

WHAT DO NUKES HAVE TO DO WITH CLIMATE CHANGE?

LET'S TALK ABOUT: RESPONSIBILITIES



Week Three: August 22—28

Nuclear weapons and climate change are two of the greatest threats facing the world. With nearly 14,000 nuclear weapons, nine nuclear-armed states possess the capacity to destroy humanity and devastate the environment through war. Climate change threatens all life and responding to it involves shifting priorities and resources away from militaries and war, toward just and sustainable peace.

In the Clinton Franciscans' Laudato Si' Action Plan for 2022, a commitment was made to "Research harmful environmental effects of the production of nuclear weapons and make Information available to the public in 2022." This is in keeping with the Corporate Public Stands taken by the Clinton Franciscans on Care for Creation and Nuclear Disarmament.

From August 8 – September 5, the Franciscan Peace Center will be sharing a weekly series of infographics created by Pax Christi International which highlight the relationship between the threat of nuclear weapons and the threat of climate change.



Franciscan Peace Center

RICH COUNTRIES

Rich countries are most responsible for climate change. Some bear a double responsibility as they also possess nuclear weapons, which can cause catastrophic climate change. These countries have two urgent responsibilities – dramatically cut industrial, consumer, and military carbon emissions *and* abandon their nukes.

OLD PROBLEMS

The nuclear powers' failure to take responsibility for the impact of their nuclear strategies is not new. During the Cold War, the United States kept bomb-loaded, gas-guzzling nuclear bombers in flight, day and night, for decades. None of the nine countries with nuclear weapons have adequately cleaned up their nuclear test sites or provided sufficient health care and compensation for the people affected by radioactive pollution from their tests.

IN NUMBERS

The United States, China, and Russia are responsible for nearly half the world's carbon emissions (48%). They also have more than 90% of the world's nuclear weapons. Other countries responsible for heavy carbon emissions and nuclear weapons are the United Kingdom, France, India, and Pakistan.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

The economies and militaries of wealthy and powerful countries consume a lot of fossil fuels. Countries with the largest economies are the biggest polluters and their military forces are among the heaviest carbon-emitters in the world. The use of their nuclear arsenals could disrupt the global climate catastrophically.

WHAT NOW?

Nuclear nations threaten the planet and its people with mass destruction. The biggest nuclear powers are also the biggest sources of climate-changing greenhouse gases. They cannot be ready to destroy the planet while also pledging to save it. Let's urge our governments to join the nuclear ban treaty and fulfill international climate agreements.

Sources
<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/09/29/15-5-countries-produce-most-carbon-dioxide-co2.asp>
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/264435/number-of-nuclear-warheads-worldwide/>

