

Help **STOP** Nuclear War Before It's Too Late

We all have a part to play

David Ratcliffe
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"Never have the nations of the world had so much to lose, or so much to gain. Together we shall save our planet, or together we shall perish in its flames. Save it we can—and save it we must—and then shall we earn the eternal thanks of mankind and, as peacemakers, the eternal blessing of God."

—President John F. Kennedy, UN General Assembly, 25 Sep 1961

*To Jim Douglass and Steven Starr
friends and teachers*

The increasing likelihood of nuclear war—not by miscalculation nor by accident, but by the collective madness of people leading and promoting the U.S. war machine, in concert with mainstream media malpractice—is THE supreme threat to all life on Earth. 50 years ago today the ultimate sacrifice was made by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., one of the 20th century's greatest peacemakers. King gave his life championing the world's poor by opposing the greatest purveyor of violence on Earth—his own government. Calls for "honoring Dr. King" betray his life's purpose if they do not steadfastly sound the alarm that the push by the West for war with Russia, which is a mass extinction event waiting to happen.

In 1958 Martin King wrote about *agape*, the word that for him was at the center of nonviolence: "Agape means understanding, redeeming good will for all.... It is the love of God operating in the human heart." The Christian West has lost its way in understanding this tenet. Five areas of concern that most people in the United States appear to be unconscious or unaware of are explored in the following. **First**, it is critical to recognize that [a democracy within a national security state cannot survive](#). **Second**, since the 1990s and the supposed end of the Cold War, [U.S. militarists have failed to achieve nuclear superiority over Russia](#). **Third** is an examination of what everyone in the United States must understand about what [the global environmental consequences of nuclear war](#) mean. **Fourth**, it is the highest necessity for people here to [expand the lens and explore a wider field-of-view of what is happening in Russia and what is not being discussed in the U.S. about Russia](#). **Fifth** is the extraordinary sacrifice Martin Luther King made in light of the fourth gospel to realize the full meaning of *agape*: "[No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends](#)" (John 15:13).

↑ A Democracy Within A National Security State Cannot Survive

While the push by militarists in the West for war covers many theaters—including the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and the Korean peninsula—the ultimate target is Russia. This drive is being led by people in the U.S. including what are called [Neocons](#) as well as [Neoliberals](#). Speaking at the [Israel's Influence, Good or Bad for America?](#) conference in March 2016, Journalist Jim Lobe covered [American Neoconservatives: A History and Overview](#):

If I were asked to boil down neoconservatism into its essential elements—that is, those that remained consistent over the past nearly 50 years—I would say the following: First, a Manichean view of the world in which good and evil are constantly at war and the United States has an obligation to lead the forces for good around the globe; second, a belief in the moral exceptionalism of both the United States and Israel, and the absolute moral necessity for the United States to defend Israel's security; third, a conviction that, in order to keep evil at bay, the United States must have and be willing to exercise the military power necessary to defeat any and all challenges anywhere—and there is a corollary to this: force is the only language that evil and adversaries understand; fourth, the 1930s—what with Munich, appeasement, Chamberlain, and then Churchill, the redeemer—taught us everything we need to know about evil and how to thwart it; and fifth, democracy is generally desirable, but it always depends on who wins.

A summary list [encapsulating neo-liberalism](#) includes: 1. the rule of the market freeing private enterprise from any bonds imposed by the state; 2. cutting public funding for social services and infrastructure as well as reducing the safety-net for the poor; 3. deregulation that reduces government oversight of everything that limits profits; 4. privatization in the form of selling off state-owned enterprises, goods and services to private investors; and 5. replacing the values of “the public good” and “community” with “individual responsibility.”

Regarding [Neoliberals](#), journalist Ramin Mazaheri observed last November in, [“Forced recession as a tool of social war against the 99%,”](#) that:

If you don't already understand that headline, you are missing the primary goal of neoliberal capitalism over the past nearly 40 years. Stop assuming the 1% wants growth economies ... The 1%'s interest is only in supporting the “keep all I got” model. Accept this as a rule and you are halfway to enlightenment, and you will pierce the technocratic lie that “economics is too hard to understand”.

What Neocons, Neoliberals, and the ruling class in general have in common is a *capitalism über alles* worldview belief in the sacrosanct necessity of military supremacy and its complement of spending levels dwarfing all other programs for the sake of keeping capitalism afloat. For the U.S. the pinnacle of military supremacy since 1945 has been its nuclear arsenal. [Speaking in 2009](#), Catholic Worker and author Jim Douglass [summed up](#) the contradiction of how the U.S. government adopted policies that based so-called national security on weapons that could destroy the planet.

A democracy within a national security state cannot survive. The president's decision to base our security on nuclear weapons created the contradiction of a democracy ruled by the dictates of the Pentagon. A democratic national security state is a contradiction in terms.

The insecure basis of our security then became weapons that could destroy the planet. To protect the security of that illusory means of security, which was absolute destructive power, we now needed a ruling elite of national security managers with an authority above that of our elected representatives.

So from that point on, our military-industrial managers made the real decisions of state. President Truman simply ratified their decisions and entrenched their power, as he did with the establishment of the CIA, and as his National Security Council did with its endorsement of plausible deniability.

