# 2023-24 Topic Proposal: Nuclear Weapons

## Contributors

Jeffrey Buntin, Northwestern University

Nora Cai

Connelly Cowan, Georgetown University

Jordan Di, University of Kentucky

Michael Greenberg, Georgetown University

Ethan Greer, Georgetown University

David Griffith, University of Kentucky

Jackson Hightower, Georgetown University

Kevin Hirn, University of Michigan

Nolan Johnson, University of Minnesota

Brandon Kelley, Georgetown University

Julian Kuffour, University of Southern California

Haritha Kumar, Georgetown University

Kieran Lawless, Georgetown University

Gabriel Lewis, Georgetown University

Mikaela Malsin, Emory University

J Parrish, University of Minnesota

Owen Phoenix-Flood, University of Minnesota

Rayeed Rahman, University of Southern California

Benjamin Sayers, Georgetown University

Jared Spiers, University of Kansas

Anthony Trufanov, Dartmouth College

Zidao Wang, Georgetown University

Adam White, Georgetown University

Annie Zhao

Additionally, the authors would like to extend a special thanks to David Bernstein, Ari Davidson, Nico Juarez, and Beau Larsen for providing valuable suggestions and raising worthwhile questions for consideration during this process.

# Summary

## Executive Summary

The contributors to this paper submit that the NDT/CEDA topic area for 2023-2024 ought to be nuclear weapons.

This topic controversy has a great deal to recommend it. Our position regarding the proper scope and contours of this resolution are laid out below, in the Proposed Wordings subsection of this Summary. Regardless of which wording is selected, however, this is a controversy area with extensive and high-quality Affirmative and Negative ground, both policy and critical. It is a recipe for deep and productive clash on issues of vital importance, with high-quality arguments and strategies well-supported by evidence. To substantiate this, we have attached an extensive appendix—which, despite being hundreds of pages long even without page breaks, only begins to scratch the surface of what is out there.

The literature base on this topic strikes the balance between being stable and ‘well-developed’ on the one hand and being timely and [non-stagnant](https://www.belfercenter.org/rethinkingnucleardeterrence#:~:text=The%20Rethinking%20Nuclear%20Deterrence%20Research,arms%20control%2C%20and%20nuclear%20disarmament) on the better than perhaps any other issue area. For countless reasons, covered in greater detail below, this topic is in no way stale, redundant, or a rehash; but, additionally, [numerous](https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/08/05/what-s-driving-china-s-nuclear-buildup-pub-85106) [developments](https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3309790/officials-outline-strategy-in-nuclear-posture-review/) in [recent](https://www.politico.com/news/2022/10/26/u-s-plans-upgraded-nukes-europe-00063675) [years](https://www.cnn.com/2022/12/12/politics/air-force-hypersonic-test/index.html) (and even [recent days](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-65404805)) further increase the urgency and salience of nuclear issues, and raise important new policy considerations warranting research and vigorous debate.

Importantly, however, none of these developments complicate the direction of ‘uniqueness’ on this topic; quite the opposite. The clear and constant trend at present, both in the United States and around the world, is toward greater reliance on nuclear weapons in an expanding number of contexts, as articulated in an increasingly expansive [declaratory policy](armscontrol.org/act/2021-03/features/toward-just-us-nuclear-declaratory-policy) and supported by both quantitative expansion and qualitative ‘modernization’ (including, e.g., via the development of hypersonic missiles, multiple independently-targetable reentry vehicles, and more) of the strategic arsenal.

This is, to say the least, a dramatic change from fifteen years ago, when Obama has just entered office, arms control was on the rise and arsenals on the decline, these technologies did not even exist yet, and Russia and China were seen as new entrants to an increasingly globalized liberal international order. Certain structuralist critiques of nuclear weapons will make a reappearance—though, given the major evolutions in both debate and the relevant literature base since 2009, and the fact that no one debating at that time is debating today, even that is unlikely to be repetitive—but all other policy and kritik positions will be new.

These developments are accelerating by the day, and have critical and profound implications for strategic stability, the lived experience of persons around the world, and more. As the evidence included in this document substantiates, nuclear weapons are an issue of [profound importance](https://www.wilpf.org/thoughts-for-change/decommissioning-nuclear-weapons/), both structural and existential, for people representing all backgrounds, all parts of the political spectrum, and all theoretical viewpoints. This means two things: 1) this is an issue with which debaters ought to engage and about which we should all learn; and 2) there are a wide range of high-quality solvency advocates for both policy and kritik Affirmatives, and an equally robust set of Negative arguments and evidence. Extensive evidence for all of these premises is included below.

## Core Controversies

The core controversies of this topic, outlined in detail throughout this summary, include:

* Should the U.S. continue to maintain its nuclear arsenal?
* If yes, then 1) what should the purpose(s) of this arsenal be—i.e., what ought to be the U.S.’s declared policy be regarding the conditions under which nuclear weapons would be used, in what ways, and to what ends?; and 2) what form should this arsenal take, including what new limitations should be placed upon it and/or what new shifts should occur—i.e. of what capabilities should this arsenal consist, and postured in what ways?

These central questions intersect with a wide variety of policy and kritikal concerns. These include, among many others surveyed at length below: deterrence of Russia and China; the risks of miscalculation, escalation, and questions of strategic stability during crises; issues of arms control and non-proliferation; nuclear testing and waste-dumping; structures and systems of militarism, colonialism, and anti-Blackness; extended deterrence and Allied assurance; how emerging technologies change these various other issues; and more.

## Proposed Wordings

#### There are several sensible approaches. What is most important is that certain structural features be retained.

This is a controversy area with strong affirmative and negative ground, both policy and critical. There are several ways that one could structure a topic in this area while retaining the upsides. The authors of this paper have arrived at the following approaches, each of which we believe have merit depending on how much Affirmative flexibility is desired and in what directions. The wording committee should not feel overly constrained by the particular words and phrases chosen here—while we believe that these terms represent a strong start and would likely work well if selected, some of these have been vetted more thoroughly than others. Instead, these resolutions should be taken as a starting point and represent desirable structures: if other words and phrases are found to work better, we support their use, so long as all resultant resolutional options meet certain key criteria outlined below.

#### Key Criteria for Resolutional Wordings:

* First and foremost, the Affirmative must be *allowed* to reduce the *roles* to which nuclear weapons are dedicated—i.e., the circumstances in which they would be used—and not solely the size or nature of the nuclear arsenal itself. This enables a diversity of policy Aff mechanisms tied to specific articulable harms, while building in unified Neg ground. We also believe that this ensures access a wide variety of high-quality critical Affirmatives, such as those included below.
* It is almost certainly desirable that the Affirmative be *allowed* to *include* changes to *hardware* of the United States’ strategic arsenal, at least including its nuclear weapons, such as: changes to arsenal size (e.g. how many nuclear warheads?), characteristics (e.g. do we employ hypersonic delivery vehicles?), and how the arsenal is postured (e.g. are nuclear weapons kept de-mated?). Our evidence suggests that such changes would not, by themselves, necessarily alter the arsenal’s role nor be necessitated by alterations to the arsenal’s role; however, they are deeply interrelated, and should be available to the Affirmative as part of the “ceiling” of the resolution. However, due to concerns about links and link uniqueness, the resolution should *not* allow an Affirmative to *only* make such changes (that is, the Affirmative should be required to include a *floor* of also *reducing the role* of nuclear weapons) *unless* the topic is worded so as to require that that reduction in size and/or nature of the U.S. nuclear arsenal be rather *large and sweeping* (for example: eliminating one leg of the nuclear triad, drastically reducing the size of the U.S.’s nuclear arsenal, or eliminating the arsenal altogether).
* Affirmatives should probably be required to include a public/non-secret component. As discussed below, this can reasonably be accomplished with common terms of art, is typical for top-level changes to nuclear strategy, and with proper advantage design is not solved by the “do it secretly” counterplan.
* We also recommend the use of “United States,” absent clear evidence of major concerns, because we think it provides greater latitude for topical K Affirmatives and are not interested in litigating whether the role of our nuclear forces should be restrained via a Con-Con. (Teams that wish to make their NFU or Disarm Affirmative vastly worse by trying to have the states do it or whatever are free to do so.)

#### Available Wording Options Include:

#### Double Clause, Declaratory Policy

RESOLVED: The United States should change its [nuclear strategy and/or posture] by at least adopting declaratory policy reducing the [role] of its nuclear weapons.

This wording establishes a floor of reducing role via declaratory policy, with a ceiling of broader changes to the strategy and/or arsenal. It is a favorite of many contributors who prefer a more expansive topic.

#### List, Narrow

RESOLVED: The United States should change its [nuclear strategy and/or posture] by at least:

* defining a sole purpose for nuclear weapons,
* eliminating its reliance on one or more legs of its nuclear triad, and/or
* dismantling a majority of its nuclear weapons.

This wording requires particularly expansive Affirmative action, and is a favorite among many contributors who prefer a narrower topic with deeper contestation of core mechanisms. It establishes a floor of quite sweeping and dramatic changes to the nuclear arsenal, with a ceiling of broader strategy and/or arsenal changes (for example, to ensure that means and ends remain aligned, or to specify the ways in which the U.S. implements or compensates for removal of its nuclear arsenal). Simultaneously, the list items are worded in such a way as to minimize the Negative’s ability to dodge debates on these core mechanisms; for example, ‘dismantling a majority’ rather than language like ‘eliminate’ helps to limit small, niche PICs, as does ‘defining a sole purpose’ rather than language like ‘limiting nuclear weapons to a nuclear retaliatory role’.

#### Single Clause, Role Not Strategy/Posture

RESOLVED: The United States should substantially reduce the [role] of its nuclear weapons.

This resolution would require reducing the circumstances/purposes of nuclear weapons use, but would probably not allow the Affirmative to directly mandate changes to the U.S.’s posture or arsenal, and may also not require public disclosure. It does, however, have the substantial upside of making many of the best critical Affirmatives more conclusively topical.

#### Single Clause, ‘09-‘10 Rehash

RESOLVED: The United States should substantially reduce the size of its nuclear weapons arsenal, and/or substantially reduce the [role] of its nuclear weapons.

This resolution mirrors the 2009 wording, and would require the Affirmative to reduce the size of the arsenal itself, the purposes to which it is dedicated, or both.

A note regarding “substantial”: while we do not necessarily object to its use, it is probably unnecessary in any wording which includes a requirement to reduce the role of the arsenal, because such a change would inherently be highly impactful (particularly if public disclosure is required). It is also not required in the narrow list wording, which specifies a large object of the change (i.e., knock out a leg of the triad, no first use, disarm). However, use of ‘substantially’ or some other magnifier might well make sense in the context of a wording like this, which includes a clause about simple ‘reduc[tion in] size’.

#### Additional examples

**Double Clause, Reduce Role**

RESOLVED: The United States should change its [nuclear strategy and/or posture] by at least reducing the [role] of nuclear weapons.

This is similar to ‘declaratory policy,’ but less likely to ensure public disclosure.

There are certainly others, and to reiterate: we wish to retain flexibility for the topic committee to maximize topic quality, but we hope that this helps to provide some useful direction for that process.

#### Some Alternatives for Bracketed Terms

**--Nuclear Strategy and/or Posture**

* “Nuclear Posture.” There is some debate about the meaning of this term. It includes at least the physical ‘hardware’ of the nuclear arsenal. Some common usage of the term encompasses declaratory policy, though Vipin Narang argues that it should not. Yes hardware, maybe declaratory.
* “Nuclear Strategy.” Refers to decisions about how many nuclear weapons to deploy, what delivery systems to put them on, and what policies to adopt regarding the circumstances in which they would be used. Maybe hardware, yes declaratory.
* “Nuclear Doctrine.” Defines how, under what circumstances, and for what purposes a state will use its nuclear arsenal. Arguably, like strategy, excludes hardware in favor of a focus on the concepts driving the arsenal. Clearest card on this is Bong-geun 16.
* “Strategic doctrine” / “strategic policy” / “strategic posture.” The broadest options. Strategic doctrine has been defined as an effort to match military force with national goals. Strategic posture is the means and methods by which nations pursue their national interests. Strategic policy means an overarching framework that encompasses and links together all aspects of how a government intends to deal with a particular problem or issue, as opposed to ad hoc or operational/tactical policies. It does not have to be nuclear.

**--Role**

* It is possible that another term should be used instead or in addition here; for example, the 2009 formulation of “role and/or missions” is plausible. We are confident in the use of “role,” the choice of whether or not inclusion of “missions” is necessary or desirable requires further vetting.
* “Role.” The typical or characteristic function performed by something. In the context of nukes, this is the type of circumstances in which nuclear weapons would be brought to bear.
* “Missions.” More specific than role. Carr says “role is used as a deed or action the U.S. military is capable of performing”; “mission … is used to describe a specific job assigned to the military, where the military employs a specific role toward achieving that mission.”

**‘Declaratory’?**

This option is intended to screen out AFFs changing posture in secret to disrupt Assurance or Deterrence DA ground.

## Sample Affirmative Cases

### Policy

#### No First Use (See Appendix NFU Section, Tannenwald 19, Blair 18 among others)

The largest aff, which is topical under any of the proposed wordings, is NFU/sole purpose. While NFU and sole purpose are different strategic doctrines, they both involve the U.S. forswearing the use of nuclear weapons to deter non-nuclear attacks. The debate over whether the U.S. should adopt an NFU/sole purpose doctrine is extremely robust and has become more mainstream in the last few years. For instance, Biden suggested during the 2020 presidential campaign that he would be open to adopting a sole purpose doctrine, and a contentious part of drafting the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review was whether to leave a role for the first use of nuclear weapons. Scholars continue to write about whether the U.S. should adopt an NFU/sole purpose doctrine, and there are many good cards on both sides.

#### Disarmament (See Appendix Disarmament Section, Perkovich 08, Doyle 13)

Disarmament is another possible affirmative under any topic wording.  While it will be discussed more in the K Affs section below, there are significant policy advantages to it, including non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, and US hegemony.  Further, this affirmative accesses the core question of whether deterrence itself is a viable 21st century strategy for global stability.

#### Other Affirmatives (see Appendix: NSA section, TNW section, ICBMs section, etc)

The broader proposed wordings also allow aff teams to make smaller changes to the U.S.’s nuclear posture. Affs under these wordings also include proposals to not use nuclear weapons to deter cyberattacks, not use nuclear weapons to deter attacks with biological/chemical weapons, not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states (known as “negative security assurances”), and more. Some wordings also allow the U.S. to make changes to the makeup of its nuclear forces, such as eliminating ICBMs as a leg of the nuclear triad. These proposals link to less offense than NFU/sole purpose affs, but they are still meaningful departures from the status quo – the U.S. has limited the number of nuclear weapons in its arsenal, but never the overall role or makeup of those nuclear weapons.

#### Advantage Area Example #1—Crisis Stability

As outlined in all of the affirmative proposals above, the primary aff advantage area is crisis stability. Many scholars argue that the U.S.’s current maximalist deterrence policy lowers the threshold for nuclear use and incentivizes escalation of low-level conflicts. These debates are continuing to evolve as new technologies and force postures emerge, both in the United States and abroad. These arguments lend themselves well to affs centered around establishing a more restricted role for nuclear weapons in the U.S.’s overall military strategy.

#### Advantage Area Example #2—Nonproliferation (See Appendix, NonProliferation)

Another advantage area – which is less commonly discussed in the literature, but is still a core part of debates about nuclear strategy – is nonproliferation. Some scholars argue that the U.S.’s low threshold for nuclear use undermines the goals of nonproliferation, signaling that it is normatively acceptable for states to use nuclear deterrence in a broad range of circumstances, and incentivizing states to acquire their own arsenals.

### Kritikal

Critical literature about U.S. nuclear policy, and nuclear weapons broadly, is both rich and vast. The destructive potential of nuclear weapons has captured the attention and research of critical scholars for decades, ensuring that one could fill far more than a single debate season with new critical engagement in a topic about the United States’ nuclear policy.

For those interested in connecting U.S. nuclear policy to issues of racism and anti-blackness in America, there is a rich basis of activism dating back decades which explicitly tied disarmament to racial justice more broadly. People like W.E.B. DuBois and Bayard Rustin fought extensively to demonstrate and challenge the link between nuclear weapons in the United States and the global system of anti-blackness and colonialism. Affirmatives can connect DuBois and Rustin’s activism to demands today for the abolition of nuclear weapons and the broader destruction of the United States in its current form.

Many scholars examine the link between U.S. nuclear policy and settler colonialism. U.S. (and other nations’) nuclear tests have often been conducted on native land, causing massive ecological, cultural, and personal damage to the indigenous peoples who lived on those lands. The waste management of the nuclear process has also been imbricated in a colonial structure where the U.S. uses the poor financial status of native tribes to coerce them into allowing nuclear waste disposal on their lands. Affirmatives can conduct a genealogy of this history and tie it to the necessity of restrictions on how the U.S. uses nuclear weapons, or even total nuclear disarmament.

Postmodern and “high theory” literature engages with the issue of nuclear weapons as well. Derrida, Baudrillard, Bataille, and many others have a lot to say about the nature of nuclear weapons. Some challenge their implication for humanity and the collective imaginary, some recognize their existence as part of a broader shift towards a technologically oriented society, and all talk about nukes using big words that I don’t understand.

Feminist and queer readings of international relations and nuclear weapons are another unique avenue for exploring the topic. Affs drawing on these literature bases could critique the way current nuclear/military posture relies on gendered understandings of deterrence, militarism, and state sovereignty. Affs can demand policy changes, such as nuclear disarmament, or critique the resolution’s centering of the United States as the arbiter of global nuclear policy.

We have also suggested that the resolution uses the phrase “United States” instead of “United States federal government” to allow affs to take a broader view of the topic actor. For instance, a more expansive reading of “United States” could allow affs to defend movement-based proposals to get rid of nuclear weapons. These affs still link to the core topic DAs, so policy teams should not worry about including them in the topic, but they open up unique discussions about tactics and organizing against aggressive military policies.

## Core Neg Ground

### Case Negs

Case debates—both at the level of the mechanism and all levels of the advantages (read: not simply a bunch of impact defense nor the Affirmative’s internal links being fake)—will be frequent and robust on this topic, both against policy Affirmatives and K Affirmatives, and that is something that we should all relish. It would be an extremely nice change of pace.

### Disads

This topic would present phenomenal disadvantage ground. Said DAs would be high-quality and unified, with potential for innovation and new additions over the course of the season.

A central future of the DA debate on this topic is the strong link uniqueness. The U.S. has not made major shifts in declaratory policy in several decades, especially because allies and entrenched coalitions in Washington have consistently issued significant protests when the topic has been brought up. One example is that Biden strongly considered a Sole Purpose Policy (one of the potential Affirmative cases) as part of his Nuclear Posture Review, but he ultimately decided against it as a direct result of disagreement from allies in Asia and Europe.

Every debate, the negative would be guaranteed access to at least two unique and timely generics with consistently strong links and broad educational potential: the Assurances DA and the Deterrence DA.

The Assurances DA is both very strong and timely. Broadly, the DA argues that a shift in nuclear posture would greatly worry allies about U.S. extended deterrence and alliance commitments. In turn, this would cause several potential negative impacts, most commonly proliferation. This is timely and good to debate about as many U.S. allies, including Japan, South Korea, and certain NATO countries, have either A) expressed doubts about U.S. extended deterrence and alliance commitments or B) recently re-affirmed their understandings about U.S. nuclear posture with the American government (as in the case of South Korea [see: link uniqueness section, which includes discussion of a new nuclear posture agreement reached just this week in an effort to prevent independence South Korean proliferation]).

This DA can be as broad or as narrow as desired, where teams could read specific DAs to individual countries like Japan or entire alliances like NATO.

Just as relevant is the Deterrence DA, which argues that a shift in U.S. nuclear posture would embolden countries that are considered the U.S.’s adversaries, including Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran. This DA is especially relevant as 1) there are many uncertain questions surrounding Russia and the Ukraine War, especially considering whether or not Russia is willing to use nuclear weapons, and 2) China is increasingly eying Taiwan and other nearby areas.

There can also be unique versions of the Deterrence DA based on the affirmative. For example, in response to an affirmative that advocates that the U.S. should declare that it won’t use its nukes in response to conventional, cyber, or biological attacks, the negative could argue that those policies would make the conventional, cyber, or biological attacks more likely. In many cases, these disadvantages are likely to be higher quality.

In addition to Assurances and Deterrence, there are plenty of other disadvantages. One that the topic paper includes is the Modernization DA, which argues that there is a bipartisan governmental coalition oriented towards modernizing the U.S. nuclear arsenal, but restrictions on nuclear policy might rupture that coalition, and there are plenty of impacts to why nuclear modernization might be beneficial. Moreover, this topic has some of the best Politics DA links out of the last few topics, with nuclear policy shifts continuing to cause many contentious political debates. Lastly, there are plenty of specific DAs that teams could read against individual affirmatives that provide a diversity of negative options.

### Counterplans

There are a few different ways to approach counterplans on the nukes topic. The three we’ve highlighted in this portion of the Topic Paper are Safety Alteration CPs, Crisis Management CPs, and Arms Control CPs. (For a top-line sample of solvency advocates for each of these, you may refer respectively in the Appendix to: Weaver 15; Costigliola 23; and Rusten & Melamed 23 + Maurer 20.)

First, there are counterplans that alter the safety of our nuclear weapons. A lot of impact scenarios will rely on the premise that dependence on nuclear weapons makes miscalculation both more severe in magnitude and more probable. This type of counterplan would establish measures that ensure the operational safety of nuclear weaponry and protect the integrity of our command-and-control. These would avoid virtually ever topic DA since it would not require the United States to adjust its dependence on or deployment of nuclear weapons. Many of the changes advocated for in this area would remain internal to the Department of Defense and the President, ensuring that they do not trigger the perception links that many core topic generics will rely on.

Second, there are counterplans that establish channels for crisis management. This can take the form of diplomacy in the event of a crisis, the establishing of hotlines, or measures aimed at diffusing crises before they arise. This would mitigate the potentially destabilizing impacts that nuclear weapons have. Crisis management tends to be less controversial than posture shifts, allowing it to sidestep link arguments about making concessions prior to the diffusion of a crisis. This sets up a sequencing question for the net benefit, where the neg can argue that we can reduce our dependence on nuclear weapons only after the appropriate diplomatic measures have been taken to ensure that our adversaries no longer pose a threat in the realm that the aff argues nuclear weapons are necessary for.

Lastly, arms control CPs can utilize the strength of the U.S. nuclear posture in order to extract concessions from our adversaries and de-escalate crises. They can either be paired with conditioning the aff on a change in adversarial behavior or read as advantage CPs that require the U.S. to remain strong in order to succeed. Given that current arms control arrangements are unsuccessful and expiring in the status quo, many scholars are demanding novel approaches that rely on incrementalism, ensuring that the CP is able to link less to any DAs about the perception of U.S. weakness. Furthermore, many argue that negotiating from a position of strong nuclear posture is necessary to induce compliance in our adversaries, making the debate over what makes for effective arms control negotiations one that is well-covered in topic literature.

### Kritiks

Many of the same literature bases described above in the Affirmative K section would have much to say about more conventional nuclear policy reforms. Incremental reductions in the role of nuclear weapons, particularly those that can be characterized by arms control, are the subject of enduring criticism for being an example of “anti-nuclear nuclearism”; policy change which, which opposing particular aspects of the nuclear apparatus, naturalizes its existence on the whole. Similar critiques are levied against particular justifications for nuclear restraint, such as those focused on humanitarian values or international law.

Scholars studying the colonialism of nuclear weapons or opposing negative understandings of nuclear peace point out that violence, particularly nuclear violence, is an ongoing facet of existence for the colonized and for other groups experiencing structural violence. Many of these scholars highlight the role of technolstrategic language in sanitizing these forms of ongoing violence.

Others still criticize technical attempts to control nuclear risk, pointing out that they assume an impossible mastery of the bomb, or criticize rational models of deterrence for inappropriately representing the psychological dynamics that underpin nuclear decision-making.

In addition to this wealth of critical literature concerning nuclear weapons, not to mention the enormous variety of literature not covered by this paper, negative teams can draw upon broader critical engagements with international relations theory, which are themselves as varied as they are plentiful.

## Why Debate This?

### Great Topic

That’s above. (And lots of ev for it is below!)

### Great for Novices & Programs

#### This is an excellent topic for novice debate.

All proposed versions of the topic are easy to explain and understand–novices will be able to understand the topic area at recruiting events and will be able to come away with a basic grasp of core affirmative and negative arguments within the first few meetings of the semester. Terms of art are clearly defined in the literature.

The topic literature is accessible and clash is baked in–experts are not only responding to each others’ arguments, they are responding to them by name and referring to each others’ writing directly. This will make even introductory research assignments fruitful and will build students’ confidence–not to say cutting cards on the topic will be easy but it will be less complicated for beginners than it often is.

Core generic negative is unified, good, and not just politics; the negative will always be able to read an assurance or deterrence disad against a topical affirmative. While these debates are generic they are also incredibly educational, involving IR theory and the nuances of US alliance structures. The ADA will likely put both an assurance and a deterrence DA in the novice starter set, meaning novices will have two accessible core topic generic DAs they can read throughout the season.

Counterplans are rooted in the literature–this isn’t a topic where debaters have to fall back on bad process CPs with no solvency advocates, most scholarly articles suggest several avenues to solve the impacts of the case and then debate back and forth amongst scholars which would be the most effective.

The critical literature is engaging and the links are real and discussed even in more mainstream literature. The implications of nuclear weapons on IR theory are discussed in many subdisciplines and tie to many other critical literature bases. This means that there are not only interesting kritiks for the negative but also soft left and critical aff approaches that will satisfy novices.

#### This is also an excellent topic for programs.

It is easy to pitch to administrators. It lends itself extraordinarily well to public debates, and is a vitally important issue to engage with in the public sphere. It lends itself extremely well to external connections and portable use—whether that be in the form of journal publication, engagement with policymakers or think tanks, engagement with anti-nuclear advocacy organizations, or other vectors.

Whereas the previous topic was highly insular, this topic is the opposite: it is of deep, immediate, timely importance; is perceived as such by a wide range of organizations, institutions, and the public; and there are a great many opportunities to take lessons-learned here and move to apply them elsewhere.

### AT: “This is Stale/We’ve Already Debated This”

#### 1. The events of the last decade have left the lessons of recent nukes topics obsolete.

The last time we debated a similar nukes topic:

1. Obama was president.
2. Medvedev had yet to become president of Russia.
3. We were on the verge of a successful NPT Review Conference.
4. North Korea had conducted only one nuclear test, and did not have an operational arsenal.
5. Russia had not invaded Ukraine.
6. The US and Russia were about to enter a new arms control agreement: New START.
7. Bin Laden was alive, and Obama was three years away from a 2012 debate in which he mocked Romney for fearmongering about Russia instead of focusing on terrorists.
8. Trump had not yet released an unusually aggressive Nuclear Posture Review.
9. Obama had yet to negotiate, and Trump had yet to abrogate, the Iran deal.

Needless to say, the fundamental shift in many of these issues cardinally changes the nature of the debate about nuclear posture.

Even since NFU:

1. China has engaged in a drastic buildup of ICBM capabilities, and has tested groundbreaking hypersonics.
2. Russia invaded Ukraine.
3. The United States withdrew from Afghanistan.
4. Trump lost the 2020 election, which drastically shifted the literature from its focus on Trump’s idiosyncracies back to structural arguments about posture.

Though these lists are far from exhaustive, these events alone should suffice to illustrate that the ground has drastically shifted under the feet of nuclear strategy veterans.

#### 2. The structure of the executive power topic discouraged the debates created by this topic.

a. Focus on interbranch authority. Rather than being centered around the desirability of changes to nuclear posture, the majority of NFU debates centered around whether Congress or the Courts were best suited to changing nuclear posture. Most 2NRs against NFU included the executive self-restraint CP, obviating discussions of nuclear policy.

b. The executive power topic was broader than NFU. In fact, NFU was just one prong of five, where the others were broad enough to have arguably served as topics in themselves. The result was that even squads that devoted significant attention to the area were unable to allocate the level of care and detail to the debate that would be possible under this topic.

c. K ground. Because Trump was president and the topical mechism centered on statutory/judicial restrictions, room for creative kritikal interpretations of the resolution was significantly limited. This would not be the case on this topic.

d. This topic is broader than NFU. Most proposed wordings permit both narrower changes to doctrine and broader changes to the material dimensions of the nuclear arsenal.

3. No current debaters competed on the most recent topic that discussed nuclear posture.

4th-year students’ first topic was alliances, and 5th-year students’ first topic was space.

#### 3. What about alliances?

a. Different focus. While there are some common themes, most research and debates would be very different. The alliance topic focused on broader military commitments, resulting in a focus on conventional conflict. The scenarios in which nuclear use is currently contemplated are much narrower. As a result, where the alliances topic asks *whether* the U.S. should respond to conflicts, the nukes topic asks *how* the U.S. should respond.

b. Different mechanism. Most alliances topic debates reduced to topicality or the inability of a case to justify using the defense commitment mechanism. This also displaced many core IR debates.

c. The meat of the alliances topic was great; to the extent there is overlap, that’s a good thing. The fundamental IR literature base is extremely deep, and there were many controversies that the community still had not fully explored up through the NDT. Issues such as the interaction between force posture and international law or the U.S.’s military commitments to the Rio Treaty states, Australia, Thailand, and more were unaddressed and would be fruitful to revisit.

### Why Care?—Sample Framework Cards

#### Additional evidence is available in the Appendix in various places, and there is much more out there. But, as a brief sample for evidence regarding the urgency of college students learning about and grappling with these issues:

#### Learning about nuclear policy is critical

Intondi 20 – Associate professor of history at Montgomery College and director of research for American University’s Nuclear Studies Institute. He is the author of *African Americans Against the Bomb: Nuclear Weapons, Colonialism, and the Black Freedom Movement*.

Vincent Intondi, “Reflections on Injustice, Racism, and the Bomb,” *Arms Control Today*, vol. 50, no. 6, July/August 2020, https://search.proquest.com/docview/2425622578?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true.

The questions that we must ask ourselves today are how have we avoided nuclear war for the last 75 years and how can we sustain the popular support and awareness that is necessary to move policymakers to take the steps necessary to reduce and eliminate nuclear dangers. The answers: good luck and good organizing. There is nothing we can do about luck, except hope it is on our side. But by learning from the past, it is clear that there is much we can do as organizers, advocates, lobbyists, artists, writers, teachers, and just concerned citizens.

We need to make connections. Our power is in our diversity. The anti-nuclear movement needs to continue to reach out to marginalized communities and show the links between that amount of money spent on nuclear weapons and how those funds could be used for food, health care, jobs, housing, and education. Whether it is connecting with the religious, immigrant, LGBTQ, or Black communities, half the battle is showing up.

We need education. Far too many students go through their entire education, including college, without ever learning about the history of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki or the greater nuclear threat that has persisted since 1945. We must demand that curriculums across the country dedicate more time to the nuclear arms race and the movement to stop nuclear war. This means being involved on school boards and curriculum committees and creating the materials that we can distribute and incorporate into the various school systems.

We need artists. Part of the reason the nuclear issue resonated in the 1980s was because performers such as Jackson Browne, Rita Marley, James Taylor, Bruce Springsteen, Gil Scott-Heron, Harry Belafonte, and Linda Ronstadt, as well as various Hollywood and Broadway stars, performed, raised money, and lent their voices to the cause. We saw the power of this action when President Barack Obama was pushing the Iran nuclear deal.

We need filmmakers. One of the most successful strategies of the anti-nuclear movement in the 1980s was to create "The Day After." Viewed by millions, this film, along with Helen Caldicott's relentless pursuit of making sure the world knew the human effects of nuclear weapons, shook ordinary citizens to their core. We can and must replicate these actions to drive home the uncomfortable fact that nuclear weapons are a threat to everyone, everywhere.

We need to hold politicians accountable. Currently, we have a president who has threatened repeatedly to use nuclear weapons, has no problem spending billions on the nuclear arsenal, and may even want to resume nuclear testing. Moreover, we have local, state, and federal politicians who support the president's decisions and are complicit in the march to nuclear competition and the perpetuation of the oppression imposed by the threat of nuclear weapons use. Whenever we have an opportunity to back a politician who fights for nuclear disarmament, we need to do so. We need to demand from our elected officials that they work toward the goal of nuclear abolition and indeed have some of our organizers within the movement run for office themselves. Of course, we need to vote.

We need to support the anti-nuclear movement and help it evolve. Much like new organizations that emerged in the 1980s, over the last decade we have seen groups such as Global Zero, Beyond the Bomb, and Don't Bank on the Bomb and global disarmament networks such as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons emerge. From the start, these groups have promoted intersectionality and made the connections among race, climate, feminism, and poverty in the fight to abolish nuclear weapons, not just in the United States but worldwide. In many cases, dynamic women have led this new movement. They are younger, with fresh ideas; savvy; and motivated. Whether one is in favor of working toward a nofirst-use policy or a formal ban on nuclear weapons through negotiations at the United Nations, these organizers need our support, money, time, and respect.

With all this said, I cannot lie. I am saddened as I write this. Every five years on the anniversary of the first atomic bombings, the demand for my work seems to increase. Although I am thankful that I have the opportunity to write and speak about racism and nuclear weapons, this also means both are still with us.

Part of the problem is that we cannot wait until an anniversary of the atomic bombing or the release of another video of an unarmed person of color being murdered by police forces to talk about these issues.

Yet, I also remain hopeful. I find hope in the work of long-established groups such as the Arms Control Association, Ploughshares Fund, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and others. I find hope in younger anti-nuclear activists and the movement around the world to formally ban the bomb. I find hope in seeing so many in the streets demanding racial justice and refusing to remain silent in the face of hate, racism, and bigotry. But mostly, I remain hopeful that there will come a time, perhaps on another anniversary of Hiroshima, when I will be asked to write about the past when nuclear weapons and institutional racism once existed and were finally dismantled. Until that day, the fight continues, and we march on.

#### The next generation of students lack even a surface level understanding of U.S. nuclear policy – engagement in policy debates around this issues are essential to hold nuclear decisionmakers accountable and bring the issue of nuclear policy back into the public sphere and away from the nuclear bureaucracy.

Connolly and Hewitt 18 – Former research analyst at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation & former Hebert Scoville Peace Fellow

Erin Connolly Kate Hewitt, June 11 2018, “American students aren’t taught nuclear weapons policy in school. Here’s how to fix that problem.,” Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, https://thebulletin.org/2018/06/american-students-arent-taught-nuclear-weapons-policy-in-school-heres-how-to-fix-that-problem/

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We expected students in colleges and high schools near Manhattan Project sites to have some foundational knowledge of nuclear weapons, their history, and current issues. We were wrong.

Nuclear weapons represent an existential threat to the United States, but the policy discussion surrounding them has largely left the public space. The jargon and reports are intimidating, which we came to terms with ourselves when we entered this field. Nuclear weapons policy is not easily accessible; this is nothing new, and scholars like Carol Cohn, an expert on gender and global security issues, have [explained](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/05/opinion/security-masculinity-nuclear-weapons.html) why. But if experts want the public to be engaged in nuclear policy debates, education and inclusivity are critical. There is no more time to waste, so the two of us decided to start educating the public ourselves.

Ducking the issue. Our generation has grown up largely unaware of nuclear weapons policy debates. The Cold War generation had a very different experience. Practicing duck-and-cover drills in school, they were constantly reminded of this existential threat. While the drills were ineffective for protecting people from a major blast or subsequent radiation, they were effective in terms of raising public awareness about the national security threat posed by nuclear weapons.

The abandonment of duck-and-cover drills might not be a big deal, but it meant that nuclear weapons were left out of public education altogether. This has affected how Americans engage with the issue as adults.

Ignoring nuclear weapons is an unsustainable approach; the public must be aware of this existential threat to the United States and what policies officials have chosen to address this threat. But awareness of these issues is intrinsically linked to issue exposure. For example, one of us (Connolly) found nuclear weapons by chance through a course in college; the other grew up in a town built on nuclear weapons technology but only truly dove into the subject through university studies. When we were exposed to it, we found nuclear weapons policy to be interesting (hence our career choice) but complex. Recognizing the need to increase both exposure and accessibility, we became determined to educate the next generation by providing enough background and information so that students could engage on the issue and feel comfortable looking deeper than the headlines.

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Over the course of 22 presentations in four days, we found students to be engaged and curious, but also surprised by the information we presented. This topic was new for most of them, and their questions were thoughtful and concerned. Many believed Iran had a nuclear weapon, some wondered why we “didn’t just nuke North Korea,” and others countered that we have a “shield” to shoot down missiles as they approach the United States.

We carefully explained each of these issues. There was, in fact, an international agreement in place to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, and contrary to some reports, this agreement was working. Iran has no nuclear weapon. In fact, the International Atomic Energy Agency has [confirmed](https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/iran-is-implementing-nuclear-related-jcpoa-commitments-director-general-amano-tells-iaea-board) 10 times that the Iran nuclear deal is working. “[Nuking North Korea](https://www.vox.com/world/2018/2/7/16974772/north-korea-war-trump-kim-nuclear-weapon)” seems like a simple solution, but we worked through the facts. We do not know where all of North Korea’s nuclear (not to mention chemical and biological) facilities are located. We know that Seoul could be destroyed by conventional means alone. In terms of a shield, the United States has spent [more than $45 billion](https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/692136.pdf#page=75) on the Ground-based Midcourse Defense system to protect the country, yet it has only “[a limited capability to defend the US homeland](http://www.dote.osd.mil/pub/reports/FY2016/pdf/bmds/2016gmd.pdf)” from missile threats in the best of conditions. The US Government Accountability Office [has said](https://www.gao.gov/assets/680/675263.pdf) the system needs significant improvements in order to be reliable. Diplomacy has proven to be the most effective guardian of the US homeland.

Equipped for engagement. The next generation is constantly bombarded by news, alerts, and social media updates. When it comes to nuclear policy, however, young Americans are almost completely unaware of the choices to which they are tacitly consenting. The US federal government [plans to spend](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-nuclear-arsenal/u-s-nuclear-arsenal-to-cost-1-2-trillion-over-next-30-years-cbo-idUSKBN1D030E) $1.2 trillion over the next 30 years to modernize its nuclear arsenal, and today’s young people will bear much of that cost. While the US arsenal must be updated and secure, there are certain aspects that may be unnecessary—yet lawmakers have little accountability for their spending on nuclear weapons, and this has created a situation in which millions of dollars have been wasted. North Korea has become a public concern, but few people know what the threat truly is, or what a viable path forward would look like. The fact that many students believe Iran has a nuclear weapon shows how headlines can mislead the public.

We want to equip students with the information to engage on these issues and discuss them with family and friends, to ask questions of their representatives, and even to consider careers in the field. Nuclear policy affects everyone, yet only one American gets to decide whether to launch an attack, and only a handful of people decide how much money taxpayers will spend on nuclear weapons.

For the public to be engaged in nuclear policy debates, education is critical. That is our mission: to provide students and the public with tools they can use to make informed decisions regarding their money and their future. Fewer than one percent of the students we surveyed knew which countries had nuclear weapons, let alone that the United States and Russia [hold](https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Nuclearweaponswhohaswhat) more than 90 percent of the current global stockpile. The knowledge gap between the public and policymakers has become too wide—we are here to narrow it. Washington State marked the beginning: 1,100 students down and millions to go.

And in answer to the question posed at the beginning of this essay, there are nine countries with nuclear weapons.

### Why Now?

As noted by Richard Haas (see Appendix, Lit Review)  there are any number of good reasons to debate nuclear weapons right now:

First, the Russian shift to a more aggressive nuclear posture; as it becomes more evident the Russian military cannot compete with NATO or other Western powers in conventional forces, they will rely more on nuclear threats.  We have already witnessed this in the conflict in Ukraine, as Russia has threatened to use nuclear weapons if NATO becomes involved.  Further, the coming expiration of New START in 2026, coupled with the breakdown in negotiations for a replacement due to the Ukraine conflict, makes the issue all the more timely.

Second, and even more recently, the Chinese shift away from minimum deterrence to land based nuclear weapons creates a tripolar world which is uniquely unpredictable.  The shift from a mostly submarine based second-strike capability to a land-based, first-strike capable nuclear force, with a likely dramatic increase in the number of warheads available to launch, changes deterrence calculus for both Russia and the United States.

Third, increased proliferation by both North Korea and Iran, with North Korean capabilities getting closer to US homeland and Iranian proliferation threatening Middle East stability, are additional reasons for concern.  These may signal a broader breakdown in anti-proliferation norms globally.

Fourth, the development of tactical nuclear weapons by multiple states has begun to break down the nuclear taboo, moving us closer to another nuclear use.

While the nuclear threats the U.S. faces change constantly, its actual policy around nukes remain stagnant. There is a remarkable level of continuity between presidents, parties, and Nuclear Posture Reviews around what the United States should do with its arsenal. Biden and Trump’s NPRs didn’t adopt any of the affs listed in this paper, and it remains exceedingly unlikely that will change in the next year given Biden’s NPR has already been released. Sole Purpose, although supported by Biden, was not in the report. No new negative security assurance was signed, or NFU adopted, or ICMB cuts implemented. The bilateral reliance of the US and Russia on New START for all nuclear guidance and the breakdown in negotiation for a START replacement in 2026 further ensures the US makes no significant unilateral cuts to its arsenal while awaiting Russia’s next move. The molasses-paced nature of U.S. military bureaucracy and the significant pushback by senior Air Force and Navy officers on any cuts to the arsenal ensures the neg and aff that for the next year at least, the field will remain relatively stable. Basically, Biden’s policy is the same as Trump’s which was the same as Obama’s. Although each tried to add a little flair, the broad strokes are the same which means affirmatives have to break substantially from past reviews.

Unfortunately, the threats and stagnation noted above combine to threaten the collapse of the deterrence framework that has arguably stabilized the world since the end of World War 2.  In the absence of mutually assured destruction, is there another governing principle that can deter the use of nuclear weapons?  Can unilateral US action be a primary step towards global disarmament or some other stabilizing nuclear norm?

Many of these debates have shifted considerably since the last time the debate community confronted even one part of this question–NFU, on the Executive Authority topic.  The recent shifts in Russian and Chinese posture date from within the past 24 months, meaning the literature has significantly changed from 2016.  This topic also gives the community the opportunity to discuss the threat of nuclear annihilation head-on in a way that we have not done in quite some time.

#### This evidence succinctly summarizes the rationale for “why now”?

Egeland et al 21 – Sciences Po, Center for International Studies (CERI), CNRS, Programme on Nuclear Knowledges

Kjølv Egeland, Thomas Fraise, and Hebatalla Taha, “Casting the atomic canon: (R)evolving nuclear strategy,” European Journal of International Security, Volume 7 Issue 3, published online by Cambridge University Press on 12-9-21, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-journal-of-international-security/article/casting-the-atomic-canon-revolving-nuclear-strategy/82E6A693C1B3A6B1DC44DE37B5D84D27>

Introduction

In the preface to the second edition of The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy, published in 1989, Lawrence Freedman concluded that ‘the intellectual exhaustion of nuclear strategy’ had finally been ‘matched by its political exhaustion’. 1 The period since, it would seem, has proved restorative. While nuclear strategy and security studies are currently said to be undergoing a ‘renaissance’ or ‘revival’, 2 the world’s nine nuclear-armed states are all devoting significant resources into expanding or ‘modernising’ their nuclear armouries.3 A range of observers argue that ‘a new Cold War’ is underway.4 Much of the arms control architecture designed during and after the Cold War has been purposefully dismantled,5 and nuclear-armed leaders appear more willing than before to glorify their weapons and issue overt nuclear threats to their adversaries.6 In 2019, the UN Secretary-General established that a ‘qualitative nuclear arms race is underway’. 7 In this context, a new and updated edition of The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy, widely considered the seminal introduction to its subject,8 is timely.

# \*\*\*Appendix: Supporting Evidence

# Lit Review

### Lit Review---Framework/You Should Care

#### Learning about nuclear policy is critical

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We need education. Far too many students go through their entire education, including college, without ever learning about the history of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki or the greater nuclear threat that has persisted since 1945. We must demand that curriculums across the country dedicate more time to the nuclear arms race and the movement to stop nuclear war. This means being involved on school boards and curriculum committees and creating the materials that we can distribute and incorporate into the various school systems.

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We need to hold politicians accountable. Currently, we have a president who has threatened repeatedly to use nuclear weapons, has no problem spending billions on the nuclear arsenal, and may even want to resume nuclear testing. Moreover, we have local, state, and federal politicians who support the president's decisions and are complicit in the march to nuclear competition and the perpetuation of the oppression imposed by the threat of nuclear weapons use. Whenever we have an opportunity to back a politician who fights for nuclear disarmament, we need to do so. We need to demand from our elected officials that they work toward the goal of nuclear abolition and indeed have some of our organizers within the movement run for office themselves. Of course, we need to vote.

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And in answer to the question posed at the beginning of this essay, there are nine countries with nuclear weapons.

#### The time passed between Hiroshima and today has led to a generation of apathetic engagement in nuclear policy – discussing and grappling with the implications of nuclear policy is essential to build broad based movements for disarmament.

Samler and Ciobanu 21 – Administrative and Research Officer for Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy. Christian N. Ciobanu, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation’s Policy and Advocacy Coordinator.

Danielle Samler, Christian Ciobanu, March 17 2021, “Waking Up Generation Z,” Peace Review, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10402659.2020.1867350?casa\_token=4fR6Y37\_\_dwAAAAA:Wclxia-iBszW7KcVFUChslGNV2yKqjxxyji57acAslivdNlHveFa6z8xsYxCG8iyJYIuyD4GE4m1

As we move further away from the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, their impact and legacy becomes a distant memory, losing importance, especially with youth (for this essay, youth is defined as generation Z, the demographic succeeding Millennials and preceding generation alpha. This is defined as people born in the mid to late 90's until early 2010s). The Cold War, not to mention World War II, has faded further into the midst of history and have been replaced by America’s Forever Wars starting in 2001. For this new generation, the legacy and impact of the atomic bombings were not part of their upbringing. Instead, this generation was shaped by the 9/11 attacks, 2008 financial crisis, climate change, increased terrorism around the globe, forever wars, and now a global pandemic. The absence of an emotional connection to the bombings, coupled with the fact that educational institutions largely fail to adequately teach students about the humanitarian impact of the atomic bombings, the hibakusha message, and nuclear weapons more broadly, has resulted in a drastic weakening of the legacy of the atomic bombings.

Youth engagement and mobilization are essential components of social, political, and legislative change. Without full youth engagement, humanitarian disarmament—a people centered approach to disarmament focusing on human security and the prevention and remediation of arms-inflicted human suffering—will not be viewed as a legitimate pathway toward peace. Youth need to claim ownership of their future while looking to the past in order to understand the potential consequences of sticking to the status quo. It becomes difficult, however, to mobilize youth on issues such as nuclear weapons or humanitarian disarmament when the atomic bombings do not solicit similar emotional responses as other pressing social and political issues. This essay addresses ways to revive the significance of the atomic bombings and frame their legacy in a way that youth can connect with and understand in order to effectuate lasting change.

#### These discussions break out of an American-centric understanding of nuclear policy to reemphasize the humanitarian alongside the security concerns of nuclear weapons policy.

Samler and Ciobanu 21 – Administrative and Research Officer for Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy. Christian N. Ciobanu, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation’s Policy and Advocacy Coordinator.

Danielle Samler, Christian Ciobanu, March 17 2021, “Waking Up Generation Z,” Peace Review, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10402659.2020.1867350?casa\_token=4fR6Y37\_\_dwAAAAA:Wclxia-iBszW7KcVFUChslGNV2yKqjxxyji57acAslivdNlHveFa6z8xsYxCG8iyJYIuyD4GE4m1

This blatant display of destruction highlighted not only how dangerous nuclear weapons can be, but also put a spotlight on the dangers of removing humanitarian considerations from policy decisions. The lack of humanity and empathy shown in the atomic bombings is indicative of a larger problem—a lack of empathy globally among states. This is represented in nuclear policies that are void of humanitarian considerations and do not account for any collateral damage those policies might produce once implemented.

American educational institutions do not provide adequate education about the atomic bombings, which has not only further eroded the legacy of the atomic bombings, but has also infected many youth with an American-centric perspective and understanding of the bombings. Students learn about the bombings, but these bombings are not condemned strongly or at all in some instances. Pat Elder, in an article titled “Hiroshima and Nagasaki: American High School Textbooks Perpetuate the Big Lie,” notes that Americans “suffer from a misinformation campaign initially perpetrated by the Truman administration and carried on to this day.” Many textbooks tell the story that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were crucial in ending the war and saving numerous American lives. We have since come to understand that these claims are false, but this is how many of today’s youth were taught to understand the bombings. By framing the bombings this way, today’s youth lack an emotional connection to them.

In today’s world, there is a high risk of nuclear weapons being used. To address that risk, there needs to be widespread support for humanitarian disarmament from today’s youth in order for it to gain more legitimacy among global leaders. Erin Connolly and Kate Hewitt, two young female experts on nuclear policy, discuss the importance of educating high schoolers about nuclear issues in their article titled “American Students Aren’t Taught Nuclear Weapons Policy in School. Here’s How to Fix It.” They note that while generation Z is constantly receiving news and social media updates, information on nuclear policy is not included. For this generation, nuclear weapons are perceived as more of an abstract concept than a real threat. Sarah Bidgood, the Director of the Eurasia Nonproliferation Program at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, argues that this lack of education has resulted in “widespread apathy toward nonproliferation and disarmament decision making among the general public and a looming personnel crisis within government sectors that enact policy in these domains.”

### Lit Review---Now Key

#### Now is a uniquely ripe time to discuss nuclear policy.

Roberts 23 --- Ph.D., Director of the Center for Global Security Research at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Prior to this position, he was deputy assistant secretary of defense for Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy.

Brad, March 2023, “China’s Emergence as a Second Nuclear Peer,” CGSR Study Group Report, https://cgsr.llnl.gov/content/assets/docs/CGSR\_Two\_Peer\_230314.pdf.

The evident erosion of the security environment over the last decade or two has brought with it a daunting collection of new nuclear deterrence challenges.4 Three stand out.

First, Russia’s shift under President Vladimir Putin from partner to rival to aggressor raises basic questions about the stability of deterrence. His willingness to make heavy use of nuclear threats in a war of aggression against Ukraine and his flirtation with nuclear employment there call into question his stated conviction that nuclear wars cannot be won and thus must not be fought. Assuming President Putin continues to lead Russia after the Ukraine war, we can expect a period of nuclear provocations and nuclear-backed probing while he rebuilds.

Second, China is now a decade into what Chairman Xi Jinping has described as “significant increase in China’s strategic potential” aimed at “a strong system of strategic deterrence.” The then commander of U.S. Strategic Command, speaking in 2021, coined the term “strategic breakout” to characterize China’s ongoing modernization, diversification, and build-up of its nuclear forces. China has already fielded an impressive new force of land- and sea-based long-range nuclear-tipped missiles as well as a large force of missiles capable of delivering both conventional and nuclear warheads in the Northeast Asian theater. These deployments have strengthened its deterrence posture and war-fighting capabilities. These developments are more troubling when considered alongside China’s growing conventional military power. With these developments, China has already emerged as a near nuclear peer of the United States. Over the next decade or so, it is likely to emerge as a full peer in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

Third, North Korea’s success in creating and deploying an operational nuclear force also raises questions about the stability of deterrence. It now poses an existential threat to U.S. allies in East Asia and the risk of severe damage to the United States. Iran’s status at the nuclear brink adds further uncertainty and complexity to this picture. We can expect in one or both regions nuclear backed provocations aimed at breaking “hostile American policies.”

Thus, a key additional new factor in the deterrence landscape is the two-peer (2P) problem. China will come to equal Russia if not surpass it as a nuclear weapon state. Moreover, the two are not just peers by quantitative or qualitative metrics—they are adversaries of the U.S.-led regional and global orders who have made common cause to re-make those orders in a “friendship without limits.” This is a qualitatively new and different problem. Thus, we should think of China’s emergence as a nuclear peer of the United States as both additive and transformative from the perspective of U.S. nuclear deterrence. Its transformative aspects derive from the need to deter two major power adversaries simultaneously and, potentially, to wage simultaneous nuclear war against both. This need follows from the likelihood of strategic cooperation between two “friends without limits.” It follows also from the potential for opportunistic aggression by one in the circumstance when the other is at war with the United States.

This new problem is both an emerged and an emerging problem. It has emerged in the sense that Russia and China already cooperate to U.S. strategic disadvantage and that China is engaged in strategic breakout. But the challenges will intensify as their nuclear and broader military modernization efforts proceed, as China achieves a greater ability to project military power in the Indo-Pacific, and as Russia proceeds with its efforts to redress the conditions in the European security order it deems unacceptable.

#### The geopolitical landscape has changed drastically in the last several years, making effective nuclear policy even more important.

Karadag 22 – Researcher at the Institute for Security & Development Policy, Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science at International Islamic University Malaysia.

Lokman Karadag, “Extended Nuclear Deterrence: Threats and Challenges to U.S. Alliance System in Northeast Asia,” Institute for Security & Development Policy, 11-15-2022, nges-to-u-s-alliance-system-in-northeast-asia/

However, **the new geopolitical landscape that has emerged over the past few years with** the **rapprochement between the anti-U.S. front at regional and international levels** **and** the **rapid modernization of** these **countries’ nuclear arsenals has led to re-questioning the credibility of Extended Nuclear Deterrence among the allies**. At the same time, **Russia’s** attempt to change the status quo by **force in** the **Ukraine** War, **China’s** intensified **activities around Taiwan**, and **North Korea’s new law consecrating the right to carry out nuclear strikes** to destroy threats have all further exacerbated the situation. Furthermore, the **rising regional arms race**, **rapid change of regional and international nuclear arms posture**, **and** the **strengthening of nuclear forces** both **in quantity and quality have led Japan and South Korea to increase their defense budget substantially**.

**The nature of the growing threat from multi-directions** increasingly **deteriorates** the **technical adequacy of extended nuclear deterrence**. This is especially relevant in the face of the rising threat from North Korea on the one hand and the Chinese expansionism toward Japan and Taiwan on the other.

### Lit Review---Now Key---Post-Ukraine

#### Ukraine changed the game—nuclear policy is more relevant than ever with new modalities, new systems, and new actors.

Williams 22 - (\*Heather Williams \*\*Nicholas Adamopoulos \*Director, Project on Nuclear Issues and Senior Fellow, International Security Program \*\*Program Manager and Research Associate, Project on Nuclear Issues; 12-16-2022, CSIS, "Arms Control after Ukraine: Integrated Arms Control and Deterring Two Peer Competitors," doa: 4-26-2023) url: https://www.csis.org/analysis/arms-control-after-ukraine-integrated-arms-control-and-deterring-two-peer-competitors

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has illuminated longstanding cracks in the nuclear arms control regime. Legacy arms control tools had little utility as Russia eschewed arms control agreements and transparency-based risk reduction measures designed to avoid unwanted escalation. Russian aggression has included direct and indirect nuclear threats, such as Russian president Vladimir Putin’s statement on September 21, 2022: “They [NATO] have even resorted to the nuclear blackmail. . . . I would like to remind those who make such statements regarding Russia that our country has different types of weapons as well.” Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is forcing a reckoning for the arms control community on the utility of arms control and risk reduction tools, many of which are designed to lower the chances of inadvertent escalation, in the face of an actor who intentionally escalates crises and uses nuclear weapons for coercion.

This reckoning comes as the United States also wrestles with how to deter two peer competitors, given China’s growing strategic arsenal and regional ambitions. In 2020, U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM) commander Admiral Charles Richard stated, “We are on a trajectory for the first time in our nation’s history to face two peer nuclear-capable competitors who have to be deterred differently, and we’re working very hard to meet that challenge.” And the 2022 U.S. National Defense Strategy outlines the need to compete with China as a pacing challenge while accounting for the acute threat from Russia. If arms control is to have a future, it will have to work in tandem with these changing deterrence requirements.

In January 2022, the Project on Nuclear Issues published a study, Integrated Arms Control in an Era of Strategic Competition, that offered a vision for the future of arms control evolving in parallel with integrated deterrence. Integrated arms control may go beyond the rigid structures that have shaped legacy U.S.-Russia arms control agreements by adopting new modalities, incorporating new systems, and including new actors. This policy paper applies the principles of integrated arms control to the changing deterrence landscape and argues that because arms control and deterrence work hand in hand, future U.S. arms control efforts will have to adapt to the changing strategic necessity of deterring two peer competitors. However, arms control remains a path worth pursuing because of its benefits to strategic stability, risk reduction, transparency, and predictability. How the United States and arms control partners apply these principles will be determined by a variety of factors, including the outcome of the war in Ukraine and U.S. decisions about force posture. To be clear, prospects for arms control in the short term are not a cause for optimism; rather, this paper is intended as a first step in identifying the key questions that will determine the role of arms control while deterring two peer competitors.

This paper will first examine ways that the war in Ukraine may impact prospects for arms control, then pose first-order questions about future U.S. arms control policy. In so doing, it assumes Russia will remain a peer strategic competitor with a sizeable nuclear arsenal. Even if Russia emerges from the Ukraine crisis with significantly depleted conventional forces, its nuclear arsenal will be of even greater importance. The paper also assumes that China will continue on its current trajectory of expanding its strategic arsenal. It concludes that balancing integrated arms control and integrated deterrence in the face of two peer competitors should focus on five priorities: 1) tailoring arms control to match deterrence requirements; 2) developing short-term risk reduction measures; 3) furthering allies’ strategic priorities; 4) continuing U.S. strategic modernization; and 5) competing in emerging technologies while also exploring arms control opportunities.

Implications of the War in Ukraine for Arms Control

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, threatened to undermine not only European security and the wider international order but also the practice of arms control. The war in Ukraine has seen conventional forces deployed on a scale unprecedented since the collapse of the Soviet Union, prompted fears of nuclear and chemical weapons use, and poisoned prospects for dialogue on reducing or limiting nuclear weapons in the near term. Russia’s activities in Ukraine have already proven to be damaging to international arms control and disarmament efforts, driving Moscow’s decision to block consensus at the 2022 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. Russian diplomats objected to the inclusion of language in the final document expressing concern about operations and security at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine, arguing it was designed “to settle scores with Russia by raising issues that are not directly related to the treaty.” Although arms control has been under strain for at least a decade, the war in Ukraine has highlighted its limits in preventing intentional aggression and escalation. At the same time, arms control has made Russia’s military buildup over the years more transparent and predictable.

Before proceeding, it is worth recalling what arms control is and what it is not. In their classic volume Strategy and Arms Control, Thomas Schelling and Morton Halperin defined arms control as “all the forms of military cooperation between potential enemies in the interest of reducing the likelihood of war, its scope and violence if it occurs, and the political and economic costs of being prepared for it.” As they described, competition and cooperation can coexist in arms control agreements. Arms control efforts do not necessarily entail disarmament or arms reductions; indeed, as Schelling and Halperin noted, “Any agreement that reduced the capability for destruction in general war might make war more likely, in that the costs and risks in initiating it would not appear as great.” Arms control is a tool for managing—rather than eliminating—competition and armaments.

Integrated arms control is a twenty-first-century tool that can be used while balancing competition and cooperation. It offers an approach that is more flexible than many historical arms control mechanisms and can include a diversity of actors, verification tools, and formats, ranging from bilateral treaties to informal multilateral risk reduction efforts. But Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has tested the utility of arms control and raises difficult questions about prospects for future cooperation. Although the war continues at the time of writing, a series of lessons learned can still be hypothesized regarding what the war will mean for arms control going forward.

First, the war in Ukraine has demonstrated the limits of arms control and risk reduction tools focused primarily on avoiding misperception or inadvertent escalation. Most historical arms control efforts centered on crisis stability and arms race stability, with an underlying assumption that crisis escalation would be due to misperception, inadvertency, or accident. But Russia’s invasion of Ukraine was not an accident. It was not due to misperception of Ukrainian, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO), or U.S. interests in the sense originally envisioned by most arms control theorists—although Putin may have overestimated his own military capabilities, misjudged Ukraine’s resolve, and underestimated NATO’s unity. The invasion cannot be blamed on a lack of crisis communication channels. The war in Ukraine was not a failure of existing risk reduction measures. Rather, most arms control tools were not matched to the nature of the Russian threat and intentional escalation. Presently, Russian and Chinese strategies for competition with the United States involve manipulation of risk underpinned by a growing reliance on nuclear weapons for coercion during a crisis. They do not want to reduce risks in certain scenarios. Combined with increasingly complex and integrated conventional and nuclear systems, these emerging adversary strategies will move future crises further from the Cold War–era escalation ladder and warrant a reassessment of the U.S. crisis management and arms control tool kit.

Second, Russian noncompliance with treaties and arms control norms is indicative of a broader aggressive turn in its strategic posture and intentions. Russia has consistently violated arms control obligations, including its 2007 suspension of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), violation of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and rollback of Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) programs. Additionally, it has used chemical agents as tools of assassination and continued to support the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria despite its use of chemical agents in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Moscow has drawn down participation in numerous cooperative risk reduction activities, decreased decisionmaking transparency, and backstopped its actions with nuclear threats. These data points reflect a wider trend of Russia attempting to remake the international order. In this case, arms control has served as a canary in the coal mine to the Kremlin’s broader strategic intentions; while many of these agreements may now be moot, they point to an enduring value of arms control for adding transparency and predictability to an otherwise opaque and ambiguous actor.

Third, nuclear weapons are of increasing strategic value to ambitious autocrats hoping to pursue opportunistic aggression and risk manipulation. Putin has relied on nuclear weapons throughout the Ukraine crisis for both implicit and explicit bullying, announcing on February 27, 2022, “orders to the defense minister and chief of General Staff to introduce a special combat duty regime in the Russian army’s deference [deterrence] forces.” The reference in the September 21 speech to “existential” risks to Russia—and the alleged threat of Ukraine invading Russian territory—is a direct link to Russian strategic doctrine. Russian policy holds that nuclear weapons may be employed to counter “aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is in jeopardy.” It should be assumed that China is closely watching how Putin uses nuclear threats in Ukraine. Adversary escalation strategies rest on the assumption that they have several asymmetric advantages relative to the United States in stakes, geography, and authoritarian decisionmaking structure that would allow them to credibly threaten escalation in limited wars to the point of deterring U.S. activity in the region. Russia has attempted to leverage these asymmetries in Ukraine, along with integrating military and nonmilitary tools across phases of conflict, albeit with limited success.

Finally, rising tensions with China during the war in Ukraine may be a harbinger of future challenges for the United States in deterring two peer competitors. For the United States, nuclear deterrence has typically been a two-party game, and while some attention has historically been paid to the potential for China to become a nuclear competitor, this possibility has been comparatively limited until the past decade. The recent quantitative and qualitative expansion of Russian and Chinese nuclear arsenals has already offered a preview of future competition. In the midst of the Ukraine war, China has for the first time conducted live-fire exercises in areas Taiwan claims as its own territorial waters, demarcating six training areas that encircled the island for four days. Future nuclear arms control between major powers will have to address multiple actors and domains. Traditional arms control tools, including treaties, may struggle to incorporate and verify any limits on strategic systems. Additionally, arms control with only one competitor could create an opportunity for the other to pursue strategic superiority.

### Lit Review---Now Key---China

#### Chinese modernization demands an updated U.S. response.

Geller 22 – former Senior Policy Analyst for Nuclear Deterrence and Missile Defense in the Center for National Defense at the Heritage Foundation.

Patty-Jane Geller, “The U.S. Must Strengthen Its Nuclear Forces to Deter Growing Nuclear Threats,” Heritage Foundation, 11-30-2022, https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/the-us-must-strengthen-its-nuclear-forces-deter-growing-nuclear-threats

**Threat assessments predicted growth in China’s nuclear forces, but not to the extent we are seeing today**. For instance, a 2012 annual threat assessment noted that China will likely more than double its force of fewer than 50 ICBMs by 2025.10 However, **current predictions estimate that China’s ICBM force alone could eventually surpass the 400 currently in the U.S. arsenal**.11 Additionally, **the National Intelligence Council’s 2012 Global Trends 2030 report focused on future nuclear threats posed by Iran or** the **India–Pakistan** conflict **with no discussion of** the **potential three-party nuclear peer dynamic that is emerging** today.12

The extraordinary technical and geopolitical developments that we see today—**China’s strategic breakout and Russia’s nuclear expansion rather than reduction**—**were** generally **not taken into account** **as** the **Obama** Administration **went about finalizing the nuclear force structure** for the coming decades.13 **Decisions** about the future U.S. force structure **were made in the context of presumably more benevolent trends**. **The Columbia-class nuclear submarine**, for example, **will have** eight fewer missile tubes than its predecessor, the Ohio-class, and therefore **less firing capacity**.14 According to a 2021 RAND Corporation study led by former Obama Administration official Frank Klotz, **the decision** to reduce the number of missiles in the Columbia-class design “**was based** in part **on** the **assumption** that **the multi-decade reduction in U.S. nuclear delivery systems is unlikely to be** suddenly and dramatically **reversed**.”15 Moreover, **a major premise behind agreeing to New START’s reductions was** that **the** **U**nited **S**tates **was “resetting”** its **relations with Russia** and that the projected threat environment would allow it to reduce its nuclear forces to historically low levels.

Deterioration of the Strategic Environment

**The assumptions of a more benign security environment that guided nuclear force planning** over a decade ago have been invalidated. Several developments have contributed to the deterioration of the threat environment, and **U.S. nuclear force planning** should be revised **to account for those developments.**

China. **Most significant is China’s strategic breakout**. In the summer of 2021, satellite imagery revealed that **China is building more than 300 new missile silos in its western desert**, probably for the Dong Feng (DF)-41, China’s most modern ICBM, which is believed to carry multiple warheads.16 As Chinaalready deploys about 100 ICBMs, **filling these new silos with missiles would place its ICBM force on track to exceed the U.S. arsenal** of 400 deployed ICBMs. The Pentagon’s 2021 report on Chinese military power stated that **China intends to have “**at least 1,000 **nuclear warheads by** 2030**,”** which is roughly five times the size **of its current estimated stockpile**.17 In February 2022, the Director of National Intelligence predicted that “**Beijing will continue the** largest ever **nuclear force** expansion **and arsenal** diversificationin its history.”18

* Beijing is also advancing its nuclear forces qualitatively. In addition to rounding out its nuclear triad with the deployment of the H-6N nuclear-capable bomber, Beijing has hundreds of regional, dual-capable missiles like the DF-26 and DF-21 that are capable of striking out to the second island chain with precision.19 The United States, by contrast, has no nuclear weapons based in the Indo-Pacific, leaving a potential perceived gap in U.S. deterrence capability.
* China is also testing and deploying nuclear-capable hypersonic weapons, including a fractional orbital bombardment system (FOBS) that orbited the globe before releasing its hypersonic glide vehicle, which maneuvered to its target, demonstrating a technological capability not known to exist in U.S. and Russian arsenals.20
* Finally, activity at China’s Lop Nur nuclear test site raises concern that Beijing is not adhering to the zero-yield nuclear test standard by which the United States abides.21 Conducting even low-yield nuclear tests would enable China to improve the quality of its nuclear warheads and pursue other novel nuclear capabilities.

These upgrades have led senior U.S. leaders to conclude that China has become a nuclear peer **of the United States and Russia**. According to STRATCOM Commander Admiral Charles Richard, **China** “**possesses the capability to employ** any coercive nuclear strategy **today**.”22 **The United States for the** first time **now faces a** three-party nuclear dynamic **that requires it to** deter two nuclear peers at once **and** deter them differently**.**

#### China is modernizing their forces and moving away from a minimum deterrence model of submarine-based nukes. This destabilizes the bilateral deterrence between the US and Russia that has existed since the Cold War.

The Economist, 2022 (“How Will America Deal With Three-Way Nuclear Deterrence” November 29, <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2022/11/29/how-will-america-deal-with-three-way-nuclear-deterrence>, DoA 4/27/2023, DVOG)

THE LANKY Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missile and its squat naval cousin, Trident, stand sentinel near Omaha, outside the headquarters of America's Strategic Command, which is in charge of America's fearsome nuclear arsenal. Inside, STRATCOM's personnel say they have been at "battle stations" since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, [watching](https://www.economist.com/europe/2022/10/17/how-to-detect-an-imminent-russian-nuclear-attack) for any sign that Vladimir Putin might act on his threats to use nukes. For Admiral Charles Richard, the commander, **the war in Ukraine marks a new era in which big powers use nuclear weapons to coerce rivals. But "this is just the warm-up**," he declared on November 3rd. "**The big one is coming. And it isn't going to be very long before we're going to get tested."**

**The "big one" is China, which is fast expanding its nuclear stockpile from about 200-300 warheads at the start of the decade to perhaps 1,500 by 2035**, according to the Pentagon's latest annual report on China's [military power](https://www.economist.com/china/2022/11/03/xi-jinping-wants-ready-soldiers-and-loyal-generals), published on November 29th (see chart). **Its arsenal would thus start to resemble those of America and Russia, whose long-distance "strategic" nukes are capped at 1,550** deployed warheads each under the New START treaty (though, unlike China, they have thousands more shorter-range nukes as well as warheads in storage).

The cold war, in which America and the Soviet Union menaced each other with tens of thousands of nukes, was scary enough. **In the new age America confronts not just Russia but also China. New weapons-among them hypersonic missiles that are hard to detect and shoot down, and space and cyber weapons that threaten command-and-control systems-may unsettle the nuclear balance. Worse, decades of arms-control agreements may end by 2026. A new nuclear-arms race looms. Many think that it has already started.**

Admiral Richard last year sounded the alarm that China was staging a "strategic breakout". Now he warns that America is losing the military contest: "As I assess our level of deterrence against China, the ship is slowly sinking." President Joe Biden says America faces a "decisive decade". In a flurry of national-security policy documents this autumn his administration classifies Russia as the "acute" threat and China as the "pacing challenge".

**"By the 2030s the United States will, for the first time in its history, face two major nuclear powers as strategic competitors and potential adversaries. This will create new stresses on stability and new challenges for deterrence, assurance, arms control, and risk reduction," declares the Nuclear Posture Review** (NPR).

STRATCOM says it needs a new generation of theorists. Admiral Richard compares the conundrum to the three-body problem of astrophysics. **The motion of two celestial bodies in orbit around each other is easily predicted by Newton's mechanics. Add a third body, and their movement becomes chaotically unpredictable. Should America keep concentrating on Russia, whose nuclear arsenal still poses "an enduring existential threat", and accord less priority to China, or vice versa**?

Like many nuclear powers, China long adhered to a form of minimum deterrence, whereby a few hundred warheads are deemed sufficient to ensure enough survive a surprise attack to inflict devastating retaliation. In the cold war America and the Soviet Union lived instead by the mad maths of "counterforce", believing that nuclear war could be won with ever more weapons, many aimed at their foe's nukes.

From 60,000-odd warheads in the mid-1980s, their stockpiles shrank through arms-control deals. New START now limits their "strategic" nukes, such as intercontinental ballistic missiles (icbms) with a range of 5,500km (3,420 miles) or more. Each can deploy 700 launch platforms (icbms, submarine-launched missiles and heavy bombers) and 1,550 warheads.

Disarmament advocates want further limits. Some have called on America to adopt a policy of "no first use" akin to China's declared stance. Mr Biden campaigned for a looser formulation, that the "sole purpose" of nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack. But the war in Ukraine and an outcry among allies-who feared a weakening of the American nuclear umbrella-put paid to that. The Biden team instead declared fuzzily that the "fundamental role" of nukes is to deter nuclear attack.

**One reason the administration has not done more to reduce the role of such weapons is that China appears determined to increase it. Its nuclear triad is growing apace**. It is digging three vast fields with at least 300 silos for icbms. America says its Jin-class submarines have now been armed with JL-3 missiles, able to reach the continental United States from protected waters close to China. China has also deployed the nuclear-capable H-6N bomber, equipped for air-to-air refuelling. Having long kept warheads separate from missiles, China seems to be shifting to rapid "launch on warning" of an incoming nuclear attack, as in America and Russia.

**Admiral Richard argues that, with such "breathtaking" expansion, China is seeking to "confront and coerce other nuclear-capable peers". But James Acton of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a think-tank, questions whether China can produce fissile material as fast as the Pentagon forecasts. He argues that China's behaviour may be caused by fear that its modest arsenal is vulnerable to America's more capable spy satellites and missiles**.

**The "security dilemma" of the nuclear world is such that one man's defence is often the other's offence. China's test last year of a globe-circling hypersonic weapon may reflect an effort to ensure that any retaliatory strike can get through America's missile defences; or it could be a step towards delivering a surprise first strike**.

Tong Zhao, of Princeton University's Programme on Science and Global Security, notes that China's policy has become more opaque and its language tougher, with talk of "strategic victory". He argues that China, as it gains a military edge in its region, may worry that America could use nuclear weapons to defend [Taiwan](https://www.economist.com/china/2022/09/01/a-weak-china-may-be-more-warlike-than-a-strong-one). But Xi Jinping, China's leader, may have a political aim, suggests Mr Zhao: to hasten the end of the Western-dominated order and force America "to accept peaceful coexistence with China and treat it with respect".

For now, China seems uninterested in arms control. It says it will talk about limits only when America and Russia bring their stockpiles down to Chinese levels. In any case, it dislikes the intrusiveness of US-Russia verification regimes. For all of Mr Putin's nuclear threats, and American warnings of "catastrophic consequences", the two sides still regularly exchange information about their strategic weapons.

START anew

That is good. **The bad news is that talks between American and Russian officials, who were due to meet in Cairo this week to discuss resuming mutual inspections, have been postponed. New START expires in 2026**. It is the last major accord between the nuclear superpowers after America withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002 (to pursue missile defences), the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019 (citing cheating by Russia) and the Open Skies treaty in 2020 (ending mutual reconnaissance overflights).

**America wants any successor to New START to cover nukes that are currently excluded. Among them are esoteric strategic Russian weapons under development, such as a nuclear-powered torpedo, and thousands of "non-strategic" or**[**tactical nuclear weapons**](https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2022/09/14/do-russias-military-setbacks-increase-the-risk-of-nuclear-conflict)**with a shorter range and usually a lower explosive power.**

**Time is short. America and Russia are unlikely to resume nuclear talks while war rages in Ukraine. They could keep abiding by the terms of New START after it expires, but that may not last without a new accord in sight. A Republican president, if one is elected in 2024, may be disinclined to negotiate a narrow US-Russia deal.**

Hawkish Americans think it is time to rebuild the nuclear arsenal. They include Franklin Miller, a former Pentagon official who helped slash America's stockpile in the 1980s and 90s by shrinking the bloated target list and removing the "overkill" of using several warheads to destroy a single target. He thinks America should roughly double its arsenal to 3,000-3,500 deployed strategic warheads-within a treaty if possible or unilaterally if not. The aim is to ward off Russia and China simultaneously, because an alliance between the two cannot be ruled out, he says.

Russia and China would surely respond with still more nukes. Little matter, retorts Mr Miller. If they decided to match or exceed America's arsenal they would be wasting money on nukes that would only "make the rubble bounce". Others muse that 6,000 warheads would deter smaller powers from trying to match big ones.

In contrast, **Rose Gottemoeller, who negotiated New START, warns against throwing away the gains of decades of arms control. America and Russia remain each other's most serious nuclear threat, and so have an interest in a new treaty. Russia, in particular, now faces an America that is modernising its triad and command system. China is a long way from parity, she notes, and America should not give up on seeking agreement with it. Rather than be drawn into a nuclear spiral, America should concentrate on competing in new areas of technology, such as quantum computing and artificial intelligence.**

**Team Biden says it does not need more nukes. Yet nuclear posture is in part political signalling, and politics may eventually**[**push**](https://www.economist.com/europe/2022/08/02/what-would-push-the-west-and-russia-to-nuclear-war)**America to re-arm**. The risk of Russia using nukes rises as it loses ground to Ukrainian forces. As China's military force grows, so will America's alarm. Some think America should already reload its nuclear bombers within the rules of New START. Once the treaty expires, both America and Russia can bring lots of stored weapons back into service. **February 4th 2026, the last day of New START, may mark the start of a new nuclear race-this time one that is three-sided and perilously complex.**

#### China wants nuclear parity with the US and Russia––reducing the size of our arsenal can prevent a new arms race between nuclear superpowers

Lenefsky 4/27 – Former Project Director for Arms Control at the United Nations Association USA, JD from NYU Law

[(David](https://www.law.com/newyorklawjournal/2023/04/27/nuclear-weapons-a-lawless-world/?slreturn=20230327174434) Lenefsky, “Nuclear Weapons: A Lawless World,” 27 April 2023, New York Law Journal, <https://www.law.com/newyorklawjournal/2023/04/27/nuclear-weapons-a-lawless-world/?slreturn=20230327174434>)

**The** new factor **in superpower nuclear relationships is** of course China**.** Reportedly, **China’s nuclear stockpile has about 400 warheads. U.S. intelligence authorities have publicly stated** China isbothexpanding its nuclear weapons stoc**kpile,** which could increase to about 1,000 warheads by 2030, and building intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Not surprisingly,China is **thought to be** uninterested in nuclear arms control until it reaches parity **with the United States and Russia,** that is, 700 platforms (missiles and bombers) carrying 1,550 weapons.

**China’s position,** however**, offers the United States an opportunity to raise** with China and Russiathe issue ofminimal deterrence**,** meaning,each **of the three** possessing no more of a nuclear arsenal thanisnecessary to d**eter the others from attacking.**

Would not all three nuclear superpowers be more secure if each limited their nuclear arsenals to 400 platforms carrying 400 warheads—or 300 platforms and warheads, or 200? What level of damage would each find unacceptable from a retaliatory strike? Would Russia and China gamble that the United States would not have 20 to 40 surviving nuclear missiles even after a combined attack that could destroy the ten largest cities in each country?

**Minimal deterrence** avoids an arms race **while it** enables the United States to continue deterrence **of attacks on** our **allies.** And **minimal deterrence** can be verified. **All three have** satellite surveillance **of the other two, plus the United States and Russia have substantial experience,** which **they can share with China,** withon-site inspections **of each other which allow them to confirm information shared in data exchanges.** (Discussion of the feasibility of total nuclear disarmament is intentionally omitted. So also is the subject of stopping the spread of nuclear weapons to additional countries—a goal made more problematic given the lack of restraint by the three nuclear superpowers.)

### Lit Review---Now Key---North Korea

#### North Korea is emboldened to build nukes now since they know China has their back

Sanger and Choe 4/26 – White House and national security correspondent at NYT, Seoul bureau chief for The New York Times

(David E. Sanger, Choe Sang-Hun, “Inside Biden’s Renewed Promise to Protect South Korea From Nuclear Weapons,” <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/26/us/politics/biden-korea-nuclear-weapons.html>)

WASHINGTON — In the four years since President Donald J. Trump’s leader-to-leader diplomacy with Kim Jong-un of North Korea collapsed after a failed meeting in Hanoi, the North’s arsenalof nuclear weapons **has** expanded so fast **that** American and South Korean **officials** admit they **have** stopped trying to keep a precise count.

North Korea’s missile tests are so frequent that they prompt more shrugs than big headlines in Seoul.

So when President Biden welcomes President Yoon Suk Yeol of South Korea to the White House on Wednesday, only the second state visit of Mr. Biden’s presidency, there will be few pretenses that disarming North Korea remains a plausible goal.

**Instead,** American officials say, Mr.Biden’s most vivid commitmentto Mr. Yoon **will focus on** what arms control experts call **“**extended deterrence**,” renewing a vow that** America’snucleararsenal will be used**,** if necessary**, to dissuade or respond to a North Korean nuclear attack** on the South.

**The emphasis on deterrence is a striking admission that** all other effortsover the past three decades **to** rein in Pyongyang’s **nuclear program,** including diplomatic persuasion, crushing sanctions and episodic promises of development aid,have all failed**. It is also intended to** tamp down a growing call in South Korea for its own independent arsenal**,** on the very remote chance that North Korea would make the suicidal decision to use a nuclear weapon.

The North’s arsenal will hardly be the only topic under discussion during Mr. Yoon’s visit. He and Mr. Biden will also celebrate the 70th anniversary of the alliance between their countries, commitments for more South Korean investment in manufacturing semiconductors and plans to bolster Seoul’s always-fraught relationship with Japan.

But the rapid expansion of North Korea’s capabilities is a subject of perpetual mutual concern for both countries. At a recent security conference held by the Harvard Korea Project, several experts said they believed Mr. Kim’s goal was to approach the size of Britain’s and France’s arsenals, which hold 200 to 300 weapons each.

Mr. Biden and Mr. Yoon are expected to hold out the possibility of pursuing a diplomatic solution toward what a succession of administrations have called the “complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.” But the North, administration officials say, has declined to respond to a series of public and private messages from Mr. Biden and his aides.

And what seems irreversible now is North Korea’s entrenched and advanced program.

With China expanding its arsenal to 1,500 weapons by around 2035, according to Pentagon estimates, and Russia threatening to use tactical weapons in Ukraine, “this is not an external environment in which it’s easy to have a conversation with North Korea,” said Victor Cha, a professor at Georgetown University who directed policy toward the North during the George W. Bush administration. “They look around their neighborhood and they say, ‘I don’t think so.’”

Mr. Trump vowed “fire and fury like the world has never seen” when North Korea greeted his presidency with missile launches; he ultimately tried the innovative approach of direct diplomacy with Mr. Kim. He emerged at one point predicting that Mr. Kim would begin disarming within six months and declaring at another that the North was “no longer a nuclear threat.” The arsenal just kept growing.

On Friday, North Korea’s foreign minister, Choe Son-hui, repeating a line that has been uttered by her government frequently in recent months, said the North’s status “as a world-class nuclear power is final and irreversible.”

Few experts believe the shift in rhetoric or the threats about first strikes indicate a greater willingness by the North to employ nuclear weapons. The response would be devastating. But gone are the days when American officials thought that the arsenal was a bargaining chip, something to be bartered away for trade deals, or for the string of hotels that Mr. Trump said America would help build on the North Korean beaches.

There was a mistaken belief, said Joseph S. Nye, who oversaw one of the first intelligence estimates of North Korea for the U.S. government, “that they would try to cash in their chips and get something” for the nuclear weapons. But rather than developing the country, he said at the Harvard conference, the North’s highest goal was “to preserve the dynasty,” and that meant holding on to the arsenal, and expanding it.

North Korea’s new confidence in expanding the arsenal, American officials said in interviews, **is** partly **explained by a** change in the relationship with China. **Previously, the United States worked with Beijing** — the supplier of critical energy and trade to the North — to rein in the country. In the mid-2000s, the Chinese even hosted the so-called six-party talks — North Korea, along with Japan, Russia, the United States and South Korea — **to resolve the nuclear issue.** When Pyongyang conducted nuclear tests, Beijing often voted for sanctions, and imposed a few.

