recognized as a science fiction writer.

This brief video highlights why so many of us in the peace movement held Chandler in such high regard.

Science for Peace