Grappling directly with and facing the numbing denial permeating western society that nuclear weapons keep the peace and make us safe offers a way out of the prison of hopelessness. Exercising our intelligence bestowed by right of birth on this planet supports the process of seeing the world as it is and choosing how to respond equipped with understanding and wisdom. A noteworthy campaign is getting under way to prevent nuclear war: [Back From the Brink: The Call to Prevent Nuclear War](#) (see local-to-ratical information about it [here](#)).

↑ **U.S. Militarists Have Failed to Achieve Nuclear Superiority Over Russia**

The purpose here is to address the following: unless we in the U.S. succeed in decreasing political tensions with Russia, we will be fighting a war with them very soon. Such a war will inevitably go nuclear given that Russia has made it very clear [it will not back down if attacked](#). In [March](#), Stephen Cohen, professor emeritus of Russian studies, history, and politics at New York University and Princeton University, described how **“Putin declares that the long US attempt to gain nuclear superiority over Russia has failed and hopes Washington will “listen now”:**

Beginning in the 1990s, successive US administrations—under Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama—sought de facto nuclear superiority over post-Soviet Russia. Animated by rampant post-Cold War (misconceived) triumphalism and by a perception that Russia was now too weak, demoralized, or supplicant to compete, they did so in three ways: by expanding NATO to Russia’s borders; by funding ever more destructive, “precise,” and “usable” nuclear weapons; and, in 2002, by unilaterally withdrawing from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. By prohibiting wide deployment of anti-missile defense installments (each side got one exception at home), the treaty had long guaranteed mutual security based on the underlying principles of MAD and parity. Bush’s abolition of the ABM Treaty in effect abolished those principles and signified Washington’s quest for nuclear superiority over Russia. Today, there are scores of deployed American missile-defense installments, which are officially a NATO project as well, around the world, including on land and at sea bordering Russia. From the beginning, Washington maintained, as it does today, that “Our missile defense has never been about Russia,” only about Iran and other “rogue states,” but this has always been a fairy tale believed by no sensible observer and certainly not by Moscow.

In the same article Cohen pointed out how remarks in the second part of the March 1 address by President Putin

were addressed directly to Washington. Putin’s overarching point was that Russia has thwarted Washington’s two-decade-long effort to gain nuclear superiority over—and thus a survivable first-strike capability against—Russia. His attendant conclusion was that one era in post-Soviet

Russian-American strategic relations has ended and a new one has begun. This part of Putin's speech makes it among the important he has delivered during his 18 years in power.

Mr. Putin began this second half of the speech with the following:

I will speak about the newest systems of Russian strategic weapons that we are creating in response to the unilateral withdrawal of the United States of America from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the practical deployment of their missile defence systems both in the US and beyond their national borders.

The second half of the March 1 speech is [here](#) and the full text is available [here](#).

In January Cohen pointed out how so-called papers of record like the *NYT* did not see fit to report on the [December 12, 2017 release by the National Security Archive](#) of the documents detailing what Soviet Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev was promised in 1990-91 by Western leaders concerning the reunification of Germany. Not only did Gorbachev agree to reunification but also that the new Germany would be a member of NATO. The President of the USSR agreed to this in part due to "U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's famous 'not one inch eastward' assurance about NATO expansion in his meeting with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev on February 9, 1990."

On March 23 writing in "**A truly historical month for the future of our planet**" (at [thesaker.is](#)), or [unz.com](#)), incisive analysis by [Andrei Raevsky](#) aka [the Saker](#) provides further insight:

Why is the nuclear issue so central? Because the Russians are fully aware of the fact that [the AngloZionists cannot win a conventional war with Russia](#). Thus it is crucial for the Russians to convince the AngloZionists that they are neither militarily superior nor invulnerable (see [here](#) for a full analysis of these two myths). But once some kind of *modus vivendi* is achieved with the West, Russia will focus her efforts in different directions: much needed internal reforms and development, the work with China on the establishment of a single Eurasian zone of economic security, peace and prosperity, the restoration of peace in the Middle-East, the development of the Russian Far East and North—you name it. Russia has plenty of work which needs to be done, none of which involves the West in any capacity.

And that is, of course, what is so totally unacceptable to the West.

Hence this month's historical developments which have placed Russia and the West in a direct collision course. As I said above, the Empire can now either fold or double down. If it decides to fold, war will be averted and meaningful negotiations finally entered into. If it doubles down, something the Neocons always do, then this means war with Russia. This is a stark and very difficult choice (no, not for normal people, but for the psychopaths ruling the West). And there isn't much Russia could, or should, do at this point. As is the case every time a serious crisis takes place, the apparently united elites running the West will now break-up into separate factions and each one of these factions will pursue and promote its own, narrow, interests. There will be an intense, mostly behind the scenes, struggle between those who will want to double down or even trigger a war against Russia and those who will be horrified by that notion (not necessarily for profound moral reasons, just out of basic self-interest and a healthy instinct for self-preservation).

As to who will prevail, your guess is as good a mine. But the fact that today Trump replaced McMaster with a warmongering psychopath like John Bolton is a clear sign that the Neocons are in charge in the USA and that the Axis of Kindness is about to get a heck of a lot “kinder”.

Expansion of NATO up to the very borders of Russia, further development of U.S. nuclear weapons technology and effective kill-power, and [U.S. withdrawal from the ABM treaty](#) have induced a chimerical sense of invincibility in the minds of U.S. war-mongers and merchants of death that, if allowed to progress further, will result in the extinction not only of humans, but of all large animals and other forms of complex life on earth going back at least 66 million years.

