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**PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT
HUMAN SURVIVAL PROJECT**

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ANOTHER 'TREASON SUMMIT' OR THREE?

YES ABSOLUTELY!

**US-RUSSIA DIALOGUE IS AN EXISTENTIAL NECESSITY
THAT 'TRUMPS' EVERY OTHER CONSIDERATION**

**THE REAL ISSUE ISNT RUSSIAN ELECTION 'BOTS'. ITS
POSSIBLE GLOBAL THERMONUCLEAR WAR.**

With the hands of the 'doomsday clock' closer to midnight than they have ever been (at least since 1953), and with the real risk of nuclear conflict between Russia and the USA as great as it has ever been, dialogue – on a sustained and repeated basis, not just a one – off – is a life and death necessity for the US, for Russia, and for the whole world.

Whatever we think of either Donald Trump and Putin – and neither are attractive examples of liberal or progressive democracy to put it mildly – and whatever Putin might or might not 'have' on Trump, to open a process of dialogue on US-Russian relations overall, and on nuclear disarmament, arms-control and above all on nuclear risk reduction, is of existential importance. And it is this not whether or not Russian 'bots' were interfering in a US election, that governs whether or not civilization will still be here ten, twenty, a hundred, years down the track and whether or not there will be a nuclear arms race in the immediate future.

The world was lucky to have survived the cold war. A second round of this kind of behavior may not find us so lucky. Yet critics such as Ryan, Mc Cain and others who bay to hold Putin (and Trump) 'accountable' tempt fate in just this way. Such behavior and such rhetoric is itself unbelievably irresponsible.

At the Helsinki press conference Trump noted somewhat lamely that the US had 'made mistakes' in its relationship with Russia. He has been lambasted and called 'traitor' for what was in fact a hardly adequate admission of what is indeed the truth. Or a tenth of the truth.

Self-criticism by the President of the US (and for that matter criticism of NATO) are not treason. They may be plain honesty. Its a pity Trump did it so badly and did not mention that it was precisely the expansion of NATO eastwards after 1990 that has put Russia so much offside.

This does not mean that Trump is innocent as driven snow. It does mean that his current critics simply don't get what really is in the interests of the United States and mistakenly think that any concession to Putin even the utterly inadequate ones Trump has made (has he in fact made any at all?) - is treason.

This kind of confrontational thinking merely drives Russia into the corner, from which it launches the worlds most powerful nuclear weapons, showcased the day before Yesterday.

Absolutely there should be more meetings between Trump and Putin. They should discuss not the 2016 election – a subject that should be firmly off – limits – but should focus on reducing the risk of an (accidental or otherwise) nuclear apocalypse. They should focus on agreeing an extension to the New START treaty, on lowering the operational readiness of nuclear weapon systems so Presidents don't have just six minutes to decide whether or not to destroy civilization, on improving or restoring military-to military communication (a subject in which Putin has already indicated interest), on establishing the 'joint data exchange centre' agreed in 1998 and reaffirmed multiple times by both governments but never implemented, and on agreements never to use nuclear weapons first/initiate nuclear war.

And they should set up a joint task force to make recommendations on reducing the risk of nuclear war and on how to abolish their nuclear arsenals altogether.

In the current fevered state of public debate it would be understandable if they did this behind closed doors.

These topics may sound wonkish and technical, but its on these seemingly abstruse issues that human survival and the survival of what we (mis) call 'civilization' may depend.

It goes without saying that this needs to be done in an atmosphere of mutual respect and without posturing and name-calling.

We may not like Putin. We may not like Trump. The author of this release doesn't like either of them. That is irrelevant. The survival of the planet simply 'trumps' everything.

The measures that the US and Russia ought to be taking are outlined in the appeal made a week prior to the Helsinki Summit by the Abolition 2000 Working Group on Nuclear Risk Reduction, People for Nuclear Disarmament, and the Human Survival Project. (urls below)

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**APPEAL ON NUCLEAR RISK REDUCTION TO
PRESIDENTS PUTIN AND TRUMP,
NATO MEETING 11-12 JULY**

PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT HUMAN SURVIVAL PROJECT

ABOLITION 2000 WORKING GROUP ON NUCLEAR RISK REDUCTION

Dear NATO Ministers of Defense and Foreign Affairs, and Presidents Trump and Putin:

Last January, as is well known, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, at the advice of its board of sponsors, on which sit nobel prizewinners and respected experts on nuclear weapons risks, moved the hands of its iconic 'doomsday clock', which has monitored how close or otherwise humans are to self-destruction, from three minutes to 'midnight' to a frightening two figurative minutes to 'midnight'.

The Bulletin's Board of Sponsors has not been the only body or person to sound the alarm on rising risks of nuclear war: similar warnings were issued by Mikhail Gorbachev, Pope Francis, former US Defense Secretary Bill Perry, and by former commanders of both US and Russian nuclear missile forces.

