

B.B. Skit to Introduce the Cold War and the Arms Race

(Presented in 1987 at a school assembly)

Some of us in the school are going to give you a few reasons why you should be concerned about your world and the people who make major decisions in it. Actually, we're going to give you 50,000 reasons, but it won't take very long.

Before you tell you, though, we'd like you to close your eyes so you can fully appreciate the words and sounds you will hear. *[Make sure all eyes are closed.]*

None of the students here, and only a few of the faculty, were alive during World War II. It was a terribly destructive war. It lasted six years, millions of people died, and families and nations suffered enormously.

The next sound you hear will represent all the firepower of World War II — every bullet, mortar shell, torpedo, bomb, everything, including the two atomic bombs dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

1 PLUNK (using a B.B. in a metal trash can)

Did you hear that? That single sound represents three megatons, or three million tons of TNT — all the firepower of World War II spread over six years.

The next sound you hear represents the number of World War II's on just one of our Poseidon submarines — enough to destroy more than 200 of the largest Soviet cities.

3 PLUNKS in the trash can

We have 31 Poseidon submarines.

The next sound you will hear represents the number of World War II's on one Trident submarine — enough to destroy every major city in the northern hemisphere.

8 PLUNKS in the trash can

We currently have 10 Trident submarines and the government wants to build 10 more Tridents.

Now, if you will keep your eyes closed, the next sound you will hear represents the number of World War II's contained in the nuclear weapons arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union, about half belonging to us and half to the Soviets.

6,000 PLUNKS (slowly pour the BBs down the side of the trash can)

Okay, you can open your eyes now. That was the mildest nuclear war you will ever hear.

A one megaton nuclear weapon is more than 60 times the explosive power of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Today the US and the USSR possess 50,000 such nuclear weapons.

50,000 nuclear weapons — that's 50,000 reasons to try to stop the arms race.

What we do may be only a drop in the bucket, but, as you just heard, a drop in the bucket can make a very loud sound.

Reference: Ronald Glossop. *Confronting War*. London: McFarland and Company, 2001, p. 164.