↑ **The Global Environmental Consequences of Nuclear War**

Everyone needs to understand what nuclear war means and what the results will be that will occur globally.

The scientifically predicted consequences of nuclear war were first analyzed in the 1980s. In 2015, [speaking at the Symposium on the Dynamics of Possible Nuclear Extinction](#), Alan Robock, [Professor of Climate Science at Rutgers Univ.](#), described how he was among the scientists thirty-plus years ago that [conducted studies on what the ecological consequences of nuclear war would include](#).

There are two types of targets: nuclear air bursts and ground bursts. The cities would burn and firestorms would build. Ground bursts also produce dust and in one case the sunlight gets absorbed and in another case it gets reflected. But that means very little sunlight would reach the ground. And that would cause rapid, large drops in surface temperature. This would be devastation to agriculture and natural ecosystems.

The smoke in the atmosphere also heats the upper atmosphere which then destroys ozone and that would mean a lot more ultraviolet radiation reaching the ground also which would be devastating for life. This produces what we call Nuclear Winter with cold, dry, dark conditions at the surface, more ultraviolet-producing, crops dying, and global famine....

The nuclear freeze movement was going on at the same time as Helen described. And then the nuclear arms race ended. And this science was part of the story of why the nuclear arms race ended. The Soviet Union ended 5 years later so it wasn't the end of the Soviet Union that ended the arms race.

[Steven Starr](#) is Director of Clinical Laboratory Science at Univ. of Missouri and Senior Scientist at Physicians for Social Responsibility. In [“Turning a Blind Eye Towards Armageddon—U.S. Leaders Reject Nuclear Winter Studies,”](#) (Federation of American Scientists, January 2017) he summarizes the ecological effects of nuclear war and raises the most pressing of questions including, Do U.S. military and political leaders fully understand the consequences of nuclear war?

Now 10 years ago, several of the world's leading climatologists and physicists chose to reinvestigate the long-term environmental impacts of nuclear war. The peer-reviewed studies they produced are considered to be the most authoritative type of scientific research, which is subjected to criticism by the international scientific community before final publication in scholarly journals. No serious errors were found in these studies and their findings remain

unchallenged.[†]...

[T]hese scientists used state-of-the-art computer modeling to evaluate the consequences of a range of possible nuclear conflicts. They began with a hypothetical war in Southeast Asia, in which a total of 100 Hiroshima-size atomic bombs were detonated in the cities of India and Pakistan....

[T]oday, each of the approximately 3,540 strategic weapons deployed by the United States and Russia is seven to 80 times more powerful than the atomic bombs modeled in the India-Pakistan study....

Strategic nuclear weapons produce much larger nuclear firestorms than do atomic bombs. For example, a standard Russian 800-kiloton warhead, on an average day, **will ignite fires covering a surface area of 90 to 152 square miles.**



[See Steven Starr with Lynn Eden & Theodore A. Postol, “[What would happen if an 800-kiloton nuclear warhead detonated above midtown Manhattan?](#)”, BAS.org, 25 Feb 2015]

A war fought with hundreds or thousands of U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear weapons would ignite immense nuclear firestorms covering land surface areas of many thousands or tens of thousands of square miles. **The scientists calculated that these fires would produce up to 180 million tons of black carbon soot and smoke, which would form a dense, global stratospheric smoke layer.** The smoke would remain in the stratosphere for 10 to 20 years, and it would block as much as 70 percent of sunlight from reaching the surface of the Northern Hemisphere and 35 percent from the Southern Hemisphere. **So much sunlight would be blocked by the smoke that the noonday sun would resemble a full moon at midnight.**

Under such conditions, it would only require a matter of days or weeks for daily minimum temperatures to fall below freezing in the largest agricultural areas of the Northern Hemisphere, where freezing temperatures would occur every day for a period of between one to more than two years. Average surface temperatures would become colder than those experienced 18,000 years ago at the height of the last Ice Age, and the prolonged cold would cause average rainfall to decrease by up to 90%. Growing seasons would be completely eliminated for more than a decade; it would be too cold and dark to grow food crops, which would doom the majority of the human population....

Perhaps [General John Hyten, Head of USSTRATCOM](#), who is in charge of the U.S. nuclear triad, and [General Paul Selva, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff](#), the second highest ranking officer in the United States, have never seen or heard of the 21st century nuclear winter studies. Perhaps when they hear a question about “nuclear winter,” they only remember the smear campaigns done against the early studies. Or, maybe, they just choose not to accept the new scientific research on nuclear winter, despite the fact that it has withstood the criticism of the global scientific community.

[T]he rejection of nuclear winter research by the top leaders of the United States raises some profoundly important questions: Do U.S. military and political leaders fully understand the consequences of nuclear war? Do they realize that even a “successful” nuclear first-strike against Russia could cause most Americans to die from nuclear famine?...

My own personal assessment of the state of the nuclear danger today is that it is profound. The United States is sleepwalking towards nuclear war. Our leaders have turned a blind eye to the scientifically predicted consequences of nuclear war, and our military appears to be intent on making “Russia back down.” This is a recipe for unlimited human disaster.

It is still not too late to seek dialogue, diplomacy, and détente with Russia and China, and to create a global dialogue about the existential dangers of nuclear war. We must return to the understanding that nuclear war cannot be won and must not be fought. This can be achieved if our political and military leaders listen to the warnings from the scientific community about the long-term global environmental consequences of nuclear war.