Since those warnings have been issued, there have been periods in which the risk of nuclear weapons being used, both between the US and the DPRK, but even more frighteningly, between the US and Russia, have seemed to 'spike', for days, weeks, and even months. Then a breakthrough of some kind takes place and the risks recede for a while, only for the cycle to repeat itself. This cannot go on forever: An indefinite number of spins of the roulette barrel sooner or later will produce a shot.

The use of nuclear weapons between the US and the DPRK would be a catastrophe with global implications, with an immediate body count in excess of all the casualties of the whole of WW-II. The use of nuclear weapons in Europe and Russia (and then likely the US and China) would be a global catastrophe similar in scale to that which wiped out the dinosaurs, in which what we call 'civilization' would end, and in which human survival itself could not be assured. Even if humans as a species did survive, most land-based living species would not.

We wish to express our alarm at the current elevated state of risk of nuclear weapons use. One cannot play American, Russian, or Korean roulette with the

species, civilization, and the planet as a whole indefinitely: At some point, our luck will run out. Malfunction, miscalculation, madness malice or malware will produce catastrophe.

We would like to urge both the upcoming July 11-12 meeting of NATO, and the July 16 meeting between Presidents Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump to take concrete practical measures that will lower these risks.

Many other appeals and prescriptions for risk reduction, largely overlapping with this one, have been made in recent years and months. We strongly support all of those and draw unashamedly from all of them. These include:

--All the measures listed in the Abolition 2000 working group on nuclear risk reduction of which this letters author is a co-convenor:

<http://www.abolition2000.org/en/nuclear-risk-reduction/>

--The July 10 2016 appeal by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, calling for a lowering of nuclear weapons alert status, or a nuclear weapons stand-down.

<http://www.pnnd.org/article/osce-parliamentary-assembly-calls-nuclear-weapons-stand-down>

--The measures proposed by IDN of France, to diminish the risk of nuclear catastrophe:

<http://www.idn-france.org/2018/06/mesures-urgentes-proposees-idn-eviter-catastrophe-nucleaire/>

--The Appeal by IDN for the removal of tactical nuclear weapons from Europe:

<http://www.abolition2000.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IDN-IT-IS-URGENT-TO-ELIMINATE-NUCLEAR-TACTICAL-WEAPONS-IN-EUROPE.pdf>

--The Appeal to Leaders of Nuclear-Armed states by women parliamentarians, organized by Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament (PNND)

<http://www.pnnd.org/article/common-security-sustainable-and-nuclear-weapon-free-world>

The policy prescriptions contained in all of these appeals are mutually reinforcing and overlapping, and it is possible and necessary to support all of them, which we do most strongly.

There are however a few obvious measures that should be discussed both at the NATO summit and at the Trump-Putin summit.

--Tactical nuclear weapons, whether in Kaliningrad, Crimea, Turkey, Italy or Germany, constitute a kind of nuclear 'tripwire'. Considered more 'usable' than strategic nuclear weapons, their use is nonetheless likely to lead on to the massive use of strategic nuclear weapons. Many of them have yields not meaningfully distinguishable from strategic nuclear weapons. Their use should be made more difficult not easier.

--The conducting of exercises with nuclear capable military equipment, and in particular the conducting of 'mirror-imaged' or 'back-to back' Russian and NATO exercises in relatively close proximity is incredibly dangerous and provocative. In the recent past however, a number of such exercises have taken place. The mind boggles at the potential for disaster, should something have gone wrong or should there have been serious misunderstandings of each others intentions. Such exercises should never take place.

--In the past, Russia and NATO have had relatively good and respectful military-to-military communications and a relatively high level of mutual transparency. This is no longer the case. Military to military communications both on an informal and personal basis, and more formally, need to be restored and upgraded.

--The Idea for a Joint Data Exchange Centre in Moscow, discussed between the US and Russia since 1998, and reaffirmed as an intention three or four times at least, should finally be implemented. The possibility of NATO and China also participating should be explored.

--Russia and the US, followed by (or preceded by) NATO nuclear weapon states should declare that they will not use nuclear weapons first. (No First Use). Currently India and China have such formal policies.

--Nuclear postures that mandate either various forms of 'launch on warning' or 'launch under (presumed) attack' should be abolished. It is far too easy for computer or sensor malfunction to produce false attack warnings that, if believed, initiate the apocalypse, and this has come close to taking place in both Russia and the USA on a frighteningly large number of occasions. Semantic debates about whether US

forces are 'really' on 'hair trigger' do nothing to reduce the very real risks of a nuclear exchange bought about by nothing more significant than sun reflected off high clouds over North Dakota that looked to Soviet surveillance satellite systems exactly like a series of launches (1983), a research rocket that looked like an SLBM launch (1995) and software and hardware glitches that looked to US systems like thousands of incoming warheads.

In the slightly longer run, assuming we are all still here, the need is to:

--Extend the New START treaty so that we are not in a position where nothing constrains nuclear weapons expansion on either side. Absent a New START extension, this is the position we will be in, risking a new/renewed nuclear arms race.

--Adopt nuclear postures and security policies whose entire purpose is to diminish the role of nuclear weapons.

These would go some way to making thinkable, and possible, the fulfillment of the nuclear-armed states Art VI NPT obligations.

Signed:

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