**Now, rather than view North Korea as an unruly,** angry **neighbor,** China has welcomed it,along with Russia and Iran, as part of what White House officials call a coalition of the aggrieved. While Chinese officials presumably fear North Korea’s nuclear tests could go awry, creating a radioactive cloud, **it appears perfectly happy to have the North unsettling the United States and** its **allies with regular missile tests.**

**Pyongyang’s most recent tests** of intercontinental ballistic missiles — including one powered by solid fuel, which makes it quick to roll out of hiding and launch — **suggest that** North Korea can now almost certainly reach American territory**,** even if its ability to hit specific targets is imprecise. And over the past year, the North has enshrined its nuclear capability in its laws and started talking about its first-strike capabilities, rather than casting its arsenal as purely defensive.

### Lit Review---Now Key---North Korea / Iran

#### Global and regional threats from states like North Korea and Iran are increasing.

Geller 22 – former Senior Policy Analyst for Nuclear Deterrence and Missile Defense in the Center for National Defense at the Heritage Foundation.

Patty-Jane Geller, “The U.S. Must Strengthen Its Nuclear Forces to Deter Growing Nuclear Threats,” Heritage Foundation, 11-30-2022, https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/the-us-must-strengthen-its-nuclear-forces-deter-growing-nuclear-threats

Rogue States. **The United States must also contend with the increasing nuclear threat from** NorthKorea, **which is** improving **its** ability **to** strike **the** U.S. homelandand **U.S.** regional allies **while** lowering **its** threshold **for** nuclear use.32 **This threat will** likely **implicate** U.S. **extended deterrence commitments**. **The United States may also need to contend with a future** nuclear-armed Iran, **which will have** implications **for** stability **in the** Middle East.33

### Lit Review---Now Key---Russia

#### The Russian threat is likewise growing and demands U.S. response.

Geller 22 – former Senior Policy Analyst for Nuclear Deterrence and Missile Defense in the Center for National Defense at the Heritage Foundation.

Patty-Jane Geller, “The U.S. Must Strengthen Its Nuclear Forces to Deter Growing Nuclear Threats,” Heritage Foundation, 11-30-2022, https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/the-us-must-strengthen-its-nuclear-forces-deter-growing-nuclear-threats

Russia. **The new Chinese nuclear threat adds to the Russian nuclear threat**, **which is also** growing. The **United States and Russia have rough parity in their strategic nuclear forces** under the limits set by New START. However, **Russia is expanding its nuclear capabilities in three key areas** that may enable it to gain advantages—or strengthen preexisting ones—over the United States.

* Russia is modernizing and expanding its stockpile of approximately 2,000 non-strategic nuclear weapons, which is unconstrained by New START,23 at a time when the United States deploys only a small inventory of weapons in this category in Europe.24 The Obama Administration’s 2010 Nuclear Posture Review and 2013 Nuclear Employment Guidance stated that large disparities in nuclear forces, such as this one, will impact long-term strategic stability.25 Russian President Vladimir Putin’s threats that nuclear weapons might be used as Russia wages war on Ukraine only increase the significance of this disparity in non-strategic nuclear weapons.
* Russia is developing several new nuclear capabilities, including nuclear-armed hypersonic weapons that could strike key U.S. and allied forces during a regional conflict. It is also developing a nuclear-powered torpedo armed with a megaton-class nuclear warhead and a nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed cruise missile.26 These exotic capabilities were probably not anticipated in 2010.
* Like China, Russia has active nuclear weapons facilities and is believed to be conducting low-yield nuclear tests that could enable it to improve the military characteristics of its warheads.27 Unlike the United States, which has no active nuclear weapon production capability, it also has an active nuclear production complex that would enable it to develop more weapons that it can add to ample upload capacity on its strategic forces.

#### The potential for Russian-Chinese cooperation multiplies the threat.

Geller 22 – former Senior Policy Analyst for Nuclear Deterrence and Missile Defense in the Center for National Defense at the Heritage Foundation.

Patty-Jane Geller, “The U.S. Must Strengthen Its Nuclear Forces to Deter Growing Nuclear Threats,” Heritage Foundation, 11-30-2022, https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/the-us-must-strengthen-its-nuclear-forces-deter-growing-nuclear-threats

Russian and Chinese cooperation. **A concern that the United States did not face in 2010 is the potential for greater Russian and Chinese military cooperation**. **In February 2022, Russia and China declared a** “no limits” partnership **with** “no ‘forbidden’ areas of cooperation.”29 This partnership has included arms sales and technical cooperation, joint participation in major exercises such as Vostok 2022, and each country’s implicit or explicit diplomatic support for the other’s revanchist ambitions.30 More concrete military cooperation is uncertain, and Russian–Chinese cooperation will probably ebb and flow; nevertheless, because its nuclear forces cannot be adjusted rapidly in response to these fluctuations, **the United States will** need **to account for this** risk **in its force planning.**

Adversary Missile Defense. **Russia and China are improving their missile defense systems, which could challenge the ability of U.S. missiles to hold targets at risk**. Russia has more midcourse defense interceptors than the United States has and is modernizing that system and others like the S-500 that can defend against a range of missile threats. China is also developing a midcourse interceptor that could engage ICBMs.31 Future U.S. capabilities **will** need **to be able to** contend with these defenses.

#### Russia’s suspension of participation in the New START treaty proves arms control agreements are nearly obsolete in the squo––huge rusk of a three-way arms race

Letman 4/24 – Journalist at The Diplomat

[(Jon](https://truthout.org/articles/the-us-has-no-plans-to-give-up-nuclear-weapons-the-public-needs-to-change-that/) Letman, “The US Has No Plans to Give Up Nuclear Weapons. The Public Needs to Change That.,” 24 April 2023, truthout, <https://truthout.org/articles/the-us-has-no-plans-to-give-up-nuclear-weapons-the-public-needs-to-change-that/>)

Fewer Weapons, Fewer Constraints

During the Cold War, the U.S. had far more nuclear weapons deployed in many more locations including Alaska, Hawaii, and over a dozen countries around the world.

“Over the long course of the nuclear age, concerned U.S. citizens have demanded arms control and disarmament. That effort has to be renewed again.”

And while Kimball said greater consolidation is generally better than having many more sites hosting nuclear weapons, saying, “the presence of nuclear weapons in specific locations does not by itself communicate how widespread geographically the risk is that they pose, because if nuclear weapons are used in a conflict involving Russia or China,” [or anywhere else] the global effects would be catastrophic.

**In recent years,** arms control treatiessuch as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Open Skies Treaty and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (“Iran Nuclear Deal”) have been abandoned **by the U.S., Russia, or both. The last remaining** nuclear arms control **treaty between the U.S. and Russia, the** New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty **(New START),** was **extended for five years just two days before it expired** in 2021 **but in February,** Russia announced it was suspending participation**,** leaving the lastU.S.-Russia arms control treaty hanging by a thread.

**With the end of inspections, data exchanges, and much-needed communication between Washington and Moscow, as well as Beijing,** Kimball **worries mistrust can lead to** the assumption of **worst-case scenarios.** He says there is a great need for increased public awareness and engagement on nuclear issues.

While the U.S. nuclear enterprise has widespread support by both Democrat and Republican members of Congress, one of the boldest shows of opposition to nuclear weapons was voiced by Michigan congresswoman Rep. Rashida Tlaib, who has expressed her support for the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Additional support for the prohibition of TPNW (also called the “ban treaty”) came from Massachusetts Rep. James McGovern and Oregon Rep. Earl Blumenauer, who introduced a resolution in 2019 calling for “the American people to work towards reducing and ultimately eliminating nuclear weapons.” Furthermore, in 2022, more than 200 U.S. mayors collectively called for the adoption of a timebound plan for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

“This is an existential threat that demands engagement even with our worst adversaries and even with a bona fide war criminal like Vladimir Putin because our survival ultimately depends on it.”

**Without dialogue** and diplomatic engagement**,** the result**,** Kimball warned, **could be an** unconstrained three-way arms race **between Russia, China and the U.S. “**If we didn’t have enough problems already,” Kimball said, **“**it still can get worse.”

The public has a vital role in all this, Kimball said. “Over the long course of the nuclear age, concerned U.S. citizens have stood up and demanded that their leaders take action to reduce the number and the risks posed by nuclear weapons by engaging in arms control and disarmament diplomacy with our adversaries. That effort has to be renewed again.”

#### There’s currently no strategic stability––that means Russian belligerence dramatically increases the chances of nuclear war

Lenefsky 4/27 – Former Project Director for Arms Control at the United Nations Association USA, JD from NYU Law

[(David](https://www.law.com/newyorklawjournal/2023/04/27/nuclear-weapons-a-lawless-world/?slreturn=20230327174434) Lenefsky, “Nuclear Weapons: A Lawless World,” 27 April 2023, New York Law Journal, <https://www.law.com/newyorklawjournal/2023/04/27/nuclear-weapons-a-lawless-world/?slreturn=20230327174434>)

The dynamics of the nuclear **weapons** relationshipbetween **and among** the United States, Russia and China is in free fall.

There is presently nostrategic **nuclear weapons** stability between the three nuclear superpowers **other than their recognition**, it is assumed, **that preventing nuclear war is an existential imperative. Each knows,** it is hoped, **that wars** today which kill thousands would—**if strategic nuclear weapons are used—kill millions.**

VladimirPutin’sannouncementon Feb. 21that Russia “is suspending **its** participation” inthe New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (called theNew START **Treaty)—the only remaining bilateral** nuclear arms **control agreement with the United States—is the denouement to** 51 years of such agreements.

The United States and Russia **(formerly the Soviet Union)** have had ten formal agreements dealing with strategic nuclear weapons**. Seven of these agreements deal with the number of strategic nuclear weapons and delivery systems each side is allowed to possess.**

The first, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, known as SALT I, signed in May 1972, froze the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and sea borne launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) at existing levels.

At the time, the United States had 1,054 ICBMs and the Soviet Union 1,618 ICBMs. Each was allowed to dismantle older ICBMs and SLBMs and build new SLBMs, but the United States was limited to 710 SLBMs on 44 ballistic missile submarines and the Soviet Union to 950 SLBMs on 62 submarines. Congress approved SALT I but mandated that future arms control agreements must have equal limits for both countries.

The following six agreements substantially reduced the number of delivery systems and nuclear weapons each side could possess. The last **such** agreement, New START**, entered into force on Feb. 5, 2011. It** limits **each to 700 deployed ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers equipped to carry** nuclear weapons. The total number of deployed warheads each is allowed is 1,550.

**Days before New START was due to expire, the United States and Russia agreed to a five-year extension** to Feb. 4, 2026—the last extension the treaty permits. Putin’s **February** announcementstated Russia is withdrawing from the treaty’s verification procedures—not from the treaty itself—but that it would not deploy additional strategic weapons.

Several factors greatly complicate current nuclear weapons relationships between the United States, Russia and China.

**First,** Russia’s invasion of Ukraineon Feb. 24, 2022 **and** Putin’s threat the next day**,** even if ambiguous,to use nuclear weapons—presumably tactical (battlefield) nuclear weapons—**if the United States or NATO “interferes with us”** creates a heightened belligerency **and** nuclear **weapons** uncertainty not experienced since the Cuban missile crisisin 1963. **This uncertainty has obviously been** exacerbated by Putin’s recent announcementon March 25 **that Russian** tactical nuclear weapons could be deployed by summer in Belarus, Ukraine’s northern neighbor.

**The uncertainty of it all is further demonstrated by the** irreconcilability of Putin’sMarch 25 statement with hisjoint statement withChina’s PresidentXiissued just four daysearlier on March 21 **which declared: “**All nuclear**-**weaponstates shouldrefrain from deploying nuclear weapons abroad andwithdrawnuclearweapons deployed abroad**.” China,** moreover, **has expressly stated that nuclear weapons should not be used in Ukraine.**

Putin’s talk about nuclear weapons is even more worrisome given Russia’s so-called Wagner mercenary group, a private paramilitary company employing former prisoners, fighting in Ukraine. Its leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin has accused senior Russian military leaders of incompetence—and “treason.”

This degree of belligerent independence **raises the terrorizing thought of** the Wagner group (orany non-governmental actor) obtaining anuclearweapon**.** The totality of circumstances merits urgent attention to the issues of unauthorized and accidental use of nuclear weapons.

If arms control discussions with Russia ever resume, then clearly there is need to add at least three agenda items: possession and control of tactical nuclear weapons; a no-first use pledge or policy not to be the first to use nuclear weapons; and, command and control of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

Second**,** all three nuclear superpowers are developinga **new** class of missiles—hypersonic missiles **capable of travelling** at more than **five times the speed of sound. If perfected, these missiles would** likelyescape all but last minute detection **by existing early warning systems. Decision making by a targeted country would be equivalent to** playing(pun obviously intended)Russian roulette**,** butwith nuclear weapons.

### Lit Review---Now Key---South Korea

#### The Washington Declaration is a centerpiece of renewed US-South Korea cooperation and **reverses** previous commitments to reducing the role of nuclear weapons.

Sanger 23 – White House and national security correspondent, and a senior writer. In a 38-year reporting career for The New York Times, he has been on three teams that have won Pulitzer Prizes, most recently in 2017 for international reporting.

David A. Sanger, “U.S. and South Korea Agree to Cooperate on Nuclear Weapons,” The New York Times, April 26, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/26/us/politics/biden-south-korea-state-visit.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare

**The United States will give South Korea a** central role **for the** first time **in** strategic planning **for the use of nuclear weapons in any conflict with North Korea, in** return **for an agreement that Seoul will** notpursue **its** ownnuclearweapons **arsenal,** American officials said.

The agreement, which the two sides are calling **the Washington Declaration**, **is a** centerpiece of this week’s state visit by President Yoon Suk Yeol of South Korea, who will appear with President Biden at the White House on Wednesday.

The **new cooperation is closely modeled on how NATO nations plan for possible nuclear conflict**, but **the American president will retain** the **sole authority** to decide whether to employ a nuclear weapon. While the United States has never formally adopted a “no first use” policy, officials said such a decision would almost certainly come only after the North itself used a nuclear weapon against South Korea.

On Wednesday morning, John Kirby, a spokesman for the National Security Council, said, “I would caution anyone from thinking that there was new focus on the centrality of nuclear weapons,” despite the wording of the new declaration. “**We have treaty commitments to the Republic on the peninsula**,” he said, using the shorthand for the Republic of Korea, **and** “**we want to make sure we have as many options as possible.”**

**The accord** is notable for several reasons. First, it **is intended to provide assurance to the South Korean public**, where **pollsters have found consistent majorities in favor of** building **an independent South Korean nuclear force**. President Yoon himself mused openly about that option early this year, though his government quickly walked the statement back. He also raised the possibility of reintroducing American tactical nuclear weapons to South Korea, a step that his government has said in recent weeks it is no longer pursuing.

The United States withdrew its last nuclear weapons from Korea in 1991, under the George H.W. Bush administration.

But the second reason it is important is one the Biden administration is saying little about: **It edges toward** reversing the commitment, going back to the Obama administration, to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in American defense strategy. **For years, the United States has been improving its non-nuclear strike options,** improving the precision and power of conventional weapons that could reach any target in the world in about an hour.

But **the South is looking for greater assurance of “extended deterrence,”** the concept that the United States will seek to deter a North Korean nuclear strike on the South with a nuclear response — even if that risks a North Korean strike on an American city.

**South Korea is a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which prohibits it from obtaining nuclear weapons**. So the commitment not to build its own weapons is not new. **But nations can withdraw from the treaty, simply by providing notice to the United Natio**ns. Only one nation has done so: North Korea, in the early 1990s. Three countries have not signed the treaty and have developed nuclear weapons: Israel, India and Pakistan.

#### Nuclear policy is the lynchpin of the U.S.-South Korea relationship --- now is uniquely key.

Work 22 – PhD, Fellow and Director of Academic Affairs at the Korea Economic Institute of America, Nonresident Fellow at the Stimson Center.

Clint Work, “How, Exactly, Can the US Strengthen Extended Deterrence?,” The Diplomat, 11-08-2022, https://thediplomat.com/2022/11/how-exactly-can-the-us-strengthen-extended-deterrence/

Nonetheless, **given its frequent invocation by U.S. and South Korean leaders and officials**, “**strengthening extended deterrence**” **has become a truism**. Despite its constant mention, it’s unclear exactly how it can be effectively implemented. Furthermore, its meaning differs depending on the audience. Its effectiveness and what it means is perceived differently in Washington than in Seoul or Pyongyang.

What is clear is **there’s significant concern in Seoul about** both **the nature and extent of the U.S. extended deterrence commitment. While South Korean concerns** about the U.S. commitment **are as old as the alliance** – in fact, they precede it – **they have taken on a newfound vigor amid North Korea’s advancing nuclear and missile capabilities and testing campaign** **as well as** its more **aggressive nuclear policy law and threat to deploy tactical nuclear weapons**; **China-U.S. competition**; **and perceptions of waning U.S. influence.**

Informally, **U.S. officials show frustration regarding South Korea’s concerns**. How, they ask, is the U.S. commitment to South Korea not readily evident? There are 28,500 U.S. military personnel stationed in the country, there’s a longstanding Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and South Korea, and well over a hundred thousand U.S. citizens live there. What about those very concrete realities is insufficient? Earlier this year, when a poll found 71 percent of South Koreans were in favor of the country developing its own nuclear weapons, U.S. officials were incredulous. They shouldn’t have been.

Of course, **the South Korean people are aware of the U.S. presence and treaty commitment**. They’re far more aware of them than are most U.S. citizens. **Yet** doubts persist. **Strengthening deterrence**, it turns out, **isn’t just about such concrete realities and advanced capabilities**. **It’s just as much** – if not more – **about** perception. In this regard, South Korean officials register various interconnected and contradictory concerns.

**They worry that U.S. officials do not view North Korea as a threat to the same degree that South Korea does** or that U.S. officials do not view it as a realistic threat to the continental United States (CONUS). Whereas North Korea’s short- and medium-range missiles – not to mention its massed artillery, large special operation forces, other asymmetric capabilities, and sheer proximity – make it an immediate and existential threat to Seoul, **South Korean officials feel U.S. policymakers**, despite their proclamations to the contrary, simply **do not view the threat in the same way**. South Korean observers feel that U.S. officials doubt North Korea could, in practice, reach CONUS with a nuclear-tipped ICBM. This runs directly counter to an alternative fear – namely, that because North Korean ICBMs might hold Seattle hostage, it could limit the U.S. response to Pyongyang’s aggression.

Moreover, even if U.S. officials do genuinely believe North Korea possesses such a capability, **South Korean officials fear the U.S. government’s attention is taken up by other priorities, like** the war in **Ukraine and confronting China**, which supersede dealing North Korea. In other words, even if U.S. policymakers do see North Korean capabilities as a threat to CONUS, South Korean officials worry that they do not have the bandwidth to address it.

**Another concern** among South Korean officials **is that the United States would not, in fact, retaliate against North Korea with U.S. nuclear weapons** were the latter to attack South Korea. **Or**, contradictorily, South Korean officials are concerned **that the U.S. would**, in fact, **retaliate with nuclear weapons but without proper consultation**. **The absence of a formal South Korea-U.S. alliance nuclear planning group and U.S. nuclear weapons policy**, **which gives the U.S. president sole authority** to order the use of nuclear weapons without consulting anyone else, **reinforces the lack of clarity and concern**.

**There’s** also a **concern** among South Korean observers **that** the **consensus view within the U.S. government is that North Korea would never actually test the United States’ extended deterrence commitment by executing a full-scale attack** or using nuclear weapons against South Korea. So, accordingly, whereas U.S. officials ask why North Korea would test the alliance in that manner – not believing it ever actually would – South Korean observers focus on what the United States and the alliance would do if it did. They feel there is insufficient clarity on this point. Deeper consultation, they argue, is necessary.

However, **on the U.S. side**, some **people highlight risks that might result from deeper consultation**, which are just as beset by contradiction as are South Korean concerns. Some U.S. observers note that with deeper consultation, **the South Korean could make requests of the United States that the latter cannot or will not fulfill**. **This itself could strip away illusions that have papered over long-term differences** and will force both sides to face any differences from the perspective of equals or near-equals. Both sides would have profound difficulties doing so given the longstanding and historically rooted psychologies about their respective roles in the alliance.

With more consultation and a keener awareness on the South Korean side regarding the limits of what the United States can or will provide, the **South Korean could become** even more determined **to chart its** owncourse**, including its own independent nuclear deterrent**. U.S. observers hold that **this would** overturndecades **of U.S. and South Korean government policy on denuclearization**, give North Korea a ready ex post facto justification for its own nuclear weapons program, fundamentally undermine the NPT, and result in further horizontal proliferation in the region and likely beyond.

#### US nuclear commitments to South Korea are insufficient to convince them not to build nukes––the Washington Declaration is only a temporary solution

Mackenzie and Plett-Usher 4/27 – Foreign correspondent at BBC, BBC State Department Correspondent

(Jean Mackenzie, Barbara Plett Usher, “US and South Korea agree key nuclear weapons deal,” 27 April 2023, BBC News, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-65404805)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-65404805>

The US and South Korea have secured a landmark deal to counter the North Korean nuclear threat.

**Washington has agreed to** periodicallydeploy US nuclear-armed submarines **to South Korea and** involve Seoul in its nuclear planningoperations**.**

In return, South Korea has agreed to not develop its own nuclear weapons.

The Washington Declaration will strengthen the allies' co-operation in deterring a North Korean attack, US President Joe Biden said.

Concern has been rising on both sides about the nuclear threat posed by North Korea. Pyongyang is developing tactical nuclear weapons that can target South Korea, and refining its long-range weapons that can reach the US mainland.

**The US already has a treaty obligation to defend South Korea, and has previously pledged** to use **nuclear weapons if necessary. But some** in South Korea **have** started to doubt that commitment **and call for** the country to pursue **its own nuclear programme.**

The South Korean President, Yoon Suk-yeol, who was at the White House for a state visit, said the Washington Declaration marked an "unprecedented" commitment by the US to enhance defence, deter attacks and protect US allies by using nuclear weapons.

China - clearly not pleased with the US stance - warned against "deliberately stirring up tensions, provoking confrontation and playing up threats".

The new agreement is a result of negotiations that took place over the course of several months, according to a senior administration official.

Why South Koreans want the nuclear bomb

Under the new deal, the US will make its defence commitments more visible by sending a nuclear-armed submarine to South Korea for the first time in 40 years, along with other strategic assets, including nuclear-capable bombers.

The two sides will also develop a Nuclear Consultative Group to discuss nuclear planning issues.

Politicians in Seoul have long been pushing Washington to involve them more in planning for how and when to use nuclear weapons against North Korea.

As North Korea's nuclear arsenal has grown in size and sophistication, South Koreans have grown wary of being kept in the dark over what would trigger Mr Biden to push the nuclear button on their behalf.

A fear that Washington might abandon Seoul **has led to calls for South Korea to develop** its own nuclear **weapons.**

But in January, Mr **Yoon alarmed** policymakers in **Washington when he became the first** South Korean president **to put this idea back on the table in decades.**

**It** suddenly **became clear to the US** that **reassuring** words and **gestures would** no longer workand **if it was to dissuade South Korea from** wantingto build **its own bombs, it would have to** offer something concrete.

Furthermore, Mr Yoon had made it clear that he expected to return home having made "tangible" progress.

Duyeon Kim, from the Centre for a New American Security, said it was a "big win" for South Korea to be involved in nuclear planning.

"Until now, tabletop exercises would end before Washington's decision to use nuclear weapons," said Ms Kim.

"The US had considered such information to be too classified to share, but it is important to practice and train for this scenario given the types of nuclear weapons North Korea is producing."

**This new** Nuclear **Consultative Group ticks the box**, providing the increased involvement the South Korean government has been asking for. **But** the bigger question is whether it will quell the public's anxieties.

It does not ink a total commitment **from the US that it would use nuclear weapons to defend South Korea** if North Korea were to attack.

However, on Wednesday Mr Biden said: "A nuclear attack by North Korea against the United States or its allies and partners is unacceptable and will result in the end of whatever regime were to take such an action."

**In return, the US has demanded that South Korea remain a non-nuclear state** and a faithful advocate of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The US sees dissuading South Korea from going nuclear as essential, **fearful** that **if it fails, other countries may follow in its footsteps.**

**But these US commitments are** unlikely to fully satisfy **the influential, and increasingly** vocal, group of academics, scientists and **members of South Korea's ruling party who have been pushing for Seoul to arm itself.**

Dr Cheong Seong-chang, a leading proponent of South Korea going nuclear, said that while the declaration had many positive aspects, it was "extremely regrettable that South Korea had openly given up its right to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT]", adding that this had "further strengthened our nuclear shackles".

President Biden said the US was continuing efforts to get North Korea back to the negotiating table. Washington says Pyongyang has ignored numerous requests to talk without preconditions.

The US hopes to convince North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons, but last year the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un declared the country's nuclear status "irreversible".

Some experts say it now makes more sense to discuss arms control rather than denuclearisation.

#### Relying on the US for extended deterrence comes at a huge political cost to the South Korean president

Dominguez 4/27 – Staff Writer at The Japan Times

(Gabriel, “U.S. pledges stronger nuclear deterrence, but is South Korea buying it?,” 27 April 2023, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/04/27/asia-pacific/politics-diplomacy-asia-pacific/biden-yoon-washington-declaration-analysis/>)

Amid growing doubts in South Korea about the credibility of the U.S. nuclear umbrella, Washington and Seoul have agreed on new measures to counter North Korea’s rising nuclear threats, including regular deployments of American strategic assets to the region and closer consultation on U.S. nuclear planning against Pyongyang.

However, analysts question whether the steps outlined Wednesday by U.S. President Joe Biden and South Korean leader Yoon Suk-yeol will be enough toreassurea growing number of **South Koreans** whobelieve it is futile **to try to persuade Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear arsenal and** that **it is** better for Seoul to respond **with** its own **nuclear weapons.**

Outlined in the so-called Washington Declaration, the latest deterrence efforts call for the establishment of a nuclear consultative group (NCG) — modeled on nuclear consultations within NATO — to discuss nuclear and strategic planning, a move that provides Seoul with greater insight into, and presumably also a greater voice in, Washington’s plans for potential nuclear retaliation in the event of a North Korean attack.

The two sides also agreed to “immediate bilateral presidential consultations” in the event of such an attack and promised to respond “swiftly, overwhelmingly, and decisively,” said Yoon, who is on a five-day state visit to the U.S. to mark the 70th anniversary of the two countries’ alliance.

**While the declaration states that Washington commits to** “make every effort to **consult”** with Seoul **and** will **“share** information on nuclear and strategic weapon operations plans,” **Biden stressed** during a news conference **that** the U.S. president remains the sole authority **over America’s** nuclear **arsenal.**

The U.S. also agreed to regularly deploy its “strategic assets” — such as heavy bombers and aircraft carriers — in and around South Korea, while also announcing the first visit to the country by a U.S. nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine since the early 1980s.

While Biden said Washington would not be stationing nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula, he warned North Korea that a nuclear attack against the United States or its allies and partners would result in “the end of whatever regime, were it to take such an action.”

The U.S. had stationed nuclear weapons in South Korea from 1958 but withdrew them in 1991 as part of an agreement with Moscow to end the foreign deployment of “tactical” nuclear weapons intended for use in the battlefield, such as nuclear artillery shells. However**, conservative politicians in South Korea,** including Yoon, hadrenewed calls for a redeployment **in response to Pyongyang’s growing arsenal** of nuclear-capable missiles.

Seoul won’t be building nukes

**A key aspect of the** Washington **Declaration is that it reaffirms South Korea’s intention to stay within the** Nuclear **Non-Prolif**eration **Treaty,** an indirect vow by Seoul not to pursue an indigenous nuclear weapons capability.

“The Yoon administration is pledging to set aside the prospect that South Korea would develop and deploy an independent nuclear weapons capability in favor of a robust alliance-centered response,” said Scott Snyder, director of the U.S.-Korea Policy program at the New York-based Council on Foreign Relations.

The document also calls for a new bilateral tabletop exercise for responding to potential nuclear crises, while also strengthening existing mechanisms, including the Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group, to better prepare to defend against potential attacks and conduct simulations aimed at improving joint planning efforts.

**Given its focus on strengthening “extended deterrence” —** Washington’s commitment to deter enemies and defend its allies with military power, including nuclear weapons — **experts view the Washington Declaration** as an upgrade of bilateral defense ties.

“To me, the key here is much more enhanced, tighter consultations between allies, giving South Korea a greater role in planning and executing joint operations in addressing North Korea’s increasing nuclear capabilities,” said Ji-Young Lee, a Korea expert and associate professor of International Relations at American University.

**The significance of the declaration could be easy to downplay, given the nature of the bilateral relationship as defense allies,** said Seong-hyon Lee, a senior fellow at the George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations.

**However,** this marks a very important departure from policy **under Yoon’s predecessor,** President Moon Jae-in, **who was widely seen as leaning closer to China**, Lee said, calling the current president’s direction “180 degrees opposite.”

“More than ever, **Yoon boldly displayed his country’s strategic clarity in siding with the United States, even shouldering harsh criticisms from China and Russia in his sympathetic remarks about Ukraine and Taiwan,”** he said.

‘Not what many South Koreans wanted’

But while the declaration attempts to ease doubts about America’s security commitment, experts say it may fall short of the concrete and credible steps the South Korean public has been seeking, particularly as it is unlikely to persuade Pyongyang to stop developing, testing or threatening to use nuclear weapons.

Lee called the declaration “a rhetorical assurance to dissuade South Korea from going nuclear and have the country continue to be bound by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.”

Lee said the document fails to clearly mention any discussion on South Korea’s possible development of nuclear weapons, its authority in nuclear reprocessing, or the redeployment of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons.

“This is not what many South Koreans wanted, so they will scratch their heads about what really was accomplished in this summit.”

Once a fringe position, support for the idea of South Korea developing its own nuclear weapons has spread rapidly in the country as doubts grow about Washington’s willingness to potentially sacrifice San Francisco for Seoul.

A spate of recent surveys show that **a** majority of South Koreans— including an astounding 71% in a wide-ranging poll taken in February last year — **now** believe the country should develop its own nuclear weapons, a move Yoon had earlier hinted Seoul could pursue.

**Given the popular support for this alternative,** Lee argues that **Biden** didn’t seem to **fully appreciate** how much is at stake for Yoon **in South Korea.**

**“Without any substantive deliverables,** Yoon is likely to face backlash **at home and become an early lame-duck president,** with his current support ratings dipping below 30%,” he said, adding that the leader is revitalizing the U.S.-South Korea alliance “at a huge political risk, **domestically.”**

#### Extended deterrence has been extremely successful––only a strong US arsenal can prevent South Korean prolif

Allison 4/27 – Professor of Government at the Harvard Kennedy School

(Graham Allison, “Why Biden and Yoon’s Agreement Is a Big Deal,” 27 April 2023, Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/04/27/biden-yoon-summit-nuclear-nonproliferation-us-south-korea/>)

**The** Washington Declarationsigned by U.S. President Joe Biden and South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol yesterday **should be a ringing reminder of one of the greatest achievements of U.S. national security strategy: its** decades-long success in preventingtheproliferationof nuclear weapons. **The agreement strengthened nuclear deterrence coordination between the two allies and offered a greater sense of assurance that South Korea falls under the U.S. nuclear umbrella.**

Unfortunately, the agreement’s significance will be missed by many Americans who live in what has been called the United States of Amnesia. Like so much else about the international order today, many take for granted the fact that we now live in the 78th year since nuclear weapons were used in war.

After having survived the most dangerous crisis in recorded history—the Cuban missile crisis of 1962—U.S. President John F. Kennedy predicted a world in which there would be 15 or 20 nuclear states by the 1970s. That forecast reflected the conventional wisdom of the time that as states acquired the technical and economic base to build their own nuclear weapons, many would, and the world would see recurring nuclear wars, terrorist nuclear attacks, and anarchy.

Today**, however,** South Korea**—**like most wealthy nations—does not have its own nuclear arsenal**. When he met with Biden,** Yoon reaffirmed his country’sNuclear Nonproliferation Treatycommitment to remain non-nuclear **and instead** bet his country’s very survival on Washington’s promise to use its nuclear arsenal **to deter** nuclear-armed **Pyongyang** from attacking.

This is not because Seoul is incapable of developing its own nuclear weapons. Seven decades on, nuclear weapons are not exactly a frontier technology. Intelligence estimates indicate that North Korea, one of the world’s poorest countries, could have an arsenal of 40 nuclear weapons and a stockpile of fissile material from which it could make an additional hundred. But Pyongyang is, relatively speaking, an outlier—one of only nine countries known to have nuclear weapons.

What falsified Kennedy’s forecast and prevented the emergence of such a dangerous world? Among many factors, first and foremost has been a concerted, sustained, strategic campaign by U.S. administrations, both Democratic and Republican, to prevent nuclear proliferation. The agreement with Yoon is just the most recent nail that is keeping the lid on this box.

The U.S. strategy **has consisted of five** primary **pillars:** a robust U.S.nucleararsenal sufficient to deter adversaries **from attacking; the 1968 Nonproliferation Treaty** in which 185 states have now committed to forgo nuclear weapons; U.S. **“**extended deterrence**,”** in which Washington has committed to use its nuclear arsenal to deter any attack on select allies;artful coercion of alli**es at** moments when they have been tempted to go nuclear; and relentless opposition to states such as Iran that have sought to upset this regime. Yesterday’s agreement significantly strengthened theextended deterrencepillar of this strategy **by creating a consultative group** akin to NATO’s Nuclear Planning Group,bolstering South Korean involvement in U.S. nuclear statecraft.

This strategy has been extraordinarily successful**. It has** persuaded 95 percent of the world’s countries **to** accept a position in which other nations**,** including their deadly enemies**,** have nuclear weapons and they do not.

### Lit Review---Policy Area---Arms Control

#### Arms control generally features relatively unified themes that AFF and NEG teams can effectively mobilize across the area.

Milo Ventura 18, honors thesis, Department of International Studies, Macalester College, advised by Professor Ahmed Samatar, “Arms Control and Disarmament: Legitimacy, War, and Peace,” 4/24/18, https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1030&context=intlstudies\_honors

Arms Control and Disarmament

In simple terms arms control is the limitation of arms through methods such as the reduction of the number of weapons, the types of weapons or delivery systems, the research and manufacture of certain weapons, or the levels or locales of deployments of these weapons50. Arms control can be unilateral but it is usually an agreement between multiple parties. All the treaties regarding nuclear arsenals are strictly arms control, seeking only limitations in stockpile numbers or technologies. Harald Muller postulates that for arms control regimes to be successful three conditions must be fulfilled: Treaty community coherence, leadership, and great power cooperation. 51 Arms control can be divided into several types as laid out by Roach, Griffiths, and O’Callaghan.52 There are horizontal restrictions which deal with non-proliferation and preventing the spread of weapons. These include geographic restrictions that limit the placement of certain weapons, numerical restrictions, which involve caps on the quantity of certain weapons, technological restrictions, covering the limiting or banning of certain technologies, particularly those that threaten the balance of power, and confidence building measures, which include sharing knowledge and establishing communication measures and, importantly compliance and verification. Oftentimes, arms control agreements are combinations of these with verification being important to successful agreements.

Disarmament refers to the complete elimination of certain armaments. This is what the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty) seeks to do. Disarmament can be unilateral or multilateral (or bilateral). For the CWC it is multilateral but the USA unilaterally decided to proceed with disarmament of its chemical weapons stockpile under George H. Bush (although it is not expected to complete this until 2023). Nuclear disarmament appears at this present time as a distant horizon to reach and though proliferation may be prevented and stockpiles reduced, the nuclear threat is surely something that humankind will be living with for quite some time.

The CWC aims for eventual disarmament. Some also seek similar disarmament of nuclear weapons as well as of other weapons of mass destructions and other armaments that cause inordinate damage to civilians such as landmines and cluster munitions. Of course actually achieving disarmament faces obstacles. The process of disarmament can include reductions in weaponry not just complete destruction, but complete reductions must be the goal. Disarmament can be considered an extension of arms control though the terms are not synonymous even if they are related. Sometimes the terms are used somewhat interchangeably colloquially. But there is a clear scholarly distinction and in this thesis I differentiate between the two though by no means are the definitions I present necessarily universal and they are very much centered on weapons of mass destruction.

Arms control and disarmament are obviously very closely related to war and peace. It is commonly supposed that both are beneficial and help to prevent war and mitigate its effects. But in order to inhibit war arms control must be successful. Exactly what this success entails is open to interpretation and specific to the surrounding circumstances. However one clear conception entails when an arms control agreement is being adhered to by the acceded parties. More widely, it may depend on how many nation-states are acceding to the agreement, which is going to be quite different for landmines compared to nuclear weapons (with nuclear weapons agreements just between the USA and Russia are necessary for serious reductions in numbers). The same criteria can be used for disarmament with a particular emphasis on the global dimension. Arms control seeks to deter challenges to peace by establishing a world order that does so through limiting certain armaments, or in the case of disarmament, eliminating them completely. It is important to note that neither arms control nor disarmament can present any claim to prevent war completely; rather they seek to prevent and limit war under certain circumstances, by controlling armaments. But war will be fought anyway, the causes being primarily political, and arms control and disarmament seek to prevent certain wars from breaking out and certain weapons, usually those with major indiscriminate destructive power, from being utilized.

Though arms control can be implemented through force, diplomacy is the most common method through which it is achieved. Either way, the state is heavily involved and indeed political power is especially important when it comes to weapons of mass destruction, and doubly so with nuclear weapons as they change calculations of warfare by providing for mutual assured destruction.

The security dilemma is the problem that arms control is supposed to aid in solving. This dilemma is a situation where a state increases its military power, such as through developing and stockpiling certain weapons, with the intention of increasing its security, based on the simple premise that militarily and politically stronger states are more secure. This leads other states to respond in turn, by stockpiling more of a certain weapons for instance, and increasing tensions as this pattern continues. The dilemma arises as the tensions and risk of conflict threaten the states security even while the state seeks to increase its security be increasing military power to gain at least a minimum level of deterrence. With the advent of new weapons, particularly weapons of mass destruction, the dilemma becomes increasingly worrisome due to attempts to achieve an advantage over opponents, often before rules of use and competition are put in place and clarified, driving arms races into overdrive. This may be seen partially in the early years of the Cold War with major tensions and risk of war over Berlin and Cuba, and the arms race driven by fear of disadvantage such as the “bomber gap.” The Cold War experience also showcases the potential for mutual assured destruction to prevent the security dilemma from spiraling into war. However, there are several problems that arise, particularly the stability-instability paradox and the increased violence in the periphery. The security dilemma is largely seen as going along with realist international theory and makes sense in an anarchic system.53

A common criticism is that arms control does not work and does not successfully deal with the security dilemma. Perhaps if arms control was universal, rigorous, and adhered to by all the states of the world, it might. However, imperfect arms control does little to nothing to benefit the world. This criticism is not so with the theory and ideals behind arms control so much as with its implementation, which is flawed and according to some cannot help but be so. There, then, arises the question of whether this implementation can be fixed and if so how to go about doing so. A major issue with implementation is verification. For, arms control functions as only a cloak with no real depth behind it, with countries, particularly the major powers, holding banned weapons in secret and attempting to gain an unfair advantage.

For some scholars, such as Richard Betts, arms control is detrimental and in fact undermines military stability. 54 He argues that equalizing military power through arms control may yield “unequal forces when alignments congeal.” The issue with arms control is not that it doesn’t work but that it is detrimental when it does work. Arms control, and particularly disarmament, diminishes deterrence. Disarmament eliminates certain arms and thus eliminates the deterrent consisting of that weapon. This is not much of a problem with chemical weapons, but with nuclear weapons it may be a real concern given the potential importance of the nuclear deterrent in preventing World War III. Even with just arms control an equal balance and state of deterrence may be threatened, leading to increased chances of war as certain powers and alignments gain a clear advantage encouraging aggression, or even as deterrence weakens to become not enough of a deterrent to prevent conflict.

Arms control offers an avenue to perpetual peace and disarmament does so to an even greater extent. Walter Clemens argues that this is only part of the drive to peace as even if “total disarmament could be achieved men would still be likely to fight one another.”55 This is also a losing battle in many ways, with arms control seemingly feeling further and further behind. However Clemens does believe that without arms control the world would be in far worse state and is in fact necessary for peace, though not sufficient. At its best it only succeeds in “outfoxing the adversary for the time being” but is important in the idealist project to bring about perpetual peace.

### Lit Review---Policy Area---Congress Actor

#### A variety of proposals focus on empowering Congress as an actor in foreign policy. It taps a robust debate that goes to the core of the interbranch allocation of war powers.

John Ramming Chappell 22, a joint J.D. and M.S. in Foreign Service candidate, 2023, at Georgetown University, “President of the United States, Destroyer of Worlds: Considering Congress’s Authority to Enact a Nuclear No-First-Use Law,” American University National Security Law Brief, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2021), https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/nslb/vol12/iss2/4

C. Congressional Proposals

Congress, in turn, has explored passing a no-first-use law. Unlike presidential policy considerations, a no-first-use law would bind the Executive Branch across administrations. However, efforts to pass a no-first-use law have thus far fallen flat partially due to constitutional concerns.

During the Vietnam War, legislators considered how to best reclaim congressional authority over war powers and foreign policy.63 The 1970s saw framework legislation like the War Powers Resolution, National Emergencies Act, and the Arms Export Control Act.64 As Congress considered how to reassert control over foreign policy and national security issues, two no-first-use proposals emerged.

In 1971, the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) drafted a bill requiring the assent of a committee of congressional leaders before a President could use nuclear weapons first without a declaration of war.65 [FOOTNOTE 65 BEGINS] 65 See Peter Raven-Hansen, Introduction, in FIRST USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS: UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, WHO DECIDES? ix (1987). [FOOTNOTE 65 ENDS] FAS renewed its call for a no-first-use law in 1984 with an essay in Foreign Policy. 66 [FOOTNOTE 66 BEGINS] 66 Jeremy Stone, Presidential First Use Is Unlawful, 56 FOREIGN POL’Y 94 (1984). [FOOTNOTE 66 ENDS] The essay sparked debate among constitutional scholars67 [FOOTNOTE 67 BEGINS] 67 E.g., William C. Banks, First Use of Nuclear Weapons: The Constitutional Role of a Congressional Leadership Committee, 13 J. LEGIS. 1 (1986); Stephen Carter, The Constitution and the Prevention of Nuclear Holocaust: A Reaction to Professor Banks, 13 J. LEGIS. 1206 (1986). [FOOTNOTE 67 ENDS] and elicited criticism from those who questioned the constitutionality of a leadership committee authorizing nuclear first use.68 [FOOTNOTE 68 BEGINS] 68 See generally FIRST USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS: UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, WHO DECIDES? (Peter Raven-Hansen ed., 1987) [FOOTNOTE 68 ENDS] In particular, some concluded the mechanism amounted to an unconstitutional legislative veto69 [FOOTNOTE 69 BEGINS] 69 See Peter Raven-Hansen, The Constitutionality of the FAS Proposal: A Critical Summary, in FIRST USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS: UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, WHO DECIDES? 211 (Peter Raven-Hansen ed., 1987). See I.N.S. v. Chadha, 462 U.S. 919, 959 (1983) (holding legislative vetoes unconstitutional); Bowsher v. Synar, 478 U.S. 714, 757–58 (1986) (holding that Congress may not authorize a lesser representative of the Legislative Branch to act on its behalf). [FOOTNOTE 69 ENDS] and Congress could not delegate its war powers to a leadership committee.70 [FOOTNOTE 70 BEGINS] 70 See generally Banks, supra note 67 (discussing delegation issues in the FAS proposal, an important issue outside of the scope of this paper). [FOOTNOTE 70 ENDS]

In 1972, Senator William Fulbright (D-Ark.) proposed an amendment to a draft of the War Powers Resolution that would prohibit the President from using “nuclear weapons without the prior, explicit authorization of Congress” except “in response to a nuclear attack or to an irrevocable launch of nuclear weapons.”71 [FOOTNOTE 71 BEGINS] 71 STEPHEN P. MULLIGAN, LEGISLATION LIMITING THE PRESIDENT’S POWER TO USE NUCLEAR WEAPONS: SEPARATION OF POWERS IMPLICATIONS 11–12 (Nov. 3, 2017). [FOOTNOTE 71 ENDS] Senator Jacob Javits (D-N.Y.) opposed the amendment on constitutional grounds, stating that, after Congress places a nuclear weapon in the U.S. arsenal, the President has the prerogative as commander in chief to decide “whether, when, or how to use it or not to use it.”72 The Senate overwhelmingly voted down the Fulbright Amendment with a vote of 68-10.73 As of 2021, that instance remains Congress’s only vote on a no-first-use law.

With renewed concerns about the first use of nuclear weapons during the Trump administration, Congress has again considered a no-first-use law. Senator Elizabeth Warren (DMass.) and Congressman Adam Smith (D-Cal.) introduced a 2019 bill that simply read, “It is the policy of the United States to not use nuclear weapons first.”74 They reintroduced the bill in 2021.75 Both Warren-Smith bills attracted cosponsors but neither has come to a vote.76

Senator Ed Markey and Congressman Ted Lieu have introduced the Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act in every Congress since 2017,77 aiming to provide checks and balances on presidential sole authority to use nuclear weapons.78 The Markey-Lieu proposal is the leading nofirst-use bill since the Fulbright Amendment.

The Markey-Lieu bill argues nuclear weapons are distinct from conventional weapons as a constitutional matter.79 The proposal’s findings include recognition that “nuclear weapons are uniquely powerful” and “a first-use nuclear strike carried out by the United States would constitute a major act of war.”80 Therefore, the bill stipulates “[n]o Federal funds may be obligated or expended to conduct a first-use nuclear strike unless such strike is conducted pursuant to a war declared by Congress that expressly authorizes such strike.”81 The Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act defines a first use of nuclear weapons as an “attack using nuclear weapons against an enemy that is conducted without the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff first confirming to the President that there has been a nuclear strike against the United States, its territories, or its allies.”82

By finding the first use of nuclear weapons a major act of war83 and establishing “[a] first-use nuclear strike conducted absent a declaration of war by Congress would violate the Constitution,”84 the bill interprets Congress’s war power as inclusive of regulating nuclear first use. The bill also recognizes the President’s role as commander in chief, noting the President currently has sole operational authority to authorize the use of nuclear weapons and U.S. military officers must comply with the President’s order in accordance with their obligations under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.85

Although the Markey-Lieu bill has garnered dozens of cosponsors in each of the three Congresses in which it has been introduced, it has never left the originating committee for a floor vote in either chamber of Congress.86 However, previous no-first-use proposals have sparked considerable constitutional debates, inviting the question of whether constitutional concerns may hinder the passage of the Restricting No First Use Act of 2021.

III. NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE WAR POWERS OF CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT

As previous no-first-use proposals demonstrate, the first use of nuclear weapons raises questions about the respective roles of Congress and the President in waging war. This Section discusses the war powers of Congress and the President and analyzes the interaction between their respective authorities.

A. Congressional War Powers

The Framers of the Constitution recognized the gravity of decisions to enter into war and allocated certain war powers to Congress. Writing as Publius in Federalist 69, Alexander Hamilton stated that “the declaring of war… [and] the raising and regulating of fleets and armies… would appertain to the legislature.”87 In a 1793 essay, James Madison wrote, “In no part of the constitution is more wisdom to be found than in the clause which confides the question of war or peace to the legislature, and not to the executive department.”88

Congress’s power to declare war includes authority over those decisions to enter into war.89 [FOOTNOTE 89 BEGINS] 89 See Saikrishna Prakash, Unleashing the Dogs of War: What the Constitution Means by “Declare War,” 93 CORNELL L. REV. 45, 50 (2007). See also William M. Treanor, Fame, the Founding, and the Power to Declare War, 82 CORNELL L. REV. 695, 700 (1997) (“The Founders intended that the [Declare War] Clause would vest in Congress principal responsibility for initiating conflict.”). [FOOTNOTE 89 ENDS] The Constitution expressly vests in Congress the exclusive power to declare war.90 The declare war authority is more than a formalistic authority to issue a declaration.91 In Talbot v. Seeman, Chief Justice John Marshall observed that “The whole powers of war...by the constitution of the United States [are] vested in Congress.”92 A formal declaration is not required to conduct a war. Rather, Congress may decide to enter into war in a variety of ways, including with authorizations for the use of military force or appropriations.93

As mentioned, the Markey-Lieu no-first-use bill observes that “[t]he Constitution gives Congress the sole power to declare war” and asserts that nuclear first use “would constitute a major act of war.”94 Senator Markey emphasized Congress’s war powers, saying, “Our Constitution affords Congress, not the President, the exclusive power to declare war and that extends, clearly, to the most catastrophic type of war, nuclear war. No Commander-in-Chief [sic] should be able to act alone to start a nuclear war.”95

Under the Constitution, Congress is authorized to “make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces.”96 The Land and Naval Forces Clause establishes Congress’s authority over internal regulation of the armed forces. Under that authority, Congress established the Uniform Code of Military Justice and enacts defense authorization acts that shape the military’s internal bureaucracy.97 [FOOTNOTE 97 BEGINS] 97 Rudesill argues that the Land and Naval Forces Clause also encompasses Congress’s power over external regulation of the armed forces, including the use of military force, surveillance, and interrogation. See Dakota S. Rudesill, The Land and Naval Forces Clause, 86 U. CIN. L. REV. 391, 296 (2018). He further posits that Congress could regulate the use of nuclear weapons pursuant to its external regulation authority. See Dakota S. Rudesill, Nuclear Command and Statutory Control, 11 J. NAT'L SEC. L. & POL'Y 365, 408 (2021) [FOOTNOTE 97 ENDS] Senator Fulbright asserted that his no-first-use amendment to the War Powers Resolution was authorized under the Land and Naval Forces Clause, but he mostly appealed to the declare war power during debate.98

The Constitution also states that “No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law,” granting Congress the authority to make appropriations.99 The Constitution further authorizes Congress to “lay and collect Taxes...to...provide for the common Defense… of the United States.”100 The Constitution prohibits an appropriation for the army extending beyond two years,101 providing Congress with periodic opportunities to control the conduct of war by reducing or eliminating funding to the military.102 Congress can use its power of the purse to limit military action.103 As the U.S. Court of Claims observed in Swaim v. United States, “Congress may increase the Army, or reduce the Army, or abolish it altogether.”104 Similarly, Congress could remove nuclear weapons from the U.S. arsenal, choose to modernize existing nuclear forces, or halt the development of particular delivery systems.105

Senator Markey and Congressman Lieu appeal to Congress’s appropriations power in their no first use proposal. As mentioned, their bill stipulates, “No Federal funds may be obligated or expended to conduct a first-use nuclear strike unless such strike is conducted pursuant to a war declared by Congress that expressly authorizes such strike.”106

B. Presidential War Powers

On the other hand, the President serves as commander in chief under the Constitution.107 The Commander in Chief Clause has “given rise to some of the most persistent controversies in our constitutional history,” fueling assertions that it “vests power to do anything, anywhere, that can be done with an army or navy.”108 However, Alexander Hamilton described the commander in chief authority as “much inferior” to the authority of the British king, amounting to “nothing more than the supreme command and direction of the military and naval forces.”109

Under the commander in chief authority, the President has exclusive authority to conduct military campaigns through battlefield decisions.110 Writing for the majority in Fleming v. Page, Chief Justice Taney asserted, “As commander-in-chief [sic], [the President] is authorized to direct the movements of the naval and military forces placed by law at his command, and to employ them in the manner he may deem most effectual to harass and conquer and subdue the enemy.”111 The Swaim court wrote, “so long as we have a military force[,] Congress can not take away from the President the supreme command.”112 In the context of nuclear weapons, some argue that this exclusive authority includes the choice “to use or not to use a particular weapon in the existing arsenal against an armed enemy.”113 [FOOTNOTE 113 BEGINS] 113 Robert F. Turner, Congressional Limits on the Commander in Chief: The FAS Proposal, in FIRST USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS: UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, WHO DECIDES? 46 (Peter Raven-Hansen ed., 1987). See also 118 Cong. Rec. 12451 (1972) (statement of Senator Javits) (“I have deep concern… as to whether the President of the United States with his constitutional authority as Commander in Chief can be prevented from using a weapon in our arsenal in defense of the United States or in defense of the Armed Forces of the United States.”) [FOOTNOTE 113 ENDS]

As commander in chief, the President can use military force in response to an armed attack without congressional authorization.114 [FOOTNOTE 114 BEGINS] 114 See HENKIN, supra note 90, at 47. See also H.R.J. Res. 542, 93rd Cong. (1973) (“The constitutional powers of the President as Commander-in-Chief to introduce United States Armed Forces into hostilities, or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances, are exercised only pursuant to (1) a declaration of war, (2) specific statutory authorization, or (3) a national emergency created by attack upon the United States, its territories or possessions, or its armed forces.” [FOOTNOTE 114 ENDS] At the Constitutional Convention, James Madison and Elbridge Gerry amended the draft Constitution to give Congress the power to “declare war” instead of “make war,” enabling the President to “repel sudden attacks.”115 In The Prize Cases, Justice Grier wrote that, in the case of an invasion by a foreign state, “the President is not only authorized but bound to resist by force. He does not initiate the war, but is bound to accept the challenge without waiting for any special legislative authority.”116 The War Powers Resolution similarly recognizes “a national emergency created by attack upon the United States, its territories or possessions, or its armed forces” as a legitimate constitutional basis for introducing U.S. armed forces into hostilities.117 In the context of nuclear weapons, the President’s duty to respond to an armed attack extends to nuclear second strikes in retaliation for a nuclear attack on the United States.118

C. Concurrent War Powers

Despite the immense gravity of decisions to enter into war, the Constitution offers relatively little guidance about the relationship between presidential and congressional war powers. The constitutionality of a no-first-use law turns on the boundary between the war powers of Congress and those of the President.

In Swaim v. United States, the Court of Claims clarified that “Congress cannot in the disguise of ‘Rules for Government’ of the Army impair the authority of the President as Commander in Chief.”119 Nor could Congress infringe on his authority as commander in chief through the power of the purse or the necessary and proper powers.120

Therefore, the constitutionality of a no-first-use law rests on identifying where Congress’s exclusive declare war authority ends and the President’s exclusive commander in chief authority begins. Constitutional scholars generally agree that Congress could not micromanage battlefield tactics.121 For example, Congress could not order a retreat of a particular battalion during a war. During the 1972 debate of the Fulbright Amendment, Senator Jacob Javits expressed doubt about whether “[Congress] can instruct the President as to whether, when, or how to use a [nuclear weapon].”122

However, Congress does have some authority to restrict presidential action in the conduct of war and it has repeatedly done so throughout U.S. history.123 [FOOTNOTE 123 BEGINS] 123 See DAVID J. BARRON, WAGING WAR: THE CLASH BETWEEN PRESIDENTS AND CONGRESS 1776 TO ISIS xii (2016) (“Even when Congress has chosen to stay silent at the outset of an armed conflict, presidents have, time and again, met legislative resistance as the fighting has dragged on. And, sometimes, Congress has challenged the president’s powers of command even in advance of the use of force, placing obstacles in his way in the event that he should choose a course of action certain to lead to war.”). [FOOTNOTE 123 ENDS] In Ex parte Milligan, Chief Justice Chase wrote that Congress has

the power to provide by law for carrying on war. This power necessarily extends to all legislation essential to the prosecution of war… except such as interferes with the command of the forces and the conduct of campaigns. That power and duty belong to the President as Commander in Chief.124

Professor Louis Henkin, an expert in constitutional aspects of foreign affairs, similarly asserted that, while it would be “unthinkable for Congress to attempt detailed, tactical decision, or supervision,”125 “the President’s powers as Commander in Chief are subject to ultimate Congressional authority to ‘make’ the war, and that Congress can control the conduct of the war it has authorized.”126 Professor Saikrishna Prakash, an expert in presidential authority in foreign relations, wrote “while the President may use military force, the President may not order those uses of force that amount to informal declarations of war.”127

Congressional action modulates the President’s power over foreign affairs, a principle expressed in Youngstown Sheet & Tube v. Sawyer. 128 [FOOTNOTE 128 BEGINS] 128 Proponents of an expansive presidential foreign affairs power often cite United States v. Curtiss-Wright, in which Justice Sutherland called the President the “sole organ of the federal government in international relations.” United States v. Curtiss-Wright Exp. Corp., 299 U.S. 304, 319 (1936) (quoting John Marshall, who was a member of the House of Representatives at the time of the statement, regarding President’s authority to order an extradition). But see Henkin, supra note 90, at 41 n.19 (“both Marshall and Jefferson spoke of the President only as the sole organ of communication and did not imply any power to make foreign policy. Substantive power was later read into the phrase”). Accord Koh, supra note 63, at 61 (“[Marshall’s] remarks were controversial, not because Congress had accepted a broad presidential monopoly over all foreign relations, but because it had largely acquiesced in the President’s narrower dominance over diplomatic communications”). Justice Sutherland’s statement was in dicta as Curtiss-Wright turned on the constitutionality of a congressional delegation to the President of its authority under the foreign commerce power to impose an arms embargo. Charles A. Lofgren, United States v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corporation: An Historical Reassessment, 83 YALE L.J. 1, 5 (1973) (“Those portions of Sutherland's opinion which go beyond the issue of delegation in foreign affairs are dicta”). [FOOTNOTE 128 ENDS] In his Youngstown concurrence, Justice Jackson formulated a tripartite framework for presidential power, acknowledging, “Presidential powers are not fixed but fluctuate, depending on their disjunction or conjunction with those of Congress.”129 If the President takes measures incompatible with the express or implied will of Congress, the President’s power is “at its lowest ebb” and the President must rely only on their constitutional powers without reliance on Congress’s constitutional powers.130 When the President acts without “a congressional grant or denial of authority, he can only rely upon his own independent powers, but there is a zone of twilight in which he and Congress may have concurrent authority, or in which its distribution is uncertain.”131 On the other hand, when “the President acts pursuant to an express or implied authorization of Congress” the President’s authority “is at its maximum.”132 In such cases, the President may exercise their constitutional authorities and Congress’s.

There is currently no congressional grant or restriction on the President’s use of nuclear weapons.133 Under the tripartite framework of Youngstown, the first use of nuclear weapons falls into the “zone of twilight.”134 By expressly prohibiting the first use of nuclear weapons without congressional authorization, a no-first-use law would move a President’s first use of nuclear weapons from the zone of twilight into Justice Jackson’s third category, where a President’s action defies Congress’s will and “his power is at its lowest ebb, for then he can rely only upon his own constitutional powers minus any constitutional powers of Congress over the matter.”135 A no-firstuse law would be unconstitutional, therefore, if the President, using only his own constitutional powers as commander in chief, could use nuclear weapons first. If the commander in chief authority extends to nuclear first use, then a no-first-use law would exceed Congress’s authority and thus be unable to successfully invade an exclusive presidential power.136

Determining whether a no-first-use law complies with the Constitution hence requires ascertaining whether the first use of nuclear weapons falls under the President’s plenary authority as commander in chief or Congress’s exclusive authority to declare war.

#### There are strong policy arguments in favor of such restrictions.

John Ramming Chappell 22, a joint J.D. and M.S. in Foreign Service candidate, 2023, at Georgetown University, “President of the United States, Destroyer of Worlds: Considering Congress’s Authority to Enact a Nuclear No-First-Use Law,” American University National Security Law Brief, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2021), https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/nslb/vol12/iss2/4

I. STILL LIVING UNDER A NUCLEAR SWORD OF DAMOCLES2

After decades of Taiwanese self-governance, suppose the People’s Republic of China mounts an invasion across the Taiwan Strait to “unify” the mainland with its “rebel province.”3 The United States has long professed a “strategic ambiguity” approach to Taiwan,4 meaning that successive U.S. administrations have declined to definitively state under which conditions the United States would come to Taiwan’s defense in such a contingency.5 Now, with tensions between China and the United States at an all-time high, the President decides to take military action against China to repel the attack.6 The President’s advisors warn him that the United States does not have sufficient conventional forces mobilized nearby to halt the offensive before the Chinese military reaches Taiwan’s shore.7 Without consulting Congress,8 the President orders a nuclear strike targeting Chinese forces, a first use of nuclear weapons that prompts a Chinese nuclear response.9 The ensuing nuclear exchange ends millions of civilian lives in the United States and China within days.10 [FOOTNOTE 10 BEGINS] 10 Kyle Mizokami, A Nuclear War with China and Russia? 335,000,000 Dead, For Starters, NAT’L INT. (Aug. 22, 2021),

https://nationalinterest.org/blog/reboot/nuclear-war-china-and-russia-335000000-dead-starters-192271. [FOOTNOTE 10 ENDS]

A. The Persistent Threat of Nuclear Weapons

Seventy-six years after the United States used the first nuclear weapons in war to bomb Nagasaki and Hiroshima, no other country has launched nuclear weapons in warfare. However, the risk of a nuclear exchange remains. Although the recurring nuclear crises of the Cold War have subsided,11 nuclear weapons remain at the forefront of national security conversations in disparate regions,12 and an exchange of nuclear strikes remains possible.13 [FOOTNOTE 13 BEGINS] 13 See Max Fisher, As Russia Digs In, What’s the Risk of Nuclear War? ‘It’s Not Zero,’ N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 22, 2022). See generally BRAD ROBERTS, THE CASE FOR U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY (2016). [FOOTNOTE 13 ENDS] While the decision to use nuclear weapons is a matter of life or death for many people, in the U.S. it lies with one person: the President. Despite the persisting danger of a nuclear exchange, Congress currently has no say in the President’s decision to use nuclear weapons, including a decision to use nuclear weapons first.14

In the United States, the Trump presidency renewed concerns about the use of U.S. nuclear weapons and opened a dialogue about the President’s sole authority to make such a potentially devastating decision.15 President Trump reportedly suggested launching nuclear weapons into hurricanes on multiple occasions.16 His exchanges with Kim Jong Un included a declaration that “I too have a Nuclear Button, but it is a much bigger & more powerful one than his, and my Button works!”17 and a threat of “fire and fury” against North Korea.18 President Trump’s temperament drew attention to the President’s nuclear authorities, resulting in a flurry of books, essays, and editorials expressing concern about his responsible use of the nuclear arsenal.19 [FOOTNOTE 19 BEGINS] 19 E.g., PERRY & COLLINA, supra note 14, at 7–10; JEFFREY LEWIS, THE 2020 COMMISSION REPORT ON THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR ATTACKS AGAINST THE U.S.: A SPECULATIVE NOVEL (2018); BOB WOODWARD & ROBERT COSTA, PERIL (2021); Editorial Board, Trump and the nuclear button, WASH. POST (Nov. 25, 2017), https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/trump-and-the-nuclear-button/2017/11/25/85bb50b2-cafd-11e7-8321- 481fd63f174d\_story.html; Alana Abramson, Here's Exactly What Donald Trump Would Have to Do to Launch Nuclear Weapons, TIME (Jan. 3, 2018), https://time.com/5085723/nuke-button-donald-trump-nuclear-weapons-north-korea/; Bruce Blair & Jon Wolfsthal, Trump can launch nuclear weapons whenever he wants, with or without Mattis, WASH. POST (Dec. 23, 2018), https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2018/12/23/trump-can-launch-nuclear-weapons-whenever-hewants-with-or-without-mattis/; Garrett M. Graff, By the Way, Donald Trump Could Still Launch Nuclear Weapons at Any Time, WIRED (Nov. 17, 2020), https://www.wired.com/story/donald-trump-nuclear-weapons-system-reform/; Jack Detsch, What Could Stop an ‘Unhinged’ U.S. President From Ordering a Nuclear Strike?, FOREIGN POL’Y (Jan. 8, 2021), https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/01/08/trump-nuclear-strike-pelosi-white-house-pentagon-congress/. [FOOTNOTE 19 ENDS] Authors called attention to the President’s sole authority to order a nuclear launch and the U.S. policy that allows the United States to use nuclear weapons first.20 Amid concerns about President Trump launching an unprovoked nuclear attack in 2017,21 the Senate held its first hearing on nuclear launch authority since 1976.22 [FOOTNOTE 22 BEGINS] 22 Kingston Reif, Senate Examines Launch Authority, ARMS CONTROL TODAY, (Dec. 2017), https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2017-12/news/senate-examines-launch-authority. See also Authority to Order the Use of Nuclear Weapons: Hearing Before the Comm. on Foreign Rels. U.S. Senate, 115th Cong. (2017) [hereinafter Authority to Order the Use of Nuclear Weapons], https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/11%2014%2017%20Authority%20to%20Order%20the%20Use%20o f%20Nuclear%20Weapons1.pdf. [FOOTNOTE 22 ENDS]

In early 2022, concerns about a possible nuclear exchange mounted during Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, especially after President Vladimir Putin put Russia’s nuclear deterrent on high alert in late February.23 [FOOTNOTE 23 BEGINS] 23 Yuras Karmanau et al., Putin puts nuclear forces on high alert, escalating tensions, ASSOCIATED PRESS (Feb. 27, 2022), https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-kyiv-business-europe-moscow-2e4e1cf784f22b6afbe5a2f936725550. [FOOTNOTE 23 ENDS] As the Russian military met significant resistance and struggled to gain ground in much of the country, some analysts expressed that President Putin might opt to use low-yield nuclear weapons against Ukrainian forces.24 [FOOTNOTE 24 BEGINS] 24 See William J. Broad, The Smaller Bombs That Could Turn Ukraine Into a Nuclear War Zone, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 21, 2022), https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/21/science/russia-nuclear-ukraine.html; David French, This Is a Uniquely Perilous Moment, ATLANTIC (Mar. 12, 2022), https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/03/a-uniquely-perilousmoment/627040/. [FOOTNOTE 24 ENDS] As Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called for the United States to impose a no-fly zone in Ukraine, American analysts warned that such a measure could risk a nuclear war.25 [FOOTNOTE 25 BEGINS] 25 See, e.g., Brian Finucane & Olga Oliker, Zelensky Wants a No-Fly Zone. NATO Is Right to Say No, N.Y. TIMES (MAR. 25, 2022), https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/25/opinion/no-fly-zone-ukraine-nati-russia.html; Joshua Pollack, A no-fly zone might help Ukraine. Or it might lead to nuclear war, WASH. POST (Mar. 4, 2022), https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/03/04/ukraine-nuclear-war-proxy/. [FOOTNOTE 25 ENDS]

B. No First Use

Recognizing the devastation that a nuclear exchange could wreak, nuclear policymakers in the White House and on Capitol Hill have long considered, but never adopted, a promise to never use nuclear weapons first – what is known as a “no-first-use policy.”26 Such a promise would be tantamount to acknowledging that the sole purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons is to deter other states’ use of nuclear weapons. Deterrence requires an adversary to perceive that, if an adversary strikes the U.S. with nuclear weapons, the United States could launch a retaliatory second strike with surviving nuclear forces that would result in unacceptable losses for the aggressor state.27 Under a deterrence framework in which the sole purpose of nuclear weapons is deterring a nuclear attack by another state, a state does not need to use nuclear weapons first.

Past no-first-use debates have included questions about whether passing a no-first-use law would exceed Congress’s authority. As the Biden administration reviews the U.S. nuclear posture and considers adopting a no-first-use policy, evaluating the constitutionality of Congress enacting a no-first-use law helps determine whether Congress could enshrine a no-first-use policy in law, regardless of President Biden’s decision.

#### A specific form of these debates plays out for the use of nuclear weapons in response to WMD.

John Ramming Chappell 22, a joint J.D. and M.S. in Foreign Service candidate, 2023, at Georgetown University, “President of the United States, Destroyer of Worlds: Considering Congress’s Authority to Enact a Nuclear No-First-Use Law,” American University National Security Law Brief, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2021), https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/nslb/vol12/iss2/4

A. First Use In Response to a Non-Nuclear Attack Against the United States

Suppose the President orders a nuclear strike against another state in response to a nonnuclear armed attack on the United States or its armed forces. This situation encompasses two scenarios. In the first scenario, a foreign adversary attacks the United States, its armed forces, or one of its allies with conventional, biological, or chemical weapons. In the second scenario, the U.S. and a foreign adversary are engaged in a conventional conflict and U.S. military involvement is authorized by Congress. The two scenarios are constitutionally similar. Each invites the question of whether the President, when unambiguously authorized to use force in some way, may escalate from conventional warfare to the use of nuclear weapons.

Under current U.S. law, Congress has not expressly restricted how the President may respond to an attack on the United States, but the law of armed conflict requires that self-defense be limited to the minimum force necessary to repel the attack and proportional to the threat the attack poses.173

However, the President’s responsibility to repel an attack in defense of the United States does not amount to the open-ended constitutional authority to mount offensive operations against the adversary’s cities.174 As commander in chief, the President’s can repel sudden attacks but cannot “take the fight to the enemy and indiscriminately attack that nation's ports, [or] territory” without congressional authorization.175 As Prakash writes, “in response to hostilities initiated by another nation, the President is limited to a lethal but calibrated defensive response, reserving to Congress the decision to wage an offensive war.”176 For example, President Thomas Jefferson launched a limited attack against the Barbary pirates attacking U.S. vessels in the Mediterranean before requesting authorization from Congress for more decisive action.177 Therefore, in response to a limited attack on U.S. troops overseas, for example, the President would not have the constitutional authority to launch a nuclear strike against a foreign capital without congressional authorization.178

These observations temper the President’s authority to mount a nuclear strike in response to a conventional attack. Under current domestic law, the President could use nuclear weapons to respond to a non-nuclear attack on the U.S. or its armed forces, a possibility left open in the Trump administration’s Nuclear Posture Review.179 However, while the President can use necessary military force to repel a non-nuclear attack against the United States, Congress can limit how the President responds to an armed attack if that response amounts to a declaration of unauthorized war, which would be the case if the Markey-Lieu bill was enacted.

Because nuclear conflicts are qualitatively different from non-nuclear conflicts, Congress’s declare war authority extends to limitations on the President’s choice to transform a non-nuclear war into a nuclear one. Congress maintains the authority to choose not only whether the United States shall enter a war, but what form of war it shall wage.180 The United States military has conventional superiority over any potential adversary.181 Whether a conventional strike occurred in the United States or against U.S. forces in another location, a successful conventional attack on the United States would be unlikely to pose an existential threat to the country. A nuclear attack, however, could put millions of American lives at risk.182

Congress could constrain the President’s response to an attack on the United States with nofirst-use legislation. The Markey-Lieu proposal would prevent the President from using nuclear weapons in response to a non-nuclear attack on the United States or its armed forces.

#### And, for anticipatory first strikes.

John Ramming Chappell 22, a joint J.D. and M.S. in Foreign Service candidate, 2023, at Georgetown University, “President of the United States, Destroyer of Worlds: Considering Congress’s Authority to Enact a Nuclear No-First-Use Law,” American University National Security Law Brief, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2021), https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/nslb/vol12/iss2/4

B. Anticipatory First Use

The Restricting No First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2021 raises the constitutional and practical concern of whether the President would be able to launch an anticipatory nuclear strike preempting an expected nuclear strike on the United States.

As a constitutional matter, the President’s duty to repel attacks on the United States under the commander in chief power includes an authority to use military force in anticipation of an imminent attack.183 Under current law, the President could probably use nuclear weapons first in anticipation of an imminent nuclear attack on the United States. The President’s authorization to launch an anticipatory strike in response to a less-than-imminent threat against the United States is not permitted under Article II, although a President could blur the imminence requirement as the Trump administration did in its legal justification for the targeted killing of Iranian general Qassem Soleimani.184

The Markey-Lieu proposal defines a first use of nuclear weapons as any case where the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have not confirmed to the President that there has been a nuclear strike against the United States, its territories, or its allies.185 In this definition, the proposal implicitly allows the President to mount a second strike after the United States has been attacked with a nuclear weapon. However, the Markey-Lieu bill, if passed into law, would prevent the President from using nuclear weapons to preempt a nuclear attack on the United States unless expressly authorized by Congress.

The Markey-Lieu proposal would not infringe on the President’s exclusive authority to mount a preemptive use of military force in response to an expected nuclear attack on the United States. In launching an anticipatory nuclear strike, the President makes the decision to enter the United States into nuclear war before a foreign adversary has started hostilities and triggered the President’s duty to respond. Under the Constitution, however, the choice to enter the United States into a war belongs to Congress.186 A war has not necessarily begun before the President orders an anticipatory nuclear first strike. A President could misapprehend the foreign adversary’s intentions, mistakenly assuming that a nuclear strike is imminent. A President could also rely on a false alarm, launching a nuclear strike first and igniting a nuclear war. In either case, an adversary has not unilaterally forced war upon the United States and the President’s decision to mount an anticipatory strike would amount to a choice to enter the United States into war. Because the choice to enter into a nuclear war lies exclusively with Congress under the declare war power, the restriction proposed in the Markey-Lieu bill does not exceed Congress’s constitutional authority.

### Lit Review---Policy Area---NFU

#### There’s a robust, conceptually coherent, and easily mappable debate about the role of nuclear threats in US foreign policy.

Johan Verbeke 23, Former Ambassador of Belgium to the United States, Visiting Professor at the Universities of Brussels (VUB) and Lille (UCL, France) and a Senior Fellow of Egmont–the Royal Institute for International Relations in Brussels, has been a diplomat for 35 years, ending his career as Ambassador in Washington, was the Chief Adviser to two Ministers of Foreign Affairs and a Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, “Use of Force,” Diplomacy in Practice: A Critical Approach, Routledge, 2023, pp. 145–186

8.11.1 Nuclear war

8.11.1.1 Deterrence and balance of terror

With the introduction of nuclear weapons, the logic of war as we traditionally knew it has been totally upset. Nuclear warfare does not only kill your enemy, but it kills you too. In nuclear warfare, victory and defeat have no meaning anymore, war has become suicidal. As Robert Oppenheimer put it: ‘two scorpions in a bottle’.

The bombings in 1945 of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were atypical and no conclusions regarding the future likelihood of nuclear warfare could be drawn from them: they occurred at a time that the US had atomic monopoly and hence did not have to fear retaliation. It is the lack of any retaliatory capacity at the disposal of Japan that made Truman’s decision possible. Things change once you are with two (or more) in the nuclear game. Because then the logic of that game changes fundamentally.

In such duopoly scenario survival depends on effective deterrence, indeed on symmetrical deterrence since the need for deterrence by one party also plays for the other party. The logic of deterrence is rather paradoxical: deterrence means, analytically, that you have to credibly threaten with the use of force, in order not to have to use it. For deterrence to succeed, there must be three conditions fulfilled: (1) you must effectively have the nuclear power, (2) you must be effectively ready to use it, and (3) your potential adversary must be fully aware of these two facts. The second of these three conditions is critical. Deterrence will not work if your threat of use of force is not totally credible (as we too often witness with bland invocations of ‘red lines’). Note that given the symmetrical relationship involved it will be, again paradoxically, the countries that possess nuclear weapons that will feel safer than those who do not.

This then is what we have learned to call the ‘balance of terror’ resting on the so-called MAD-doctrine (‘mutually assured destruction’). MAD should not be called a ‘doctrine’ since it is a matter of pure logic. This explains why no strenuous negotiations or written agreements were involved in getting at that ‘balance’. That balance came naturally, logically. Not an option, but a necessity. The parties involved readily understood what was at stake: if I kill my adversary, I am assured that he will kill me; so, killing him effectively means killing myself, suicide. The mechanism underlying it is self-fulfilling. It operates through the intrinsic self-interest of the parties. The MAD-logic is often suggested as the primary reason for the Cold War remaining ‘cold’. While the Bipolar World might have been intrinsically a rather dangerous place, its MAD-doctrine paradoxically led to stability and predictability. As Ronal Steel put it: ‘In its perverted way, the Cold War was a force of stability’ (STEEL, 1995, p. 11). Nuclear weapons ended up being viewed as a fundamental source of national security and international stability. Churchill put it in a memorable phrase: ‘safety would prove to be the sturdy child of terror’ (see Box 8.15). That is why some analysts have suggested that the proliferation of nuclear weapons to India and Pakistan has actually (and again paradoxically) moderated their relationship by raising the cost of all-out war for both parties to unacceptable levels.

The preceding remarks may give the impression that the logic of deterrence only plays with regard to nuclear weapons. That logic, however, applies to any form of deterrence, including with conventional weapons or even sanction regimes. What makes nuclear deterrence special is its ‘absolute’ nature given the total destruction that would follow in case it would fail.

[BOX OMITTED]

It is quite interesting to note that the MAD-logic was confirmed and indeed guaranteed by the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972. This was a treaty specifically designed to ensure the mutual vulnerability of the Soviet Union and the US by limiting the missile defences they could develop, thus ensuring their continued mutual vulnerability to nuclear attack. The ABM Treaty thus rested on the proposition that the development of effective missile defences by one side would undermine the other side’s confidence in the effectiveness of its nuclear deterrent, incentivising it to launch a first strike before it was too late. Significantly, in 2002, the US withdrew from the Treaty in order to be able to pursue the development of its Ballistic Missile Defence system, a move that contradicts the logic behind MAD and thus fragilises the ‘balance of terror’.

MAD-logic presupposes that the parties are rational agents. But governments do not always behave rationally, which brings us to the questions of No First Use (NFU) and Non-Proliferation (see Box 8.16).

[BOX OMITTED]

8.11.1.2 No First Use (NFU)

Not everybody would agree that the logic of deterrence is as compelling as portrayed above. Moreover, as pointed out, the logic presupposes rational agents deciding on the use of nuclear force. NFU stands for a doctrine according to which no nuclear weapons would be used against an enemy that has used only conventional weapons. India and China have declared NFU. The US has consciously opted for an ambiguous posture. Proponents of the doctrine think that NFU would make for a safer world. They point out that without NFU, a nuclear state adversary that fears an unexpected nuclear attack is more likely to put its own arsenal on hair-trigger alert, increasing the risk of accidental launch. Also, without NFU an adversary might be tempted to pre-empt the would-be attacker by going even faster, engendering a perverse dialectic known as ‘reciprocal fear of surprise attack’.

But many observers are not convinced by these pro-NFU arguments.

From a conceptual perspective NFU opponents point out that the aim should not be to diminish the deterrence from nuclear weapons (as would happen with NFU), but to minimise the risk that those weapons themselves become the cause of escalation:

• To counter the NFU argument regarding the risk of accidental launch, opponents argue that one should not question the overall principle of deterrence but look at formulas to improve the nuclear chain command. One could envisage that the power to decide on a launch should reside in a collective body (a college) rather than a single individual (e.g. the President). Doing so would perhaps not totally avert ‘accidental’ launches by ‘non-rational’ actors, but it would at least drastically diminish that risk from happening.

• Also, nuclear powers could make their systems safer. Currently these systems are designed for nuclear forces to be launched within a few minutes, without the possibility of recall (called ‘launch on warning’). Taking weapons off this hair-trigger by mutual agreement could allow decisions to be made with cooler heads

• Another way for a first-use policy to be made safer could be that nuclear states make formal pledges regarding the scope of their first-use policy. It has been suggested, for instance, that recourse to nuclear weapons should only happen in case the very survival of nations is at stake.

From a political perspective NFU-opponents point out that NFU could make the world a less stable place:

• South Korea, Taiwan, or the Baltic States are countries that face intimidating neighbours; they think (and the NFU-opponents agree) that uncertainty about America’s First Use helps deter conventional attacks that might threaten their very existence, such as a Russian assault on Estonia or a Chinese invasion of Taiwan.

• Also, were the US to rule out First Use, some of its Asian allies might pursue nuclear weapons of their own. Any such proliferation risks being destabilising and indeed increasing the risks of nuclear war.