- Alan Robock et al., “[Nuclear winter revisited with a modern climate model and current nuclear arsenals: Still catastrophic consequences](#),” *Journal of Geophysical Research: Atmospheres* 112 (2007)
- Owen Brian Toon et al., “[Atmospheric effects and societal consequences of regional scale nuclear conflicts and acts of individual nuclear terrorism](#),” *Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics* 7 (2007)
- Michael Mills et al., “[Massive global ozone loss predicted following regional nuclear conflict](#),” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 105, no. 14 (2008)
- Michael Mills et al., “[Multidecadal global cooling and unprecedented ozone loss following a regional nuclear conflict](#),” *Earth’s Future* (2014)
- Alan Robock et al., “[Climatic consequences of regional nuclear conflicts](#),” *Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics* 7 (2007)

In 2015 Steven Starr [described](#) how the “most recent mass extinction event took place 66 million years ago, when an asteroid about 6 miles in diameter struck the Earth near the Yucatan peninsula.” The impact caused Earth’s forests to burn forming a global smoke layer in the stratosphere which remained in place for many years, blocking warming sunlight and creating Ice Age weather conditions on Earth. This period of cold and dark spanning the globe came to be called “Impact Winter” and devastated life on Earth. “No land animal larger than a squirrel is believed to have survived the fire and ice from the asteroid. 75% of all the living species of plants and animals that had inhabited the Earth became extinct.”



Cloudless sky

obscured by **150 million tons of smoke in the stratosphere after a US-Russian nuclear war** adapted from “[Local Nuclear War, Global Suffering](#)”, Robock & Toon (*Scientific American*, 2010)

If nuclear weapons are launched, there will be a critical difference between Impact Winter and Nuclear Winter. Sixty-six million years ago the global fires were caused by organic matter of Earth’s forests burning from the debris generated by the asteroid’s impact which heated Earth’s upper and lower atmospheres to about 2700 and 700 degrees Fahrenheit respectively. Global fires generated by nuclear weapons will contain massive levels of utterly lethal man-made radioactive isotopes inimical to all biological life. It took 66 million years for Earth to regenerate from the collision with the asteroid. It will effectively take eternity for Earth to regenerate after nuclear weapons are launched.

↑ Expanding the Lens – Explore a Wider Field-of-View

There are numerous sources to draw upon to gain a more balanced perspective on Russia, its people, its current President, and its history. The following offer a means of increasing understanding Russia and its people by going beyond what Stephen Cohen terms “[media malpractice](#)”:

a somewhat close reader of these mainstream newspapers, and television “news” viewer, will note their selective, disproportionate coverage of some stories to the exclusion of others; the prejudicial language and prosecutorial slant often employed; the systematic violation of journalistic due process and presumption of innocence; the equal exclusion of contrary “sources” and “expert” opinions in their pages and on their televised panels; and other disregard for long-established journalistic standards.

Tuning in to such sources offers substantive critical analysis of the increasing U.S. demonization of Russia and provides an antidote to the drumbeating of the War Party and moves to increase thought control and Big Brother crimestop:

The first and simplest stage of discipline, which can be taught even to young children, is called in Newspeak, *Crimestop*. *Crimestop* means the faculty of stopping short, as though by instinct, at the threshold of any dangerous thought. It includes the power of not grasping analogies, of failing to perceive logical errors, of misunderstanding the simplest arguments if they are inimical to Ingsoc, and of being bored or repelled by any train of thought which is capable of leading in a heretical direction. *Crimestop*, in short, means protective stupidity.

—George Orwell, *1984*

Speaking on [The State of the Nuclear Danger](#) in 2016, Steven Starr relayed how in Russia, the danger of nuclear war with the U.S. was the top news story.

So, while the US ignores the danger of nuclear war, Russian scholar Stephen Cohen reports that the danger of nuclear war with the US is the leading news story in Russia. I listen to Cohen interviews on the John Batchelor Show every week [[recordings](#) - search under “Cohen”; [print copy](#) in *The Nation*], and it’s really one of the few sources in our media where you can get informed updates. Cohen speaks Russian and he listens to the Russian media, and he states, “Just as there are no discussion of the most existential question of our time in the American political class, the possibility of war with Russia, it is the only thing being discussed in the Russian political class. These are two different political universes. In Russia, all the discussion in the newspapers, and there is plenty of free discussion on talk show TV which echoes what the Kremlin is thinking, online, in the elite newspapers, and in the popular broadcasts, the number one, two, three and four topics of the day are the possibility of war with the United States.”

And Cohen goes on to say that, “I conclude from this that the leadership of Russia actually believes now, in reaction to what the US and NATO have said and done over the last two years, and particularly in reaction to the breakdown of the proposed cooperation in Syria, and the rhetoric coming out of Washington, that war is a real possibility. I can’t remember when, since the Cuban Missile Crisis, that Moscow leadership came to this conclusion in its collective head.”

We in the United States know so very little about Russia and its people. Such lack of knowledge makes it far too easy to dehumanize the other culture, prey upon it, and fuels unfounded fears and paranoia. Exercising our remarkable powers of intelligence and response ability to what Life presents us with in each moment is the greatest fulfillment of what we were born to manifest and discover here on the journey.

