

Honorable Mention: 2018 Greenfield Peace Writing Scholarship
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How could you save the world from itself? It's a complicated problem with no complete solution. The question-what would it take to eliminate nuclear weapons in your lifetime?- is one of those problems with no complete solution. To eliminate nuclear weapons is to eliminate war itself. However, in this essay I will propose a solution to this pressing issue.

In 1861 Richard Gatling invented the Gatling gun with the idea that if the weapon was powerful enough, it could stop all wars. While the Gatling gun destroyed the lives of many people and variants of it still do today, his philosophy that fear could end war is true, but his weapon could not do that alone.

What happened on August 6th, 1945, when a bomb erased a city and changed the world forever. It started something new: from the ashes of Hiroshima the global atomic age reigned and there was no turning back. The bomb killed an estimated 130,000 people that day. The bomb nicknamed "Little Boy" left a big mark on the world. Only three days later, the next fated city would experience the even more powerful, "Fat man" atomic bomb. It killed 75,000 more Japanese civilians. It is certainly understandable why Japan despises the use of atomic weapons today, as history brutally demonstrated the destruction that they could create. Today Japan still remains as the only country targeted with nuclear weapons during a conventional war. As awful as these weapons were, their destruction was only a fraction of what we have become capable of today.

The bombs in 1945 were made to end a war, the rest of the bombs were to stop all wars. Gatling's philosophy comes to life when countries all around the world who make the atomic bombs use them as deterrents to war. I would suggest that a program similar to the Paris Agreement should be implemented. While there have been many laws to restrict nuclear weapon possession, a fresh, strong agreement led by the U.S. would definitely catch people's attention. However, this program would not directly ask nations to disarm themselves first. Like in the Paris agreement, nations should set goals to achieve, after talks with the nations they are at conflict with. Then with a decrease in hostile relations between countries, there would be a common motive to immobilize each others nuclear arsenal. No country desires war and thanks to globalization and democracy, countries would eventually align themselves with the program one way or the other.

Yet I cannot stress enough that the U.S. has to be vulnerable to punishments. This would show that the U.S. is actively trying to better the world because they are willing to be reprimanded for their actions. America needs to be the spearhead in the elimination of nuclear arsenals across the world, and if they are, the rest of the world will follow suit.

All of us need to understand the urgency of the matter at hand. In 1945 we created a bomb that was able to wipe out everything our grandparents knew and loved with a push of a button. The missiles that we created today are nothing like the ones that were used on Japanese soil. Fear could be ended, yet we must admit to the problem that we cause ourselves, then work with each other to solve this problem. One mistake could truly end the world in an instant. As a realist, I find it difficult to envision a world without atomic bombs, however, even I know that with effort yields results.