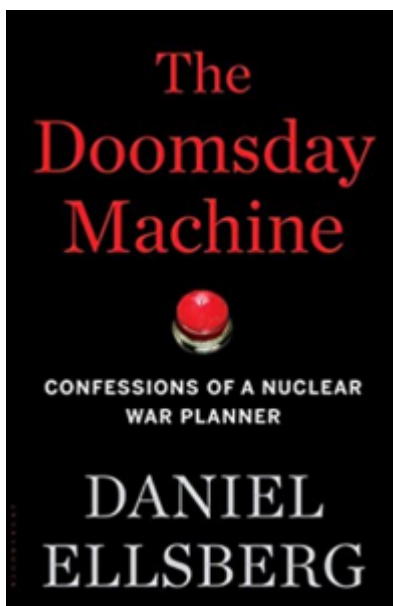


# LTN Book Club: 'Doomsday' brings clarity to nuclear war

By Kathryn Reed

Sobering. Scary. Eye-opening. Educational. Thought-provoking. Those are just a few of the ways to describe "The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner" (Bloomsbury 2017) by Daniel Ellsberg.

If the author's name sounds familiar, it's because he is the person who released the Pentagon Papers, which were the subject of the 2017 movie "The Post."



The now 87-year-old worked for the RAND Corporation as an analyst on nuclear strategy and then for the Defense Department through the 1960s.

What is so alarming is how inaccurate the information was about the destruction that would occur from the use of nuclear weapons. And then who knew what and when is incredible. The facts that were kept secret from those making decisions is downright frightening. The lack of trust between the military and civilians – including the president and his advisors – is stunning.

Scientists for decades didn't understand about nuclear winter being a reality if there would be an all-out war. The fires

and then smoke that would follow the bombs' detonation weren't part of the calculations at the get-go. This would eventually lead to worldwide starvation because plants wouldn't be able to grow without adequate sunlight.

The fact the United States for years had only one plan for all of its nuclear missiles was startling. They were to be used to wipe out the then Soviet Union and China. Both. There was no other plan. The fact that all of the bordering countries would be severely impacted was of little consequence to the war planners.

The segment on the Cuban missile crisis is like none I ever learned about in school or have read about until now.

I read and listened to "Doomsday" based on my schedule. It took longer to read because I would reread parts. It's complex. I wanted to make sure I had read things correctly. I feel like I should reread or listen to it all again down the road to fully comprehend everything Ellsberg shares.

Yes, it's a history book of sorts. But it is so incredibly relevant to today because we have even more weapons that can wipe out life as we know it on Earth – as do the Russians and others.

Ellsberg makes a strong case for getting rid of these weapons of mass destruction. It would be hard to argue otherwise. The ethical and moral use as well just the possession of these weapons is worth a serious discussion.

—

#### **Notes:**

· The next book will be "Emerald Bay and Desolation Wilderness" (Arcadia Publishing 2018) by Peter Goin. The review will be published July 1.