#### The canonical debate surrounding changes to declaratory policy is still live, focused on deterring sub-nuclear WMD attacks and conventional adversary attacks, reassuring US allies,

Iris Gupta 22, Johns Hopkins University, “Declaring No-First-Use: The Necessary Next Step for American Nuclear Policy,” IDEAL, 6/26/22

In 2012, former President Obama spoke at the International Nuclear Security Summit, declaring a nuclear strike as “one of the more urgent and serious threats to global security.” He stressed, “it would not take much – just a handful or so of these [nuclear] materials to kill hundreds and thousands of innocent people.”[FOOTNOTE 1 BEGINS] President Obama Speaks at the Nuclear Security ... - Youtube.” The Obama White House, 27 Mar. 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ll8kwDCh\_Q. [FOOTNOTE 1 ENDS] Yet a decade later, the United States (U.S.) still has yet to abandon its risky nuclear policy of first-use. A first-use policy ambiguously threatens the use of nuclear weapons against our adversaries first in a crisis, which is in contrast to a nuclear policy of no-first-use (NFU), a formal “commitment to not use nuclear weapons first in any situation.” An NFU policy would restrict a president from considering the use of nuclear weapons and would help signal that nuclear forces are only to be used for deterrence against other nuclear weapons.[FOOTNOTE 2 BEGINS] “No First Use: Frequently Asked Questions.” Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, 20 Apr. 2021, https://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/no-first-use/no-first-use-frequently-askedquestions/#:~:text=A%20%E2%80%9CNo%20First%20Use%E2%80%9D%20(,are%20for%20deterrence%E2%80%94not%20warfighting. [FOOTNOTE 2 ENDS] As of now, China is the only country that has declared NFU.[FOOTNOTE 3 BEGINS] Zhen, Liu. “China Calls on Nations to Cut Nuclear Stockpile and Backs 'No First Use'.” South China Morning Post, 22 Oct. 2021, https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3153387/china-backs-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-calls-nations-cut. [FOOTNOTE 3 ENDS] There is, however, speculation that since the declaration is not binding under any international law, China would abandon the doctrine and still use its nuclear weapons first in an emergent situation.[FOOTNOTE 4 BEGINS] Pry, Peter. “China's 'No First Use' Nuclear Fiction.” TheHill, The Hill, 24 June 2020, https://thehill.com/opinion/international/502503-chinas-nofirst-use-nuclear-fiction. [FOOTNOTE 4 ENDS] Despite fears of the declaration being ingenuine, there is still powerful and symbolic diplomatic messaging associated with declaring NFU, which makes nuclear declaratory policy a crucial tool for a country to wield in its nuclear arsenal. As nuclear technology continues to advance, arsenals steadily expand, and political tensions with adversaries like Russia approach their breaking points, the U.S. would be well-advised to reconsider its current strategy with this tool.[FOOTNOTE 5 BEGINS] “United States Nuclear Weapons in Europe.” Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 9 Mar. 2022, https://cnduk.org/resources/united-statesnuclear-weapons-europe/. [FOOTNOTE 5 ENDS]

Resistance against a declaratory policy of no-first-use is well-documented, and the most common criticism argues the importance of threatening nuclear weapons to deter non-nuclear attacks that are cyber or biological. The logic of the deterrence argument is the following: if our adversaries believe that the U.S. may nuclearize first in response to a conventional attack, then they would be less inclined to attack in the first place. The deterrence argument is, however, not a very compelling one. Michael Gerson of Harvard’s Belfer Center assures that U.S. conventional capabilities are more than adequate to respond to conventional aggression, biological weapons, and even an adversary’s use of nuclear weapons.[FOOTNOTE 6 BEGINS] Gerson, Michael S. “The Future of U.S. Nuclear Policy: The Case for No First Use.” Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Quarterly Journal: International Security, Feb. 2011, https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/future-us-nuclear-policy-case-no-first-use. [FOOTNOTE 6 ENDS] Indeed, the U.S. has upheld, and continues to uphold, its reputation of an unmatched conventional military ability. Not only does the U.S. spend more than any other country on its conventional military at $750 billion each year, but the U.S. also possesses 2,100 fighters, 967 attack choppers, and over 900 air transports, all of which cement our “air superiority as well as naval prowess” on the global scale.[FOOTNOTE 7 BEGINS] Douglas, Richard. “Does the United States Really Have the World's Strongest Military?” The National Interest, The Center for the National Interest, 17 July 2021, https://nationalinterest.org/blog/reboot/does-united-states-really-have-world%E2%80%99s-strongest-military-189843. [FOOTNOTE 7 ENDS] Nuclear weapons are arguably unnecessary to protect American sovereignty, and may even be viewed as excessive. John Holdren, former President Obama’s senior science advisor, asserts that “retaliating with nuclear weapons against chemical or biological weapons use would … almost certainly be seen as disproportionate” by the international community.[FOOTNOTE 8 BEGINS] Holdren, John P. “The Overwhelming Case for No First Use.” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, vol. 76, no. 1, 2020, pp. 3–7., https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277. [FOOTNOTE 8 ENDS] The decision to retaliate in this manner plays a significant role in the U.S. international reputation as a decision-maker, and the U.S. would undoubtedly be held responsible for the repercussions of potential retaliation by arbiters like the United Nations. For these reasons, it is highly unlikely that any U.S. president would order a nuclear launch in response to non-nuclear attacks. The fear of a disproportionate response helps explain why there have been several instances of biological and chemical attacks in recent years which have not been met with nuclear attacks by the U.S. For example, the U.S. threatened force against Syria’s use of chemical weapons but backed off when they were used, perhaps underscoring American fear of responding by escalation.[FOOTNOTE 9 BEGINS] Levitz, Eric. “Obama Deeply Proud of That Time He Broke His Promise on Syria, and 12 Other Revelations from His Unbelievably Frank Interview with the Atlantic.” Intelligencer, New York Magazine, 10 Mar. 2016, https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2016/03/obama-the-dark-knightexplains-isis.html. [FOOTNOTE 9 ENDS]

Another popular criticism of an NFU policy, cited by former Secretary of State John Kerry, is that “such [an NFU] declaration could unnerve American allies already fearful that America’s nuclear umbrella cannot be relied upon.”[FOOTNOTE 10 BEGINS] Sanger, David E., and William J. Broad. “Obama Unlikely to Vow No First Use of Nuclear Weapons.” The New York Times, The New York Times, 6 Sept. 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/06/science/obama-unlikely-to-vow-no-first-use-of-nuclear-weapons.html. [FOOTNOTE 10 ENDS] From this perspective, declaring NFU would represent a weakening of nuclear umbrella commitments that the U.S. would come to the aid of allies if they are conventionally attacked. The sentiments in support of such commitments remain strong. As Terence Roehrig in Political Science Quarterly reports, South Korea has “exerted great effort to have Washington [D.C.] provide explicit reassurances that the nuclear umbrella remains in place.”[FOOTNOTE 11 BEGINS] Roehrig, Terence. “The U.S. Nuclear Umbrella over South Korea: Nuclear Weapons and Extended Deterrence.” Political Science Quarterly, vol. 132, no. 4, 2017, pp. 651–684., https://doi.org/10.1002/polq.12702. [FOOTNOTE 11 ENDS] John Harvey from War on the Rocks suggests that “if America adopts no-first-use, then allies could lose confidence in America’s extended deterrence commitments which … could spur them to develop and field their own nuclear weapons,” a much-feared response from the global proliferation standpoint.[FOOTNOTE 12 BEGINS] Harvey, John R. “Assessing the Risks of a Nuclear 'No First Use' Policy.” War on the Rocks, 5 July 2019, https://warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/. [FOOTNOTE 12 ENDS] Yet, the nuclear umbrella argument is not particularly convincing either, as it serves more of an aesthetic than functional purpose. To this point, Bruce Blair of Princeton’s Program on Science and Global Security writes, regarding an NFU policy, that “neither elite nor public opinion among our 30 key allies believes that U.S. nuclear first use is critical to their defense … This threat has long been discounted, knowing conventional forces are adequate to successfully defend the sovereignty and vital interests of these 30 nations.”[FOOTNOTE 13 BEGINS] Blair, Bruce. “The Flimsy Case against No-First-Use of Nuclear Weapons.” POLITICO Magazine, 28 Sept. 2016, https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/09/nuclear-weapons-no-first-use-debate-214300/. [FOOTNOTE 13 ENDS] The U.S. track record of nuclear inaction is solidified by the fact that U.S. nuclear weapons did not deter the rise of the Islamic State; Russian interventions in Georgia, Ukraine, or Syria; North Korean nuclear missile tests; and risky conventional crises in Kashmir.[FOOTNOTE 14 BEGINS] Tannenwald, Nina. “It’s Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy.” Texas National Security Review, 1 Aug. 2019, https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/. [FOOTNOTE 14 ENDS] There is also evidence to suggest that even if an NFU policy does leave the nuclear umbrella in jeopardy, the U.S. has other tools to swiftly calm the fears of our allies. For example, Eric Gomez from War on the Rocks points out that ballistic missile defense (BMD) systems can easily substitute nuclear weapons as a form of extended deterrence.[FOOTNOTE 15 BEGINS] Gomez, Eric. “Revisiting the Value of the U.S. Nuclear Umbrella in East Asia.” War on the Rocks, 6 Mar. 2018, https://warontherocks.com/2018/03/revisiting-value-u-s-nuclear-umbrella-east-asia/. [FOOTNOTE 15 ENDS] Gomez writes that reducing the role nuclear weapons play in defense might even incentivize the U.S. to increase conventional forces which would provide improved deterrence capacity. Indeed, conventional weapons present a more believable threat to adversaries than nuclear weapons do.

In the absence of robust counterarguments, the U.S. should seriously consider adopting a nuclear policy of no first use. A U.S. declaration of NFU would send a powerful message to the world’s leading powers, signifying a firm commitment to nuclear peace. The nuclear arms race we are seeing today makes this action all the more imperative. John Holdren in Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists writes that the U.S. first-use stance concedes the need for our nuclear‐armed foes to upgrade or acquire nuclear weapons to deter or respond to a U.S. nuclear attack. He warns, “This syndrome drives an endless cycle of action and reaction, compounded by worst‐case assessment on both sides.” [FOOTNOTE 16 BEGINS] Holdren, John P. “The Overwhelming Case for No First Use.” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, vol. 76, no. 1, 2020, pp. 3–7., https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277. [FOOTNOTE 16 ENDS] For this reason, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the largest international treaty that serves as a multilateral forum for all nations to move towards the common goal of nuclear disarmament, is already breaking down. Because the U.S. maintains significant international influence, Dr. Lewis Dunn from the Center for Global Security Research proposes that “the overall objective should be to articulate a U.S. look-long vision of the nuclear disarmament future.” [FOOTNOTE 17 BEGINS] Dunn, Lewis. “Redefining the U.S. Agenda for Nuclear Disarmament, Analysis and Reflections.” Livermore Papers on Global Security No. 1 Center for Global Security Research, Oct. 2016, https://doi.org/10.2172/1332480. [FOOTNOTE 17 ENDS]

The benefits would be far-reaching, as Scott Sagan in Survival concludes that “U.S. behavior, including nuclear posture and doctrine, is highly influential … The signaling and legitimizing effects of U.S. nuclear doctrine … should not be minimized.” [FOOTNOTE 18 BEGINS] Sagan, Scott D. “The Case for No First Use.” Survival, vol. 51, no. 3, 2009, pp. 163–182., https://doi.org/10.1080/00396330903011545. [FOOTNOTE 18 ENDS] Dunn more specifically foresees that a U.S. vision towards nuclear disarmament through NFU commitments would “provide flexibility for today’s nuclear-weapon states to phase pursuit of strategic elimination,” setting the norms for successful global disarmament. [FOOTNOTE 19 BEGINS] Dunn, Lewis. “Redefining the U.S. Agenda for Nuclear Disarmament, Analysis and Reflections.” Livermore Papers on Global Security No. 1 Center for Global Security Research, Oct. 2016, https://doi.org/10.2172/1332480. [FOOTNOTE 19 ENDS] Many non-nuclear member states have criticized the U.S. for not doing enough to “fulfill its obligations” to international treaties like the NPT. Thus, an NFU policy would symbolize the willingness of the U.S. to adhere to non-proliferation and encourage support from allies and adversaries alike. International backing of the disarmament of nuclear weapons could reduce the probability of a country developing a nuclear program eleven-fold and reduce the probability of pursuing nuclear weapons six-fold. [FOOTNOTE 20 BEGINS] Fuhrmann, Matthew, and Yonatan Lupu. “Do Arms Control Treaties Work ? Assessing the Effectiveness of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.” International Studies Quarterly, vol. 60, no. 3, 2016, pp. 530–539., https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqw013. [FOOTNOTE 20 ENDS] With fewer nuclear weapons in circulation, chances of conflict escalation and unintended or miscalculated nuclear strikes decrease significantly.

Adopting an NFU policy would also drastically reduce the probability of a miscalculated nuclear strike from an adversary like Russia. John Gower of the Carnegie Endowment writes that ambiguity in declaratory nuclear policy “feeds the risk of miscalculation.”21 [FOOTNOTE 21 BEGINS] 21Gower, John. “The Dangerous Illogic of Twenty-First-Century Deterrence through Planning for Nuclear Warfighting.” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 6 Mar. 2018, https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/03/06/dangerous-illogic-of-twenty-first-century-deterrence-throughplanning-for-nuclear-warfighting-pub-75717. [FOOTNOTE 21 ENDS] If an adversary believes the U.S. may use nuclear weapons first in a crisis, they might even be more likely to strike pre-emptively to reduce their risk of disaster. One might see some tension with this concept against the previous argument that nuclear weapons do not present a credible threat since the U.S. is unlikely to nuclearize first in a crisis. This is a fair point, but to this concern I would respond that the decision-making calculus of the U.S. and its allies fundamentally differs from that of adversaries because each actor must act on its own perception of a worst-case scenario to protect its sovereignty. Since a worst-case scenario for the U.S. is facing international criticism, it would likely not use nuclear weapons first to protect its reputation. For allies, the worst-case scenario is U.S. inaction during a crisis, so they must maintain suspicion towards U.S. security guarantees. Russia on the other hand, already views the U.S. with deep hostility and mistrust, so even the slightest conflicting signal about nuclear intention from the U.S. would be enough to justify preemptive action. With the U.S. continuing to rapidly modernize its nuclear arsenal, miscalculation has become increasingly likely. Russia is highly perceptive of this modernization, as Eoin Higgins of Common Dreams reports that “Moscow [is] treating U.S. moves as a sign the country has made a decision to consider a nuclear conflict as a viable political option and [is] creating the potential [scenario] necessary for it.”22 [FOOTNOTE 22 BEGINS] 22Higgins, Eoin. “Russia Fears Us under Trump Now Ready to Use Nuclear Weapons as 'Viable Political Option'.” Common Dreams, 6 Mar. 2020, https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/03/06/russia-fears-us-under-trump-now-ready-use-nuclear-weapons-viable-political-option. [FOOTNOTE 22 ENDS] Russia has even backed up its words with actions as they continue to rapidly modernize its nuclear arsenal as well.23 [FOOTNOTE 23 BEGINS] 23Gottemoeller, Rose. “Russia Is Updating Their Nuclear Weapons: What Does That Mean for the Rest of Us?” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 29 Jan. 2020, https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/01/29/russia-is-updating-their-nuclear-weapons-what-does-that-mean-forrest-of-us-pub-80895. [FOOTNOTE 23 ENDS] An NFU declaration from the U.S. is then paramount to stop conflict escalation, as “a clear U.S. no-first-use policy would reduce the risk of Russian or Chinese nuclear miscalculation during a crisis by alleviating concerns about a devastating U.S. nuclear firststrike.”24 [FOOTNOTE 24 BEGINS] 24Panda, Ankit. “'No First Use' and Nuclear Weapons.” Council on Foreign Relations, Council on Foreign Relations, 17 July 2018, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/no-first-use-and-nuclear-weapons. [FOOTNOTE 24 ENDS]

Aside from ensuring the safety of the U.S. and our allies, an NFU policy would also prevent a mistaken blow to adversaries. The U.S. currently maintains a robust base of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), whose locations are publicly disclosed because they must be stored in land-based silos. Since these missiles would be instantly obliterated by another country’s nuclear first strike, ICBMs have little utility as second-strike weapons. Instead, they are exclusively used by the U.S. for a pre-emptive or first strike. To complement the pre-emptive nature of these missiles, the U.S. also maintains a highly dangerous launch-on-warning policy, authorizing the first use of ICBMs in situations where the U.S. merely suspects danger. In this high-pressure and precarious situation, the U.S. president has just minutes to unilaterally decide whether to launch a nuclear weapon in response to a suspected enemy attack. To illustrate this risk, Bob Woodward, a veteran investigator of the Trump Administration, in his book, Peril, expressed fear that Trump would have launched nuclear weapons to stay in power as a result of the lost 2020 election.25 [FOOTNOTE 25 BEGINS] 25Gangel, Jamie, et al. “Woodward/Costa Book: Worried Trump Could 'Go Rogue,' Milley Took Secret Action to Protect Nuclear Weapons.” CNN, Cable News Network, 14 Sept. 2021, https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/14/politics/woodward-book-trump-nuclear/index.html. [FOOTNOTE 25 ENDS] Critically, James Cartwright and Bruce Blair of the New York Times point out that an NFU policy would “gut the rationale for retaining the large arsenal of land-based strategic missiles … [and] any need for launching on warning disappears.” 26 [FOOTNOTE 26 BEGINS] 26Cartwright, James E., and Bruce G. Blair. “End the First-Use Policy for Nuclear Weapons.” The New York Times, The New York Times, 15 Aug. 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/15/opinion/end-the-first-use-policy-for-nuclear-weapons.html. [FOOTNOTE 26 ENDS] In other words, an NFU declaration would “shape the physical qualities of nuclear forces in a way that renders them unsuitable for missions other than deterrence of nuclear attacks,” essentially enforcing first-use disarmament onto the U.S.27 [FOOTNOTE 27 BEGINS] 27 Jackson, Galen. “Policy Roundtable: Nuclear First-Use and Presidential Authority.” Texas National Security Review, 31 July 2019, https://tnsr.org/roundtable/policy-roundtable-nuclear-first-use-and-presidential-authority/. [FOOTNOTE 27 ENDS] Phasing out the use of ICBMs and launch-on-warning policies would drastically reduce the chance of a U.S. miscalculated strike on an adversary by raising the cost of launching nuclear weapons. Tyler Rogoway of The War Zone finds that there have been at least three false alarms in the U.S. that could have led to a mistaken nuclear war through launch-on-warning. In one particular instance, former Defense Secretary Bill Perry “was awakened in the middle of the night and told that Pentagon computers were showing 200 ICBMs on their way from the Soviet Union. Luckily, it was not the end of the world, but just a computer glitch.”28 [FOOTNOTE 28 BEGINS] 28Rogoway, Tyler. “Updating America's Land-Based Ballistic Missile 'Nuclear Sponge' Is a $100B+ Waste.” The Drive, The Drive, 1 Dec. 2019, https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/27535/updating-americas-land-based-ballistic-missile-nuclear-sponge-is-a-100b-waste. [FOOTNOTE 28 ENDS]

For the above reasons, declaring NFU to work towards the long-term goal of global disarmament is the most responsible foreign policy decision. Even if the U.S. is not yet willing to sacrifice its long-held “nuclear umbrella,” it is crucial to realize that future global disarmament would eliminate the need for a U.S. nuclear umbrella in the first place. By giving adversaries and allies alike the flexibility to disarm, and by removing ambiguity in nuclear policy to move toward a mutual understanding of nonproliferation, we inadvertently protect our allies in a much more stable, long-term manner. Threatening our adversaries in the status quo by upholding extended deterrence for our allies only encourages them to proliferate and strengthen their nuclear capabilities. The paradox of proliferation is unraveling before our eyes, and the rapid proliferation we see right now is proof. It is only after the U.S. finally realizes that the nuclear umbrella has already begun to close that we can finally consider a departure from the current nuclear policy and move towards one that values norm-setting and unambiguity.

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#### The debate is timely, but grounded in a deep foundation going back many presidential administrations.

John Ramming Chappell 22, a joint J.D. and M.S. in Foreign Service candidate, 2023, at Georgetown University, “President of the United States, Destroyer of Worlds: Considering Congress’s Authority to Enact a Nuclear No-First-Use Law,” American University National Security Law Brief, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2021), https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/nslb/vol12/iss2/4

II. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF NO-FIRST-USE POLICY DEBATES

Policymakers have debated whether to declare a no-first-use policy for at least seventy years, beginning soon after the dawn of the nuclear age.29 Both Congress and presidential administrations have considered implementing a no-first-use policy.30 However, the United States has elected to keep first use on the table time and again. This Section outlines past no-first-use debates.

A. The Policy Debate Around No First Use

The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review describes the current U.S. declaratory policy,31 [FOOTNOTE 31 BEGINS] 31 The Nuclear Posture Review is the chief expression of U.S. nuclear policy. Declaratory policy is a set of public statements regarding the circumstances under which a state would consider using nuclear weapons. See generally, GEORGE PERKOVICH & PRANAY VADDI, PROPORTIONATE DETERRENCE: A MODEL NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW 1, 31-32 (2021). [FOOTNOTE 31 ENDS] ruling out a no-first-use pledge in order to maintain deterrence against non-nuclear attacks.32 U.S. declaratory policy precludes using nuclear weapons against “states that are party to the [Non-Proliferation Treaty] and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations.”33 The Nuclear Posture Review states that the United States would consider using nuclear weapons in response to “attacks on the U.S., allied, or partner civilian population or infrastructure, and attacks on U.S. or allied nuclear forces, their command and control, or warning and attack assessment capabilities.”34

Proponents of a no-first-use policy argue that the United States should never need to use nuclear weapons first because the United States can accomplish any necessary objective that the first use of nuclear weapons could advance with conventional force instead.35 [FOOTNOTE 35 BEGINS] 35 See PERRY & COLLINA, supra note 14, at 210. Generally speaking, the use of conventional force refers to the use of military force by means that do not involve nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. [FOOTNOTE 35 ENDS] No-first-use supporters also claim that prohibiting the first use of nuclear weapons would decrease the likelihood of a mistaken nuclear launch by ensuring that the United States would not respond to a false alarm with a nuclear strike.36 [FOOTNOTE 36 BEGINS] 36 Nina Tannenwald, It’s Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy, TEX. NAT’L SEC. REV. (July 2, 2019), https://tnsr.org/roundtable/policy-roundtable-nuclear-first-use-and-presidential-authority/#essay2. [FOOTNOTE 36 ENDS] No-first-use supporters further argue that the current policy of leaving first use on the table undermines stability in a crisis by incentivizing other states to launch a preemptive strike, increasing the risk of miscommunication and brinkmanship, and prompting opponents to take measures to increase the survivability of their forces that would increase the risk of unauthorized use.37 [FOOTNOTE 37 BEGINS] 37 Michael S. Gerson, The Future of U.S. Nuclear Policy: The Case for No First Use, BELFER CTR. (Feb. 2011), https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/future-us-nuclear-policy-case-no-first-use. [FOOTNOTE 37 ENDS]

Opponents of a no-first-use policy, on the other hand, argue that the policy would undermine deterrence.38 [FOOTNOTE 38 BEGINS] 38 See, e.g., John R. Harvey, Assessing the Risks of a Nuclear 'No First Use' Policy, WAR ON THE ROCKS (July 5, 2019), https://warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/ ("The first risk is to deterrence: Adversaries, absent a fear of reprisal, could be emboldened to act against U.S. interests.”) [FOOTNOTE 38 ENDS] They claim the United States needs a nuclear deterrent against both nuclear attacks and significant conventional, chemical, biological, or cyber threats.39 Conventional threats were especially salient during the Cold War when policymakers feared the Warsaw Pact may invade NATO and that the Pact’s conventional superiority required a nuclear deterrent.40 [FOOTNOTE 40 BEGINS] 40 Stephen L. Carter, The Constitution and Prevention of Nuclear Holocaust: A Reaction to Professor Banks, 13 J. LEGIS., 206, 206 (1986). [FOOTNOTE 40 ENDS] Furthermore, they posit that a no-first-use policy would undermine extended deterrence over U.S. allies,41 [FOOTNOTE 41 BEGINS] 41 As British Defense Minister Denis Healey argued in the 1960s, “it only takes five percent credibility to deter the Russians, but ninety-five percent credibility to reassure the Europeans.” ROBERTS, supra note 13, at 179. [FOOTNOTE 41 ENDS] incentivizing them to develop their own nuclear arms amid eroding U.S. assurances.42 [FOOTNOTE 42 BEGINS] 42 Franklin C. Miller & Keith B. Payne, The dangers of no-first-use, BULL. ATOM. SCI. (Aug. 22, 2016), https://thebulletin.org/2016/08/the-dangers-of-no-first-use/. But see Jon Wolfsthal, Nuclear First-Use Is Dangerous and Unnecessary, TEX. NAT’L SEC. REV. (July 2, 2019), https://tnsr.org/roundtable/policy-roundtable-nuclear-first-use-andpresidential-authority/#essay3. Extended deterrence is a U.S. commitment to retaliate against attacks on another state, thereby preventing attacks on the state because prospective attackers expect to incur unacceptable losses in a U.S. retaliatory strike. Allies and partners that rely on the United States for extended deterrence are sometimes described as being under the U.S. “nuclear umbrella.” [FOOTNOTE 42 ENDS]

B. Presidential Considerations

Several administrations have weighed the possibility of a no-first-use policy. George Kennan, the diplomat and strategist who first crafted the Cold War’s containment policy, recommended a nofirst-use policy to the Truman administration in 1950, but President Truman declined to implement the proposal and kept the first use of nuclear weapons under “active consideration.”43

During the Clinton administration, Defense Secretary Les Aspin considered a no-first-use policy as part of a post-Cold War nuclear posture.44 However, Aspin elected not to incorporate no first use into the Nuclear Posture Review after allies expressed concern that the policy would undermine their security.45 Although the details of those concerns are not publicly available, allies tend to approach the prospect of a no-first-use policy with caution if they depend on U.S. security assurances to deter conventional attacks. A no-first-use policy would retain the option of retaliating with nuclear weapons against a nuclear attack on an ally, but it would rule out the use of nuclear weapons in retaliation against a non-nuclear attack, whether on an ally or the United States. Therefore, allies and partners that depend on the United States for extended deterrence against non nuclear attacks tend to oppose a no-first-use policy because it would make a conventional attack against them appear less risky.

The election of President Barack Obama elicited hopes for policies to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. security, including a no-first-use policy.46 In a 2009 speech in Prague, President Barack Obama affirmed “America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.”47 That vision contributed to President Obama’s selection for the Nobel Peace Prize that year.48 However, after consultations with allies, the Obama administration chose not to include no first use in the 2010 Nuclear Policy Review.49 [FOOTNOTE 49 BEGINS] 49 See PERRY & COLLINA, supra note 14, at 96; ROBERTS supra note 13, at 201. Allies in Northeast Asia particularly opposed the change. Neither Japan nor South Korea has nuclear weapons despite their proximity to North Korea and China. U.S. allies in Northeast Asia instead rely on U.S. extended deterrence to guard against existential security threats, making them especially sensitive to changes in the U.S. nuclear posture. [FOOTNOTE 49 ENDS] President Obama revisited no first use at the end of his second term but again encountered resistance from advisors and allies, including Japan, South Korea, France, and the United Kingdom.50 [FOOTNOTE 50 BEGINS] 50 See Josh Rogin, U.S. allies unite to block Obama's nuclear 'legacy,' WASH. POST (Aug. 14, 2016), https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/allies-unite-to-block-an-obamalegacy/2016/08/14/cdb8d8e4-60b9-11e6-8e45-477372e89d78\_story.html. [FOOTNOTE 50 ENDS]

The Trump administration resurfaced concerns about U.S. nuclear policy, making no first use an important policy issue in the 2020 presidential election.51 [FOOTNOTE 51 BEGINS] 51 See Robert Burns, Biden would push for less US reliance on nukes for defense, ASSOCIATED PRESS (Sep. 21, 2020) https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-nuclear-weapons-elections-joe-biden-russia1299ae16f3f21db12e4a41ce2392a0f7. [FOOTNOTE 51 ENDS] No-first-use policy even appeared in a Democratic presidential debate in 2019 when Senator Elizabeth Warren supported the idea because “[i]t reduces the likelihood that someone miscalculates, [or] someone misunderstands.”52 Montana governor Steve Bullock countered that he “wouldn’t want to take [first use] off the table.”53

The Biden administration has begun its Nuclear Posture Review, which was expected for release in early 2022.54 The process has already sparked controversy within the Department of Defense, where senior officials requested the resignation of a political appointee overseeing the review.55 The ouster drew concern from Senator Ed Markey, who worried the appointee’s reassignment may have been motivated by a desire to disadvantage no first use in the review process.56 In late 2021, hundreds of top scientists urged President Biden to adopt a no-first-use policy in a letter.57 Dozens of members of Congress followed suit in early 2022, urging the President to “[d]eclare that the sole purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter a nuclear attack on the United States and its allies, and that the United States will never use nuclear weapons first.”58 President Biden’s past support for a no-first-use policy has also elicited concern from allies.59 As Vice President in January 2017, Joe Biden said, “Given our non-nuclear capabilities, and today’s threats— it’s hard to envision a plausible scenario in which the first use of nuclear weapons would be necessary. Or make sense.”60 [FOOTNOTE 60 BEGINS] 60 William J. Perry & Tom Z. Collina, To Prevent Nuclear War, President Biden Should Listen to Vice President Biden, DEF. NEWS (Nov. 17, 2021), https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2021/11/17/to-prevent-nuclear-warpresident-biden-should-listen-to-vice-president-biden/. [FOOTNOTE 60 ENDS] Biden reaffirmed his position as a presidential candidate.61 [FOOTNOTE 61 BEGINS] 61 See Kingston Reif, Biden Administration Begins Nuclear Posture Review, ARMS CONTROL ASSOC. (Sep. 2021), https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2021-09/news/biden-administration-begins-nuclear-posture-review. [FOOTNOTE 61 ENDS] However, in March 2022, administration officials reportedly indicated that President Biden’s Nuclear Posture Review will not adopt a no-first-use policy.62 [FOOTNOTE 62 BEGINS] 62 Michael R. Gordon, Biden Sticks With Longstanding U.S. Policy on Use of Nuclear Weapons Amid Pressure From Allies, WALL STREET J. (Mar. 25, 2022), https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-sticks-with-longstanding-u-s-policy-on-use-of-nuclearweapons-amid-pressure-from-allies-11648176849. [FOOTNOTE 62 ENDS]

In sum, presidential administrations have considered a no-first-use policy and elected to keep their options open while assuring the public that they would only use nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances.

### Lit Review---Policy Area---Risk Mitigation

#### A broad suite of nuclear risk mitigation measures---some topical, some CPs---are being actively debated in the wake of Russia’s Ukraine invasion.

Frederic S. Pearson & Erika Simpson 22, Pearson is a professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, USA; Simpson is an associate professor of International Relations at the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada, and the President of the Canadian Peace Research Association, “How to De-Escalate Dangerous Nuclear Weapons and Force Deployments in Europe,” International Journal, vol. 77, no. 1, SAGE Publications Ltd, 03/01/2022, pp. 125–136

The prospect of nuclear war

The war in Ukraine threatens democracy and the morale of the international community more than any other crisis since the end of the Second World War. It is time for renewed serious diplomacy, building upon and strengthening arms control treaties like the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). There remain approximately 12,700 nuclear warheads in the world, and the United States and Russia own approximately 90 percent of them. Russian president Vladimir Putin’s nebulous declaration on 27 February 2022 that he was putting his nuclear forces into “special combat readiness” was an ominous alarm.1 [FOOTNOTE 1 BEGINS] 1 “Treaty between The United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles (INF Treaty),” 8 December 1987; Hans M. Kristensen et al., “Status of world nuclear forces,” Federation of American Scientists, 2022; Arms Control Association, “Nuclear weapons: Who has what at a glance,” Arms Control Association Fact Sheet, January 2022; David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, “Putin declares a nuclear alert, and Biden seeks deescalation,” The New York Times, 27 February 2022. [FOOTNOTE 1 ENDS] In the midst of central Europe, the temptation to rattle nuclear sabres is destabilizing and could trigger pre-emptive blows by either side.

A US-Russian nuclear war remains unlikely, but accidental escalation or miscalculation from the threatened use of tactical nuclear weapons can happen; in this regard the Cuban Missile Crisis was a near miss because of intended Russian nuclear weapon deployment in Cuba and the forceful American response to missile deployment near its borders. In a speech one week before the Ukraine invasion, President Putin threatened “consequences you have never faced in your history” for “anyone who tries to interfere with us.” He came close to threatening nuclear war when he said that Russia “remains one of the most powerful nuclear states” with “a certain advantage in several cuttingedge weapons.” 2 In a show of military prowess on 19 February 2022, Putin invited Belarus despot Aleksandr Lukashenko to sit by his side when watching the testing of Russia’s nuclear triad and three types of nuclear missiles, and possible nuclear deployments in that country have been rumoured.3 [FOOTNOTE 3 BEGINS] 3 Sanger and Broad, “Putin declares a nuclear alert”; Ellen Mitchell, “Russia’s nuclear weapons threat raises Western fears,” The Hill, 27 February 2022; Thomas Nilsen, “These weapons were used in Putin’s nuclear thunder exercise,” The Barents Observer, 19 February 2022. [FOOTNOTE 3 ENDS]

In a similarly sabre-rattling fashion, former US President Trump raised the prospect of nuclear war with North Korea in 2018, boasting that he commanded a “much bigger” and “more powerful” arsenal of devastating weapons than the rogue state. Such threats undermine the credibility of nuclear deterrence, which rests on a set of overriding preferences that serve as underlying assumptions guiding rational decision-making during crisis. Indeed, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union became increasingly amenable to a no-first-use pledge regarding such weapons, while Washington refused given a perceived inferiority in conventional infantry capability in Europe.4

Leaked documents with thought-provoking ideas and items

It is time for a renewed approach to arms control, especially considering the abrogation of the INF during the Trump administration, amidst charges that Russia was not living up to the terms. As the Ukraine situation plays out, the US, Russia, and the European allies must not miss the opportunity to negotiate strict limits, verification measures, and overarching controls over their nuclear weapon stockpiles as well as any other weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical arms, along with their conventional force deployments in Europe. Significantly, in the lead-up to the Ukraine fighting, American and NATO official diplomatic replies regarding Ukraine and European security that were delivered to Moscow were somehow leaked and published by El Pais, the Spanish daily, as John F. Kirby, the Pentagon press secretary confirmed on 2 February 2022.5 [FOOTNOTE 5 BEGINS] 5 El Pais website, “NATO-Russia Restricted” and “Non-Paper Confidential Rel/Russia” https://elpais.com/ infografias/2022/02/respuesta\_otan/respuesta\_otan\_eeuu.pdf (accessed 25 February 2022), 1–12; “Pentagon Press Briefing on Evolving Situation in Europe,” 3 February 2022. [FOOTNOTE 5 ENDS] Despite, or indeed because of, the havoc wreaked by the subsequent Russian invasion, they remain of even higher priority.

Two papers, “NATO-Russia Restricted” and “Confidential/Rel Russia,” totalling nine pages, were straightforwardly written and itemized, composed with few surprises and no abusive language. NATO and American diplomats appeared willing to discuss different concerns using the thus-far largely dormant NATO-Russia Council (NRC). The numbered items in both documents were technical and wide-ranging. They proposed some thought-provoking new ideas about strategic and tactical arms control, interspersed among many paragraphs and arguments focused upon issues surrounding Russian and NATO force build-ups, and around Ukrainian membership in NATO.

Telephone hotlines during future crises

An example is item 7.3 of NATO’s document that proposes, “Working on the Russian proposal to establish a civilian telephone hotline to maintain emergency contact.” An intergovernmental hotline had been established between the US and Russia in 1963, in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and was later upgraded from the original teletype link to actual voice and digital contact. Notably, one relevant aspect of settling the Cuban crisis was that it ended in such mutual agreements, including Soviet nondeployment in Cuba and US commitments to remove nuclear missiles from Turkey and not to invade Cuba militarily.6 Therefore, renewed bargaining makes eminent sense in today’s Europe, and the NATO proposal is well overdue to establish more hotlines and communication measures during emergency, including those between general staffs, rather than resorting to the historically timeworn practice of withdrawing ambassadors and breaking off relations.7

NATO’s Open Door Policy and consensus decision-making

Item 8.2 of the NATO document reaffirms the allied commitment to NATO’s “Open Door Policy” under Article 10 of NATO’s founding Washington Treaty. At the Bucharest Summit in April 2008, allied leaders agreed by consensus that Georgia and Ukraine might one day become members. Aspirant countries, presumptively qualifying as democracies, can prepare for possible membership through NATO’s Membership Action Plan (MAP) “without prejudice to further decisions which may be taken about their applications to join the MAP.” NATO allies must decide according to consensus rules whether to accept or reject potential MAP members. The prospect of Georgia and Ukraine’s NATO membership appeared to hasten Moscow’s so-called peacekeeping invasion of Georgia, a script later repeated with even greater destruction in Ukraine.

In early 2022, President Putin also accused Western nations of ignoring key Russian security concerns, including in his view the provocative 2007–2008 Ukraine and Georgia NATO references, as well as failed implementation of the 2014 Minsk protocol stipulating increased and controversial autonomy for Eastern Ukraine’s Donbas regions. With the onset of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the NATO allies strongly united in opposition to Putin’s flagrant disregard of Ukrainian sovereignty and international law; yet, one long-term outcome of the war could be prolonged reluctance within the NATO Council about the merits of accepting Ukraine as a full-fledged ally.8

NATO membership and eligibility

The leaked documents do not acknowledge that the NATO allies could defer the weighty issues of Ukrainian and Georgian membership for years hence. Importantly, there is no checklist for NATO membership, but emerging democracies officially must share the alliance’s values. Ukraine has considerable work to do to meet NATO’s unwritten standards for eligibility, though its reputation is clearly being enhanced by its courageous resistance to Russian attack. Of course, NATO members such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, and especially Turkey might also be deemed problematic in upholding democratic values.9 Indeed, while premising democratic status, NATO inclusion has always been primarily about strategic geographic location in the alliance’s founding premise of Soviet/Russian containment.10

Since NATO allies could certainly delay such weighty membership decisions, this could conceivably be part of a NATO-Russia de-escalation understanding, calling for formal Ukrainian neutrality perhaps on the order of Finland’s long-time approach, along with reduced Russian pressures on the border. Russia’s Ukraine conflict, now that it has resulted in war and retaliatory sanctions, could form the necessity for renewed European strategic detente ´ , as well as a reshaping of world economics and markets.11

Increased transparency and multilateral negotiations

Indeed, the risks of war escalating in Europe to both conventional and nuclear levels could be ameliorated by Item 9.3 in the exchanged documents that suggests “increasing transparency of exercises and snap exercises” in the region. Item 9.6 further suggests “reducing threats to space systems.” Such proposals make sense and are worth pursuing in a variety of negotiating forums including the NRC, as was proposed, or the European Union (EU), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the United Nations (UN). Now that Russian tanks, bombs, missiles, and artillery have descended upon Ukrainian cities, and with the uncertain prospect of strong economic sanctions deeply impacting Moscow’s inner oligarchy and restraining the president, it will be important for many international organizations to express strong messages of unity and seek valid means of de-escalation.

Marked willingness to explore nuclear risk reduction measures

The leaked documents include a “Non-Paper” ranked as “Confidential” (not Top Secret) with proposals to improve security. Presumably, therefore, this paper was written by American diplomats with the approval of US president Joseph Biden. Diplomats and experts interested in setting up Nuclear-Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs), as in Canada’s Arctic, Latin America, and the Korean Peninsula, as well as regions free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the Middle East and elsewhere can also learn from studying these documents.

In a non-confrontational tone, the non-paper’s main thrust emphasizes institutional approaches, proposing that the NRC is the “appropriate” forum to discuss the “security of Europe.” The US documents refer to the 2010 OSCE Astana Summit Commemorative Declaration, highlighting the right of each participating state to “be free to choose or change its security arrangements, including treaties of alliance[...]” 12 At the time of writing, the US and other allied states remained “concerned” that Russia has contravened its commitments under international law as well as under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances for Ukraine; it also appears that Ukraine somewhat blames the West for not protecting its security as premised in that document.

Nuclear risk reduction measures

Written in the fateful weeks leading up to the Russian invasion, the leaked American documents declare the US’s willingness to explore “nuclear risk reduction measures, including strategic bomber platforms.” They also mention the possibility of limitations on “deployments of intermediate and shorter-range land-based missiles.” Now amidst the Ukraine war, it must be emphasized, it is imperative that the United States, Russia, and NATO return to high-level negotiations in order to rid Western and Eastern Europe of dangerous, escalatory nuclear weapons that along with nuclear plants might also become soft targets, vulnerable to military attack in a deepening crisis.

Europe’s tactical nuclear weapons as credible bargaining chips

The B-61 nuclear bombs deployed in five NATO countries, along with future missile and anti-missile systems, are credible bargaining chips that could be de-alerted and disarmed for the safety of all sides. The secret locations of US nuclear weapons stored at bases in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey were accidentally included in Canadian senator Joseph Day’s report on behalf of the defence and security committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.13 In any discussion about putting limits on Russia’s tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, the planned modernization of these weapons could be a potential concessionary factor that could be used to advantage in negotiations.

Mutual force reduction including Aegis transparency mechanisms

In pursuit of reduced Russian border and regional troop deployments, Washington was also evidently prepared to discuss a “transparency mechanism to confirm the absence of Tomahawk cruise missiles at Aegis Ashore sites in Romania and Poland.” Russia had posed legitimate concerns that NATO’s Aegis Ashore system for defending against short- or intermediate-range missiles could use Tomahawk intermediate-range missiles against Russian targets potentially deployed in Romania and Poland.14 A nuclear risk reduction agreement might, therefore, usefully involve both Aegis limits, and Russia’s calling back its deployment of modern dual-capable missiles and threats to arm Kaliningrad, its enclave on the Baltic Sea. NATO peacetime troop deployments in Poland and other eastern member states might also be appropriate agenda items in a mutual force reduction. The important points to emphasize here are the American focus on transparency concerning the absence (rather than the presence) of cruise missiles and also the fact that Moscow, facing NATO build-ups, may come to see greater strategic gains in European security as worth a compromise on Ukraine.

Basic assumptions about arms control need not revert to Cold War tensions

Given the ideas being exchanged about the need for transparency surrounding existing weapons systems—as well as alarming forms of warfare ranging from accidental clashes to competing technologies and cyber measures over Ukraine—we must recognize that basic assumptions about arms control and NATO membership need not revert to Cold War brinkmanship tensions or early post–Cold War triumphalism. The solution is for the West’s sphere of influence not to expand significantly eastwards. The US president and NATO’s secretary general Jens Stoltenberg made it very clear that NATO will protect allied nations during this war, but the alliance will not undertake military action including enforcing a no-fly zone on Ukrainian territory against Russia.15

In view of Russia’s military transgressions, it seems unlikely that the US and NATO will support near-term regional nuclear disarmament and risk-reduction measures. In future, to deter Russia they may emphasize a dangerous disparity in the numbers of battlefield-ready tactical nuclear weapons; the necessity to modernize NATO’s reliance on its tactical nuclear response; and the imperative of increasing all infantry, armoured, and special operations capabilities including the acquisition of more robust anti-air defence capabilities. Apart from the strong reverberations in defence policymaking and military spending due to the shock of Putin’s attack, we can expect deep opposition and concern among the NATO allies due to their cyclical fears of abandonment and entrapment, as well as their disagreements on how to respond to Russia—for example in Hungary’s contentions prior to the invasion that Moscow was justified in its claims, even as Hungary subsequently condemned the invasion, accepted refugees, but refused to allow the transit of lethal weapons to Ukraine through its territory.16

The UN’s new treaty prohibits nuclear weapons

Moreover, the United Kingdom’s March 2021 decision to increase its nuclear warhead stockpile defies efforts to promote further consensus around the historical goals of the NPT and the new TPNW, which bans the possession, use, testing, development, and transfer of such weapons.17 Thus, the continuing importance of both nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament for Europeans must be acknowledged. We recall the stir created in the 1980s by then US president Ronald Reagan when he responded to a press question about whether a limited nuclear war could be confined to Europe and presumably not reach US or Russian territory; he reportedly said he thought so, and thereby created European furor and impetus for the anti-nuclear campaign. The UK’s decision defiantly rejects the TPNW’s central tenets, as does France’s foreign minister’s abrupt warning to Russia on 24 February 2022 that Putin, when making threats about using nuclear weapons, needs to understand that NATO, too, is a nuclear alliance, even while the French minister ruled out a NATO-led military intervention to defend Ukraine.18

New initiatives including freezing nuclear deployments

Nevertheless, the non-nuclear NATO allies, including Canada, Germany, and Lithuania, which is located next to the Russian Kaliningrad enclave, could strongly encourage Moscow and Washington to negotiate constraints on nuclear weapons, such as: a freeze on their deployment; the storage of all B-61 gravity bombs away from their operational carriers; more sophisticated data exchanges; and the verification, dismantlement, and eventual removal of intermediate- and short-range nuclear systems. Indeed, such initiatives would comport with well-established international law and INF, NPT, and TPNW objectives.

### Lit Review---New Schools---New DA & CP Ground

#### There are a lot of different approaches to nuclear weapons policy, and with those different approaches comes great ground for a range of DAs and generic and aff-specific CPs in every topic area. This card categorizes thinking about nuclear strategy into four different schools. Each of those would offer a different take on a solution to any one problem, and each has distinct but overlapping beliefs about how to approach everything from conventional weapons to arms control to U.S. credibility.

Van Jackson 22, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Victoria University of Wellington, Ph.D. in World Politics from the Catholic University of America, “Reducing or Exploiting Risk? Varieties of US Nuclear Thought and Their Implications for Northeast Asia,” Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1080/25751654.2022.2056356

Disagreement about US nuclear policy in Washington is not new. In the past decade though, diverging perspectives have sharpened to the point that there are now at least four competing schools of thought about nuclear strategy. What these intellectual camps believe and prioritize, even more than the region itself, is the best analytical entry point for understanding likely US decisions and sensibilities regarding specific nuclear concerns affecting Northeast Asia. Although there are avatars in the real world who faithfully hold the views of each of these four camps, outlined in the table below, many others in the US national security establishment are hybrids of these categories, which should be understood as ideal types. As with Weberian ideal-type schemas generally, what makes these categories useful is that the closer a given presidency’s intellectual makeup hews to a given school of thought, the easier it will be to anticipate how they would respond to shifts in Northeast Asia’s security environment. Table 1, and the text that follows, identifies and characterizes these four “camps” of US nuclear thought.

Arms Controllers

Arms controllers believe nuclear wars cannot be won in any meaningful way and prioritize managing and reducing – not exploiting – risks to strategic stability (crisis and arms-racing stability). As such, arms-controllers worry about nuclear accidents and inadvertent escalation, aver nuclear signaling as a means of coercion whenever possible, view proliferation as destabilizing, seek international agreements to impose nuclear restraints, and are conscientious about pressures that might lead others to resort to nuclear first use3 Extending this perspective to non-nuclear weapons systems, arms controllers have been the primary constituency concerned with how ballistic missile defenses can undermine strategic stability, why new domains like cyberspace create entanglement risks with nuclear command and control, and why hypersonic glide vehicles heighten nuclear first-use pressures (because of the inability for the target to defend against a missile that could have a nuclear warhead) (Acton 2018). Although both Democratic and Republican presidencies have concluded arms control agreements in the past, arms controllers now reside almost entirely within the Democratic Party; the evolution of the Republican Party during the Trump years has eliminated any notable experts who think about nuclear weapons the way arms-controllers do. Given their commitment to mitigating risk, the scope for nuclear weapons-use for any reason is narrowest when arms controllers predominate in the US government.

Nuclear Traditionalists

Nuclear traditionalists accept the logic of mutually assured destruction (MAD), believing in the generally stabilizing benefits of a reliable, modern US nuclear arsenal. Although the Cold War showed that US policymakers constantly sought ways to escape vulnerability to Soviet first-strikes (Gavin 2018), it also birthed a widely held conventional wisdom that a secure second-strike capability – assured retaliation – was sufficient to deter nuclear attacks in most instances. The paradox of nuclear traditionalists’ beliefs is the paradox of deterrence reasoning. They believe nuclear wars are not generally worth fighting, and that strategic stability creates permissive space to pursue military operations and coercive diplomacy without worrying about nuclear war. At the same time, they also rely on nuclear signaling about the United States’ willingness to use nuclear weapons to induce adversary restraint and reassure allies who might be tempted to pursue their own nuclear weapons if they deemed the US extended nuclear deterrence commitment unreliable. Nuclear traditionalists, found in both the Democratic and Republican Parties, support nuclear modernization investments and are agnostic about adjacent technology areas like missile defenses and hypersonic glide vehicles. Acknowledging that mutual vulnerability is a sound basis for stability necessarily means that non-nuclear weapons will matter only to the extent they enhance or undermine the ability for either the United States or its adversaries to retain an assured retaliation capability. There is some scope for nuclear weapons use in the traditionalists’ worldview, both out of misperception – because of their reliance on extended nuclear deterrence commitments and nuclear signaling – and because their belief in the stability-instability paradox incentivizes them to, paradoxically, engage in behavior that risks escalating into a conflict spiral.

Future-of War (Fow) Strategists

A category of defense intellectuals and practitioners that did not exist during the Cold War is the FoW strategists. Nurtured by the long-range planning of the Office of Net Assessment in the Pentagon, their attitude toward nuclear weapons derives from a vision of how wars will be fought in the future (Work and Brimley 2014). FoW strategists are far from advocates of nuclear disarmament. Instead, they simply de-center the role of nuclear weapons by taking as a starting point that the stability-instability paradox holds, meaning that future wars will need to be fought with conventional and emerging weapons systems within the shadow of nuclear war (Work and Brimley 2014). Although they are agnostic about nuclear modernization and see nuclear weapons as insufficient for anyone’s security, FoW strategists believe in retaining what they describe as America’s “military-technical edge”, prioritizing a conventional arms buildup in PGMs (specifically ballistic missile defense, robotics, hypersonic glide vehicles, rail gun, directed energy weapons, and intermediate-range ground-launched cruise missiles) (Work and Brimley 2014; Flournoy 2021). FoW strategists are a transpartisan grouping that dominated defense strategy during the Obama administration (Mann 2012). FoW strategists are less likely than traditionalists to resort to nuclear signaling and believe that conventional military superiority should be adequate to reassure allies worried about US extended deterrence commitments. But there is still scope for nuclear use in this view because of entanglement risks with conventional weapons systems. PGMs, especially hypersonic glide vehicles, may undermine crisis stability by heightening adversary first-use pressures (Pollack 2015; Acton 2018). PGMs also pose a discrimination problem for nuclear-armed adversaries who may not be able to discern whether US missiles targeting them have nuclear warheads.

Nuclear Primacists

Modern nuclear primacists represent an evolution of more assertive beliefs about the utility of nuclear weapons coming out of Reagan-era triumphalism. They exercised substantial influence over both George W. Bush’s and Trump’s nuclear policies, and today they exist entirely within the Republican Party. Believing that nuclear wars are won by suffering fewer casualties and less damage than one’s enemy, nuclear primacists consistently argue that stability is most likely the result of US escalation dominance and a willingness to engage in brinkmanship4 Consequently, nuclear primacists seek cutting-edge conventional and nuclear modernization investments in order to implement damage-limitation strategies involving counterforce strikes against adversary weapons systems and infrastructure. They are also proponents of nuclear signaling and even limited nuclear use on the grounds that it has a deterrent effect, which is why they support development and deployment of low-yield, non-strategic nuclear weapons (Brumfiel 2019). Also indicative of their heavy reliance on nuclear weapons, the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review stated the United States would resume nuclear testing after a multi-decade moratorium if there were “geopolitical challenges” (Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives 2018, 77), which then-Secretary James Mattis elaborated meant “the emergence of new adversaries, expansion of adversary nuclear forces, changes in adversary strategy and doctrine, new alignments among adversaries, and the further proliferation of nuclear weapons” (Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives 2018, 77). Nuclear primacists additionally embrace ambiguity regarding the United States’ willingness to resort to nuclear first-use. Some nuclear primacists have even advocated for ally nuclear proliferation; as long as ally proliferation does not undermine US nuclear superiority, there is no logical basis for nuclear primacists to oppose it. The primacists’ scope for nuclear weapons use – deliberate, inadvertent, or incidental – is much higher than for the other nuclear worldviews outlined here. The reason is that the primacists’ underlying theory of stability centers on exploiting nuclear weapons in various ways rather than restraining them or appealing to alternative tools of statecraft.

### Lit Review---Problem Area---Deterrence Collapse

#### The topic is particularly timely because of the disintegration of the Cold War-era deterrence framework

Nina Tannenwald, Director, International Relations Brown, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, “The Great Unraveling: The Future of the Nuclear Normative Order,” MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE NEW NUCLEAR AGE: EMERGING RISKS AND DECLINING NORMS IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND CHANGING NUCLEAR DOCTRINES, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2018, p. 12-15.

This retrenchment from traditional understandings of deterrence in the U.S.-Russian relationship is an example of a far deeper problem. Today, deterrence is being challenged from three directions: first, by technological developments that entangle nuclear and conventional deterrence and also erode the boundaries between nuclear and conventional weapons; second, by a political critique that new nuclear states are irrational and cannot be deterred; and, third, by an ethical critique, exemplified by Pope Francis and the humanitarian campaign, that relying on nuclear deterrence has become morally unacceptable.

First, technological advances risk undermining nuclear stability. Stable nuclear deterrence has depended on the survivability of nuclear arsenals against any kind of disarming attack. Today, leaps in missile accuracy and in remote sensing, aided by computers, threaten to undermine the steps countries take, such as hardening and concealment, to ensure the survivability of their nuclear forces.18 Even ballistic-missile submarines may not be invulnerable in the future.19 Additionally, new guided bombs, such as the U.S. plans for an advanced cruise missile that would carry a nuclear warhead, and new delivery systems threaten the second-strike capabilities of Russia and China.20 Together these technological developments undercut the logic of “mutual assured destruction.” They make the task of securing nuclear arsenals much more difficult, undermining one of the foundations of stable nuclear deterrence between rivals.

New technologies also risk blurring the line between nuclear and conventional weapons. As Thomas Schelling first noted in the 1960s, the nuclear-conventional distinction is the principal qualitative restraint on using the bomb.21 U.S. leaders have consistently recognized this distinction as the only clear “firebreak” on nuclear warfare. In 1965, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara’s arguments rejecting proposals to build a neutron bomb emphasized the importance of this firebreak. He argued, “While we may find very low yield weapons and enhanced radiation warheads to be of military utility, we should not acquire them simply for the purpose of breaking down the distinction between nuclear and nonnuclear warfare.”22

Today, the new smaller, lower-yield warheads weaken this distinction.23 Further, well-intentioned efforts to develop high-tech conventional weapons to replace former nuclear missions may inadvertently increase the risk of nuclear use.24 The U.S. hypersonic weapon under development, for example, a conventional weapon intended for “prompt global strike,” will be so fast and powerful that it will likely spur a nuclear response. The hypersonic glider is explicitly a way to attack China without crossing the nuclear threshold, complicating Chinese leaders’ assessment of nuclear retaliation. For normative reasons, strategic conventional weapons are more “usable” than nuclear weapons. However, prompt global strike can encourage preemption or the mistaken perception that it is a nuclear strike. Russian leaders believe, for example, that the United States seeks such weapons for potential use against Russian nuclear forces.25 For its part, Russia is developing new sea- and air-launched cruise missiles that can carry either nuclear or conventional payloads, and Russia has conducted various military exercises combining conventional and nonstrategic nuclear weapons or dual-capable systems.26 Pakistan’s intention to counter India’s conventional military superiority with battlefield nuclear weapons also revives unacceptably risky strategies of the 1980s. These practices increase, rather than reduce, the risk of nuclear escalation by entangling nuclear and conventional systems and dangerously eroding the firebreak between nuclear and conventional warfare.

These new technologies will require new understandings about how the key concept of strategic stability applies. Strategic stability was always a contested concept. Yet today there are major differences in how the nuclear-armed states think about this key notion and what they believe would enhance or degrade stability in specific issue areas. It is not even clear whether they consider strategic stability to be a useful framework for discussing security cooperation.27 In short, without new, shared understandings about what would make deterrence stable today, new military technologies may increase the risk of escalation to nuclear use.

Second, deterrence is being discredited politically. Some critics argue that new nuclear states, especially those with extremist elements domestically, are irrational and cannot be deterred. The same applies to terrorists. Therefore, goes the argument, a policy of relying on nuclear deterrence is no longer a viable option and states should pursue more aggressive preventive or preemptive military strategies instead.28 The George W. Bush administration was a strong proponent of this view, but it was also quite evident in the debate over the Obama administration’s Iran nuclear deal, in which some critics argued that Iranian leaders were not rational and therefore nuclear deterrence would never work against a nuclear-armed Iran. On the other end of the political spectrum, some analysts, in trying to make the case for nuclear abolition, have sought to debunk nuclear deterrence as a “myth.”29

Finally, deterrence is subject to a renewed ethical critique, led by the humanitarian impact campaign and the Catholic Church. The humanitarian campaign, launched at the 2010 NPT Review Conference by nonnuclear states frustrated by the slow pace of disarmament, seeks to highlight the devastating humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons as a way to delegitimize deterrence and mobilize support for disarmament. The church has long been a powerful moral voice on this issue. In the 1980s, the U.S. Catholic bishops’ groundbreaking 1983 pastoral letter focused on the ethics of nuclear use and criticized nuclear deterrence as “morally flawed.”30 At the time, the bishops justified a “provisional acceptance” of possession of nuclear weapons for purposes of deterrence as an “interim” strategy on the way to “progressive disarmament.” They opposed first use but did not rule out any conceivable second use. This powerful statement provoked a widespread debate about the ethics of the nuclear arms race and helped undermine public support for the Reagan administration’s aggressive nuclear strategies.31

Today, more than three decades later, the church finds even deterrence unacceptable and an entrenched obstacle to disarmament. In December 2014, a church policy paper expressed unequivocal rejection of any use, noting “the very possession of nuclear weapons even for purposes of deterrence is morally problematic.”32 During his visit to the United States in September 2015, Pope Francis called for a complete prohibition of nuclear weapons, stating, “An ethics and a law based on the threat of mutual destruction—and possibly the destruction of all ~~mankind~~[humanity]—are self-contradictory and an affront to the entire framework of the United Nations.”33 The Vatican was an outspoken supporter of negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that began in March 2017. It signed and ratified the treaty when the latter opened for signature on September 20, 2017. In the eyes of the church and the 121 nonnuclear nations that voted to adopt the treaty, nuclear deterrence is now not only immoral but also illegal. The implications of the prohibition treaty for the nuclear normative order are considered further below.

In sum, technological developments along with political and ethical critiques of deterrence are eroding both the legitimacy and the stability of nuclear deterrence as the core strategic relationship among nuclear-armed states.

#### Status quo deterrence policy fails—nine reasons.

Blair, research scholar in the Program on Science and Global Security at Princeton University and co-founder of the Global Zero movement, 2018 (Bruce G., with Jessica Sleight and Claire Foley, “The End of Nuclear Warfighting: Moving to a Deterrence-Only Posture an alternative u.s. nuclear posture review”, Global Zero, <https://www.globalzero.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ANPR-Final.pdf>, DoA 4/27/2023, DVOG)

While **nuclear deterrence** remains a pillar of U.S. national security and a security umbrella for U.S. allies, its **central organizing principle of threatening massive destruction in response to nuclear aggression was more suited to the Cold War** confrontation with the Soviet Union and China **than to the modern rivalry among the United States, Russia, and China**. But despite the anachronistic nature of today’s nuclear postures, **these competitors have been unable to replace the paradigm of nuclear deterrence** with a new security architecture. They remain under its yoke, seemingly condemned to maintain and rebuild vast arsenals in perpetuity. **Among the deleterious consequences are an increased risk of nuclear conflict and massive investments in weapons of diminishing relevance to the biggest global security dangers facing the world in the 21st century—nuclear proliferation, terrorism, cyberwarfare, climate change, mass refugee migrations, and a multitude of dangers stemming from the diffusion of power around the world**. China and Russia are not U.S. allies, but they are indispensable partners in the resolution of these vexing challenges. Preserving reciprocal nuclear terror as the central organizing principle of mutual security contributes to central and extended deterrence—wherein U.S. nuclear forces serve to deter an attack on the United States (central) and its allies (extended)—but **fear-based relationships stunt cooperation in grappling with these complex problems. And their adversarial nuclear postures carry an inherent risk that nuclear weapons will be used,** intentionally or not. Today there are a multitude of scenarios of use by one of the nine states that possess them, or by terrorists seeking to acquire them. The number of possible scenarios is much higher than existed at the height of the Cold War, and consequently the likelihood of intentional or unintentional use may well be higher. Wisdom in imagining a new direction and shaping a more suitable nuclear posture for the early 21st century begins with an honest reckoning of the shortcomings of current policy.

**Nine key points underlie most of the findings and recommendations** of this analysis.

**First, the long-standing operational U.S**. (and Russian) **practice of programming massive-attack options directed against opposing nuclear forces, war-sustaining industries, and leadership facilities produces an egregious discrepancy between the scale of destruction enabled by the nuclear forces and any reasonable judgment of what scale would actually deter an adversary**. **The legacy U.S. posture of deterrence-plus-warfighting** directed against roughly 1,500 total aimpoints in Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran **goes well beyond intrinsic requirements of a deterrence-only posture**. **The capacity to deliver a very small number of nuclear weapons in a measured and flexible manner in response to immediate circumstances should suffice**. It is reasonable to judge that such a capability would serve to repress any impulse by a legitimate state under rational leadership to initiate a nuclear attack against the United States or U.S. allies.

**Second, the legacy posture rests precariously on the core assumption of deterrence that national leaders as individuals are rational actors and perform logical calculations of costs and benefits**. General John E. Hyten, head of U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), recently testified that “a rational actor is the basis of all deterrent policy.” **But a posture enabled by high-alert nuclear forces configured and inclined toward preemptive or prompt “launch on warning” does not support a deliberative process. Even the most levelheaded U.S. (or Russian) leader could buckle under the immense time pressure imposed by current nuclear postures. Aggravating factors include the likelihood of inadequate information, misperception, political pressure, and fear. Decision-making in crises and under uncertainty often leads seemingly rational leaders to make mistakes or misinterpret an adversary’s behavior or intentions**. The assumption of rationality may not be tenable for another reason. Doubts have arisen as nuclear weapons proliferate to more actors and as traditional norms of international behavior yield to idiosyncratic interpretations of acceptable conduct on the world stage. The lineup of world leaders in command of nuclear forces today includes more than one outlier whose grasp of reality appears in doubt at times and whose advisers and institutions appear unwilling or unable to rein in their impulses. Hinging national and world security on the assumption of human rationality seems a dubious wisdom.

**Third,** **deterrence’s core message that nuclear weapons offer their possessors a security blanket runs counter to the plea to non-nuclear nations to forgo such weapons permanently. This contradiction, dripping in hypocrisy, engenders cynicism among the non-nuclear-weapon countries and erodes the nonproliferation regime**.

**Fourth, the extensive “modernization” of nuclear forces underway** in the United States, Russia, and China **does not comport with the treaty obligations of the five nuclear-armed members of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Their pledges to negotiate disarmament in good faith and reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs ring disingenuous** in light of their nuclear upgrades. This discordance harms the nonproliferation cause.

**Fifth, the U.S. nuclear posture works at cross-purposes with crisis stability. The United States** (along with Russia, France, and the United Kingdom, but not China) **refuses to rule out the first use of nuclear weapons. This weakens restraint during a crisis. The mutual anticipation of nuclear first use by the belligerents would exert pressure on them to go first, or “preempt**.” In the case of the United States and Russia, this pressure is greatly aggravated by the longstanding operational practice of programming massive-attack plans directed primarily against the opposing nuclear forces (many of which are vulnerable) and enabling these plans by alert forces poised for immediate launch.

**Sixth, the U.S. posture has an Achilles’ heel: vulnerable command, control, and communications** (C3**) and early-warning networks. The fear that these networks would collapse under attack all but compels national leaders to authorize the release of U.S. nuclear forces during a crisis regardless of the survivability of the triad** of U.S. land-based Minuteman missiles, Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarines, and heavy long-range B-52H and B-2A bombers. **Having the ability to absorb an attack and retaliate is the essence of deterrence, and yet the United States has failed to ensure presidential survival and robust communications**—both vital to executing a retaliatory attack. This deficiency far outweighs concerns about the number, reliability, and survivability of warheads, bombs, and delivery vehicles. **If command and control fails, nothing else matters.**

Seventh, **the existing nuclear posture stands apart from powerful U.S. conventional forces and other non-nuclear military capabilities. It neglects both the positive and negative contributions of these capabilities**. On the positive side, **exponential advances in information processing**—the driving force behind the “revolution in military affairs”—**have allowed for the mass substitution by conventional precision-guided forces directed by space navigation and laser targeting for nuclear forces in mission planning and accelerated the 80 percent drawdown in the nuclear inventories of the United States** and Russia since their Cold War peak. But the U.S. nuclear posture has still not fully exploited this revolution. **Strategic planners have not adequately grasped the need and opportunity for providing the president with strategic non-nuclear options involving conventional forces for de-escalating the early phase of conflict, even one marked by enemy nuclear strikes**. The recent Pentagon push to develop new “low-yield” nuclear weapons for purposes of conflict de-escalation fails to grasp the fact that any use of nuclear weapons is inherently escalatory and unnecessary given the availability of powerful nonnuclear capabilities. On the negative side, high-performing nonnuclear U.S. capabilities have not only widened the U.S. conventional advantage over its potential adversaries and driven these countries to rely more on nuclear weapons and their early first use to compensate, but also increasingly put those opposing nuclear forces at risk. The growing lethality of U.S. conventional weapons has thus undermined nuclear crisis stability at the same time that they provide tools for de-escalation. This double-edged sword complicates all aspects of nuclear planning, operations, and arms control.

**Eighth, the U.S. posture saddles strategic-arms control with a perspective that focuses on nuclear weapons and looks past non-nuclear capabilities. This downplays real or perceived U.S. advantages in those capabilities, particularly in the areas of precision-guided conventional weapons and missile defenses**. Thus, it was U.S.-led conventional precision bombing during the Balkans conflict in 1999 and U.S. withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002, coupled with the deployment of missile defenses that spurred Russia’s modernization of its nuclear weapons and its reluctance to negotiate a follow-on treaty to replace the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START). Progress in U.S.-Russian strategic-stability talks and in drawing other nuclear-armed countries into multilateral discussions of strategic arms has also suffered as a consequence. The narrow compass of such talks needs to be widened.

**Ninth, and last, the U.S. posture seems to float in a geopolitical vacuum. It is understood almost entirely in military terms, divorced from broader connections to political relationships, diplomacy, economic sanctions, and other nonmilitary dimensions. This decoupling magnifies the role of the nuclear force in international relations and in managing crises. An ordinary strain in relations can bring nuclear weapons into the foreground of the relationship.** Thus, the end of the Cold War did not end the practice of programming massive-attack options and keeping thousands of nuclear warheads on hair-trigger alert, notwithstanding a symbolic and operationally meaningless “detargeting” agreement between the United States and Russia signed in 1994. In 2014, the Russian incursion into Ukraine was a sufficient strain in U.S.-Russian relations to initiate a phase of nuclear signaling and brinkmanship between them.

These shortcomings, amplified by an equally myopic posture in Moscow, led to an almost unfathomable amount of nuclear overkill during the Cold War. Soviet and U.S. arsenals grew well beyond any reasonable deterrent requirement—13,000 U.S. strategic weapons aimed at 16,000 Soviet targets in the 1980s. **Present-day arsenals still exceed any reasonable judgment of actual deterrent requirements. In their continuing pursuit of warfighting capabilities if not decisive nuclear superiority, both sides are undertaking outsized modernization programs that will continue to hold each other and the world hostage** to incomprehensible levels of violence and destruction.

Breaking the nuclear grip of this long-standing pursuit on U.S.- Russian relations and on U.S. capital investments will be very difficult, but the United States has a historic opportunity to leverage its other strengths and chart a new course in reducing the role and salience of nuclear weapons. It should pursue an ambitious agenda whose lead items should be negotiating deep U.S.-Russian nuclear cuts and eliciting formal pledges from all the nuclear-armed states not to use nuclear weapons first in conflict. **The United States should also immediately transition to a deterrence-only strategy. Backed by powerful non-nuclear capabilities designed for second-strike responses, this posture would provide adequate deterrence while changing the strategic culture of nuclear warfighting, restraining the nuclear arms competition, and setting the stage for multilateral nuclear negotiations aimed at making progress toward a world free of nuclear weapons.**

### Lit Review---Problem Area---Norm Collapse

#### The situation is urgent—the norms that have helped prevent nuclear use \*in warfare\* since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are eroding—we need to reconsider our strategic force structure and policies to prevent nuclear conflict

Jane Vaynman, Assistant Professor, Political Science, Temple University and former Stanton National Security Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations, “Introduction,” MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE NEW NUCLEAR AGE: EMERGING RISKS AND DECLINING NORMS IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND CHANGING NUCLEAR DOCTRINES, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2018, p. 1-4.

The risk of nuclear use has increased, not only because of growing tensions with North Korea and Russia, but more broadly due to shifts in several underlying drivers of nuclear conflict—or, conversely, nuclear restraint. The authors of the two essays in this occasional paper, the second set prepared for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences project on “Meeting the Challenges of the New Nuclear Age,” identify two such drivers: deteriorating norms and increasingly complex security relationships. Nina Tannenwald’s paper, “The Great Unraveling: The Future of the Nuclear Normative Order,” argues that norms of nuclear non-use have deteriorated, both with respect to a global nuclear order and within relationships among nuclear states. James Acton’s paper, “Technology, Doctrine, and the Risk of Nuclear War,” focuses on the evolution of several strategic relationships, including the rise of multipolarity, crisis escalation, and the blurring of lines between nuclear and nonnuclear capabilities.

The authors come to similar conclusions for different reasons, and taken together their views suggest a rather bleak picture, with limited opportunities for reducing risks. They observe some of the same phenomena in the contemporary security environment and agree about the implications. Changes in nuclear doctrines, for example, increase the possibility of nuclear use as nuclear weapons become more “usable,” both normatively and practically. Indeed, the authors would likely agree with one another’s views, having chosen merely to focus on different dimensions of a multifaceted problem. However, there are also notable contrasts in these two approaches to understanding nuclear risks. While Tannenwald considers positions taken by nonnuclear states, Acton’s sense of the “nuclear order” focuses on relationships between the nuclear powers. Perceptions and understandings play a central role in both analyses, but for Tannenwald expectations may be informed by normative beliefs and ethical considerations, while Acton focuses on states’ inabilities to observe fully an adversary’s intentions and capabilities. These views are not contradictory and taken together reveal a broader picture for considering nuclear use dynamics.

Tannenwald discusses a series of related nuclear norms: deterrence, nonuse, nonproliferation, non-explosive-testing, and disarmament. These norms are contested and face challenges from domestic politics, evolving nuclear doctrines, and international confrontations. Of these, the deterrence and disarmament discussions raise the most interesting questions. The deterrence regime argument holds that nuclear weapons are only for the purposes of deterrence, not for use in conflict. Of course, deterrence only works with a credible threat of use, but here the threat is made under the condition of extreme existential risk, with use only in retaliation to a strike against the state. Under this kind of deterrence-only norm, the United States and the Soviet Union took steps to lower incentives for first strike and diminish the chances of use due to misperception. In some ways, the deterrence norm is a mild version of a norm of nonuse. Tannenwald identifies a decline in traditional understandings of deterrence, which implies a higher likelihood of use.

The ethical opposition to nuclear weapons, articulated today by proponents of disarmament and the participants of the humanitarian consequences movement, holds that nuclear use is illegitimate on moral grounds, which leads to a fundamental objection to any role for nuclear weapons, including deterrence. Though the paper also separates non-use (or a nuclear taboo norm) from the “disarmament norm,” they are deeply related, as Tannenwald notes, “the spread, strengthening, and internalization of the taboo have long been seen as a step on the route to disarmament.” Tannenwald observes a curious duality in the current status of these interlaced norms. In many respects, there is a decline in commitments to non-use evident in increased references to nuclear use by political leaders and the lowering of nuclear use thresholds in military doctrines. But the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons signed in July 2017 also suggests that some nonnuclear states support a normative push for disarmament. An implication of Tannenwald’s assessment is that in the near future we might see an even sharper global contestation between ideas of nuclear weapons as effective and even prestigious military tools and nuclear weapons as morally illegitimate.

Tannenwald’s discussion of deterrence norms alongside moral opposition to nuclear weapons and disarmament suggests a tension between various options for next steps. On one hand, Tannenwald argues in favor of a global no-first-use commitment and a recommitment by nuclear states to deterrence. On the other hand, Tannenwald also takes seriously the calls for disarmament and seeks “frank conversations about the morality of deterrence.” Can states commit to a deterrence norm and also question the ethics of that norm? Does a commitment to no-first-use contradict efforts to delegitimize nuclear weapons, or is it a step toward that ultimate direction?

Tannenwald’s paper suggests, though does not explicitly argue, that a commitment to disarmament is in some ways in opposition to a milder non-use norm consistent with deterrence. There may be an important trade-off between these approaches: eventual disarmament could delegitimize the risk-reducing elements of nuclear deterrence today, but a renewed commitment to deterrence could make arguments for eventual disarmament increasingly difficult to make.

James Acton attributes the increased possibility of nuclear use to material rather than normative drivers. Acton identifies multipolarity and crisis escalation as the two key situations in which changes in technology and doctrine are today creating increased risk. His paper does not draw an explicit link between them, raising some questions as to whether global conditions have effects on crisis stability. The specific characteristics of contemporary military technology, which blur the line between nuclear and conventional capabilities, and the way these technologies have been incorporated into military doctrines come into play specifically when considering the potential for crises to escalate to nuclear use.

At the end of his essay, Acton notes, “the drivers behind the growing likelihood of nuclear use are a mix of the old and the new.” The statement is a good reflection of many of the dynamics he identifies in his paper. First, the triangular nature of today’s multipolar relationships increases the dangers of rivalries that are far from new. India and Pakistan continue to respond to one another’s buildup in nuclear arsenals and missiles, but now China has become increasingly attentive to India’s efforts. U.S. nuclear strategy remains bilaterally oriented toward Russia on one hand and China on the other, but international and domestic pressures for further rounds of nuclear reductions increasingly seek to include both Russia and China.

The problem of crisis escalation is likewise a mix of past and present, newly exacerbated by dual conventional and nuclear technologies. Acton’s assessment of the doctrinal and technological shifts suggests that states’ efforts effectively to threaten and coerce with conventional means—perhaps even decreasing the reliance on nuclear weapons—actually increase the potential for escalation to nuclear use. The military doctrines of several nuclear states have intentionally focused on creating escalation through conventional weapons. However, conventional escalation could be misperceived as entering the nuclear domain. Even more importantly, some of these conventional strategies intentionally threaten assets that are also relevant for nuclear capabilities. Acton cites the examples of command-and-control centers, early-warning satellites, and nuclear forces colocated with conventional ones. The increasing development of dual-use delivery systems also exacerbates the escalation problem, as states could mistake conventional capabilities for nuclear ones and interpret military moves by an adversary as far more aggressive nuclear signals.

Despite the pessimism of both Tannenwald’s and Acton’s essays, they suggest several areas that warrant further thinking, including arms control focused on restraining escalatory behaviors, the intersection of nonnuclear technology and norms, and domestic politics as a limiting factor for debate on nuclear weapon policy.

First, the authors are highly skeptical about prospects for future arms control, but other elements of their essays suggest we should perhaps revisit arms control ideas even at a time when they are not politically popular. Tannenwald’s proposal for a no-first-use regime, especially one adopted through international agreement, is a form of arms control that focuses on establishing rules about allowable behaviors. Compliance with a no-first-use commitment might involve openness about certain types of deployments, or demonstrations of doctrinal integration of the no-first-use concept in military planning. Tannenwald’s analysis of the decline of arms control actually suggests that perhaps efforts should focus on designing arms control that promotes common understandings and expectations, while avoiding the kinds of restraints on capabilities or on freedom to develop technologies that often raise domestic political opposition. While efforts to restrain behaviors will likewise face an uphill battle, and the United States has indeed rejected commitments to impose international laws on domestic policies, the potentially different constellations of domestic support and opposition could create opportunities for such agreements that are at the very least worth exploring.

In addition to measures Acton proposes on internal organizational reform of governments and militaries, his paper inspires ideas for cooperative efforts that likewise focus on specifying behaviors rather than limiting capabilities. Acton’s analysis implies the challenge is not always one of organizational failure to recognize a perceptions problem, but rather one of states having strategic interests that create opportunities for misperception (and consequently nuclear escalation) as they address other legitimate security concerns. Acton notes specific cases of possible misidentification of nuclear versus conventional capabilities, and in doing so he also points out specific opportunities to mitigate misperception. If, for example, there is a potential inadvertent escalation problem at the deployment stage of Chinese DF-26 missiles, then this is an area in which the United States and China could pursue confidence-building measures and information exchange. While even such limited arms control may founder for a host of reasons (including the technical and political difficulties Acton notes), the identification of how a mutually disadvantaged misperception could occur should motivate at least an attempt to design cooperative responses.

Second, it is clear scholars and policy-makers will have to contend with the challenge of how norms develop, or perhaps fail to develop, around emerging nonnuclear military technologies that increase the risk of escalation into nuclear conflict. Two factors may undermine the development of restraint norms in this space. As Acton discusses, states are developing nonnuclear technologies in response to perceived security threats and with use in mind, and the technology is integrated into doctrine and deployment. Increasing the risk of escalation may be an unintentional—or even intentional—externality of these capabilities, but neither negates its purpose within military strategy, making “non-use” norms unlikely to take hold. Further, there are many diverse ideas on how escalation could occur under new scenarios that involve long-range, high-precision conventional missiles, autonomous weapons, or cyber capabilities. The lack of consensus is unsurprising, but also inhibits both norm development and norm promotion by actors who might seek to mitigate escalation risks. Efforts at developing common understanding about even a small subset of nonnuclear technology could aid in the growth of norms around high-risk behaviors or communication during crises involving these capabilities.

# Definitions

## Nouns---Declaratory Policy

### “Declaratory Policy”

#### Declaratory policy articulates rationales for when the U.S. could use nuclear weapons

Perkovich and Vaddi 21 – Ken Olivier and Angela Nomellini Chair and vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; fellow in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

George Perkovich and Pranay Vaddi, “Proportionate Deterrence: A Model Nuclear Posture Review,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2021, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Perkobvich\_Vaddi\_NPR\_full2.pdf

Declaratory Policy (Chapter 2)

States generally put more stock in each other’s capabilities and actions than their declared intentions. At the same time, a state’s nuclear policies and forces require rationales to guide them. Declaratory policy articulates such rationales and intentions to one’s population and defense establishment, and to allies and adversaries, reflecting when the government thinks it could be prudent and justifiable to use nuclear weapons. Even if decisionmaking on capabilities sometimes has a logic of its own, declaratory policy should guide the acquisition and posturing of forces, as well as efforts to reduce unnecessary or destabilizing capabilities.

#### Declaratory policy.

Steve Andreasen 21, National Security Consultant for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, former Director for Defense Policy and Arms Control on the U.S. National Security Council, M.A. from the University of Minnesota Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, “Declaratory Policy: Advancing Sole Purpose,” Nuclear Threat Initiative, June 2021, https://media.nti.org/documents/Declaratory\_Policy\_Advancing\_Sole\_Purpose\_-\_Andreasen\_Excerpt.pdf

Nuclear declaratory policy encompasses public statements by leaders and governments articulating the circumstances under which nuclear weapons might be used. Declaratory policy communicates to other governments and the public both at home and abroad the role of nuclear weapons in a nation’s security policy, and it is tied to the acquisition and posture of a nation’s nuclear forces.

#### Here is our current declaratory policy.

NPR 22, “2022 Nuclear Posture Review,” Federation of American Scientists, 2022, https://s3.amazonaws.com/uploads.fas.org/2022/10/27113658/2022-Nuclear-Posture-Review.pdf

Declaratory Policy. United States declaratory policy reflects a sensible and stabilizing approach to deterring a range of attacks in a dynamic security environment. This balanced policy maintains a very high bar for nuclear employment, while also complicating adversary decision calculus, and assuring Allies and partners. *As long as nuclear weapons exist, the fundamental role of nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack on the United States, our Allies, and partners. The United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or its Allies and partners*.

The United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations. For all other states, there remains a narrow range of contingencies in which U.S. nuclear weapons may still play a role in deterring attacks that have strategic effect against the United States or its Allies and partners.

Declaratory policy is informed by the threat, assessed adversary perceptions, Ally and partner perspectives, and our strategic risk reduction objectives. We conducted a thorough review of a broad range of options for nuclear declaratory policy – including both No First Use and Sole Purpose policies – and concluded that those approaches would result in an unacceptable level of risk in light of the range of non-nuclear capabilities being developed and fielded by competitors that could inflict strategic-level damage to the United States and its Allies and partners. Some Allies and partners are particularly vulnerable to attacks with non-nuclear means that could produce devastating effects. We retain the goal of moving toward a sole purpose declaration and we will work with our Allies and partners to identify concrete steps that would allow us to do so.

### Topline Defense

#### It’s unique, has rich debate, and provides a mechanism that guarantees links to perception disads (allied or adversarial) and procurement disads

Costlow 21 – senior analyst at the National Institute for Public Policy

Matthew Costlow, “Believe It Or Not: U.S. Nuclear Declaratory Policy And Calculated Ambiguity,” War on the Rocks, 8-9-21, https://warontherocks.com/2021/08/believe-it-or-not-u-s-nuclear-declaratory-policy-and-calculated-ambiguity/

The Obama administration twice reportedly considered adopting a new, more restrictive, nuclear declaratory policy. However, it twice rejected the move as unwise because the security environment had not improved enough and because allies such as Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany fiercely objected. More recently, then-candidate for president, Joe Biden, wrote that he wants to revisit this issue at least once more, likely in a forthcoming Nuclear Posture Review. Given the potential consequences of a changed U.S. nuclear declaratory policy — whether it is shifting adversaries’ threat perceptions, alliance dynamics, or domestic weapons procurement — it is well worth exploring whether change is desirable.

### Vision of the Topic

#### Forcing topical affs to at least adopt declaratory policy is at the core of the nuclear weapon policy controversy. It’s a term of art, requiring that the aff change *public statements*, that has been directly debated by the core literature base.

#### Requiring the aff to make public changes also guarantees that the “Do it in Secret CP” is neg ground. Topical affirmatives must have a reason why public declarations are key, thus ensuring the negative has perception links for disads, in order to beat the Secret CP.

#### Concurrently, the Secret CP would also filter out contrived affs in the vein of “don’t respond to X scenario with nukes” that lack a reason why a public change in policy is necessary.

#### Affs this includes (of those included in the topic paper)---

---CBW Deterrence

---Cyber Deterrence

---NFU

---Some forms of arms control

---Sole Purpose

---TNWs (at least the policy component)

---Minimum Deterrence (at least the policy component)

### Floor/Ceiling

#### Should this term be used in the floor of the resolution, other affs that materially change the nuclear arsenal, such as disarmament, ICBM elimination, the material components of TNWs and Minimum Deterrence, etc., can be topical should the ceiling allow for it. To beat the PIC out of the declaratory policy change, these affs could be coupled with a warrant about why a public statement is necessary for signaling/stability considerations or a warrant for why the material change is necessary for the credibility of the declared policy change.

#### Evidence for the latter can be found in speculation surrounding China’s NFU given its nuclear capabilities

McKeon and Melamed 21 – senior program officer with NTI’s Global Nuclear Policy Program; deputy vice president of NTI’s Global Nuclear Policy Program

James McKeon and Mark Melamed, “Ch 7: Engaging China to Reduce Nuclear Risks,” in Special Report, U.S. Nuclear Policies for a Safer World, Nuclear Threat Initiative, 6-10-21, https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/us-nuclear-policies-safer-world/

However, Trump administration officials routinely argued that China’s stated “no first use” policy is not credible given the expansion of its nuclear capabilities. Other experts also have questioned whether China’s “no first use” policy is as firm as it once was, and whether China’s new ICBM capabilities may push far beyond a “minimum deterrent” posture. The new capabilities also could push Beijing to a “launch-on-warning posture” with some warheads always deployed on their designated missile and the system reliant on early warning radars (similar to the United States and Russia), which would be a significant expansion of its “minimum deterrent” posture. According to Tong Zhao, there is interest within some corners of the Chinese military to make such a change.54 Even if Chinese officials remain committed to “no first use” in principle, an increased reliance on early warning systems and silo-based ICBMs could introduce greater pressure to launch in response to warning of an incoming attack—with the attendant risk of a launch in response to a false alarm.55

#### Offense for the former can include allied perception/planning

Perkovich and Vaddi 21 – Ken Olivier and Angela Nomellini Chair and vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; fellow in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

George Perkovich and Pranay Vaddi, “Proportionate Deterrence: A Model Nuclear Posture Review,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2021, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Perkobvich\_Vaddi\_NPR\_full2.pdf

Allies are an important audience for U.S. declaratory policy. They are more likely than adversaries to believe U.S. policy statements and plan accordingly. But allies are not uniform. Some may oppose any nuclear weapons use, particularly in and around their countries. Others may see NFU more broadly as a sign of U.S. withdrawal from its historic commitments to alliances. Still others—privately, at least—think NFU would weaken collective deterrence of Russia or China without securing any compromises or guarantees from them in return. Any consideration of declaratory policy change must involve sustained wide-ranging consultations with allies and examination of the significant potential for nuclear detonations occurring on or upwind from allied territory.

#### Should changing declaratory policy be the only topical action, then mandating material changes to the nuclear arsenal are likely excluded.

