Is Russia Planning A Nuclear War?

President Trump recently announced that the United States is going to back out of the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) with Russia.

According to National Security Advisor, John Bolton, who is not a favor of arms control treaties, Russia has already violated the INF, giving the United States valid reason to leave the treaty, which had originally been signed with the now defunct Soviet Union.

John Bolton's position on arms control treaties makes sense, as they usually hamper the United States more than those we sign them with. Overall, the USA depends more on military technology than any other country in the world. Ever since before World War I, part of the US military strategy has been that it is better to expend things than people. This attitude came in part due to our national wealth and part in response to the high number of casualties we suffered in our Civil War.

Arms control treaties generally limit newer and more powerful military technologies, something that we as a country depend on, more than other countries do. In addition, many countries find ways to interpret these agreements, which allow them to do what they want, while hamstringing the American military. Such is the case of the INF, which the Russians have negated by the development and deployment of a new cruise missile.

The danger of backing out of the INF is that we could very

well find ourselves back in another Cold War, with the US and Russia building up nuclear stockpiles in a return to détente through Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). If that happens, we will once again be only a button push away from thermonuclear war on a global scale.

Three-Phase Survival

It may seem a bit strange talking about nuclear survival now, when it will take us six months to finish the process of backing out of the treaty. But there's a good reason for that. It will take you and I much longer than six months to prepare for nuclear war. Surviving a nuclear war is one of the more complex survival problems around, as tough as surviving an EMP, but in different ways.

There are actually three different phases of survival that we would have to pass through, if our country were ever involved in a nuclear war. These are:

- Surviving nuclear war
- Surviving nuclear fallout
- Surviving nuclear winter

Nuclear explosions have the capability of killing in several different ways; but the majority of those who are killed will be killed either by the heat of the explosion or the blast force, which will generate enormous winds, flattening everything in its path.

Surviving the war itself is the shortest survival problem and depends more on your location than anything else. The closer you are to a target, the greater the impact that the heat and blast force will have, killing even before the radiation can. Those who are the closest to the blast will probably die without even knowing what is happening. Those farther out may have as much as a minute to seek shelter before the heat and blast can reach them.

Radiation poisoning isn't just a short-term problem from the explosion though; it is also a problem from fallout; the falling of radioactive debris (mostly soot). This fallout will occur over the next 30 days and will follow the prevailing wind, as the wind blows the radioactive soot across the surface of the planet.

I distinctly remember fallout drills, much like fire drills, when I was in elementary school. Our class was to take shelter under the stairway in the school building. Looking back on it, I can't see how that would have done any good, as there was no way all those kids could have survived in that small space for 30 days; there just wasn't enough room, let alone things like food, water and toilets.

Finally, there will be a portion of the soot which will be blown up into the upper atmosphere, where it will remain for years, not falling back to the Earth in the form of fallout. This will block a portion of the sun's light, causing a "nuclear winter" as temperatures plummet. A worldwide nuclear winter could be caused by as little as 50 – 15 kt nuclear bombs (the size dropped on Hiroshima), actually fairly small devices by today's standards.

How much they plummet will depend largely upon how much soot ends up blowing up into the upper atmosphere and that depends on where the nukes are aimed. The worst is if they are city-busters, as there is a lot of flammable material in a city. This nuclear winter could last for years, perhaps even more than a decade.

The Effects of Nuclear War

An important part of studying nuclear war is understanding

what potential targets there are out there. I'm sure that during the Cold War there was a lot of effort on the part of the CIA and other intelligence agencies to figure out how the Soviet Union was targeting us. Military targets obviously received the highest priority, but government centers, our missile silos, nuclear reactors and major population centers could all be targeted as well.

In a "limited" nuclear exchange, with "only" 500 nuclear warheads hitting the United States, we could count on every military base and state capital being hit, with many major cities and nuclear reactors destroyed as well.

What that would mean is that our entire government would be decapitated at the state and federal level; military forces would be largely destroyed, except for those deployed on ships and overseas, our nation's power grid would be down and the entire infrastructure we depend on, including the distribution of food and other goods disrupted. It could easily take years to put enough of the United States back together to have a viable government and infrastructure once again.

