# Mark Lynas warns of civilisation’s collapse within a week of nuclear war



British author Mark Lynas’s recent publication, *Six Minutes to Winter: Nuclear War and How to Avoid*, presents a stark and harrowing vision of the aftermath of a full-scale nuclear war. Lynas outlines a devastating scenario in which civilisation as currently known could be obliterated within just one week following the first nuclear detonation.

Lynas describes a world devastated by approximately 4,000 nuclear explosions targeting various countries, leading to firestorms that consume almost all flammable materials. The immediate human toll is catastrophic, with around 770 million people killed. “In the areas hit directly… there is nothing left: the firestorms produced intense heat and virtually all flammable material was consumed,” he writes. He emphasises the grisly nature of the aftermath by noting, “skeletons are everywhere, alongside the haunting shadows left by people who were caught outside during the first blasts and vaporised.” He poignantly adds, “Given what is about to unfold, they were the lucky ones.”

Survivors, numbering in the millions, become refugees regardless of their previous social status, wealth, or education. Roads littered with debris prevent vehicle travel, forcing people to trek on foot through scenes of carnage. Many suffer severe burns and radiation injuries without access to medical care. Lynas terms this period the “initial holocaust,” during which survivors face horrific sights of mangled bodies and the onset of deadly environmental changes.

One of the most chilling consequences of such a nuclear conflict is the onset of nuclear winter. Lynas predicts a planet-wide deep freeze, where areas including America, Europe, and Asia experience plummeting temperatures even during peak summer months. Frost becomes a nightly occurrence, and fresh water sources dry up. The absence of sunlight leads to the collapse of oceanic life, and tropical rainforests perish while temperate regions suffer conditions akin to Siberian winters. This nuclear winter could trigger a new global ice age, characterized by persistent sub-freezing temperatures and the disappearance of normal seasonal rhythms.

In the societal vacuum following the collapse of governments and armed forces, Lynas describes the emergence of violent, marauding gangs that patrol territories by night, often armed with stolen military weapons. They establish brutal regimes over survivors, exacting violent control and hanging dissenters to conserve ammunition. These gangs prey on the vulnerable, raiding food supplies and surrounding communities, leading to widespread lawlessness.

Electricity infrastructure would be largely destroyed, complicating survival further. Lynas notes that within two months, darkness would consume nearly the entire day, with survivors forced to rely on flaming torches carried by roaming gangs. Fire light is avoided by refugees out of fear of attracting attention, leaving many huddling in the cold and darkness.

With all domesticated animals consumed, humans may tragically become the only source of fresh meat. Lynas grimly mentions that the smell of roasting human flesh would become a common feature, especially where gangs have seized control. The fates of survival-focused “preppers” are particularly bleak; initially targeted for their stored food, ammunition, and other supplies, they ultimately fall victim to violent attacks, with their bodies dismembered in acts described as being conducted “with particular care and ceremony,” reflecting the morbid reality of desperation.

Following the nuclear winter, Lynas anticipates a period he calls the “UV Spring,” when damaging ultraviolet radiation will surge due to the damaged atmosphere. This increase leads to rapid skin burns and higher skin cancer rates among survivors. The intense solar radiation, combined with residual radiation from the bombs, will sterilize landscapes, preventing plant regrowth. Eventually, rising temperatures bring back destructive monsoon rains and flash floods, adding to the destruction.

Reflecting a note of cautious geographic hope, Lynas points to Australia and New Zealand as potential last refuges due to their remoteness, warm climates, and relatively small populations. However, he underscores that modern communications and logistical networks would be entirely destroyed, leaving these countries isolated and largely unreachable.

The *Daily Star* reports Lynas’s book as a sobering exploration of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear war, offering a bleak outlook on human survival and the global environment in such a scenario.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/six-minutes-to-winter-9781399410496/> - This URL supports the publication and general content of Mark Lynas's book, *Six Minutes to Winter*, which addresses the catastrophic consequences of a full-scale nuclear war.
2. <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/six-minutes-to-winter-9781399410533/> - Like the previous link, this URL also corroborates the publication details of Lynas's book, emphasizing its focus on nuclear war and its consequences.
3. <https://www.target.com/p/six-minutes-to-winter-by-mark-lynas-hardcover/-/A-93213219> - This URL provides further information on the book, highlighting its themes of nuclear war as a greater immediate threat than climate change and the potential for global devastation.
4. <https://guardianbookshop.com/six-minutes-to-winter-9781399410519/> - This URL supports the book's discussion of the massive nuclear arsenals held by multiple countries and the risk of global conflict similar to World War III.
5. <https://www.duckscottage.com/book/9781399410519> - This link describes the book as a timely and urgent exploration of nuclear threats and potential solutions, echoing the themes of immediate danger and long-term survival detailed in the article.
6. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This URL is the source of the original article discussing Lynas's book and its exploration of nuclear war's devastating consequences on humanity and the environment.
7. <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/quick-death-best-can-hope-35128071> - Please view link - unable to able to access data