

At first glance, one might see little connection between higher education and the nuclear threat to humanity. In a book soon to be published by the American Council on Education regarding the moral dimensions of higher education, I have written a chapter on Universities and the Nuclear Threat. I believe there are no university concerns more pressing or more important than this one, none more integral to a university education today.

Universities are mainly dedicated to improving the life of the mind, intellectual and professional development of our upcoming generation. However, this purpose does not stand alone because only persons have minds and in persons, knowledge and intelligence must also be accompanied by moral values and ethical judgments.

Most educators like to compress the intellectual and moral goals of education into a single purpose: to prepare young people for a good and productive life, for themselves and for the societies in which they will live, not just to survive, but to create a better world for themselves and others.

This generation of students is the first in the long history of humankind and of education that must face a world that may be utterly destroyed, where survival is a constant and nagging concern. All the good aspects of life that we teach them about may well be obliterated by one catastrophic evil: the nuclear holocaust. Can we possibly not inform them in the course of their education that this is not only a remote possibility, but, if we believe the reading in the doomsday clock, a real probability? Not only are there more than 50,000 nuclear warheads in existence, many thousands of them are attached to delivery

systems, on the ground, in the air, under the sea. They are not only poised, they are targeted and hair triggered to computers for delivery, either by purpose or by accident.

They are, for the most part, aimed at the USSR and the USA, but if a significant number of them fly, this world for which we prepare ~~ourselves~~ them could well be returned to the Stone Age or worse.

As Einstein said so well: "Once the atom was split, everything changed, except our way of thinking and so we drift towards unparelled disaster."

Our university students should be given a clear, precise, and scientifically accurate picture of what faces them today, what will happen if, and what options they have, intellectually, morally, and politically, if their generation is to emerge safely from this corner into which we have painted them and the rest of humanity. The situation is desperate, but not hopeless. They must be led to understand it and to act while there is time. They need not drift or lose hope. Is there anything more important, beyond salvation, that they should learn from us today?

(John Gilligan, former Governor of Ohio, U. S. Representative, and Administrator of the Agency for International Development pioneering this task on our campus.)

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