Heer 21 – Distinguished Fellow at the Center for the National Interest dealing with Chinese and East Asian issues; former National Intelligence Officer for East Asia

Paul Heer, “Has Washington’s Policy Toward Taiwan Crossed the Rubicon?” The National Interest, 12-10-21, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/has-washington%E2%80%99s-policy-toward-taiwan-crossed-rubicon-197877

In any event, the statements by Ratner and Kritenbrink essentially make the case that Washington is opposed to even peaceful unification of Taiwan with the mainland, because the island’s autonomy from Chinese control is critical to vital U.S. interests and regional security. In that regard, Ratner took a major step into the debate over whether Washington should abandon “strategic ambiguity” in favor of “strategic clarity”—publicly affirming a commitment to defend Taiwan from a Chinese attack. In an exchange with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Robert Menendez, Ratner said it was his “personal view” that “a change in U.S. declaratory policy would not meaningfully strengthen deterrence” against Beijing. But in his formal statement, Ratner nonetheless seemed to approach that line. He later said the Pentagon “remains committed to maintaining the capacity of the United States (invoking the TRA) to resist the resort to force or other forms of coercion that may jeopardize the security of the people of Taiwan. Let me be clear that this is an absolute priority: The PRC is the Department’s pacing challenge and a Taiwan contingency is the pacing scenario. We are modernizing our capabilities, updating U.S. force posture, and developing new operational concepts accordingly.” That may not have been “a change in US declaratory policy,” but it certainly sounded like a determination to defend Taiwan if it is attacked.

#### (though, it plausibly could be topical)

Goldston 21 – professor of Astrophysical Sciences at Princeton University

Robert J. Goldston, “Bilateral strategic stability: What the United States should discuss with Russia. And China,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 10-14-21, https://thebulletin.org/2021/10/bilateral-strategic-stability-what-the-united-states-should-discuss-with-russia-and-china/

The most stabilizing nuclear declaratory policy would flow from the verified elimination of nuclear weapons, consistent with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. If there are no nuclear weapons, there can be no nuclear war. This would be a welcome but highly unlikely outcome of bilateral dialogue with Russia. Russia considers itself to be confronted by superior conventional NATO forces and has made clear that it considers that nuclear forces may be necessary for its defense against conventional attack.

#### If true, excluding reductions to the nuclear arsenal would limit the topic and give the neg access to counterplans that change the composition of the nuclear arsenal without changing declaratory policy, but it would also force the aff to have reasons why policy-only changes can solve.

#### That’s a burden we should not take lightly

Perkovich and Vaddi 21 – Ken Olivier and Angela Nomellini Chair and vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; fellow in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

George Perkovich and Pranay Vaddi, “Proportionate Deterrence: A Model Nuclear Posture Review,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2021, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Perkobvich\_Vaddi\_NPR\_full2.pdf

A no-first-use declaration without reduction of the weapons that are most tied to first use would be relatively meaningless to Moscow and Beijing.

#### Even so, changes to declaratory policy on its own can serve to generate stability and form the beginning of broader reductions to the nuclear arsenal

Repussard 21 – Policy Fellow at BASIC, where they work on the Nuclear Responsibilities and the Risk Reduction programmes; MA from King’s College London in Intelligence and International Security; BA (Hons) in International Relations from the University of Birmingham and Fudan University in Shanghai

Eva-Nour Repussard, “The Road to Disarmament Should Leave No One Behind: On the Importance of Discussing Declaratory Policies,” BASIC, 12-23-21, https://basicint.org/the-road-to-disarmament-should-leave-no-one-behind-on-the-importance-of-discussing-declaratory-policies/

The Stepping Stones Approach to Nuclear Disarmament — as its name implies — seeks to achieve disarmament through incremental steps that would move Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) away from their current arms race dynamics to a more positive dynamic ‘with the intention of reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in postures’. Amongst those steps, SSA proponents place a particular emphasis on the role and importance of declaratory policies. Declaratory policies, defined as ‘a set of public statements about the circumstances in which a state or group of states would consider using nuclear weapons’, play an important role in international security —as they increase doctrinal transparency and can appease tensions. Indeed, the Stepping Stones Approach states that NWS should ‘deepen discussions on nuclear doctrine and declaratory policies, both among themselves and with Non-Nuclear Weapon States, at the upcoming NPT Review Conference and throughout the next NPT review cycle.’ Declaratory policies can decrease nuclear risks by strengthening some aspects of Nuclear Weapons States’ negative security assurances and demonstrating a gradual relinquishment of attachment to nuclear weapons. Declaratory policies, thus, can show progress towards creating an environment for nuclear disarmament without requiring NWS to immediately or drastically change their dependence on nuclear deterrence — or make any strategic security sacrifice.

### T---Public Statements about Circumstances

#### Public statements about circumstances where states would consider using nuclear weapons

Chalmers 11 – Director, Research and U.K. Defense Policy, Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies

Malcolm Chalmers, “Ch 2: Words That Matter? NATO Declaratory Policy and the DDPR,” Nuclear Threat Initiative, 11-16-11, https://media.nti.org/pdfs/NTI\_Framework\_Chpt2.pdf

Declaratory policy, defined as a set of public statements about the circumstances in which a state or group of states would consider using nuclear weapons, has always been a balancing act.3 Although it can have a key role in deterrence of potential adversaries, it can also be used to reassure those same states, together with concerned third parties and domestic public opinion, that nuclear weapons will only be used in extreme circumstances. In the case of NATO, declaratory policy has an additional dimension, helping to reassure the United States’ European Allies of its willingness to incur the risks involved in extended deterrence, while assuaging their concerns that, in a future crisis, the United States might use its nuclear monopoly to privilege its own security over their own.

#### Public statements about the role of nuclear weapons

Lewis 10 – Director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey and non-resident affiliate at Stanford's Center for Security and International Cooperation

Jeffrey Lewis, “Declaratory Policy,” Arms Control Wonk, 1-4-10, https://www.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/202583/declaratory-policy/

I notice this very interesting story by Paul Richter in the Los Angeles Times on deliberations over the Nuclear Posture Review. In particular, Richter summarizes the debate over “declaratory” policy — public statements about the role of US nuclear weapons.

### Need to Include it

#### “Reduce Reliance” alone Does not guarantee a “significant change” to declaratory policy

Costlow 21 – senior analyst at the National Institute for Public Policy

Matthew Costlow, “Believe It Or Not: U.S. Nuclear Declaratory Policy And Calculated Ambiguity,” War on the Rocks, 8-9-21, https://warontherocks.com/2021/08/believe-it-or-not-u-s-nuclear-declaratory-policy-and-calculated-ambiguity/

Those who wish to make cuts to the U.S. nuclear arsenal see President Biden’s Interim National Security Guidance’s pledge to “take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy” as a golden opportunity to advance their preferred policies. As the Obama administration demonstrated, however, a reduction in the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security strategy does not, in fact, require a change in declaratory policy. Rather, the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review cited an improved security environment, increasingly capable conventional weapons, and more regional missile defenses as factors that allowed a reduction in reliance on nuclear weapons, without a significant change to declaratory policy.

## Nouns---‘Doctrine’

### Doctrine---Policy

#### Doctrine describes when, how, and why a state will use nukes.

Michael Clarke 13, Associate Professor at ANU, Senior Research Fellow at the Griffith Asia Institute, “Pakistan and Nuclear Terrorism: How Real Is the Threat?,” Comparative Strategy, vol. 32, no. 2, 04/2013, pp. 98–114

Nuclear doctrine defines how, under what circumstances, and for what purposes a state will use its nuclear arsenal. A command and control system (C2 ) ensures that the state’s nuclear weapons will only be used according to the principles of its nuclear doctrine. Historically, Pakistan’s evolving nuclear doctrine and C2 system have been of concern due to their potential impact on strategic stability in South Asia.39 With respect to nuclear doctrine, concern has stemmed from the fact that Islamabad has never declared a formal nuclear doctrine, although it has been inferred by external observers through analysis of its operational and declaratory posture.40 In this respect, it has been argued that Pakistan’s nuclear doctrine has five major features: India-centric minimum nuclear deterrence; a principle of massive retaliation; a policy of nuclear firstuse; countervalue nuclear targeting; and a delegative C2 structure.41

#### Nuclear posture is the ‘hardware’ side of nuclear strategy, including nuclear capability and nuclear force configuration. Governing principles for the use of nuclear weapons, as well as conditions for their use, are ‘software’, and are called nuclear doctrine.

Jun Bong-geun 16, Professor, Dept. of National Security and Unification Studies, “An Analysis of North Korean Nuclear Doctrines and Its Implications,” IFANS Focus, IF 2016-55E, 07/27/2016, https://preview.kstudy.com/W\_files/kiss9/5n000183\_pv.pdf

This paper aims to analyze and evaluate North Korea’s nuclear strategies, especially the principles and conditions for the use of nuclear weapons, or ‘nuclear doctrine,’ that have appeared in a variety of its laws and statements, and to predict the direction of its nuclear weapons development program and draw implications for our North Korea policies.

‘Nuclear strategy’ widely refers to a state’s deployment and use of nuclear weapons for political and military purposes, and it constitutes part of the state’s broader military and security strategy. Nuclear strategy consists of nuclear capability, nuclear force configuration, and the like on the hardware side, as represented by the term ‘nuclear posture,’ and governing principles for the use of nuclear weapons on the software side, namely, nuclear doctrine. This paper focuses on the analysis of the latter.

#### It's a state’s policy on using nukes.

Stephanie Lieggi 4, Senior Research Associate, The James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, “Going Beyond the Stir: The Strategic Realities of China’s No-First-Use Policy,” NTI, 12/31/4, https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/realities-chinas-no-first-use-policy/

Keeping in mind Beijing's rebuff of Zhu's comment, the question remains as to what his statement meant—if anything—about Chinese nuclear doctrine.[20] [FOOTNOTE 20 BEGINS] [20] For the purpose of this paper, the term nuclear doctrine will be used to describe the official policy for the development and utilization of nuclear weapons by Chinese military and political leaders. As pointed out by Dr. Evan Medeiros, an analysis of Chinese "nuclear doctrine" is "complicated by the fact that Chinese strategists do not think about doctrine in the same way as their foreign counterparts." Medeiros adds that there is no Chinese term for "doctrine." Instead "Chinese military academics identify three levels of concepts that guide military operations: strategic-level concepts, campaign-level concepts, and tactical-level concepts. The ideas at all three levels collectively comprise what Western analysts refer to as military doctrine." See Evan S. Medeiros, "Evolving Nuclear Doctrine," in Paul J. Bolt and Albert S. Willner, ed., China's Nuclear Future, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005), p 43. [FOOTNOTE 20 ENDS] To fully assess the current status of China's NFU policy, it is important to go beyond the rhetoric coming from all sides of the debate. The NFU policy has been a part of China's nuclear doctrine for over four decades. Despite massive changes in China since then, many of the factors that dictated Beijing's doctrine in the past still impact policies today. These factors—including deterrence capabilities, resource limitations, regional stability, and perceptions of what is best for China strategically—continue to guide China's nuclear doctrine.

### Doctrine---Goals & Missions

#### Goals and missions that guide deployment and use, determine force structure, declaratory policy, and diplomacy.

Paul Ingram 19, Executive Director, BASIC, “Discussion Paper: Nuclear Doctrine,” NTI, January 2019, https://media.nti.org/documents/Discussion\_Paper-Nuclear\_Doctrine.pdf

I. Background

This paper explores the role of nuclear doctrine in shaping nuclear requirements, force postures, use policy, and arms control, including nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation related agreements and actions.

Nuclear doctrine encompasses the goals and missions that guide the deployment and use of nuclear weapons, that determine each Nuclear Weapon States’ (NWS) force structure, declaratory policy and diplomacy. The dominant goals of nuclear doctrine most often include deterrence, target destruction, assurance of allies, and a hedge against an uncertain future. But the drivers of nuclear decision-making also include ideas of power and prestige, domestic politics, and legacy deployments.

#### This is the consensus use of the term.

Lode Dewaegheneire et al. 22, Lode Dewaegheneire, Veronica Vella, Sylvain Paile-Calvo, researchers at the Flemish Peace Institute, “International nuclear disarmament and policy options for Belgium and Flanders,” Flemish Peace Institute, 2022, https://vlaamsvredesinstituut.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/20220125\_Nuclear\_Disarmament-EN-FlemishPeaceInstitute-WEB.pdf \*\*italics in original

Nuclear doctrines

Several definitions of the term “nuclear doctrine” can be found, but it is generally accepted that it “*encompasses the goals and missions that guide the deployment and use of nuclear weapons, that determine each [NWS’s] force structure, declaratory policy and diplomacy*”31. [FOOTNOTE 31 BEGINS] 31 Ingram, P. (2019), Discussion paper: nuclear doctrine, Nuclear Threat Initiative (2019), https://media.nti.org/documents/Discussion\_Paper-Nuclear\_Doctrine.pdf. [FOOTNOTE 31 ENDS]

## Nouns---Miscellaneous

### “Employment”

#### Requires presidential authorization. Not the same as “use”

FAS 2011 – Federation of American Scientists

“Chapter 3: U.S. Nuclear Forces,” in *The Nuclear Matters Handbook: Expanded Edition*, Federation of American Scientists, 2011, <https://man.fas.org/eprint/NMHB2011.pdf>

3.6 Employment of Nuclear Weapons

The primary purpose of the U.S. nuclear force posture is to deter a nuclear attack against the United States, its allies, or its interests. If deterrence were to fail, the United States could employ its nuclear weapons. The decision to employ nuclear weapons at any level requires the explicit authorization of the president of the United States. The use of nuclear weapons represents a significant escalation from conventional warfare and involves many considerations. The fundamental determinant of action is the political objective sought in the use of nuclear or other types of forces. Together, these considerations have an impact not only on the decision to use nuclear weapons but also on how they are employed. Other prominent planning and employment factors include: the strategic situation, the type and extent of operations to be conducted, military effectiveness, damage-limitation measures, environmental and ecological impacts, and calculations concerning how such considerations may interact.

### “Escalation”

#### Escalation is the qualitative growth of a conflict across previous limits

Freedman 03 – Professor of War Studies at King's College London

Lawrence D. Freedman, “Bargaining and Escalation,” in *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, Third Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003

Escalation

The growth process in warfare came to be described as escalation. This word is now one of the gifts of strategic studies to everyday language, where it is used to describe the intensification of any conflict. The term was first used in the 1950s, apparently in Britain.

By the early 1960s escalation was in regular use, though the sort of process involved was understood well before, as shown for example by William Kaufmann in 1956: 'Because of its competitive character war places a heavy premium upon the attainment of an advantage, however fleeting and this in turn invites imitation. As the belligerents strive to gain a comparative advantage, the conflict undergoes an expansion.'3 Theorists such as Schelling, whose ideas were essential to the elaboration of the concept, used the word only sparingly if at all.4 The idea received prominence in the middle of the decade because of the appearance of two important books with 'escalation' appearing in the title,5 and because of the value of the concept in describing tendencies visible in the Vietnam War.

Through all this, the concept remained somewhat vague and ambiguous. Kahn used the term broadly to describe 'an increase in the level of conflict in international crisis situations'. Elsewhere in the literature it was taken to describe both deliberate moves to raise the stakes of conflict, and an involuntary process, a phenomenon of war in which the belligerents find themselves fighting a war of ever-increasing scope and intensity. In either case the movement could be a gradual increase in the level of military force employed or the transformation into a different kind of war, for example one using only conventional, to one using nuclear, explosives. The importance of the distinction between these two types of movement was underlined by Morton Halperin. He described them as 'expansion' and 'explosion' respectively. Escalation, he felt, was inadequate as a term because it obscured this distinction.6 To confuse matters further, Kahn suggested that he was using escalation as Halperin used expansion preferring eruption to Halperin's explosion. Both these latter terms were too dramatic to describe anything other than the most extreme form of war-transformation. Yet much of the interest and value in the concept of escalation has been found in its use to describe major transformations of a conflict, though not necessarily those occurring in an explosive or eruptive manner.

To clarify the meaning of the term it is useful to turn to a more recent investigation of the subject by Richard Smoke, who is influenced by Schelling. Smoke notes how escalation implies a step-by-step qualitative growth rather than the sort of homogeneous, quantitative growth Halperin described as expansion. Furthermore it suggests an active thrust upward rather than a mere framework with no distinct bias. (Here Smoke may be reading the metaphor a little too literally. The rhetoric surrounding nuclear war often speaks of descents downwards, warning of untold horrors at thze end. Movement towards Hades rather than Heaven seems more appropriate - and one can travel downwards on escalators.) Smoke eventually defines escalation in terms of a movement across limits previously constraining both sides, or 'a step of any size that crosses a saliency’. These saliencies, which serve to contain wars, are 'objective and hence noticeable by all parties'; they are 'in some way discrete or discontinuous'.7 This definition is quite restrictive, but this makes it analytically useful in assessing the theories of the 1960s.

### “Nuclear Allocation”

#### Apportionment of nukes for use of war plans

DoD 10 – Department of Defense

“Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,” JP 1-02, Department of Defense, 2010, https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp1\_02-april2010.pdf

allocation (nuclear) — The apportionment of specific numbers and types of nuclear weapons to a commander for a stated time period as a planning factor for use in the development of war plans. (Additional authority is required for the actual deployment of allocated weapons to locations desired by the commander to support the war plans. Expenditures of these weapons are not authorized until released by proper authority.)

### “Nuclear Weapon Exercise”

#### Includes training exercises not related to immediate readiness, but does not include flying/launching

DoD 10 – Department of Defense

“Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,” JP 1-02, Department of Defense, 2010, https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp1\_02-april2010.pdf

nuclear weapon exercise — (\*) An operation not directly related to immediate operational readiness. It includes removal of a weapon from its normal storage location, preparing for use, delivery to an employment unit, and the movement in a ground training exercise, to include loading aboard an aircraft or missile and return to storage. It may include any or all of the operations listed above, but does not include launching or flying operations. Typical exercises include aircraft generation exercises, ground readiness exercises, ground tactical exercises, and various categories of inspections designed to evaluate the capability of the unit to perform its prescribed mission. See also nuclear weapon maneuver.

### “Nuclear Weapon Maneuver”

#### Broader than nuclear weapon exercise, but does not include using nukes

DoD 10 – Department of Defense

“Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,” JP 1-02, Department of Defense, 2010, https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp1\_02-april2010.pdf

nuclear weapon maneuver — (\*) An operation not directly related to immediate operational readiness. It may consist of all those operations listed for a nuclear weapon exercise and is extended to include flyaway in combat aircraft, but does not include expenditure of the weapon. Typical maneuvers include nuclear operational readiness maneuvers and tactical air operations. See also nuclear weapon exercise.

### “Nuclear Defense”

#### Includes the defensive procedures in response to nuclear or radiological attack

NATO and Russia 07 – North Atlantic Treaty Organization + the Russian Federation

“NATO-Russia Glossary of Nuclear Terms and Definitions,” NATO-Russia Council compilation, 2007, <https://www.nato.int/docu/glossary/eng-nuclear/nuc_glos-e.pdf>

nuclear defence

The methods, plans, and procedures involved in establishing and exercising defensive measures against the effects of an attack by nuclear weapons or radiological warfare agents. It encompasses both the training for, and the implementation of, these methods, plans, and procedures (AAP-6).

### “Nuclear Crisis”

#### Maybe best to not use this term

Borja et al 21 – fellow at the Center for Global Security Research (CGSR), affiliate at the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC) at Stanford University, Ph.D. in physical chemistry from the University of California, Berkeley (2016)

Lauren Borja, Jacek Durkalec, Anna Péczeli, and Brian Radzinsky, “Multipolarity and U.S. Nuclear Strategy: Workshop Summary,” Center for Global Security Research (CGSR) at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), December 2021, https://cgsr.llnl.gov/content/assets/docs/Workshop\_Summary\_Multipolarity\_US\_Nuclear\_Strategy.pdf

The second question is whether nuclear weapons could help to deter aggression or manage escalation in a scenario in which the United States and its allies do not enjoy conventional regional superiority because of the U.S. military engagement in another region. As every crisis between nuclear powers is by definition a nuclear crisis, nuclear weapons could be leveraged by the United States and its allies to shape decisions of an opportunistic aggressor. Yet, this may be difficult in a scenario in which Russia or China also enjoy regional nuclear superiority with diverse arsenals of non-strategic nuclear forces. In such a scenario, adversary’s theater nuclear forces might negate any perceived benefits that the United States and its allies might want to enjoy from putting nuclear weapons to the forefront.

### “Non-Proliferation”

#### Whole gamut of actions

FAS 2011 – Federation of American Scientists

“Glossary,” in *The Nuclear Matters Handbook: Expanded Edition*, Federation of American Scientists, 2011, <https://man.fas.org/eprint/NMHB2011.pdf>

nonproliferation

Those actions (e.g., diplomacy, arms control, multilateral agreements, threat reduction assistance, and export controls) taken to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by dissuading or impeding access to, or distribution of, sensitive technologies, material, and expertise.

### “Refurbishment”

#### Includes all nuclear weapons alterations

FAS 2011 – Federation of American Scientists

“Glossary,” in *The Nuclear Matters Handbook: Expanded Edition*, Federation of American Scientists, 2011, <https://man.fas.org/eprint/NMHB2011.pdf>

refurbishment

All nuclear weapons alterations and modifications including life extensions, modernizations, and revised military requirements.

## Nouns---‘Mission’

### Missions = Currently Existing

#### “Missions” of the nuclear arsenal include only specific tasks that currently exist

OELRICH 05Acting President of FAS, PhD – Princeton, BS – U. Chicago both in Chemistry, Research Associate at Lawrence Livermore National Labs. [Ivan Oelrich, Missions for Nuclear Weapons after the Cold War,” FEDERATION of AMERICAN SCIENTISTS, Occasional Paper No. 3 January 2005, http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/armscontrol/missionsaftercwrptfull.pdf]

Defining Nuclear Missions

This study does not set out to promote new nuclear missions but to evaluate the set of missions currently under some level of consideration. The set is shown in Table 2 and is a composite from several sources, including a report from the National Institute for Public Policy (NIPP), the Nuclear Posture Review(NPR), studies from the National Laboratories, and Congressional reports.[7]

Before proceeding, we need two definitions: *mission* is used here to mean a specific type of task such as destroying a particular type of target. *Why* one might want to destroy the target, the effect, is the objective or, using the Administration's terminology, the *goal*.

The distinction between missions and goals is important but is often muddled in discussions of nuclear weapons. In the following discussion, deterrence,for example, is not a mission of nuclear weapons. A mission for a nuclear system might be to be able to survive a first strike and then launch against the striker,destroying its cities. The goal of this mission would be deterrence. Damage limitation seems to be an uncontroversial goal in general; but the specific mission of a surprise first strike, necessary to effect that goal, is much less appealing. Many discussions of nuclear weapons do not maintain the distinction between missions and goals. They assume or assert that nuclear weapons will achieve the desired goal, so some of the missions are only implied. It is easy to lose sight of the task nuclear weapons would actually be asked to perform. Maintaining this perspective is one benefit of maintaining the distinction between specific missions and general goals.

Table 2

Nuclear Missions

1 Survive and fire back after nuclear attack against homeland (for retaliation/deterrence)

2 Survive and fire back after nuclear attack against allies (for retaliation/deterrence/assurance)

3 Survive and fire back after chem/bio attack against homeland (for retaliation/deterrence)

4 Survive and fire back after chem/bio attack against allies (for assurance/retaliation/deterrence)

5 Survive and fire back after CBW use in military theater

6 Deploying nuclear weapons to attack enemy nuclear weapons to increase their vulnerability, decreasing their value (to discourage their development in the first place)

7 Deploying nuclear weapons to attack enemy chem/bio weapons to increase their vulnerability, decreasing their value (to discourage their development in the first place)

8 Damage limitation attacks against nuclear weapons in military theater

9 Damage limitation attacks against CB weapons in military theater

10 Damage limitation attacks against Russian/Chinese central systems

11 Ready to inflict damage after regional conventional attacks (or to deter such attacks)

12 Overawe potential rivals

13 Provide virtual power

14 Fight regional wars

15 Apply shock to terminate a regional conventional war

Nuclear Weapons Missions

We have tried to make the list complete. However, some possible nuclear missions, in fact some actual past missions, **are excluded because they are not currently proposed.** For example, the Nike and Safeguard systems deployed nuclear warheads for strategic defense against bombers and missiles respectively, but we can find almost no serious consideration at this time of arming ballistic missile interceptors with nuclear warheads. Indeed, the Congress has even considered banning the option. Nuclear explosives have been proposed as propulsion systems for space launchers (the Orion project, for example) that could have military application but this idea is not currently on the table. We included a mission for discouraging the build-up of nuclear arsenals by making the competition seem hopeless (a mission we call "overawe," that is usually mentioned with respect to China). We do not, however, list a comparable "overawing" mission with respect to discouraging other nations from developing chemical or biological weapons because we cannot find any proposal for it. The list inTable 2 runs roughly in order of more to less widely accepted missions.

### Mission = Specific Tasks

#### “Missions” of the nuclear arsenal are specific jobs assigned to the military

Carr, 93 - US Navy Commander (Roberta, “THE GREENING OF GLOBAL SECURITY: THE U.S. MILITARY AND INTERNATIONAL

ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY” http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA277754&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf)

In this thesis, the term role is used as a deed or action the U.S. military is capable of performing. Roles in this thesis are action verbs, that is, something that is performed.

The Roles and Missions document also defines missions as "the tasks assigned by the President or Secretary of Defense to the Commanders-in-Chief (CINCs) of combatant commands."[Ref. 1 :p. 1-3] Similarly, mission in this thesis is used to describe a specific job assigned to the military, where the military employs a specific role toward achieving that mission. In other words, the U.S. military performs a role to accomplish a mission.

#### “Missions” refers to specific tasks of weapons – not capabilities generally

Rohling, 80 – in the Polemologisch Instituut at Groningen University in the Netherlands (Bert, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist, November, “The Sin of Silence”, ebsco)

Up to now, restrictions on this sovereign right to possess arms have forbidden some quality or quantity of specific categories of weapons. But technological innovations have made this approach difficult if not useless. Hence the need for a new approach which does not rely on qualitative or quantitative restrictions on weapons but considers instead the ”missions” or “functions” of national armed power. These terms would be used to describe the specific tasks to which military capabilities can be put, and it is these missions or functions that should be made the primary focus of agreement.4 Some capabilities should be forbidden: the capability of launching a pre-emptive first strike or a successful surprise attack. As a general rule a state should not have the right to possess arms capable of performing functions that are forbidden by international law. The logical consequence of the ban on the use of force, except to resist armed attack, is a further ban on the right to possess arms capable of supportive aggressive designs.

#### Missions refers to the specific tasks that weapons are capable of being put toward

Miller, 84(Arthur, Nuclear Weapons and Law, p. 197-198)

Up to now, negotiations have been conducted on the basis of special categories of weapons and armspower. However, technology presents ever more confusing novelties. Bertram directed our attention to “the erosion of the existing weapons categories” which was partly a result of “multi-mission weapons.” 85 Hence his plea for “new units of account, missions instroead of weapons.” 86 The term “mission” is used to describe specific tasks to which military capabilities can be put. Such functions should be the subject of negotiations and agreed-upon prescriptions.

### Missions Includes Targeting

#### Limiting Targeting is a restriction of the mission

KRISTENSEN, NORRIS, & OELRICH 09 Nuclear Scientists, FAS contributors

[Hans M. Kristensen, Robert S. Norris, Ivan Oelrich, “From Counterforce to Minimal Deterrence: A New Nuclear Policy on the Path Toward Eliminating Nuclear Weapons,” http://www.fas.org/pubs/\_docs/OccasionalPaper7.pdf]

Proponents of counterforce targeting often claim that it is the only morally justifiable nuclear targeting because anything else means “city busting” andtargeting of civilians. But that argument ignores that existing counterforcetargeting accepts tens of millions of civilian casualties. We believe that nuclear targeting decisions should place a very high value on avoiding collateralthreat to populations, and explicitly prohibit city attacks, keeping in mindthat important military targets in cities can always be attacked, simply not withnuclear weapons. Of course, huge fatalities will occur in any nuclear attackbut many fewer in a minimal deterrence posture than would occur with today’stargeting choices. Note that this approach actually restricts the mission ofnuclear weapons to just deterrence, which is what most discussions of nuclearweapons claim the mission to be. This is not war fighting, it is not preemptionto limit damage, it is not vengeance. It is only deterrence in its simplest form:guaranteed pain if an adversary unwisely attacks the United States or its allieswith nuclear weapons.

### Missions Includes Counterforce

#### Counterforce is a mission

KRISTENSEN, NORRIS, & OELRICH 09 Nuclear Scientists, FAS contributors

[Hans M. Kristensen, Robert S. Norris, Ivan Oelrich, “From Counterforce to Minimal Deterrence: A New Nuclear Policy on the Path Toward Eliminating Nuclear Weapons,” http://www.fas.org/pubs/\_docs/OccasionalPaper7.pdf]

The counterforce mission, and all that goes with it, should be explicitly and publicly abandoned and replaced with a much less ambitious and qualitativelydifferent doctrine. A new “minimal deterrence” mission will make retaliationafter nuclear attack the sole mission for nuclear weapons. We believe thatadopting this doctrine is an important step on the path to nuclear abolitionbecause nuclear retaliation is the one mission for nuclear weapons that reducesthe salience of nuclear weapons; it is the self-canceling mission. With just thisone mission, the United States can have far fewer nuclear forces to use againsta different set of targets. Almost all of the “requirements” for nuclear weapons’performance were established during the Cold War and derive from the counterforcemission. Under a minimal deterrence doctrine, appropriate needs forreliability, accuracy, response time, and all other performance characteristics,can be reevaluated and loosened.

### Missions Includes First Use

#### NFU restricts the deterrence mission of nuclear weapons

Panofsky, 07 - Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (Emeritus) (Wolfgang, “Peace talk: My life negotiating science and policy ,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist, Nov/Dec, ebsco)

Prior to possible prohibition, it seems feasible to me to drive for consensus that the only justifiable remaining role of nuclear weapons is deterrence of the use of nuclear weapons by others. Retaining, or even searching for, other missions for nuclear weapons is shortsighted and prolongs or even exacerbates the nuclear dangers. Such a restriction on the mission of nuclear weapons is equivalent to a universal declaration of “no-first-use” of nuclear weapons, a declaration that has been embraced only by China, and by none of the other nuclear weapons states. But most important, such a restricted view of the mission of nuclear weapons should enable drastic reductions of the existing nuclear weapons stockpiles, in particular those held by the United States and Russia. Such a limit imposed on the role of nuclear weapons can be used to revitalize the nuclear weapons arms control drive, which lately has suffered a series of setbacks. This has been a personal disappointment to me because some of the achievements in nuclear weapons arms control that were enacted during the Cold War, some of which I participated in developing, have now fallen on hard times.

### Missions Includes Global Strike

#### Preemption through Global Strike is a nuclear mission

Kristensen, 06 - Director, Nuclear Information Project, Federation of American Scientists (Hans, “Global Strike: A Chronology of the Pentagon’s New Offensive Strike Plan,” 3/15, http://www.nukestrat.com/pubs/GlobalStrikeReport.pdf)

One year after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the Bush administration published the National Security Strategy of the United States of America. Building on the events of 9/11 – and a decade of gradual expansion of nuclear doctrine focused on Russian and China to one aimed increasingly at regional aggressors armed with weapons of mass destruction – the new strategy wove together terrorism and weapons of mass destruction proliferation in a plan for a more offensive U.S. military posture.

"We must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends....We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today’s adversaries….The greater the threat, the greater the risk of inaction – and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of our enemy’s attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively....To support preemptive actions, we will…continue to transform out military forces to ensure our ability to conduct rapid and precise operations to achieve decisive results."2

Three and a half years later, the military product of that strategy is operational: Global Strike. The operational embodiment of the Global Strike mission is Contingency Plan (CONPLAN) 8022, a new strike plan developed by STRATCOM in coordination with the Air Force and Navy to provide a prompt global strike options to the President with nuclear, conventional, space, and information warfare capabilities.

It is important to understand that the Global Strike mission and CONPLAN 8022 are different than previous missions and plans both in their intent and capabilities. Although promoted as a way of increasing the President’s options for deterring lesser adversaries, Global Strike is first and foremost offensive and preemptive in nature and deeply rooted in the expectation that deterrence will fail sooner or later. Rather than waiting for the mushroom cloud to appear, a phrase used several times by the Bush administration, the Global Strike mission is focused on defeating the threat before it is unleashed. In its most extreme sense, Global Strike seeks to create near-invulnerability for the United States by forcing utter vulnerability upon any potential adversary. As a result, Global Strike is principally about warfighting rather than deterrence.

From Policy to Capability

Because of its unique duty to save America from damage inflicted by weapons of mass destruction, Global Strike is an important new focus for the Pentagon’s offensive planning in the post-9/11 era: It is the basis for the implementation of the New Triad described in the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR); the core of the transformation of U.S. Strategic Command into the center of U.S. military planning; and the embodiment of the doctrinal and political shift in how the United States views the role of its military forces after 9/11. Global Strike has emerged in response to specific guidance issued by the While House and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) since 2001:

• Nuclear Posture Review (December 2001): Lays the foundation by articulating requirements for forces and planning tools that reemphasized operations against regional adversaries armed with weapons mass destruction.

• National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 14 (June 2002): Promulgates new Nuclear Weapons Planning Guidance in accordance with the Nuclear Posture Review.

• National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 17 (September 2002): Communicates a new National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction as a comprehensive approach to counter nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Reaffirms that United States will use nuclear weapons – even preemptively – against anyone using weapons of mass destruction against the United States, its forces abroad, and friends and allies. Calls for a mix of nuclear and conventional forces.

• National Security Strategy of the United States (September 2002): Publicly articulates a preemption doctrine against weapons of mass destruction that requires transformation of military forces to rapidly and precisely “stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends.”

• Unified Command Plan, Change 2 (January 2003): Assigns four new missions to STRATCOM: Global Strike, missile defense, information operations, and global C4ISR. The directive defines global strike as "a capability to deliver rapid, extended range, precision kinetic (nuclear and conventional) and non-kinetic (elements of space and information operations) effects in support of theater and national objectives." • Nuclear Posture Review Implementation Plan (March 2003): A 26-page list of specific items from the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review that the military Services are ordered to implement.

• Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy (NUWEP) (April 2004): A detailed outline of the countries that U.S. nuclear planning shall be directed against, including a breakdown of the individual strike options (plans) and their target categories and objectives. The document states in part: "U.S. nuclear forces must be capable of, and be seen to be capable of, destroying those critical war-making and war-supporting assets and capabilities that a potential enemy leadership values most and that it would rely on to achieve its own objectives in a post-war world."

• Unified Command Plan 2004 (March 2005): Assigns to STRATCOM the mission of coordinating the Pentagon’s efforts to combating Weapons of Mass Destruction.

In response to this (and probably other) guidance, STRATCOM planners went to work on a new strike plan that could be used to implement Global Strike if ordered to do so. Only four months after being assigned the Global Strike by Unified Command Plan (Change 2) in January 2003, a strategic concept for CONPLAN 8022 had been developed. A second concept was readied in June (CONPLAN 8022-02) and completed in November 2003.

As a concept plan, CONPLAN 8022 was not operational at this point but available for implementation if so ordered by the Secretary of Defense. That happened in June 2004, when Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld ordered the military to implement CONPLAN 8022 “which provides the President a prompt, global strike capability." In response, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Richard Myers signed the Global Strike Alert Order (ALERTORD) on June 30, 2004, which ordered STRATCOM to put CONPLAN 8022 into effect in coordination with the Air Force and Navy. Six weeks later, on August 17, STRATCOM published Global Strike Interim Capability Operations Order (OPORD) which changed the nature of CONPLAN 8022 from a concept plan to a contingency plan. In response, selected bombers, ICBMs, SSBNs, and information warfare units were tasked against specific high-value targets in adversary countries. Finally, on November 18, 2005, Joint Functional Component Command Space and Global Strike achieved Initial Operational capability after being thoroughly tested in the nuclear strike exercise Global Lightning 06.

The Nuclear Option

Although Global Strike is primarily a non-nuclear mission based on advanced conventional capabilities, space, and information warfare capabilities, this chronology illustrates that nuclear weapons are surprisingly prominent in both the planning and command structure of Global Strike.3

What makes the nuclear option in CONPLAN 8022 particularly surprising is that Global Strike is one of the pillars of the Bush administration’s vision of a “New Triad” where advanced conventional weapons were supposed to permit a reduction of the number and role of nuclear weapons. Instead, one of the first acts of the Pentagon appears to have been to include nuclear weapons in the very plan that was supposed to reduce the nuclear role. Overall, the number of nuclear weapons in the stockpile may be declining because there are simply too many of them. But the nuclear option in CONPLAN 8022 suggests that the planners simultaneously have created a new mission that reaffirms the importance and broadens the role of nuclear weapons further by changing or lowering the perceived threshold or timing for when nuclear weapons may be used in a conflict. That threshold must be different than in the past, otherwise why include a nuclear option in CONPLAN 8022?

In contrast with the Bush administration’s claim to be reducing the role of nuclear weapons, consider these remarks by JCS Chairman Gen. Richard Myers at the July 2004 retirement ceremony of Adm. Ellis as STRATCOM commander in Omaha:

You reshaped “the roles and missions of that old command to better posture our military forces to defeat existing and future threats against our nation [after 9/11]….You did this by expanding the options available to the President, both from a strong nuclear deterrence standpoint and conventional and non-kinetic response options.”4

The following year, General Myers repeated his description of the expansion of the options, this time in his testimony before Congress:

“Within DOD, the SecDef has tasked the US Strategic Command to synchronize our efforts to counter WMD and ensure the force structure and the resources are in place to help all combatant commands defeat WMD.… STRATCOM has revised our strategic deterrence and response plan that became effective in the fall of 2004. This revised, detailed plan provides more flexible options to assure allies, and dissuade, deter, and if necessary, defeat adversaries in a wider range of contingencies.”5

The expansion of nuclear options to the President includes CONPLAN 8022. The new and different nature of that plan is further underscored by the fact that STRATCOM for more than a decade has maintained and modernized a robust nuclear posture directed against Russia and China and, increasingly, also regional adversaries armed with weapons of mass destruction. STRATCOM told the Clinton administration’s Nuclear Posture Review in 1993: “Within the context of a regional single or few warhead detonation, classical deterrence already allows for adaptively planned missions to counter any use of WMD.”6 If STRATCOM has had the capability to counter any use of weapons of mass destruction for more than a decade, then why include a nuclear option in CONPLAN 8022?

The “New Triad” is frequently portrayed as an alternative to the Cold War strategy of nuclear Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). Yet CONPLAN 8022 is premised on the preservation and improvement of an assured destruction capability for nuclear weapons. The international nuclear situation may be less “mutual” today compared with the Cold War, but “assured destruction” very much continues to be is a key requirement for U.S. nuclear planning. In CONPLAN 8022 this assured destruction capability is intended not just in retaliation but in preemption.

## Nouns---‘Nuclear Weapons’ & Related Systems

### “Ballistic Missile”

#### No lift from surface and follows ballistic trajectory

FAS 2011 – Federation of American Scientists

“Glossary,” in *The Nuclear Matters Handbook: Expanded Edition*, Federation of American Scientists, 2011, <https://man.fas.org/eprint/NMHB2011.pdf>

ballistic missile

Any missile that does not rely upon aerodynamic surfaces to produce lift and consequently follows a ballistic trajectory when thrust is terminated.

### “Deployed Nuclear Weapons”

#### Nukes in custody of the Armed Forces via JCS authorization

DoD 10 – Department of Defense

“Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,” JP 1-02, Department of Defense, 2010, https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp1\_02-april2010.pdf

deployed nuclear weapons — 1. When used in connection with the transfer of weapons between the Department of Energy and the Department of Defense, this term describes those weapons transferred to and in the custody of the Department of Defense. 2. Those nuclear weapons specifically authorized by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to be transferred to the custody of the storage facilities or carrying or delivery units of the Armed Forces.

### “Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons”

#### Can be used to support operations

DoD 10 – Department of Defense

“Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,” JP 1-02, Department of Defense, 2010, https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp1\_02-april2010.pdf

nonstrategic nuclear forces — Those nuclear-capable forces located in an operational area with a capability to employ nuclear weapons by land, sea, or air forces against opposing forces, supporting installations, or facilities. Such forces may be employed, when authorized by competent authority, to support operations that contribute to the accomplishment of the commander’s mission within the theater of operations.

### “Nuclear Command and Control”

#### Exercise of authority by president through established command lines

FAS 2011 – Federation of American Scientists

“Glossary,” in *The Nuclear Matters Handbook: Expanded Edition*, Federation of American Scientists, 2011, <https://man.fas.org/eprint/NMHB2011.pdf>

nuclear command and control

The exercise of authority and direction by the president, as commander in chief through established command lines over nuclear weapon operations of military forces, as chief executive over all government activities that support those operations, and as head of state over required multinational actions that support those operations.

#### It connects to all nuclear-capable forces

FAS 2011 – Federation of American Scientists

“Chapter 4: Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications System,” in *The Nuclear Matters Handbook: Expanded Edition*, Federation of American Scientists, 2011, <https://man.fas.org/eprint/NMHB2011.pdf>

4.2 Nuclear Command and Control

Nuclear command and control (C2)—or the exercise of authority and direction by the president through established command lines over nuclear weapons operations, as the Chief Executive over all nuclear weapon activities that support those operations, and as the Head of State over required multinational actions that support those operations—is provided through a survivable “thin line” of communications and warning systems that ensure dedicated connectivity from the president to all nuclear-capable forces. The fundamental requirements of nuclear C2 are paramount; nuclear C2 must be assured, timely, secure, survivable, and enduring in providing the information and communications for the president to make and communicate critical decisions without being constrained by limitations in the systems, the people, or the procedures that make up the full nuclear C3 system.

### “Nuclear Command and Control System”

#### The framework that enables execution of presidential nuclear direction

FAS 2011 – Federation of American Scientists

“Glossary,” in *The Nuclear Matters Handbook: Expanded Edition*, Federation of American Scientists, 2011, <https://man.fas.org/eprint/NMHB2011.pdf>

nuclear command and control system

The facilities, equipment, communications, procedures, and personnel that enable presidential nuclear direction to be carried out.

#### Includes a wide breadth of stakeholders to support nuclear C2

FAS 2011 – Federation of American Scientists

“Chapter 4: Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications System,” in *The Nuclear Matters Handbook: Expanded Edition*, Federation of American Scientists, 2011, <https://man.fas.org/eprint/NMHB2011.pdf>

The president’s ability to exercise these authorities is ensured by the Nuclear Command and Control System (NCCS)—the facilities, equipment, communications, procedures, and personnel that are essential for supporting the president’s nuclear C2. The NCCS is an interagency system that includes stakeholders from the White House, the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of State (DOS), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Justice (DOJ)/Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Department of Energy (DOE), and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI).

### “Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications System”

#### Collection of activities to transfer senior decisions to execution

FAS 2011 – Federation of American Scientists

“Glossary,” in *The Nuclear Matters Handbook: Expanded Edition*, Federation of American Scientists, 2011, <https://man.fas.org/eprint/NMHB2011.pdf>

nuclear command, control, and communications system

The collection of activities, processes, and procedures performed by appropriate commanders and support personnel who, through the chain of command, allow for senior-level decisions on nuclear weapons employment to be made based on relevant information and subsequently allow for those decisions to be communicated to forces for execution.

### “Nuclear Delivery Unit”

#### Level of organization capable of using a nuke

NATO and Russia 07 – North Atlantic Treaty Organization + the Russian Federation

“NATO-Russia Glossary of Nuclear Terms and Definitions,” NATO-Russia Council compilation, 2007, <https://www.nato.int/docu/glossary/eng-nuclear/nuc_glos-e.pdf>

nuclear delivery unit

Any level of organisation capable of employing a nuclear weapon system or systems when the weapon or weapons have been released by proper authority (AAP-6). See also nuclear certified delivery unit.

### “Nuclear Force Structure”

#### Includes quality, quantity, and type of nukes and delivery platforms. Excludes doctrine and security apparatus

Gartzke et al 14 – Department of Political Science, University of California, San Diego

Erik Gartzke, Jeffrey M. Kaplow, and Rupal N. Mehta, “The Determinants of Nuclear Force Structure,” The Journal of Conflict Resolution, April 2014, Vol. 58, No. 3, Special Issue: Nuclear Posture, Nonproliferation Policy, and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons (April 2014), pp. 481-508, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24545649

States that have acquired nuclear weapons must confront the complicated and important question of how to structure their nuclear arsenals.1

[[Begin FN 1]]

1. Analysts use varying definitions of nuclear force structure, including everything from simple weapon counts to the entire command, control, and intelligence infrastructure behind these weapons. We see nuclear force structure broadly as describing the quality, quantity, and type of nuclear weapons and delivery platforms deployed by a state. At the same time, this definition excludes questions of nuclear doctrine and the larger national security apparatus.

[[End FN 1]]

Some states, such as the United Kingdom, field only a small number of nuclear platforms, while others, such as the United States and the Soviet Union, establish diverse portfolios of weapons with varying range, destructive power, and other characteristics.2 Nuclear states differ dramatically not only in the number of nuclear platforms they deploy but also in the relative weight they place on particular weapon systems and on each component of the nuclear triad (air-, land-, and sea-based weapons).3 These characteristics have also changed over time—nuclear forces that seem appropriate in one strategic environment may be made redundant or obsolete by the introduction of new technologies or by cycles of crisis and détente. Variation across nations and time raises several key questions: Why do states deploy the nuclear force structures they do? What drives the decisions of states to invest in new nuclear platforms? How do officials think about the diversification of their nuclear portfolios?

#### Includes both nuclear warheads and delivery units

FAS 2011 – Federation of American Scientists

“Chapter 3: U.S. Nuclear Forces,” in *The Nuclear Matters Handbook: Expanded Edition*, Federation of American Scientists, 2011, <https://man.fas.org/eprint/NMHB2011.pdf>

3.5 Nuclear Weapons Force Structure

The U.S. nuclear force structure includes both nuclear warheads, which have been discussed above, and the units that can deliver the nuclear warheads to a target, if and when approved by the president. These delivery units consist of the launch platforms, delivery vehicles, support equipment, and the personnel required to accomplish the employment mission. Among other things, the delivery units have a staff that supports the commander for various functions, such as human resources, intelligence, delivery operations, security, training, and supply. The units also have technical and operational procedures, a security system, and a personnel support system that provides for the care of the unit’s personnel. The remainder of this section will focus on nuclear delivery systems.

### “Nuclear Forces”

#### “Nuclear forces” means delivery platforms, weapons, support systems, C&C assets, and military infrastructure.

a --- Ph.D., Director of the Center for Global Security Research at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Prior to this position, he was deputy assistant secretary of defense for Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy.

Brad, March 2023, “China’s Emergence as a Second Nuclear Peer,” CGSR Study Group Report, https://cgsr.llnl.gov/content/assets/docs/CGSR\_Two\_Peer\_230314.pdf.

Are existing and planned U.S. strategic nuclear force fit for the purpose of deterring and, if necessary, defeating two near peers simultaneously?

Does the United States have sufficient weapons of the right types, and will possess sufficient weapons as it modernizes? If not, what changes are needed?

The term “nuclear forces” refers here to the delivery platforms (bombers and ballistic missile submarines), weapons (warheads and bombs) mated to delivery systems (e.g., SLBMs and ICBMs), support systems (e.g., tankers), command and control assets, and associated military infrastructure necessary to conduct nuclear combat operations. The platforms and weapons can conceptually be split into two components: those that are operationally deployed and those that are not operationally deployed. The operationally-deployed component is readily available (immediately or within a few days), while the non-deployed component may take weeks to years to become operational.

### “Nuclear Triad”

#### “Components” = air, land and sea-based weapons of all ranges and capabilities. “Legs” include strategic bombers, ICBMs, and SLBMs

Gartzke et al 14 – Department of Political Science, University of California, San Diego

Erik Gartzke, Jeffrey M. Kaplow, and Rupal N. Mehta, “The Determinants of Nuclear Force Structure,” The Journal of Conflict Resolution, April 2014, Vol. 58, No. 3, Special Issue: Nuclear Posture, Nonproliferation Policy, and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons (April 2014), pp. 481-508, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24545649

States that have acquired nuclear weapons must confront the complicated and important question of how to structure their nuclear arsenals.1 Some states, such as the United Kingdom, field only a small number of nuclear platforms, while others, such as the United States and the Soviet Union, establish diverse portfolios of weapons with varying range, destructive power, and other characteristics.2 Nuclear states differ dramatically not only in the number of nuclear platforms they deploy but also in the relative weight they place on particular weapon systems and on each component of the nuclear triad (air-, land-, and sea-based weapons).3

[[Begin FN 3]]

3. The three legs of the nuclear triad are generally seen to include strategic bombers, inter- continental ballistic missiles, and submarine-launched ballistic missiles. Other, more esoteric, formulations exist: the US 2002 Nuclear Posture Review advances the idea of a “new triad” that consists of nuclear and nonnuclear offensive strike systems, active and passive defenses, and an enhanced defense infrastructure (US Department of Defense 2002). Here, we take the components of the nuclear triad to mean strategic air-, land-, and sea-based weapons of all ranges and capabilities.

[[End FN 3]]

These characteristics have also changed over time—nuclear forces that seem appropriate in one strategic environment may be made redundant or obsolete by the introduction of new technologies or by cycles of crisis and détente. Variation across nations and time raises several key questions: Why do states deploy the nuclear force structures they do? What drives the decisions of states to invest in new nuclear platforms? How do officials think about the diversification of their nuclear portfolios?

#### “Leg” = SLBMs, ICBMs, or heavy bombers

FAS 2011 – Federation of American Scientists

“Chapter 3: U.S. Nuclear Forces,” in *The Nuclear Matters Handbook: Expanded Edition*, Federation of American Scientists, 2011, <https://man.fas.org/eprint/NMHB2011.pdf>

The 2010 NPR concluded that, for planned reductions under the New START, the United States should retain a smaller triad of SLBMs, ICBMs, and heavy bombers. Retaining all three legs of the triad will best maintain strategic stability at a reasonable cost, while hedging against potential technical problems or vulnerabilities.

Weapons in the U.S. nuclear arsenal provide a wide range of options that can be tailored to meet desired military and political objectives. Each leg of the triad has advantages that warrant retaining all three legs in the near-term. Strategic nuclear submarines (SSBNs) and the SLBMs they carry represent the most survivable leg of the nuclear triad. Singlewarhead ICBMs contribute to stability, and like SLBMs, have low vulnerability to air defenses. Unlike ICBMs and SLBMs, bombers can be visibly deployed forward as a signal in crisis to strengthen deterrence against potential adversaries and assurance of allies and partners; it is also possible to recall a manned bomber after launch or takeoff toward a target. Figure 3.9 is a list of the current U.S. nuclear warheads and their associated delivery systems.

### “Nuclear Weapon”

#### Capable of producing a nuclear reaction

DoD 10 – Department of Defense

“Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,” JP 1-02, Department of Defense, 2010, https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp1\_02-april2010.pdf

Nuclear weapon — A complete assembly (i.e., implosion type, gun type, or thermonuclear type), in its intended ultimate configuration which, upon completion of the prescribed arming, fusing, and firing seqwouence, is capable of producing the intended nuclear reaction and release of energy. (JP 3-11)

### “Nuclear Weapon Delivery System”

#### Military vehicle (ballistic or cruise missile, airplane, or sub) that carries nuke to target

FAS 2011 – Federation of American Scientists

“Chapter 3: U.S. Nuclear Forces,” in *The Nuclear Matters Handbook: Expanded Edition*, Federation of American Scientists, 2011, <https://man.fas.org/eprint/NMHB2011.pdf>

3.5.1 Nuclear Weapon Delivery Systems

Nuclear weapons are carried to their targets through the use of nuclear weapon delivery systems. A nuclear weapon delivery system is the military vehicle (ballistic or cruise missile, airplane, or submarine) by which a nuclear weapon would be delivered to its intended target in the event of authorized use. Most nuclear warheads have been designed for specific delivery systems. The United States currently maintains a nuclear triad, or a system of delivery vehicles comprised of a sea, land, and air deterrent based on submarine-launched ballistic missiles, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and heavy bombers. Figure 3.8 depicts the U.S. nuclear triad.

### “Strategic Nuclear Forces”

#### Includes SLBMs, heavy bombers, and ICBMs

NATO and Russia 07 – North Atlantic Treaty Organization + the Russian Federation

“NATO-Russia Glossary of Nuclear Terms and Definitions,” NATO-Russia Council compilation, 2007, <https://www.nato.int/docu/glossary/eng-nuclear/nuc_glos-e.pdf>

Strategic Nuclear Forces

Land-based ballistic missiles with ranges over 5500 kilometers, modern submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and heavy bombers (USIA).

### “Strategic Nuclear Weapons”

#### Includes ICBMs and can be used for operations

NATO and Russia 07 – North Atlantic Treaty Organization + the Russian Federation

“NATO-Russia Glossary of Nuclear Terms and Definitions,” NATO-Russia Council compilation, 2007, <https://www.nato.int/docu/glossary/eng-nuclear/nuc_glos-e.pdf>

Strategic Nuclear Weapons

Strategic nuclear weapons are designed to engage objects in geographically remote strategic regions (over 5500 km) to accomplish strategic missions. In exceptional situations, strategic nuclear weapons may be used to accomplish operational missions. Strategic nuclear weapons are in service with the strategic nuclear forces (RF).

#### There’s no clear distinguishing factor between strategic and tactical

Gartzke et al 14 – Department of Political Science, University of California, San Diego

Erik Gartzke, Jeffrey M. Kaplow, and Rupal N. Mehta, “The Determinants of Nuclear Force Structure,” The Journal of Conflict Resolution, April 2014, Vol. 58, No. 3, Special Issue: Nuclear Posture, Nonproliferation Policy, and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons (April 2014), pp. 481-508, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24545649

Our quantitative analysis employs two different versions of the dependent variable: the total number of unique nuclear platforms (tactical and strategic) and also the number of unique strategic platforms.11 We use the strategic portfolio diversity version of the variable to assess the theories of nuclear force structure that derive from ideas of strategic nuclear deterrence. Existing studies of nuclear force structure deal almost exclusively with strategic nuclear weapons. Even the nuclear triad, an important method and framework for the diversification of force structures, contemplates largely strategic weapons. At the same time, to the extent that force structure considerations involve the deployment of tactical as well as strategic weapons, omitting tactical weapons risks biasing our results for those states with substantial tactical weapon portfolios.12

[[Begin FN 12]]

12. There exists no clear criteria by which to distinguish between strategic and tactical (also known as theater or nonstrategic) weapon systems (Kristensen 2012; Millar and Alexan- der 2003). We rely on our sources to best capture the prevailing view of analysts about particular weapon systems. Please see the data appendix for additional detail.

[[End FN 12]]

## Nouns---‘Posture’ & Variants

### Posture---General

#### Includes number of, types of, status of, and location of nukes

NATO and Russia 07 – North Atlantic Treaty Organization + the Russian Federation

“NATO-Russia Glossary of Nuclear Terms and Definitions,” NATO-Russia Council compilation, 2007, <https://www.nato.int/docu/glossary/eng-nuclear/nuc_glos-e.pdf>

nuclear posture

A term commonly used in NATO to refer to nuclear forces and related subjects such as numbers, types, locations of nuclear weapons and their associated delivery systems, as well as their operational status, including delivery-system readiness levels and weapon-storage locations. See also deterrent force (CP&MT).

### Posture---Operationalization

#### Nuclear posture is forces, organizational procedures, and doctrines that operationalize nuclear capabilities. It is distinct from declaratory policy.

Vipin Narang 13, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy, Professor of Political Science at MIT, “What Does It Take to Deter? Regional Power Nuclear Postures and International Conflict,” Journal of Conflict Resolution, vol. 57, no. 3, 06/2013, pp. 478–508

What kind of nuclear forces are enough to deter conventional conflict? International security literature evinces a pervasive ‘‘existential bias,’’ arguing that the mere possession of a small nuclear arsenal ought to deter adversaries from initiating conflict. Kenneth Waltz famously argued that nothing more than the ‘‘credibility of small deterrent forces’’ is required to establish Thomas Schelling’s ‘‘threat that leaves something to chance,’’ and ought to deter not just nuclear use but conventional attacks as well (Waltz 2002, 23; Schelling 1960). Existing quantitative work on nuclear deterrence and conflict explicitly expresses this bias by treating all nuclear states as equivalent once they acquire a single nuclear weapon. This assumes that a state with one warhead reaps the same deterrence effect as states with mature second-strike or even first-use capabilities.

Not only is this theoretically suspect, but is it empirically true? The present scholarship is inconclusive. This is largely due to the focus on the superpower experiences of the United States and the Soviet Union (Glaser 1990). As advocated by Albert Wohlstetter, Herman Kahn, and others, the superpowers developed massive nuclear arsenals to deter each other, without first answering how much was actually necessary to deter conventional conflict. Was it the tens of thousands of nuclear weapons that they oriented for first use? Or, as some Cold War theorists ultimately argued, would just a few weapons have sufficed? Decades after the advent of nuclear weapons, we still do not know, particularly because superpower development of overkill arsenals outpaced thinking on this issue.

Indeed, the superpower nuclear balance is a poor guide for analyzing the relationship between nuclear weapons and deterrence for several reasons. First, the superpowers were so much more powerful than the other states in the system that their ability to deter nonsuperpower states was overdetermined. Second, because of resource constraints and simple learning, the superpowers’ large and diverse nuclear architectures have not been, nor are likely to be, replicated by another state. Thus, the superpower deterrence equation is nearly irrelevant to all other nuclear powers. The superpower experience is therefore a methodologically and empirically unreliable guide to identifying the level of nuclear forces required to deter conflict.

However, the experiences of the regional nuclear powers—nonsuperpower states with independent nuclear forces—can provide insight into what kinds of nuclear forces are required to deter conflict. These powers developed nuclear forces of similar size (less than several hundred) and faced the constraints imposed by having to operate and maneuver below the superpowers. Unlike the superpowers, regional powers must make critical choices about how to allocate their limited nuclear forces for deterrence. And they have achieved widely different deterrence success. Pakistan has successfully deterred Indian conventional power on numerous occasions, but India has not been able to do likewise, as the 1999 Kargil war demonstrated. Nuclear Israel experienced serious deterrence failures against its Arab opponents in 1973 and 1990. Why have states with similarly sized arsenals had such differential success in deterring conventional conflict? Answering this question is of immediate theoretical and policy importance, particularly since the future proliferation landscape will, by definition, only include regional powers.

The twin problems of the ‘‘existential bias’’ and the Cold War hangover in theoretical and quantitative studies have clouded our understanding of deterrence. Indeed, the dichotomous focus on whether a state has nuclear weapons or not is a serious conceptual misspecification. This article thus attempts to advance our theoretical and empirical understanding in two ways. First, it focuses on the experiences of the regional nuclear powers, which comprise the lion’s share of existing (and all emerging) nuclear powers and provide the most fertile ground for testing theories of deterrence. Second, it shifts the unit of analysis from the mere possession of a nuclear weapon to nuclear posture: the forces, organizational procedures, and doctrines states adopt to operationalize their nuclear capabilities. I develop an original classification scheme that identifies three distinct regional power nuclear postures: catalytic, assured retaliation, and asymmetric escalation. Using this new independent variable, I statistically test whether and how variation in nuclear posture affects a state’s ability to deter conflict at various levels of intensity. This is one of the first attempts, both theoretically and empirically, to disaggregate nuclear weapons states by their nuclear postures.

I find that nuclear weapons deter unequally as a function of a state’s nuclear posture. States with different nuclear postures reap different deterrence power, because these postures pose a credible threat to adversaries at different points in a potential conflict. In particular, the asymmetric escalation posture is the only one to exert a powerful deterrent effect on the initiation and escalation of armed conflict. An assured retaliation posture has surprisingly little ability to systematically deter even high-intensity conventional conflict. And the catalytic posture has experienced serious deterrence failures, including several full-blown wars. Contrary to conventional wisdom, there is little evidence that mere possession of nuclear weapons—or even secure second-strike forces—systematically deters conventional conflict. If a state wants to deter conventional conflict, it must explicitly orient its nuclear posture to do so.

These findings have profound implications for theoretical and policy debates about deterrence and proliferation. The fact that states must do more than to simply acquire nuclear weapons to successfully deter conflict suggests to scholars and policy makers alike that the key variable of interest for stability among nuclear powers should not be acquisition of nuclear weapons, but nuclear posture. The implications for conflict and nonproliferation approaches in South Asia, the Korean peninsula, and the Middle East are significant.

This article proceeds as follows: first, I review the current thinking on nuclear deterrence, illustrating its pervasive existential bias. In the second and third sections, I outline my typology of regional power nuclear postures and present the rationale for shifting the unit of analysis to nuclear posture, hypothesizing that different postures should create different deterrence results. The subsequent sections present the empirical analysis, finding that asymmetric escalation is the uniquely ‘‘deterrence optimal’’ nuclear posture available to regional powers. I conclude with how this revises our understanding of nuclear deterrence.

Moving Beyond the Existential Bias

A dogma in security studies is that the critical threshold in a regional state’s quest for security is the acquisition of nuclear weapons. In addition to deterring nuclear attack, the mere risk of nuclear use should deter adversaries from initiating conventional attacks for fear of escalation to the nuclear level (Waltz 1981). Although the Cold War witnessed the development of massive nuclear architectures, many influential deterrence and proliferation theorists ultimately concluded that the basic existence of a nuclear weapons capability ought to provide sufficient deterrence to conventional conflict (Schelling 1966; Gaddis 1987; Jervis 1988; Mearsheimer 1984/1985).

The logic behind this ‘‘existential deterrence’’1 is that the destructive power of a single nuclear weapon is so great that conventional conflict ought to be inhibited even due to a small risk of nuclear escalation. Schelling suggests that even a plausible threat of nuclear use with a small arsenal could inhibit limited wars through the progressive ‘‘generation of risk’’ (Schelling 1960, 187–94). McGeorge Bundy writes that the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons ‘‘rests on the uncertainty about what could happen . . . deterrent power is unaffected by most changes in the arsenals on both sides’’ (Bundy 1984). Theorists like Waltz, Jervis, and Mearsheimer argue that this threshold is achieved with just a few nuclear weapons because adversaries can never be certain that a strike will fully disarm or eliminate an adversary’s capacity for nuclear retaliation (Waltz and Sagan 2002, 141–42; Jervis 1989, 35; also Waltz 1981). Waltz writes that once a state ‘‘has a small number of deliverable warheads of uncertain location . . .’’ it should be capable of deterring armed conflict (Waltz and Sagan, 2002, 142). Mearsheimer (2001, 129) similarly concludes that ‘‘there is no question . . . the presence of nuclear weapons makes states more cautious about using military force of any kind against each other.’’ In the established logic, the mere acquisition of nuclear weapons is the crucial leap to achieving security, not only against nuclear but also conventional attack.

This logic should be even more binding among regional powers. The potential speed of conventional military breakdowns in regional conflict scenarios increases the risk of rapid nuclear escalation by an imperiled state and should thus make any opponent facing a regional nuclear power extremely cautious in initiating disputes. Waltz famously writes, ‘‘Nuclear weapons lessen the intensity as well as the frequency of war among their possessors. For fear of escalation, nuclear states do not want to fight long or hard over important interests—indeed, they do not want to fight at all. Minor nuclear states have even better reasons . . . to avoid any fighting’’ (Waltz 1981, 25). Bernard Brodie (1959, 275) similarly argues that a ‘‘small menaced nation’’ required only a single nuclear weapon ‘‘to give the Soviet government pause,’’ and achieve protection against conventional threats. Particularly since the end of the Cold War, the efficacy of ‘‘existential deterrence’’ has been largely embraced and unchallenged by scholars and practitioners.

Existing empirical work, both qualitative and quantitative, expresses the existential bias by assuming that the size, structure, and orientation of nuclear arsenals are all irrelevant. For example, recent qualitative work on crisis-prone South Asia treats India and Pakistan as nuclear equivalents, even though they operationalize their nuclear forces in very different ways (Ganguly 2008; Kapur 2007, 2008; Narang 2010a). The quantitative dispute literature has analyzed large-n data sets to estimate the deterrence effects of nuclear weapons by measuring levels of conflict a state experiences pre- and postnuclearization. But the quantitative literature has several problems. First, it explicitly suffers from the existential bias by simply using a dummy variable for whether a state has nuclear weapons or not in a particular year, treating the Cold War Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) the same as post-1967 Israel (Bueno De Mesquita and Riker 1982; Huth 1988,1990; Huth and Russett 1984, 1988; Geller 1990; Bennett and Stam 2004; Signorino and Tarar 2006; Beardsley and Asal 2007, 2009; Gartzke and Jo 2009; Horowitz 2009; Rauchhaus 2009). This assumes that one nuclear weapon has the same deterrent power as ten thousand, irrespective of how they are deployed. Second, quantitative literature based on dyad-year data sets overweights the superpower experience, since they possessed nuclear weapons for the longest period, were involved in the most politically relevant conflict dyads, and had many crises with each other and by proxy. This has thus generated inconclusive results about the role of nuclear weapons in deterring conflict. For example, Bennett and Stam’s analysis of nuclear weapons and the probability of conflict is indeterminate: ‘‘While variables are statistically significant, estimated effects differ in direction across subsets and outcomes.’’ As a result they are ‘‘[u]nable to estimate key effect on war probability’’ (Bennett and Stam 2004, 112).

Furthermore, as a result of this bias, most post–Cold War theory has focused on how and why states initially acquire nuclear weapons (Sagan 1996/1997; Gartzke and Jo 2007; Singh and Way 2004). Very little has been written on the deterrence effects of choices states make after they acquire nuclear weapons. This lacuna is reinforced by another mostly unarticulated, untested assumption that nuclear postures are optimized for a state’s security environment and are therefore epiphenomenal to deterrence success. The observable implication of this assumption would be equivalent deterrence success across nuclear states, which further reinforces the ‘‘existential bias.’’

Fortunately, two simple correctives can advance our understanding of how nuclear weapons affect international conflict. First, regional nuclear powers should be analyzed as a separate class of states. I define the regional nuclear powers as the non-superpower states with independent nuclear forces: China, France, India, Israel, Pakistan, and South Africa.2 For a variety of reasons—financial, technical, and through simple learning—regional nuclear powers have chosen fundamentally different approaches to operationalizing their nuclear arsenals than the superpowers (Narang 2010b). These states developed nuclear arsenals of similar size and faced similar structural constraints and opportunities. Although substantial variation exists in aggregate powermetrics across regional nuclear powers, I posit that their similarity on key relevant dimensions—such as geostrategic situation and size of nuclear arsenal—means that we can reasonably treat them with a common analytical lens. Whereas the superpowers had fundamentally different architectures that could ‘‘do it all’’ with respect to deterrence, and had to worry about extended deterrence commitments, regional powers are forced to make critical decisions about how to allocate their much scarcer nuclear forces and toward what end. Their widely different deterrence successes make them fertile and critical testing ground for the effects of nuclear weapons on conflict. That is, the similar power metrics and arsenal sizes but varying deterrence success among regional nuclear states allows me to theorize and isolate the effects of nuclear weapons in deterring armed conflict.

The second corrective is that the unit of analysis should be shifted from nuclear weapons to nuclear posture. Nuclear posture is the overall orientation of a state’s nuclear force structure, and includes the number and type of nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles, the rules and procedures governing how and when those weapons are deployed and released, and against what targets. I thus use the term nuclear posture to refer to the capabilities, employment doctrine, and command and control procedures a state establishes to operationalize its nuclear weapons capability. It is nuclear posture, rather than warhead numbers or declaratory doctrine, which should generate deterrent power against an opponent. Numerical estimates are fraught with uncertainty, especially in real time. Moreover, marginal additional nuclear weapons should not affect an adversary’s calculations about initiating conflict absent a change in nuclear posture, particularly since states have moved away from counterforce targeting. Furthermore, because posture focuses on observable capabilities, organizational procedures and interests, and patterns of behavior that are measurable both to adversaries and analysts, posture is a more consistent indicator than declaratory doctrine (though the two may be consistent). States care more about what an adversary can do with its nuclear weapons than what it says about them.

As such, I hypothesize that it is differences in peacetime nuclear posture that generate variation in states’ ability to deter conflict. The United States’ and the Soviet Union’s various nuclear postures seemingly had differential deterrent effects during the Cold War (Freedman 2003; also see Lieber and Press 2009). Similarly, regional nuclear powers have adopted identifiable and distinct nuclear postures across a spectrum of capabilities, primary envisioned employment, and management procedures with each having different deterrent effects. By unpacking regional nuclear postures, I move beyond the existential bias to isolate what is precisely required to deter conflict with nuclear weapons. In doing so, I hope to specify which types of nuclear states, if any, are best able to deter conflict at various levels of intensity.

#### It is how nuclear capabilities---including warheads AND delivery vehicles, rules and procedures governing deployment, targeting procedures, and who has authority to decide---as distinct from declaratory policy---are integrated within the broader military structure.

Vipin Narang 14, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy, Professor of Political Science at MIT, “Introduction,” Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era: Regional Powers and International Conflict, Princeton University Press, 2014, pp. 1–12, JSTOR

I fill this vacuum in the first part of the book by analyzing the experiences of the regional nuclear powers, or the non-superpower states that have developed independent nuclear forces: China, India, Pakistan, Israel, South Africa, and France.3 I discuss these states’ choices about nuclear strategy in terms of nuclear posture. Nuclear posture is the incorporation of some number and type of nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles into a state’s overall military structure, the rules and procedures governing how those weapons are deployed, when and under what conditions they might be used, against what targets, and who has the authority to make those decisions. 4 [FOOTNOTE 4 BEGINS] 4. As a definitional aside, the focus is intended to be on a state’s observable nuclear posture as defined above, as opposed to a state’s declared nuclear doctrine. A state’s nuclear posture is essentially its peacetime nuclear orientation and procedures for deployment and signaling during crises. Because of the challenges of studying doctrines in general, and nuclear doctrines in particular—which are highly classified, often unarticulated, untested, and of questionable credibility—I have chosen to focus on a critical component of doctrine, a state’s nuclear posture, in order to gain some leverage on the questions of interest. [FOOTNOTE 4 ENDS] Nuclear posture is best thought of as the operational, rather than the declaratory, nuclear doctrine of a country; while the two can overlap, it is the operational doctrine that generates deterrent power against an opponent. To put it bluntly, states care more about what an adversary can credibly do with its nuclear weapons than what it says about them. I thus use the term “nuclear posture” to refer to the capabilities (actual nuclear forces), employment doctrine (under what conditions they might be used), and command-and- control procedures (how they are managed, deployed, and potentially released) a state establishes to operationalize its nuclear weapons capability. This can also be thought of as “nuclear strategy,” and I use these terms interchangeably with both referring to the preceding definition. As Tara Kartha colorfully put it, without a nuclear posture or strategy, “a much vaunted [nuclear] test remains simply a loud bang in the ground.”5

#### More ev. It’s capabilities, deployment patterns, and command and control procedures.

Vipin Narang 9, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy, Professor of Political Science at MIT, “Posturing for Peace? Pakistan’s Nuclear Postures and South Asian Stability,” International Security, vol. 34, no. 3, The MIT Press, 2009, pp. 38–78

Most of the proliferation literature focuses on the acquisition of nuclear weapons, viewing the ability to assemble a single functional nuclear weapon as the critical threshold in a state’s ability to deter conºict.5 The mere acquisition of nuclear devices, however, neither constitutes an operational nuclear arsenal nor produces a uniform deterrent effect.6 It is the incorporation of some number and type of nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles into a state’s overall military structure and the rules and procedures governing how those weapons are deployed, when and under what conditions they might be used, against what targets, and who has the authority to make those decisions that broadly constitute a state’s nuclear posture and that generate a specific deterrent effect. Thus, a key missing variable in the proliferation literature is a state’s nuclear posture. In this article I use the term “nuclear posture” to refer to the capabilities, deployment patterns, and command and control procedures a state uses to manage and operationalize its nuclear weapons capability.

Nuclear posture is best thought of as a state’s operational, rather than declaratory, nuclear doctrine; it is a state’s operational doctrine, or nuclear posture, that generates deterrent power against an opponent—states care more about what an adversary does with nuclear weapons than what it says about them. As such, differences in nuclear posture can generate variation in a state’s ability to deter different types and levels of conºict, as well as induce tradeoffs with respect to securely managing its nuclear arsenal.7 In the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union evolved nuclear postures to eventually establish some degree of dynamic stability between them, and various postures had differential deterrent effects.8 Similarly, regional nuclear powers9— which face systemic and domestic constraints different from those of the superpowers— have adopted varied, but identiªable, nuclear postures across a spectrum of capabilities, management procedures, and levels of transparency, with each having different deterrent effects. I identify three distinct types of regional power nuclear postures: a catalytic posture, an assured retaliation posture, and an asymmetric escalation posture.

#### Narang’s definition is ‘expansive’ but ‘defensible.’

Matthew Kroenig 15, professor in the Department of Government and the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, “Posturing the Bomb,” International Studies Review, edited by Vipin Narang, vol. 17, no. 3, [Oxford University Press, Wiley, The International Studies Association], 2015, pp. 482–484

Narang defines nuclear posture as "the incorporation of some numer and type of warheads and delivery vehicles into a state's overall military structure, the rules and procedures governing how those weapons are deployed, when and under what conditions they might be used, against what targets, and who has the authority to make those decisions" (p. 4). This expansive definition is debatable (the author grants that "nuclear strategy" could be a useful synonym), but certainly defensible. The author argues that there are three basic types of nuclear posture from which regional powers can choose: "catalytic" (possessing a minimal capability and using the threat of possible disaster in a crisis primarily to compel outside intervention on one's behalf); "assured retaliation" (deterring nuclear attack by possessing the capability to absorb a nuclear strike and respond with a devastating nuclear response); and "asymmetric escalation" (threatening to use nuclear weapons early in a crisis to deter both nuclear and conventional attack).

#### “Nuclear posture” is capabilities of the force, when and how to use them, and the command-and-control arrangements

van Hooft 21 – Senior Strategic Analyst at the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies. PhD in political science from the University of Amsterdam. Postdoctoral fellow from 2018-2020 at the Security Studies Program (SSP) of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Paul van Hooft, “The US and Extended Deterrence,” *NL ARMS Netherlands Annual Review of Military Studies: Deterrence in the 21st Century – Insights from Theory and Practice*, Springer 21, Eds. Frans Osinga and Tim Sweijs, https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-94-6265-419-8#about-this-book.

Like the other key national security texts from the Trump administration, the 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) and the 2018 National Defense Strategy,Footnote30 the 2018 NPR identifies the return of great power competition as the key challenge driving American grand strategy. The NPR specifically signals advances in missile and targeting technology, has created the need for rethinking the nuclear posture.Footnote31

[BEGIN FOOTNOTE 31] The nuclear posture can be defined as the capabilities of the nuclear force, with a doctrine for when and how to employ them, and specified control and command arrangements. [END FOOTNOTE 31]

This was primarily a response to the incredibly rapid and sustained growth of the economy of the People’s Republic of China and its growing military capabilities, reinforced by the renewed Russian belligerence exemplified by its annexation of the Crimea and invasion of Ukraine.Footnote32 The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) followed suit, distancing itself from the previous NPRs—specifically the 2010 Barrack Obama administration NPR—that assumed the prospects for military confrontation between great power had declined and would continue to do so and that the U.S. could lead in nuclear arms reduction.Footnote33 The NPR specifically notes the risks of Russia and China pursuing asymmetric ways and means to counter U.S. conventional capabilities, specifically the U.S. capabilities that make up its precision strike complex. Russia and China are developing counter-space military capabilities that undermine U.S. space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), nuclear command, control and communications (NC3), and positioning, navigation, and timing, as well as offensive cyberspace capabilities.Footnote34

#### “Nuclear posture” is the capabilities, conditions, and procedures of nuclear use – it’s also operational rather than declaratory

Narang 14 – Frank Stanton Professor of Nuclear Security and Political Science at MIT.

Vipin Narang, “Introduction,” *Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era: Regional Powers and International Conflict*, Princeton University Press 2014, non-paginated epub.

I fill this vacuum in the first part of the book by analyzing the experiences of the regional nuclear powers, or the non-superpower states that have developed independent nuclear forces: China, India, Pakistan, Israel, South Africa, and France.3 I discuss these states’ choices about nuclear strategy in terms of nuclear posture. Nuclear posture is the incorporation of some number and type of nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles into a state’s overall military structure, the rules and procedures governing how those weapons are deployed, when and under what conditions they might be used, against what targets, and who has the authority to make those decisions.4 Nuclear posture is best thought of as the operational, rather than the declaratory, nuclear doctrine of a country; while the two can overlap, it is the operational doctrine that generates deterrent power against an opponent. To put it bluntly, states care more about what an adversary can credibly do with its nuclear weapons than what it says about them. I thus use the term “nuclear posture” to refer to the capabilities (actual nuclear forces), employment doctrine (under what conditions they might be used), and command-and-control procedures (how they are managed, deployed, and potentially released) a state establishes to operationalize its nuclear weapons capability. This can also be thought of as “nuclear strategy,” and I use these terms interchangeably with both referring to the preceding definition. As Tara Kartha colorfully put it, without a nuclear posture or strategy, “a much vaunted [nuclear] test remains simply a loud bang in the ground.”5

### Posture---Includes Conditions for Use

#### It goes beyond doctrine to reach a comprehensive evaluation of when and how a state would use its capabilities.

Hyun-Binn Cho & Ariel Petrovics 22, Cho is assistant professor of political science and international studies at The College of New Jersey; Petrovics is an Assistant Research Scholar at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy, “North Korea’s Strategically Ambiguous Nuclear Posture,” The Washington Quarterly, vol. 45, no. 2, Routledge, 04/03/2022, pp. 39–58

North Korea’s growing capabilities have reinvigorated policy debate about the regime’s strategic nuclear thinking. While denuclearization remains a top priority, until North Korea dismantles its nuclear program, the question of how Pyongyang might use its newfound capabilities continues to bedevil outside observers.2 The reclusive regime has yet to declare an official nuclear doctrine, and experts are divided over how to best characterize its nuclear posture. Posture, sometimes also called nuclear strategy, goes beyond official doctrine to comprehensively evaluate when and how a state would use its nuclear weapons by assessing its technological capabilities, force structure, official statements, and broader security priorities. To be sure, discerning North Korea’s nuclear posture is fraught with the dual challenges of limited and evolving information about the “Hermit Kingdom,” but understanding the strategies of the newest nuclear-armed state is too important a task to ignore. Pyongyang’s nuclear posture will have far-reaching consequences for deterrence, crisis escalation, and the risks of nuclear proliferation in the Asia-Pacific and beyond.3

How can we best characterize North Korea’s nuclear posture, and what indicators allow us to make such an assessment? This article addresses these questions by making two contributions: presenting an updated assessment of North Korea’s nuclear posture and offering a conceptual map to better manage the uncertainty surrounding Pyongyang’s strategic nuclear thinking. First, we argue that North Korea’s nuclear posture is best described as one of strategic ambiguity—mixing features from traditionally distinct postures to generate uncertainty in its adversaries. Existing evaluations typically pigeonhole North Korea into individual boxes within traditional typologies of regional-power nuclear postures, even when there is considerable disagreement over which box fits best.4 Indeed, North Korea watchers have over time assigned the regime to every one of the available boxes within such typologies. Forcing North Korea into one box, however, belies the uncertainty surrounding the Hermit Kingdom and potentially misleads US and South Korean force planning, which must consider the risks involved in choosing the wrong box. We thus propose an alternative interpretation: Pyongyang has a de facto nuclear posture of strategic ambiguity, which relies on a mix of features from traditionally discrete postures to leverage uncertainty and optimize deterrence.

The first step to understanding this posture of strategic ambiguity is to recognize that nuclear postures traditionally serve as a signaling device. Unlike the range of possible military operations and contingencies that nuclear war-fighting strategies can cover, nuclear postures describe the state’s primary envisioned usage of nuclear weapons. [FOOTNOTE 5 BEGINS] 5 Vipin Narang, Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era: Regional Powers and International Conflict (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014). While some analysts use the term nuclear posture synonymously with nuclear strategy, we distinguish nuclear posture both from the range of nuclear war-fighting strategies that a state might contemplate and from declared nuclear doctrine. [FOOTNOTE 5 ENDS] Thus, the nuclear postures of regional nuclear powers such as China, India or Pakistan signal a high probability that these states will use nuclear weapons in a manner that is consistent with available indicators. In this regard, the credibility of nuclear postures can be a factor in managing crisis stability.

#### It includes circumstances for use AND deployment patterns. It’s interchangable with nuclear strategy or doctrine.

Cristobal M. Miranda 16, M.A. Candidate Thesis from the University of Arizona, International Security, “Towards a Balanced U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy,” The University of Arizona, 2016, ProQuest

There is an inherent and expressed tension between scholars who emphasize the continued efficacy of nuclear weapons and deterrence, and others who prioritize strengthening nuclear nonproliferation efforts, reducing the dangers of nuclear weapons, and moving towards nuclear disarmament. For example, in response to Lieber and Press’ arguments regarding a “counterforce revolution” and nuclear deterrence, Jan Lodal writes “Lieber and Press’ concept for nuclear war fighting, like all the many others before it, collapses under even the most superficial examination. It does not even address the most immediate threat: that a terrorist organization will acquire a nuclear weapon. By proposing yet another unworkable nuclear strategy, their article emphasizes that only by eliminating nuclear weapons can the world be protected from the existential threat they pose” (Lodal, 2010). In another response to Lieber and Press’ arguments, James Acton notes “the surest and best way of avoiding nuclear use is preventing nuclear proliferation… A successful nonproliferation regime requires a broad-based international consensus… creating such a consensus will require the United States to work towards a world without nuclear weapons. Devaluing nuclear weapons is an important step on this path. The further development of nuclear counterforce capabilities will only make this goal harder to achieve” (Acton, 2010). Hans Kristensen, Matthew McKinzie, and Ivan Oelrich charge that Lieber and Press’ article “‘The Nukes We Need’ is an unfortunate distraction on the path to understanding how a safer, more stable deterrent relationship with China and Russia can and should be achieved. The challenge today is not to make the use of nuclear weapons more credible. It is to reduce their salience” (Kristensen, McKinzie, & Oelrich, 2010). In response to such criticisms, Lieber and Press have stated “if analysts continue to hold a false sense of the irrelevance of nuclear weapons even as U.S. adversaries cling to them to try to keep the United States at bay – and if analysts convince enough policymakers to do the same – there is a real danger the United States could stumble into a nuclear war… Unfortunately, many contemporary nuclear analysts, policy advocates, and policymakers seek to minimize discussion about nuclear weapons and simply assert that nuclear weapons are not particularly useful in the twenty-first century. That is a dangerous approach” (Lieber & Press, 2013, p. 10-12).

