

# Is the World Walking Blindfolded Toward a Nuclear War?

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Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Military](#) and [WMD](#)

***“Through the release of atomic energy, our generation has brought into the world the most revolutionary force since prehistoric man’s discovery of fire. This basic power of the universe cannot be fitted into the outmoded concept of narrow nationalisms.” Statement by the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists, presided by Albert Einstein, January 22, 1947.***

***“I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones.” Albert Einstein (1879-1955), German-born theoretical physicist, (in an interview in ‘Liberal Judaism’, April-May, 1949)***

***“While defending our own vital interests, nuclear powers must avert those confrontations, which bring an adversary to a choice of either a humiliating retreat or a nuclear war. To adopt that kind of course in the nuclear age would be evidence only of the bankruptcy of our policy—or of a collective death-wish for the world.” John F. Kennedy (1917-1963), 35th U.S. President, 1961-1963, (in his commencement address titled “A Strategy of Peace” delivered at the American University in Washington, D.C., on Monday, June 10, 1963***

## Introduction

During the fatidic year of 2024, the world’s attention was distracted, first by the on-going and expanding US-NATO provoked [Ukraine war](#) against Russia, “to weaken Russia” dixit Secretary of Defense, General Lloyd Austin, a proxy war planned a long time ago, in 1991, after the [collapse of the Soviet Union](#).

As a matter of fact, this has been a [proxy war](#) from the start between the United States and Russia, promoted by American neocons. It is a war that officially started with the U.S. government [financing](#) the violent overthrow of the elected pro-Russian government of President Viktor Yanukovych, in February 2014.

Secondly, there is the on-going [conflict](#) between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza, which began with an attack by  [Hamas](#) in October 2023. This was followed by the killing of more than [40,000 Palestinians](#) by the Israeli Netanyahu government. Such widespread massacre of civilians and destruction have left thousands of children orphaned, shocked [genocide](#) historians and shamed the world’s conscience. Nevertheless, the modern-day massacre of the Palestinian people seems to have no end in sight.

On the other hand, we have also witnessed this year the holding of the grandiose Paris Summer Olympics. That great peace celebration among nations was followed by a political saga in the American presidential election campaign, when the incumbent Democratic

[President Joe Biden](#) was pressured to withdraw his candidacy in favor of Vice President Kamala Harris.

However, other more scary developments have been taking place in the shadow. Indeed, the *New York Times* revealed on Tuesday, August 20, that last March, President Joe Biden, in a dangerous display of brinkmanship, secretly approved a new coordinated [American nuclear strategy](#). It is about a plan for simultaneous nuclear confrontations of the United States with Russia, China and North Korea.

That there exists such a plan is not very reassuring, considering that the United States was the first and only country to have dropped nuclear bombs on cities, those of [Hiroshima and Nagasaki](#), in August 1945, resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths.

That a world nuclear war in this day and age could be viewed as possible, even likely, is mind-boggling. As the quote above from President John F. Kennedy in his June 1963 speech illustrates, *“to adopt that kind of course in the nuclear age would be evidence only of the bankruptcy or our policy—or of a collective death-wish for the world.”*

## **The Dire Consequences of Countries Preparing for a Nuclear War**

Nuclear spending programs in the three largest nuclear powers—China, Russia, and the United States—threaten to trigger a three-way nuclear arms race, as the world’s arms control architecture collapses. Russia and China are expanding their nuclear capabilities, and pressure mounts in Washington, especially among supporters of the [U.S. military-industrial complex \(MIC\)](#), for the United States to respond in kind.

The lack of trust and willingness to control and limit the production of nuclear weapons may herald a new era of development of new nuclear weapons, including the deployment of offensive intercontinental-range nuclear weapons. This means that the main nuclear powers could expand the development of new nuclear weapons just as geopolitical tensions keep increasing. This is bound to place the security of all nations in jeopardy.

## **Humanity’s Doomsday Clock Is Getting Closer and Closer to Midnight**

According to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, its metaphor or symbol of the [Doomsday Clock](#), created in 1947, was set to 90 seconds to midnight in January 2023. It was kept at that high point in January 2024, because humanity continues to face a high level of danger in three main areas: the greatest risk of [nuclear warfare](#), the ongoing negative consequences of [climate change](#) and the new threat of [Artificial Intelligence](#).

In July of 1991, at the end of the [Cold War](#), the United States (Pres. George H. W. Bush) and the Soviet Union/Russia (Pres. Mikhail S. Gorbachev) signed the bilateral [Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty](#) (START I), designed to promote nuclear disarmament.

It mandated both sides to reduce their strategic offensive nuclear weapons arsenals. The Atomic Scientists’ Doomsday Clock was then set at 17 minutes to midnight. (N.B.: START I was a success. It had the effect of removing about 80% of all strategic nuclear weapons then in existence, when its final implementation was completed, in late 2001.)

Today, however, with the world thrown into a new [Cold War II](#), with heightened geopolitical tensions between US-EU-NATO, on one side and Russia-China-North Korea-Iran, on the

other, the risks of a major global nuclear cataclysm are very high.

## **Since START I, Most Arms Control Agreements Have Failed**

After the success of the START I treaty, there were two additional treaties signed between the U.S. and Russia to further reduce the stocks of nuclear armaments. Both failed.

First, in January 1993, American president George H. W. Bush and Russian president Boris Yeltsin signed a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty called [START II](#), to expand what the START I treaty had accomplished. However, this new treaty never entered into effect.

This is because the George W. Bush administration decided, in June 2002, to withdraw from the [Anti-ballistic Missile treaty](#) (ABM) that had been in existence between the U.S. and the USSR since 1972, and which was one of the conditions for START II to go ahead.

