

Sir: As a young man I attended Indiana University and recall being enrolled in a psychology class. Our class reviewed a study of monkey capture. Researchers would place nuts in long necked bottles and tie the bottles to stakes. When the monkey troop arrived they inserted their paws into the long narrow necked bottles and grabbed the nuts at the bottom of the bottles. Unfortunately for the monkeys, they could not withdraw their paws from the bottles with the nuts in their paws. Despite the approach of the capture team, the monkeys would not let go of the nuts at the bottom of the bottles and were always captured. At the time I thought what a quaint exhibition of greed in monkeys, not relating their greed to human behavior.

On October 10, 2013 I watched a stunning documentary about the Cuban Missile Crisis. In 1962, Vasily Arkinpov was Russian fleet commander for four armed nuclear submarines awaiting action in the Sargasso Sea adjacent to the Atlantic Coast of the United States. Arkinpov was described by his wife as being shy, very smart, very polite, and a "real human being". His pictures portray the image of a handsome, intelligent young man who appears to be in his mid-twenties. His eyes are the eyes of a person who possesses great awareness and sensitivity as well as kindness.

Prior to the 1962 Sargasso Sea assignment, Vasily Arkinpov had been stationed on the K-19 Russian nuclear sub at the time of its famous accident. The K-19 was in the presence of U.S. Navy ships and if the reactor had exploded, it would have destroyed the U.S. Navy ships and started WWII.

Arkinpov watched as eight of his fellow crewmen died of radiation poisoning after having worked on the defective reactor. Having witnessed the horrible suffering of his crewmates, Arkinpov promised himself that he would never allow himself to be involved in an incident with nuclear weapons that would take human life. It is noted that after this incident the Russians placed their nuclear submarines in mothballs.

The Russian submarines used in 1962 were diesel – electric models not designed for warm waters. It was extremely hot with temperatures being over a 110 degrees Fahrenheit in the submarine. In addition the submariners were limited to one cup of water a day. Arkinpov's submarine was located by U.S. Navy ships and was subjected to loud sonar pinging which was quite nerve wracking to the sailors. The Americans also dropped practice depth charges in an attempt to force the Russian submarine to the surface.

At this point the captain of the submarine was out of communication with Moscow. The captain was listening to war rhetoric on American radio, did not know that the depth charges were practice charges, and did not know whether the two nations were at war. The captain of the ship was also authorized to fire his nuclear torpedo, which had the explosive power of Hiroshima, without prior approval from Moscow. However, he was required to obtain half of the key from the political officer and also required to obtain the approval of the fleet commander.

The captain who was an irritable, authoritarian older man became extremely agitated after being subjected to depth charges, the extreme heat and the sonar pinging, declared that he was going to fire the nuclear warhead and go down fighting. The captain summoned the political officer and ordered that he provide his half of the key. The warhead was armed and prepared for action. At that point, the

young fleet commander Arkinpov pointed out that the Americans might just be trying to force them to the surface and refused to allow the captain to proceed. After a heated debate the captain conceded, the key was removed and the warhead was withdrawn from firing position. Arkinpov then stated that it was time for the submarine to meet the Americans. The submarine surfaced and was subsequently sent back to Russia where it was received in disgrace. Arkinpov died in the late 1990's of kidney cancer as a result of his exposure to radiation in the K-19 incident. In the early 2000's in a reunion of American and Russian sailors involved in the incident Arkinpov was hailed as a hero for refusing to start WWII.

After viewing this documentary I realized that the human species has very little chance of survival as there are very few people anywhere who possess the moral courage exhibited by Vasily Arkinpov. He said no to the entire Russian military establishment in the midst of the greatest crisis in human history and then sailed home to Russia to face universal condemnation by the political hierarchy.

Today the human species faces an even greater threat to its survival as a result of the catastrophe at Fukushima. Former Japanese ambassador Murata has stated that Fukushima will lead to human extinction if all its radiation is fully released.

Obviously, we are the monkey in the jungle captured by its own greed. As long as nuclear power satisfies the short term greed of the nuclear industry, the human species will be in extreme peril. Someone must exhibit great courage in the face of corporate power and establish a global initiative to resolve the Fukushima meltdown and de-commission nuclear reactors throughout the world.

In 1980 Carl Sagan in his famous series Cosmos calculated that the chance of human survival over the next 100 years was less than 1%. You as a person exercising significant power must act in the face of corporate resistance to not only shut down Fukushima safely but also in this era of competitive solar energy, act to de-commission nuclear power plants globally. If not the planet Earth will become a lifeless empty rock orbiting the sun in silent testimony to the stupidity and insanity of its former inhabitants. We will have destroyed a beautiful world, the only place where life is known to exist. This Kafkaesque dance of madness must stop.

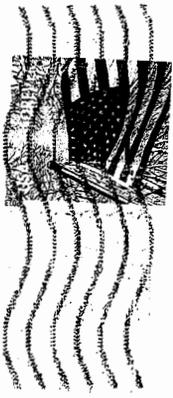
I am sure that the sons and daughters of the wealthy and powerful will find refuge in well-stocked bunkers deep in the earth; however, I sincerely doubt that your daughters and sons will appreciate that particular legacy left to them; especially if you do not act with courage now. Al Gore commented in his book The Future that there is presently a vacuum in global leadership. The world is in great need of a "real human being" of the caliber of Vasily Arkinpov.


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30 OCT 2013 PM 4 L



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