While in one sense maintaining a nuclear deterrent force in perpetuity is in inherent conflict with the notion of a distant future involving complete nuclear disarmament, in another sense one can view contemporary deterrence, nonproliferation, and disarmament efforts as potentially complementary and linked since each of these objectives share the overarching goal of preventing the future use of nuclear weapons (Ferguson, Perry & Scowcroft, 2009, p. 93). Efforts by nuclear states to pursue nuclear disarmament, even though such efforts do not yet produce complete disarmament and deterrent forces continue to exist, can engender some international support to nonproliferation policies (Knopf, 2012/2013, p. 94). A middle approach may be possible where nuclear states seek to balance the goals and benefits of nuclear deterrence with nuclear nonproliferation efforts and the long-term vision of nuclear disarmament. Such a balanced approach could also reduce, but not eliminate, some of the inherent dangers of nuclear weapons (Goldstein, 2000, p. 278, 296-298; Hagerty, 1998, p. 37). Timing is a key variable that allows for this middle or balanced approach; nuclear deterrence relationships exist today and can be maintained for the foreseeable future given that the timeline for global nuclear disarmament is decidedly long-term and uncertain. The challenge in the coming years and decades is to shape nuclear deterrence relationships in ways that are conducive to allowing for the future possibility of nuclear disarmament. The following sections of this chapter will develop a “nuclear balance” theoretical model, focusing on how a state can develop a nuclear weapons policy involving nuclear posture and force structure that ensures strategic deterrence and stability while also supporting nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament policies. For the purposes of this theoretical model, the term “nuclear posture” refers primarily to the circumstances in which a state might choose to use nuclear weapons, as well as the deployment patterns of nuclear forces and potential targets; the term “force structure” refers to the size and characteristics of a state’s nuclear deterrent. The terms “nuclear strategy” and “nuclear doctrine” are used interchangeably with nuclear posture. This theory recognizes that the current international nuclear environment is more complex than the bilateral nature of the Cold War nuclear rivalry. Contemporary nuclear states face a dynamic and interconnected set of deterrence relationships that feeds a “security trilemma where actions taken by a state to defend against another state have the effect of making a third state feel insecure. Due to the trilemma, changes in one state’s nuclear posture or policy can have a cascading effect on the other nuclear-armed states” (Koblentz, 2014, p. 3). While the “security trilemma” is a challenge to international security, it also provides a potential opportunity for a given nuclear state to positively influence the evolving nuclear landscape (Koblentz, 2014, p. 31). The nuclear balance theoretical model is realist at its core in that it assumes that the international system will remain an anarchic environment where independent states are primarily responsible for their own security. This model draws upon both defensive and offensive realism. From defensive realism, it adopts the notion of the deterrent utility of small nuclear forces (Waltz, 2013; Glaser, 1998). From the offensive realist school of thought, it emphasizes the notion that nuclear forces, regardless of size, must be modern, flexible, and survivable in order to maintain an effective deterrent (Lieber & Press, 2013; Lieber & Press, 2013, January; Mearsheimer, 2014, p. 227-232). The nuclear balance model also takes into account the dangers of nuclear weapons as derived from organization theory and other dangers such as nuclear terrorism, as well as recognizes the existence of international nuclear norms that support the nonproliferation regime (Sagan, 2013). In a general sense, this theoretical model is consistent with the concept of “analytic eclecticism,” described by Sil and Katzenstein as “an intellectual stance that supports efforts to complement, engage, and selectively utilize theoretical constructs embedded in contending research traditions to build complex arguments that bear on substantive problems of interest to both scholars and practitioners” (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010, p. 411; Paul, 2009, p. 2). While the nuclear balance model is most relevant for NPT-recognized nuclear weapon states given their Article VI legal commitment to eventually disarm, it is possible that any nuclear-armed state could follow such a balanced nuclear weapons policy.

### Posture---Includes Conditions for Use---NFU

#### Nuclear posture includes NFU.

The Hindu Editorial Board 22, “India’s nuclear policy reflects past ideology,” The Hindu, 7/2/22, https://chahalacademy.com/current-affairs/02-Jul-2022/893

The Nuclear Doctrine of India:

The Nuclear Doctrine of India is based on the premise that it will only use nuclear weapons in retaliation for another country's attempt to use nuclear weapons against India, its states, or its army. Without joining the Non-Proliferation Treaty, India became the first country to develop nuclear power. The Doctrine Treaty of India is built on the following pillars:

Establishing and sustaining a credible minimum deterrent.

A "No First Use" nuclear posture means that nuclear weapons will only be deployed in response for a nuclear strike on Indian territory or Indian forces elsewhere;

Nuclear response for a first strike will be huge and aimed to do irreparable harm.

Only the civilian political leadership, through the Nuclear Command Authority, may sanction nuclear retaliation attacks.

Non-use of nuclear weapons against governments that do not possess nuclear weapons;

However, in the case of a massive biological or chemical assault on India or Indian forces anywhere, India will maintain the option of retaliating using nuclear weapons.

The continuation of rigorous limits on the export of nuclear and missile-related materials and technologies, participation in the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty discussions, and adherence to the nuclear test moratorium.

Persistence in the pursuit of a nuclear-weapon-free world through comprehensive, verifiable, and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear Command Authority (NCA)- On January 4, 2003, India formed a three-tier Nuclear Command Authority (NCA) to manage its nuclear weapons.

### Posture---Excludes Conditions for Use

#### Nuclear posture is the ‘hardware’ side of nuclear strategy, including nuclear capability and nuclear force configuration. Governing principles for the use of nuclear weapons, as well as conditions for their use, are ‘software’, and are called nuclear doctrine.

Jun Bong-geun 16, Professor, Dept. of National Security and Unification Studies, “An Analysis of North Korean Nuclear Doctrines and Its Implications,” IFANS Focus, IF 2016-55E, 07/27/2016, https://preview.kstudy.com/W\_files/kiss9/5n000183\_pv.pdf

This paper aims to analyze and evaluate North Korea’s nuclear strategies, especially the principles and conditions for the use of nuclear weapons, or ‘nuclear doctrine,’ that have appeared in a variety of its laws and statements, and to predict the direction of its nuclear weapons development program and draw implications for our North Korea policies.

‘Nuclear strategy’ widely refers to a state’s deployment and use of nuclear weapons for political and military purposes, and it constitutes part of the state’s broader military and security strategy. Nuclear strategy consists of nuclear capability, nuclear force configuration, and the like on the hardware side, as represented by the term ‘nuclear posture,’ and governing principles for the use of nuclear weapons on the software side, namely, nuclear doctrine. This paper focuses on the analysis of the latter.

### Posture---Excludes Info-Gathering

#### It exlucdes the information processing architecture surrounding nuclear weapons in favor of a focus on weapons alone.

Paul Bracken 16, Professor of Management and Political Science at Yale University, “The Cyber Threat to Nuclear Stability,” Orbis, vol. 60, no. 2, 2016, pp. 188–203

Strategic Postures

A strategic framework rather than a predictive academic theory is the first requirement for any coherent discussion about nuclear weapons. Without it a debate about strategy and modernization, biases and politics lacking the rational context that serious policy research demands will dominate. Any real problem—modernizing the U.S. nuclear posture, countering China, dealing with North Korea—will be so complex that predictive academic theories are unlikely to be of much use. While a good strategy requires such a framework, it must be tempered by details that are specific to context, country, and time frame.

One such framework was developed in the Cold War and offers insights into the dynamics of a second nuclear age. This nearly forgotten framework was called “max-min,” and it defined a strategic posture in terms of two factors: accuracy and search.1 Accuracy describes how close to its target a system can deliver a warhead. Accuracy is measured in terms of “circular probable error” (CEP), defined as the radius of a circle, centered on the target, within which 50 percent of the warheads are expected to land. A smaller CEP indicates greater accuracy. While the Cold War framework focused on nuclear warheads, the concept applies to conventional precision weapons as well, since they are also capable of destroying non-hardened nuclear targets.

Search is defined as the time it takes to fix a target’s location, measured in hours or days. A surrogate measure of search is the amount of money put into programs and technology. For example, the dollars invested in the U-2 reconnaissance program, anti-submarine warfare (ASW) assets and spy satellites were also measures of search.

Analysts have understood the significance of breakthroughs in accuracy for some time.2 These are the backbone of the precision strike revolution. What is not appreciated yet is that a revolution in search technology in recent years promises to have an equally large impact.

The term “max-min” arises from the idea that in a first strike nuclear attack, the attacker attempts to minimize retaliation while the second striker attempts to maximize the retaliatory blow. When the theory was first developed in the mid-1960s, U.S. policymakers assumed that the Soviet Union would strike first and that the United States would retaliate.

It is important to understand that the two strikes occur sequentially. The order of moves matters. If it changes (e.g., the United States strikes first), so do the results. Therefore, max-min 􀂏 min-max, as in the mini-max theorem of game theory. Thus, this is not game theory. There is no definition of game theory’s mixed strategies, so bluffing analogies with poker—central to game theory analyses of nuclear strategy—do not exist here.3 Max-min deals with long-term competition rather than short-run moves. The time frame of the max-min analysis is thus closer to net assessment.4 The focus is on multi-year efforts to build a strategic posture after analyzing what one’s opponent has chosen. The “moves” are investments in intelligence systems such as ASW, satellites, and other search technologies; and weapons, such as fixed and mobile missiles, bombers, and submarines. Because all of this includes the information processing architecture, as well as nuclear weapons, a better name is “strategic posture.” The term “nuclear posture” is reserved for the weapons alone.

### Posture---Nine Elemnts

#### “Nuclear posture” includes nine elements, and excludes things like missile defense and non-nuclear capabilities

Perry & Schlesinger 9 --- Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States

William J, James R, 2009, “America’s Strategic Posture,” The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/strat\_posture\_report\_adv\_copy.pdf

It is important to begin here with a definition. The nuclear posture consists of the following elements:

1. The arsenal of operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons.

2. The arsenal of forward-deployed tactical nuclear weapons.

3. The triad of strategic nuclear delivery systems (land-based missiles, sea-based missiles, and bombers).

4. The delivery systems for forward-deployed systems (including both submarine-launched cruise missiles and aircraft equipped to carry both conventional and nuclear payloads, called dual-capable aircraft).

5. The stockpile of warheads held in operational reserve.

6. A stockpile of fissile material appropriate for use in warheads.

7. The associated command, control, and intelligence systems.

8. The infrastructure associated with the production of all of these capabilities, without which the force will not remain viable, both physical and human.

9. Declaratory policy specifying the role of nuclear forces in U.S. military and national security strategies.

### Posture---NPR Context

#### The role of nuclear weapons in U.S. security strategy

DoD 95, “Nuclear Posture Review,” Department of Defense, 1995, accessed via WebArchive, https://web.archive.org/web/20090806232307/http://www.dod.mil/execsec/adr95/npr\_.html

The Nuclear Posture Review was chartered in October 1993 to determine what the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. security strategy should be. A 10-month DoD collaborative effort, the NPR was co-chaired by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the Joint Staff. Working groups were comprised of representatives from OSD, the Joint Staff, the Services, and the unified commands. The Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff reviewed and directed the progress of the NPR through issue briefs and the development of a final report, which was presented to the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Some decisions relating to the NPR were raised through the interagency process, including all relevant agencies of the U.S. government, which had the opportunity to review a wide range of options. The President approved the recommendations of the NPR on September 18, 1994.

#### The above definition is cited in academic work.

Joanna Spear 11, Research Professor of International Affairs at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University and Director of the FAO Regional Skill Sustainment Initiative, “More Business as Usual? The Obama Administration and the Nuclear Posture Review,” Contemporary Security Policy, vol. 32, no. 1, 04/2011, pp. 241–263

The Executive Branch had previously completed two Nuclear Posture Reviews, in 1994 and 2002. The Nuclear Posture Review is a systematic process to ‘determine what the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. security strategy should be’.60 [FOOTNOTE 60 BEGINS] 60. US Department of Defense, The Nuclear Posture Review (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 1995), at: http://www.dod.mil/execsec/adr95/npr\_.html [FOOTNOTE 60 ENDS] The 2002 NPR had also explicitly discussed options for using nuclear weapons against seven countries. Although a classified document the 2002 NPR was widely leaked and this caused many diplomatic problems for the Bush Administration.

#### It is the role of nuclear weapons in the US arsenal.

Rachel Elizabeth Whitlark 19, political scientist and assistant professor of international affairs at the Georgia Institute of Technology, “Should Presidential Command over Nuclear Launch Have Limitations? In a Word, No.,” Texas National Security Review, Vol. 2, No. 3, May 2019, 2576-1153

It is also worth mentioning that there are some relevant policies already in place, including specifications of the circumstances under which the United States will use nuclear weapons. According to the Defense Department’s 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, 22 [FOOTNOTE 22 BEGINS] 22 The nuclear posture review is the Department of Defense’s process to determine what role nuclear weapons should have in the U.S. arsenal. Reviews generally happen with each new presidential administration or quadrennially. The 2018 document is accessible here: Nuclear Posture Review, Department of Defense, February 2018, https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872886/-1/-1/1/2018-NUCLEAR-POSTURE-REVIEWFINAL-REPORT.PDF. [FOOTNOTE 22 ENDS] nuclear use is circumscribed for all but the most extreme circumstances to defend U.S. vital interests. It articulates that deterrence is the sole purpose of nuclear weapons, and pledges to augment the conventional capabilities the United States will use in combat. Moreover, the document articulates negative security assurances, commitments not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states in good standing with their Nuclear NonProliferation Treaty obligations. President Barack Obama pledged this commitment and Trump has reaffirmed it.

#### Role of nuclear weapons in national security

Allison B. Bawden 20, Director, Natural Resources and Environment, GAO, “NUCLEAR WEAPONS: NNSA Needs to Incorporate Additional Management Controls Over Its Microelectronics Activities,” GAO, June 2020, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1156500.pdf

According to the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, the United States will pursue initiatives to ensure a continued capability to develop and produce microelectronics beyond 2025.7 [FOOTNOTE 7 BEGINS] 7Department of Defense, Nuclear Posture Review, (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 2018). The Nuclear Posture Review is produced periodically and describes presidential policy on the role of nuclear weapons in national security. [FOOTNOTE 7 ENDS] Currently, NNSA plans to begin production after 2025 for three nuclear weapon modernization programs, and microelectronics will be needed for those programs.8 Historically, NNSA’s weapon modernization programs have been life extension programs (LEPs), which refurbish or replace nuclear weapons components to, among other things, extend the lives of these weapons and enhance the safety and security of the stockpile. However, NNSA is moving into an era in which its weapon modernization programs will also include weapon modification programs and potentially new acquisitions.

#### The scope of the NPR includes US nuclear policy, strategy, capabilities, and force posture.

Chan Kim 18, Korea Institute of Nuclear Nonproliferation and Control(KINAC) Policy Research Division, Center for Strategic Policy and Research, “Comparison Analysis on 2010 and 2018 NPR : Changes in Trend of Nonproliferation and Its Implications,” Transactions of the Korean Nuclear Society Spring Meeting, 05/18/2018, pp. 1–3, https://www.kns.org/files/pre\_paper/39/18S-279%EA%B9%80%EC%B0%AC.pdf

The Nuclear Posture Review is a legislatively-mandated review that that establishes U.S. nuclear policy, strategy, capabilities, and force posture [1], which is presented every 8 year. The first NPR was published in 1994, so the recent 2018 NPR is the fourth one of the series. Based on NPR, the strategic policy for U.S. national security from 5 to 10 years and the relevant budget is allocated.

#### It's comprehensive.

Maj. Jon M. Fontenot 95, Major, United States Air Force, “A New Era: From SAC to STRATCOM,” 5/23/95, https://spp.fas.org/eprint/fontenot.htm

Background: The Strategic Air Command (SAC) was created on March 21, 1946 and assigned the mission of deterring aggression through "long range offensive operations in any part of the world" and "maximum range reconnaissance over land or sea". During the first year, SAC's personnel loss was 63 percent and aircraft loss was 78 percent; the losses were due to the demobilization after World War II. But during the next two years, SAC's personnel and aircraft gains helped establish the command. When General Curtis E. LeMay became SAC's third commander, the morale in the command was low. But General LeMay would change the attitude in the command and make the command one of the elite places to work. During his tenure (almost nine years), General LeMay instituted a strenuous training program to make all units combat ready. SAC was very good at its job, but unexpectedly the threat was over--the Warsaw Pact was gone, the Berlin Wall fell, and the Soviet Union dissolved into independent states. General Butler was the chief architect with dissolving SAC and the start-up of the United States Strategic Command (STRATCOM). He worked very closely with General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on the roles and missions and structure of STRATCOM. The only question was when would the change take place. STRATCOM took over the same mission of SAC, but with one twist. STRATCOM has authority over all nuclear weapons. The future for STRATCOM depends on two items: the Nuclear Posture Review and the restructure of the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP). The Nuclear Posture Review is a comprehensive look at the nations nuclear weapons and how the nation employs them. While SIOP is the means to employ the weapons, the planning takes 18 months. STRATCOM knew this was too long and developed a plan to reduce the time from 18 to 6 months (adaptive force planning).

#### It looks at all nuclear requirements.

Leonard S. Spector 1, Deputy Director of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies and Editor-in-Chief of the Center's Publications, interview with Ambassador Robert G Joseph, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Proliferation Strategies, Counterproliferation, and Homeland Defense, U.S. National Security Council Staff, “Interview with Ambassador Robert G. Joseph, U.S. National Security Council Staff,” The Nonproliferation Review, vol. 8, no. 3, 09/2001, pp. 1–10

NPR: There have been discussions of the need for a two-tiered deterrent system, in order to deter Third World states on the one hand, and Russia and China on the other. In this view, smaller nuclear weapons might be needed for bunker busting, or to act as a more credible deterrent against smaller nations that might threaten us, while larger weapons would continue to act as general deterrents. Has the administration actively looked at the idea of developing smaller yield nuclear weapons to meet this kind of challenge?

Joseph: The Nuclear Posture Review is looking at all of our nuclear requirements. That said, I do not hear anyone in the administration advocating the testing of new nuclear weapons, or of any nuclear tests for that matter. The president has said that he supports the moratorium on testing.

#### It considers all ‘force structure options.’

Steven F. Kuhta et al. 94, Steven F. Kuhta, Carol L. Kolarik, Samuel N. Cox, and Daniel C. Hoagland are with the National Security and International Affairs Division, Washington D.C.; James F. Dinwiddie and James D. Nolan are with the Los Angeles Regional Office, all at the GAO, “Reductions to MK-6 Guidance System Inventory Objectives May Be Possible,” 1994, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA283196.pdf \*\*apologies for the argle bargle in the text, the OCR quality on this document is very low---underlined chunk is manually verified and can be found on page 25 of the document\*\*

RCOMMUNDATION I: The GAO recommended that the Secetary of Defense consider whether some slight reductions in Cold War-based operatiosa readiness and reliability goals are acceptable. (p. 7/GAO Draft Report)

DeD RESPONSE: Partialy cancur. The DoD will utiate a study to determine whether reductions in eisgti operational readiness and reliability goals are acceptable. That study will be coniplated in time to support the FY 1996 budget submission. The on-going DoD Nuclea Posture Review a reviewiag the correa strategic muclea force structure. The Nuclear Postue Review is exuinmmnin operational readiness and relibility goals as a pant of determining the overall brore structure. The Nuclear Posture Review is considering all force structure options to ensure that the DoD-proposed strategic force structure will provide the optimum balance of strategic readiness and deterrence versus cost. The determination by the Nuclear Posture Review on subinarine-lunched ballistic missile force structure is expected in time to support the FY 1995 buge cyl

#### But BMD is separate.

Justin Doubleday 18, Staff writer at Inside Defense, “Hyten: DOD Taking ‘Way Too Long’ to Develop Space-Based Sensor,” Inside the Pentagon, vol. 34, no. 9, Inside Washington Publishers, 2018, pp. 1–11

The four-star also argued the Nuclear Posture Review and the Missile Defense Review should be integrated to better reflect “21st century deterrence.”

“Everything that’s in the document, I support,” Hyten said of the NPR. “The only problem I have with the Nuclear Posture Review is the Missile Defense Review is a separate document. When I look at strategic deterrence in the 21st century, it’s a combination of all our capabilities, and right up front is offense and defense.”

#### The NPR is declaratory. This doesn’t necessarily mean nuclear posture is itself declaratory, rather that the NPR declares nuclear posture.

John Ramming Chappell 21, joint J.D. and M.S. in Foreign Service candidate, 2023, at Georgetown University, “President of the United States, Destroyer of Worlds: Considering Congress’s Authority to Enact a Nuclear No-First-Use Law,” National Security Law Brief, vol. 12, no. 2, 2022/2021, pp. 45–83

The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review describes the current U.S. declaratory policy,31 [FOOTNOTE 31 BEGINS] 3 The Nuclear Posture Review is the chief expression of U.S. nuclear policy. Declaratory policy is a set of public statements regarding the circumstances under which a state would consider using nuclear weapons. See generaly, GEORGE PERKOVICH & PRANAY VADDI, PROPORTIONATE DETERRENCE: A MODEL NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW 1, 31-32 (2021). [FOOTNOTE 31 ENDS] ruling out a no-first-use pledge in order to maintain deterrence against non-nuclear attacks.32 U.S. declaratory policy precludes using nuclear weapons against "states that are party to the [Non-Proliferation Treaty] and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations."" The Nuclear Posture Review states that the United States would consider using nuclear weapons in response to "attacks on the U.S., allied, or partner civilian population or infrastructure, and attacks on U.S. or allied nuclear forces, their command and control, or warning and attack assessment capabilities.""

## Nouns---‘Role’

### “Role”

#### The “role” of nuclear weapons is the circumstances that justify nuclear use

Murdock et al 13 – Senior advisor at CSIS; PhD from the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

Clark A. Murdock (Study Director), Stephanie Spies and John K. Warden (Authors), “Forging a Consensus for a Sustainable U.S. Nuclear Posture,” A Report of the CSIS Nuclear Consensus Working Group, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, April 2013, pp. 49, https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy\_files/files/publication/130422\_Spies\_ForgingConsensus\_Web.pdf.

How could the “role” of nuclear weapons be defined? One measure of the role of nuclear weapons is the type and scale of threats that states claim would justify use of nuclear weapons. Where among the rungs of military capability and doctrine does nuclear use figure, and under what conditions?

#### It means removing the requirements for nukes to perform certain functions

Mount 21 – Senior Fellow and Director of the Defense Posture Project at the Federation of American Scientists. PhD and M.A. from Georgetown University.

Adam Mount, “What is the Sole Purpose of U.S. Nuclear Weapons,” *Federation of American Scientists*, 2021, pp. 15, http://uploads.fas.org/2021/08/25092950/FAS-SPNW.pdf.

Did President Biden intend sole purpose to affect the functions of nuclear weapons or only the types of attacks they might respond to? Without more information, it is not possible to know for certain. It is worth noting his emphasis on the need to “reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy” in the interim national security guidance and Secretary of State Blinken’s statement that the next nuclear policy review will “look at how we can continue to reduce reliance in the role of nuclear weapons in our strategy.”25 It is also worth noting Biden’s comment that W76-2 is a “bad idea” because a president might be “more inclined to use them,” which is a general statement about US reliance on a weapon designed to reduce reliance on nonnuclear response options, and not a statement about the need to respond to specific types of contingencies. The role of nuclear weapons is not primarily to deter chemical and biological weapons. In order to significantly reduce the role of nuclear weapons, or to reduce the country’s reliance on nuclear weapons, the president should have to remove the requirement for nuclear weapons to perform certain functions.

### Role = Deterrence

#### Role refers to the typical function performed by something

Oxford English Dictionary, 89 (online, at Emory)

role

**b.** The typical or characteristic function performed by someone or something; freq. in phr. ***to play a role***.

#### For nuclear weapons, this is deterrence

Alagappa, 07 - Distinguished Senior Fellow at East-West Center, Honolulu, HI (Muthiah, “Nuclear Weapons and Security in 21st Century Asia: Deterrence Dominance and Stability,” 10/24, http://aparc.stanford.edu/events/nuclear\_weapons\_and\_security\_in\_21st\_century\_asia\_deterrence\_dominance\_and\_stability/)

Nuclear weapons play a modest but significant role in the national security strategies of key states in the Asian security region. Relevant in a small number of situations and augmenting conventional forces, their role is frequently indirect. The primary role of nuclear weapons is basic or central deterrence.

#### Restricting the role requires restricting the range of weapons that nuclear weapons can be used to deter

Huntley et al, 04 **–** Program Director for the Simons Centre for Disarmament and Nonprolifertion Research at the University of British Columbia (Wade, Nuclear Disarmament in the Twenty-first Century, p. 381)

To restrict the role of nuclear weapons to deterrence against the use of nuclear weapons would decrease the political and military implications of nuclear weapons. This measure is very important as a first step to promote nuclear disarmament. Under the current nuclear doctrine of the U.S. and NATO, nuclear weapons have a function to deter the use of chemical and biological weapons as well as conventional weapons. In order to avoid the use of chemical and biological weapons, we should work hard to ensure the universality and effectiveness of the Chemical Weapon Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. Given that all five nuclear-weapon states are parties to both conventions, a no-first-use pledge should be made among the five states first and foremost.

Negative security assurances that ensure the non-use or the threat to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states have been discussed in connection with the NPT. Since the end of the 1970s, nuclear-weapon states have declared conditional negative security assurances as a political commitment. Just before the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the U.S., the U.K., France and Russia announced a joint declaration on conditional negative security assurances and China declared unconditional negative security assurances.

It seems to be natural to promise not to use nuclear weapons to non-nuclear-weapon states that legally abandon the option of nuclear weapons. It cannot be denied that these political declarations have been playing an important role as an international norm. However, the nuclear-weapon states should move to adopt a legally binding document on negative security assurances.

#### Restricting the role means limiting the scope of deterrence

Panofsky, 97 - Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (Emeritus) (Wolfgang, Post-Cold War Conflict Deterrence (1997), Commission on Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Applications (CPSMA), p. 112)

Restricting the role of U.S. nuclear forces to the core role would make the threat of U.S. nuclear retaliation against nuclear aggression by others more credible by not diluting the mission with other, less credible, deterrent roles. Thus under such a clear policy, U.S. forces would exert larger leverage against nuclear proliferation by making it clear that such proliferation would result in intolerable risks to the proliferant. • Restriction of U.S. nuclear weapons to the core function would go a long way to satisfy U.S. critics that the obligations under Article VI of the NPT are being met by decreasing the use of nuclear weapons as tools of international diplomacy and by permitting much more drastic reductions of nuclear forces than those inherent in present commitments. It could be viewed to meet obligations of Article VI as a step toward eventual elimination of nuclear weapons in a future era where possession of such weapons by other powers is no longer plausible. If the core function remains the only justifiable role of U.S. nuclear weapons, the question continues to resurface whether this fact should be recognized by declaratory policy or merely be implemented by such actions as reduced numbers of nuclear weapons, elimination of tactical nuclear forces, reduced quick response readiness, improved survivability, and more robust command and control. Restricting the nuclear role to respond to nuclear threats only is de facto equivalent to a "no first use" policy which used to be advocated by the then Soviet Union, but has been withdrawn recently by Russia but is still proclaimed by China. A declaratory no first use policy has been so much used and abused in past propaganda by various nations that a similar proclamation by the United States would lack credibility. Moreover such a restriction could not be binding in case of war at any rate and therefore has limited operational significance in itself. Therefore a pragmatic shift in nuclear weapons deployments corresponding to the core function only is superior to a proclaimed policy. The summary conclusion of these considerations is that the role of nuclear weapons to deter the use or threat of use of nuclear attack by other nations continues to have at least as much validity today as it had during the Cold War but that it should be their only mission. Although no strategy can assure that nuclear weapons will never by used again, such a highly limited role offers the maximum leverage toward avoidance of nuclear conflict and toward a worldwide decrease in nuclear weapons inventories. Deterrence of nonnuclear conflict should be separated as much as possible from the goal of deterrence of nuclear war.

#### The roles of Nuclear Arsenal are to deter WMD attacks, deter conventional attacks, and support deterrence

BODMAN & GATES 08 Secretary of Energy & Secretary of Defense for Bush

[Samuel W. Bodman & Robert M. Gates, National Security and Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century, September, http://www.defenselink.mil/news/nuclearweaponspolicy.pdf]

Within this more flexible portfolio, nuclear weapons are less prominent, but the rolesthey play continue to be vital. The policies of successive U.S. administrations have shown a marked continuity in the purposes assigned to nuclear forces. U.S. nuclear forces have served, and continue to serve, to: 1) deter acts of aggression involving nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction; 2) help deter, in concert withgeneral-purpose forces, major conventional attacks; and 3) support deterrence by holdingat risk key targets that cannot be threatened effectively by non-nuclear weapons. Becauseof their immense destructive power, nuclear weapons, as recognized in the 2006 NationalSecurity Strategy, deter in a way that simply cannot be duplicated by other weapons.

#### the nuclear arsenal has three deterrent roles – counter a nuclear attack, a CBW attack, and defend against an overwhelming conventional attack

KIMBALL 09 ACA Director

[Daryl Kimball, What Are Nuclear Weapons For? Reassessing and Reducing the Role of Nuclear Weapons in 21st Century U.S. Security Policy, http://www.armscontrol.org/print/3779]

Unfortunately, even after two post-Cold War Nuclear Posture Reviews, the United States still has a nuclear force posture that calls for fewer operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons but still essentially **retains the same basic roles** and retains all of the essential characteristics it had during the Cold War. Current doctrine calls for:

\* a nuclear arsenal and readiness posture capable of delivering a devastating counterforce attack against Russia, China, and other potential regional nuclear-armed foes.

\* the possible use of nuclear weapons to defend U.S. forces and allies against massive conventional military attacks; and

\* the possible use of nuclear weapons to counter suspected chemical or biological weapons threats.

#### The role of nuclear weapons is deterrence

Thakur, 02 – director of the Peace and Governance Program at United Nations University (Ramesh, “The role of nuclear weapons is deterrence” The Japan Times, May, http://update.unu.edu/archive/issue16\_9.htm)

The role of nuclear weapons is deterrence

How do we justify the paradox of using a weapon of mass destruction to stop others from acquiring them?

The United States has the largest and most powerful arsenal of nuclear weapons in the world. The Sept. 11 tragedy concentrated its mind on the dangers of terrorist attacks using biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, and on the need for pre-emptive strikes as a form of active defense if credible evidence exists that such attacks are planned.

America emerged from the Sept. 11 attacks a nation inflamed, a nation enraged, but also a nation aroused. The tragedy inflicted on the American body politic a pain that will not sleep, and aroused an anger in the Bush administration that will not easily be appeased.

The world grieved with America, understood its pain, shared its anger, and generally supported the ensuing "war on terrorism." This sympathy and goodwill is in danger of being dissipated due to two sets of anxieties.

On the one hand, it has been nothing short of a revelation to realize just how many governments have been engaged in waging their own wars on terrorism, rather than using the opportunity to suppress opponents, dissenters and other assorted troublemakers in their midst.

On the other hand, there is growing international unease that the Bush administration is changing the war's agenda in order to deal with unfinished business in Iraq and Somalia. This is made possible by the military successes in Afghanistan, which were based on long-distance, over-the-horizon warfare utilizing unmatched technological advances and local warrior allies. The U.S. can do today what was not within its grasp in earlier times. In the Persian Gulf, Kosovo and Afghanistan wars, it was the critics who turned out to be still fighting the last war; the generals had moved decisively and brilliantly to preparing for the next one.

The series of public policy speeches and pronouncements, combined with curiously timed leaks, reveal a pattern of preparing the political ground for a military offensive against Iraq in the foreseeable future. More worryingly, they suggest the possibility of nuclear weapons being used as a last resort, or even earlier as the weapon of choice to launch clinically effective strikes.

In his State of the Union address in January, President George W. Bush declared that an Iraq-Iran-North Korea "axis of evil" threatened the peace and welfare of the world. He insisted that the U.S. would not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to acquire the world's most destructive weapons. The language and the message was repeated during his East Asian tour in February. And now we have the leak of the Nuclear Posture Review, which identifies countries against whom contingency plans have been drawn for the use of nuclear weapons.

The constant reference in recent weeks to the risks posed to America from weapons of mass destruction, or WMD, may well comprise part of the political-psychological strategy of making the use of nuclear weapons more acceptable to American public opinion. Language is not always neutral, and often contains powerful codes of permissible and impermissible behavior. The fact that nuclear weapons have not been used since 1945 in itself contains one of the most powerful taboos against their use today.

The effort to expand the role of nuclear weapons as a counter to the development or acquisition of WMD by "rogue states" (or those comprising the axis of evil) is a threat to arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation. It is not clear that biological, chemical and nuclear weapons belong in one conceptual category.

Looking at the long-lasting and particularly traumatic conflicts in Africa and Asia (Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone), it is also clear that the real WMD are small arms and land mines. Light arms are the weapons of choice in these types of conflict because they are inexpensive, extremely user-friendly, easy to conceal and smuggle across borders, rugged and durable, easy to dismantle and reassemble -- and extremely lethal.

In a provocative essay (Foreign Affairs, May/June 1999), John Mueller and Karl Mueller argued that sanctions caused more deaths in the 20th century than all WMD throughout history.

The justification of nuclear weapons as the weapon to counter WMD, if accepted in one case, could be claimed by others interested in acquiring nuclear weapons -- especially if they had suffered the threat or use of biochemical weapons. Abolitionists never accepted the justification for nuclear weapons. In the past, even advocates for the utility of nuclear weapons restricted their role to deterring and countering only nuclear weapons. The language of WMD is designed to justify an expansion in the role of nuclear weapon doctrines from countering nuclear to biological and chemical weapons as well.

The legitimization of nuclear weapons as usable against biochemical threats would thus have grave consequences for nuclear nonproliferation. It would be contrary to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and its associated declarations and promises. It is hard to see how a dramatic deterioration of international security could contribute to an enhancement of any country's national security.

#### The only role is to threaten retaliation

The Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, 96 (“The Nuclear Weapon Debate,” http://www.dfat.gov.au/cc/cc\_report2.html

In the post-Cold War world the only conceivable residual role of nuclear weapons is to pose a threat of retaliation against nuclear aggression. It follows that a joint no-first use undertaking would be at no strategic cost to the nuclear weapon states. Indeed as a significant confidence building measure it would in fact enhance their security.  
As one of the immediate steps, the nuclear weapon states should agree and state that they would not be the first to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against each other and that they would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons in any conflict with a non-nuclear weapon state. The Commission considers that such an agreement should be brought into operation as soon as possible.

#### 3 deterrent roles of the arsenal – preserve peace, specific military goals, and nuclear umbrella

BAILEY et al 07 Senior Associate at the National Institute for Public Policy and is a member of the U.S. Department of State International Security Advisory Board

[Kathleen C. Bailey, Robert G. Joseph, Gordon C. Oehler, Keith B. Payne, Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Charles S. Robb, C. Paul Robinson, James R. Schlesinger, William Schneider Jr., William Van Cleave, R. James Woolsey, “White Paper On The Necessity of the U.S. Nuclear Deterrent,” http://www.nipp.org/Publication/Downloads/Publication%20Archive%20PDF/Deterrence%20Paper%20-%20version%202.pdf]

The U.S. nuclear arsenal plays three distinct but interrelated roles that presently cannot be fulfilled by any other type of weapon. First, the fundamental purpose of U.S. nuclear forces is political: to preserve peace, prevent coercion, and achieve our national objectives without use of military force. U.S. nuclear weapons help deter attacks from adversaries using all types of weapons of mass destruction. In other words, our objective is to use nuclear weapons politically to prevent our having to use military force. To be effective politically, our weapons must be appropriate to the threat, and the United States must be perceived as having both the will and the capability to employ nuclear weapons.

The deterrent value of nuclear weapons may be affected by their potential for military use, which comprises the second role of U.S. nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons differ from all other types of weapons because of their overwhelming, immediate destructive power. No other existing single weapon can deliver such force. Today’s highly accurate, powerful conventional weapons can indeed threaten some, but not all, strategic military targets. Some targets—such as deeply buried targets where leadership, WMD, or other military targets might be bunkered—can be threatened with destruction only by nuclear weapons. Furthermore, conventional weapons have inherent limitations in their capability to threaten such targets. (See shaded box.) To help deter an aggressor from introducing WMD into a conflict, it may be important that the aggressor understand that there are no protected sanctuaries against potential U.S. retaliation.

The third role of the U.S. nuclear arsenal is to help prevent nuclear proliferation by extending our deterrent—the nuclear umbrella. There are several countries which could, with little effort and time, develop their own nuclear weapons but do not because they trust in and rely on the U.S. nuclear deterrent.

### Current “roles”

#### Here is our current policy as it relates to the role of nuclear weapons.

Hans M. Kristensen & Matt Korda 22, Director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, Associate Senior Fellow at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute; Senior Research Associate and Project Manager for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, M.A. in International Peace and Security from King’s College London, “The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review: Arms Control Subdued By Military Rivalry,” Federation of American Scientists, 10-27-2022, https://fas.org/blogs/security/2022/10/2022-nuclear-posture-review

The NPR reaffirms long-standing U.S. policy about the role of nuclear weapons but with slightly modified language. The role is: 1) Deter strategic attacks, 2) Assure allies and partners, and 3) Achieve U.S. objectives if deterrence fails.

The NPR reiterates the language from the 2010 NPR that the “fundamental role” of U.S. nuclear weapons “is to deter nuclear attacks” and only in “extreme circumstances.” The strategy seeks to “maintain a very high bar for nuclear employment” and, if employment of nuclear weapons is necessary, “seek to end conflict at the lowest level of damage possible on the best achievable terms for the United States and its Allies and partners.”

Deterring “strategic” attacks is a different formulation than the “deterrence of nuclear and non-nuclear attack” language in the 2018 NPR, but the new NPR makes it clear that “strategic” also accounts for existing and emerging non-nuclear attacks: “nuclear weapons are required to deter not only nuclear attack, but also a narrow range of other high consequence, strategic-level attacks.”

Indeed, the NPR makes clear that U.S. nuclear weapons can be used against the full spectrum of threats: “While the United States maintains a very high bar for the employment of nuclear weapons, our nuclear posture is intended to complicate an adversary’s entire decision calculus, including whether to instigate a crisis, initiate armed conflict, conduct strategic attacks using non-nuclear capabilities, or escalate to the use of nuclear weapons on any scale.”

During his presidential campaign, Joe Biden spoke repeatedly in favor of a no-first-use and sole-purpose policy for U.S. nuclear weapons. But the NPR explicitly rejects both under current conditions. The public version of the NPR doesn’t explain why a no-first-use policy against nuclear attack is not possible, but it appears to trim somewhat the 2018 NPR language about an enhanced role of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear strategic attacks. And the stated goal is still “moving toward a sole purpose declaration” when possible in consultation with Allies and partners.

In that context the NPR reiterates previous “negative security assurances” that the United States “will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states that are party to the NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations.”

“For all other states” the NPR warns, “there remains a narrow range of contingencies in which U.S. nuclear weapons may still play a role in deterring attacks that have strategic effect against the United States or its Allies and partners.” That potentially includes Iran, North Korea, and Pakistan.

Interestingly, the NPR states that “hedging against an uncertain future” is no longer a stated (formal) role of nuclear weapons. Hedging has been part of a strategy to be able to react to changes in the threat environment, for example by deploying more weapons or modifying capabilities. The change does not mean that the United States is no longer hedging, but that hedging is part of managing the arsenal, rather than acting as a role for nuclear weapons within US military strategy writ large.

The NPR reaffirms, consistent with the 2013 Nuclear Employment Strategy, that U.S. use of nuclear weapons must comply with the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) and that it is U.S. policy “not to purposely threaten civilian populations or objects, and the United States will not intentionally target civilian populations or objects in violation of LOAC.” That means that U.S. nuclear forces cannot attack cities per se (unless they contain military targets).

#### Roles of nuclear weapons.

Hans M. Kristensen & Matt Korda 23, Director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, Associate Senior Fellow at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute; Senior Research Associate and Project Manager for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, M.A. in International Peace and Security from King’s College London, “United States nuclear weapons, 2023,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Vol. 79, No. 1, 2023, https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.2022.2156686

The 2022 NPR offers slightly modified language relative to the 2018 NPR on the role of nuclear weapons in US military strategy. The three stated roles are: 1) “Deter strategic attack;” 2) “Assure Allies and partners;” and 3) “Achieve U.S. objectives if deterrence fails” (US Department of Defense Citation2022b, 7). “Deterring strategic attacks” is a different formulation than the “deterrence of nuclear and non-nuclear attack” language in the 2018 NPR, but the new NPR makes it clear that “strategic” also accounts for existing and emerging non-nuclear attacks (US Department of Defense Citation2022b, 8).

Additionally, the 2022 NPR states: “ ‘Hedging against an uncertain future’ is no longer a stated role for nuclear weapons” (US Department of Defense Citation2022b, 7). This likely does not mean an actual reduction in the role of nuclear weapons but, rather, a roll-back of Trump administration language to that of the Obama administration. Rather than a role for nuclear weapons, “hedging against an uncertain future” is more about managing the weapons production complex. (For a detailed analysis of the 2022 NPR, see Kristensen and Korda Citation2022).

#### Here is how the NPR defines what the roles are and what each one does.

NPR 22, “2022 Nuclear Posture Review,” Federation of American Scientists, 2022, https://s3.amazonaws.com/uploads.fas.org/2022/10/27113658/2022-Nuclear-Posture-Review.pdf

The Role of Nuclear Weapons. The NPR affirms the following roles for nuclear weapons:

► Deter strategic attacks;

► Assure Allies and partners; and

► Achieve U.S. objectives if deterrence fails.

These roles are interrelated and complementary and provide the basis for developing and assessing our nuclear strategies, policies, and capabilities. “Hedging against an uncertain future” is no longer a stated role for nuclear weapons. The United States will continue to carry out robust risk management strategies within the nuclear enterprise so that it is capable of delivering credible deterrence even in the face of significant uncertainties and unanticipated challenges. This requires sustaining a set of initiatives and actions in the nuclear enterprise that over time builds enduring advantage and resilience in our stockpile, production complex, and science and technology efforts. Our approach to mitigating programmatic, geopolitical, technological, and operational risk through a resilient and adaptive nuclear enterprise is discussed below.

Deter Strategic Attacks. The United States affirms that its nuclear forces deter all forms of strategic attack. They serve to deter nuclear employment of any scale directed against the U.S. homeland or the territory of Allies and partners, whether on the ground, in the air, at sea, or in space. Any adversary use of nuclear weapons, regardless of location or yield, would fundamentally alter the nature of a conflict, create the potential for uncontrolled escalation, and have strategic effects. We must therefore be able to deter both large-scale and limited nuclear attacks from a range of adversaries. The capability to deter limited nuclear attacks is critical given that some competitors have developed strategies for warfare that may rely on the threat of nuclear escalation in order to terminate a conflict on advantageous terms. The ability to deter limited nuclear use is thus key to deterring non-nuclear aggression. If we are not confident we can deter escalation, it will be more difficult for our leaders to make the decision to project conventional military power to protect vital national security interests – and far more dangerous to do so should that decision be made.

Consistent with prior reviews, our nuclear strategy accounts for existing and emerging non-nuclear threats with potential strategic effect for which nuclear weapons are necessary to deter. We concluded that nuclear weapons are required to deter not only nuclear attack, but also a narrow range of other high consequence, strategic-level attacks. This is a prudent approach given the current security environment and how it could further evolve.

Assure Allies and Partners. The NSS and NDS require strengthening security architectures in key regions in order to fully leverage the capabilities of Allies and partners to deter and, if necessary, defeat adversary aggression. The U.S. global alliance and partnership network is a military center of gravity. U.S. extended nuclear deterrence is foundational to this network. Thus, assuring Allies and partners that these commitments are credible is central to U.S. national security and defense strategy.

Allies must be confident that the United States is willing and able to deter the range of strategic threats they face, and mitigate the risks they will assume in a crisis or conflict. Modernizing U.S. nuclear forces is key to assuring Allies that the United States is committed and capable of deterring the range of threats U.S. nuclear strategy addresses. Extended nuclear deterrence contributes to U.S. non-proliferation goals by giving Allies and partners confidence that they can resist strategic threats and remain secure without acquiring nuclear weapons of their own. Part of our assurance to Allies and partners is a continued and strengthened commitment to arms control, nuclear nonproliferation, and nuclear risk reduction to improve collective security by reducing or constraining adversary capabilities.

Achieve U.S. Objectives if Deterrence Fails. We will maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent and flexible nuclear capabilities to achieve our objectives should the President conclude that the employment of nuclear weapons is necessary. In such a circumstance, the United States would seek to end any conflict at the lowest level of damage possible on the best achievable terms for the United States and its Allies and partners. As part of NPR implementation, the United States will update nuclear weapons employment guidance in accordance with the policy and strategy established by the President following publication of this report.

United States nuclear weapons employment guidance is approved by the President, and all nuclear plans are reviewed and approved by the Secretary of Defense. These plans are prepared with advice from the Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, among other senior officials. Legal advice is integral to the preparation of these documents and includes review of their consistency with the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC), which is authoritatively stated for DoD personnel in the DoD Law of War Manual. Longstanding DoD policy is to comply with LOAC in all armed conflicts, however characterized, and the DoD Law of War Manual recognizes that “[t]he law of war governs the use of nuclear weapons, just as it governs the use of conventional weapons.” In addition, longstanding U.S. policy is to not purposely threaten civilian populations or objects, and the United States will not intentionally target civilian populations or objects in violation of LOAC.

### NPR Defines “Role”

#### The Nuclear Posture Review defines the role of nuclear weapons

FAS, 02 – Federation of American Scientists (SECRECY NEWS, from the FAS Project on Government Secrecy, Volume 2002, Issue No. 4, January 10, 2002, “NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW MAY NOT COMPLY WITH LAW,” http://fas.org/sgp/news/secrecy/2002/01/011002.html)

Contrary to an explicit legal requirement, the Pentagon has still not produced an unclassified report on its Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), which defines the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. military strategy.

The Pentagon held a press briefing yesterday outlining the conclusions of the Review, and released a three-page Foreword from the otherwise classified report.

#### The NPR sets out 4 goals for nuclear forces – assurance, dissuasion, deterrence or defeat

OELRICH 05Acting President of FAS, PhD – Princeton, BS – U. Chicago both in Chemistry, Research Associate at Lawrence Livermore National Labs. [Ivan Oelrich, Missions for Nuclear Weapons after the Cold War,” FEDERATION of AMERICAN SCIENTISTS, Occasional Paper No. 3 January 2005, http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/armscontrol/missionsaftercwrptfull.pdf]

Specifically, this study starts with the Administration's four goals for the nuclear force (as part of a new "triad" of nuclear offensive forces, defenses, and a responsive infrastructure) as laid out in the most recent Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The purpose of nuclear weapons, according to the Administration, is either to assure, dissuade, deter, or defeat.

The NPR states that nuclear weapons are meant to assure, primarily our allies but also ourselves. Simply possessing a nuclear force gives the United States the confidence to protect itself and its allies against all enemies but especially enemies armed with nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons. The argument is that United States does not even have to contemplate the use of nuclear weapons: just having them provides a solid security foundation for U.S. engagement in the world. Having a U.S. nuclear umbrella large enough to cover allies also reduces their incentive to develop their own nuclear arsenals, the NPR argues, thereby reducing proliferation.

Nuclear weapons should dissuade enemies from attempting certain types of military competition. If the United States maintains, for example, a large intercontinental- range nuclear arsenal, now over a hundred times China's, then China will be content with a small force, it is argued. But if the United States reduces substantially, the Chinese will believe that competition is possible and productive and will respond to U.S. reductions with their own buildup.

Of course, nuclear weapons should deter. This means primarily, but not exclusively, deterrence of *nuclear* attack on the United States or its allies. By threatening retaliation, the United States can make any attack more costly than any possible military, political, or economic gain. To effectively deter, one should be able to threaten something the enemy values.

Finally, the NPR argues that nuclear weapons should be able to defeat, that is, they should be able to engage military targets for military advantage. Of particular importance are targets that may resist attack by conventional weapons, for example, hardened intercontinental-range missile silos.

### Role Defined by Congress

#### Role is statutorily defined by Congress

Pollmiller et al, 08 - Lt Col, USAF (David, “Enough Already: JCA belongs in the Air Force! ,” A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements for Air War College, January,by David E. Pollmiller, https://www.afresearch.org/skins/rims/q\_mod\_be0e99f3-fc56-4ccb-8dfe-670c0822a153/q\_act\_downloadpaper/q\_obj\_99275839-3fd3-47e6-9829-5cb922828480/display.aspx?rs=enginespage)

Functions are the appropriate or assigned duties, responsibilities, missions, or tasks of an individual, office, or organization; as defined in the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, the term "function" includes functions, powers, and duties.3 The US Congress House Committee on Armed Services further offers that a function is a “specific responsibility assigned by the President or the Secretary of Defense to a Service.”4 Simply, assigned functions enable a specific Service to legally fulfill their congressionally established role.

A mission is instead a task, together with the purpose, that clearly indicates the action to be taken and the reason therefore.5 Furthermore, missions are not performed by Services but are performed by combatant commanders.6

A role on the other hand is a “broad enduring purpose” assigned by Congress and given to a specific Service.7 It is established in legislation and is legally binding. A role basically defines why a specific Service exists.

#### “Role” is codified by Congress in law – if the plan changes a role, it has to be through Congress

Powell, 93 **-** Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Colin, “Roles, Missions, and Functions of the Armed Forces of the United States” http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA266034&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf)

The terms roles, missions, and functions are often used interchangeably, but the distinctions among them are important. ROLES are the broad and enduring purposes for which the services were established by Congress in law. MISSIONS are the tasks assigned by the President or the Secretary of Defense to the combatant commanders in chief (CINCs). FUNCTIONS are specific responsibilities assigned by the President and the Secretary of Defense to enable the services to fulfill their legally established roles. Simply stated, the primary function of theservices is to provide forces that are organized, trained, and equipped to perform a role--to be employed by a CINC in the accomplishment of a mission.

#### Role means it is created or changed by the Congress – only missions allow the aff the flexibility to use the President

Powell, 93 **-** Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Colin, “Roles, Missions, and Functions of the Armed Forces of the United States” http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA266034&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf)

After World War II, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were established as a permanent, formal body, with a joint staff; thc Air Force was established as a separate Service; the Department of Defense was created; and the Armed Forces were unified by the National Security Act of 1947. The Commanders in Chief (CINCs) retained their Service identities, and the Chief of Naval Operations and Chief of Staff of the Army, respectively, continued to act as executive agents for the Pacific and European theaters.

In 1958, however, the Secretary of Defense was given direction authority over the CINCs. Services retained their roles, as established by law, but midssion were assigned, on a geographical or functional basis, to the CINCs.

In 1987, the distinctions between roles and missions were further modified when Congress established, in law, a new combatant command, the US Special Specal Operations Command (USSOCOM), and gave it a role.

Today, ROLES are the broad and enduring purposes for which the Services, and USSOCOM, were established by Congress in law. In broadest terms, the role of the Services today is to organize, train, and equip forces, the Army for prompt and sustained combat incident to operations on land; the Navy for prompt and sustained combat incident to operations on and from the sea; the Air Force for prompt and sustained offensive and defensive air operations; the Marine Core for service with the fleet in the seizure or defense of advanced naval bases, and the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign; and Special Operations Command for special operations activities or missions.

MISSIONS are the tasks assigned by the President or Secretary of Defense to the CINCs of combatant commands. The responsibilities of the combatant CINCs are spelled out in the Unified Command Plan, a document prepared by the Joint Staff, reviewed by the JCS and the Secretary of Defense, and approved by the President.

#### Role is codified by Congress – only missions are done by the President or the military

Leland, 93 – general, and the Director for Strategic, Plans and Policy of the Joint Staff, for the Joint Chiefs (1993 Report on the Roles, Missions and Functions of the Armed Forces Submitted by Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2/12, http://www.fas.org/man/docs/corm93/brief.htm)

I'm going to talk a minute or two about process because the terms, roles, missions and functions, are commonly used and interchanged within the building, often as if they mean the same thing, and they don't. So there's some help in understanding what we did and why we concluded what we did by understanding the terminology.

Very simply, a role is a broad and enduring purpose, and it is provided to a service. So the Army, as an example, as you see on the left there, the role is to man, train, and equip forces for operations on land. The Navy does that on the sea. The Marine Corps for land operations essential to naval campaigns. Then you can see here for the Air Force, for offensive and defensive air campaigns. So that's a role. The roles are provided by the Congress to the Services. A function is something where the president or the Secretary of Defense tell a service to do something in particular. An example would be to provide forces. So an example of a function is the President says, "I want you, Army, to provide forces to do that role -- operations on land."

Finally, missions are done by combatant commanders. Missions are not done by services. So services provide forces; combatant commanders do missions.

This other diagram just gives you the same information in a little bit different form. Congress gives the roles to the Services. The President and the Secretary of Defense assign specific functions. The Services then provide the forces and the forces must be capable of performing the functions that were given to them by the President and the Secretary of Defense. The commanders, the combatant commanders, when they have those forces, they get missions from the President and they conduct operations. The ones listed there are some you're very familiar with -- Desert Storm, of course Southwest Asia; Just Cause, the operation in Panama; Restore Hope is the ongoing operation in Somalia.

#### The Nuclear Mission Management Plan establishes the role of nuclear weapons

US Code, 09 (Current as of 8/19/09, TITLE 10. ARMED FORCES, SUBTITLE A. GENERAL MILITARY LAW, PART I. ORGANIZATION AND GENERAL MILITARY POWERS, CHAPTER 2. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, 10 USCS § 113, lexis congressional universe)

 Nuclear mission management plan**.** Act Oct. 5, 1999, P.L. 106-65, Div C, Title XXXI, Subtitle E, § 3163(d), 113 Stat. 945, provides:  
   "(1) The Secretary of Defense shall develop and implement a plan to ensure the continued reliability of the capability of the Department of Defense to carry out its nuclear deterrent mission.  
   "(2) The plan shall do the following:  
      "(A) Articulate the current policy of the United States on the role of nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence in the conduct of defense and foreign relations matters.  
      "(B) Establish stockpile viability and capability requirements with respect to that mission, including the number and variety of warheads required.  
      "(C) Establish requirements relating to the contractor industrial base, support infrastructure, and surveillance, testing, assessment, and certification of nuclear weapons necessary to support that mission.  
   "(3) The plan shall take into account the following:  
      "(A) Requirements for the critical skills, readiness, training, exercise, and testing of personnel necessary to meet that mission.  
      "(B) The relevant programs and plans of the military departments and the Defense Agencies with respect to readiness, sustainment (including research and development), and modernization of the strategic deterrent forces.".

### Role Includes Warfighting

#### The role has shifted from deterrence to include warfighting

Jingmei, 03 - associate professor at the Arms Control Research Division of the Institute of Applied Physics and Computational Mathematics (IAPCM) in Beijing (Tian, “The Bush Administration’s Nuclear Strategy and Its Implications for China’s Security,” March, http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/20188/tian.pdf)

During the Cold War, nuclear weapons had a dual role in American military strategy. One role was to deter a Soviet nuclear attack on the United States and to deter a Warsaw Pact conventional attack on European allies by convincing the Soviet Union that doing so would result in unacceptable consequences. The other role of nuclear weapons was war-fighting. The resolution to use nuclear forces—that is, nuclear war-fighting—is also an important element of nuclear deterrence.4 In essence, the goal of America’s nuclear strategy was to avoid the use of nuclear weapons and the breakout of nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union, because both sides had nuclear forces whose use would result in mutually assured destruction. Under that condition, the United States and the Soviet Union were unlikely to really reduce their nuclear weapons. Instead, the total number of nuclear weapons grew and grew, reaching a vastly excessive level. The world was in the shadow of nuclear war.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War significantly changed the international security environment. Accordingly, the Clinton administration reassessed U.S. nuclear strategy. The Nuclear Posture Review approved by President Bill Clinton on September 18, 1994, concluded that nuclear weapons were playing a smaller role in U.S. security than at any other time in the nuclear age, and thus the United States required a much smaller nuclear arsenal.5 Subsequently, President Clinton endorsed the Presidential Decision Directive PDD/NSC 60 in November 1997, formally abandoning the nuclear guidelines issued by the Reagan administration in 1981, which said that the United States must be prepared to fight and win a protracted nuclear war. The PDD operated from the premise that the primary role of nuclear weapons in the post–Cold War era was deterrence.6 As a result, the United States reduced its nuclear arsenal on a large scale and pushed the process of international nuclear arms control.

However, the Bush administration plans to change the former administration’s policy on nuclear weapons, emphasizing their war-fighting role. According to the classified Nuclear Posture Review, which was leaked to the media, the United States could use nuclear weapons first against China, Russia, Iraq, North Korea, Iran, Libya, and Syria; in an Arab-Israeli conflict; in a war between China and Taiwan; and in an attack by North Korea on South Korea. And it could use nuclear weapons in three types of situations: against targets able to withstand non-nuclear attack; in retaliation for attack with nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons; and in the event of surprising military development.7 Later, President Bush in a speech at West Point stressed, “We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plan, and confront the worst threats before they emerge.”8 This implies that President Bush may be willing to use nuclear weapons not only in retaliation for an attack by weapons of mass destruction but also to preempt such attacks.

These situations show that the Bush administration has expanded the range of use of nuclear weapons from nuclear weapon states to non-nuclear weapon states and has shifted the main role of nuclear weapons from deterrence to war-fighting. This breaks a decadeslong taboo against the use of nuclear weapons except as a last resort, and it lowers the threshold for using nuclear weapons. Although increasing the war-fighting role of nuclear weapons would further strengthen the credibility and effectiveness of U.S. nuclear deterrence, it also would provoke other countries to pursue nuclear weapons because of their military value. This would increase the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation, thereby destabilizing regions and the world.

#### The role includes offensive warfighting

Cabasso, 08 - Executive Director Western States Legal Foundation (Jacqueline, “StratCom in Context: The Hidden Architecture of U.S. Militarism,” http://www.afterdowningstreet.org/militarism

The Pentagon’s December 2001 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) – contemporaneous with the establishment of the new StratCom - underlines the fundamental policy and technological underpinnings for the Bush administration’s aggressive “preventive war” doctrine, and has served as the primary justification for each subsequent annual nuclear weapons budget request as well as the current “Complex Transformation” plan to modernize the nuclear weapons laboratories and manufacturing plants.

The NPR expanded the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security policy, including the possible use of nuclear weapons in “immediate, potential, or unexpected contingencies” against a seven named countries including Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, and called for indefinite retention of a large, modern, and diverse nuclear force. Significantly, the NPR also elevated the weapons research and development infrastructure – including the nuclear weapons laboratories – to one leg of the “New Strategic Triad,” intended to support both “offensive” and “defensive” nuclear and non-nuclear high-tech weapons systems that will enable the U.S. to project overwhelming global military power.

#### Nuclear Roles: Deter WMD, Prevent Catastrophic Loss, Target Unique Areas, enhance US influence

N.I.P.P. 01 National Institute for Public Policy – Executive Report

["Rationale and Requirements for U.S. Nuclear Forces and Arms Control,” Volume I Executive Report January 2001, NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY, http://www.nipp.org/National%20Institute%20Press/Archives/Publication%20Archive%20PDF/volume%201%20complete.pdf

· Possible current/future deterrence and wartime roles for nuclear weapons may include:

– Deterring weapons of mass destruction (WMD) use by regional powers.

– Deterring WMD or massive conventional aggression by an emerging global competitor.

– Preventing catastrophic losses in conventional war.

– Providing unique targeting capabilities (deep underground/biological weapons targets).

– Enhancing U.S. influence in crises.

### Role = Alert Status

#### De-alerting, demating, deep cuts and ending testing all reduce the role of nuclear weapons

The Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, 96 (“The Nuclear Weapon Debate,” http://www.dfat.gov.au/cc/cc\_report2.html

There are a number of such steps that can be taken immediately. They would significantly reduce the risk of nuclear war and thus enhance the security of all states, but particularly that of the nuclear weapon states. Their implementation would provide clear confirmation of the intent of the nuclear weapon states to further reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their security postures. These steps would also signal that the nuclear weapon states were unequivocally of the view that continued possession of nuclear weapons was incommensurate with the risks they pose.  
The recommended steps are:

Taking nuclear forces off alert

Removal of warheads from delivery vehicles

Ending deployment of non-strategic nuclear weapons

Ending nuclear testing

Initiating negotiations to further reduce US and Russian nuclear arsenals

Agreement among the nuclear weapon states of reciprocal no first use undertakings, and of a non-use undertaking by them in relation to the non-nuclear weapon states.

#### Alert postures reinforce the nuclear weapons role

The Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, 96 (“The Nuclear Weapon Debate,” http://www.dfat.gov.au/cc/cc\_report2.html

The continuing practice of maintaining nuclear-tipped missiles on alert, whether on land-based or sea-based platforms, is a highly regrettable perpetuation of Cold War attitudes and assumptions. It needlessly sustains the risk of hair-trigger postures. It retards the critical process of normalising United States-Russian relations. It sends the unmistakable and, from an arms control perspective, severely damaging message that nuclear weapons serve a vital security role. It is entirely inappropriate to the extraordinary transformation in the international security environment achieved at such staggering cost. Taking these missiles off alert is a natural counterpart to the stand-down of bombers from nuclear alert which was implemented in late 1991.

### Role – Caselist

#### No First Use, De-Alert, Numeric Reductions, and tactical consolidation are all role reductions

Støre 08 Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs

[Jonas Gahr Støre, A Global Effort to Achieve a World Free of Nuclear Weapons, Minister’s summary and preliminary recommendations, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/static/npp/chair\_writtensummary.pdf]

What further steps could nuclear weapon states take to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security policies?

There are compelling reasons for renewed efforts by nuclear weapon states to reduce the size of their nuclear arsenals and the role of their nuclear weapons. Participants discussed no-first use pledges, the de-alerting of nuclear weapons, the importance of numerical reductions and proposals to consolidate tactical nuclear weapons. Some participants argued that the priority should be those steps agreed at the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences.

#### Restricting the role includes limiting deterrence missions and increasing operational safety

Pippenger, 97 - Media Relations Associate at the National Academy of Sciences (Ellen, “Changes in U.S. Policy Needed to Reduce Risks Posed by Nuclear Weapons”, 6/17, http://www8.nationalacademies.org/onpinews/newsitem.aspx?RecordID=5796  
To address these and other concerns, the United States should adopt an explicit policy restricting the role of nuclear weapons to deterring or responding to nuclear attacks or threats, the committee said. This country should no longer threaten to respond with nuclear weapons against attacks by conventional, chemical, or biological weapons. In addition, United States and Russia should negotiate further reductions in nuclear arms, adopt practices that provide higher levels of operational safety for the remaining weapons, and work to prevent theft or unauthorized use of nuclear arms.

#### NFU & De-Alert reduce the nuclear posture

OELRICH 08 Vice President for Strategic Security Programs at the Federation of American Scientists. He received his BS from the University of Chicago and a PhD from Princeton University, both in chemistry

[Ivan Oelrich, “What Are Nuclear Weapons For?,” http://www.americanphysicalsociety.org/units/fps/newsletters/200804/oelrich.cfm]

The nuclear “posture” we have today, the combination of weapons, their number and characteristics, that we keep them on hair-trigger alert, constantly deployed, many on submarines forward deployed off the coasts of Russia and China just minutes from their targets, demonstrates that the United States maintains nuclear war fighting options including disarming first strikes. Reserving nuclear weapons solely for the mission of responding to nuclear attack, thereby deterring such an attach in the first place, implies a decisive no-first-use posture, weapons off alert, perhaps even stored separately from their delivery systems. And since the pain that must be inflicted today should be proportionate to the stakes in play, not a potential enemy’s arsenal, the number of weapons needed is almost certainly only in the double digits.

#### No First use is a major change in our arsenal’s role

SAGAN 09  Professor of Political Science at Stanford University and Co-Director of Stanford’s Center for International Security and Cooperation.

[Scott D. Sagan, “The Case for No First Use,” Survival: Global Politics and Strategy, vol. 51, no. 3, June–July 2009, pp. 163–182 ]

In his 5 April 2009 speech in Prague, US President Barack Obama promised that ‘to put an end to Cold War thinking, we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and urge others to do the same’. The forthcoming Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), mandated by Congress, provides the administration an opportunity to honour that commitment. To reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategy, however, the next NPR must abandon the long-standing US policy of threatening to use its nuclear weapons first in a variety of military scenarios. This basic step was not taken in the George W. Bush administration’s 2001 NPR, despite its claim to institute ‘a major change in our approach to the role of nuclear offensive forces in our deterrent strategy’ and call to ‘both reduce our dependence on nuclear weapons and improve our ability to deter attack in the face of proliferating [weapons of mass destruction (WMD)] capabilities’. Indeed, the 2001 NPR contradicted these stated ambitions by maintaining that nuclear weapons were still necessary to ‘provide credible military options to deter a wide range of threats, including WMD and large-scale conventional military

## Nouns---‘Strategic’ & Variants

### Nuclear Strategy

#### FYI, one of the canonical texts in the area is called “the evolution of nuclear strategy.” It deeply engages the debate on whether such a term is even possible or if nuclear strategies are oxymorons because once you’re using nukes there are no political ends left to accomplish.

Lawrence Freedman & Jeffrey H. Michaels 19, Freedman, KCMG, CBE, PC, FBA is a British academic, historian and author with specialising in foreign policy, international relations and strategy, described as the "dean of British strategic studies"; Michaels is a Visiting Research Fellow in the School of Security Studies, “The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy,” Fourth edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019

#### It’s what nukes to have and how and when to use them. This definition is reflected in several canonical nuclear strategy texts.

Joshua S. Goldstein & Jon C. Pevehouse 14, Goldstein is professor emeritus of international relations at American University; Pevehouse is the Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor in Political Science and Public Policy at UW Madison, “Military Force and Terrorism,” International Relations, Tenth edition, 2013-2014 update, Pearson, 2014, pp. 192–231

Nuclear Strategy and Arms Control

The term nuclear strategy refers to decisions about how many nuclear weapons to deploy, what delivery systems to put them on, and what policies to adopt regarding the circumstances in which they would be used. 33 [FOOTNOTE 33 BEGINS] 33 Glaser, Charles L. Analyzing Strategic Nuclear Policy. Princeton, 1990. Sagan, Scott D. Moving Targets: Nuclear Strategy and National Security. Princeton, 1989. Jervis, Robert. The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon. Cornell, 1989. Talbott, Strobe. The Master of the Game: Paul Nitze and the Nuclear Peace. Knopf, 1988. [FOOTNOTE 33 ENDS]

#### Synonymous with nuclear doctrine, it means the nuclear aspect of military strategy.

Ronald E. Dolan 86, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “A Comparative English-Chinese Dictionary of Military Terms,” 5/9/1986, DTIC

NUCLEAR DOCTRINE

[CHARACTERS OMITTED]

Hezi' zhan lÜe [2702 1311 2069 3970]

Definition

No formal definition available from the People's Republic of China.

Commentary

Neither the Soviet Dictionary of Basic Military Terms nor the US Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms includes a defini- tion for this term.

The People's Republic of China does not use the term "doctrine" in reference to its own military planning. Probably the term nuclear strategy would be closest to nuclear doctrine. Nuclear strategy is the nuclear aspect of the general military strategy.

#### It’s using nuclear means to achieve ends, and the doctrines governing production, use, and non-use of nukes that enable them to accomplish those goals.

Anna Péczeli 15, senior fellow at the Center for Global Security Research (CGSR) at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, “Shifting Away From Cold War Nuclear Thinking? Nuclear Strategy under the Obama Administration,” Corvinus University of Budapest, 03/06/2015, DOI.org (Crossref), doi:10.14267/phd.2015009

Although today we can apply the term “strategy” with respect to almost every human activities, its traditional understanding used to refer primarily to military affairs. Nuclear strategy in general is a specified military strategy which “involves the development of doctrines and strategies for the production and use or non-use of nuclear weapons.”65 (Vicente; Cabaço [2011]) In more simplistic terms, just like any other strategy, this is the art of matching means to certain ends – in this case: nuclear weapons to policy goals. Although it applies the same logic, nuclear strategy is still fundamentally different from other military strategies. Most of these differences derive from the huge destructive power of nuclear weapons. As a result of this immense destructive power, the main goal of nuclear strategies has quickly shifted away from the use of these weapons to deterring their employment by the enemy. In other words, Hans Morgenthau argues that a fundamental difference between the nuclear and the prenuclear periods is the use of force. In the pre-nuclear age, traditional forces were considered “an instrument for breaking the will of the opponent either through successful defense or attack; its primary function lies in the effectiveness of its physical application.” In the meanwhile, nuclear weapons have “a psychological function pure and simple. The prospective opponents are kept constantly aware of the inevitability of their own destruction should they resort to nuclear force, and this awareness prevents them from resorting to it.”66 (Morgenthau [1964]: p. 24.)

### Nuclear Strategy---Broad

#### It’s when you use nuclear weapons for military or political purposes, and subsumes component strategies for achieving particular goals such as deterrence or bargaining.

Verghese Koithara 3, Vice Admiral Verghese Koithara is an independent strategic analyst who retired from the Indian Navy in 1998, has a Ph.D. in political science, “Coercion and Risk-Taking in Nuclear South Asia,” March 2003, CISAC Working Paper

Nuclear Strategies

The term nuclear strategy is used here in the broad sense of exploiting nuclear weapons for both political and military purposes. It includes component strategies for deterrence, crisis bargaining, and employment. In addition, in the case of India and Pakistan, both of which are not genuinely autonomous actors in the nuclear field, there is an important component of strategy that is aimed at influencing global opinion. In Pakistan the strategic discourse in nuclear matters has been relatively thin, particularly before the May 1998 tests.50 In India, on the other hand, there were writings from soon after the first Chinese test of 1964. It gathered strength after India’s 1974 test and assumed major proportions in the early 1990s when the CTBT began to loom, threatening India’s nuclear “option.” After the 1998 tests this has turned into a flood.51 The Pakistani strategic discourse, though thin, is thematically more coherent because of its concentrated India focus. The Indian discourse is more diffused. The problem faced by India is that while it needs to emphasize the nuclear issue in global powerpolitical terms, it is in its interests to marginalize it in the India-Pakistan context.52

#### Tenets/strategies for production and usage of nukes

Freedman 23 – Professor Emeritus, Department of War Studies, King's College, University of London. Author of The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy

Lawrence D. Freedman, “nuclear strategy,” Britannica, last updated 2-21-23, https://www.britannica.com/topic/nuclear-strategy

nuclear strategy, the formation of tenets and strategies for producing and using nuclear weapons.

#### It includes only military means---not political or economic ones (but, no constant or accepted definition)

Freedman 03 – Professor of War Studies at King's College London

Lawrence D. Freedman, “Introduction,” in *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, Third Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003

A book about strategy ought to begin with a definition of the subject. There has been no constant and generally accepted definition of strategy, even during the post-war years. The origins of the word 'strategy' lie in the Greek strategos, meaning the art of the general. There was little need to significantly alter the meaning even up to the time of General von Clausewitz (1780-1831) who defined the concept of strategy as the use of battles to forward the aim of war. By the twentieth century such a definition was blatantly inadequate. The preoccupation with battles, always questionable, failed to allow for the great variety in the methods of employing military forces and the choice of targets. Furthermore, the link with war itself was too direct. When war-fighting was so distasteful, it might be as important to preserve the peace by reminding a potential enemy of the costs of war or even to achieve aggressive objectives by encouraging a weaker country to give in without a fight. The definition of strategy developed by Basil Liddell Hart - 'the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil ends of policy'23 - seems more appropriate. It is non-committal about how the military means are to be distributed while stressing, as would Clausewitz, the role of the political sphere as the source of strategic objectives. It also maintains the connection with military means, and in this differs from other contending definitions. Such a definition clearly also rejects the view that when the value of military instruments has been blunted by the excessive costs attendant on their use, all the means of national power - political and economic as well as military - should be incorporated into a definition of strategy. If we have to focus on all methods of prevailing in any given conflict, the study of strategy ceases to be distinct from the study of diplomacy or of international relations in general and the sense that we are dealing with ‘functional and purposive violence' is lost.24

#### It's entirely distinct from “strategic”

Freedman 03 – Professor of War Studies at King's College London

Lawrence D. Freedman, “Introduction,” in *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, Third Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003

If some have sought to broaden the term, others have sought to constrict it. When fledgling air forces, after World War I, were anxious to demonstrate that they possessed a means for getting right to the heart of the enemy's power and destroying it with some well-chosen blows, they described this as a 'strategic' capability. Thus they spoke of 'strategic bombardment', using 'strategic bombers', eventually under a ‘Strategic Air Command' (SAC). After 1945, nuclear weapons, best able to perform this mission, came to be known as 'strategic weapons', and a war in which they were to be used would be a 'strategic war'. This use of the adjective 'strategic' has very little to do with the noun 'strategy'. The connection has become even more tenuous, with 'strategic' tightly defined, in the 'strategic arms reduction talks’ by reference to the ranges of certain weapons. A weapon that could be directed from the homeland of one superpower against the homeland of the other was strategic. During the cold war, it was difficult to avoid this sort of use, as it was the language in which nuclear issues were discussed. Since the end of the cold war this narrow use has fallen from favour, and while there is still talk of the strategic uses of air power, strategy is being used again in its wider context.25

#### Includes war prevention, military action, and post-war planning

Gray 23 – former Emeritus Professor of Strategic Studies at the University of Reading, U.K. He also served in the Reagan Administration for five years and was an adviser for the British Government for many years.

Colin S. Gray, “Nuclear Strategy – A Tale of Consequence,” Military Strategy Magazine, Volume 7, Issue 1, Spring 2020, pg. 6-10, https://www.militarystrategymagazine.com/article/nuclear-strategy-a-tale-of-consequence/

Formidably challenging though the problems of nuclear strategy certainly are, there is at least one approach to the difficulties raised by nuclear strategy that can help us significantly if we employ it ruthlessly. I suggest that the whole complex subject of nuclear strategy should be organized in our minds, plans, and even our action, as a three-part problem. We can, and ought, to reduce nuclear strategy quite rigorously, to a 3-part problem or challenge and we need to exercise a conceptual discipline in order to deny the truly awesome physical possibilities undue authority over our thought and behaviour. Both at its core and in its core nuclear strategy comprises but three conceptually imperial ideas: war prevention, military action, and – most potently of all – consequences. These three contexts, pre-war, wartime, and post-war, capture the entirety of our subject.

### Nuclear Strategy---Oxymoron

#### Strategy requires attempting to attain a goal. There is no such thing as goal-oriented detonation of nuclear weapons, so nuclear strategy is an oxymoron.

John M. Gates 88, last date cited, Aileen Dunham Professor of History, Emeritus, at Wooster, “The Continuing Problem of Conceptual Confusion,” 1988, https://discover.wooster.edu/jgates/the-continuing-problem-of-conceptual-confusion/

A similar problem of linguistic confusion exists with other military terminology. In virtually all cases, the minute the adjective “nuclear” is applied to a term, it ceases to mean what it has traditionally meant. For example, the term “strategy” is used to describe “the way in which military power is used by government in the pursuit of their interest.”[29] That being the case, one must believe that nuclear power can be used in the pursuit of one’s interest before one can speak of “nuclear strategy.” But almost anyone having written on the topic agrees that nuclear power does not have such utility. As the political scientist Robert Jervis observed, “a rational strategy for the employment of nuclear weapons is a contradiction in terms.”[30] The term nuclear strategy really has nothing to do with war; it is only applicable when one speaks of deterrence.

“War” is another term that loses its traditional meaning when the adjective “nuclear” precedes it. War is supposed to be a purposeful act, calculated to make one’s enemy do one’s will, to paraphrase Clausewitz. In its traditional meaning, war is an extension of politics and diplomacy, a violent attempt to achieve one’s goals when other methods fail. Given that definition, however, the phrase “nuclear war,” like “nuclear strategy,” becomes an oxymoron. If both parties to a conflict possess nuclear explosives (or have allies possessing them), then the use of those explosive devices might well prove suicidal, and suicide is not a rational extension of policy. General Collins appeared to come to the only reasonable conclusion possible when he rejected nuclear war as “a rational form of warfare or a rational instrument of policy.”[31] An exchange of nuclear explosions is not an example of rational, goal oriented behavior, and therefore such an act is not war. One can speak rationally about nuclear disaster, but talking rationally about nuclear war is more difficult.

### Nuclear Strategy---Doesn’t Require Gov

#### Nuclear strategy doesn’t necessarily require the government---it can encompass a whole-of-society view of who shapes the organization and use of military force.

Mickaël Aubout 21, Captain, French Air Forces, holds a PhD in geography from Sorbonne- Université, “Outline of Strategic Aerial Culture,” translated by 1st Lt Casey Evans, Capt Marie Gaudreault, and Capt Cody Anderson, Strategic Studies Quarterly, Winter 2021

The concept of strategic culture is a topic of much debate, and there is still no commonly accepted definition. Colin Gray noted in 2006 that strategic culture remains “a notoriously opaque and vague concept.”2 In the field of military strategy, the notion of strategic culture is, after all, fairly recent. It was coined in the United States at the end of the 1970s in the context of analyzing Soviet strategic thinking.3 Although the concept remains relatively new as a research topic, the process of studying the political, economic, or cultural characteristics of nations to explain their national strategies is much older.4 In fact, the study of particular styles of military strategy among populations was even addressed in the writings of classical authors such as Xenophon, Tacitus, and Machiavelli.

Several definitions of strategic culture have been proposed. Hervé Coutau- Bégarie and Bruno Colson hold to the definition offered in 1991 by Yitzhak Klein, who considers strategic culture “the attitudes and beliefs held close within the heart of a military institution regarding the political objective of war and the strategic and operational method most effective at attaining it.”5 This definition echoes another proposed a decade earlier, in 1977, by Jack Snyder. Snyder, a researcher at RAND, is the author of the study that formalized the term. He defined strategic culture as “the sum total of the ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to nuclear strategy.”6

The term “nuclear strategy,” relevant as it was to Snyder’s subject of study, need not be understood as restrictive. While Klein’s notion of strategic culture speaks of the military institution, Snyder expands the notion to include members not belonging to a military establishment by speaking of a “national strategic community.” Carnes Lord further considers society as a whole and proposes a slightly less restrictive definition from the point of view of the actors who share this strategic culture. “It is the sum of traditional practices and ways of thinking that, within a society, governs the organization and the use of military force in the service of political objectives.”7

Three principal elements of strategic culture emerge from these definitions. First, a strategic culture can be understood as a shared set of technical preferences, moral and ethical values, and specific practices. Furthermore, strategic culture directly influences the choices made in military operations through its aim to achieve national political objectives. Third, this strategic culture is shared by a defined group of actors.

### Strategic Doctrine---Broad

#### It’s the broad problem of matching military force with national goals. It can be regional or comprehensive.

Sanford Lakoff 88, professor emeritus of political science at the University of California at San Diego, “Power and Limit: U.S. Strategic Doctrine in the Middle East,” The Middle East In Global Strategy, Routledge, 1988

The formulation of a strategic doctrine has been defined as an effort to match military force with national goals.1 [FOOTNOTE 1 BEGINS] 1 A definition similar to the one used here is that of Russell F. Weigley: "the art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation to secure the objectives of national policy by the application of force, or the threat of force, "from The American Way of War (New York: Macmillan, 1973), p. xvii; cited by Captain James A. Bowden, "The RDJTF and Doctrine," Military Review (November 1982), p. 57. Charles Burton Marshall distinguishes between two different understandings of strategy: "first, the principle of coherence between an organized society's capabilities for waging warfare and its enduring purposes: and second--in the form of 'a strategy' or 'strategies'--such a society's related policies and understandings without regard to their conforming or not conforming to that criterion of coherence." See W. Scott Thompson, ed., "Strategy: The Emerging Dangers," National Security in the 1980s: From Weakness to Strength (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Books, 1980), p. 425. I use the term "strategic doctrine" here in both senses. When used in the first sense, it is qualified as "comprehensive"; otherwise, it refers to regional "policies and undertakings." In practice,the relationship between the two is apt to be closer than the analytical distinction suggests. [FOOTNOTE 1 ENDS] U.S. strategic doctrine in the Middle East might be supposed to mirror the U.S. comprehensive global strategy of deterring Soviet threats, blocking efforts to expand Soviet influence, and ensuring "extended deterrence" for allies, friendly states, and vital interests. But the reality is more complicated than any simple formula may suggest. These principles, which were developed mainly with regard to conditions in Europe, have proven to be only partially applicable to other regions. A regionally specific doctrine can be discerned, however, by noting the differences between U.S. relations with Western Europe and those with the Middle East, and by tracing the actual pattern of conduct exhibited by recent U.S. administrations in response to local problems and challenges.

#### It's a political-military chain of causes and effects. It importantly includes political goals.

Barry Ross Posen 81, Ford International Professor of Political Science at MIT, Director Emeritus of the MIT Security Studies Program, “The Systemic, Organizational, and Technological Origins of Strategic Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars,” University of California, Berkeley, 1981, ProQuest

WHAT IS STRATEGIC DOCTRINE?

This study employs three theories to explain why strategic doctrines vary along certain specified dimensions. These theories will be illustrated and tested by comparing the doctrines of three different states. This task generates an immediate definitional problem. Although most states have strategic doctrines, there are no international rules of behavior requiring that they declare the doctrines in the same form, in identical documents, with similar levels of clarity. The analyst must infer the strategic doctrine of a given state from a variety of sources. To be sure that the doctrines inferred may ,be usefully compared, the term "strategic doctrine" needs to be defined, and the same rules for constructing doctrine must be employed in each case. The same questions should be asked of each state, and they should be asked from the same sources. Failure to do so can cause great confusion, not merely in an academic exercise, but in policy debates as well.

The "our doctrine, their doctrine game"

Conventional comparisons of an ominous Soviet nuclear war-fighting doctrine with a benign American "deterrence" doctrine illustrate the confusion generated by the failure to refine and define the concept of strategic doctrine. In such comparisons the operational preferences of Soviet military commanders are contrasted with the more general political-military preferences of American academics and statesmen.'. In so doing, Americans forget that the Soviets may infer U.S. doctrine from the operational preferences of American soldiers, that these preferences may differ from the pronouncements of American civilians, and that the Soviets :may react militarily and politically to such preferences in ways that are inimical to the goals of American statesmen.

One example of confused comparisons of Soviet and American strategic doctrine can be found in the hearings on the proposed SALT II Treaty during the summer of 1979. Both Senators Jacob Javits and Claiborne Pell characterized U.S. doctrine in the "mutual assured destruction" terms with which we are now all familiar. Senator Javits contrasted this doctrine with that of the Soviets - "winning any war." Yet, under questioning, General David Jones, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, denied that M.A.D. had ever been U.S. doctrine.

