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## Expert: Israeli warheads a threat to own security

By LAHAV HARKOV  
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Knesset holds first-ever anti-nuclear parley with several MKs speaking out against weapons; MK Henin: Need to find alternatives.

Israel should agree to nuclear disarmament for its own sake, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War co-president Dr. Ira Helfand told the Knesset in the Israeli Disarmament Movement's first-ever conference in the legislature.

Several coalition and opposition MKs spoke out against nuclear weapons at the conference with the leader of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning organization.

"The current political reality looks like an attempt to hit a wall, when it comes to nuclear war," MK Dov Henin (Hadash) said. "It's essential to understand that use of nuclear weapons will have terrible results for those using them and not only their target. The conclusion is that it is necessary to urgently find alternatives, like promoting disarmament in the entire Middle East."

MK Moshe Feiglin (Likud Beytenu) explained that the Torah calls for life over death, which means fighting evil, like Iran. "We need to find a middle ground between total disarmament and the current situation. We need to make sure that evil like Iran does not grow in other places in the world and gain nuclear weapons," he said.

Meretz MK Tamar Zandberg criticized the lack of public discourse about the pros and cons of nuclear weapons in Israel, despite concern over Iran.

In an interview with *The Jerusalem Post*, Helfand discussed his research, which has found that even a limited nuclear war – such as one between India and Pakistan – would result in widespread famine.

In 2006, Rutgers University researchers found that a theoretical nuclear war between India and Pakistan using about 50 warheads – half a percent of the world's nuclear weapons – would lead the world's temperature to drop by 1.3 degrees centigrade.

Helfand studied what impact this would have upon human health, specifically nutrition, and found that corn growth would drop 10% in the US and rice 15% in 10 years.

"It's worse than we expected. This would cause worldwide famine," Helfand said. "When you get a small decrease in food, the price of food goes up and the 870 million people who are already malnourished won't be able to survive."

In addition, much of the Middle East – which depends on food imports – will be at risk, because countries where food production will decline will export less.

"There's a potential of 1 billion dead, because of a limited war in one corner of the world," Helfand warned.

Helfand's organization conducted further research on Chinese food production in the aftermath of nuclear war. The results have yet to be published, but Helfand says they show a potential for famine in China, affecting another 1.3 billion people.

The solution, according to Helfand, is disarmament, and he thinks Israel can benefit from it too.

"There are authoritative estimates that Israel has 80 to 100 warheads, many of which are more powerful than what was used in Hiroshima," he explained.

The government is ambiguous as to whether or not it has nuclear weapons, but Israel has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The organization urges Iran not to continue developing nuclear weapons, but Helfand posits that Tehran would only stop if nations around the world, including Israel, agree to disarmament.

Helfand compared Israel to the US in the Cold War, when there was "a sense of imminent threat" and the public felt nuclear weapons were necessary.

"The weapons themselves are the greatest threat to Israel's security. We want to alert people to an existential threat – and Israel already has enough of those," Helfand said.

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