

The challenge of abolishing nuclear weapons, by David Krieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Santa Barbara, California, USA. **Abstract:** Of the many serious problems confronting humanity, none poses a more pervasive and urgent threat than the continuing dangers of nuclear weapons. Throughout the period of the Cold War, humanity lived with the threat of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). Today we live with a new form of MAD – Mutually Assured Delusions, particularly delusions that nuclear weapons provide protection against nuclear attack. Despite the clear, logical shortcomings of deterrence theory, the US government continues to promote both nuclear deterrence and reliance on nuclear arsenals for security in the 21st century. Assuredly, deterrence cannot work against terrorist organizations that cannot be located. This paper explores the many good reasons to abolish nuclear weapons and the role of the US in doing so. Nuclear weapons are anti-democratic, costly, cowardly, illegal, immoral, and they undermine security. Humanity has a choice. We can eliminate nuclear weapons or continue to run the risk that they will eliminate humankind. The United States, as the first country to create nuclear weapons and the only country to use them, has a special responsibility to lead in fulfilling its obligations for nuclear disarmament under international law. As the militarily and economically most powerful state in the international system, the US could lead in convening the good faith negotiations for nuclear disarmament required under Article VI of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The US government must be pressed into action by its citizens. Ordinary people must lead from below; citizens must lead their political leaders. The abolition of slavery was the moral, social and political challenge of the 19th century. The abolition of nuclear weapons is the even more consequential challenge of our time.