

“The Danger of World War III”

Nuclear Disarmament in Times of Unprecedented Risk Roundtable

convened by Canadian Pugwash Group, Canadian Network
to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Canadians for a Nuclear
Weapons Convention, and Project Ploughshares

Ottawa
October 24, 2024

*Jennifer Allen Simons, C.M., Ph.D., LL.D.,
Founder and President,
The Simons Foundation Canada*

Good Morning,

I would like to welcome you to the panel, *The Danger of World War Three* – a terrifying prospect - yet not an unrealistic one given Ukraine President Zelensky's latest appeal for more support from NATO and the West, because, he says, North Korean troops are deployed by Russia in its war thus bringing closer the potential of NATO face to face with Russia and the possibility of a nuclear attack.

And, in the Middle East, on top of the already huge provision of weapons, the United States is now deploying its Missile Defence System to Israel; and with it, one hundred troops on the ground to defend against Iran - furthering US entanglement in the expanding regional war - regional wars which are increasingly becoming **overtly** global.

We are in danger of a nuclear incident: Be it Russia's resort to a nuclear attack, or the West's miscalculation of Putin's bluff; or consequences of the escalation of Israel's attacks on Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon and on Iran.

Russia's aggressive foreign policy is to blame for new salience of nuclear weapons and a nuclear arms race; for the end of mutual reductions in nuclear arms between Russia and the United States; and in part for the expansion of China's nuclear arsenal to reach parity with them. North Korea is aiding Russia, supplying Russia with troops and weapons to attack Ukraine, and as well, is advancing its nuclear programs and increasing its nuclear and missile threats.

Iran too is helping Russia by providing drones and ballistic missiles for its war on Ukraine. Because of the United States' withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Iran is increasing enrichment to weapon production level. However, I understand that Iran not building nuclear weapon but if Israel bombs Iran nuclear sites this may change and be precursor to a Middle East nuclear arms race.

And with Israel's war in Gaza between nuclear-armed Israel and Iran proxies, the situation could explode into a nuclear war.

The international realm is further destabilized because U.S. **conventional weapons** which are far superior in development to those of Russia and China, and are now capable of destroying all of China's and Russian **nuclear** missile silos ¹ - a threat which could trigger a nuclear response.

We are faced with the prospect of World War III which no doubt would be nuclear. We are dealing with a burgeoning nuclear arms race, yet military build-up, whether nuclear or conventional, will never solve the problem. A desperate Putin could resort to nuclear weapons to stave off defeat.

¹www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/sep/05/us-arms-advantage-over-russia-and-china-threatens-stability-experts-warn -Dan Plesch and Manuel Galileo rReport

We are also challenged with questions on the adequacy of post-World War II global institutions - predominantly the United Nations and its entities, the UN Human Rights Commission, the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. Russia, North Korea, and particularly Israel, and have demonstrated their contempt for these International organizations, and have thumbed their noses at International Law.

Moreover, battlefields have expanded to incorporate the internet: cyber attacks - and specifically Russian government technical driven cyber warfare , weaponizing psychological operations to subvert democratic societies. We need new tools – and perhaps new institutions - to cope with this changed reality.

We are fortunate today to have experts in these issues:

The first panelist is Matt Korda is the associate director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, co-author of the Nuclear Notebook and an associate researcher with the Nuclear Disarmament, Arms Control and Non- proliferation Programme at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) who will provide us with information on the growing role of nuclear weapons and the implications of these developments and posit future trends.

Cesar Jaramillo, the Executive Director of Project Ploughshares, and Chair of Canadian Pugwash, will bring us up to date on NATO in relation to Ukraine – an increasing danger: on NATO and the contradiction with the NPT; and possible measures by NATO to address the nuclear threat.

Our third speaker is Paul Meyer, former Canadian Ambassador for Disarmament, who is a Simon Fraser University Fellow in International Security and Adjunct Professor at the School for International Studies. Paul will speak on the UN Response to the Nuclear Disarmament Crisis and possibilities of a Special Session on Disarmament focussed on initiatives to reinvigorate structures and trust for effective disarmament.

I suggest that questions be taken at the end of the three speakers' contributions.

Thank you!

So please go ahead Matt.

Jennifer Allen Simons, C.M., Ph.D., LL.D.,
Founder and President,
The Simons Foundation Canada
October 24, 2024

