



**Nuclear Challenges in the Baltic Region and the Role of the Public.**

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Kon'nichiwa!

Dear participants of the conference! Today I am talking to you from the shores of the Baltic Sea, not far from St. Petersburg, Russia. I remember what happened 75 years ago in Japan, 7 thousand kilometers away from me.

I bow my head to the hundreds of thousands of victims of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At the same time, I see that the nuclear collapse may now repeat itself in my native Baltic region. I will talk about the nuclear challenges in the Region and the possible role of the public in the prevention of nuclear war.

Today the United States and Russia possess approximately 90% of the world's nuclear weapons. The likelihood of its use has increased more than ever since the end of the Second World War. One of the hot military confrontation lines between NATO and Russia runs across the Baltic Sea. Non-members of NATO – Finland and Sweden – are deeply involved in this confrontation.

Experts from Russian state universities published the recent report “Security in the Eastern Baltic.”<sup>1</sup> They concluded in the report that the probability of NATO-Russia confrontation in the near future is 90% and the likelihood of a local military conflict is 4 times higher than the likelihood of “*difficult and lengthy, potentially effective negotiations on security and confidence-building measures in the region with the code name ‘Helsinki’*”.

Any military conflict in the Baltic Sea region would most likely lead to the collapse of the life of 90 million people in 9 countries around the Baltic Sea, including Baltic Russia. It is impossible to guarantee that more than 30 nuclear reactors in nuclear power plants in the region, as well as storage facilities for spent nuclear fuel, will not become targets for attacks with weapons, in a worst-case scenario with nuclear weapons.

I would like to note some key facts related to the use of military and “peaceful nuclear technologies” in Russia:

- Russia could be the first to use nuclear weapons – this is now its official doctrine, adopted in 2020;
- the Ministry Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation declared: “*The prohibition of nuclear weapons is contrary to the national interests of Russia*”;

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<sup>1</sup> Yu. Zverev, N. Mezhevich, Security in the Eastern Baltic, 2019 (Rus.)  
[https://interaffairs.ru/i/Bezopasnost\\_v\\_Vostochnoj\\_Baltike.pdf](https://interaffairs.ru/i/Bezopasnost_v_Vostochnoj_Baltike.pdf)

- The President of the Russian Federation demonstrated his psychological readiness to use nuclear weapons. He personally launched during a recent military exercise 4 transcontinental missiles from submarines, air and ground-based facilities;
- The Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom has agreements to build 36 nuclear power units in different countries. Consumers of the nuclear electricity from these NPPs outside of Russia may be investors in Russian military programs, because part of the fresh fuel for these NPPs are planned to be fabricated from the uranium after extraction during a reprocessing of the spent nuclear fuel of the nuclear submarines.

Thus, Russian top-level politicians are ready to use nuclear weapons and develop nuclear infrastructure outside of Russia for support of Russian military programs.

Dear friends, I would like to highlight some of the new challenges that the COVID19 pandemic has created.

All countries, including nuclear weapons countries, have been powerless against the new virus. Covid19 has contributed to an economic crisis. The leaders of nuclear countries also use the crisis to find enemies outside the country.

Thus, instead of joining forces against the virus, political confrontation between countries deepens.

What is the possible strategy of the international peace movement?

We are part of the sick planet Earth. We do not have a planet B!

I think we need now, not only to protect our planet from nuclear weapons, but also

- To reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- to stop “civil nuclear” expansion - the construction of NPPs; civil nuclear technologies are part of the military-industrial complex;
- to provide safety for decommissioning of more 400 nuclear reactors on our planet;
- to promote of the sustainable development of our countries.

It is reasonable in future to develop the cooperation of the peace movement with our colleagues from NGOs working in the field of

- protection of traditional lifestyles of indigenous peoples;
- against climate change;
- against the export of nuclear power plant projects.

The politicians of our countries are trying to make us enemies 75 years after the Second World War. Let's hold hands, friends, in Russia, USA, Japan, Europe, China, and other countries.

**We are friends, not enemies!**

Arigato!