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[**Nuclear irresponsibility**](https://www.peacefare.net/2020/08/08/nuclear-irresponsibility/)

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*Former IAEA nuclear inspector* ***Pantelis Ikonomou*** *writes, on a date between the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and the bombing of Nagasaki (in an excerpt from his****Global Nuclear Developments****, which Springer has published in May 2020*)*:*

Nuclear powers regard their weapons as the most effective lever to achieve strategic goals and the status of a world power or a regional leader. The geopolitical backdrop from the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear bombing simply could not be ignored. There are already a number of “nuclear suitors” or would-be proliferators who are ready to play the same card in the on-going geopolitical game. This fact cannot and should not be ignored….

In 50 years of implementation the NPT has had significant successes to show as far as consolidating the non-proliferation regime is concerned. But when it comes to the goal of nuclear disarmament, it has so far been a great failure. The five superpowers, the NPT Nuclear Weapons States, keep evading, in essence ignoring their relevant obligation to nuclear disarmament under Article VI of the NPT. Their behavior creates global frustration, awkwardness and anger, and consequently great distrust of the vast majority of “*nuclear have nots*” to the few “*nuclear haves*.” This reality could be a powerful catalyst for negative developments leading to the collapse of the NPT regime.….

Having served for over 32 years the world’s nuclear watchdog IAEA, consciously espousing its declared goals, I would like to address a few rhetorical questions to the two major nuclear powers: the US and Russia, depositaries and steady supporters of the NPT regime and the IAEA:

• Why do they revive, in full consciousness, a nuclear race 30 years after the end of the Cold War?

• Are they not aware of their actions being contrary to their undertaking under Article VI of the NPT? That is *“…to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control*”.

• Do they not realize that they severely endanger the non-proliferation regime?

• Do they not see the imminent risk of uncontrolled nuclear proliferation by aspiring suitors, “would-be proliferators,” in the Middle East and in north-east Asia?

• Isn’t North Korea enough?

 • Why do they risk their displacement from, or initially the decreased relevance of, their global geostrategic primacy?

• Is it possible that they underestimate the growing nuclear threat to mankind?

• Is the behavior of the two UNSC superpowers responsible as patrons of world peace and security? Why do they disrespect the international community’s expectations and disregard its exasperation, anger, and fear?

The risks of the nuclear threat span around the globe and affect every country’s sovereignty and security. The universal nature of the existing nuclear threat is indisputable. It is within the powers and abilities of the leaders of Russia and the US to fulfil their utmost obligation towards their citizens and the peoples of our really small, yet so beautiful and still very young planet Earth. This is to initiate and achieve a political climate of understanding and moderation, a global nuclear “*calm down*” atmosphere. …

What are these leaders waiting for? What are their intentions? Nuclear crises are becoming more complex and unpredictable, more dynamic and erratic in nature. The tipping point for uncontrollable and irreversible derailment may be nearer than we think. The probability of nuclear weapons be used at any time, intentionally or by accident, is on the rise again, after decades of receding following the end of the Cold War era.

Have we not yet learned the lesson from Hiroshima and Nagasaki?