Many observers considered the American withdrawal of the ABM treaty as the first step toward abandoning effective legal constraints on nuclear proliferation.

Second, President Barack Obama did attempt to revive the mutual reduction of offensive nuclear weapons for ensuring a safer world, when he signed a [New START](#) treaty, in April 2010, with then President Dmitry Medvedev of the Russian Federation. However, there was mounting skepticism over nuclear arms reductions among some U.S. Republican senators and from Washington DC think tanks, such as the Heritage Foundation.

The New START treaty was intended to last ten years, with an option to renew it for up to five years upon the agreement of both parties.

However, on February 2017, then President Donald Trump told Russian president Vladimir Putin that he was withdrawing from the New START treaty, expressing the view that it was too favorable to Russia and that this was a *“bad deal negotiated by the Obama administration.”*

All attempts between Trump and Putin to draft a replacement to the New START treaty before it expired in 2021 failed. Russia went as far as accusing the [Trump administration](#) of “deliberately and intentionally” dismantling international arms control agreements and referred to its “counterproductive and openly aggressive” approach in talks.

Nevertheless, in January 2021, the newly-elected Biden administration did accept a Russian proposal to extend the New START treaty of nuclear arms reduction for five years, i.e. until 2026.

That was the last attempt by the United States and Russia to increase their mutual nuclear safety through bilateral negotiations.

## **An Historical Precedent**

Political relations between the United States and Russia have become increasingly strained, especially after Russia [invaded](#) neighboring Ukraine in February 2022.

The Russian government evoked two main reasons for its move: to protect the Ukrainian russophone minority from Kiev’s exactions, and to prevent the latter country from joining NATO, which would mean the deployment of American nuclear-armed missiles at Russia’s

border.

This war has resulted in tremendous amounts of destruction, sufferings and numerous deaths. It is a war that could have been avoided with a minimum of good faith, diplomacy and a few concessions.

The conflict is reminiscent of the [1962 Cuban missile crisis](#). The Soviet Union had placed nuclear-armed missiles in Cuba, 90 miles from the U.S. coastline, in a response to American deployments of nuclear-armed missiles in Italy and Turkey. A compromise was eventually reached between President Kennedy and President Khrushchev: the Soviet government would dismantle their offensive weapons in Cuba and the U.S. government agreed, secretly, to dismantle all of the offensive weapons it had deployed in Turkey.

## Conclusions

The world has increasingly become a more chaotic and dangerous place. This has a lot to do with the current lack of nuclear deterrence agreements between major nuclear powers. If one nuclear country were to launch an attack with a nuclear weapon in such a climate of mistrust, this could create an existential threat for hundreds of millions of inhabitants of the Planet.

A devastating nuclear war would not only have tragic human consequences, but also economic ones. It would be a huge waste of resources, but it could also create a *nuclear winter* with damaging fallouts on crops leading to famine, besides being a major source of air pollution.

A nuclear war could profit the military nuclear industry in some countries, but it would create chaos in the global economy, causing inflation in the countries involved and creating stagflation in the private sector of national economies.

If leaders of nations with nuclear weapons continue to trivialize the threat of a full-scale nuclear war and to fantasize the demerital idea that they can 'win' a nuclear war, the world may be heading straight towards an existential catastrophe.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon all, leaders and citizens, to work towards the abolition of wars, which do not advance humanity, but rather set it back.

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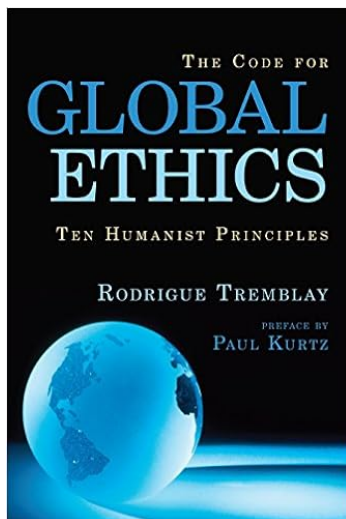
*International economist Dr. Rodrigue Tremblay is the author of the book about morals "[The code for Global Ethics, Ten Humanist Principles](#)" of the book about geopolitics "[The New American Empire](#)", and the recent book, in French, "[La régression tranquille du Québec, 1980-2018](#)". He was Minister of Trade and Industry (1976-79) in the Lévesque government. He holds a Ph.D. in international finance from Stanford University. Please visit [Dr Tremblay's](#)*

site or email to a friend [here](#).

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## The Code for Global Ethics: Ten Humanist Principles

by [Rodrigue Tremblay](#), Preface by [Paul Kurtz](#)

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Humanists have long contended that morality is a strictly human concern and should be independent of religious creeds and dogma. This principle was clearly articulated in the two Humanist Manifestos issued in the mid-twentieth century and in Humanist Manifesto 2000, which appeared at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Now this code for global ethics further elaborates ten humanist principles designed for a world community that is growing ever closer together. In the face of the obvious challenges to international stability—from nuclear proliferation, environmental degradation, economic turmoil, and reactionary and sometimes violent religious movements—a code based on the “natural dignity and inherent worth of all human beings” is needed more than ever. In separate chapters the author delves into the issues surrounding these ten humanist principles: preserving individual dignity and equality, respecting life and property, tolerance, sharing, preventing domination of others, eliminating superstition, conserving the natural environment, resolving differences cooperatively without resort to violence or war, political and economic democracy, and providing for universal education. This forward-looking, optimistic, and eminently reasonable discussion of humanist ideals makes an important contribution to laying the foundations for a just and peaceable global community.

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