

## **In Support of Senate Joint Memorial 5**

To: Chair Burdick and members of Senate Committee on Rules

From: Andy Harris, MD, Board of Directors, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility

On Jan. 25, 1995, Russian early warning radar detected the launch of a large, four-stage rocket with similar characteristics to a submarine-launched Trident nuclear missile off the coast of Norway. The radar operators at Russia's Olenegorsk early warning station promptly reported the incoming missile to their superiors.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin was given Russia's version of the nuclear briefcase with the launch codes for Russia's missile arsenal. It turned out to be a false alarm – a Norwegian scientific rocket that was on a mission to study the aurora borealis.

**On nine occasions the world has been on the brink of nuclear war** because of false or misleading information from satellite and radar stations, or from human error.

Today countries of the world collectively have a stockpile of nearly 14,500 nuclear weapons, of which 4,120 are deployed and ready to launch within 15 minutes, commonly known as being on “hair-trigger alert.”

**The U.S. President currently has de facto sole authority to launch nuclear attacks** by the United States without consultation or any system of checks and balances. Think about that! It is time to push for a change.

Senate Joint Memorial 5 urges the “Congress of the United States to take appropriate steps to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by establishing a system of checks and balances **to ensure that the President of the United States no longer has the sole and unchecked authority to launch nuclear weapons.**” Should we ever have an erratic and unstable President, this provision would make for a safer world.

In addition, the resolution pushes for a global build-down of nuclear weapons arsenals with the eventual goal of the abolition of nuclear weapons, as advocated by the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**, signed by 122 countries, sponsored by International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, for which it was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize.

Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility knows that **the only medical treatment for nuclear war is prevention.** We urge you to support Senate Joint Memorial 5.

Thank you.

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