- **[The American Committee for East-West Accord](#)**

From its [Mission Statement](#):

Our fundamental premise is that no real or lasting American, European, or international security generally is possible without essential kinds of stable cooperation with Russia.... The Committee is new but not without a distinguished predecessor. Its name derives from The American Committee on East-West Accord, a pro-detente organization founded in 1974 by illustrious Americans – among them, CEOs of multinational corporations, political figures, educational leaders, and policy thinkers such as George F. Kennan. That Committee, believing cold war had ended, closed its doors in 1992, though not before being credited with having contributed to the historic agreements reached by Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H. Bush, and Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985-1991. Today’s need for something akin to a new detente is no less imperative. And the new Committee for East-West Accord, which expects to be joined soon by an affiliated European branch in Brussels, strives for even more: A conclusive end to cold war and its attendant dangers.

[Excerpt: Widely Reported Section of Vladimir Putin’s Speech on Russian Defense](#)

- **[Johnson’s Russian List](#)**

“the JRL,” has been a favored source of Russia-related information since it was founded by Editor-in-Chief David Johnson in 1996. Like an “Early Bird” focused on Russia and related subjects, the JRL since its beginning has been a voluminous, full-text e-mail newsletter, where its complete content resides. The JRL is a project of the [Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies \(IERES\)](#) at

[The George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs](#). The JRL also includes a content-rich [website](#) with 7 sections of [Headlines](#), 2 Social Media Feeds, 7 ways to [Follow the JRL](#), a plethora of wide-ranging [Links](#), and [Archives](#) going back to 1997.

- **[Center for Citizen Initiatives](#)**

The Center for Citizen Initiatives (CCI) began its life in 1983 with the hope that ordinary Americans could insert themselves into the nuclear arms race and bring about a constructive relationship with the Soviet Union. Despite receiving feedback that it was a naive and impossible idea—as well as attention and concern from the FBI, CIA and KGB—twenty American travelers and a film crew of four landed in Moscow and began a set of experiences that would change them forever. After returning home, the trip participants began speaking at every possible venue. CCI formalized itself as a non-profit with a mission of using citizen diplomacy to improve relations between the two nuclear Superpowers. Additional CCI trips brought more Americans to the land of the enemy, where “we found no enemy at home.”

Our world has never faced a more challenging era than today. At CCI, we experienced one other such dangerous period in 1980. We flew in between the two enemy nations and dared to try to understand the challenges on both sides. Our citizen-to-citizen programs began to soften the environment between the two Superpowers of that era. Other American groups also got involved. War was averted and good relations began to grow in the 1990s. Our vision is: When real people in large numbers get involved, amazing changes begin to happen! If it happened in the 1980s, it can happen again. Join us! Let's help reduce the tensions existing today between the two Superpowers. We begin our new mission armed with the knowledge that our original efforts in 1983 produced magic and miracles beyond anything we could have imagined—and with the belief that 99% of Americans and Russians genuinely yearn for good relations between our two nations. There is no problem between the peoples of our countries. We only need to overcome our distrust and fears, and rebuild the proper relationships to guarantee security for both nations.

[Russians Meet Mainstream Americans!](#) (RMMA—pronounced Rama) launched on March 20, 2018.

When “Top-Down Diplomacy” is absent, as it is today, it is critical that “bottom-up diplomacy” fill the vacuum and begin grappling with these heavy issues of war or peace. RMMA participants won't argue or debate, we will simply share different points of view and in the process will educate ourselves, each other—then educate fellow citizens in both countries.

[“Four Senators Request Negotiations with Russia,”](#) Sharon Tennison, CCI, 11 Mar 2018

[For Russians With Love](#), photo essay by Hakim Young of July 2016 Center for Citizen Initiatives trip to Russia.

[Russians Ask “Why Do You Demonize Us When We Are So Much Like You?”](#) by Ann Wright, *opednews.com*, 4 July 2016

I've just ended two weeks visiting cities in four regions of Russia. The one question that was asked over and over was, “Why does America hate us? Why do you demonize us?” Most would add a caveat—“I like American people and I think YOU like us individually but why does the American government hate our government?”

This article is a composite of the comments and questions that were asked to our 20-person delegation and to me as an individual. I do not attempt to defend the views but offer them as an insight into the thinking of many of the persons we came into contact with in meetings and on the streets.

None of the questions, comments or views tell the full story, but I hope they give a feel for the desire of the ordinary Russian that her country and its citizens are respected as a sovereign nation with a long history and that it is not demonized as an outlaw state or an “evil” nation. Russia has its flaws and room for improvement in many areas, just as every nation does, including for sure, the United States.

Ann Wright is a 29-year US Army/Army Reserves veteran, a retired United States Army colonel and retired U.S. State Department official, known for her outspoken opposition to the Iraq War. She received the State Department Award for Heroism in 1997, after helping to evacuate several thousand people during the civil war in Sierra Leone. She is most noted for having been one of three State Department officials to publicly resign in direct protest of the 2003 Invasion of Iraq.

Wright was also a passenger on the Challenger 1, which along with the Mavi Marmara, was part of the Gaza flotilla. She served in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia and Mongolia. In December, 2001 she was on the small team that reopened the US Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan. She is the co-author of the book *Dissent: Voices of Conscience*. She has written frequently on rape in the military.

- **Keeping it real: Meet the American podcasters who give an honest scoop on Russia**

Tommy O'Callghan, *Russia Beyond*, 17 Mar 2018.