From a survival viewpoint, once the war was over, the situation that those of us who survived would be living through would be much like an EMP, with a large portion of the population dying off, either from the war itself or from starvation afterwards. The two major differences would be that our electronics would not be fried, so could be used off of off-grid power and that it would actually be easier to get at least localized electric grids up and running once again.

Surviving the Nuclear War

There are two workable strategies for surviving a nuclear war and the aftermath. The first is to be so far out in the boonies, that you aren't affected by it. Even then, there will be the dual problems of fallout and nuclear winter. The second is to be underground, surviving in a bunker.

Surviving the War

The two options I just mentioned will both work for surviving the war itself. It is even theoretically possible to survive near ground zero, if one is in a deep enough bunker. But the reality is that most personally-owned bunkers are not deep enough for that. However, if you live out in the suburbs and are several miles from any target, you could easily survive the war phase in a bunker.

The idea here is that the radiation, heat and blast will all pass over your head, with the ground your bunker is buried in protecting you. Of course, the farther out you are from ground zero, the better; but even being a mile from the epicenter will protect you, if you are in a bunker.

If you are not in a bunker, you will need to be several miles away from the burst, to be protected from any permanent injury or death. A 20 kt nuclear bomb will flatten all buildings out to about a mile and blow glass out of windows out to about three miles. Third degree burns and flash fires will occur out to about 3.5 miles.

Surviving the Fallout

Your best option for surviving fallout is to be in a bunker, below ground level. If you don’t have a bunker, the basement of your home will suffice. However, you can even survive fallout at ground level, if you are inside a sealed building and don’t go outside.

The key here is to not have any contact with the radioactive soot that is falling. Being underground provides you with a greater level of protection than being at ground level, as the ground will absorb some of that radiation, especially from fallout that doesn’t fall right beside your shelter.

It should be noted that you can be pretty far from a population center and still have problems with fallout. In some parts of the country, where there are high winds, fallout can travel great distances from the blast, especially if there is a lot of flammable material to turn into radioactive ash.

Surviving Nuclear Winter

Perhaps the biggest challenge in surviving a nuclear war will be surviving the nuclear winter that follows. How bad that winter will be is not something that can be predicted accurately, simply because there are so many variables to consider. But there is a good chance that it will be bad enough that growing food will be a challenge, especially in the northern part of the country. Perversely, this means that some of the best places to survive the war will be the worst places to survive the nuclear winter.

There are ways of growing food, even in the midst of a nuclear winter. The greenhouse was invented for the purpose of growing food during cold times. It is essentially a passive solar structure, designed to turn the sun’s light into heat. While sunlight will be diminished, there will still be sunlight available, so it will be possible to grow plants in a

greenhouse.

The heating and lighting in a greenhouse can also be augmented in other ways. Putting black plastic barrels, filled with water in the greenhouse is a great means of making a solar heater. The sun can warm the plastic barrels during the day, with the water storing that heat. At night, the heat will radiate out into the greenhouse. Fire can be used as well, which will increase the carbon monoxide in the greenhouse. That’s good for the plants.

Making a Simple Bunker

I mentioned that it will be easier to survive a nuclear war in a bunker. Yet building a bunker is an expensive proposition, with a minimal price tag of about $10,000; and that’s assuming you do the work yourself. But there is a cheaper way.

If your home has a basement, you can convert part or all of it into a bunker fairly easily. You’ll already have a cement floor and at least two walls. You can add the other two walls, if you’re not going to use the whole thing as a bunker, making them out of cinder block. The tricky part will be the roof of the bunker, which should ideally be made out of steel and concrete, so that if the house burns or falls down, the bunker will remain intact.

Taking that idea a step farther, you can add plumbing and an air handling system to that basement bunker, giving yourself a water supply, some sort of septic tank and a way of getting filtered air into the bunker, even if the house above you burns down. These provisions will need to last you at least through the time of fallout. Once that is over, you can replenish your water and build an outhouse.

CLICK HERE

To get your hard cover copy of Darkest Days and find out how to survive when the lights go out!