We have never had that strategy (MAD) in all the time that I have been associated with the strategic forces. I spent about half of my career in the strategic forces, and we have always targeted military targets. . . i

General Jones repeated this statement for both the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee. Clearly, something more is implied than the usual Mutual Assured Destruction caricature of American doctrine, with its emphasis on arms race and crisis stability, and counter-value city-busting. Yet, the questioning by the two Senators reveals little understanding of the ambiguities in American doctrine, and the effects of those ambiguities on the very "war-winning” characteristics: of Soviet doctrine that we purport to fear so much. Our political leaders may have talked "MAD" for many years, but Soviet planners may have seen an American "war-winning" strategy.

In spite of General Jones's characterization of U.S. doctrine, Fritz Ermarth's comparison of Soviet and American strategy can be taken as the conventional wisdom.

Soviet strategic doctrine stipulates that Soviet strategic forces and plans should strive in all available ways to enhance the prospect that the Soviet Union could survive as a nation and . . . defeat the enemy should deterrence fail . . .

The essence of U.S. "doctrine" is to deter central nuclear war at relatively low levels of arms efforts . . . and strategic anxiety . . . through the credible threat of catastrophic damage to the enemy should deterrence fail. In that event . . . it should be the aim and ability of U.S. power to inflict maximum misery on the enemy . . .2

Such comparisons of Soviet and American strategic doctrine are misleading on two counts - both stemming from failure to refine the concept of strategic doctrine. First, they take their information from different sources. In so doing, the ominous and warlike injunctions of Soviet Marshalls are compared to the theoretical speculations of American academics, and the multi-dimensional policies of responsible civilians. This makes the Soviet Union appear more malevolent, and the U.S. more benevolent than is probably the case.

Many of the sources from which Soviet doctrine is gleaned are publications by, for, and of Soviet soldiers. The famous study Military Strategy, by Marshall V.D. Sokolovsky, was the first of many such books to be translated and published in the West. 3 First published in 1963, it is often cited as evidence of Soviet offensive proclivities. A number of Soviet military writings on doctrine have been published in a series called "The Soldier's Bookshelf." These are books about military affairs and the conduct of military operations recommended to higher-level commanders and staff officers. Such sources will naturally reveal an "operational" bias.

In contrast, Fritz Ermarth and others infer U.S. strategic doctrine from the Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense, public statements by the President or the Secretary of Defense, academic analysis (which has more often prescribed than described U.S. doctrine), congressional testimony, and the like. Very little of what passes for summary statements of U.S. doctrine is derived from military sources. Otherwise, General Jones would not have had to explain to two Senate committees that, as far as he knew, MAD had never been U.S. doctrine. General Jones, like his Soviet counterparts, was talking about how the forces would be operated in wartime.

We see in these examples the confusion and misunderstanding that can arise from the absence of rules about how doctrine is to be inferred. Such rules cannot exist if the concept of strategic doctrine is not defined. Popular comparisons of Soviet and U.S. doctrine, because they have displayed little consistency in terms of sources, have unduly exaggerated the differences between the two states. We lose sight of the fact that the Soviet state reacts not merely to what our leaders say, but to what our soldiers appear ready to do.

These comparisons of Soviet arid U.S. doctrine are misleading on a second count. Although they proceed from different sources, they tend to ask the same question: At what targets are the central strategic systems pointed? Cities or Forces? In fact, the forces of both countries are targetted at a full range of civilian and military targets. This manner of studying doctrine focuses on means to the exclusion of ends. Military organizations do not come into existence for their own sake. They are liberally funded and occasionally employed by states in the pursuit of political ends. When we examine the strategic doctrine of a state, we should want to know more than what its soldiers or civilian leaders think a war will look like. We want to know, if possible, what ends the military forces are meant to serve. How are the state's various military means integrated with its various political ends? Perhaps we can even imagine the circumstances that might lead the political leadership of a state to embark on war, that riskiest of national enterprises.

Strategic Doctrine - A Political-Military Concept

The term ’’strategy" was expropriated from the soldiers by political scientists and historians many years ago. Long before the advent of nuclear weapons, it came to have a political-military connotation. Although a good deal of the strategic thinking about nuclear weapons has been done by civilians, the military, in the guise of the U.S. Strategic Air Command and the Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces, has managed to reassert its claim. As a concept, "strategic doctrine" should be recovered from the soldiers and put back into the hands of civilians. What the soldiers do is plan nuclear operations.

Strategic doctrine should be viewed as a political-military means-ends chain. (See Chart 1). There has been widespread consensus on the political-military aspect of strategic doctrine for some time, certainly since the 1943 publication of Edward Meade Earle's Makers of Modern Strategy.^ Students of Clausewitz will also recognize this approach. Strategic doctrine must integrate political ends with military means. It must define the likely threats and develop political and military strategies to deal with them.

Broadly, political strategies may aim to disrupt or preserve the status quo. They may stress complete self-reliance, cooperation with allies, or the extension of security guarantees. Military force may be used to dissuade or persuade. .Both the determination of threats and [CHART 1 OMITTED] the development of responses demand that priorities be set and choices be made. There is widespread consensus on this point. Given an anarchical environment, the number of possible threats is limitless. Given the inescapable limits of a national economy, resources are not. Strategic doctrine must determine the most dangerous and plausible threats. The remedy of these threats becomes the state's main political end. Because resources are limited, the most appropriate military means must be selected to pursue the political ends in view.

I find it useful to think of a strategic doctrine as a group of interconnected hypotheses about what "causes" security for the state. These hypotheses will be tested against the state's continued well-being. Each hypothesis connects a means to an end. The political and military ends and means may be viewed as either dependent or independent variables, depending on the particular hypothesis in question. The dependent variable of one hypothesis might be the independent variable of another. Ideally, explanations should be offered as to why a particular means is believed to lead to a particular end, and why the entire chain of hypotheses is believed to cause security for the state. If a doctrine were stated in this fashion, it would be easier to evaluate. Moreover, the state in question would be better able to monitor the adequacy of its doctrine to a changing environment. Of course, doctrines are almost never stated in such rigorous form, but the analyst may be guided by this conceptualization in his attempt to ferret out the doctrine of a state# and to compare the doctrines of states.

In the study of strategic doctrine# one wishes to specify political ends, military means, and the nexus between them. I use the terms "operational strategy" or "operational doctrine" for the subcomponent of strategic doctrine that deals explicitly with military means. Two questions are important. What means shall be employed? More importantly, how shall they be employed? Priorities must be set among the various types of military forces available to the modern state. A set of prescriptions must be generated specifying how military forces should be structured and employed to respond to the threats and opportunities identified in the environment.

Since the close of World War I# modern states have had land, sea, and air forces to employ to achieve their goals. Since the close of World War II, some have had nuclear forces. States stress one type of force over another for geographical, technological, economic, or political reasons. Within forces, different sorts of weaponry could be stressed. Navies might stress submarines or aircraft carriers. Armies might stress armor or infantry. Air Forces might stress long range bombing of industry or short range support of army formations. These latter choices shade off into the realm known as tactics.®

Operational doctrine or operational strategy includes the preferred mode of a group of services, single service, or sub-service for fighting wars. Operational doctrine includes the judgements of professional military officers, and to a lesser but important extent civilian leaders, about what is and is not militarily possible and necessary. Such judgements are based on appraisals of military technology, national geography, adversary capabilities, and the skills of one's own military organization. Operational doctrine, particularly the aspects that relate directly to combat, is strongly reflected in the forces that are acquired by the military organization. Force posture, the pile of weapons any military organization controls, can be used as evidence to discover operational doctrine.

How shall military means be employed? Military operations can be broken into three different categories. (See Chart I) The operational doctrine of a state may be oriented primarily towards the destruction of an adversary's armed forces. Its military organization aims to forcibly disarm its adversaries. Some military organizations have more limited goals. Their task is to deny an adversary the objectives that he seeks. Others are tasked with neither forcible disarmament nor denial, but rather with punishment. Their goal is simply the infliction of pain.

As Chart I indicates, operational doctrine does not necessarily indicate political intent. This is why a simple description of a state's military organization does hot tell us everything we would want to know about its possible involvement or behavior in war. I have developed five composite terms for political-military or strategic doctrines which capture the fundamental connections between military means and political ends. An anti-status quo policy married to disarming capabilities produces an offensive doctrine. The same policy married to punishment means, generates a compellent or coercive strategic doctrine. (These are rare, and will not be much discussed in the remainder of this essay. Arguably, U.S. bombing of North and South Vietnam falls into this category.) In some cases, technology or geography dictates that a status quo power protect itself with disarming means. Although it may not be of much interest to its adversaries, the analyst may want to remember this. The term "dissuasive-offensive" might be used for such a doctrine. In this essay, both status quo and anti-status quo strategies that stress disarming means will be called "offensive," because some of the causes and most of the consequences of the doctrines are similar. Status quo powers with punishment operational doctrines have deterrent strategic doctrines. Status quo powers with denial operational doctrines have defensive strategic doctrines.

These are the composite terms for the five strategic doctrine means-ends chains that I have identified. These terms capture both political purpose and military posture. As the diagram indicates, operational doctrines serve as the means for the political strategies, persuasion and dissuasion. Persuasion is self-explanatory. Dissuasion aims to convince an adversary that he should not attempt to achieve his ends by war. Any of the three operational doctrines identified can be put to work for this political strategy. However, each has special costs and problems.

Examples of doctrine

An example of an offensive strategic doctrine is the combination of tanks, motorized infantry, and combat aircraft invented by the Germans in the 1930' s, and called Blitzkrieg ever since. Modern Israel, since 1956, has to some extent imitated the operational aspects of the Blitzrieg military format, with outstanding success in 1956 and 1967, and more limited success in 1973. The equipment has changed, but the method of combining the different types of forces for high speed warfare has remained the same. Unlike Germany, Israel has not aimed at conquest. Sadly, her operational doctrine has both brought her conquests and imbued them with military value. Her enemies have interpreted this unintended consequence as a political cause. Having done so, they are not sure that Israel will not conquer again. This is an unfortunate but frequent occurrence. The malign capability inherent in disarming operational doctrines is taken to indicate malign intent.

All of the land powers on the eve of World War I held offensive doctrines. The French are perhaps best known for their commitment to "I\*offense a l'outrance" - offense to the limit. After the fact, this same commitment has come to be known as the "cult of the offensive." All of these offensive doctrines call for early and intense attack. All include important preemptive strains.

A well known example of a defensive doctrine is the complex of French policies, much misunderstood, that are symbolized in current discourse by the Maginot Line. The failure of this particular doctrine to ensure the security of France has made the term "Maginot Line Mentality" one of extreme derision in modern political-military discourse. Moreover, the apparent ease with which the line was flanked by the Germans in 1940 has given defense a bad name ever since. Plans to protect part of the U.S. strategic bomber deterrent in the 1950's with concrete blast shelters were derided by the U.S. Air Force as Maginot-Line-thinking. In 1973 such shelters stood Egypt in good stead against Israel, discouraging a 1967 style aerial preemption. Like the Maginot Line, the Great Wall of China played an important role in a defensive doctrine. For the British Empire, the English channel, a large fleet, and a small army provided the elements of what was essentially a defensive doctrine.

An example of a deterrent doctrine, and as pure a one as is likely to be found, is that associated with present day France and its Force de Frappe. At considerable cost France has managed to build enough atomic powered, nuclear armed submarines to keep at least one at sea at any given time. Eventually this number will rise to two. Additionally France maintains some fifty strategic bombers and eighteen intermediate range ballistic missiles. While the small size of this force makes it more vulnerable to prevention than that of the United States, the French believe that the threat to eliminate even a small number of the most important Soviet cities is menacing enough to discourage aggression by her most probable adversary.

An example of a deterrent doctrine achieved with conventional military technology is that of modern Switzerland. . The Swiss Army has little hope of denying much of the country to a large and determined adversary. Rather, the army and airforce are deliberately and carefully structured so as to make the price of action against Switzerland very high. It is of critical importance not only that the initial defense be stalwart but also that painful and determined resistance continue over an extended period of time. No tourist who has travelled for any length of time in that small country can fail to observe the frequent military maneuvers by citizen reservists; the stockpiles of military equipment by the sides of the highways; and the low-flying, mountain-hugging aircraft of the Swiss Air Force, preparing speed traps for those schooled to battle over the steppes. The Swiss cannot deny their country to an adversary, but they can make him pay for the privelege of entry, and punish him for staying around. The occupier of Switzerland is to be determinedly, if slowly, bled. The People's Republic of China, Rumania, Sweden, and Yugoslavia have similar doctrines.

Of course, all of the preceding examples of strategic doctrine are much simplified. The diagram of the five possible strategic doctrine, means-ends chains is a simplifying device. U.S. doctrine in the post World War II period provides a more complex example, but one that can still be stated in the terms thusfar employed.

Our overall political goal has been the security of this state from nuclear attack. One military means to that end has been a secure second-strike force designed to deter such a strike by the threat of punishment. There has also been a political means to that end, preserving the sovereignty of countries with substantial economic resources that might, if conquered, contribute to the Soviet war machine. A variety of political and military means are employed to help preserve the sovereignty of other states. Among the political means employed are formal alliances with these states. Among the military means employed are general purpose forces capable of denial and deterrent {punishment) operations; and intercontinental nuclear forces capable of deterrent operations and, to a lesser extent, offensive (disarming) operations. One ^could descend further into the military means section of the chain into the domain customarily called "tactics." A large number of interlinked political means and ends could also be abstracted. The important methodological point is that questions about strategic doctrine be asked in these terms - which political and military ends and means are most important to a given state, and how are they connected together?

Summary

Strategic doctrine is thus a political-military doctrine, a chain of interconnected political and military ends and means. Ideally, it includes an explanation, implicit or explicit, of how and why the ends and means fit together, and how and why the entire chain leads to the security of the state. Some doctrines do not do this very well.

Strategic doctrine should not be searched for in any particular document or government organization; rather, it must be ferreted out from a variety of written and unwritten statements, as well as from practices and programs. It will frequently be the case that very few individuals in a government can specify all of the elements in the means-ends chain that make up the doctrine of the state. Nonetheless, there is a center-line or mainstream around which day-to-day policy tends to weave itself. It is the analyst's task to discover this mainstream. Some authors have even suggested that there is something of a consensus, a shared political and military mindset. I would not want to stress this point. As our own frequent and intense strategic debates show, the consensus is a rough one.

#### It's the beliefs that drive military policy. It operates at a higher level than an individual service or circumstance.

Mike Hough 2k, Director, Institute for Strategic Studies University of Pretoria, “The Concept of Military Doctrine with Specific Reference to the South African National Defence Force,” Strategic Review for Southern Africa, vol. 22, no. 1, University of Pretoria, Institute for Strategic Studies, 06/01/2000, pp. 86–102

The concepts "doctrine", "strategy" and "posture" are often used as synonyms, while closer analysis does reveal a specific meaning for each of these concepts. Moreover, although they are mutually interdependent, they are linked in a sequential fashion. In this article these concepts are described and discussed, and some of the implications of post-Cold War developments for doctrine, strategy and principles of war are referred to. Finally, a brief overview is provided of the status of doctrine in the South African National Defence Force.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article analyses the concept of military doctrine, the sources and formulation of military doctrine, levels of military doctrine, and the relationship between doctrine, strategy and the principles of war. Some reference to the effect of post-Cold War developments on military doctrine is also made, and the current status of doctrine in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) is discussed in broad terms.

Doctrine, in the general sense of the word, is described as "any explicit set of beliefs that purports to explain reality and usually prescribes goals for political action. A coherent set of doctrines constitutes an ideology". (1) Doctrine can therefore guide (and follow from) both political decision-making and strategic decision-making at all levels, from the national strategy level to the operational and tactical level. In this article the emphasis will fall on military doctrine -- sometimes also called strategic doctrine -- although the latter actually applies to higher levels than the military.

2. THE CONCEPT OF MILITARY DOCTRINE

The term strategy is, in certain usages, still seen as the equivalent of doctrine. Similarly, the concept strategic doctrine is sometimes used interchangeably with military doctrine or defence doctrine. As stated, strategic doctrine is usually associated with a higher level of decision-making than is the case with military doctrine, and is described as consisting of "the major set of consciously adopted political-military assumptions on which specific strategies and manageable elements of defence policy are based" (2) (it would of course at this level also include non-military doctrine).

### Strategic Doctrine---Specific

#### Strategic doctrine is what guides official behavior with respect to R&D, weapons choice, forces, operational plans, and arms control. Strategic vs tactical is meaningless, but ‘strategic doctrine’ constraints the ambiguity of the term strategy to an intermediate level between ‘grand strategy’ and the strategy of a particular service.

Susanne Peters 89, European University Institute, Department of Political and Social Sciences, “Strategy and Security: West German Doctrines and Their Predominance in the Evolution of the NATO Dual-Track Decision of 1979,” December 1989, Thesis

My analysis will focus on "strategic doctrines" presented by strategic experts. Neither the definition of the terms "strategy" and "doctrine" nor the difference between them are by any means clear within the strategic debate. The term "doctrine" has been applied to a wide range from broad policies and generalisations of U.S. defence policy-\*2 down to the level of the "doctrine" of a specific service. The term "strategy" has been used in a military sense, as well as in reference to the state "strategy" of using military force for a broad range of political aims, called "grand strategy". In the present context the term strategy will refer to the compromise formula of all NATO allies, the "NATO strategy", although, as it will be seen, it is sometimes hard to distinguish between what is official NATO strategy and what is U.S. national strategy.

In contrast to this use of the term "strategy", Fritz Ermath offered a definition of strategic doctrine which is useful in this context on an intermediate level between doctrines of particular services and grand strategy. Strategic doctrine is a

"set of operative beliefs, values, and assertions that in a significant way guide official behavior with respect to strategic research and development (R&D), weapons choice, forces, operational plans, arms control, etc."«

Thus "doctrine" in this study is always used in a way subordinate to "strategy". Since the doctrines to be analysed refer to the actual nuclear strategy of the nations involved, the term "strategic" doctrine instead of "military" doctrine is preferred here. Julian rider's summary of the variety of interpretations of military or strategic doctrine in Western writings helps to supplement Ermath's definition by elaborating for whom and at which level the term "doctrine" is used.\* The term "doctrine" has been systematised in this context as expressing not only the official military policy of one state, but also the consensus of opinion among a large number of professionals who represent a common experience, which is conceived on a national level. Thus, application of the term "doctrine" assumes the existence of a national doctrine to which governmental parties feel committed as a coherent concept of security and strategic policy. The doctrines which will be analysed on a governmental, departmental, institutional and individual level and the resulting differences will be pointed out. However, since the doctrines of German and U.S. politicians and strategic experts will also be analysed with respect to their national characteristics, the focus of attention is less on the variety than on the consensus of the national doctrines. For stylistic reasons "doctrine", "guideline" or "view" are used interchangeably.

Related to this problem of defining "doctrine" and "strategy" is the distinction between the different levels of a war. The decision to label a weapon "strategic". "tactical" or "operational" depends largely on the weapon's assigned role in war. The labels ’Tactical Nuclear Weapons" and, more recently, "Theatre Nuclear Weapon" are defined largely by process of elimination and by setting them aside from the category "strategic weapons". More than other terms in the strategic debate the labels "strategic" and "tactical" create confusion and contain ambiguities. It seems that there are no absolute criteria for distinguishing between these two categories of weapons and if one examines weapon yield, weapon range, location of delivery system, location of target and alert status one discovers a continuous range of values, with much overlap.^5

Even though defining a tactical nuclear weapon is a thankless task and in spite of the arbitrariness of their distinction, these terms can be understood as two poles of a continuum:

"The word "strategic" may refer to (1) attack by US or Soviet forces on opposing homelands; (2) attack on population (and/or industry) as distinct from military targets; (3) attack on missiles in silos and other long-range forces versus attack on general-purpose forces; (4) attack on "deep" targets; (5) nuclear as opposed to nonnuclear attacks; (6) attacks using long-range vehicles against any target; or (7) any attack launched from outside the theater. The word "tactical" may mean (1) avoiding superpower homelands, fighting in allied territory only; (2) attack only on military targets; (3) attack only on general-purpose forces; (4) nonnuclear attack or perhaps nuclear attack only on the battlefield; (5) attack using short-range vehicles.

### Strategic Policy---Broad

#### Framework for dealing with problems.

Ronald Ranta 15, senior lecturer in politics and international relations in the Department of Criminology, Politics and Sociology, Kingston University, UK, and a former chef, “Introduction,” Political Decision Making and Non-Decisions: The Case of Israel and the Occupied Territories, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 1–15

What do I mean by stating that Israel did not have a strategic policy towards the OT? I use the term ‘strategic policy’ to mean an overarching framework that encompasses and links together all aspects of how a government intends to deal with a particular problem or issue, as opposed to ad hoc or operational/tactical policies. The policy decision- making process can be divided into four main stages: identifying and assessing the problem; formulating a response that deals with the problem; formally or informally agreeing and or approving the response; and implementing the agreed upon response. In this context, a strategic policy means an overarching framework – decisions, laws and regulations, statements of intent, guidance to the military, and diplomatic and political manoeuvres among other things, encompassing and linking together economic, diplomatic, social, political and military aspects – that was assessed, agreed upon and implemented by the government with the intent of pursuing a particular vision for Israel’s long- term relationship with the OT and the population living under Israel’s occupation.

### Strategic Policy---Must Be Durable

#### Strategic policy has to do with strategic culture. It is durable and slow to change.

Bernhard Beitelmair-Berini 18, PhD candidate, Lecturer and Research Fellow on International Relations at the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg, “India’s Strategic Culture Debate,” in Delineating India’s Strategic Pluralism: The Subculture-Cleavage Model of Grand Strategic Thought, 2018, pp 32–101

Besides the problem of devising strategic culture as an (independent or intervening) ideational variable one encounters the problematique of the so called ‘too much continuity and the too much coherence’ problems afflicting many models of strategic culture. (Bloomfield 2012, 438) The answers to these two problems can be depicted in form of a matrix, which has also structured research positions on India. Basically ‘continuity’ deals with the question of change while ‘coherence’ addresses the issue of essentialism and parsimony. For the too much continuity problem there are two possible answers; strategic culture is either semi-permanent with deep roots in history or it is amendable for change hence discourse and contemporary circumstances play a conditioning role. Therefore, a differentiation between two types of strategic decisionmaking can be made namely that between ‘strategic policy’ and ‘strategic behaviour’. ‘Strategic policy’ following Bloomfield (Bloomfield 2012, 439) signifies long-term decision-making. ‘Strategic policy’ is what Snyder regards as the state of semi-permanence and which he equates to ‘culture’ “rather than mere policy”. (Snyder 1977, 9) So here the term ‘strategic policy’ is pointing to the immutable and semi-permanent character of many strategic culture definitions. Whereas the concept of ‘behaviour’ is referring to more short-term strategic choices as they are taken, for example, during a crisis. Establishing such a conceptual distinction provides a better understanding of the problem of change as some approaches tend to state ‘too much continuity’ in strategic policy, implicitly claiming that almost no change is taking place. For them “the weight of historical experiences and historically-rooted strategic preferences tends to constrain responses to changes in the "objective" strategic environment”. (Johnston 1995, 34) Johnston contends that if strategic culture itself changes, it does so slowly, lagging behind changes in "objective" conditions (Johnston 1995, 34). Concerning the sources of change scholars are divided between those who regard strategic culture as rooted in tradition and deep history and those who ascribe change to recent developments and crisis reaction. For the advocates of a long-standing tradition it is an indigenous construct sometimes developed over millennia, where the last relevant modification had been added about two centuries ago. For instance, while not celebrating war, certain normative strands within Indian culture treat it as acceptable when good fights evil. Both major Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, deal with wars, and treat rivalries as natural and normal. Even more explicitly does Kautilya’s Arthashastra address the use of force (Liebig 2013). But there have also always been non-violent (ahimsa) and pacifistic traditions in India, which considered violence as an impossible instrument of human conflict. Thus, much like the West (Christian tradition) knows ‘just war’ (bellum iustum), Machiavellian thought or Kantian peace are all of these normative dimensions of strategic thought evident in Indian writings on statecraft and strategy albeit clad in a different terminology. In contrast to this pluralistic understanding of different deeply-rooted ideological traditions, the view of the proponents of the traditional (first generational) monolithic and essentialist approach, does neither acknowledge the possibility for change nor the existence of counter-cultures challenging their conception of an age-old and all-encompassing strategic culture.

#### This says the same thing.

Bernhard Beitelmair-Berini 17, PhD candidate, Lecturer and Research Fellow on International Relations at the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg, “Theorising Indian Strategic Culture(s): Taking Stock of a Controversial Debate,” Theorizing Indian Foreign Policy, edited by Mischa Hansel et al., Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017, pp. 91–111

Besides the problem of devising strategic culture as an ideational variable, one encounters the problematique of the so-called ‘too much continuity and the too much coherence’ problems afflicting many models of strategic culture (Bloomfield 2012: 438). Basically, ‘continuity’ deals with the question of change while ‘coherence’ addresses the issue of essentialism and parsimony. For the too much continuity problem there are two possible answers: strategic culture is either semi-permanent with deep roots in history or it is amendable for change, hence contemporary circumstances play a conditioning role. Therefore, a differentiation between two types of strategic decision-making can be made, namely that between ‘strategic policy’ and ‘strategic behaviour’. ‘Strategic policy’ following Bloomfield (2012: 439) signifies long-term decision-making. ‘Strategic policy’ is what Snyder regards as the state of semi-permanence and which he equates to ‘culture’ ‘rather than mere policy’ (Snyder 1977: 9). So here the term ‘strategic policy’ is pointing to the immutable and semi-permanent character of many strategic culture definitions whereas the concept of ‘behaviour’ is referring to more short-term strategic choices as they are taken, for example, during a crisis. Establishing such a conceptual distinction provides a better understanding of the problem of change as some approaches tend to state ‘too much continuity’ in strategic policy, implicitly claiming that almost no change is taking place. For them ‘the weight of historical experiences and historically rooted strategic preferences tends to constrain responses to changes in the “objective” strategic environment’ (Johnston 1995: 34). Johnston contends that strategic culture permits adaptation but that it does so only slowly, and therefore, often lags behind changes in ‘objective’ conditions (Johnston 1995: 34).

### Strategic Posture

#### Strategic posture is the means by which nations pursue their interests.

Dr. Daniel Goure 8, Vice President of the Lexington Institute, “Rethinking the U.S. Strategic Posture,” A Paper Presented to the Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, Lexington Institute

Defining a New Strategic Posture

The term strategic posture generally is associated with the means and methods by which nations pursue their national interests -- principally military forces and the way they are organized and employed. The link between national interests and strategic posture is determined by a nation’s strategic objectives. A nation’s most fundamental national interest is survival. Hence, its foremost strategic objective is to secure the homeland from attack. A strategic posture must first have adequate means and methods to ensure that objective. During the Cold War, the United States entered into a series of alliance relationships that extended the protection provided by its strategic posture to allies in Europe and the Pacific. U.S. national security policy also left open the possibility that nuclear weapons might be employed if other vital interests were threatened.

#### It is how states respond to their external threat environment.

Alexander Lanoszka 14, Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and in the Balsillie School of International Affairs at the University of Waterloo, “Protection States Trust?: Major Power Patronage, Nuclear Behavior, and Alliance Dynamics,” Princeton University, June 2014

The challenges associated with guaranteeing security via extended deterrence imply that the credibility of major power support can vary across space and time. I argue that states refer to an important indicator - the strategic posture of their major power patron – when evaluating their patron’s credibility. The term ‘strategic posture’ refers to how the major power’s decision-makers respond to the external threat environment. It denotes a purposive set of decisions regarding foreign policy alignment, declaratory policy, weapons procurement, military doctrine, and forward deployment.39 Strategic postures reflect how major powers decide to project (military) power beyond their borders. During the nineteenth century, Great Britain had to determine which maritime areas its Royal Navy would protect, which alliances to form and maintain, how the next war would be fought, and which colonies would host military personnel. US decision-makers faced similar concerns throughout the Cold War regarding which waterways necessitate a naval presence, which alliances should the United States have, and where and how many troops would be stationed on allied territory.

## Verbs

### “Change”

#### To make something different, to replace with another. Changes can be large or small.

Merriam Webster ND, “Change,” https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/change

change

1 of 2

verb

ˈchānj

changed; changing

Synonyms of change

transitive verb

1

a

: to make different in some particular : ALTER

never bothered to change the will

b

: to make radically different : TRANSFORM

can't change human nature

c

: to give a different position, course, or direction to

changed his residence from Ohio to California

2

a

: to replace with another

let's change the subject

b

: to make a shift from one to another : SWITCH

always changes sides in an argument

c

: to exchange for an equivalent sum of money (as in smaller denominations or in a foreign currency)

change a 20-dollar bill

d

: to undergo a modification of

foliage changing color

e

: to put fresh clothes or covering on

change a bed

#### Make something different than before

Dictionary.com ND, “change,” https://www.dictionary.com/browse/change

verb (used with object), changed, chang·ing.

to make the form, nature, content, future course, etc., of (something) different from what it is or from what it would be if left alone:

to change one's name;

to change one's opinion;

to change the course of history.

to transform or convert (usually followed by into):

The witch changed the prince into a toad.

### --Change---UQ

#### This doesn’t really matter because this part of the topic isn’t where uniqueness is going to come from, but the US doesn’t ‘change’ its nuclear posture on a regular basis and there is offense intrinsic to directional changes that doesn’t care about its nature or magnitude.

Oliver Meier & Paul Ingram 10, Oliver Meier is a senior researcher at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg and an international correspondent and representative of the Arms Control Association; Paul Ingram is executive director of the British American Security Information Council, “A Nuclear Posture Review for NATO,” Arms Control Today, vol. 40, no. 8, Arms Control Association, 10/2010, pp. 8–15

The alliance can no longer avoid a fundamental reform of its nuclear weapons policy. First, the policy is outdated. Despite a drastic reduction in the number of nuclear weapons deployed in Europe, NATO's core nuclear policy remains largely unchanged since the 1991 Strategic Concept was adopted soon after the end of the East-West confrontation. Although this policy was responsive to the dramatic transformation taking place at that moment, NATO policy since then appears stuck in a time warp. Despite its overwhelming conventional superiority over any potential foe, NATO remains attached to a position of strategic ambiguity, maintaining the option to use nuclear weapons in response to any kind of attack, be it nuclear or conventional. The alliance confirmed this policy in its current Strategic Concept, adopted in 1999, long after Russia had become a partner, after very little discussion of nuclear policy within the review process. This has weakened the credibility of NATO members' efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Given NATO's strategic position, there would be no significant sacrifice and a great deal to gain diplomatically and politically if the alliance were prepared to limit its options, much as the U.S. government itself has done in its latest Nuclear Posture Review (NPR).

The alliance retains around 200 freefall U.S. nuclear bombs, deployed on aging aircraft in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey, whose pilots could be expected to deliver these weapons in times of war. In the eyes of many, these nuclear sharing arrangements, invented under conditions of the global nuclear standoff to ensure a tight coupling between Western European and U.S. security, look anachronistic in today's world. These arrangements have been criticized repeatedly by the majority of member states of the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) as being at odds with treaty obligations.6

Second, NATO needs to respond to the new nuclear arms control agenda as outlined by U.S. President Barack Obama. NATO has so far been unable collectively to endorse the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, which the United States and most allies now are pursuing. A number of member states want NATO to play a stronger role in arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament. From this perspective, the world's most powerful alliance needs to be seen to engage in efforts to prevent further arms races, specifically nuclear arms races. Otherwise, it might be perceived as an organization pursuing military hegemony.

Third, NATO has to bring its policy in line with the one enunciated in the U.S. NPR Report, which has updated U.S. nuclear weapons policy by reducing Washington's reliance on nuclear deterrence. For example, the United States has now declared that it will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear nonproliferation obligations and also declared that it is the goal of the United States eventually to limit the role of nuclear weapons solely to deterring nuclear weapons use.7 For NATO to have a less restrictive policy than the principal state deploying nuclear weapons on its behalf is, for all practical purposes, strategically meaningless. Maintaining a "first-use" policy also would give the impression of obstinate resistance to the disarmament agenda for no good cause.

There may be several reasons for NATO to consider its own leadership contribution to Obama's agenda. Such leadership would likely be greatly appreciated by many within the Obama administration at this moment, as they themselves are more directly constrained by hostility within Congress and the need to display a commitment to strong defense. Furthermore, NATO is responding only to the strategic situation in Europe, arguably a great deal more secure than that in many other regions and independent of strategic relationships for which the United States needs to account when considering its global posture.

Fourth, the nuclear status quo in the alliance is politically untenable because the dual-capable aircraft designated to deliver U.S. bombs in Europe are aging, and current host states will likely not have the political and financial capital to drive through investment decisions within the next decade on their replacement.8 Germany has already indicated that it does not intend to replace these aircraft, although there are proposals to extend the life of the current systems; other host countries will face difficult domestic challenges if they choose to procure new aircraft. A refusal by some NATO member states to accommodate host-nation concerns by blocking alliance-wide change and effectively pressuring them to procure nuclear-capable delivery systems against the expressed will of their parliaments and publics could severely harm alliance cohesion.

Several key western European allies, including three of the five nuclear host nations, have been champions of change. The German government has been most vocal and, with the support of all its significant political parties, has adopted a formal policy that advocates withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons from Germany and Europe. Others, most notably host nations Belgium and the Netherlands, but also Norway and Luxembourg, support the German push for a thorough review of NATO's nuclear posture.9 Although host countries are obviously motivated in part by the coming issue of investment in dual-capable aircraft, western European countries generally are keen for Europe to play its role in supporting Obama's vision of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Resistance to Change

NATO allies generally recognize that this time "a status quo oriented 'don't rock the boat' approach might not work, as a number of political and military developments require an open discussion."10 Yet, there are differences as to how far-reaching the reforms should be. In many people's minds, certain factors counterbalance the need for a radical reduction of NATO's reliance on nuclear deterrence and, in particular, a change in nuclear sharing practices.

Some in central and eastern Europe, particularly in the Baltic states, fear that changes in NATO policy and doctrine could signal a weakening of collective defense commitments and a further U.S. decoupling from Europe, a process they perceive started as attention moved away from Europe around a decade ago.11 Although rarely willing to declare this directly in public, they worry about emboldening a resurgent Russia within their region. Opposition to change comes not so much from an attachment to particular deployments or from specific worries about balancing nuclear forces, but rather from concerns about signaling, local strategic balances, and the long-term credibility of alliance cohesion.12 Nevertheless, central European caution with regard to changing NATO's nuclear posture does not mean that these countries oppose a review of nuclear policy. Thus, in a September 9 telephone interview, a source close to the Polish government said, "Poland is ready to work within the framework of follow-on discussions after the Lisbon summit, without precluding any outcome of such discussions."

Some in Turkey are said to be worried about a possible weakening of U.S. defense commitments and the potential threat from a nuclear-armed Iran. Officially, however, Turkey emphasizes the need for nuclear weapons reductions; one indication of Ankara's nuanced position is that the Turkish air force has not been providing dual-capable aircraft to participate in nuclear sharing for some time.13

Before they agree to a reduction in the role of nuclear weapons in NATO's posture, these countries are looking to the alliance to put in place stronger nonnuclear instruments of reassurance to fill a "commitment gap" they fear could result from a withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe.14

French objections are another hurdle. Even though France does not directly participate in NATO nuclear policy, "Paris sees little need to review NATO's current nuclear posture," a French diplomat said in a telephone interview September 7. Others close to French policymaking have privately expressed the view that France is not overly concerned about political pressure being exerted on it to make deeper cuts, but it is concerned that its European allies could move away from supporting the policy of nuclear deterrence, with implications for alliance cohesion.

The other European nuclear power, the United Kingdom, has an ambiguous position with regard to NATO nuclear policy. The new coalition government has been keen to show continuity in the disarmament diplomacy pursued by its predecessor but is strongly attached to nuclear deterrence. Officials have privately expressed concerns that the desire for progress on disarmament in Europe may lead to hasty decisions.15 The new government appears to have a greater desire to coordinate with the French on these and related matters.

Those that believed that Washington's leadership was essential to changes in NATO's nuclear posture were disappointed by the results of the U.S. NPR. The Obama administration appears to be agnostic with regard to the future deployment of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe or has been unwilling, at least up to now, to express a view publicly. The NPR Report states simply that "[a]ny changes in NATO's nuclear posture should only be taken after a thorough review within - and decision by - the Alliance."16 Although Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton argued at the informal April meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Tallinn, Estonia, that NATO should remain "a nuclear alliance," she did not take an explicit position on the nature of any continued deployment of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, rather focusing on the importance of maintaining the principle of burden and responsibility sharing.17

Ahead of the Tallinn meeting, Rasmussen stated his personal preference for maintaining the current nuclear sharing arrangements and indicated that they might even be useful in deterring unconventional threats, a position that apparently also reflects the opinion of some senior members of the international staff at NATO headquarters. A number of NATO member states, however, have directly criticized Rasmussen for this approach.18 During his September visit to Washington, Rasmussen predicted that NATO "will not give up nuclear capabilities as an essential part of our deterrence policies."19 Yet, many member states are unhappy with the way Rasmussen is handling the Strategic Concept review, saying that he does not consult adequately with capitals and tends to inject his personal opinions into the debate. Thus, Rasmussen has been described as acting more as a general than a secretary and has been ridiculed as "the 29th member state." During the first 12 months of deliberations on the new Strategic Concept, which was launched at the April 2009 summit in Germany and France, expectations had been raised that this process was to be the most open and participative of any NATO has conducted. Yet now, during the final stages of deliberations, the doors in Brussels have been slammed shut again, as officials responsible for finding support among key member states seek consensus.

A Minimalist Strategic Concept

NATO member states are currently discussing which aspects of NATO's future nuclear posture need to be determined by the new Strategic Concept and which ones can be left to the follow-on process after the Lisbon summit. NATO would be well advised to take a "minimalist approach," as one diplomat described it, to the nuclear language in the new Strategic Concept, on the basis of a "first, do no harm" principle, focusing on those aspects of NATO's nuclear posture that are not under dispute. To a certain extent, this is inevitable because the new Strategic Concept will be much shorter than the 1999 version. Several diplomats predicted that the new concept might contain only two to three paragraphs on NATO's new nuclear doctrine. One section would outline the alliance's approach to nuclear deterrence, and another section would "balance" these statements by outlining NATO's role in disarmament, arms control, and nonproliferation. Thus, in a September 6 speech to Germany's ambassadors, German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle argued that the joint letter by him and his counterparts from Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Norway ahead of the meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Tallinn had the purpose of ensuring "that disarmament and arms control will remain a key issue, also within NATO's new Strategic Concept that is to be adopted at the Lisbon Summit in November."20

There is no debate as to whether NATO should remain a nuclear alliance, if only because the three nuclear-weapon states - France, the United Kingdom and the United States - have pledged to use their nuclear assets for the protection of NATO allies. Rasmussen said he expects NATO allies to state that "as long as nuclear weapons exist, the alliance will remain a nuclear alliance, while gradually reducing the role and number of nuclear weapons."21 Beyond this, a few other principles should guide deliberations on what the Strategic Concept should say on nuclear policy.

First, a new concept should not preclude changes in NATO's nuclear posture, which would come as the result of a formal review with adequate time for consideration. Any attempt to close down debates could damage the longerterm support for NATO's nuclear posture and for the alliance more generally.

Second, the new concept needs to reflect the widespread support within NATO for the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, the dominant paradigm on nuclear issues ever since Obama's April 2009 speech in Prague. At the 2010 NPT Review Conference in May, states-parties endorsed this goal. All NATO members are also NPT parties. During his September 7 briefing, Rasmussen said he expects the Strategic Concept to "endorse the grand vision of a world without nuclear weapons." The French diplomat, however, cautioned that if nuclear weapons are discussed in NATO, the discussion must take place against the background of the current and future strategic situation. "We do not want ideological debates about Global Zero," he said, referring to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. "This also applies to substrategic weapons. If the Strategic Concept addresses this question, it would also have to speak about Russia's tactical nuclear weapons as well. These are currently not addressed at all."

To be sure, a failure by NATO's new Strategic Concept to endorse Obama's goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and to explicitly reduce the salience of nuclear weapons would cast serious doubt on the credibility of its members and on the ability of the alliance to act cohesively on all matters surrounding nuclear weapons.

Third, the new Strategic Concept should move beyond the current unequivocal commitment to ongoing deployment of U.S. nuclear forces in Europe, stated in Article 63 of the 1999 concept as follows: "Nuclear forces based in Europe and committed to NATO provide an essential political and military link between the European and the North American members of the Alliance. The Alliance will therefore maintain adequate nuclear forces in Europe." Retention of such a formula would go against the stated preferences of a number of member states and thus weaken alliance cohesion. The only appropriate approach at this stage would be to leave such a question to a review of nuclear posture in 2011, along with a necessary debate over declaratory policy.

What the Review Should Do

A minimalist Strategic Concept would provide "a framework that is both durable and flexible."22 By committing the alliance to reducing its reliance on nuclear weapons and initiating a process to implement such a policy, it would reflect the most important political changes that have taken place since 1999. Such a process, a "NATO NPR," should not be seen as "reopening" the Strategic Concept. On the contrary, a NATO NPR would consider the posture of the alliance in the light of the general principles contained within the Strategic Concept; it would not revise them. It is therefore not too early to consider what ought to be covered by a NATO NPR and what its principles might be as its framework within the Strategic Concept is hammered out over the next month or so. Previous Strategic Concepts have been implemented through military guidance, an opaque process free from any significant accountability and often ignoring the political implications of NATO's military posture. The fact that the current MC 400, which translates the political principles in NATO's Strategic Concept into guidance for military commanders, is almost 20 years old and has been revised only twice underlines the urgency of a thorough review. A true NATO NPR by contrast would be more open-ended, focusing on political and military aspects. Five principles should guide a NATO NPR.

First, a NATO NPR should be comprehensive and address operational and political aspects of NATO's nuclear sharing policies. All options, including a continuation of current practices, their reform, and their demise should be on the table.23

Second, the strategic issues facing NATO are clearly linked to other unresolved issues, such as support for strategic missile defense and the broader alliance relationship with Russia. For example, the Polish source pointed out that, "from a Polish perspective, the question of the commitment of the alliance to the deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe cannot be seen in isolation. Any change in the nuclear posture would have an impact on other aspects of the Strategic Concept."

Although a NATO NPR undoubtedly will sit within broader discussions, it would be a mistake to allow the review to be held hostage to unneeded linkages. According to several sources, France has already conditioned its consent to a NATO endorsement of strategic missile defense (another topic that is up for decision at the Lisbon summit) on a U.S. commitment not to change NATO's nuclear posture drastically. The French diplomat stated that Paris has no fundamental problems with the alliance endorsing strategic missile defense at the Lisbon summit, but warned that "such a system has to be effective and affordable." He argued that "missile defense is a complement to NATO's nuclear deterrent, but cannot be a substitute for it. Thus, we think that a possible endorsement by NATO of such a missile defense system should not have any impact on NATO's nuclear posture." This stands in contrast to the U.S. desire, as outlined in the NPR Report, "to increase reliance on non-nuclear means," including missile defenses, to deter regional threats of aggression.24

### --Change---Contextual

#### All the broad areas contemplated by the topic paper are captured by the ‘change’ terminology.

Charles L. Glaser & Steve Fetter 5, Charles L. Glaser is Professor and Deputy Dean of the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago; Steve Fetter is Professor and Dean of the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, “Counterforce Revisited: Assessing the Nuclear Posture Review’s New Missions,” International Security, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 84–126

This leaves open the possibility that the nuclear taboo would be strengthened by doctrinal changes that reject the use of nuclear weapons. Some proponents of a no-first-use policy have identified strengthening the norm against using nuclear weapons as a key rationale for changing U.S. nuclear doctrine.65 Again, however, the strength of this potential effect must be analyzed relative to the sources of the nuclear taboo. The nuclear taboo reºects the widespread recognition of the destructive potential of nuclear weapons, which has contributed to their being categorized as different from other weapons; the difªculty of establishing sharp lines between the use of nuclear weapons of different sizes, as well as between different types of nuclear use; and the weight of decades of nonuse. These factors may be so powerful that doctrinal shifts alone are unlikely to strengthen or weaken the taboo signiªcantly.66

Part of the challenge in analyzing the impact of doctrine on the nuclear taboo is the paucity of cases in which the central features of U.S. nuclear doctrine have been relevant to U.S. decisions about whether to use nuclear weapons. During the Cold War, U.S. nuclear doctrine was designed to deter a very large conventional war that threatened truly vital U.S. interests (e.g., a largeWarsaw Pact invasion ofWestern Europe) and nuclear attacks against the United States and its allies. Fortunately, since the early 1960s, crises and wars on this scale have not occurred. Consequently, although there is now clear evidence of a nuclear taboo, we have little information both about the extent of this taboo—the range of scenarios in which nuclear use is considered inappropriate—and the impact of U.S. doctrine on the depth and breadth of the taboo. This leaves open the possibility that excluding the new counterforce missions from U.S. doctrine would strengthen the taboo. Removing first use from U.S. nuclear doctrine (and the associated war plans) would likely change the ways in which U.S. political and military leaders envisioned the purposes of nuclear weapons under the most severe conºict conditions. Even removing a subset of first use—for example, eliminating nuclear use in response to a conventional attack while maintaining the option of nuclear preemption—could have this effect. If changes in doctrine reflected an assessment of the risks of nuclear use, and not the appropriateness of use, then the shift would not initially reflect a change in the taboo. Over time, however, the revised doctrine might alter the options that U.S. leaders even considered, leading to a further narrowing of what was viewed as the appropriate use of nuclear weapons.

The possibility of this interaction between U.S. nuclear doctrine and the nuclear taboo raises two further issues. First, the positive impact on proliferation would occur only if potential proliferators both accept the taboo and revise their understanding of it in response to changes in U.S. nuclear doctrine. Given the weak link between U.S. doctrine and the development of the nuclear taboo in the United States, we expect this interaction to be even weaker. Second, we need to question the desirability of strengthening the nuclear taboo to cover all types of U.S. ªrst use of nuclear weapons. If, as we conclude, there is the possibility under a very restrictive set of circumstance that the beneªts of damagelimitation attack could exceed the costs, then an absolute taboo (unless also recognized by all potential adversaries) could reduce U.S. security.

BARRIERS TO ACQUISITION. So far, this section has considered the effect of the NPR on states’ incentives to obtain nuclear weapons. Whether a state acquires nuclear weapons, however, also depends on the barriers it faces. Many of the countries that the United States has been most concerned about, including Iraq, North Korea, and possibly Iran, decided they wanted nuclear weapons; the question was whether they could acquire them. Consequently, if adopting new nuclear missions (and especially testing new nuclear weapons) would hurt U.S. multilateral nonproliferation efforts, thereby lowering the barriers to acquisition, the result could be increased proliferation. More spe ciªcally, the NPR could undermine the U.S. ability both to form and maintain strong international coalitions against identiªed potential proliferators (e.g., North Korea and Iran) and to achieve broad international support for strengthening barriers to proliferation, including tightening the requirements of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), enhancing export controls, and improving physical protection measures. Critics argue that maintaining and improving the nonproliferation regime requires strong U.S. leadership, but that many aspects of U.S. strategic nuclear policy—including its nuclear doctrine—are undermining the U.S. ability to play this essential role.67

According to these arguments, the NPT regime is a complex, multidimensional deal between states that are attempting to prevent proliferation. If the United States wants other states to devote themselves to preventing proliferation, then it must hold up its side of the nonproliferation bargain. Otherwise, it loses the legitimacy that is required to lead effectively, and other states will conclude that the nonproliferation policies that it advocates are inequitable and therefore refuse to adopt them. Consequently, this argument holds that to advance its nonproliferation goals, the United States should adopt an array of changes required to bring U.S. nuclear policy in line with its NPT regime obligations, including: further reduction of the size of its nuclear forces to a level well below that agreed to in the 2002 Treaty of Moscow; negotiation of verifiable and irreversible limits on the total number of nuclear warheads; a recommitment to pursuing nuclear disarmament; the restoration of confidence in negative security guarantees that commit the United States not to use nuclear weapons against nonnuclear powers; ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); and the revision of U.S. doctrine to restrict the planned uses of nuclear weapons.68 Adopting these changes is all the more important because the United States committed itself to many of these policies at the 2000 NPT renewal conference; as a result, these policies are no longer simply part of a broad but ºexible interpretation of the NPT regime, but rather explicit criteria by which states can and do judge U.S. nonproliferation policy.

#### Writing in the area frequently discusses NPRs and posture changes in terms of change and continuity. Here’s an example that concludes continuity is far more pronounced than change in nuclear posture documents starting with the 1990s.

Michal Smetana 18, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Coordinator of the Peace Research Center Prague (PRCP), and Head Researcher at the Experimental Lab for International Security Studies (ELISS) at Stanford University, “A Nuclear Posture Review for the Third Nuclear Age,” The Washington Quarterly, vol. 41, no. 3, Routledge, 07/03/2018, pp. 137–157

My analysis of the 2018 NPR proceeds as follows. First, I situate the general findings of the document into the broader logic of change and continuity in the U.S. post-Cold War nuclear posture. In turn, I discuss the three dimensions of the 2018 NPR that attracted the most attention after the release of the report: (re-)formulation of U.S. declaratory policy for nuclear employment; the development of two new sea-based nuclear weapons; and the future of arms control and nonproliferation initiatives. Finally, I explore the likely implications of these arguments.

The Logic of Continuity and Change

The evolutionary development of U.S. post-Cold War nuclear posture displays visible patterns of both change and continuity. The partial changes, usually in the formulation of broader strategic narrativesFootnote11 and declaratory statements, are mostly driven by two factors: the dynamic development of the external security environment and the difference in strategic beliefs about the impact of U.S. policy choices on the behavior of other actors. In this sense, the 2018 NPR does provide a novel narrative to justify its individual policies: the global threat environment dramatically deteriorated since the previous review; Obama’s “leadership by example” strategy ultimately failed; and the return of great power rivalry now represents the main challenge of U.S. nuclear strategy—primarily referring to Russia as the only country currently matching the nuclear capability of the United States.

However, despite the ambitious agendas of individual presidents, many policy principles and specific decisions maintain a remarkable level of continuity across administrations since the end of the Cold War. This strong resistance to profound changes is sometimes ascribed to the “bureaucracy of deterrence,” referring to the defense officials in the Pentagon that play a key role in developing U.S. nuclear posture.Footnote12 Notably, many strategic force planning and development policies are still informed by the core principles formulated by the U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM) in the early 1990s. To a large extent, these principles remain the linchpin of U.S. nuclear policy that has survived numerous alternative proposals from both within and outside administrations.Footnote13

In the 2018 NPR, the continuation of earlier policies includes the decision to retain and comprehensively modernize all three “legs” of the nuclear triad: strategic bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). Despite its salience in U.S. strategic thinking since the 1960s,Footnote14 the triad concept has been contested; for example, Ashton Carter, then-Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Bill Clinton administration, proposed the elimination of ICBMs for the 1994 NPR, and similar proposals were put forward in the course of making the 2010 NPR.Footnote15 Reportedly, Secretary Mattis was also initially skeptical of the continued need for the triad framework, yet he was eventually persuaded that it was still “the right way to go.”Footnote16

This decision goes hand-in-hand with the complex modernization program for all three legs of the triad initiated under the previous administration. This continuation of Obama’s “program of record” includes developing the B-21 Raider strategic bomber, the new air-launched Long-Range Standoff cruise missile, the COLUMBIA program to replace the current OHIO-class fleet of nuclear submarines, studies for a new SLBM, and the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent as a replacement for Minuteman-III ICBMs. In addition, the 2018 NPR confirms the F-35 jet fighter and upgraded B61 gravity bombs as the future of forward-deployed nonstrategic deterrence capabilities in Europe.Footnote17

The alert posture for U.S. strategic forces remains based on what the 1991 STRATCOM “Phoenix Study”Footnote18 called the “twin triad”: SLBMs and ICBMs providing an on-alert everyday deterrence capability and bombers serving as an additional backup for those other two legs. As such, a substantive portion of the U.S. strategic arsenal remains on the high-alert status, ready to be launched within minutes following the president’s order. Before their respective posture reviews, both George W. Bush and Obama made a promise to seek de-alerting of ballistic missiles—a change of practice that has been sometimes been advocated as a way to increase the decision time and decrease the risk of nuclear use by accident or miscalculation.Footnote19 However, their subsequent NPRs—like the current report—found such a move “destabilizing”Footnote20 and reaffirmed the earlier alert practice.

Although the 2018 NPR does not envision further cuts in the nuclear stockpile, media reports about the intention to increase itFootnote21 are misleading at best: even the addition of new capabilities will modify already existing warheads and the document contained no plans to quantitatively expand the number of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, following the post-Cold War practice, the 2018 NPR also expects to retain a large pool of non-deployed warheads (a “hedge force”), which is unaccounted for under U.S.-Russian arms control agreements, and ready for (re-)upload on delivery systems, if required by an unexpected contingency. In accordance with the latest nuclear guidance adopted under the Obama administration, the hedge force also serves for both intra-leg hedging (i.e., to replace warheads on delivery systems in the same basic category) and inter-leg hedging (i.e., to keep enough extra warheads within each leg of the triad to hedge against potential failures of the other two legs).Footnote22

Like its predecessors, the 2018 NPR also calls for urgent investments into revitalizing the U.S. nuclear weapons complex. Obama’s pledge in 2010 to rule out explosive nuclear testing as a way of maintaining a reliable nuclear arsenal was—quite expectedly—reconsidered in the 2018 report. Nevertheless, despite proposals to resume underground testing,Footnote23 the 2018 NPR does not revoke the 1992 test moratorium. Instead, like Bush’s 2002 NPR, it merely instructs the NNSA to maintain testing capability.Footnote24

In the 2018 NPR, sustaining and modernizing U.S. forces are seen as the bedrock for deterrence strategies that are tailored (i.e., adjusted vis-à-vis multiple actors with divergent capabilities) and flexible (i.e. qualitatively diverse enough to provide a range of options for different contingencies)—the word “flexible” alone appears about 70 times in the report. None of these concepts, however, represent an innovation in the development of U.S. nuclear policy. As early as 1995, STRATCOM’s “Essentials of Post-Cold War Deterrence” prescribed that the “[U.S.] deterrence plans need to be country- and leadership-specific.”Footnote25 The Bush administration then, under the “New Triad” doctrine, advocated the shift from a “‘one size fits all' notion of deterrence toward more tailorable approaches.”Footnote26 Similarly, the early 1990s force planning studies highlighted the flexibility of nuclear forces as the key principle for maintaining deterrence capability under planned reductions in the stockpile, and the 2002 NPR repeatedly stressed that “[g]reater flexibility is needed with respect to nuclear forces and planning.”Footnote27

On a more implicit level, the logic of tailored strategies and flexible forces also informed the key strategic documents of the Obama administration. From what is known about the current nuclear strike plans, they are already highly flexible, and the 2018 NPR prescriptions probably do not warrant any changes to the current nuclear guidance.Footnote28 As a matter of fact, STRATCOM Commander General John E. Hyten made the following remark about a year ago: “I actually have a series of very flexible options from conventional all the way up to large-scale nuke that I can advise the president on to give him options on what he would want to do […] I’m very comfortable today with the flexibility of our response options.”

#### Here’s one about Britain.

John Baylis 5, Head of the Department of Politics and International Relations and Pro-Vice-Chancellor at Swansea University, “British Nuclear Doctrine: The ‘Moscow Criterion’ and the Polaris Improvement Programme,” Contemporary British History Vol. 19, No. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 53–65

This article focuses on continuity and change in British nuclear doctrine, especially in terms of targeting policy. After an initial assessment in 1945 that nuclear weapons would be scarce and would therefore have to be targeted, if war broke out, against urban centres, British nuclear strategy in the early Cold War period was based upon the concept of counter-force deterrence. This meant that projected nuclear forces were targeted against Soviet military forces in order to reduce damage to the United Kingdom because of its particular vulnerability in the nuclear age. Just as Britain deployed its first nuclear weapons, however, the superpowers were developing thermonuclear weapons. This led to a re-evaluation of British nuclear doctrine in the late 1950s in which Britain sought greater interdependence with the United States and, at the same time, stressed the importance of maintaining an independent targeting policy. ‘Deterrence in concert’ with the United States involved targeting a mix of military and urban centres, while ‘unilateral deterrence’ now targeted Soviet cities. The Polaris force, deployed in the late 1960s, was particularly suited for counter-value targeting. Almost immediately, however, Soviet ABM developments caused strategic planners in Britain to undertake an improvement programme, designed to ensure that counter-vale deterrence maintained its credibility. Critical to this conception, it was believed, was the ability to target Moscow, and the secret British Chevaline project was designed essentially to maintain this priority. This article sets out to explain the importance of the ‘Moscow criterion’ in British nuclear doctrine and the difficulties Britain faced in trying to maintain the capabilities, which would achieve what successive governments perceived to be the central requirements of deterrence.

#### Here's another one about the NPR.

Trevor McCrisken & Maxwell Downman 19, McCrisken is Lecturer in American Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick; Downman is nuclear policy analyst for the British American Security Information Council (BASIC), “‘Peace through Strength’: Europe and NATO Deterrence beyond the US Nuclear Posture Review,” International Affairs, vol. 95, no. 2, 03/01/2019, pp. 277–295

Much of the literature on Trump’s nuclear policy seeks to shed light on the degree of continuity or change with previous US administrations. For example, a number of former senior US policy-makers emphasized the NPR’s continuity, arguing that it was ‘in the mainstream of US nuclear policy’ as well as ‘prudent’ and ‘modest’ in its response to Russia.2 Other commentators, meanwhile, criticized it as a bold departure from previous nuclear policy positions, asserting that it ‘hastens the rise of a more dangerous world’ by openly embracing nuclear competition.3 Ana Péczeli notes that while parts of the NPR align with previous positions on modernization and posture, it appears to ‘put arms control measures on the back seat’.4 Heather Williams maintains, however, that changes in the NPR are ‘more subtle’, contending that the largest shift was the acceptance of a cross-domain definition of strategic stability.5

Absent from the assessments to date, however, has been an attempt to place nuclear policy developments within a fuller understanding of the deeper strategic direction being taken by the United States under its current conservative Republican leadership. This article will therefore offer a perspective that situates the Trump administration’s nuclear policy within the legacy of the long-held Republican Party idea of ‘peace through strength’. In this broader context, it will focus on European reactions to Trump’s policy to demonstrate how the changes to US nuclear policy, though intended to bolster nuclear deterrence and assurance to allies, actually challenge widely held European attitudes on nuclear deterrence, disarmament and arms control. Since February 2018, a number of European political leaders have expressed concerns over the direction of US nuclear policy, ranging from disquiet over the US decision to develop new low-yield nuclear weapons through opposition to the US abandonment of the Iran nuclear deal and the announced withdrawal from the INF Treaty to wider frustrations over the state of transatlantic relations and deteriorating relations with Russia.6 Of course, European views on nuclear weapons are not uniform. As this article shows, reactions have differed somewhat from state to state, and there has not been a completely unified view among European NATO members. Nonetheless, it is argued that the Trump administration’s nuclear policy broadly challenges the more traditionally ‘European’ approaches to the issues of nuclear declaratory policy, faith in the deterrent value of existing nuclear weapons platforms, and the future of arms control.

### “Reduce Role”

#### Reduce the Role allows every aff in the appendix—sole purpose/NFU, cyber, ICBMs, etc—guarantees assurance/deterrence DAs

Rusten, Vice President of the Global Nuclear Policy Program at the Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2021 (Lynn Rusten, 10-7-2021, "Reducing the Role of Nuclear Weapons Will Make America Safer," National Interest, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/reducing-role-nuclear-weapons-will-make-america-safer-194957>, DoA 4/29/2023)

What a U.S. president says about the role of nuclear weapons is vitally important. It not only establishes nuclear policy for the U.S. government, it tells the world—allies and adversaries alike—how the United States views the role of nuclear weapons in national and global security, now and in the future. Further, **a president’s public expression on the role of nuclear weapons matters for U.S. leadership on**[**nonproliferation**](https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/last-thing-middle-east-needs-nuclear-arms-race-194886)**.**

Nuclear weapons have not been used in more than seventy-five years, but the possibility they could be used is rising due to tensions among nuclear-armed states, advances in technologies such as cyber that introduce new avenues for miscalculation, and the erosion of arms control and other measures that limit nuclear competition and paths to conflict.

The **Nuclear Posture** Review **should be** guided by the objective President Joe Biden articulated as a presidential candidate: **to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategy. As long as nuclear weapons exist, they will play an important role in deterrence. But reducing their role means limiting—not increasing—the circumstances under which the United States would contemplate the use of nuclear weapons. U.S. policy should state**, as candidate Biden [proposed](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-nuclear-weapons-elections-joe-biden-russia-1299ae16f3f21db12e4a41ce2392a0f7), **that the sole purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter or, if necessary, respond to the use of nuclear weapons by other countries.** **Moving toward this policy will require close coordination with allies to strengthen their confidence in our conventional capacity to deter, and if necessary, respond to non-nuclear attacks, including cyber.**

**The president** must also review the $1.5 trillion nuclear modernization effort to consider whether all programs now underway are required to meet his policy objectives. He **should cancel the proposed nuclear sea-launched cruise missile—a system that would be highly destabilizing. The largest yield nuclear bomb in the U.S. arsenal**, the forty-year-old B83 designed to be delivered by aircraft, **was slated for elimination** by the Obama administration, **but revived by** the **Trump** administration. **It should be retired. Whether and when to replace the current**[**intercontinental ballistic missile**](https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/roll-back-nuclear-modernization-programs-mr-president-194912)**force with a new missile, the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent, also merits close examination.**

**The president should take immediate steps to reduce the risks of nuclear use, including by miscalculation or inadvertent actions, and to reassure the American people as well as other countries regarding U.S. processes and procedures. He should put guardrails around the**[**sole authority**](https://www.voanews.com/a/usa_us-politics_democrats-want-biden-relinquish-sole-authority-nuclear-launches/6202565.html)**of the president to authorize a nuclear strike by establishing procedures providing for, time permitting, consultations with key members of the cabinet and with congressional leaders, should such a contingency arise. He should order a “failsafe review” of U.S. nuclear weapons and command and control and warning systems to ensure they are continually hardened against cyber interference that could lead to the unintended or miscalculated use of a nuclear weapon.** The review should consider other steps to protect against unintended failures of the systems and procedures in place to ensure that they will operate correctly and only as intended.

Biden must also define his objectives for U.S.-Russian and U.S.-Chinese nuclear relations. The United States and Russia possess [more than 90 percent](https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-russia-say-held-intensive-substantive-arms-control-talks-geneva-2021-09-30/) of the world’s nuclear arsenals, and nuclear arms competition and the risk of conflict between these nuclear superpowers persists. While the president was wise to extend the New START Treaty with Russia through 2026, now our two countries have only a few years to negotiate a new set of agreements to maintain verifiable limits on U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear forces beyond 2026. Such agreements must also address [other types](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/art-negotiating-non-strategic-nuclear-weapons-186848) of nuclear weapons and strategic non-nuclear capabilities. The posture review should enable further nuclear limits and reductions with Russia to enhance security for the United States and our allies.

As for China, its nuclear arsenal is [growing](https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/pentagon-sounds-alarm-about-china%E2%80%99s-nuclear-weapons-expansion-191669) but currently less than one-tenth of that of the United States or Russia. The review must assess the near and longer-term implications of China’s nuclear modernization. But it would be a monumental mistake to determine that China’s nuclear program today precludes the United States from pursuing limits and reductions with Russia in a successor agreement to New START. To the contrary, China is more likely to engage in multilateral arms control once the United States and Russia have further reduced their arsenals. As a priority, the United States should pursue crisis management, risk reduction, and strategic stability dialogue with China. Near-term steps to reduce the risk of conflict, to better understand each side’s security concerns, and to discuss concerns including questions about China’s nuclear policies and plans, will provide the foundation for future risk reduction, confidence-building, and arms control measures.

**The president’s focus and leadership are essential to ensuring that the Nuclear Posture Review reflects his priorities and his deeply held views on the role and future direction of nuclear weapons in U.S. and global security. Our world—and his legacy—depend on it**.

#### Reduce the role

Brad Roberts 21, Director of the Center for Global Security Research at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy in the U.S. Department of Defense, Ph.D. in International Relations from Erasmus University, “Orienting the 2021 Nuclear Posture Review,” The Washington Quarterly, Vol. 44, No. 2, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2021.1933740

There are three basic approaches to further reducing the role of nuclear weapons in US defense strategy: one is to wield an ax—to eliminate one of the remaining functions. The second is to wield a scalpel—to pare back more judiciously, putting the emphasis on changes to the “how” rather than the “what.” The third is to wield a sledgehammer—to entirely replace current strategy with a radical alternative. As it works to reduce the role, what else should the Biden administration do to ensure that deterrence remains effective and that the extended deterrence commitment to allies remains strong and credible?

#### “reduce role” works for disarm/non-prolif

Cirincione, 2022 (Joseph, President of the Ploughshares Fund, February 7, "Achieving a Safer U.S. Nuclear Posture," Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, <https://quincyinst.org/report/achieving-a-safer-u-s-nuclear-posture/>, DoA 4/29/2023)

Carnegie Endowment scholars Toby Dalton and Ariel Levite warn that “**stalled progress toward nuclear disarmament by states with nuclear weapons,” and the spread of sensitive nuclear materials and technologies, have pushed the global nonproliferation regime to the breaking point**. Biden’s AUKUS deal, announced simultaneously in Canberra, London, and Washington last September, sets a dangerous precedent, allowing Australia for the first time to enrich uranium to near-bomb levels of purity to fuel nuclear reactors in new attack submarines it will now acquire, thus opening the door to future proliferation. **Urgent steps are needed**, argue Dalton and Levite, “**to restore the nonproliferation regime’s role as a bulwark of global stability.”**

**Restoring the regime will require policies that reduce the role and number of U.S. nuclear weapons, that recognize the profound moral questions raised by the use of these weapons** (and the consequent civilian toll), **and that seek to avoid risky or dangerous doctrines and postures that can trigger nuclear war**, as Kennedy put it, “by accident, miscalculation, or madness.” Nuclear weapons may be a means of deterrence in some cases, but they are never a tool for waging war.

#### Reduce used in context of disarmament

Gastellum, Researcher at PNNL, 2012 (ZN, “Denuclearization and Nuclear Disarmament – Present Situation and Prospects”, prepared for the Department of Energy, <https://www.pnnl.gov/main/publications/external/technical_reports/PNNL-22092.pdf>, DoA 4/29/2023)

According to the Nuclear Threat Initiative, **the international community has not yet agreed upon a legal definition of nuclear disarmament. However, international agreements generally describe nuclear disarmament as “the process of reducing the quantity and/or capabilities of military weapons and/or military forces**.” For the purpose of this paper**, nuclear disarmament will be defined as the act of reducing, limiting, or abolishing nuclear weapons.**

The term denuclearization is even less agreed upon in the international community, and appears rarely in the context of arms control and nuclear nonproliferation. For the purpose of this paper, denuclearization will be defined as the elimination of the military infrastructure and materials necessary for nuclear weapons production.

#### Reduce the role works for sole purpose affs

Kimball, Executive Director of the Arms Control Foundation, 2021 (Daryl, October 17, "Biden’s NPR Must Reduce the Role of Nuclear Weapons," No Publication, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2021-10/focus/bidens-npr-must-reduce-role-nuclear-weapons>, DoA 4/29/2023)

President Joe **Biden** clearly recognizes the problem and the value of diplomacy and nuclear restraint in solving it. His **Interim National Security Strategic Guidance states that his administration will** seek to “re-establish [its] credibility as a leader in arms control” and “**take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in [U.S.] national security strategy**.” In February, Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to extend the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) and negotiate further nuclear limits.

But it remains to be seen whether Biden’s recently launched Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) will lead to meaningful adjustments in the dangerous Cold War-era nuclear policies and costly nuclear modernization programs he inherited. Earlier this year, [Biden blew the chance](https://www.armscontrol.org/issue-briefs/2021-07/bidens-disappointing-first-nuclear-weapons-budget) to meaningfully scale back his predecessor’s bloated $44 billion annual nuclear budget.

Going forward, Biden needs to play a more direct role in the NPR to ensure it reflects his priorities and does not reinforce the dangerous overreliance on nuclear weapons and exacerbate global nuclear competition. As I and other experts recommended in a [recent letter to the White House](https://www.armscontrol.org/sites/default/files/files/documents/Letter_NPR_POTUS-09152021.pdf), the president should make important changes in several key areas.

First, t**he NPR should include a declaratory policy that substantially narrows the role of nuclear weapons**, consistent with Biden’s stated views. In 2020, he wrote, “I believe that **the sole purpose of the U.S. nuclear arsenal should be deterring—and, if necessary, retaliating against—a nuclear attack**. As president, I will work to put that belief into practice.”

**A “sole purpose” policy that rules out the use of nuclear weapons in a preemptive strike or in response to a nonnuclear attack on the United States or its allies would increase strategic stability, reduce the risk of nuclear war, and help operationalize the principle that** Biden and Putin agreed to in July that “**a nuclear war cannot be won** and must never be fought.” The more options there are to use nuclear weapons, the more likely it is that they will be used.

#### Reduce the Role—deterring North Korea

Bennett, 2021 (Bruce W., Professor, Pardee RAND Graduate School, October 20, "Reducing the Role of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Could Make North Korea Happy," No Publication, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2021/10/reducing-the-role-of-us-nuclear-weapons-could-make.html>, DOA 4/29/2023)

**According to President Joe Biden's**[**Interim National Security Strategy**](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/03/interim-national-security-strategic-guidance/) issued in March, **the United States “will take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, while ensuring our strategic deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective and that our extended deterrence commitments to our allies remain strong and credible**.” [**Biden believes**](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2021-10/focus/bidens-npr-must-reduce-role-nuclear-weapons)**“that the sole purpose of the U.S. nuclear arsenal should be deterring—and, if necessary, retaliating against—a nuclear attack.**” But many U.S. officials believe that a deterrent threat can be ineffective unless military plans and capabilities are prepared to exercise that threat. A [U.S. Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) underway](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2021-09/news/biden-administration-begins-nuclear-posture-review) will examine these issues.

**The threats emanating from North Korea pose a useful case study for the potential implications of reducing the role of U.S. nuclear weapons**. North Korea has [apparently produced several dozen nuclear weapons](https://www.38north.org/2021/04/estimating-north-koreas-nuclear-stockpiles-an-interview-with-siegfried-hecker/) and [has threatened to use them to defend North Korea](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/north-korea-under-no-circumstances-will-give-up-its-nuclear-weapons/2017/08/07/33b8d319-fbb2-4559-8f7d-25e968913712_story.html). Of course, we have to remember that [North Korea claims that](https://www.rfa.org/english/news/korea/625-06252021155957.html) it was invaded by South Korea in 1950 to start the Korean War when the opposite is true. Thus, **the United States has to anticipate that North Korea could use nuclear weapons in any new aggression against South Korea.**

### “Reduce Reliance”

#### Includes arms control, declaratory policy, force posture changes, and quantitative reductions (and has link uq issues)

Costlow 21 – Senior Analyst at the National Institute for Public Policy and formerly Special Assistant in the Office of Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy at the Pentagon

Matthew R. Costlow, “Reducing U.S. Reliance on Nuclear Weapons While Others Do Not,” Real Clear Defense, 4-20-21, https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2021/04/20/reducing\_us\_reliance\_on\_nuclear\_weapons\_while\_others\_do\_not\_773422.html

The 2010 NPR stated that the United States reduced, and sought to reduce more, its reliance on nuclear weapons both through arms control (e.g., the New START Treaty) as well as unilateral initiatives (declaratory policy and force posture changes). While reductions in the number of U.S. nuclear weapons during the Obama administration were part of its overall effort to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons in U.S. national security strategy, the 2010 NPR demonstrates that cuts to the U.S. nuclear arsenal are not the only means of reducing reliance on nuclear weapons.

#### Reducing a stockpile’s size is “reducing” “reliance”

NATO 23 – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

“NATO’s nuclear deterrence policy and forces,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last updated 4-11-23, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\_50068.htm

NATO seeks its security at the lowest possible level of forces and is fully committed to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Since the height of the Cold War, it has reduced the size of its land-based nuclear weapons stockpile by over 90 per cent, reducing the number of nuclear weapons stationed in Europe and its reliance on nuclear weapons in strategy.

#### It includes downsizing the role and number of nukes

Bradley 15 – analyst for the National Institute for Public Policy and provides on-site support at United States Strategic Command in the Plans and Policy Directorate

Jennifer Bradley, “Increasing Uncertainty: The Dangers of Relying on Conventional Forces for Nuclear Deterrence,” Air & Space Power Journal, July–August 2015, pg. 72, https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Volume-29\_Issue-4/V-Bradley.pdf

Reduced Emphasis on Nuclear Weapons

The first priority of the NPR was to reduce the dangers of nuclear proliferation and the threats of nuclear terrorism. Part of the road map to this goal involved diminishing the reliance on nuclear weapons in US security strategy. The rationale was that by demonstrating its commitment to downsizing the role and numbers of nuclear weapons, the United States would “persuade our NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] partners to join with us in adopting the measures needed to reinvigorate the non-proliferation regime and secure nuclear materials worldwide against theft or seizure by terrorist groups.”10

### “Define a Sole Purpose”

#### It would define requirements of deterrence and when the US would consider nuclear use

Bradley 15 – analyst for the National Institute for Public Policy and provides on-site support at United States Strategic Command in the Plans and Policy Directorate

Jennifer Bradley, “Increasing Uncertainty: The Dangers of Relying on Conventional Forces for Nuclear Deterrence,” Air & Space Power Journal, July–August 2015, pg. 72, https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Volume-29\_Issue-4/V-Bradley.pdf

* Defining sole purpose is a critical task for the administration’s defense policy review.
  + As a central component of an integrated defense policy that will strengthen US deterrence and assurance credibility, sole purpose should be defined at the level of the NDS.
  + A sole type definition would state that the United States would consider nuclear use in response to a certain type of attack, having modest effects on a narrow set of plans but few effects on force structure.
  + A sole function definition would define what is and what is not a requirement of deterrence, potentially removing certain strategic or nonstrategic roles of nuclear weapons.

#### It includes a deterrence-only posture and NFU

Bradley 15 – analyst for the National Institute for Public Policy and provides on-site support at United States Strategic Command in the Plans and Policy Directorate

Jennifer Bradley, “Increasing Uncertainty: The Dangers of Relying on Conventional Forces for Nuclear Deterrence,” Air & Space Power Journal, July–August 2015, pg. 72, https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Volume-29\_Issue-4/V-Bradley.pdf

* Depending on how it is defined, sole purpose could have transformational effects on nearly every aspect of nuclear weapons policy or relatively modest effects. It could accommodate or incorporate a range of related policy options, like a deterrence-only posture or no first use.

Nongovernmental analysts can contribute to sound policymaking by being less constrained than officials often are in exploring the difficulties of achieving nuclear deterrence with prudently tolerable risks. Accordingly, the review envisioned and summarized here explicitly elucidates the dilemmas, uncertainties, and tradeoffs that come with current and possible alternative nuclear policies and forces. In the body of this review, we analyze extant declaratory policy, unclassified employment policy, and plans for offensive and defensive force postures, and then propose changes to several of them. We also will emphasize the need for innovative approaches to arms control.

### Misc. Contextual Uses of Verbs

#### “Adopt” declaratory policy

Moniz and Nunn 21 – co-chair and chief executive officer of NTI and former U.S. Secretary of Energy; co-Founder, co-chair, and strategic advisor at NTI and former U.S. Senator

Ernest J. Moniz and Sam Nunn, “Ch 1: Strengthening the Foundation for Nuclear Stability,” in Special Report, U.S. Nuclear Policies for a Safer World, Nuclear Threat Initiative, 6-10-21, https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/us-nuclear-policies-safer-world/

These steps include:

* Undertaking an internal “failsafe review” to ensure that U.S. nuclear weapons and command-and-control and warning systems are hardened against cyberattacks and to identify other steps that could increase decision time for leaders in a crisis and reduce the risk that a terrible miscalculation could lead to inadvertent nuclear conflict. This review should reexamine post-launch destruct devices on U.S. nuclear weapons and other measures to reduce the risk of nuclear war. Other states with nuclear weapons should be encouraged to conduct their own “failsafe reviews” to reduce the chances of a mistake, an accident, or a blunder leading to nuclear use.
* As part of a new nuclear posture review, adopting a new declaratory policy that narrows the range of scenarios in which the United States would consider the use of nuclear weapons, including by declaring that deterring a nuclear attack against the United States and its allies and partners is the “sole purpose” of U.S. nuclear weapons. This will require careful consultations with U.S. allies in Europe and the Asia-Pacific and reassurances of the U.S. commitment to—and capabilities for—their defense.

#### “Adopt” declaratory policy

Rose and Bahney 19 – senior fellow for security and strategy at the Brookings Institution and former U.S. assistant secretary of state for arms control, verification and compliance; analyst specializing in 21st century strategic conflict

Frank A. Rose and Benjamin Bahney, “Reassuring Allies and Strengthening Strategic Stability: An Approach To Nuclear Modernization For Democrats,” War on the Rocks, 4-16-19, https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/reassuring-allies-and-strengthening-strategic-stability-an-approach-to-nuclear-modernization-for-democrats/

Some Democratic lawmakers have introduced legislation calling on the United States to adopt a declaratory policy of “no first use” of nuclear weapons. Proponents argue that it would reduce the risk of nuclear use and miscalculation and set an example for the rest of the world to follow. However, given the worsening security environment and the renewed need to reassure allies, we strongly caution Democrats against embracing this policy. A “no first use” declaration would signal to allies that the United States might not support them in the face of Russian and Chinese coercive nuclear threats.

#### “Change” declaratory policy

Goldston 21 – professor of Astrophysical Sciences at Princeton University

Robert J. Goldston, “Bilateral strategic stability: What the United States should discuss with Russia. And China,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 10-14-21, https://thebulletin.org/2021/10/bilateral-strategic-stability-what-the-united-states-should-discuss-with-russia-and-china/

Colin H. Kahl, President Biden’s under secretary of defense for policy, spoke on June 23 at the 2021 Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference. He said, in substance, about nuclear declaratory policy,

“I’m not going to tell you what our declaratory policy is and how much it will change, because ultimately that’s a decision the president will make, and the president hasn’t made that decision. … I think that we can all agree that nuclear weapons are a credible deterrent against existential threats. But I think people of big intellects and good faith can disagree about how explicit or ambiguous we should be about scenarios under which we might consider the use of nuclear weapons below that threshold. And that is a debate that we will have internally.”

#### “Change” declaratory policy

Heer 21 – Distinguished Fellow at the Center for the National Interest dealing with Chinese and East Asian issues; former National Intelligence Officer for East Asia

Paul Heer, “Has Washington’s Policy Toward Taiwan Crossed the Rubicon?” The National Interest, 12-10-21, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/has-washington%E2%80%99s-policy-toward-taiwan-crossed-rubicon-197877

In any event, the statements by Ratner and Kritenbrink essentially make the case that Washington is opposed to even peaceful unification of Taiwan with the mainland, because the island’s autonomy from Chinese control is critical to vital U.S. interests and regional security. In that regard, Ratner took a major step into the debate over whether Washington should abandon “strategic ambiguity” in favor of “strategic clarity”—publicly affirming a commitment to defend Taiwan from a Chinese attack. In an exchange with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Robert Menendez, Ratner said it was his “personal view” that “a change in U.S. declaratory policy would not meaningfully strengthen deterrence” against Beijing. But in his formal statement, Ratner nonetheless seemed to approach that line. He later said the Pentagon “remains committed to maintaining the capacity of the United States (invoking the TRA) to resist the resort to force or other forms of coercion that may jeopardize the security of the people of Taiwan. Let me be clear that this is an absolute priority: The PRC is the Department’s pacing challenge and a Taiwan contingency is the pacing scenario. We are modernizing our capabilities, updating U.S. force posture, and developing new operational concepts accordingly.” That may not have been “a change in US declaratory policy,” but it certainly sounded like a determination to defend Taiwan if it is attacked.

#### “Shift” declaratory policy

Bugos 22 – Senior Policy Analyst at the Arms Control Association

Shannon Bugos, “Congress Boosts Defense Budget By $25 Billion,” Arms Control Association, Jan-Feb 2022, https://www.armscontrol.org/country-resources/united-states?page=11

Such a shift in declaratory policy would reduce the risk of nuclear war in response to bad intelligence or a false alarm or circumstances that do not threaten the survival of our nation. It would increase strategic stability and help operationalize the principle that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.”

This would send an important signal about U.S. intentions and value to the world, and it would distinguish the United States policies from those of some other bad nuclear actors.

Some argue that shifting to a “sole purpose” policy would undermine extended U.S. nuclear deterrence. This assertion doesn’t hold up under scrutiny.

## Critical Affs---‘United States’ & ‘Reduce’

### United States = People

#### “The United States” as synonymous with government isn’t an “immutable fact” – US is never uniform.

Roberts ’21 [Brian Russell Roberts is Professor of English at Brigham Young University. He received a PhD in English from the University of Virginia in 2008. His scholarship and teaching focus on American Studies, African American and black diasporan literature and culture, modernism/modernity, and archipelagic studies. He has been a Fulbright Senior Scholar at Universitas Sebelas Maret in Solo, Indonesia. “Borderwaters: Amid the Archipelagic States of America.” Duke University Press. 2021. P 26-27. ISBN 9781478013204 //shree]

The scenes that come into view via this survey of Boundaries of the United States and the Several States should draw attention to commentary by Alyosha Goldstein in the introduction to Formations of United States Colonialism, wherein he reminds us that “the United States of America has never been a uniform or unequivocal geopolitical entity.… Rather, the United States encompasses a historically variable and uneven constellation of state and local governments, indigenous nations, unincorporated territories, free associated commonwealths, protectorates, federally administered public lands, military bases, export processing zones, colonias, and anomalies such as the District of Columbia.”58 Also turning his sights on this multifarious version of the United States, Paul Lai has played on the phrase contiguous United States to coin the term discontiguous states of America, framing the United States as a geopolitical entity whose “discontiguous” qualities permit only a “discosntinuous logic of unity, one in which leaps of logic are necessary to create a semblance of wholeness.”59 Drawing on Lai’s terminology to assess not only “the discontiguous American Empire” but also the ways in which studies of US American cultures have themselves become discontiguous in assessing imperial and other US discontiguities, Craig Santos Perez has looked toward archipelagic American studies, asserting that an “archipelagic turn offers a promising analytic to navigate the transnational, transatlantic, transpacific, transindigenous, and transhemispheric turns in the now discontiguous archipelago of American studies.”60 Bringing the US Geological Survey’s “several states” and Lai’s “discontiguous states” into the ambit of what Perez has referred to as an “archipelagic turn,” the present study, as its subtitle suggests, limns a set of analytic categories that may aid us in assessing cultural formations that have arisen amid the archipelagic states of America, a phrase I use to refer to the archipelagic portions and aspects of the United States of America. This is a postcontinental redescription of the United States that asks vast and unintegrated ocean and island territories to speak from their points of disjunction and quandary, placing pressure as well on archipelagic spaces that have generally been seen as continental. Here the archipelagic as a framework does not promise to integrate these points or to make them anything other than discontiguous, and yet it does offer, as Perez suggests, a navigational heuristic, one that permits studied and dexterous movement among, to borrow from Cuban theorist Antonio Benítez-Rojo, their discontinuous conjunctions.61 These are the conjunctions and discontiguities of the US borderwaters, realms where weird sovereignties and nonsovereignties range from those showcased in the Insular Cases to those infusing the seaborne plastic shards lodged in the digestive tracts of Laysan albatrosses.