- **“Putin expressed doubts about the need for peace without Russia”**

In an interview published on 7 March 2018 Russian President Putin was asked about the rationale of a retaliatory strike by Russia if she was attacked by the U.S. From the lenta.ru, the english translation is:

President Vladimir Putin in an interview for the film “[The World Order 2018](#)” recognized that Russia’s retaliatory nuclear strike, in case of an attack on it, will lead the world to disaster. The documentary is laid out in social networks “[VKontakte](#)” and “Classmates” on Wednesday, March 7.

“Yes, for humanity it will be a global catastrophe, for the world will be a global catastrophe. But as a Russian citizen and head of the Russian state, I want to ask myself: what for do we need such a world if Russia does not exist there?” Putin said.

At the same time, the Russian leader stressed several times that Moscow can only use nuclear weapons if the missile attack warning system detects the launch of enemy missiles, calculates their trajectory and the time of the drop of the warheads into Russia. “This is called a reciprocal impact. If this decision destroys Russia, then we have a legitimate right to answer,” Putin said.

Putin also drew attention to the fact that it is incorrect to ask the question of using a nuclear button in relation to Russia, which never used such a weapon. “Firstly, it’s not we who started it. Let me remind you that the nuclear bomb, the atomic bomb, first appeared not in our country, but in the United States. This is the first. Second: we never used nuclear weapons - the United States used against Japan,” Putin said.

- **Putin** - documentary film by [Andrei Kondrashev](#), 2018 (2:10:48)

- by Rob Slane on [TheBlogMire.com](#):

“30 Questions That Journalists Should be Asking About the Skripal Case,” 20 March 2018

“20 More Questions That Journalists Should be Asking About the Skripal Case,” 27 March 2018

↑ **“No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”** (John 15:13)



“Well I don’t know what will happen now. We’ve got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn’t matter with me now. Because I’ve been to the mountaintop. I don’t mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And [God has] allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over. And I’ve seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people will get to the promised land. And I’m happy, tonight. I’m not worried about anything. I’m not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.”

—Dr. Martin Luther King, 3 Apr 1968

This was the close of Martin King’s [3 April 1968 speech at Mason Temple in Memphis](#). The above became his earthly farewell. Listening to “But it really doesn’t matter with me now,” it can heard in his voice how he was saying ‘[Goodbye, I hate to leave.](#)’ On 6 April 1968, Coretta Scott King [spoke at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta about her spouse](#):

My husband often told the children that if a man had nothing that was worth dying for, then he was not fit to live. He said also that it’s not how long you live, but how well you live. He knew that at any moment his physical life could be cut short, and we faced this possibility squarely and honestly. My husband faced the possibility of death without bitterness or hatred. He knew that this was a sick society, totally infested with racism and violence that questioned his integrity, maligned his motives, and distorted his views, which would ultimately lead to his death. And he struggled with every ounce of his energy to save that society from itself.

He never hated. He never despaired of well doing. And he encouraged us to do likewise, and so he prepared us constantly for the tragedy.

I am surprised and pleased at the success of his teaching, for our children say calmly, ‘Daddy is not dead; he may be physically dead, but his spirit will never die.’

Ours has been a religious home, and this too has made this burden easier to bear. Our concern now is that his work does not die. He gave his life for the poor of the world—the garbage workers of Memphis and the [peasants of Vietnam](#). Nothing hurt him more than that man could attempt no way to solve problems except through violence. He gave his life in search of a more excellent way, a more effective way, a creative rather than a destructive way.

Martin King wanted to do God's will and gave his life in search of a more excellent, effective, and creative way. A theologian by training, in 1998 Jim Douglass wrote about [Martin's assassination in the light of the Fourth Gospel](#).

"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God." For Martin Luther King, in the beginning was the word *agape*, a word that was, he said, at the center of nonviolence. In September 1958 he wrote in the Roman Catholic periodical *Jubilee*: "When we speak of loving those who oppose us, we refer to neither *eros* nor *philia*; we speak of a love which is expressed in the Greek word *agape*. *Agape* means understanding, redeeming good will for all.... It is the love of God operating in the human heart."^[1]

Because *agape* is God's love. King said it was a love directed especially at those neighbors who are our enemies: "*Agape* is disinterested love.... The best way to assure oneself that love is disinterested is to have love for the enemy-neighbor from whom you can expect no good in return, but only hostility and persecution."^[2] *Agape* was also the divine power within King's vision of community: "*Agape* is love seeking to preserve and create community.... *Agape* is a willingness to go to any length to restore community." That is why *agape* became flesh in a world hostile to it and suffered the consequences. "The cross," King said, "is the eternal expression of the length to which God will go in order to restore broken community."^[3] *Agape* became flesh in compassion.

On the night before his death. King spoke about the light coming into our world.

I see God working in this period of the twentieth century in a way that [people], in some strange way, are responding—something is happening in our world. The masses of people are rising up. And wherever they are assembled today, whether they are in Johannesburg, South Africa; Nairobi, Kenya; Accra, Ghana; New York City; Atlanta, Georgia; Jackson, Mississippi; or Memphis, Tennessee—the cry is always the same—"We want to be free."^[4]

He also spoke about not getting to that promised land himself.

[Like anybody, I would like to live](#) a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And [God has] allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people will get to the promised land. And I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.^[5]

Evidently, King had his eyes wide open to the cross standing before him. In the beginning was the word: *agape*. That word was why King went to Memphis, even though he sensed he was walking into his grave. In the full meaning of *agape*, he loved the Memphis sanitation workers, who were on strike and struggling, and who represented profoundly the [Poor People's Campaign](#) that he hoped to lead to Washington. The word King heard spoken to him through the lives of the sanitation workers was simple: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13).

