

## **What's the "Environmental Impact" of a Nuclear Bomb?**

*by Stephen Wing*

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A plutonium pit is the trigger that explodes a nuclear bomb. But a nuclear bomb is in turn the trigger that launches a nuclear war, which in turn is the trigger of a nuclear holocaust, a nuclear winter, and very likely the extinction of human civilization.

So we are here not just to discuss the environmental impact of a single production plant, but the potential for total destruction of the environment itself – this world that nurtured the evolution of life over billions of years and eventually our species, ourselves, and our families. The environmental impact of a nuclear war is total. Nothing would be left of the environment we know, if any of us even remain to witness it.

But what is left unspoken in any "environmental impact statement" is the impact of the environment on us. Discussing the impact of a nuclear war exposes the very concept of the "environment" as a clever way of deceiving ourselves.

We think that if an "environmental impact" can be localized in a community far from our own, where people lack the political influence to fend it off, we can remain insulated from this impact ourselves.

But contemplating the environmental impact of a nuclear war confronts us with the fact that we too are part of this so-called "environment," no matter where we live. It's not just a panorama of plant and animal species, geological strata and hydrological cycles we can survey from the windows of a safely separate human domain, but a world that permeates our lives and

bodies through the food, water, oxygen and sunlight that sustain us.

The term "environment" is therefore a metaphor for a delusional separation from reality. But for anyone who doubts that the human and natural worlds are one, a nuclear war would provide the ultimate proof.

As human civilization is inseparable from its so-called "environment," the natural world is inseparable from the political and economic environment where human history unfolds day by day. And in our current political and economic environment, the risk of a nuclear war triggered by system error, terrorist attack, or deliberate stupidity stands at an all-time high.

Building a plant to manufacture triggers for a brand-new generation of nuclear weapons will itself trigger a brand-new nuclear arms race, launching the risk of nuclear holocaust into high alert. It is this impact on the global political environment above all that demonstrates why the proposal to make plutonium pits at SRS must be scrapped, and why the nation that has led the race for nuclear supremacy since the beginning must now turn instead toward leading a good-will effort to defuse international tension and replace nuclear deterrence with a policy of "mutual assured diplomacy."

If our nation aspires to global leadership, we must lead the way out of the nuclear age to an age of planetary safety and security for all nations, peoples, and species.