Borderwaters: A Stone Skipped across the Sea

To this point in the introduction, the question of borders has been an initiating conceit and subsequently woven throughout discussions of the United States as an oceanic and archipelagic nation. The boundaries of the EEZ have given rise to the image and fact of a United States that claims more ocean space than it does land space, a United States that unexpectedly borders twenty-one other countries, a Glissantian United States that archipelagizes beyond the continental frontier and beyond its maritime borders with paradoxical claims to territory outside of its own borders. This is a United States whose shifting boundaries are recounted rhythmically by the US Geological Survey across several editions of Boundaries of the United States and the Several States. Certainly, in this light, and in light of the near-universal recognition and sense of utility the term borderlands has attained within analyses of US and broader American cultures since the 1990s, one might feel justified in suggesting that the archipelagic states of America constitute a borderland or a set of borderlands. For me, this question came to a head at the 2012 American Studies Association Convention, held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where Stephens and I organized a session titled “Archipelagic American Studies” and where I attended a topically allied session titled “Islands of Resistance: Taiwanese American Studies in the Twenty-first Century.” After island-oriented presentations by Philip Deloria, Rob Wilson, Birgit Däwes, and Hsinya Huang, the session commentator, Iping Liang of National Taiwan Normal University, gave excellent commentary in which she, in passing, described islands as “borderlands,” joining other critics whose work has gravitated toward this same land-oriented critical framework to describe archipelagic and oceanic spaces.62 During the audience comment period, I pointed out the terrestrial bias inherent in the term borderlands and wondered, advancing a term I had just begun using that year, what a borderwaters framework would look like in the context of the session’s titular “Islands of Resistance.”63 Liang’s reply at the moment was a rather cagey caution against essentializing geographic forms in ways that mark a distinction between terrestrial and watery surfaces. But since 2012 I have continued to wonder whether terrestrial metaphors such as borderlands and crossroads do not already stack the epistemological deck against—if not fully essentialize—our grapplings with archipelagic spaces and vast swaths of the planet that are, in Patricia Yaeger’s words, “not geo- but aquacentric.”64

#### The U.S. is not just the government, there are tons of different ways to interpret the term.

Roberts ’21 [Brian Russell Roberts is Professor of English at Brigham Young University. He received a PhD in English from the University of Virginia in 2008. His scholarship and teaching focus on American Studies, African American and black diasporan literature and culture, modernism/modernity, and archipelagic studies. He has been a Fulbright Senior Scholar at Universitas Sebelas Maret in Solo, Indonesia. “Borderwaters: Amid the Archipelagic States of America.” Duke University Press. 2021. P 66-67. ISBN 9781478013204 //shree]

In this version of the United States—that is, in the archipelagic states of America—a person may (be compelled to) selectively forget or remember their interiority or exteriority to US America, whether prompted by personal ethical commitments or by imposed governmental designs. Johnny discussed multiple ways of being in multiple and contradictory US Americas, with a sensibility convergent with Glissant’s mode of archipelagic thinking: you may “find yourself in some part of [the] archipelago without being in the entire archipelago, without being troubled by this.”130 Johnny’s archipelagic states of America have been multiple and interlapping: a US America “synonymous with the U.S. state,” as Paul Lyons has critiqued, and yet an “ ‘America’ [that] is not so easy to find anymore,” as Rob Wilson has described; a United States whose “present configuration is not an immutable fact,” as projected by Tiara R. Na'puti and Michael Lujan Bevacqua, and a US America whose present configuration isn’t fully present but is instead riddled with alter/native undercommons, as Stephanie Nohelani Teves has addressed.131 To expand on Glissant’s archipelagic thinking: more than being in a part of the archipelago without being in the entirety of the archipelago, archipelagic thinkers may find themselves in—and find ways to recognize, negotiate, embrace, contest, and exist plurally within—portions of multiple and interlapping archipelagoes at once (see fig. 1.5).

In this interlapping of old and new stories, in this shifting of being amid shifting lands and waters, we see realms of the borderwaters that look toward geographic form—the form of the island, the form of the shoal, the form of the archipelago—and imagine new relationalities among, for instance, the archipelagic Pacific, archipelagic Blackness, the archipelagic states of America, and the always already archipelagic form of Turtle Island.132 These borderwaters are places of the geo-ontologically plural and amphibious: islands and oceans, riverine archipelagoes and archipelagic thoughts, the American Mediterranean and a US America set amid water, Pukapuka and Puerto Rico, main currents and cruel jokes, retrospect and prospect, archipelagic currents and hurricanes—and, not least among these, interlapping pre- and noncontinental imaginaries as keys to a postcontinental imagination of the archipelagic states of America.

#### It’s the people of the United States that establishes its authority

SI 13 (The Schiller Institute, “Why the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution Matters,” 2013, ) kva

First, the document sets forth the absolute sovereignty of the United States Federal government, in declaring the establishment of the government as an instrument of all the people of the United States. This concept is much misunderstood by populists and others, who wish to make their marks in life through rebellion against the "powers that be." **It is the people of the United States, not some "outside" authority, which is establishing this government, for the purposes stated therein, and therefore it is the people who have the authority,** and the responsibility, to ensure that the purposes of the government are carried out.

#### "United States” is the people

Law Dictionary No Date – Free Online Legal Dictionary Featuring Black’s Law Dictionary, 2nd Ed. (“UNITED STATES OF AMERICA Definition & Legal Meaning”, The Law Dictionary, , No Date)

**UNITED STATES** **OF AMERICA** **Definition & Legal Meaning**

Definition & Citations:

the name that is given to **the union of** **all** **of the** **states** **under the US Constitution where** **government control is vested in the people** of the states

### Reduce = Whatever you want

#### It just means to bring to a specific state

Meriam Webster ND – A Dictionary

Meriam Webster, “Reduce,” https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reduce

: to bring to a specified state or condition

#### Or it could mean to “reduce complexity”

Collins ND – A different Dictionary.

Collins, “Reduce,” https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/reduce

If something is changed to a different or less complicated form, you can say that it is reduced to that form.

# Aff—Policy Cases

## General Aff

#### Overview—what has changed since 2010 and even 2016? CHINA—they’re modernizing their forces and moving away from a minimum deterrence model of submarine-based nukes. This destabilizes the bilateral deterrence between the US and Russia that has existed since the Cold War.

The Economist, 2022 (“How Will America Deal With Three-Way Nuclear Deterrence” November 29, <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2022/11/29/how-will-america-deal-with-three-way-nuclear-deterrence>, DoA 4/27/2023, DVOG)

THE LANKY Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missile and its squat naval cousin, Trident, stand sentinel near Omaha, outside the headquarters of America's Strategic Command, which is in charge of America's fearsome nuclear arsenal. Inside, STRATCOM's personnel say they have been at "battle stations" since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, [watching](https://www.economist.com/europe/2022/10/17/how-to-detect-an-imminent-russian-nuclear-attack) for any sign that Vladimir Putin might act on his threats to use nukes. For Admiral Charles Richard, the commander, **the war in Ukraine marks a new era in which big powers use nuclear weapons to coerce rivals. But "this is just the warm-up**," he declared on November 3rd. "**The big one is coming. And it isn't going to be very long before we're going to get tested."**

**The "big one" is China, which is fast expanding its nuclear stockpile from about 200-300 warheads at the start of the decade to perhaps 1,500 by 2035**, according to the Pentagon's latest annual report on China's [military power](https://www.economist.com/china/2022/11/03/xi-jinping-wants-ready-soldiers-and-loyal-generals), published on November 29th (see chart). **Its arsenal would thus start to resemble those of America and Russia, whose long-distance "strategic" nukes are capped at 1,550** deployed warheads each under the New START treaty (though, unlike China, they have thousands more shorter-range nukes as well as warheads in storage).

The cold war, in which America and the Soviet Union menaced each other with tens of thousands of nukes, was scary enough. **In the new age America confronts not just Russia but also China. New weapons-among them hypersonic missiles that are hard to detect and shoot down, and space and cyber weapons that threaten command-and-control systems-may unsettle the nuclear balance. Worse, decades of arms-control agreements may end by 2026. A new nuclear-arms race looms. Many think that it has already started.**

Admiral Richard last year sounded the alarm that China was staging a "strategic breakout". Now he warns that America is losing the military contest: "As I assess our level of deterrence against China, the ship is slowly sinking." President Joe Biden says America faces a "decisive decade". In a flurry of national-security policy documents this autumn his administration classifies Russia as the "acute" threat and China as the "pacing challenge".

**"By the 2030s the United States will, for the first time in its history, face two major nuclear powers as strategic competitors and potential adversaries. This will create new stresses on stability and new challenges for deterrence, assurance, arms control, and risk reduction," declares the Nuclear Posture Review** (NPR).

STRATCOM says it needs a new generation of theorists. Admiral Richard compares the conundrum to the three-body problem of astrophysics. **The motion of two celestial bodies in orbit around each other is easily predicted by Newton's mechanics. Add a third body, and their movement becomes chaotically unpredictable. Should America keep concentrating on Russia, whose nuclear arsenal still poses "an enduring existential threat", and accord less priority to China, or vice versa**?

Like many nuclear powers, China long adhered to a form of minimum deterrence, whereby a few hundred warheads are deemed sufficient to ensure enough survive a surprise attack to inflict devastating retaliation. In the cold war America and the Soviet Union lived instead by the mad maths of "counterforce", believing that nuclear war could be won with ever more weapons, many aimed at their foe's nukes.

From 60,000-odd warheads in the mid-1980s, their stockpiles shrank through arms-control deals. New START now limits their "strategic" nukes, such as intercontinental ballistic missiles (icbms) with a range of 5,500km (3,420 miles) or more. Each can deploy 700 launch platforms (icbms, submarine-launched missiles and heavy bombers) and 1,550 warheads.

Disarmament advocates want further limits. Some have called on America to adopt a policy of "no first use" akin to China's declared stance. Mr Biden campaigned for a looser formulation, that the "sole purpose" of nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack. But the war in Ukraine and an outcry among allies-who feared a weakening of the American nuclear umbrella-put paid to that. The Biden team instead declared fuzzily that the "fundamental role" of nukes is to deter nuclear attack.

**One reason the administration has not done more to reduce the role of such weapons is that China appears determined to increase it. Its nuclear triad is growing apace**. It is digging three vast fields with at least 300 silos for icbms. America says its Jin-class submarines have now been armed with JL-3 missiles, able to reach the continental United States from protected waters close to China. China has also deployed the nuclear-capable H-6N bomber, equipped for air-to-air refuelling. Having long kept warheads separate from missiles, China seems to be shifting to rapid "launch on warning" of an incoming nuclear attack, as in America and Russia.

**Admiral Richard argues that, with such "breathtaking" expansion, China is seeking to "confront and coerce other nuclear-capable peers". But James Acton of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a think-tank, questions whether China can produce fissile material as fast as the Pentagon forecasts. He argues that China's behaviour may be caused by fear that its modest arsenal is vulnerable to America's more capable spy satellites and missiles**.

**The "security dilemma" of the nuclear world is such that one man's defence is often the other's offence. China's test last year of a globe-circling hypersonic weapon may reflect an effort to ensure that any retaliatory strike can get through America's missile defences; or it could be a step towards delivering a surprise first strike**.

Tong Zhao, of Princeton University's Programme on Science and Global Security, notes that China's policy has become more opaque and its language tougher, with talk of "strategic victory". He argues that China, as it gains a military edge in its region, may worry that America could use nuclear weapons to defend [Taiwan](https://www.economist.com/china/2022/09/01/a-weak-china-may-be-more-warlike-than-a-strong-one). But Xi Jinping, China's leader, may have a political aim, suggests Mr Zhao: to hasten the end of the Western-dominated order and force America "to accept peaceful coexistence with China and treat it with respect".

For now, China seems uninterested in arms control. It says it will talk about limits only when America and Russia bring their stockpiles down to Chinese levels. In any case, it dislikes the intrusiveness of US-Russia verification regimes. For all of Mr Putin's nuclear threats, and American warnings of "catastrophic consequences", the two sides still regularly exchange information about their strategic weapons.

START anew

That is good. **The bad news is that talks between American and Russian officials, who were due to meet in Cairo this week to discuss resuming mutual inspections, have been postponed. New START expires in 2026**. It is the last major accord between the nuclear superpowers after America withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002 (to pursue missile defences), the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019 (citing cheating by Russia) and the Open Skies treaty in 2020 (ending mutual reconnaissance overflights).

**America wants any successor to New START to cover nukes that are currently excluded. Among them are esoteric strategic Russian weapons under development, such as a nuclear-powered torpedo, and thousands of "non-strategic" or**[**tactical nuclear weapons**](https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2022/09/14/do-russias-military-setbacks-increase-the-risk-of-nuclear-conflict)**with a shorter range and usually a lower explosive power.**

**Time is short. America and Russia are unlikely to resume nuclear talks while war rages in Ukraine. They could keep abiding by the terms of New START after it expires, but that may not last without a new accord in sight. A Republican president, if one is elected in 2024, may be disinclined to negotiate a narrow US-Russia deal.**

Hawkish Americans think it is time to rebuild the nuclear arsenal. They include Franklin Miller, a former Pentagon official who helped slash America's stockpile in the 1980s and 90s by shrinking the bloated target list and removing the "overkill" of using several warheads to destroy a single target. He thinks America should roughly double its arsenal to 3,000-3,500 deployed strategic warheads-within a treaty if possible or unilaterally if not. The aim is to ward off Russia and China simultaneously, because an alliance between the two cannot be ruled out, he says.

Russia and China would surely respond with still more nukes. Little matter, retorts Mr Miller. If they decided to match or exceed America's arsenal they would be wasting money on nukes that would only "make the rubble bounce". Others muse that 6,000 warheads would deter smaller powers from trying to match big ones.

In contrast, **Rose Gottemoeller, who negotiated New START, warns against throwing away the gains of decades of arms control. America and Russia remain each other's most serious nuclear threat, and so have an interest in a new treaty. Russia, in particular, now faces an America that is modernising its triad and command system. China is a long way from parity, she notes, and America should not give up on seeking agreement with it. Rather than be drawn into a nuclear spiral, America should concentrate on competing in new areas of technology, such as quantum computing and artificial intelligence.**

**Team Biden says it does not need more nukes. Yet nuclear posture is in part political signalling, and politics may eventually**[**push**](https://www.economist.com/europe/2022/08/02/what-would-push-the-west-and-russia-to-nuclear-war)**America to re-arm**. The risk of Russia using nukes rises as it loses ground to Ukrainian forces. As China's military force grows, so will America's alarm. Some think America should already reload its nuclear bombers within the rules of New START. Once the treaty expires, both America and Russia can bring lots of stored weapons back into service. **February 4th 2026, the last day of New START, may mark the start of a new nuclear race-this time one that is three-sided and perilously complex.**

#### Status quo deterrence policy fails—nine reasons.

Blair, research scholar in the Program on Science and Global Security at Princeton University and co-founder of the Global Zero movement, 2018 (Bruce G., with Jessica Sleight and Claire Foley, “The End of Nuclear Warfighting: Moving to a Deterrence-Only Posture an alternative u.s. nuclear posture review”, Global Zero, <https://www.globalzero.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ANPR-Final.pdf>, DoA 4/27/2023, DVOG)

While **nuclear deterrence** remains a pillar of U.S. national security and a security umbrella for U.S. allies, its **central organizing principle of threatening massive destruction in response to nuclear aggression was more suited to the Cold War** confrontation with the Soviet Union and China **than to the modern rivalry among the United States, Russia, and China**. But despite the anachronistic nature of today’s nuclear postures, **these competitors have been unable to replace the paradigm of nuclear deterrence** with a new security architecture. They remain under its yoke, seemingly condemned to maintain and rebuild vast arsenals in perpetuity. **Among the deleterious consequences are an increased risk of nuclear conflict and massive investments in weapons of diminishing relevance to the biggest global security dangers facing the world in the 21st century—nuclear proliferation, terrorism, cyberwarfare, climate change, mass refugee migrations, and a multitude of dangers stemming from the diffusion of power around the world**. China and Russia are not U.S. allies, but they are indispensable partners in the resolution of these vexing challenges. Preserving reciprocal nuclear terror as the central organizing principle of mutual security contributes to central and extended deterrence—wherein U.S. nuclear forces serve to deter an attack on the United States (central) and its allies (extended)—but **fear-based relationships stunt cooperation in grappling with these complex problems. And their adversarial nuclear postures carry an inherent risk that nuclear weapons will be used,** intentionally or not. Today there are a multitude of scenarios of use by one of the nine states that possess them, or by terrorists seeking to acquire them. The number of possible scenarios is much higher than existed at the height of the Cold War, and consequently the likelihood of intentional or unintentional use may well be higher. Wisdom in imagining a new direction and shaping a more suitable nuclear posture for the early 21st century begins with an honest reckoning of the shortcomings of current policy.

**Nine key points underlie most of the findings and recommendations** of this analysis.

**First, the long-standing operational U.S**. (and Russian) **practice of programming massive-attack options directed against opposing nuclear forces, war-sustaining industries, and leadership facilities produces an egregious discrepancy between the scale of destruction enabled by the nuclear forces and any reasonable judgment of what scale would actually deter an adversary**. **The legacy U.S. posture of deterrence-plus-warfighting** directed against roughly 1,500 total aimpoints in Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran **goes well beyond intrinsic requirements of a deterrence-only posture**. **The capacity to deliver a very small number of nuclear weapons in a measured and flexible manner in response to immediate circumstances should suffice**. It is reasonable to judge that such a capability would serve to repress any impulse by a legitimate state under rational leadership to initiate a nuclear attack against the United States or U.S. allies.

**Second, the legacy posture rests precariously on the core assumption of deterrence that national leaders as individuals are rational actors and perform logical calculations of costs and benefits**. General John E. Hyten, head of U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), recently testified that “a rational actor is the basis of all deterrent policy.” **But a posture enabled by high-alert nuclear forces configured and inclined toward preemptive or prompt “launch on warning” does not support a deliberative process. Even the most levelheaded U.S. (or Russian) leader could buckle under the immense time pressure imposed by current nuclear postures. Aggravating factors include the likelihood of inadequate information, misperception, political pressure, and fear. Decision-making in crises and under uncertainty often leads seemingly rational leaders to make mistakes or misinterpret an adversary’s behavior or intentions**. The assumption of rationality may not be tenable for another reason. Doubts have arisen as nuclear weapons proliferate to more actors and as traditional norms of international behavior yield to idiosyncratic interpretations of acceptable conduct on the world stage. The lineup of world leaders in command of nuclear forces today includes more than one outlier whose grasp of reality appears in doubt at times and whose advisers and institutions appear unwilling or unable to rein in their impulses. Hinging national and world security on the assumption of human rationality seems a dubious wisdom.

**Third,** **deterrence’s core message that nuclear weapons offer their possessors a security blanket runs counter to the plea to non-nuclear nations to forgo such weapons permanently. This contradiction, dripping in hypocrisy, engenders cynicism among the non-nuclear-weapon countries and erodes the nonproliferation regime**.

**Fourth, the extensive “modernization” of nuclear forces underway** in the United States, Russia, and China **does not comport with the treaty obligations of the five nuclear-armed members of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Their pledges to negotiate disarmament in good faith and reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs ring disingenuous** in light of their nuclear upgrades. This discordance harms the nonproliferation cause.

**Fifth, the U.S. nuclear posture works at cross-purposes with crisis stability. The United States** (along with Russia, France, and the United Kingdom, but not China) **refuses to rule out the first use of nuclear weapons. This weakens restraint during a crisis. The mutual anticipation of nuclear first use by the belligerents would exert pressure on them to go first, or “preempt**.” In the case of the United States and Russia, this pressure is greatly aggravated by the longstanding operational practice of programming massive-attack plans directed primarily against the opposing nuclear forces (many of which are vulnerable) and enabling these plans by alert forces poised for immediate launch.

**Sixth, the U.S. posture has an Achilles’ heel: vulnerable command, control, and communications** (C3**) and early-warning networks. The fear that these networks would collapse under attack all but compels national leaders to authorize the release of U.S. nuclear forces during a crisis regardless of the survivability of the triad** of U.S. land-based Minuteman missiles, Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarines, and heavy long-range B-52H and B-2A bombers. **Having the ability to absorb an attack and retaliate is the essence of deterrence, and yet the United States has failed to ensure presidential survival and robust communications**—both vital to executing a retaliatory attack. This deficiency far outweighs concerns about the number, reliability, and survivability of warheads, bombs, and delivery vehicles. **If command and control fails, nothing else matters.**

Seventh, **the existing nuclear posture stands apart from powerful U.S. conventional forces and other non-nuclear military capabilities. It neglects both the positive and negative contributions of these capabilities**. On the positive side, **exponential advances in information processing**—the driving force behind the “revolution in military affairs”—**have allowed for the mass substitution by conventional precision-guided forces directed by space navigation and laser targeting for nuclear forces in mission planning and accelerated the 80 percent drawdown in the nuclear inventories of the United States** and Russia since their Cold War peak. But the U.S. nuclear posture has still not fully exploited this revolution. **Strategic planners have not adequately grasped the need and opportunity for providing the president with strategic non-nuclear options involving conventional forces for de-escalating the early phase of conflict, even one marked by enemy nuclear strikes**. The recent Pentagon push to develop new “low-yield” nuclear weapons for purposes of conflict de-escalation fails to grasp the fact that any use of nuclear weapons is inherently escalatory and unnecessary given the availability of powerful nonnuclear capabilities. On the negative side, high-performing nonnuclear U.S. capabilities have not only widened the U.S. conventional advantage over its potential adversaries and driven these countries to rely more on nuclear weapons and their early first use to compensate, but also increasingly put those opposing nuclear forces at risk. The growing lethality of U.S. conventional weapons has thus undermined nuclear crisis stability at the same time that they provide tools for de-escalation. This double-edged sword complicates all aspects of nuclear planning, operations, and arms control.

**Eighth, the U.S. posture saddles strategic-arms control with a perspective that focuses on nuclear weapons and looks past non-nuclear capabilities. This downplays real or perceived U.S. advantages in those capabilities, particularly in the areas of precision-guided conventional weapons and missile defenses**. Thus, it was U.S.-led conventional precision bombing during the Balkans conflict in 1999 and U.S. withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002, coupled with the deployment of missile defenses that spurred Russia’s modernization of its nuclear weapons and its reluctance to negotiate a follow-on treaty to replace the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START). Progress in U.S.-Russian strategic-stability talks and in drawing other nuclear-armed countries into multilateral discussions of strategic arms has also suffered as a consequence. The narrow compass of such talks needs to be widened.

**Ninth, and last, the U.S. posture seems to float in a geopolitical vacuum. It is understood almost entirely in military terms, divorced from broader connections to political relationships, diplomacy, economic sanctions, and other nonmilitary dimensions. This decoupling magnifies the role of the nuclear force in international relations and in managing crises. An ordinary strain in relations can bring nuclear weapons into the foreground of the relationship.** Thus, the end of the Cold War did not end the practice of programming massive-attack options and keeping thousands of nuclear warheads on hair-trigger alert, notwithstanding a symbolic and operationally meaningless “detargeting” agreement between the United States and Russia signed in 1994. In 2014, the Russian incursion into Ukraine was a sufficient strain in U.S.-Russian relations to initiate a phase of nuclear signaling and brinkmanship between them.

These shortcomings, amplified by an equally myopic posture in Moscow, led to an almost unfathomable amount of nuclear overkill during the Cold War. Soviet and U.S. arsenals grew well beyond any reasonable deterrent requirement—13,000 U.S. strategic weapons aimed at 16,000 Soviet targets in the 1980s. **Present-day arsenals still exceed any reasonable judgment of actual deterrent requirements. In their continuing pursuit of warfighting capabilities if not decisive nuclear superiority, both sides are undertaking outsized modernization programs that will continue to hold each other and the world hostage** to incomprehensible levels of violence and destruction.

Breaking the nuclear grip of this long-standing pursuit on U.S.- Russian relations and on U.S. capital investments will be very difficult, but the United States has a historic opportunity to leverage its other strengths and chart a new course in reducing the role and salience of nuclear weapons. It should pursue an ambitious agenda whose lead items should be negotiating deep U.S.-Russian nuclear cuts and eliciting formal pledges from all the nuclear-armed states not to use nuclear weapons first in conflict. **The United States should also immediately transition to a deterrence-only strategy. Backed by powerful non-nuclear capabilities designed for second-strike responses, this posture would provide adequate deterrence while changing the strategic culture of nuclear warfighting, restraining the nuclear arms competition, and setting the stage for multilateral nuclear negotiations aimed at making progress toward a world free of nuclear weapons.**

## Advantage Areas

### UQ – Nuclear Order Bad

#### U.S. nuclear posture is eroded now – possible advantages about allied assurances, China/Russia deterrence, proliferation

Roberts, '21 – Brad Roberts served as Policy Director of the Obama administration's Nuclear Posture Review and Ballistic Missile Defense Review. (Brad Roberts; "Orienting the 2021 Nuclear Posture Review"; Taylor & Francis; https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0163660X.2021.1933740?journalCode=rwaq20; 6-17-2021)

As it considers its options, the Biden administration must have a clear view of the nuclear problem as it exists in 2021. As the interim guidance states, “we cannot pretend the world can simply be restored to the way it was 75, 30, or even four years ago. We cannot just return to the way things were before.” 6 This is undoubtedly true of US nuclear policy. What has changed since 2009?

In 2009, the nuclear danger most concerning to the Obama administration was the danger associated with insecure nuclear materials and the possibility that such materials might find their way into the hands of proliferators or terrorists. Today, this risk remains, despite substantial progress on international nuclear material security made in the Obama era. Other dangers have risen in prominence.

In 2009, North Korea was just crossing the nuclear threshold. Today, it is well on its way to a small force of nuclear-tipped long-range missiles. This shift brings with it new and existential threats to South Korea and Japan as well as the risks of attempted nuclear-backed coercion by North Korea. It also brings new threats to the US homeland, new doubts about the credibility of the US nuclear guarantee to its East Asian allies, and the danger that North Korea might employ nuclear weapons in conflict because of a miscalculation of US resolve.

In 2009, in relations with Russia and China, the Obama administration could focus on strategic stability rather than deterrence because it judged neither relationship to be fundamentally adversarial in character. In 2021, the adversarial quality of both relationships is undeniable. Both have developed approaches to regional wars on their peripheries that include a nuclear component as part of a strategy for countering what they perceive as potentially dangerous US actions. Russia has given nuclear weapons a central place in its military strategy, while China has launched an accelerating build-up of its nuclear forces and is well on its way to becoming a near-peer of the United States (in qualitative, not quantitative terms).

In 2009, allies required some assurances from the Obama administrations following the unilateralism of the George W. Bush administration. In 2021, after four years of Trump diplomacy, allies are far more anxious. Part of the problem stems from the fact that they are in the nuclear crosshairs of neighbors who are improving and increasing their nuclear arsenals. And part of the problem is the crisis of confidence in US leadership that has been brewing for at least a couple of decades but that has become especially intense over the last four years. Restoring allied confidence will require continuity of US purpose over many years and consistency in delivering security benefits to our allies.

Three further dangers have come into sharper focus over the last decade. One is the growing danger of sudden developments that unsettle nuclear planning assumptions by one or more nuclear-armed states. The United States, for example, is increasingly concerned about the potential for strategic surprise associated with geopolitical and technical developments that were not anticipated as it developed its strategic forces, such as a rapid build-up of Chinese nuclear forces or a problem certifying an aging class of warheads as serviceable. Russia is concerned about potential nuclear break-out by the United States. The emerging competition among many countries for disruptive military advantages from emerging technologies adds to concern about strategic stability.

Another is the danger that US threats to employ nuclear weapons may not be seen as credible. Adversaries flirt with the idea that their employment of nuclear weapons can be calibrated to “sober … but not enrage” the United States—that is, to awaken US leaders and the American public to an asymmetry of stake (favoring the adversary), leading to US de-escalation rather than retaliation.7 Allies worry that the United States, if faced with major risks in defending their interests in crisis and war, might choose to politically and militarily “decouple” from the conflict rather than run those risks.

Finally, there is the danger of the possible collapse of the international nuclear order. The nonproliferation regime is widely perceived as being under increasing stress from various directions. The international nuclear order more generally is tied in direct and indirect ways to the international political order, which is under duress from revisionist rivals and populist voters. Its collapse would bring a new wave of proliferation and new anxieties about the access by non-state actors to nuclear materials, technologies, and weapons.

In sum, the nuclear security landscape has eroded substantially. US policy must be carefully mapped against an up-to-date assessment of challenges and opportunities. It must also come to terms with the lessons of past experience —which do not encourage optimism, especially in light of the eroding environment.

#### The current global nuclear order is giving away – lack of restraint, arms races, and eroding norms.

Tannenwald, '20 – Nina Tannenwald is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science at Brown University. She is the coeditor, with Matthew Evangelista, of Do the Geneva Conventions Matter? (2017) and author of The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons since 1945 (2007). (Nina Tannenwald; "Life beyond Arms Control: Moving toward a Global Regime of Nuclear Restraint & Responsibility"; American Academy of Arts & Sciences; https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED\_a\_01798)

Today, we are on the verge of a world without nuclear restraint. If the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) between the United States and Russia disappears after 2021, there will be no formal limitations on strategic nuclear weapons for the first time since 1972. The restraints on missiles and warheads imposed by New START, along with its critically important verification regime, would either be tacit and informal or nonexistent. Nuclear-armed governments appear to be enthusiastically embracing an arms race in an era of heightened hostility while demonstrating little interest not only in formal arms control but in nuclear restraint of any kind. Arms control treaties are being discarded and norms are eroding; new qualitative arms races are underway while quantitative arms races may be in the offing; and some governments are reviving old war-fighting strategies including damage limitation and battlefield nuclear weapons. Almost no stability talks are taking place while leaders brazenly brandish their nuclear arsenals and engage in brinkmanship. Most experts agree that the risk of nuclear war is the highest it has been since the height of the Cold War. We are, in short, in a world of what I would call “irresponsible deterrence.”

Unfortunately, little prospect exists for negotiating new treaties. Increasing polarization in the political sphere, both domestically and in the global nuclear regime, will make it exceedingly difficult to agree on any new treaties. In the United States, the Republican Senate is averse to treaties. Internationally, increasing great-power hostility, growing regional tensions, and virulent nationalism are leading to new trade wars and looming arms races while undermining prospects for cooperative agreements among the great powers. In the global nuclear realm, the approval of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, or Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, in 2017 has exacerbated polarization in the international community between those states that favor the ban treaty and disarmament, and states committed to maintaining nuclear deterrence. These two groups increasingly exist in separate universes, making it ever harder to find common ground at UN meetings.

In the absence of formal arms control agreements, how do we proceed? What broad principles and norms would we want? What measures might the nuclear armed states take, even without formal agreement, that would reduce the risk of nuclear war and rein in the arms race? In this essay, I focus primarily on nuclear armed states, which have the major (though certainly not the only) responsibility here. This group includes not only the five “declared” nuclear-armed states acknowledged by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)– the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China–but also India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea, which possess nuclear weapons but are not parties to the NPT. I suggest that nuclear-armed states should move toward a global regime of nuclear restraint and responsibility. In the absence of formal arms control, restraint would primarily take the form of reciprocal commitments and unilateral measures to avoid an arms race and reduce nuclear dangers. Responsibility refers to nuclear-armed states pursuing limited forms of deterrence and being accountable to the international community. Needless to say, in the current environment of heightened great-power competition, the nuclear-armed governments are probably incapable of moving toward a regime of restraint and responsibility without significant prodding. Therefore, much of this work will fall to civil society and domestic politics, as well as to diplomacy at the United Nations and other international organizations, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Conference on Disarmament, and even alliances such as NATO.

Many will argue that the current global nuclear order is illegitimate and unsustainable, and that nuclear risk can ultimately be managed only through disarmament. A concept of responsible deterrence must indeed be compatible with the pursuit of disarmament. Responsible deterrence is not simply about maintaining secure command and control or refraining from giving weapons to terrorists (though it certainly includes these measures). It must also be consistent with reducing global nuclear dangers. In a global regime of nuclear restraint and responsibility, disarmament must remain the ultimate goal. The immediate goal, however–and the focus of this essay–is preventing nuclear war. Thus, even those for whom disarmament is so far in the future as to be illusory should still be able to embrace many of the tenets of responsible deterrence laid out here.

### ADV – Assurances

**Absent NFU, U.S. nuclear threats are uncredible to allies and create commitment traps.**

Steve Fetter & Jon Wolfsthal 18. Fetter is with the School of Public Policy, University of Maryland; Wolfsthal is with the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University 01/02/2018. “No First Use and Credible Deterrence.” Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 102–114.

Over reliance on nuclear weapons One need look no further than today’s headlines to see how **the lack of a no first use policy has increased the prospects for nuclear conflict**. As with so many other things, President Donald **Trump’s rejection of accepted norms and codes of conduct is likely to significantly** undermine America’s historical position as a nonproliferation champion and already **increas**ing **the risks that nuclear weapons will be** **used**. The situation on the Korean peninsula in particular risks accidental or miscalculated first-use of nuclear weapons by North Korea and the United States, due to a lack of restraint and overreliance on nuclear ambiguity. As a **candidate** Donald **Trump refused to rule out** the **first use** of nuclear weapons by the United States (Sanger, 2016) **and implied** his **willingness to initiate nuclear** weapons’ **use against North Korea** (Fifield and Wagner, 2017). **Russia’s stated willingness to initiate nuclear use in** **Europe** (Tucker, 2017), **combined with** their **military adventurism, remains a serious concern**. The **poor** **relations** between the United States and Russia and the disparity in conventional and nuclear forces and doctrine **fuel** **these dangers**. **This contrasts with** the consideration, reported in 2016 by the New York Times (Sanger and Broad, 2016) and the Washington Post (Rogin, 2016a) that President **Obama** was **considering** **ruling out** the **first-use** of nuclear weapons for the United States. The issue of possible first use contingencies was deeply **debated** in the process **leading up to the 2010** Nuclear Posture Review (**NPR**). In the end, the President determined that the capabilities of the United States were not yet to a point where nonnuclear options were sufficient for the United States to state that the sole purpose of US nuclear weapons was to deter or respond to nuclear attacks against the United States or its allies. Instead, the NPR made clear that the United States would seek to create the conditions where a sole-purpose statement could be adopted, because it would benefit American security and the pursuit of nuclear reductions and stability. His visit to Hiroshima in May 2016 indicated his openness to the idea when he said: “among those nations like my own that hold nuclear stockpiles, we must have the courage to escape the logic of fear and pursue a world without them.” 1 Former defense officials with full knowledge of America’s conventional and nuclear capabilities and the threats America faces, including former Defense Secretary William Perry2 and former Strategic Command commander and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. James Cartwright (Cartwright and Blair, 2016), have spoken in favor of no first use. According to General Cartwright, “nuclear weapons today no longer serve any purpose beyond deterring the first use of such weapons by our adversaries” (Cartwright and Blair, 2016). According to the Times and Post reports, the main reason President Obama did not adopt a policy of no first use was concern about the reaction of allies – particularly Japan. In fact, the Washington Post reported that Prime Minister Abe personally conveyed his opposition to NFU, because he believed it could increase the likelihood of conventional conflict with North Korea or China (Rogin, 2016b). Reports indicated, however, that the Japanese concern stemmed from a belief that adopting no first use would weaken the perceived American commitment to Japan’s defense. While untrue and not even directly related, this perception made rapid adoption of a no-first-use statement impossible. President Obama left office without adopting a policy of NFU or making any additional major changes to US nuclear policy. The 2018 NPR, completed by the Trump Administration, made major changes to US declaratory nuclear policy, including steps that would increase the circumstances in which the United States would consider using nuclear weapons first (US Department of Defense, 2018). The new NPR reserves the right to use nuclear weapons first not only against nuclear weapon states in response to nonnuclear strategic attacks, but would also reserve the right to use nuclear weapons against nonnuclear weapon states. Somewhat ironically, the new NPR also notes that potential adversaries must “not miscalculate regarding the consequences of nuclear first use, either regionally or against the United States itself. They must understand that there are no possible benefits from…limited nuclear escalation. Correcting any such misperceptions is now critical to maintaining strategic stability in Europe and Asia” (US Department of Defense, 2018, VII). It is unclear why that same logic does not apply to first use by the United States. Trump, who has called for strengthening and expanding US nuclear capability3 and seems unable or unwilling to connect how America’s nuclear doctrine can influence its ability to achieve nonproliferation and disarmament outcomes, may be willing to take a far more expansive view of when he might use nuclear weapons than his predecessor. Regardless of how President Trump will implement the nuclear strategy based on this new NPR, there are certain facts that should inform his decision, and will clearly affect the analysis of allies and experts on whatever position the United States adopts. Chief among these is the reality that, as the world’s sole conventional military superpower, the United States does not need nuclear weapons to deter or respond to any nonnuclear threats to itself or its allies. The debate is not whether the United States can win a war; it is to what extent does **US nuclear posture** deter conflict and convince potential adversaries not to initiate conflict, and to what extent US nuclear capabilities be used to respond to nonnuclear threats. Some believe nuclear weapons are useful and even essential to deter or respond to nonnuclear aggression (Payne, 2016; Sestanovich, 2016). Others believe it **is** **dangerous** **and undermines** **deterrence** **and** **crisis stability**.4 A key challenge for those who support no first use is working with and helping allies understand in concrete terms that such a step would enhance the credibility of US commitments to their security. The behavior of President Trump demonstrates that words and actions can do more to affect alliance confidence and commitments than any change to US nuclear policy. Trump’s disruptive statements and policies should not deflect those who seek a more stable international order that relies less, not more, on nuclear weapons threats from the task of building that more stable order. The United States, Japan, and other US allies must continue to work to enhance their security and the credibility of their alliance while reinforcing the norm against the nonuse of nuclear weapons that will enhance stability and reduce the risks of escalation. A dialogue is needed between the United States and Japan on the role that nuclear weapons should play in our mutual defense – and in particular the question of whether and under what circumstances the United States should use or threaten to use nuclear weapons first in the defense of Japan, and under what conditions Japan would welcome the adoption of such a policy of no-first-use by United States. US nuclear posture under President Trump is also likely to widen a growing schism in the global nonproliferation and disarmament process. The Nuclear Weapons Ban Convention, which was completed in 2017 without participation by any nuclear weapon state, may enter into force within the next few years. The Convention would outlaw possession of nuclear weapons and the use or threat of use such weapons by its signatories. There is a global campaign working to push US allies covered by nuclear extended deterrence to sign the treaty, and thereby reduce America’s requirement for maintaining some of its nuclear capabilities. The shift of US nuclear policy under President Trump to include greater reliance on nuclear weapons and more circumstances when nuclear weapons might be used will add energy and enthusiasm for supporters of the nuclear weapons ban convention. But if the United States does not need to rely on nuclear weapons in most circumstances and can reduce the role of nuclear weapons in maintaining the security of itself and its allies, doing so would be an important step toward reinforcing extended deterrent relationships because it would reduce the momentum of nuclear weapons ban convention movement. If the goal of US nuclear policy is, in part, to provide the greater assurances of our commitment to the security of Japan and other US allies, we must continue to balance our military requirements for defense and deterrence with our broader support for nonproliferation and disarmament. Over-reliance on the former and disregard for the latter can lead to domestic political decisions in countries such as Japan and in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) states to join the ban, directly weakening America’s ability to protect and defend its system. Cold war origins Debate about first-use began soon after the end of World War II. Europe was divided between East and West, and the number of soldiers, tanks, and artillery deployed by the East was far greater than the number deployed by the West. Western European countries, which were still rebuilding after the war, did not have capacity or the will to match the perceived strength of the Soviet army.5 The 1948 Berlin Crisis made clear that Soviet Union was aggressive and the United States would be unable to stop it through conventional means alone. After the Crisis, the United States adopted a policy of using nuclear weapons to deter or respond to a Soviet invasion of Europe. The Soviet acquisition of nuclear weapons in 1949 did not cause the United States to abandon this policy. Rather, it caused the US to greatly accelerate the production of nuclear weapons and long-range bombers and begin the development of thermonuclear weapons in order to maintain nuclear superiority and the credibility of US threats to initiate the use of nuclear weapons. The Eisenhower Administration placed even greater emphasis on nuclear weapons as a low-cost counter to the large armies of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact.6 In 1953, the US decided to produce and forward-deploy large numbers of tactical nuclear weapons – nuclear land mines, artillery shells, rockets, and bombs – for battlefield use in Europe. Eisenhower also adopted a policy of “massive retaliation,” in which the United States promised to respond to any Soviet attack with immediate and massive nuclear retaliation, both to stop an invasion and destroy strategic targets in the Soviet Union. This was sometimes called “security on the cheap” because nuclear weapons were much less expensive than the additional troops and tanks that would be needed to match the Soviet army. These threats were considered credible in the early 1950s because the Soviet Union did not have the capacity to strike the United States. But as Soviet nuclear capability grew and the United States homeland became more and more vulnerable to Soviet nuclear attack, the credibility of US threats to start a nuclear war came into doubt. This was often summarized in the form of a question: “Would an American president be willing to risk New York or Washington or Chicago to save London or Paris or Hamburg?” The need to convince both the Soviet Union and US allies that we would do so was a key factor driving the nuclear arms race. It led to the deployment of over 7,000 tactical nuclear weapons in Europe by the late 1960s (McNamara, 1983, 62–63). It also raised the very real possibility that, should we fail to deter a Soviet invasion, Europe would be destroyed by the very weapons that were intended to protect it. As the Soviet Union achieved rough nuclear parity with the United States, it cast serious doubt on the credibility of US threats to use nuclear weapons first. Some European leaders worried that an American president might not carry through with the threat because it would lead to the destruction of the United States; understanding this, the Soviet Union might gamble and invade. This led the United States and NATO to undertake a series of risky policies to enhance the credibility of nuclear retaliation, in part by limiting their ability to control escalation. Hundreds of thousands of US soldiers and thousands of nuclear weapons were placed close to the border, in a “use-it-or-loseit” position vulnerable to being overrun in the early hours of an invasion. The Soviets countered with their own large arsenal of forward-deployed tactical nuclear weapons, together with a pledge (later shown to be false) not to use nuclear weapons first. This led to the NATO decision to deploy intermediate-range groundlaunched cruise missiles and Pershing-II ballistic missiles in Europe. Because these forces could attack Moscow and other targets deep inside the Soviet Union, they were seen as “coupling” the United States more tightly to Europe, by preventing a nuclear war from being confined to Europe. The end of the cold war This logic collapsed with the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. The conventional balance of power shifted dramatically in favor of the United States and NATO. There was no longer a need to threaten to use nuclear weapons first to deter a conventional Soviet – or Russian – attack. Nuclear weapons were needed only to deter a nuclear attack, and even then it was not clear from where such an attack might come. The first post-Cold-War secretary of defense, Les Aspin, ordered a review of US nuclear policy and stated that no-first-use could form the basis of a new nonproliferation policy. Unfortunately, that NPR – and the two that followed – rejected no first use,7 largely due to concerns expressed by allies who had been told by US officials for decades that the US nuclear arsenal was the foundation of their security. That thinking and dogma was slow to change. In November 1993 Russia discarded its no-first-use pledge to compensate for its perceived conventional inferiority (Schmemman 1993). It, in essence, adopted its own US-style approach to the problem of conventional inferiority. Russian reliance on threats of nuclear first-use increased with NATO expansion to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in 1999, and the Baltic states in 2004. More recently, Russia may have adopted an “escalate to de-escalate” doctrine that envisions the first use of lowyield tactical nuclear weapons in conflicts near its borders against a conventionally superior NATO force. Although Russian officials dispute this (Oliker, 2016), there is no doubt that American military officials believe it is the case and are wrestling with the implications of this policy. Russian doctrine asserts that such first use would only come if the existence of the Russian state were at risk as the result of a conventional conflict it was losing.8 However, to American ears it is easy to imagine a Russian gamble that goes poorly – perhaps a Ukraine-style invasion of Baltic state that is forcefully repelled by NATO, including NATO attacks on Russian targets. This could prompt Putin to use nuclear weapons to forestall a humiliating defeat that might threaten his control of the Russian state. Such scenarios have driven US military planners to seek ways to deter any such first use of nuclear weapons by Russia. The United States and its allies retain their military superiority to all potential adversaries. In the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, the United States declared that the United States would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against nonnuclear weapons states that are in compliance with their nonproliferation obligations (US Department of Defense, 2010). Our conventional capabilities so outstripped that of any conceivable single or group of nonnuclear adversaries that the need to threaten the use of nuclear weapons was explicitly rejected. This statement was also central to providing a clear incentive for states to remain in compliance with their nuclear nonproliferation obligations. For nuclear-armed states, a similar view prevailed. There was and is no need to threaten to use nuclear weapons to deter or respond to any plausible conventional attack from a nuclear-armed adversary. The NPR and the Obama team considered, but did not adopt, a policy that the sole purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack. It rejected “sole purpose” primarily because of concerns about how US allies might respond. But the NPR pledged to strengthen conventional capabilities and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in deterring nonnuclear attack, with the objective of making deterrence of nuclear attack on the US and its allies the sole purpose of US nuclear weapons. By 2016 much progress had been made on this effort. As a result, in his final national security speech, Vice President Biden told an audience in Washington DC that “it is hard to envision a plausible scenario in which the first use of nuclear weapons by the United States would be necessary or make sense.” 9 NFU and sole-purpose, extended deterrence, and the nuclear umbrella Most analysts consider “sole purpose” to be essentially equivalent to no-first-use, because if the only purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter the use of nuclear weapons by others, then there is no reason to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons first.10 Deterrence is no longer the core mission, but the only mission. **With a policy of no-first-use or sole-purpose, the United States would use or threaten to use nuclear weapons only in retaliation** **to a nuclear attack on the United States or its allies, such as Japan. If the threat to use nuclear weapons first is not necessary, it is** **less than** fully **credible. As such, making incredible threats** **weakens the credibility of other commitments. Abandoning incredible threats should make the remaining** nuclear use **scenarios, and therefore** **deterrence, more credible**. **Deeply related to this discussion are the concepts of “extended deterrence” and “nuclear umbrella.” In both cases, the idea is that United States can extend the protection of its nuclear arsenal to allies**, such as Japan, South Korea, and NATO: **that the United States can deter attacks on its allies by threating to retaliate with nuclear weapons**. But there are two kinds of extended deterrence or nuclear umbrellas, and much of the confusion about no-first-use arises because of a failure to clearly distinguish between the two. The first type of extended deterrence is deterrence of nuclear attack. In this case, the United States deters nuclear attack on Japan and other allies by threatening to use its own nuclear weapons in retaliation. In essence, America declares that an attack on Japan is no different than an attack on America itself. This commitment would not be undermined in any way by no-first-use because the United States would use nuclear weapons only after an adversary had already used nuclear against an ally. The US nuclear umbrella would continue to protect Japan against nuclear attack by North Korea, China, or Russia. The second type of extended deterrence seeks to use nuclear capabilities to deter nonnuclear or conventional attacks. This was the version of extended deterrence practiced by the United States during the Cold War, in which the United States attempted to deter Soviet invasion of western Europe (or a North Korean invasion of South Korea) by threatening to respond with nuclear weapons. This form of extended deterrence is much less credible, particularly with regard to Russia or China, because **the United States would be threatening to start a nuclear war with a country that had the capacity to retaliate with nuc**lear weapon**s** **and** **destroy US cities. To convince itself that its threat was seen by the other side as credible, NATO and the United States had to go to enormous lengths in the face of a nuclear-armed Warsaw Pact, including steps like the deployment of ground-based i**ntermediate-**r**ange cruise and **b**allistic **m**issile**s** in the 1980s **that severely tested alliance cohesion and stability.** There have been serious concerns about how the potential use by an adversary of either chemical or advanced biological weapons would enter into this equation. To be sure, the future threat of biological weapons was such a concern that the 2010 NPR made clear that the negative security assurances offered could be modified in the future if nonnuclear states were to develop and use biological weapons that could approximate the impact of nuclear weapons. But **it is far from clear that threatening to use nuclear weapons in response to a biological attack would be credible or have military utility** (Sagan, 2000). In the case of states currently pursuing advanced biological weapons, there appears to be a similar calculation as with nuclear weapons – a conventional or security imbalance leads states to seek some way to counter America’s conventional capabilities. Threatening nuclear weapons use appear uncertain to alter this calculation because it does not address the underlying driver for proliferation. While the use of an extremely virulent and deadly biological weapon agent might hypothetically lead to casualties as large or even larger than nuclear use, a nuclear response is not likely to be effective or necessary, and thus is unlikely to be effective as a deterrent. NFU and Japan That brings us to today. It is clear that Japan is rightly concerned about its security in the face of an aggressive North Korea with increasingly advanced nuclear and missile capabilities. Japan also has reason to be concerned about the possibility, however remote, of nuclear attack by China or Russia. However, the US strategic nuclear arsenal is a highly effective deterrent against such an attack. America has over 4000 nuclear weapons in its active stockpile, and the entire US strategic nuclear force is undergoing modernization. This aspect of the nuclear umbrella would not be diminished in any way if the United States adopted a policy of no first use. US threats to use nuclear weapons in retaliation for nuclear attacks on Japan are highly credible, because Japan is a very close ally and the US has military bases and over 100,000 troops and dependents based in Japan. Japan’s opposition to no first use is not compatible with its rhetorical support for eventual nuclear disarmament. As noted above, no-first-use is equivalent a “sole purpose” declaration. If the sole purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter to use of nuclear weapons by others, then it follows logically that a country would be willing to give up its nuclear weapons if it could be sure that all other countries had done so. If no other countries had nuclear weapons, there would be no need to have nuclear weapons to deter their use by others. But if Japan believes that the United States must be willing to threaten the first-use of nuclear weapons, it is saying that nuclear weapons are needed to deter more than nuclear attack. Even if nuclear weapons were eliminated, these other reasons would still exist. In opposing no first use, Japan is opposing the principle of nuclear disarmament. Some might say this is not true because there are other conditions for nuclear disarmament, such as Japan facing no security threats. But saying that we can have nuclear disarmament when all countries are content to live in peace is the same as saying that nuclear disarmament is impossible. US and Japanese opposition to no first use weakens nonproliferation. The United States and its allies are by far the strongest military alliance in the world. The United States alone spends four times more than China and 10 times more than Russia on defense; the US and its allies together account for over 70 percent of world military spending, over four times more than all adversaries and potential adversaries combined (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2017). Because Japan is an island nation, it is easier defend than was Germany during the Cold War. If Japan believes that the United States must resort to the first-use or threat of first-use of nuclear weapons to defend it against a nonnuclear attack, what message does this send to all other countries – particularly those that are not US allies? Countries that are weaker and harder to defend would have even more need of nuclear weapons. A policy of no first use would strengthen nonproliferation efforts; opposing no first use weakens those efforts. The Government of Japan no doubt believes that maintaining the option of nuclear first use by the United States provides some measure of deterrence against conventional attack on Japan. The key question is how much deterrence it provides and whether these deterrence benefits are worth the price. Nuclear deterrence of conventional attack is not cost-free because such threats lack credibility. As we saw in Europe during the Cold War, actions to increase the credibility of nuclear threats have consequences, such as increasing the likelihood of nuclear war. It would be far better to strengthen conventional defenses so that there was no reason to resort to nuclear use, and to provide for a more credible deterrent. Scenarios for first use What is most lacking in discussions about no first use is consideration of specific scenarios. What, exactly, are the scenarios for which Japan believes that the threat of first use of nuclear weapons would be a powerful deterrent, or actual first use of nuclear weapons would be necessary to defend Japan? The most plausible scenario today is an attack by North Korea. As we have already noted, a US nuclear response to a nuclear attack by North Korea on Japan would not be affected by a policy of no first use, and the likelihood of nuclear retaliation by the United States should deter a nuclear attack by North Korea, because it is a highly credible threat. But North Korea might launch other attacks – attacks with conventionally armed missiles or special operations forces against air bases or ports necessary for the defense of South Korea, or cyberattacks that cripple Japan’s economy. How does Japan imagine that the United States could use nuclear weapons in such a scenario? Nuclear weapons are not needed to destroy the North Korean bases from which these attacks are being launched and thereby prevent further attacks on Japan. If the United States decided to use nuclear weapons first against North Korea, it would have to be supremely confident that it could destroy all of North Korea’s nuclear weapons and its capacity to deliver them against South Korea or Japan. Japan almost certainly would resist any proposal by the United States to use nuclear weapons first against North Korea, knowing that it might prompt a North Korean nuclear attack against Tokyo or other Japanese cities, with horrible consequences. But if the United States and Japan do not believe that it would make sense to use nuclear weapons first, the threat to do so cannot be a credible deterrent to nonnuclear aggression by North Korea. Perhaps most likely conflict scenario with China is in the Senkaku Islands. Both sides might send warships and fighter aircraft, fire warning shots, followed by armed conflict. What role does Japan imagine that US nuclear weapons might have in deterring or responding to such a conflict? Certainly, Japan does not imagine that the United States would actually use nuclear weapons to defend Japanese claims to uninhabited pieces of rock – for example, to attack Chinese ships or airbases involved in the conflict. This would be so obviously unnecessary and disproportionate as to consolidate world opinion against the United States and Japan. And if the United States and Japan believe – as they should – that there is no meaningful use for nuclear weapons in such a conflict, then how can the threat to use nuclear weapons in defense of the Senkaku Islands be credible? But if the threat is not credible, it cannot be an effective deterrent. As a final scenario, Japan might get drawn into a conflict between the United States and China, perhaps over the defense of Taiwan or in response to Chinese actions in the South China Sea. Because the United States would use air and naval bases in Japan to support its military operations against China, China might attack these bases with conventionally armed missiles. Would Japan want the United States to use nuclear weapons first in this scenario? If so, on what targets? Several Chinese missile bases deploy both, nuclear and conventionally-armed missiles; a US nuclear attack on a Chinese nuclear base could be interpreted by China as the leading edge of a firststrike designed to eliminate China’s nuclear capability. China has pledged not to use nuclear weapons first – a pledge that most analysts believe China takes seriously. But they have also promised to retaliate in the event of a nuclear attack. Would Japan want the United States to respond to a conventional Chinese attack on bases in Japan with nuclear weapons, possibly triggering Chinese nuclear retaliation against Japan? If the answer is “no,” then threats to do so are not credible and they have little deterrent value. The commitment trap We are witnessing in real time how **statements and veiled threats of nuclear use – “fire and fury such as the world has never seen”** (Baker and Choe 2017) – **can have** **lasting consequences. Statements** by President Trump **suggesting a willingness to use nuclear weapons** **first** **in a** **crisis** with North Korea has **exacerbate**d **the risks of** **accidental nuclear escalation. But in even calmer** **times, such vague threats are** **ill advised. For example, US officials apparently believe that repeatedly stating or demonstrating America’s willingness and ability to use nuclear weapons in response to many kinds of nonnuclear threats can be** **reassuring. Japan might imagine that references to nuclear weapons use, such as an American president announcing that “all options are on the table” in response to nonnuclear options might** **deter China or No**rth **Ko**rea **from initiating a conventional attack and make war less likely. But China and** **No**rth **Ko**rea **are** **well aware that the US has nuclear weapons; there is no need to make explicit threats. Anything that would be interpreted by them – or by Japan – as a** **direct commitment to make a nuclear threat** **in response to anything but the use of nuclear weapons create what has been called** **“a** **commitment trap”** (Sagan, 2000). **In these cases, the United States and Japan may feel compelled to follow through with a nuclear response, even if they believe it was unwise** **and might trigger a catastrophic an otherwise avoidable response. If we are fighting and likely to prevail in a conventional war on the Korean peninsula, using nuclear weapons could lead to a more devastating nuclear attack by the North on South Korea** **and** **stalemate any conventional conflict. Yet,** **failing** **to respond could** **expose past commitments** to use nuclear weapons **as a** **bluff** **and the call into question the** **credibility** **of the United States on all security and military matters**. That is why President Obama and many past presidents have sought **to** **limit the conditions** **under which the U**nited **S**tates **might use nuclear weapons so as to not create a commitment trap that may force it into an unnecessary use of nuclear weapons**. This concern, however, **extends to the stated willingness to use nuclear weapons first in most scenarios. Suggesting that the U**nited **S**tates **might want or need to use nuclear weapons first in response to a conventional or some other nonnuclear threat undermines the credibility of our commitment to nuclear retaliation. It is not supported by the nature of the threat facing the alliance today, nor is it likely to in the future. Nuclear threats also do not address the** **driver** **for the pursuit of nuclear or biological weapons in the first place, since No**rth **Ko**rea **and likely China** **although the later to a lesser degree as time goes on, faces a** **conventional inferiority** **that drives their need to consider nonnuclear options. The threat for the U**nited **S**tates **as the conventional superior to use nuclear weapons first also calls into question US conventional capabilities, because full confidence in those would eliminate the need to threaten the use of nuclear weapons in response to anything but a nuclear attack.** Conventional preparation for conventional war The fact that nuclear threats cannot deter most conventional attacks, and that there is no sensible use for nuclear weapons in response for such attacks, does not mean that conventional attacks cannot be deterred or prevented, or that the United States is not committed to do so. **The United States** and Japan **must** plan on **deter**ring **and defeat**ing **conventional aggression through** **conventional means. They cannot and should not rely on the magic of a nuclear umbrella**, because the umbrella will not be effective under these circumstances. **A pledge of no-first-use by the United States would not signal any reduction in** the **commitment** of the United States to the security of Japan. **Instead**, by recognizing that nuclear weapons cannot deter most nonnuclear attacks, and by taking steps to acquire the conventional capabilities required to deter and respond to them, the **security** of both countries **would be enhanced.**

### ADV – Modeling/Norms

#### International norms over nuclear non-use are woefully underdeveloped now – U.S. nuclear policy is central to norm promotion.

Ohlendorf, '18 – Claremont McKenna College (Alex Kenchi Ohlendorf; ""Do as I say, not as I Do": An Examination of the Impact the United States has on Nuclear Weapons Norms"; Claremont McKenna College; https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&amp;httpsredir=1&amp;article=2821&amp;context=cmc\_theses; 2018)

In addition to the nonproliferation, there is another norm associated with nuclear weapons that has to do with their use. According to Lawrence Freedman, non-use is defined as a norm which: “sets an internalized moral restraint on detonating a nuclear weapon.”65 Thus, the norm of non-use seeks to prevent states from launching nuclear attacks against one another in order to mitigate the chance of nuclear war.

However, the norm of non-use is not as solidified as the norm of nonproliferation. Although nuclear weapons have yet to be used in a conflict since 1945, there are no binding international agreements which prevent their use.66 As a result, in comparison to the NPT, which is signed, ratified, and implemented as an international agreement between member states, there is no objective measure to “send messages about what is and is not officially and unofficially acceptable”67 with regards to the non-use norm.

Consequently, the norm of non-use does not allow for the same level of accountability and enforcement that is experienced with the nonproliferation norm, which could have negative effects on its prominence in the international system. However, the only time that nuclear weapons were used in combat was during the bombing of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. Although the reasons for the states’ refusals to use nuclear weapons could be due to the norm of nuclear deterrence or the adverse environmental and international effects, the norm of non-use seems to have played a role in contributing to this result.

Additionally, the United States occupies a central role in its ability to influence the non-use norm. The main reason for the United States’ central role revolves around the fact that it was “the first nation to develop and possess nuclear weapons, and refrained from nuclear use at several important points,” creating a situation in which “other states paralleled or followed the American development.”68 For example, during the Korean War in 1950, the United States possessed a nuclear monopoly over the rest of the world, giving Washington the opportunity to use or threaten the use of nuclear weapons without fearing the retaliation from another nuclear rival.69 Despite this inherent advantage, the United States refrained from using nuclear weapons during the conflict even when faced with dire circumstances, such as when the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) pushed U.N. forces back past the 38th parallel. 70 Therefore, by exercising responsible control over the use of the nuclear stockpile in multiple situations similar to the Korean War, the United States was able to establish appropriate and acceptable standards of behavior with regards to nuclear use. In doing so, the United States solidified its reputation as an actor with substantial influence over the non-use norm.

As a state with substantial influence over the non-use norm, the United States has been historically active in attempting to promote the norm as well. Dubbed “negative security assurances,” the United States first extended their guarantee of nuclear non-use in 1978, stating that they would not use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear weapons state that was a part of the NPT except under extreme circumstances.71 This policy of negative security assurance was once again brought up in 1995 by the Clinton administration, which altered the policy slightly, stating that the United States would only use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear NPT member state if that member conducted “an attack on the United States, its territories or armed forces, or its allies, by such state allied to a nuclear-weapon state or associated with a nuclear-weapons state in carrying out or sustaining the attack.”72 In doing so, the United States was able to kill two birds with one stone: Washington encouraged membership to the NPT regime while simultaneously demonstrating its commitment to promoting the non-use norm. By promoting the norm, the United States was able to use its position of influence to strengthen its status and reputation as a leading advocate of nuclear non-use, and demonstrated that the country was willing to provide support in order to advance the norm.

More recently, the United States has publically alluded to its support for the norm of non-use. In 2009, President Barack Obama pledged to “reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy” and urged others to do the same.73 However, the Obama administration, as well as preceding U.S. presidential administrations’ Nuclear Posture Review’s (NPR) reflected a dilemma that has historically impacted the United States’ ability to promote the non-use norm: a policy that would allow the U.S. to threaten a nuclear first strike in certain situations.74 Although the United States possesses an influential leadership position over the norm of non-use, U.S. nuclear weapons policy has never adopted a policy of no first use. In contrast to non-use, a policy of no first use provides a guarantee that a state will not be the first to preemptively or preventively use nuclear weapons in conflict.

Instead of accepting a policy of no first use, the United States employs a policy of “calculated ambiguity,”75 allowing the United States to maintain its nuclear deterrent by threatening a nuclear first strike under certain exigent conditions, while simultaneously allowing for flexibility in what it considers to be a threat that warrants nuclear retaliation. This gives Washington the best of both worlds; “[The United States receives] the benefits of leaving open the option of a nuclear response, while committing itself to nothing if deterrence fails.”76 Although this may present strategic advantages to the United States, it also causes the norm of non-use and the United States’ rejection of a no first use doctrine to come into conflict with one another. Although the U.S. may lead and promote a norm aimed at non-use, they cannot effectively implement and reflect the norm in their own policy since doing so would eliminate their ability to justify conditions for a nuclear first strike.

According to T.V. Paul, the norm of non-use is subject to change from concepts like iteration and reciprocity. To Paul, the social aspect of the norm creates a situation in which subsequent generations of people expect the behaviors associated with the norm to be upheld by others. However, when one nuclear state like the United States decides to violate this norm, others may follow suit as they may no longer feel bound by reciprocal obligations.77Therefore, the United States’ behaviors with regards to the non-use norm can have substantial effects on other states’ decisions to perpetuate it. Moreover, Paul’s claim ties in with Finnemore and Sikkink’s claims about the effects that an actor’s iterated behavior and habit can have on norms: that iterated behavior and habit have the ability to impact the saliency and appeal of social norms.78Thus, by demonstrating consistent behavior that supports the non-use norm, the United States can empower and promote the norm, causing it to become more important to the international system. This places a serious emphasis on the behaviors of the United States, for it has the ability to alter and bring degenerative change to the non-use norm.

In effect, the United States has consolidated its reputation as a leader and influential member of the norm of nuclear non-use. It has worked to promote the norm through negative security guarantees that seek to promote NPT membership while simultaneously advancing the prominence of normative nuclear non-use. In addition, President Barack Obama publically alluded to support for the non-use norm, and encouraged other countries to follow suit.79Despite these efforts, the United States has demonstrated a level of nuclear hypocrisy that is similar to that with regards to the nonproliferation norm: while they may show public support for the norm of non-use, their maintenance of a first strike nuclear doctrine shows that they are not committed to embodying the very norm that they strive to promote. This level of hypocrisy can result in damage to the United States’ reputation as a non-use norm leader, and can also cause the degeneration of the non-use norm altogether. In order to analyze this hypocrisy and its effects, it is necessary to examine a case that is prominent to the topic: the George W. Bush administration’s 2002 Nuclear Posture Review.

### ADV – Nonproliferation

#### Reductions in U.S. reliance on nuclear weapons is key to prevent heightened likelihood of nuclear miscalculation.

Gibbons, '19 – Rebecca Davis Gibbons is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Southern Maine. She previously served as a fellow and associate of the Project on Managing the Atom at Harvard Kennedy School’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs after receiving her PhD from Georgetown University in 2016. (Rebecca Davis Gibbons; "The Future of the Nuclear Order"; Arms Control Association; Arms Control Today Vol. 49 No.3 pp. 12-16; https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26633426.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A31092f9e0c5a63342d75487738ddb30b&amp;ab\_segments=&amp;origin=&amp;initiator=; April 2019)

Envisioning the Next Nuclear Order

The preservation of the nuclear order will not succeed without the type of dedicated and visionary leadership that led to post-World War II arrangements. Although near-term prospects are dim, a reinvigorated nuclear order will require current and emerging global powers to create a renewed consensus that addresses the challenges to the deterrent order and the nonproliferation order. In broad strokes, this new consensus includes a widened circle of nuclear nonproliferation stateleaders to reflect changing power dynamics, a renewed and more credible commitment to reducing nuclear dangers, and strategic dialogues to reduce risk and mitigate conflict among nuclear weapons possessors.

A sustainable nuclear order for the 21st century must accommodate changing global power dynamics. Based on economic projections, China, India, Brazil, and Indonesia are anticipated to be among the top powers by 2050, with India and China expected to surpass the United States by gross domestic product by 2030.8 Emerging powers should be invited and encouraged to assume leadership roles within a renewed nonproliferation order. This change should not be too difficult; just as the United States and the Soviet Union sought to limit the number of nuclear weapons possessor states for strategic reasons,9 so too will rising powers prioritize proliferation as their interests become global. Nonetheless, without encouragement, these powers may continue to rely on the United States to hold the line on proliferation as it has since the end of the Cold War. U.S. leaders can assist China and India by consulting on past and present U.S. nonproliferation diplomacy and encouraging greater transparency about their nuclear arms. The interests of Indonesia and Brazil also must be weighed in any new consensus. Indonesia has long been a proponent of nuclear disarmament and led the charge for 25-year rolling extensions at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Brazil was one of the last states to join the NPT, doing so in 1998. Its late accession reflects Brazil’s complicated relationship with the nuclear nonproliferation order. Most recently, Brazil has refused to conclude an additional protocol to its IAEA safeguards agreement, but it was an important leader in the negotiations toward the nuclear prohibition treaty.

Together, the established and emerging global powers should pledge publicly to work together in a political process to promote nuclear nonproliferation. The new consensus should accept the IAEA Model Additional Protocol as the global safeguards standard and add constraints on any additional sites for enrichment and reprocessing. These sensitive technologies were not mentioned in the NPT text, and some states have claimed it is their “right” under the treaty to possess such technology for peaceful uses. A new consensus should reject this idea while credibly committing to providing a wide range of civilian nuclear technology, including access to enriched uranium for peaceful uses through the global marketplace with additional assurances through global fuel banks.

In a renewed nonproliferation consensus that brings India into the leadership of the nonproliferation order, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan should be included in meetings and discussions as nuclear weapons possessor states. This de facto expansion of possessor states in a new nuclear nonproliferation order could only occur alongside a commitment by all nuclear weapons states to play a role in the deterrent order by reducing the role of nuclear weapons, seeking risk reduction measures, making significant nuclear reductions, and eventually pursuing disarmament. Incorporating all current nuclear weapons states into this political process matters because none of them should be able to avoid these commitments.

To make these commitments more credible after decades of broken promises, the nuclear possessor states should develop a sequence of steps, beginning with further U.S. and Russian reductions, that would put them on a path toward strategic stability and a reduced reliance on nuclear weapons. These steps could include changes in nuclear posture, such as removing nuclear weapons from high alert levels over time and separating warheads from delivery vehicles. In addition, the new steps could be made within a context in which nuclear weapons, conventional strategic weapons, and missile defenses are all on the negotiating table.10 Exclusively focusing on strategic nuclear weapons will not be effective. The more powerful nucleararmed states could offer inducements in the form of aid to the other nuclear states to keep them participating in the process.

While working through these complex strategic issues, the major powers should identify and mitigate the conflicts that underlie their perceived need for nuclear weapons. In this way, the CEND initiative represents an important idea but one that requires buy-in from the highest levels of leadership in all nuclear weapons states. During this process, all states would contribute to improving verification technology and protocols for a world with many fewer nuclear weapons. Furthermore, as states dismantle weapons or down-blend nuclear weapons-grade fuel, they should keep meticulous records of the activities so the information would be useful in a future disarmament process.11

All of the above sounds far-fetched in the current geopolitical environment, but one factor that could help push forward a new nuclear consensus is the nascent norm against nuclear weapons possession. The still emerging norm could increasingly affect the thinking of citizens around the world as they become concerned about the loss of traditional arms control agreements, the development of new nuclear weapons, and new arms races. Beginning a process of greatly reducing the number of nuclear weapons would be much easier for leaders if their citizens thought possessing such weapons were wrong.

Crafting the NPT was challenging for the two Cold War-era superpowers. Developing a renewed bargain in a more multipolar system, even a tacit one that is political in nature and does not necessarily require new treaties, will be much more difficult. The leaders of the relevant states must be motivated to make a generational commitment to major changes to sustain the nuclear order. This is a task on par with addressing global climate change; it is a job for visionary leaders. Of the many challenges inherent in this process, maintaining momentum through executive leadership changes is one of the toughest. There is no hard and fast way for leaders to tie the hands of their successors, but by engaging the public and seeking its buy-in for the process, leaders increase the chance that their successors will continue moving forward.

Some U.S. leaders may reject the notion that a new nuclear order is needed. They may be happy to be free of the NPT disarmament obligation if the treaty collapses. After all, some already see it as merely a convenient fiction that helps maintain the NPT and reduces proliferation pressures. Yet, rejecting the commitment to disarm and losing the nonproliferation order risk a world in which capable states perceive fewer constraints on pursuing proliferation activities. In other words, even if one thinks the treaty’s disarmament requirement is a convenient fiction, it cannot last in perpetuity. It is not feasible to expect states to remain non-nuclearweapon possessors without a disarmament commitment, a promise that has existed for 50 years. The disarmament movement would be further catalyzed by the United States and other nuclear-weapon states walking away from the commitment to negotiate eventual disarmament.

These tasks are immense. A world with multiple rising powers, a declining superpower, and influential civil society activists is one in which new political bargains will be difficult to forge. Even the most compelling leaders will be challenged by these order-sustaining projects. Yet, not taking up the challenge to adapt the nuclear order to new political realities means an increasingly nuclear armed world in which nuclear war and nuclear accidents become more likely.

## AI Aff

#### AI changed the game—autonomous nuclear capabilities provide new ground for AFF advantages based on miscalc and relations.

Greene 23 - (Noah Greene, project assistant for the AI Safety and Stability Initiative at the Center for a New American Security; 4-26-2023, Lawfare, "AI Nuclear Weapons Catastrophe Can Be Avoided," doa: 4-26-2023) url: https://www.lawfareblog.com/ai-nuclear-weapons-catastrophe-can-be-avoided

However, autonomous weapons in this vein are far from abstract. During the Cold War, Soviet military planners developed and placed into use a semiautonomous nuclear system known as Perimeter. In the event of nuclear war, Perimeter was designed to launch the Soviet Union’s vast missile arsenal without express guidance from central command. In theory, after a human activated the system, network sensors then determined whether the country had been attacked. If the system determined that the country had been attacked, it would check with leaders at the top of the command-and-control structure to confirm. If no response was given, the onus to deploy the missiles fell on a designated official. This was essentially an attempt to ensure mutually assured destruction even in the event of the decapitation of a central government or a “dead hand” scenario.

A lack of urgency in banning such weapons is due to concerns regarding long-term international security implications. At its core, states don’t want to make a commitment that could negate a first-mover advantage in adopting certain AI systems, nor do they want to lock themselves out of the market for becoming an early adopter should their enemies decide to utilize these systems. AI-enabled nuclear weapons are particularly concerning due to their civilization-destroying nature. As James Johnson highlighted in War on the Rocks last year, the question of AI technology being integrated into nuclear mechanisms is not a question of if, but “by whom, when, and to what degree.” If viewed along a spectrum, the most extreme degree of AI involvement would be a nuclear weapons system capable of identifying targets and firing on those targets without human approval. The second most extreme example would be a nuclear weapons system capable of firing on a target independently, after a human has locked the target into the system. While neither of these specific systems is known to exist, the future environment for more risky research in this area is far from certain. And both scenarios could be catastrophic. They would also increase the chances of a “broken arrows” incident, in which a nuclear weapon is released accidentally. To at least better humanity’s odds of survival, initiating a total ban on these weapons through a P5-led agreement would be a substantial step forward.

In the past, major nuclear powers have negotiated agreements on limiting nuclear proliferation in general and specifically limiting weapons testing in certain places. These agreements include the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (NTBT) and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The thinking of the major nuclear powers—the U.S., the U.K., and the Soviet Union—when negotiating the NTBT was similar to today’s thinking on this issue. Namely, there should be limits on how and where nuclear weapons are tested. Similarly for the NPT upon its initial signing, the chances of nuclear war and destruction outweighed the strategic benefits of unmitigated weapons research and development. Although AI and nuclear technology have changed drastically since this period, the core elements of those arguments are still true today.

Russia’s February 2022 invasion of Ukraine reinvigorated the specter of a nuclear exchange. Russian President Vladimir Putin has engaged in nuclear signaling to deter Western involvement in the conflict. This comes after Russia and the U.S. have invested in new-age hypersonic missiles, some of which are capable of evading defensive measures. This evasive component may very well include some form of machine learning that allows a nuclear warhead to have fixed optical sensors to identify and evade intersecting missiles coming from a target’s defenses. China has also increased its nuclear arsenal. Again, all of these events have elevated the need for another wide-sweeping nuclear weapons treaty. Banning nuclear weapons in which a human operator is not fully in control is an area of diplomatic discussion that likely has more agreement than general bans on nuclear weapons. It is always worth noting that nuclear war or broken arrows incidents are not in any state’s interest. The genesis of a treaty between today’s nuclear powers could begin with the U.S., Russia, and China engaging in trilateral talks. Once a base level of desire for an agreement is established, a broader summit with other P5 members could be convened.

It is reasonable to question the plausibility of such an agreement being created in the current security environment between the East (Russia and China) and West (the U.S., France, and the U.K.). But even at the height of Cold War antagonism, the U.S. and the Soviet Union managed to reach significant nuclear agreements, despite a deep sense of distrust by both sides that, at times, brought humanity to periods of heightened brinkmanship, such as the Cuban missile crisis.

\* \* \*

To illustrate the need for an international nuclear agreement, let’s imagine the following scenario. The year is 2050, the Russia-Ukraine war has long ended, but in the decades since, both Russia and China have updated their nuclear arsenals. Some systems maintain semiautonomous and fully autonomous missile systems in the command-and-control structure. The adoption of this technology forces U.S. military officials to rethink the government’s commitment made 30 years prior to always keep a human in the loop in U.S. systems. Considering these developments, the Department of Defense decides to forgo its own commitment and follow the example set by other nuclear powers to invest in similar systems. Existing in this same reality is North Korea, and while Kim Jong Un is no longer in charge, the country still fears that the new Supreme Leader Kim Yo Jong (his sister) will be assassinated. Planning for this possibility and the simultaneous fear of the decapitation of its government, the country places multiple evasive hypersonic nuclear missiles into service that are capable of declaring themselves “weapons free” if sensors detect a seismic shockwave from an attack.

This scenario has ample room for catastrophe—for both the international community and domestic leaders—should any of these weapons malfunction and lead to a nuclear fallout. As the Soviet-era Col. Petrov case kindly taught us, without a human firmly in control of the nuclear command-and-control structure, the odds of disaster creep slowly toward an unintended or uncontrolled nuclear exchange. An agreement between nuclear powers on this issue led by P5 states would be an important step toward recreating a patchwork of nuclear treaties that has dissolved over the past two decades. To do otherwise would be to flirt with an AI-enabled nuclear arms race.

## CBW Deterrence Aff

#### Threats to use nuclear weapons in response to biological weapons raises the risk of miscalculation – deterrence will fail

Parthemore and Weber 21 – Christine Parthemore is the chief executive officer of the Council on Strategic Risks, where she also leads the Janne E. Nolan Center on Strategic Weapons; former senior advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Defense Programs. Andy Weber is a senior fellow at the Council on Strategic Risks; his decades of U.S. government service included five-and-a-half years as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Defense Programs.

Christine Parthemore and Andy Weber, “The US must separate nuclear deterrence from biological weapons,” *Defense News*, 18 October 2021, https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2021/10/18/the-us-must-separate-nuclear-deterrence-from-biological-weapons/.

Today, the U.S. nuclear posture positions nuclear weapons as a leading means of deterring strategic-level biological weapons activities. As the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review described, the roles of U.S. nuclear forces currently include acting as a “hedge against the potential rapid growth or emergence of nuclear and non-nuclear strategic threats, including chemical, biological, cyber, and large-scale conventional aggression.”

This creates several problems. One is raising miscalculation risks in complex security environments, in particular because of the challenge of understanding whether a disease outbreak arises naturally, by accident or from a deliberate attack. Consider the continuing confusion regarding COVID-19 nearly two years after its emergence. The U.S. intelligence community still cannot determine with high certainty whether it emerged naturally or via a lab accident. China, Iran, Russia and others have accused the United States of creating the culprit virus as a biological weapon.

How would this nuclear policy be applied if such confusion and disinformation occurred regarding a severe disease outbreak in a conflict setting or in highly tense circumstances? And would restraint regarding such a step contribute to the nation’s leaders not taking seriously enough the question of whether a biological weapon was used? The ambiguity of application of this nuclear weapons policy is seen as a tool to maintain flexibility during a crisis and avoid driving escalatory behavior. Yet it brings serious risks as well.

Further, deterring biological weapons with nuclear weapons may be ineffective. Deterrence by punishment requires that threats be credible and that the targeted entity believes the threatened action (in this case a nuclear strike) would be carried out. This is not likely to be the case. As the United States has continued this nuclear policy, several chemical weapons attacks have been carried out at targeted scales. Numerous significant cyber attacks and intrusions have been undertaken as well. For biological weapons, the Department of State’s 2021 arms control treaty compliance report determined North Korea and Russia already have offensive biological weapons programs. It also registered continuing concerns that China and Iran have engaged in dual-use activities that extend beyond what is allowed by the Biological Weapons Convention.

These types of threats will always remain in some form. Yet the United States now has potentially promising, different pathways to addressing them that simultaneously reduce nuclear risks while strengthening nuclear deterrence.

#### The threat’s credibility is irrelevant – some bioweapons use is undeterrable, despite credibility – the only way to guarantee deescalation is to take nuclear use off the table

Sagan 2K – Caroline S.G. Munro Professor of Political Science, the Mimi and Peter Haas University Fellow in Undergraduate Education, and Senior Fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation and the Freeman Spogli Institute at Stanford University.

Scott D. Sagan, “The Commitment Trap: Why the United States Should Not Use Nuclear Threats to Deter Biological and Chemical Weapons Attacks,” *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 4, Spring 2000, pp. 105-110, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2539316.

Deterrence Failures Despite Credible Threats

If the argument presented here is correct—that U.S. threats to retaliate with nuclear weapons in response to chemical and biological weapons attacks are credible because they place the United States’ reputation on the line—why is this not an unabashedly good thing? Most advocates of the calculated ambiguity doctrine assume that it is, and therefore conclude their analysis with a simple and comforting thought: the security of the United States and its allies will be enhanced if U.S. nuclear threats reduce the likelihood of adversaries using chemical or biological weapons. Yet this is not necessarily so. There is, after all, an important distinction between saying that a threat is highly credible and saying that it is effective all the time, against all adversaries, under all circumstances. U.S. nuclear threats would definitely have an overall positive effect only if they were successful 100 percent of the time. Yet because such threats both decrease the likelihood of a chemical or biological attack (but not to zero) and increase the likelihood of U.S. nuclear retaliation (but not to certainty) if deterrence fails, a more difficult net assessment is necessary. Any assessment of current nuclear doctrine must weigh the benefit of the decrease in the probability of chemical and biological attacks against the residual probability of deterrence failure, the probability of a U.S. nuclear response, and the long-term costs of such a U.S. nuclear response.

It is disturbing that most advocates of using U.S. nuclear weapons to deter chemical and biological attacks simply ignore this crucial issue. Instead, they assume either that nuclear threats will succeed 100 percent of the time, or that they will succeed except in cases in which potential enemies are “undeterrable,” because they are irrational, suicidal, or otherwise incapable of being dissuaded from aggression by even firm threats of overwhelming destruction. The first assumption is unwarranted: even believable threats can fail for reasons discussed below. The second assumption may well be proven to be accurate in some future cases, as the history of the Aum Shinrikyo cult’s terrorist use of anthrax, botulinum toxin, and sarin gas in Tokyo reminds us.55 But it is not clear how nuclear weapons doctrine is relevant for deterring such adversaries. Defense, not deterrence, would be necessary when confronting irrational enemies who either welcome a nuclear apocalypse or are, for whatever reason, oblivious to any level of threatened destruction.