Douglass presents a profound, critical analysis of how "The Fourth Gospel makes a disturbing connection between *agape* and systemic hatred that can help us understand the King assassination.... The bad news before the good news in John is that *agape* provokes systemic hatred. *Agape* and the system are at odds. The system hates *agape* because *agape* transcends the

system.” In the concluding segment he writes:

Whether in first-century Palestine or twentieth-century America, the purpose of a political execution is to destroy the people’s hope. “Here is the man [*ho anthropos*]!” proclaimed Pilate mockingly (19:5) of a prophet beaten and about to be executed. In other words, humanity’s hope is dead. But as is often the case in the Fourth Gospel, the words bear a prophetic irony beyond the speaker’s intent. Which meaning do we believe? Pilate’s cynicism or *agape*’s hope through suffering, both expressed by the same words? Is love dead or alive in one who dies out of compassion? Who has really died?

While looking terrorism in the face, the Fourth Gospel reverses the official meaning of the cross in the most radical way. Each gospel by its nature overturned the humanly perceived order by proclaiming a public execution as the Good News: the one executed by the religious establishment in collusion with the empire has been raised from the dead. But in John, Jesus speaks of the *execution itself* as his resurrection. The victim says, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (12:32). An execution whose purpose is to terrify has been transformed into an exaltation of the victim, thereby liberating the oppressed from their fear of the cross.

But no such resurrection from systemic hatred and terror is possible without our first looking into its face. Clifton Baird, Myron Billett, and Lorraine Bailey looked into the cosmic night, just as Martin Luther King did. Each experienced the truth of love made flesh. *Agape* lifted up will draw all of us into life.

In [his autobiography](#), Swiss psychologist Carl Jung recounted his journey to India in 1938 during which time he became conscious of how “Buddha saw and grasped the cosmogonic dignity of human consciousness; for that reason he saw clearly that if a man succeeded in extinguishing this light, the world would sink into nothingness.”

[When I visited the stupas of Sanchi](#), where Buddha delivered his fire sermon, I was overcome by a strong emotion of the kind that frequently develops in me when I encounter a thing, person, or idea of whose significance I am still unconscious....

[The intensity of my emotion](#) showed that the hill of Sanchi meant something central to me. A new side of Buddhism was revealed to me there. I grasped the life of the Buddha as the reality of the self which had broken through and laid claim to a personal life. For Buddha, the self stands above all gods, a *unus mundus* which represents the essence of human existence and of the world as a whole. The self embodies both the aspect of intrinsic being and the aspect of its being known, without which no world exists. Buddha saw and grasped the cosmogonic dignity of human consciousness; for that reason he saw clearly that if a man succeeded in extinguishing this light, the world would sink into nothingness. Schopenhauer’s great achievement lay in his also recognizing this, or rediscovering it independently.

Christ—like Buddha—is an embodiment of the self, but in an altogether different sense. Both stood for an overcoming of the world: Buddha out of rational insight; Christ as a foredoomed sacrifice. In Christianity more is suffered, in Buddhism more is seen and done. Both paths are right, but in the Indian sense Buddha is the more complete human being. He is a historical personality, and therefore easier for men to understand. Christ is at once a historical man and God, and therefore much more difficult to comprehend. At bottom he was not comprehensible even to himself; he knew only that he had to sacrifice himself, that this course was imposed upon him from within. His sacrifice happened to him like an act of destiny. Buddha lived out

his life and died at an advanced age, whereas Christ's activity as Christ probably lasted no more than a year.

Later, Buddhism underwent the same transformation as Christianity: Buddha became, as it were, the image of the development of the self; he became a model for men to imitate, whereas actually he had preached that by overcoming the Nidana-chain every human being could become an illuminate, a buddha. Similarly, in Christianity, Christ is an exemplar who dwells in every Christian as his integral personality. But historical trends led to the *imitatio Christi*, whereby the individual does not pursue his own destined road to wholeness, but attempts to imitate the way taken by Christ. Similarly in the East, historical trends led to a devout imitation of the Buddha. That Buddha should have become a model to be imitated was in itself a weakening of his idea, just as the *imitatio Christi* was a forerunner of the fateful stasis in the evolution of the Christian idea. As Buddha, by virtue of his insight, was far in advance of the Brahma gods, so Christ cried out to the Jews, "You are gods" (John 10:34); but men were incapable of understanding what he meant. Instead we find that the so-called Christian West, far from creating a new world, is moving with giant strides toward the possibility of destroying the world we have.

In this current moment, it is daily more evident that the so-called Christian West is moving with giant strides toward the possibility of destroying the world we have. Imitating humans such as Buddha and/or Christ causes us to avoid fully living out the Buddha within, the Christ within, that essence that is uniquely manifest in each of us.



Buddhist Monk Thích Quảng Đức
in his [self-immolation, Saigon, 11 June 1963](#)
(Colorized by Marina Amaral)

The sacrifice Vietnamese Mahayana Buddhist Monk Thích Quảng Đức made of himself on 11 June 1963 was to protest and call out the repressive policies of the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem. As Jung writes above, Christ sacrificed himself, gave up his life, that is, offered himself up to God, for the sake of humanity, for the salvation of humankind. Thích Quảng Đức gave his life for sake of his people; to focus attention on what was of ultimate value to him by giving himself up for their sake. Martin King gave his life, in his wife's words, "to save that society from itself" and offering up *agape's* hope through suffering.

In his journey Martin King lived out the Christ within with loving compassion for all he shared this Earth with. He was [murdered by the state](#) because his love for and understanding of humanity transcended the system. He lived the word *agape* to its fullest expression. His compassion for all of us moved him toward making the supreme sacrifice: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends". The consciousness of *agape* manifested

in Martin King's life and resultant assassination.

The Good News of the New Testament poses the question: by offering up one's life—the greatest gift bestowed upon each of us—is love dead or alive in one who dies out of compassion? Who has really died? As pointed out above, “the one executed by the religious establishment in collusion with the empire has been raised from the dead.... [I]n John, Jesus speaks of the *execution itself* as his resurrection.... But no such resurrection from systemic hatred and terror is possible without our first looking into its face.... *Agape* lifted up will draw all of us into life.”

The increasing depth of systemic hatred being directed at Russia by state actors, academicians, and media malpractice must be apprehended for exactly what it is and responded to as a mother bear responds when her cubs are threatened. Psychic numbing engendered by the sense of terror in each of us regarding the prospect of nuclear annihilation—being vaporized in a blinding, instantaneous flash, or suffering all manner and degree of physical injuries and pain with no medical or material aid to address the agony, systemic radiation poisoning, facing the elements without shelter, and starvation—must likewise be looked at straight in its face. Understanding, redeeming good will for all provides the means to turn away from the nightmare path being unconsciously pursued that will result in extinguishing the light of human consciousness as well as of all Life we share Earth with.

51 years ago today Martin King gave [his speech at Riverside Church](#) addressing the moral bankruptcy of the U.S. war in Vietnam and the untenable costs to society of rampant and expanding U.S. militarism. Almost three months earlier, on 14 January 1967, [Martin committed himself to deepening his opposition to the U.S. war in Vietnam](#) after seeing an article in *Ramparts* titled “[The Children of Vietnam](#).” This led directly to him giving the Riverside speech which marked him out for assassination.

In his transcending the system of U.S. empire, Martin King was offering up his life for what he had elected to challenge and call out with every fiber of his being. He consistently exhorted all to confront and grapple with the triple prong sickness—lurking within the U.S. body politic from its inception—of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism. These evils require us to respond with our inborn intelligence, shifting from the nightmare path we are daily being further drawn into and towards, in Coretta King's words, “a more excellent way, a more effective way, a creative rather than a destructive way.” Given the systemic hatred and terror being fomented by the state, it is critical to explore and evaluate appropriate systemic life-giving responses. Jim Douglass wrote how, in August 1967, Martin King confronted head on the question of restructuring the whole of U.S. American society.

In his [final, most radical presidential address to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference](#), King dealt with the question of restructuring the whole of American society. He asked, “Why are there forty million poor people in America?” “When you ask that question,” he said, “you begin to question the capitalistic economy.” In order to “help the discouraged beggars in life's marketplace,” King said, “one day we must come to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.”^[55]

King saw this vast problem of restructuring the United States in terms of the response of Jesus

to Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel:

One night, a juror came to Jesus and he wanted to know what he could do to be saved. Jesus didn't get bogged down in the kind of isolated approach of what he shouldn't do. Jesus didn't say, "Now Nicodemus, you must stop lying." He didn't say, "Nicodemus, you must stop cheating if you are doing that." ... He said something altogether different, because Jesus realized something basic—that if a man will lie, he will steal. And if a man will steal, he will kill. So instead of just getting bogged down in one thing, Jesus looked at him and said, "Nicodemus, you must be born again."

He said, in other words, "Your whole structure must be changed." A nation that will keep people in slavery for 244 years will "thingify" them—make them things. Therefore they will exploit them, and poor people generally, economically. And a nation that will exploit economically will have to have foreign investments and everything else, and will have to use its military might to protect them. All of these problems are tied together. What I am saying today is that we must go from this convention and say, "America, you must be born again!"^{156]}

For Martin Luther King, the end and means were one nonviolent vision. King's goal of an America born again through total restructuring was joined to [the means of massive civil disobedience](#), as he envisioned it happening in the Poor People's Campaign. Martin Luther King knew what lay ahead of him, and he knew what he had to do: "Like anybody I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will."

Martin King received the Nobel Peace Prize when he was 35 in 1964. In his [Nobel lecture](#) he spoke of the gap between advancements in science and failing to learn how to live in peace. "We have learned to fly the air like birds and swim the sea like fish, but we have not learned the simple art of living together as brothers." He emphasized the necessity of our human family's ability to solve the three interwoven problems of racial injustice, poverty, and war and, in learning to live together in peace likened the prospect of inheriting a big house, a "'world house' in which [we] have to live together."

It is left to all of us alive today, to carry on the work and devotion to Life on Earth that the peacemakers before us gave their lives in service to. All of us in the United States are the ones best positioned to challenge the destructiveness of the three prong sickness destroying our civilization and the Earth, and change direction towards affirming life in all its variations and sacredness. We have choices and power here that the majority of our human family do not enjoy. The choice and the power resides with us. And the choice to recognize that power, and take responsibility for it to make this into a world where all of us can live together in peace and fellowship *sits right here*.