What is relevant, however, is to think through how deterrence might fail despite the United States’ having made a credible threat to retaliate with nuclear weapons. Although it is not possible to assign relative probabilities to such scenarios, five general types of “rational deterrence” failures can be identified. First, it is possible that a strong U.S. threat to retaliate is credible, but comes too late, after a decision to launch a chemical or biological attack has already been made. President Kennedy’ s threat to respond to the Soviet missile emplacement in Cuba is the classic case of this type of deterrence failure: his threat came well after the Kremlin decision to send the nuclear-armed missiles had been made and implementation had begun. Second, it is possible that an adversary’s leadership could believe that its attack was below the threshold of chemical or biological use that would trigger a U.S. nuclear response. In this case, the U.S. commitment to use nuclear weapons in retaliation to a catastrophic chemical or biological attack would be feared, but the adversary would design the attack to produce smaller casualty figures in an attempt to avoid such retaliation. There is nothing irrational about such a strategy; whether it would work—technically or politically—is, however, another matter. Third, an adversary could believe that the source of the attack would not be known and that U.S. nuclear retaliation would therefore not occur. This is an especially serious danger with biological weapons, which could be delivered covertly and which might be masked as a natural outbreak of infectious disease.56 A fourth, though related, deterrence failure scenario is a “catalytic” biological attack: a scenario in which one adversary delivers biological weapons against U.S. troops overseas or against the U.S. homeland, but does so in a manner designed to make the U.S. government think that a different enemy instigated the attack. The general problem of “catalytic nuclear war” received attention during the Cold War, as U.S. strategists feared that third parties armed with nuclear weapons might attempt to instigate a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union.57 This danger has not been as well analyzed with respect to biological weapons, however, despite the existence of potential U.S. adversaries—Iran and Iraq are only the most obvious cases in point—that are also adversaries of each other and might therefore be interested in instigating a U.S. attack on their rival.

The fifth and final type of rational deterrence failure is an “accidental” chemical or biological attack caused by the unauthorized use of such weapons by a military commander, or a deliberate launch of such weapons, after a false warning of a nuclear attack. This type of deterrence failure is worth analyzing in more detail here, both because it has been virtually ignored in the debate about current U.S. nuclear doctrine and because it is a danger that may be significantly increased by U.S. nuclear weapons threats. One unanticipated result of U.S. statements that increase adversaries’ fears of nuclear retaliation may be to simultaneously increase their fears of nuclear “decapitation” through U.S. nuclear weapons’ first strikes or preemptive attacks. This fear would, in turn, increase the likelihood that an adversary with chemical or biological weapons would both delegate command authority over such weapons to senior military officers in the field and issue specific orders to retaliate immediately if the capital city is destroyed with nuclear weapons. Some form of predelegation of national command authority may be implemented for a variety of reasons in different states: as part of normal leadership succession procedures, as a result of leaders’ fears of massive conventional attacks on the capital, because of concerns about leadership assassination, or simply as a precaution once any adversary has nuclear weapons capabilities that could destroy the national government in the capital city. The risk-prone combination of predelegation of authority and the issuance of orders to retaliate immediately with chemical or biological weapons, however, is likely to be put in place (and is likely to be implemented) only when leaders fear a nuclear decapitation strike that would both destroy the existing government and warrant extreme retribution.

The current policy of maintaining ambiguity about what kind of U.S. retaliation would occur, however, could greatly increase fears about nuclear first use, in part because the policy also permits some ambiguity about when “retaliation” would occur. The already-cited November 1998 preemptive threat by a “senior American official” to “obliterate Iraq” if Saddam “tries to use weapons of mass destruction” is the most dramatic case in point.58 A declassified 1995 U.S. Strategic Command report on U.S. nuclear doctrine—which states that “we must be ambiguous about our response (or preemption) if what we value is threatened”—could encourage similar fears.59 To the degree that such U.S. doctrinal statements increase fears about decapitation, then adversaries’ leaders will be further encouraged to delegate authority to use chemical and biological weapons to officers lower down in the chain of command, and those officers will be more prone to retaliate promptly if they believe that a U.S. nuclear attack has occurred.

U.S. defense analysts are generally insensitive to this command-and-control problem, because they assume that the leaders of new proliferators would never delegate authority for the use of chemical or biological weapons to subordinate officers due to fears of coups or insubordination. The evidence on predelegation in the case of Iraq, however, supports my argument, not that more sanguine view. Emerging evidence from the Gulf War suggests that Saddam Hussein felt compelled by military necessity to predelegate authority to use biological and chemical weapons to senior officers in a special military unit, and ordered that such weapons be used only in the event of a nuclear attack on Baghdad.60 Saddam’ s speeches clearly show that he was worried about a nuclear decapitation threat and sought, at a minimum, to deter it through declarations that predelegation existed for a retaliatory strike in retribution for an attack on Baghdad. As the Iraqi leader explained to a delegation of U.S. senators in April 1990:

If Israel uses atomic bombs, we will strike at it with the binary chemical weapon. I reiterate now that if Israel does this, we will do that. We have given instructions to the commanders of the air bases and missile formations that once they hear Israel has hit any place in Iraq with the atomic bomb, they will load the chemical weapons with as much as will reach Israel and direct it at its territory. For we might be in Baghdad holding a meeting with the command when the atomic bomb falls on us. So to make the military order clear to the air and missile base commanders, we have told them that if they do not receive an order from higher authority and a city is struck with an atomic bomb, they will point toward Israel any weapons capable of reaching it.61

Although the evidence gathered by UNSCOM inspectors in Iraq does not suggest that all “air and missile base commanders” held independent authority to use chemical weapons, it is consistent with the possibility that limited delegation existed for the special Scud missile unit that held twenty-five warheads filled with botulinum toxin, anthrax, and aflatoxin and fifty chemical warheads. Iraqi authorities have also claimed that this special military unit had the authority to use these Scuds if Baghdad was destroyed by nuclear weapons, and UNSCOM gathered some evidence that the BW warheads were mated to a handful of these missiles.

A leader’s decision to delegate the authority to use chemical or biological weapons may be a reasonable response to the fear of a decapitation attack, but it inevitably raises the risks of accidental uses of such weapons. Two incidents from the 1991 Gulf War dramatically illustrate these dangers. First, on January 28, 1991, when the United States bombed a large ammunition bunker outside of Basra, the explosion was so large that both the Soviets (using their infrared satellite monitors) and the Israelis (who were receiving downlinks from the U.S. satellites) contacted Washington to ask if U.S. forces had just detonated a nuclear weapon.62 Second, on February 7, 1991, when U.S. forces used a “Daisy Cutter” BLU-82 bomb, an SAS British commando behind the lines reportedly saw the large explosion and announced on an open (unclassified) radio, “Sir, the blokes have just nuked Kuwait.”63

Given these occurrences during the Gulf War, it should not take too much imagination to think through similar, realistic scenarios in which the special security officers in charge of biological or chemical weapons might believe that the conditions under which they were predelegated authority to use their weapons had in fact come into effect.64 At an operational level, the risks produced by an adversary’s predelegation of authority raise difficult questions about U.S. military targeting policies, conventional and nuclear, concerning attacks against an enemy’s command, control, and communications.65 At a strategic level, the predelegation problem even raises questions about whether the net effect of U.S. nuclear threats is to increase or decrease the probability that chemical or biological weapons will be used against the U.S. homeland, military forces, or other targets.

## Cyber Deterrence Aff

#### Threats to use nukes against cyberattacks impermissibly raise the risk of nuclear conflict – U.S. cyber superiority means nuclear threats are unnecessary for deterrence

Perkovich 18 – Ken Olivier and Angela Nomellini Chair and vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

George Perkovich, “Really? We’re Gonna Nuke Russia for a Cyberattack?” *POLITICO Magazine*, 18 January 2018, https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/01/18/donald-trump-russia-nuclear-cyberattack-216477/.

Sanger and Broad acknowledge that the draft, which was first published by the Huffington Post, “does not explicitly say that a crippling cyberattack against the United States would be among the extreme circumstances” that would motivate the administration to initiate nuclear war. But, citing former and current officials, Sanger and Broad report that the proposed nuclear doctrine posits this contingency if, in the words of the leaked document, an adversary conducted “non-nuclear strategic attacks … on U.S., allied, or partner civilian population or infrastructure.” In plain English, the Trump team seems to be threatening to nuke anyone who conducts a massively disruptive cyberattack on the power grid or water system of the U.S. or one of its friends.

For three reasons, the Trump administration would be wise to reconsider and more carefully calibrate the circumstances under which it would initiate nuclear war.

The first reason has to do with the fact that nuclear war would be much more devastating to the United States than would any conceivable cyberattack. Russia and China appear to be the most likely adversaries that in the near term might be able to use cyberweapons to disable significant segments of the U.S. electricity system. Indeed, Russian attackers already did so to Ukraine, in a December 2015 operation that shut down power for approximately 230,000 Ukrainians for up to six hours. That attack, Wired magazine reported last June, may have been a dress rehearsal for a future assault on the U.S. power grid.

Now imagine it was much worse, and all of Ukraine was without electricity for weeks. If Ukraine possessed nuclear weapons, would any sane person in Washington have recommended that Ukrainian leaders retaliate by nuking Russia, and thereby inviting Russian nuclear attacks on Ukraine? The cure would have been much worse than the disease.

The same strategic logic applies to the United States. A cyberattack on U.S. civilian infrastructure could be enormously disruptive and costly. Depending on the scale and durability of outages of electricity, piped water, etc., the effect could be like what Puerto Rico is experiencing due to Hurricane Maria (though without the collapsed roadways and buildings). But, if a U.S. president initiated nuclear war in response to a massive cyberattack, Russia and China would be expected to retaliate with nuclear weapons. This could leave the mainland U.S. in the condition of Puerto Rico minus all the people, buildings and wildlife. Russia and China would suffer gravely in the process, but the U.S. would lose much more than it would gain by moving from cyberwar to nuclear war.

Here’s the second reason it’s crazy to retaliate with nuclear weapons: The United States’ conventional and cyber capabilities combined are greater than its adversaries’. Thus, the United States for decades has wanted to keep conflicts from going nuclear, where it would be harder if not impossible to “win.” The U.S. continues to develop and deploy its own cyber capabilities to disrupt adversaries’ civilian and dual-use infrastructure—energy, water, finance, etc. This helps deter adversaries from initiating cyberwarfare on a large scale, and, if deterrence fails, to enable countervailing cyberattacks and perhaps conventional warfare.

However, if the U.S. justifies the first use of nuclear weapons in response to possible cyberattacks, it will invite others to lower the threshold for using nuclear weapons. This is exactly the opposite of long-standing U.S. interests. A state with superior conventional and cyber capabilities should raise the nuclear threshold, not lower it.

#### Nuclear threats can’t deter cyber attacks – current posture raises the risk of war, fails to assure allies, and is politically unpopular

Cal 18 – Active-duty Army Aviator serving as an international relations instructor at the United States Military Academy and a resident military fellow at the Modern War Institute.

Maj. Nerea M. Cal, “Nuclear Weapons’ New Purpose: Deterring Cyber Attacks?” *Modern War Institute*, 19 March 2018, https://mwi.usma.edu/nuclear-weapons-new-purpose-deterring-cyber-attacks/.

The Practical Deterrent Effect

Just because an action is legal does not necessarily mean it is effective. Deterrence relies on the belief that the threat of pain can shape an adversary’s behavior by forcing a cost-benefit analysis. If the cost (the threat of pain) of perpetrating an action is higher than the benefit to be gained by that action, the adversary will be deterred from carrying it out. Defense and administration officials should evaluate whether a policy that allows for a nuclear response to cyber attacks will successfully deter our adversaries, taking into consideration the unique characteristics of cyberspace and the current international geopolitical environment.

The 2018 NPR claims that “in the absence of U.S. nuclear deterrence, the United States, its allies, and partners would be vulnerable to coercion and attack by adversaries who retain or expand nuclear arms and increasingly lethal non-nuclear capabilities.” As the NPR points out, “U.S. nuclear capabilities have made essential contributions to the deterrence of nuclear and non-nuclear aggression,” as well as the absence of Great Power war. Given the success of nuclear deterrence, it is not surprising that its logic and rhetoric have become firmly entrenched in the strategic and military discourse around cyber warfare. Pick up a book, read an article, or attend a cyber conference and you will inevitably encounter a discussion about how to “deter” in cyberspace and the possible effects of a cyber “arms race.” Indeed, the US government reflects this theoretical bias both structurally and substantively: US Cyber Command was once under the control of US Strategic Command, the Department of Defense’s unified command responsible for maintaining and operating the instruments of US Cold War nuclear deterrence strategy. And while Cyber Command’s ongoing transition to a unified command “demonstrates the increased US resolve against cyberspace threats,” the defense community continues to try to fit the square cyber threat into the proverbially round deterrence hole. In 2017, the Defense Science Board published a report outlining what it views to be the three major cyber deterrence challenges and proposing recommendations for how to respond to them. It seems, at least in national security circles, that the concept of deterrence and cyberspace are inextricably linked.

However, the jury is still out as to whether nuclear weapons can effectively deter in cyberspace. The very nature of the domain presents challenges to the effective use of deterrence therein. Two key challenges—that of attribution and how to demonstrate resolve—complicate a state’s ability to use the threat of pain to reshape an adversary’s cost-benefit calculations. Despite advances in cyber forensics, attackers can still mask their identities through a variety of technical and legal means. Moreover, state actors can conceal their involvement by perpetrating attacks through proxy actors. This ability to obscure an attacker’s identity or involvement obviously minimizes the potency of the deterrent threat because the ability to successfully retaliate is greatly reduced.

Even if the perpetrator of an attack can be identified, effective deterrence also requires demonstrating the resolve to follow through on a threat. In a recent press conference, Gen. Paul Selva, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, denied that the Pentagon was considering using nuclear weapons in response to cyber attacks. Other defense officials have since expressed similar sentiments. This lack of clarity between a published policy document and its interpretation by those charged with carrying it out does not signal the level of resolve necessary for a deterrent strategy to be effective.

Finally, this strategy should take into consideration the likely response of our adversaries. While our Cold War strategy was effective at preventing nuclear war, it led to an arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union, arguably leading to the proliferation of nuclear weapons that set the stage for current security challenges, such as Iran and North Korea’s pursuit of a nuclear capabilities. Would the 2018 NPR’s expansion of the United States’ nuclear deterrence strategy truly constrain our adversaries’ behavior or incentivize those with their own nuclear capabilities to mimic our policy by also expanding the circumstances in which they would use them? Arguably, this strategy would be less effective against such states, like Russia and China. As the 2018 NPR outlines, Russia has been modernizing its existing systems and developing new ones, including an undersea autonomous torpedo and a ground-launched cruise missile in violation of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Similarly, China has been expanding its nuclear capabilities. Though its arsenal remains relatively small, it deployed nuclear-powered ballistic submarines within the last year and is planning to field its next-generation submarines within the next decade. Given that the 2018 NPR considers these states, along with North Korea, to represent the greatest threats to US national security, officials must objectively evaluate whether the proposed strategy will actually help deter them or only further incite them.

The Leader of the Free World

In addition to the legal and practical implications of this strategy, the Trump administration should also ponder the normative effects of this new plan. That is, even if the strategy is legal and could work in practice, should the United States adopt a policy that expands the circumstances under which it will use its nuclear weapons? In a recent article, Jacquelyn Schneider and Sarah Kreps share the results of their research showing that Americans are less likely to support retaliation for a cyber attack than a physical attack with the same results. If Americans hold this opinion, our allies might feel similarly. Though the United States remains the world’s strongest military and economic power, it relies on allies and partners in both realms. The 2018 NPR reflects a significant shift in US policy that for decades has sought the reduction of nuclear arms towards one that will modernize and expand our arsenal, potentially encouraging our adversaries and many of our allies to do the same. Ultimately, the Trump administration must ask itself whether this policy will achieve its objectives of safeguarding the homeland, assuring allies, and deterring adversaries, or if it will have the exact opposite effect and undermine global security.

#### Nuclear deterrence is obsolete for the cyber domain – U.S. policy must adopt a paradigm shift to avoid wars

Ross 21 – Deputy division chief within the 566th Intelligence Squadron at Buckley AFB, Colorado. He is an intelligence officer with extensive expertise in signals and cyber intelligence. MA from Biola University.

Maj. Cameron Ross, “Is It Time to Forget About Cyber Deterrence?” *Air & Space Power Journal*, vol. 35, no. 1, Spring 2021, pp. 69-71, https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Volume-35\_Issue-1/C-Ross.pdf.

The arrival of nuclear weapons dramatically altered the balance between offense and defense and created the ultimate offense-dominant environment.3 In a nuclear war, the defense would always lose, and the cost of the war would be catastrophic for mankind. The horrifically destructive and undisputable nature of the weapon demanded an entirely new strategic framework to manage the atomic age. Brodie’s 1946 classic, The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order, advanced the concept of nuclear deterrence, which would serve as the foundation of US security throughout the Cold War and into the twenty-first century. Deterrence itself was not a new idea—traditional statehood included elements of conventional deterrence to achieve national objectives or avoid war. For example, forces could be deployed to borders to signal resolve and dissuade an adversary from attacking. However, Brodie recognized that nuclear weapons represented incontestable threats of unacceptable cost, so strategists had to completely change how they approached deterrence and military affairs. As he famously stated, “Thus far, the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them.”4

As a result, the dominant organizing agenda for military forces became deterrence and the avoidance of war. Theorists introduced a radical concept that a nation’s security would no longer rest in its offensive and defensive abilities but rather in its opponent’s mind. Further, the purpose of possessing military weapons (in this case, nuclear weapons) was to never use them.5 The massive cost of these incontestable weapons became the source of deterrence stability and maintenance of peace between nuclear powers. Ever since, deterrence has served as the primary strategic framework for America’s national security.

Consequently, ideas about cyber deterrence have naturally accompanied the growth of cyberspace and cyber operations. The disruptive and revolutionary nature of cyber and its potential for massive effect resembled the arrival of nuclear weapons in many ways. However, many theorists and strategists quickly noted the challenges to reconciling cyber with ideas of classical deterrence. During the Cold War, deterrence was straightforward. For example, it was easy to know who launched an attack; there was a significant scientific barrier to creating nuclear weapons; every bomb could be as powerful as the first; any use of a nuclear weapon crossed an acknowledged threshold; redlines were usually grounded in geography and easy to conceptualize; and motives were generally discernable and tied to strategic interests.6 Almost none of these apply to the world of cyber. Attribution can be incredibly difficult and usually takes an inordinate amount of time—if one can discern the origins of the attack at all. The low barrier to entry enables many actors, and what would deter each actor is almost as varied as the actors themselves. The use of a cyber weapon makes it less likely that it will be effective in the future as defenders patch the vulnerability. Defining substantive thresholds and redlines is almost impossible. Yet, despite all the barriers to effective deterrence, most authors believe it is possible and should be pursued. But is deterrence the right framework for approaching cyberspace? Perhaps the friction strategists face is indicative of the need for a paradigm shift.7

A handful of thinkers have begun to argue just that. They maintain that anchoring America’s cybersecurity capabilities around a primary strategic objective of war avoidance is not achievable in any sustained manner.8 In addition to the challenges already noted, their analysis of the nature of cyber operations points to a framework more akin to offense-defense than deterrence. Just as conventional deterrence is less stable than nuclear deterrence because of the contestability of conventional weapons, the highly contestable nature of cyberspace makes cyber deterrence even less stable.9 Further, by definition, cyberspace is interconnected, which means that action is never absent and that national security actors are in constant contact with adversaries as well as numerous nongovernmental entities.10 Finally, every new version of software, hardware, and integration configuration presents new opportunities for offense and new challenges for defense. The lack of any steady-state in cyber “terrain” means there is no steady state of defense. Instead, “defense is a dynamic construct relative to the offensive opportunities that emerge with each 2.0 or 3.0 of the terrain.”11 The combination of contestability, interconnectedness, constant action, and ever-changing terrain creates an entirely new strategic environment: one of offensive-persistence.12

As opposed to the environment of nuclear weapons, where the presumption is that the defense will lose, an offensive-persistent environment presumes that the defense can lose, but it is not structurally inevitable. Defense is possible in any specific moment within the dynamic terrain of cyberspace and can be sustained over periods of time through active adjustments to the environment. However, defense can never be decisive. “The defense can achieve tactical and operational success, but the offense will persist, the contact with the enemy will remain constant, and the defense will need to adjust as the terrain to defend and the vectors to attack evolve.”13 Just as the unique strategic environment of nuclear conflict necessitated a change in strategy to address it, cyberspace policy and operations must address the distinctive nature of cyberspace. As Richard Harknett explains, “Strategic frameworks must map to the realities of strategic environments; the reverse is not possible.”14

#### There’s deep literature for both sides of the Cyber debate AND excellent critical approaches.

Burton 22 - (Dr. Joe Burton is an Associate Lecturer in the School of International Relations at the University of St Andrews. Prior to that he was a Marie Curie (MSCA-IF) fellow at Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) where he worked on the twoyear European Commission-funded project Strategic Cultures of Cyber Warfare (CYBERCULT) and a Senior Lecturer in the New Zealand Institute for Security and Crime Science (NZISCS), University of Waikato; Summer 2022, The Cyber Defense Review, Vol 7, No. 3, "The Future of Cyber Conflict Studies: Cyber Subcultures and The Road to Interdisciplinarity," doa: 4-26-2023) url: https://cyberdefensereview.army.mil/Portals/6/Documents/2022\_summer\_cdr/CDR\_V7N3\_Summer\_2022-SE-WEB-1.pdf?ver=oDnMjK7AGrLLtmFJPHUwxQ%3D%3D

Students and scholars of International Relations are part of a community of knowledge and practice that stretches back to the founding of the discipline after the First World War. This was a conflict of attrition in which a stalemate illustrated that offensive campaigns were not decisive and that defensive measures could create long drawn-out conflicts that inflicted great costs on both sides. The task of IR scholars was to try and address the strategic, ideational, and structural deficiencies and pathologies on which the war was based. During the Cold War, the discipline’s most consuming focus was on managing the perils of nuclear capabilities: how they could be use offensively (and coercively), how to defend against them, and how to find a balance between offense and defense that could provide stability.[12]

Because IR is a community of knowledge and practice that shows significant continuities, in which knowledge accumulates, and in which various path dependencies exist, approaches to understanding cyber strategy have followed a similar direction. Scholars have debated cyber coercion,[13] cyber stability,[14] and the offense-defense balance in cyberspace.[15] While there are nuclear lessons for cyber,[16] there are also fundamental differences between the management of nuclear and cyber threats. Scholars in the field of IR have tended to lean on old adages and the accumulation of historical knowledge in ways that have not advanced the field enough.

While there are clearly some deep cleavages in the IR community about how to study IR, what to study, and different ontological and epistemological assumptions about some of the key concepts (the divide between realism, liberalism and constructivism has been widely documented, for example), the IR subculture is concerned with a common set of problems and ideas. The first is the nature of power and how it is exercised. Cyber power itself has been analyzed and deconstructed, with a variety of metrics and methods used to study and quantify it.[17] A second central and unifying theme that forms the basis of the IR subculture is the notion of explaining both cooperation and conflict under conditions of anarchy.[18] According to realist assumptions, cyber defense and offense are responses to an anarchic international environment in which there are no overriding laws or central authority. The covertness of cyberspace lends itself to offensive actions and makes defensive ones very difficult, and its global scope makes sovereign control over it next to impossible, despite recent calls for digital sovereignty in the EU and elsewhere.[19] Liberal and constructivist scholarship, conversely, has sought to examine the emergence of international cooperation in the cyber domain, including the establishment of new norms, rights, laws, and institutions. Yet progress has been slow, and norms are easily abrogated in a domain that allows for cheating, covert action and plausible deniability.[20]

Critical approaches to IR and security studies have provided further nuance to the field, in part by questioning the nature of power and knowledge in the cyber field, including who it benefits and the political and commercial interests that cyber insecurity serves. Examining the securitisation and militarization of cyberspace[21] and how offensive cyber operations are often hyped and framed as existential threats (the digital Pearl Harbor and 9/11 narratives, for example)[22] has advanced the field, and the impact of cyber operations on human rights, privacy, and human security have all emerged as significant contributions by IR scholars to the cyber security discipline.

## Disarmament Aff

#### There’s also ample policy ground over shifts in U.S. nuclear posture to disarmament – they access impacts like great power war, U.S. leadership, nuclear terrorism, proliferation, etc.

Perkovich 8 – Vice president for studies and director of the Nonproliferation Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Served as a speech writer and foreign policy adviser to Senator Joseph Biden.

George Perkovich, October 2008, “Abolishing Nuclear Weapons: Why the United States Should Lead,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/abolishing\_nuclear\_weapons.pdf

This challenge is well understood. The United States, with European backing, has undertaken national and international efforts to remove nuclear weapons materials from inadequately secured facilities around the world and to heighten security where materials are located. What is needed most in this domain is greater political will and sustained attention of high-level officials. It is tempting for working-level officials in states whose cooperation is sought by the United States to seek concessions on other issues. The next U.S. administration will have to raise these issues to the cabinet or head-of-state level, where its counterparts will not want to look indifferent or mercantile in matters of such dire consequence. A clearer commitment to the goal of nuclear disarmament would not be decisive here, but it could help. Terrorists might not be influenced, but a clearer commitment to seek conditions for the elimination of nuclear arsenals can help motivate other states to support strengthened nonproliferation rules, inspections, and controls over fissile materials. It could also strengthen popular revulsion over the use of these weapons, including by terrorists. The stronger the global effort to disavow nuclear weapons as a viable tool of statecraft and symbol of power, the greater the leverage that can be exerted on states and other actors who might facilitate terrorist acquisition or use of nuclear weapons, either by acts of commission or omission. Terrorists may not be deterrable or persuadable, but they can be impeded by the denial of sanctuary, technology, and materiel they seek from states and vendors. Eliminating the Threat of Nuclear Annihilation The end of the Cold War and the threat of U.S.–Russian nuclear war greatly reduced the specter of nuclear annihilation. Yet the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the possible diffusion of fissile materials mean that the risk of mass destruction remains. Recent studies by atmospheric scientists using advanced computer models indicate that a nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan involving 50 Hiroshima-strength weapons each (less than one percent of the global arsenal and one-half of what India and Pakistan possess) could produce a nuclear winter with climate change unrecorded in human history. Belief in nuclear deterrence provides some comfort. Indeed, it is a primary source of resistance to seriously pursuing nuclear disarmament. Yet this belief is rational only insofar as one thinks that nuclear deterrence will not fail. If that thought or assumption is valid, then nuclear proliferation should not be such a concern. If additional states or terrorists acquire nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence will not fail, then why worry? If, on the other hand, nuclear deterrence is too uncertain to protect civilization forever from the dangers of mass destruction, then the goal of creating the conditions for the secure, verifiable, and enforceable elimination of these weapons must be elevated. As long as nuclear weapons remain, deterrence will need to be managed with great care. It is indefensible to prefer an international order based heavily on threats to use nuclear weapons over an alternative in which these weapons are collectively reduced to very low numbers and salience. Fostering Optimism in U.S. Global Leadership Optimism will be difficult to cultivate in a world in which nuclear proliferation appears likely and progress toward nuclear disarmament doubtful. Since 1945, nuclear weapons have been a central symbol of the international order. The unrivalled, speedy, and destructive power of these weapons darkens imaginations. If it were possible to confine nuclear weapons to states whose stability, peacefulness, and judiciousness were widely trusted, optimism could flourish nonetheless. But this is an unlikely prospect in the near or medium term. Leaders and populations in states that could acquire nuclear weapons may not agree on which other states are trustworthy with these weapons. This is one reason why a nuclear order based on a double standard—a handful of states determined to keep nuclear weapons and also trying to prevent 185 from getting them—is inherently unstable.

#### Attempts at nuclear deterrence fails but does destabilize the globe, abolition is a far better policy and allows policymakers to rebalance over security threats that matter.

Doyle 13 – Two decades working at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) on nonproliferation.

James Doyle, January 31 2013, “Why Eliminate Nuclear Weapons?” Global Politics and Strategy, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00396338.2013.767402

It appears that the war scare that culminated with Able Archer 83 was a case of mutual intelligence failure and leadership misperception, shortcomings that remain all too frequent in the post-Cold War era. The fact that it happened 33 years after the beginning of a nuclear deterrent relationship between the United States and Soviet Union and brought the chance of nuclear war closer than at any time since the Cuban Missile Crisis is evidence against the so-called benefits of nuclear deterrence on national decision-making. What if there are no such benefits? What if nuclear-armed nations are just as prone to stumbling into war or choosing to use military force as they were prior to the acquisition of nuclear weapons? The fundamental difference then would be the magnitude of risk carried by states that choose to rely on nuclear deterrence. If deterrence fails, millions, or even hundreds of millions of civilians can be killed in less than a day. Without nuclear weapons the consequences of military conflict, even between great powers, would not be nearly as severe. Sustained use of conventional weapons can be devastating, and nuclear weapons could eventually be reconstituted and used, but the time needed for either to happen at least presents an opportunity to end hostilities before cities are destroyed.

Nuclear weapons also inhibit the development of positive relations between former rivals, as the unsteady progress in the development of positive US–Russian relations since the end of the Cold War demonstrates. How deeply can two nations engage as partners while still proclaiming the capability and willingness to destroy one another, just in case? To be sure, sources of tension other than opposing nuclear forces exist in the US–Russian relationship, but fundamental change would be needed in the area of nuclear strategy before a true partnership could be established. In the years ahead, the value of a true security partnership with Russia and China for both the United States and Europe is likely to be very high indeed.

The force is too big

Current US nuclear posture with respect to Russia seems to be completely out of step with declared policy. In 1994, Russia and the United States reached a bilateral de-targeting agreement which stated that ‘for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age – Russia and United States will not operate nuclear forces, day-to-day, in a manner that presumes they are adversaries’.[Footnote22](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00396338.2013.767402) But if Russia is not presumed to be a potential adversary, three fundamental features of the current US nuclear force structure and operating posture make little sense.

Firstly, the force is too big. Without the need to target Russia's strategic forces there simply are not enough plausible aim-points in the world for US nuclear weapons that would require 1,500–2,000 operationally deployed warheads. For example, in an extreme crisis, perhaps 50–100 nuclear weapons at most would be needed to threaten devastation on Iran, North Korea or China. Only Russia's large and dispersed nuclear force has historically justified US forces totalling thousands of nuclear weapons. Secondly, there would be no need for alerted weapons. No country other than Russia has the capability to pre-empt the launch of US forces by destroying a significant portion of them on the ground. Thirdly, US nuclear weapons would not need the operational capability (in terms of accuracy and destructive yield) to limit damage to the United States by destroying Russian nuclear weapons at their protected bases before they could be launched.

The inability of the United States and Russia to make more rapid progress on reducing nuclear weapons and increasing transparency regarding the roles and missions of remaining weapons has created a source of continued misperception and mistrust. America's maintenance of large alerted nuclear forces, even as it develops strategic missile defences, naturally leads Russia to question America's strategic intentions. Russia's retention of thousands of older non-strategic nuclear weapons raises similar suspicions among the NATO Allies. Given the generally positive nature of the US–Russian relationship, the continued competitive mutual nuclear entanglement hinders the development of truly normalised relations. For example, there is no compelling reason why US and Russian nuclear forces could not be safely decoupled, with each nation building down to their own strategic comfort level. The resulting asymmetries need not create instability as long as the political relationship remains positive.

The problem is that much of the US strategic community continues to perceive Russia as a potential adversary, despite pronouncements to the contrary. This limits their willingness to reduce US nuclear counterforce or damaging-limitation capabilities vis-à-vis Russian strategic forces and causes them to advocate the maintenance of numerically large US forces capable of prompt attacks. Those who support the maintenance of large, accurate, prompt-use nuclear forces claim that they are necessary as a hedge against the possibility of a resurgent hostile Russia. However, recent studies by the Department of Defense conclude that, even if Russia did turn adversarial and increase its nuclear forces in excess of US totals, the survivable capabilities of US forces would continue to provide the ability to answer a Russian attack with a devastating response.[Footnote23](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00396338.2013.767402) The Pentagon's new national security strategy document asserts that the United States can meet all its deterrent goals with respect to the full range of potential adversaries with a smaller nuclear arsenal than it now possesses.[Footnote24](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00396338.2013.767402)

The continued reliance on large nuclear forces and Cold War-style nuclear deterrence has many costs. There is the cost in terms of hindering positive development of relations with Russia and China. The very risk of deterrence failure and the accompanying constant fear of annihilation impose an immeasurable psychological cost. If deterrence does fail, the resulting human suffering could be unparalleled. There is also a cost to efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to additional states and non-state actors. Embracing nuclear deterrence encourages proliferation. By concluding that the threat of nuclear use can help states manage a variety of threats to national security and stability, proponents of nuclear deterrence invite other states to seek nuclear weapons to secure similar purported benefits.

Finally, there is the large financial cost of a nuclear deterrent. Maintaining its current arsenal of over 10,000 nuclear warheads costs the United States approximately $31 billion annually. By comparison, the combined US international diplomacy and foreign assistance budget is approximately $39bn per year.[Footnote25](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00396338.2013.767402) Current plans call for the modernisation of US nuclear weapons manufacturing infrastructure and the construction of a new generation of nuclear missiles, bombers and submarines. This will cost hundreds of billions of dollars over the next 20 years. In a prolonged era of fiscal constraint, and with the benefits of nuclear weapons uncertain, this level of expenditure is unjustifiable. But perhaps the greatest cost of continued reliance by most nuclear-armed states on a strategy of nuclear deterrence is that it mischaracterises the sources of danger in today's world and distracts decision-makers from adequately preparing for the most likely future threats.

Strategic oldthink

In the realist tradition of international relations theory, all nations are independent actors trying to maximise their power and security in an anarchical world.[Footnote26](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00396338.2013.767402) Nations initiate armed conflict as a means to advance or protect their interests because they calculate the benefits of using military force outweigh the risks of doing nothing in a competitive system. Proponents of nuclear deterrence argue that nuclear weapons changed the dynamics of this system by raising the stakes and uncertainties of using military force, making it less likely.[Footnote27](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00396338.2013.767402)

There are many problems with this view. Firstly, states possessing nuclear weapons have continued to use military force in situations that could have led them into conflict with other nuclear-armed nations. Nuclear weapons did not deter NATO from using force in Kosovo in the late 1990s or Russian military action in Georgia in 2008. Moreover, states without nuclear weapons have even attacked those who possess them, an outcome that flies in the face of the claims of deterrence proponents. Nuclear weapons did not deter Egypt and Syria from attacking Israel in 1973, Argentina from attacking British territory in the 1982 Falklands War or Iraq from attacking Israel during the 1991 Gulf War.

Secondly, the theory of nuclear deterrence says little about how the roles of nuclear weapons might change in an ever-evolving international system. The nature of threats to individual nations and the stability of the international system have changed dramatically since the introduction of nuclear weapons. Examples of fundamental change include the end of the Cold War and the emergence of large-scale transnational terrorism. Another, more important change is the increased degree of international security interdependence.

Such a strategy is futile

This increased interdependence is clear in the field of economics, but it has also been highlighted by advances in our scientific understanding of the interaction between the Earth's natural systems and the patterns of modern civilisation. Nothing demonstrates this more clearly than our understanding of environmental science. A nation concerned about the economic, public health and security consequences of atmospheric pollution, climate change, sea-level rise and diminishing supplies of fresh water can implement laws and policies that drastically reduce its pollution of air and water within its own borders. But such a strategy is futile, because the air above its borders and the water in its rivers and aquifers is well mixed with pollutants from surrounding nations. Only if all nations cooperate to reduce pollution can any one of them substantially benefit from the effort. The same is true for global disease pandemics and natural disasters. These security threats affect many nations simultaneously and individual national efforts to counter or address them cannot be fully effective.

The interconnectedness of the issues of nuclear deterrence and transnational environmental threats has been demonstrated by two scientists, Alan Robock and Owen Brian Toon, who used computer modelling techniques to simulate the climatic consequences of a regional nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan. Their results show that even with the detonation of nuclear weapons limited to the territories of the two combatants, the smoke and dust raised into the atmosphere by the nuclear explosions would eventually circle the globe, killing crops and temporarily cooling the planet. Robock and Toon project that nearly a billion people would die, the vast majority civilians in nations outside the warring states.[Footnote28](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00396338.2013.767402) The implication of this analysis is that all countries have a direct security interest in preventing nuclear war, anywhere. It would be perfectly reasonable for the US joint chiefs of staff to advise the secretary of defense and White House that in order to protect the security of the US population, the Pentagon must have the ability to forcibly prevent nuclear war between India and Pakistan, or any other two countries. This means that no matter what the reason for the war, or who initiated hostilities, the security of the United States would demand that Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons be destroyed in flight or preemptively attacked on the ground before they could be detonated and cause a global climatic catastrophe that would kill thousands of Americans.

The US military and much of the broader national-security community have recognised the seriousness of transnational threats such as global climate change. The US Department of Defense, for example, included climate threat as a key pillar of its most recent Quadrennial Defense Review and the CIA has established a Center for the Study of Climate Change. Despite this growing awareness, the response remains inadequate and the mechanisms for effective cooperation on transnational threats remain underdeveloped.[Footnote29](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00396338.2013.767402) If we fail to slow climate change or successfully adapt to its consequences, political and military crises are likely to result.[Footnote30](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00396338.2013.767402) Nuclear deterrence will be meaningless in these crises. Threats to use nuclear weapons will lack credibility because carrying them out would greatly worsen global environmental damage and its consequences for all states, including those who used nuclear weapons in an attempt to defend themselves or defeat their rivals.

## ICBM Cuts Aff

#### ICBMs are vulnerable and contribute to crisis instability—“use or lose” mindset.

Blair, research scholar in the Program on Science and Global Security at Princeton University and co-founder of the Global Zero movement, 2018 (Bruce G., with Jessica Sleight and Claire Foley, “The End of Nuclear Warfighting: Moving to a Deterrence-Only Posture an alternative u.s. nuclear posture review”, Global Zero, <https://www.globalzero.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ANPR-Final.pdf>, DoA 4/27/2023, DVOG)

**The United States, Russia, and China,** but especially the United States and Russia, **have ample leeway to disengage nuclear weapons from their bilateral politics and adopt operational practices that reduce—and eventually eliminate—nuclear weapons as a source of tension, threat, fear and confrontation**. In the near-term future, the United States and Russia could reduce the size of their arsenals, remove all but a fraction of them from launch-ready alert status, and shorten their wartime target lists. They could also eliminate plans to launch on warning—launching on the basis of indications from early-warning sensors or other intelligence that an enemy nuclear strike is imminent or underway—from their repertoire of options and limit their capabilities to initiate surprise or preemptive strikes. These steps would thicken firewalls against both deliberate and unintended strikes.

Over a longer time horizon, **they could further buttress crisis stability by eliminating their silo-based strategic missiles. These forces reside at fixed and known locations and are mutually vulnerable. For its part, the United States should phase out the Minuteman leg of the U.S. strategic triad over the next 10 years. The almost exclusive mission of these missiles is to engage Russia, or Russia and China simultaneously, in large-scale nuclear conflict. Such wartime scenarios have become unthinkable. Waging war against both countries simultaneously is a contingency so improbable that U.S. planners can safely ignore it.**

In any event, **any nuclear crisis between the United States and Russia would be more stable if their “use or lose” fixed position strategic forces had been previously dismantled. Strategic stability rests on rational cost-benefit calculations indicating that no political or military gain would justify initiating the use of nuclear weapons. This determination must remain robust under all conditions, including worst-case scenarios in which massive surprise strikes succeed in comprehensively destroying the opposing strategic forces in their underground silos, submarine pens, and air bases.** Although such scenarios strain credulity, the United States would be prudent to hedge against them in deploying and modernizing its nuclear forces and their supporting C3 and early-warning networks. The modernization recommendations presented below in the section “Nuclear Modernization Program” derive from these calculations. Forces and command systems that can perform under the stress of such severe hypothetical conditions can be expected to function under more-realistic wartime scenarios.

#### Reliance on ICBMs is destabilizing – their lack of survivability creates an incentive to strike first

Korda 21 – Senior Research Associate and Project Manager for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists. MA in International Peace & Security from the Department of War Studies at King’s College London.

Matt Korda, “Alternatives to the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent,” *Federation of American Scientists*, February 2021, pp. 8, https://uploads.fas.org/2021/02/Alternatives-to-the-GBSD-Feb.-2021.pdf.

In contrast to the submarine force—which prioritizes both responsiveness and survivability—the fixed ICBM force clearly places a premium on responsiveness, at the expense of survivability. This inherent vulnerability, however, creates a destabilizing psychological pressure to launch nuclear weapons quickly in a crisis—even in the midst of a false alarm. A president would only have approximately two to three minutes to decide whether or not to launch these weapons, without having all the information necessary to make a sound decision.10 Other weapons in the US nuclear arsenal—such as ballistic missile submarines—can respond to a nuclear attack just as quickly as ICBMs, yet their undetectability and survivability means that they do not come with the same kinds of psychological pressures. As a result, ICBMs can be considered to be a uniquely destabilizing weapon system.

#### ICBMs aren’t necessary anymore – they fail to meet deterrence requirements of the 21st century

Korda 21 – Senior Research Associate and Project Manager for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists. MA in International Peace & Security from the Department of War Studies at King’s College London.

Matt Korda, “Alternatives to the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent,” *Federation of American Scientists*, February 2021, pp. 6-7, https://uploads.fas.org/2021/02/Alternatives-to-the-GBSD-Feb.-2021.pdf.

The security rationale for the ICBM force is thinner than it has ever been. During the Cold War—when the United States and the Soviet Union alike feared a “bolt-from-the-blue” nuclear attack—many deterrence theorists argued that ICBMs were a stabilizing force: if both countries had hundreds of missiles on hair-trigger alert, neither could launch without the other responding in kind.

However, in today’s multipolar nuclear environment, the possibility of a Russian surprise first-strike like this is, in the words of former Defense Secretary William Perry and Ploughshares Fund’s Tom Collina, “vanishingly small.”1 This is largely due to the survivability of the US ballistic missile submarine force, which carries approximately 70% of the United States’ deployed nuclear warheads.2 Even without the ICBMs, an adversary could never hope to destroy every US bomber and nuclear-armed submarine in an attempted first strike—which is why such a strike remains incredibly unlikely today. Therefore, a reduced number of ICBMs—or even their complete elimination—would not meaningfully affect an adversary’s deterrence calculations.

Additionally, the United States’ ICBM force does not address key 21st century deterrence requirements. The missiles’ flight paths render them unusable against Chinese or North Korean military targets because they would be forced to fly over Russian territory. As a result, US submarines and bombers are assigned the nuclear mission against China and North Korea—not ICBMs. 3 Intercontinental ballistic missiles are therefore not useful for assuring the United States’ Indo-Pacific allies, and there is little evidence to suggest that these allies are particularly invested in the fate of the ICBM force. This stands in stark contrast to allied anxiety over the fates of other nuclear systems—such as strategic bombers and submarines—that are immediately relevant to their defense postures.

There is also no evidence that US ICBMs affect either Chinese nuclear doctrine or prospects for US-China arms control. In reality, reducing the number of ICBMs—or eliminating them altogether—could make China more amenable to engage in arms control negotiations, given their longstanding call for the United States to reduce the disparity between the two countries’ nuclear forces, before pursuing US-China arms control talks.4

#### SLBMs are sufficient

Korda 21 – Senior Research Associate and Project Manager for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists. MA in International Peace & Security from the Department of War Studies at King’s College London.

Matt Korda, “Alternatives to the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent,” *Federation of American Scientists*, February 2021, pp. 7-8, https://uploads.fas.org/2021/02/Alternatives-to-the-GBSD-Feb.-2021.pdf.

The deterrence mission of the ICBMs can be fulfilled by other nuclear systems. ICBMs are often characterized as the most “responsive” leg of the triad in the event of a nuclear crisis; however, the Government Accountability Office has found that not only are sea-based nuclear weapons significantly more survivable than ICBMs, they are almost equally as responsive.5 This was later confirmed by former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and General (ret.) James Cartwright—who served as Commander of US Strategic Command and subsequently as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff— who were among the authors of a 2012 Global Zero report stating that “The past clearcut superiority of ICBM over SSBN communications for wartime dissemination of emergency action messages no longer exists.”6 This suggests that ICBMs are no longer necessary in order to maintain a credible second strike capability.

“During the Cold War, the United States relied on ICBMs because they provided accuracy that was not then achievable by submarine-launched missiles or bombers. They also provided an insurance policy in case America’s nuclear submarine force was disabled. That’s not necessary anymore. Today, the United States’ submarine and bomber forces are highly accurate, and we have enough confidence in their security that we do not need an additional insurance policy — especially one that is so expensive and open to error.” — William J. Perry, Secretary of Defense 1994-1997, New York Times op-ed “Why It’s Safe To Scrap America’s ICBMs” (30 September 2016)

This situation is not likely to change, even decades into the future. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review notes that “there are no known, near-term credible threats to the survivability of the SSBN [ballistic missile submarine] force,” and if a game-changing technological breakthrough were to occur, the United States would—in all likelihood— be the one developing it, given its unrivaled superiority in anti-submarine warfare technology.7

#### SLBM’s solve any ICBM offense

Korda, Research Associate for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, 2021 (Matthew, “Siloed Thinking: A Closer Look at the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent”, Federation of American Scientists, March 2021, <https://man.fas.org/eprint/siloed-thinking.pdf>, DoA 4/27/2023, DVOG)

Eschewing damage-limiting nuclear strikes would not sacrifice the United States’ ability to launch nuclear weapons quickly in a crisis, if the President chose to do so. **Despite the Nuclear Posture Review’s characterization of ICBMs as “the most responsive leg of the triad,” submarine launched ballistic missiles can reach their targets on approximately the same timelines**. In 1993, a Government Accountability Office report on the US nuclear triad stated that “**compared to ICBMs, no operationally meaningful difference in time to target was found,” further noting that “SSBNs are in essentially constant communication with national command authorities and, depending on the scenario, SLBMs from submarine platforms would be almost as prompt as ICBMs in hitting enemy targets.**”

This finding has been echoed by the aforementioned **Global Zero** report’s authorship of high ranking former defense officials, who collectively **noted in a 2012 study that there is only a ten minute difference between ICBM and SLBM launch times. Moreover, the authors of a 2021 Institute for Defense Analyses study suggested that under certain circumstances, it is possible that SLBMs could have shorter flight times than ICBMs, due to the proximity between their “hard alert” patrol areas and their targets**. An example of how this could manifest in a wartime scenario took place in March 2005, when the USS Tennessee (SSBN-734) test launched a Trident II D5 SLBM on a heavily compressed trajectory, with impact occurring only 12 to 13 minutes after launch. As such, **it appears that the targeting requirements for prompt launch capabilities could be satisfied by the ballistic missile submarine force, which has a distinct advantage over the ICBM force given that its survivability is not in question.**

Furthermore, **the responsiveness of the seabased forces appears to satisfy several former officials who were once responsible for the US strategic deterrent**. Additionally, it is important to note that **the accuracy disparities between ICBMs and SLBMs that were apparent during the Cold War have not existed for several decades**. In 1983, Richard Garwin suggested that “it is true that ICBM-range SLBMs […] can now be given accuracy equivalent to that specified for the land-based MX**.” Given that the destructive potential of the SSBN force has dramatically improved with the introduction of the new hard-target kill “superfuze,” it is difficult to identify a wartime scenario––including a hard-target kill scenario––where the ballistic missile submarine force, operating in conjunction with other US conventional and nuclear deterrence systems, would be unable to accomplish the mission of the ICBM force. It is worth noting here that throughout the development of Trident, the Pentagon explicitly pushed the Navy to increase the accuracy and throw weight of its SLBM force as a means of “hedging against dependence on ICBMs**;” in a May 1976 memorandum to the Secretary of the Navy, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, W. P. Clements, Jr., noted that such improvements would “[encourage] consideration of options to expand our SLBM capability against the full spectrum of the target system.”

#### No such thing as a transparent ocean.

Korda, Research Associate for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, 2021 (Matthew, “Siloed Thinking: A Closer Look at the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent”, Federation of American Scientists, March 2021, <https://man.fas.org/eprint/siloed-thinking.pdf>, DoA 4/27/2023, DVOG)

**Turning to the second argument in favor of using ICBMs as a hedge––that adversarial technological innovation could challenge the survivability of the US SSBN force––it is important to note that fears of a “transparent ocean” are not new, and have often been explicitly employed to defend against any proposed reduction to the ICBM force**. Despite the United States’ unrivaled superiority in anti-submarine warfare (ASW), Richard Garwin noted in 1983 that “in the course of arguing in support of a land-based MX deployment, the Secretary and other Defense officials have suggested that there might be an ASW breakthrough which would result in the ‘oceans becoming transparent.’” **Today, these same fears are being employed once again in defense of the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent**––the replacement system for the current Minuteman III ICBM force. **Despite the United States’ unrivaled primacy in submarine stealth, there is much hype surrounding the notion that technological advances**––some uncertain combination of big data, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and unmanned underwater vehicles––**could suddenly render the oceans “transparent,” thus eroding the survivability of the US SSBN force.** The only reasonable defense against this, suggest many ICBM advocates, is the ICBM force––now and forever––just in case. **These fears, however, appear to be exaggerated in several key respects.**

**First, the United States’ Ohio-class SSBNs are among the quietest ballistic missile submarines on the planet**. As the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review states, “**When on patrol, SSBNs are, at present, virtually undetectable, and there are no known, near-term credible threats to the survivability of the SSBN force.” The same cannot be said for other nuclear-armed states’ SSBNs; Russia’s 73 legacy SSBN fleet is noisier than its American counterpart, and China’s Type 094 boomers remain noisy enough that analysts have questioned their survivability writ large. The next generation of US SSBNs––the Columbia class––is expected to be even quieter than the current Ohio fleet.** As opposed to the mechanical-drive propulsion trains deployed on current Ohio class submarines, the Columbia class will include an electric-drive propulsion train, which turns the boat’s jet pump using an electric motor, rather than a set of gears. In contrast to a mechanical drive system, this electric motor can also be used to generate power that can be diverted from the propulsion system to a non-propulsion system. As the Congressional Research Service puts it, this is “roughly analogous to the arrangement in the ‘Star Trek’ science fiction television series, in which the captain of the star ship can order the ship’s engineer to divert power from the ship’s engines to its weapons or other systems.” These electric motors are substantially quieter than the mechanical process used to turn older ships’ propellers. As a result, the **CRS assesses that “the significantly improved quieting promised by electric drive may be the single most important benefit of electric drive to the Navy’s submarine community**.” Not only will electric drive make the Navy’s Columbia-class submarines quieter, but they will also make them more survivable in the event of an attack. As the Congressional Research Service notes, “**Electric drive makes it possible to more widely distribute elements of the propulsion system around the ship, making it less likely that a single weapon might disable the entire drive system.” Additionally, the decentralized and redundant nature of an electric drive system means that “distributed power sources can be rapidly reconfigured in the event of damage to the ship to ensure a continued supply of electricity to vital systems**.”

**Second, technology development is slow and does not occur in a vacuum**. Due to long development timelines and the intertwined nature of submarine-quieting and submarine detection technologies, **it is highly unlikely that the United States will be surprised by a new detection technology without having already taken steps to mitigate its presumed effect. This is precisely how the US Navy maintained such a tremendous advantage over its Soviet counterpart during the Cold War: by specifically taking care, in the words of Owen R. Cote, Jr., to “solve the [anti-submarine warfare] problem against its own submarines**.” For example, as the United States’ Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS) underwater listening network came online and underwent significant improvements in the early 1960s, these listening stations discovered unwanted mechanical tonals during the USS Thresher’s early sea trials. This prompted the Navy to eliminate these tonals for all of its future submarines, whereas the Soviets––who did not try to create a Soviet version of SOSUS and therefore utilized submarine designs that were not informed by ASW development––did not manage to eliminate them until the early 1980s. This continuous game of technological chess between US acoustic engineers has always been a mainstay of US submarine and anti-submarine development. “Thus,” as Owen R. Cote, Jr. writes, “**when USS Columbia first deploys, it will represent one-half of the legacy of more than 50 years of intense, essentially continuous competition between American submarine designers and American antisubmarine warfare sensors.”**

**Third, the United States is actually more likely to achieve breakthroughs in these emerging technologies than its competitors**. In this respect, **it is important to remember that not all countries benefit equally from technology development. The development of underwater passive acoustic surveillance systems, for example, was a game-changer in submarine warfare: it is the closest historical example to the oceans becoming “transparent” that exists today; however, for decades this technology was exclusively pursued by the United States, who therefore singularly reaped the benefits. The oceans did not become universally “transparent” upon this technology’s development; instead, they became clearer for one country, while still remaining opaque for its geopolitical rival**. At this current moment, given the United States’ significant and long-standing technological edge in quieting and ASW technology, it is fair to suggest, as Cote does, that “**no countries other than the United States have the global presence and the full spectrum of anti-submarine warfare capabilities needed to make even very quiet submarines potentially vulnerable**.” Therefore, **if the oceans are going to be “transparent” for a particular country, that country will––once again––probably be the United States.** “With that in mind," writes Cote, “it is not the United States that should be cautious about the viability of a new generation of SSBNs, but China.”

**Fourth, fears of a “transparent” ocean often fail to consider the United States’ uniquely favorable geographical position relative to that of its nuclear-armed rivals. When Pacific-based US submarines leave their port in Washington state, they are able to operate in a relatively uncontested patrol area** stretching from the west coast of the United States to New Zealand. Within this area, there are no choke points that would draw US submarines into easily-targetable patrol lanes, and all nearby land masses are either American territories or allies. As a result, writes Cote, “**For deployed Columbia-class submarines to become vulnerable, a means of initially finding them in this vast space would need to be developed and deployed without the aid of local land-based facilities for processing data from underwater sensor arrays, or any kind of persistent surveillance by airborne sensor platforms given the vast distances involved. The prospects of such a capability are vanishingly small.” Therefore, the long ranges of the United States’ Trident submarine-launched ballistic missiles allow US SSBNs to patrol with a very high degree of survivability**, while being able to hold significant portions of China––possibly including Beijing–– at risk. The same is not true for the current class of Chinese submarines, which is seriously hampered by geographic limitations and cannot bring themselves within range of the continental United States (except possibly Seattle or Portland, with the development of China’s JL-3 SLBM) without sailing through dangerous choke points currently controlled by the US Navy. **As a result of these geographical inequalities, any advanced detection technology eventually deployed by a US nuclear rival is unlikely to have much––if any––impact on US SSBNs; they are much more likely to affect forward-operating US attack submarines, which do not carry nuclear weapons**.

**Lastly––and most crucially––finding a submarine is easier than destroying one. Even if an adversary were able to detect, track, and target a US ballistic missile submarine, destroying it is another matter entirely. There are only two places where a submarine’s precise location could be reasonably identified in a crisis: in port, or immediately following the launch of one of its missiles.** At any given time, twelve of the Navy’s fourteen Ohio-class SSBNs are considered “deployable:” an average of eight or nine boats are normally at sea, four or five of which are believed to be on “‘hard alert’ within range and position of their priority target strike package,” with most of the remaining boats in port and able to deploy on relatively short notice.

**In the event of a conflict, all deployable US submarines are likely to leave port immediately and travel to their “hard alert” positions.** As Austin Long notes in an article for Lawfare, “At the official cruising speed of 20 knots, the submarine can travel six miles in any direction in about 15 minutes.” Therefore, **if an adversary intended to strike US submarine bases as the opening 88 salvo of a war, they would have only a few minutes to do so––and could potentially leave eight or nine SSBNs at sea with anywhere between 720 and 1,440 warheads onboard, depending on their load-out**. In a 1983 study, Richard Garwin dismissed the likelihood that an adversary would be able to continuously track US strategic submarines, given the available countermeasures and “the acute interest of an SSBN in knowing whether it (and its whole fleet of siblings) is held in trail.” Garwin concluded that “it is inconceivable that a fleet-wide covert trailing operation could be long maintained.” Although adversarial anti-submarine warfare capabilities have improved since the 1980s, the complexities associated with a fleet-wide tracking operation remain highly prohibitive. **Even if an attacker were able to pinpoint the locations of every single one of these submarines, the requisite patrol aircraft, surface combatants, and attack submarines needed to destroy them would face significant logistical challenges. Maritime patrol aircraft would take hours to reach their targets and would likely have to pass through contested airspace** (including air defense systems), **while more proximate sea-based platforms would face attackers of their own during wartime. Additionally, due to the similarities in speed between US and adversary submarines, attacking submarines would have to already be very close to US SSBNs in order to fire upon them, which is “statistically quite unlikely**,” notes Long.

#### No link to assurances—SLBMs are enough to assure allies—ICBMs “use or lose” problem means they are of little value to allies.

Blair, research scholar in the Program on Science and Global Security at Princeton University and co-founder of the Global Zero movement, 2018 (Bruce G., with Jessica Sleight and Claire Foley, “The End of Nuclear Warfighting: Moving to a Deterrence-Only Posture an alternative u.s. nuclear posture review”, Global Zero, <https://www.globalzero.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ANPR-Final.pdf>, DoA 4/27/2023, DVOG)

**The United States pledges to defend allies by whatever means are necessary to deter and defeat the threats they face. U.S. conventional capabilities and second-strike nuclear capabilities provide the means. Both underwrite extended as well as central deterrence**. As previously noted, as a general rule, both forms of deterrence are based on conventional responses to conventional aggression and nuclear responses to nuclear aggression except in circumstances in which formidable U.S. conventional options allow for a non-nuclear response to nuclear aggression. **U.S. alliances provide a degree of collective security that their rivals** (great-power competitors) **can only envy. Seventy-six countries host U.S. military bases for reasons of mutual security. One hundred seventy countries host U.S. military forces on their territory, and dozens of those states host a sizable U.S. military presence**. Thirty-two strong allies are committed by the terms of their alliance to assist the United States (and vice versa) in the event of Russian, Chinese, North Korean, or terrorist aggression against any of them. [FN26Those allies are NATO member states plus Japan, South Korea, Australia, and the Philippines.]

This robust alliance network doubtless gives profound pause to any potential challenger, none of whom enjoy the support of many strong allies. Russia has military bases in a handful of countries, mainly former Soviet republics and pariah states such as Syria. China has one base in one foreign country—Djibouti, where the United States has a sizable military contingent. **Russia, China, others have no realistic prospect of winning a protracted large-scale conventional conflict waged beyond their borders against the U.S. alliance network. Current U.S. conventional forces, in addition to missile defenses, cyberweapons, special-operations forces and other non-nuclear military tools, provide credible deterrence. Combined with allied capabilities, they are sufficiently formidable to cause any rational decision maker to doubt his or her chances of achieving war aims through military aggression. By the same token, these combined capabilities offer compelling reassurance to allies.**

**To convince allies and adversaries alike that the threat of U.S. nuclear retaliation to nuclear aggression is credible, the United States keeps large numbers of strategic nuclear forces at the ready, independent of any immediate crisis**. **The bulk of them are submerged at sea and highly survivable. They are on alert even in peacetime**. In a crisis, many hundreds of additional warheads and bombs can be loaded onto strategic bombers and placed on airstrip alert at airbases. These aircraft can take off on initial indications of an enemy nuclear strike in progress and then be recalled if the indications prove false. **The combined bomber- and sea-based nuclear forces far exceed actual deterrent requirements and are primarily assigned to destroy the Russian, Chinese, and North Korean military establishments. The bulk of the U.S. silo-based missile force is also aimed at military targets, but this component contributes little to extended deterrence. Their inflexible flight paths require the missiles to overfly Russia to reach other adversaries and their “use or lose” characteristics cast doubt on their contribution to credible second-strike deterrence**.

**The disparity of power in the world today tilts against great-power rivals of the U.S. alliance network for another reason: the skewed distribution of wealth and diplomatic power in favor of this network**. The combined gross domestic product (GDP) of the U.S. alliance network is 40 times greater than Russia’s alliance network, whose economic fortunes rise and fall with the market price of oil and gas, and four times greater than that of China. Western capital and financial institutions dominate the global economy and access to it. The economic and diplomatic leverage at the U.S. alliance’s disposal is thus enormous. It is readily available and can be flexibly applied. **The alliance network wields economic clout—a source of nonmilitary power in the form of economic and financial sanctions—as well as diplomatic power in the form of visa and travel blacklists. A rational adversary could not fail to recognize the retaliatory threat this power represents. The U.S. alliance’s collective economic, diplomatic, and military power can impose an unacceptably high cost on hostile behavior by adversaries and thus can serve to deter aggression and stabilize crises. Nuclear weapons play a diminishing role in this space compared to the Cold War**.

#### Pro-ICBM arguments are propaganda – this card is also a reason why fiat is key and a link to the politics DA

Wright et al 20 – Former co-director and senior scientist in the UCS Global Security Program.

David Wright, William D. Hartung, and Lisbeth Gronlund, “Rethinking Land-Based Nuclear Missiles: Sensible Risk-Reduction Practices for US ICBMs,” *Union of Concerned Scientists*, June 2020, pp. 13-15, https://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/rethinking-land-based-nuclear-missiles.pdf.

Political Barriers to Change

In addition, and perhaps more importantly, there are people and organizations that have strong financial and other interests in retaining ICBMs for reasons that have little or nothing to do with US security, and who lobby strongly to sustain the status quo. First, the Air Force owns and manages the ICBM force and receives significant military funding every year to do so. Moreover, the ICBMs provide a career path for Air Force personnel, which the service naturally values. As a 2014 RAND report noted, “decreasing the [ICBM] force to or below 300 will impact key nuclear career fields,” which is “of interest to Air Force personnel and career field managers” (Caston et al. 2014, xx).

The ICBM Coalition is another interest group that wants to retain the ICBM force. The coalition consists of senators from states that host ICBM bases, which employ thousands of people. And, while nuclear warheads are produced by US government labs, the big-ticket items—the planes, missiles, and submarines that carry them—are manufactured by defense contractors, which have a strong financial interest in maintaining all three legs of the triad.

Defending Land-Based Missiles: The ICBM Coalition

The ICBM Coalition includes the senators—both Republicans and Democrats—from Montana, North Dakota, and Wyoming, which host the Air Force bases that are responsible for the ICBM silos and provide local jobs and other economic benefits. (Missile silos are also based in Colorado and Nebraska, but they support very few jobs.) Utah’s senators are also members of the coalition because ICBM support and maintenance is carried out at Hill Air Force Base (Hill AFB 2016). In addition, Northrop Grumman began building a new plant in Utah in August 2019 to support production of the new ICBM, which the company says could generate 2,500 new jobs in the state (Northrop Grumman 2019b).

In 2020, the members of the coalition are John Hoeven (R) and Kevin Cramer (R) from North Dakota; Jon Tester (D) and Steve Daines (R) from Montana; John Barasso (R) and Mike Enzi (R) from Wyoming; and Mike Lee (R) and Mitt Romney (R) from Utah. Hoeven and Tester are co-chairs (Hoeven et al. 2019). (See Appendix B for more information about the coalition.)

Over the years, the coalition has played an important role in ensuring the US nuclear arsenal includes a significant number of ICBMs. For example, the US-Russian 2010 New START agreement limits the total number of fielded SLBMs, ICBMs, and nuclear-armed bombers to 700. The United States is free to choose the mix of systems, so the more ICBMs it fields, the fewer SLBMs and bombers it can field. The coalition pushed hard to keep 400 ICBMs fielded, cutting the total by only 50 missiles. It also pushed hard to prevent the Pentagon from cutting the 50 missiles by eliminating a single missile squadron of 50 missiles. Each of the three Air Force bases have three such squadrons and the Senators from those states did not want to lose one of them. The upshot was that the Air Force cut five or six missiles from each of the nine squadrons, so that none were eliminated (Cloud 2014).

The coalition also wanted to keep the remaining 50 empty silos on “warm status,” which would enable the Air Force to easily return them to operation and would allow each of the nine US missile squadrons to continue overseeing 50 silos. The Air Force instead wanted to destroy the silos, as it had done when previous arms agreements called for fewer ICBMs. Maintaining 50 empty silos costs money, and the Air Force wanted to use those funds for other things. Moreover, New START limits the total number of deployed and nondeployed launchers; therefore, maintaining 50 non-deployed silos would require the United States to decrease the total number of SLBMs and bombers.

The coalition won that battle.

In 2014, two of its members—Tester and Hoeven—served on the Senate Appropriations Committee and added a provision to the defense appropriations bill that prohibited the Defense Department from spending funds to conduct an environmental assessment of the impact of eliminating ICBM silos. By law, the department could not proceed without conducting such an assessment. A press release issued in April of that year by coalition co-chair Enzi summed up what happened: “The Defense Department tried to find a way around the Hoeven-Tester language, but pressure from the coalition forced the department to back off” (Senator Mike Enzi 2014). It is not surprising that this group of senators supports maintaining ICBMs since these weapons bring jobs and economic benefits to their states. This is particularly true for Wyoming, Montana, and North Dakota, which host the three Air Force bases that oversee ICBMs.

Frances E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming, is the largest employer in the state. It is the home of the 90th Missile Wing, which is responsible for 150 Minuteman ICBM sites and directly employs some 3,700 full-time workers (more than 80 percent military)—approximately 8 percent of the local labor force around Cheyenne. Taking into account the ripple effect of spending by base personnel on local goods and services, the base accounts for another 4 percent of jobs—so-called indirect jobs—putting the overall employment figure at around 12 percent. Statewide, direct employment due to the base accounts for about 1.3 percent of the labor force. If the ICBM force were eliminated, the base would almost certainly close.

Malmstrom Air Force Base near Great Falls, Montana, is home to the 341st Missile Wing, which is also responsible for 150 ICBM sites. The base employs some 4,000 people (more than 80 percent military staff ), which accounts for more than 10 percent of the Great Falls–area labor force and perhaps 16 percent when including the indirect jobs supported by the base and its workforce. Eliminating the ICBM force would also likely result in Malmstrom closing.

Minot Air Force Base, outside of Minot, North Dakota, is home to the 91st Missile Wing, which is responsible for the remaining 150 ICBM sites. Unlike the other two ICBM bases, Minot hosts a second nuclear force, the 5th Bomb Wing, which consists of 26 B-52 bombers that carry nuclear weapons. In this case, the base would likely remain open even if the United States eliminated its ICBMs.

Some 6,200 people (nearly 90 percent military personnel) currently work at the Minot base, divided between the 91st Missile Wing and the 5th Bomb Wing. They directly account for 13 percent of the Minot-area labor force and indirectly another 7 percent of local jobs. The direct employment at Minot accounts for 1.5 percent of North Dakota’s total labor force.

Closing the Warren and Malmstrom airbases and cutting jobs at Minot would have a substantial impact on their respective local economies. But this situation is not unique: Hundreds of military installations have been shut down since the mid-1990s. To prevent local economic interests from interfering with Pentagon decisions about how best to reconfigure its forces following the end of the Cold War, the United States established the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, which provided Congress with a slate of closures that it could vote up or down as a whole (Wikipedia 2020). That process resulted in shutting down more than 350 military installations over the last 30 years, requiring many local communities to adapt.

Political Influence: The Defense Industry and ICBM Contractors

Defense contractors help underwrite election campaigns and spend tens of millions of dollars annually to hire lobbyists to urge members of Congress to fund their weapon systems. The bigger the program budget, the more intense the efforts to secure funding. The development and production of new ICBMs is expected to cost $100 billion (in 2020 dollars) (Reif 2017)—a high price tag even in the world of costly military programs.

Northrop Grumman expects to win the contract to build a new generation of ICBMs—the GBSD—to replace the existing Minuteman fleet over the next 20 years. Northrop Grumman is the only defense contractor that can readily produce ICBMs, and after Boeing dropped out of the competition, the Pentagon announced in December 2019 that it will award Northrop Grumman a non-competitive contract. Some members of Congress are concerned that such a contract may reduce incentives for cost savings and staying on schedule (Erwin 2019). The conference report to the FY20 National Defense Authorization Act requires a Pentagon report to Congress assessing “the risks and costs resulting from receiving only one bid” for engineering and manufacturing development phase of the GBSD program (House of Representatives 2019, 1449).

Northrop Grumman and its subcontractors that would be involved in the new ICBM program employ a total of 524 lobbyists, a large fraction of whom have passed through the revolving door from senior positions in government (see Appendix B).

Northrop Grumman not only lobbied for the new GBSD program, it also lobbied heavily to prevent a government feasibility study on extending the service life of the current ICBMs to 2050, which would have postponed the GBSD program for years. In particular, the company helped defeat an amendment to the House version of the fiscal year 2020 defense bill requiring a study that would estimate the cost savings from delaying the GBSD, assess how new technologies that might be developed for the GBSD could be incorporated into existing Minuteman missiles to extend their service life, and analyze alternative and potentially better methods for assessing the service life of Minuteman missiles (House Amendment 528 to H.R. 2500 2019). It was defeated in a floor vote.

Defense companies also fortify their influence over Congress by hiring subcontractors across the United States to create jobs and support economic development in numerous states and congressional districts. In 2019, for example, Northrop Grumman announced the “nationwide team” it was putting together to develop and build the new ICBM:

#### ICBMs are irrelevant.

Erästö 22 - (tytti erästö, Senior Researcher in the SIPRI Weapons of Mass Destruction Programme, focusing on nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation issues; SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security, No. 2022/6, June 2022, "Revisiting ‘Minimal Nuclear Deterrence’: Laying The Ground For Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament," doa: 4-27-2023) url: https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/sipriinsight2206\_minimal\_nuclear\_deterrence\_1.pdf

Several arms control advocates in the country have called for the removal of the land-based leg of the triad, arguing that ICBMs are not only obsolete, but also destabilizing.72 More specifically, siloed ICBMs are vulnerable to counterforce attacks due to their fixed and known locations. While hardening complicates counterforce strikes against ICBMs, an adversary could still destroy them by launching multiple nuclear weapons against one location. Siloed ICBMs have traditionally been regarded as having high deterrent value due to their level of readiness, which means that they can be launched ‘under warning’, before they are reached by incoming adversary missiles. Critics point out that it is this combination of vulnerability and high alert level that makes ICBMs particularly dangerous, which is why they should be either eliminated or significantly reduced.73 The contrary view is that ICBMs are still important for maintaining the high threshold for nuclear attack against the USA, as the task of conducting successful counterforce strikes against 450 hardened missile silos would be more daunting than a strike against the other two legs of the triad.74

#### Air Force causes nuclear accidents—multiple close calls

Gallagher, Principal Threat Researcher at SophosLabs, 2016 (Sean Gallagher, 1-25-2016, "Air Force 2014 “bent spear” nuke mishap overlooked in nuclear force review," Ars Technica, <https://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2016/01/air-force-2014-bent-spear-nuke-mishap-overlooked-in-nuclear-force-review/>, DoA 4/27/2023, DVOG)

**You'll be relieved to know that the public was never put in danger by a nuclear weapons incident** that caused $1.8 million (£1.3 million) in damages to a Minuteman III missile in Colorado. But the accident, **which happened in May of 2014, initially went unreported by the US Air Force even as**[**a team of experts reviewed the service's nuclear forces**](http://www.stripes.com/news/air-force/reports-us-nuke-force-needs-morale-boost-billions-in-funding-1.314149)**in the wake of a**[**testing scandal**](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-air-force-fires-nine-officers-following-nuclear-test-cheating-probe/2014/03/27/9e5eaffa-b5e0-11e3-b899-20667de76985_story.html)**and**[**security failures**](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/22/air-force-nuclear-security_n_5370360.html)**.**

[The Associated Press](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/nuclear-mishap-withheld-by-air-force-from-review-team/2016/01/25/28315e32-c33e-11e5-b933-31c93021392a_story.html) received what it called "the first substantive description of the accident" last Friday [January of 2016] following more than a year of requests to the Air Force.

**Details of the incident have been kept secret by the Air Force because of their sensitive nature, but we now know the situation rendered an intercontinental ballistic missile inoperable. Three airmen were trying to troubleshoot the missile after it failed a diagnostic test and had become "non-operational**." Ultimately, the accident would likely have been categorized as a "Bent Spear" event, the code used by the military for damaged weapons (as opposed to "Broken Arrow," the code for an accidental nuclear detonation or other weapons incident in peacetime).

According to the Air Force, **the missile was partially damaged in this troubleshooting process because the maintenance chief "did not correctly adhere to technical guidance" and "lacked the necessary proficiency level" to understand that what was being done to find the problem could cause greater damage to the missile**.

**The 2014 independent review of the Air Force's "nuclear enterprise" found widespread morale problems and deteriorating hardware**. [At the time](http://www.stripes.com/news/air-force/reports-us-nuke-force-needs-morale-boost-billions-in-funding-1.314149), then-Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel said **the report found that "a consistent lack of investment and support for our nuclear forces over far too many years has left us with too little margin to cope with mounting stresses. The reviews found evidence of systematic problems that if not addressed could undermine the safety, security, and effectiveness of the elements of the force in the future."**

While expensive, **the May 2014 incident** at the "Juliet-07" silo—nine miles outside Peetz, Colorado—**is hardly the most serious incident to have occurred within the Air Force's nuclear forces. The service went through a wave of missile safety improvements in the 1980s after the "**[**Damascus Incident**](http://www.concordmonitor.com/home/8655799-95/how-a-dropped-wrench-socket-almost-incinerated-arkansas)**," when a technician dropped a socket wrench and triggered the explosion of a Titan II** ICBM in Damascus, Arkansas**. The wrench struck the missile as it fell and pierced the skin of its booster, causing fuel and oxidizer leaks. The resulting explosion killed one airman, injured 21 others, and ejected the W-53 nuclear warhead from the silo. The warhead landed next to a nearby road**. The Titan II missiles were phased out in the 1980s as the LGM-118 "Peacekeeper" missile was being introduced.

**But since the 1980s, there's been little in the way of technology updates for the US ballistic missile force. The Minuteman III missile damaged in the newly uncovered incident entered service in the 1970s**. While the 450 Minuteman III missiles have had significant upgrades over the past three decades (including a new guidance system in 1993), most of the billions spent on them has been to refurbish their existing technology. **The network linking together the command bunkers for the Minuteman III fleet uses software that is**[**stored on 8-inch floppy disks**](http://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2014/04/60-minutes-shocked-to-find-8-inch-floppies-drive-nuclear-deterrent/)**.**

Fortunately, there have been no explosive accidents with nuclear weapons since 1958, when a B-52 accidentally released an unarmed nuclear bomb over South Carolina. Luckily, in that event, the fissile core of the bomb was not installed.  However, the bomb's conventional explosive trigger did go off, causing an explosion that damaged a nearby house when it struck the ground and [created a crater 70 feet wide and 35 feet deep](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/roadtrippers/that-one-time-america-accidentally-dropped-a-nuke-on-south-carolina_b_6041794.html). **Given the number of other accidentally dropped or explosively launched nuclear warheads over the past 60 years, it's a testament to the engineering behind US nuclear warhead design that there hasn't been an accidental atomic explosion. You have to look on the bright side of these things**.

#### Follows 2 high profile incidents in 2007-2008 which could have led to an accident over the continental US or an international incident between China-Taiwan

Center For Public Integrity, 2008 (12/10, "Air Force failure to maintain nuclear weapons accountability," Center for Public Integrity, <https://publicintegrity.org/accountability/air-force-failure-to-maintain-nuclear-weapons-accountability/>, DoA 4/27/2023, DVOG)

**The Air Force failed to maintain accountability over nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons components in two incidents in 2006 and 2007. In August 2007, six nuclear weapons were mistakenly flown from Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota to Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana. Air Force personnel at Minot and the flight crew believed these were unarmed cruise missiles, but in fact each was a nuclear weapon with a yield of up to 10 of the bombs used on Hiroshima**. According to *The Washington Post*, “**That detail … escape(d) notice for an astounding 36 hours, during which the missiles were flown across the country to a Louisiana air base that had no idea nuclear warheads were coming. It was the first known flight by a nuclear-armed bomber over U.S. airspace, without special high-level authorization, in nearly 40 years.” Another incident occurred in late 2006, but the Department of Defense did not discover it until March 2008. Instead of sending helicopter batteries, four nuclear weapons parts** (not the nuclear warheads themselves) **were shipped to and stored in Taiwan. These two revelations prompted several reviews of nuclear weapons accountability procedures and policies as well as of the Air Force’s organization. “The ensuing investigations revealed a serious erosion of focus, expertise, mission readiness, resources, and discipline in the nuclear weapons enterprise within the Air Force**,” stated a [September 2008 Task Force on Defense Department Nuclear Weapons Management](http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/phase_I_report_sept_10.pdf). “The Task Force found that there has been an unambiguous, dramatic, and unacceptable decline in the Air Force’s commitment to perform the nuclear mission and, until very recently, little has been done to reverse it.” **In late October 2008, the Air Force revealed yet another incident involving a fire in a nuclear missile silo during the spring, though officials said there was no threat of nuclear detonation or radioactive release.**

## Minimum Deterrence Aff

#### Deterrence is tied to mere existence and survivability of remaining arsenals overwhelms the link.

Erästö 22 - (tytti erästö, Senior Researcher in the SIPRI Weapons of Mass Destruction Programme, focusing on nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation issues; SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security, No. 2022/6, June 2022, "Revisiting ‘Minimal Nuclear Deterrence’: Laying The Ground For Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament," doa: 4-27-2023) url: https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/sipriinsight2206\_minimal\_nuclear\_deterrence\_1.pdf

Minimal nuclear deterrence proposals typically highlight the exclusively retaliatory function of nuclear weapons.21 Based on the narrowest definition, the minimal requirement for nuclear forces is the ability to deliver a second strike to respond to nuclear aggression. For example, one of the authors of a 1993 United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research report explains that minimal nuclear deterrence is ‘predicated on the view that the only sensible rationale for possession of nuclear forces is to deter others from using theirs’.22 While this and most other sources suggest that minimal nuclear deterrence is in line with the NFU policy for nuclear weapons, others argue that it would also allow for the first use of nuclear weapons to counter conventional aggression (see below).

A retaliatory capability is only considered credible if the second-strike forces can survive a first strike. In theory, the smallest number of nuclear weapons required to create a credible deterrent effect ‘is two: one that an adversary might be able to take out with a first strike and one that it knows it cannot’.23 In practice, however, this number is viewed as insufficient. Indeed, one of the main arguments against small nuclear arsenals is that they are less survivable and, hence, less credible than large arsenals.24 This argument is based on the logic that a counterforce attack that seeks to eliminate an adversary’s entire nuclear arsenal would be easier against a few tens or hundreds of nuclear weapons than against thousands of such weapons. Insofar as small nuclear arsenals are seen as easy targets for pre-emptive strikes, they can be seen to contribute to crisis instability by creating an incentive to ‘use them or lose them’ before the anticipated adversary attacks.25

While some degree of redundancy is therefore viewed as necessary for maintaining second-strike nuclear forces, survivability primarily depends on the quality and configuration of nuclear weapons rather than their numbers. All nuclear-armed states have sought to protect their arsenals against counterforce attacks. One way they do this is through concealment, or the practice of deploying nuclear warheads on submarines, mobile landbased missile launchers or stealthy aircraft to make their detection and tracking more difficult. Another method is hardening, which means placing nuclear weapons in deep underground facilities that are reinforced with materials capable of withstanding the effects of counterforce strikes.26 The concealment of nuclear weapons in ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) is generally viewed as the most effective of these methods. The UK has opted for a sea-based nuclear deterrent that relies solely on SSBNs, while most nuclear-armed states have combined a sea-based deterrent with air- and land-based systems.27 Provided that nuclear-armed states are confident in the effectiveness of these methods—and assuming that their nuclear policy is based on deterrence by retaliation—their perceived security needs can be met with small nuclear arsenals.

Despite being preoccupied with the minimum arsenal size for credible nuclear deterrence, in general, advocates of minimal nuclear deterrence tend to regard the psychological deterrent effect primarily as linked to the existence of nuclear weapons rather than technical details pertaining to their quantity, quality, configuration or readiness.28 Describing this logic, one analyst writes that: ‘an enemy who  can  be deterred,  will  be deterred by the prospect of a counterattack, even if it consists of only a few nuclear weapons’.29 As others point out, this psychological effect does not even require a guaranteed response to a first strike; it is sufficient to create ‘first-strike uncertainty’, meaning uncertainty in the minds of potential adversaries about their ability to successfully destroy the entire nuclear arsenal in a preemptive strike.30 This also suggests that nuclear parity, which has long been a central consideration in Russian–US arms control, is largely irrelevant for deterrence. Indeed, several minimal nuclear deterrence advocates argue against the need to match adversary capabilities.31

## NFU Aff

### NFU

Post-Ukraine advocates can be found in the Lit Review---NFU section.

#### Doctrines relying on nuclear use for deterrence are ill-conceived and unsustainable.

Michael Krepon 21, cofounder of the Stimson Center, a prolific author, and the winner of a lifetime achievement award from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for his work to reduce nuclear dangers, “Reaffirming Norms, Reducing Numbers,” Winning and Losing the Nuclear Peace: The Rise, Demise, and Revival of Arms Control, Stanford Security Studies, an imprint of Stanford University Press, 2021, pp. 493–530

There have been no mushroom clouds in warfare for the past three-quarters of a century despite tens of thousands of detonations-in-waiting with doc- trines spring-loaded for use. The nuclear peace has held even as pairings of nuclear-armed rivals have increased fourfold. Tribute for this great accom- plishment is usually paid to deterrence, but this answer is, at best, only half right. Deterrence has dangerous ritual behaviors. It is designed to succeed by the threat of harsh punishment. When deterrence is strengthened, threats become more pronounced. A nuclear rival usually reciprocates with strength- ening measures of its own. The resulting nuclear competition is deeply un- settling, and those under the Bomb’s protection do not feel safer as a result. Their discomfort cannot be alleviated with threats of even greater destructive effect.

Deterrence between adversaries without some form of reassurance is unsafe. Reassurance, like deterrence, has its own rituals, the most formal of which entail negotiating, signing, and implementing treaties. Those who seek safety by means of strengthening deterrence typically argue that arms con- trol agreements are unreliable and that treaties fail. There is truth to these arguments: Reassurance, like deterrence, is not a permanently safe condition. Many treaties do not last for more than three decades, if that. It is also true that deterrence fails. The nuclear peace cannot count only on deterrence or on instruments of reassurance, including arms control; to be extended, the nuclear peace requires embracing both.

Rivals that possess nuclear weapons compete seriously. Because they compete, they occasionally fi nd themselves in harrowing crises. Competition requires guardrails, norms, and stabilization measures to avoid mushroom clouds. Arms control can provide these essential needs. Deterrence, left to its own devices, cannot. Deterrence needs stabilization and mechanisms to reduce nuclear danger. Deterrence without the reassurance provided by arms control will not end well.

Nuclear deterrence is inherently unstable because it is based on the pros- pect of infl icting greater punishment. Because deterrence fails and because arms control treaties can be impermanent, norms are central. When deter- rence breaks down and when treaties are cast aside, norms can still remain in place. The most crucial norm is not crossing the nuclear threshold in war- fare to gain advantage or to avoid disadvantage. Once there is fi rst use in a war between nuclear-armed rivals, there almost assuredly will be second use. Uncommon efforts by national leaders under extreme duress would be required to prevent uncontrolled escalation. Escalation control is an intellectual construct conceived in great hubris that has never been tested to withstand circumstances that are completely unique and incomprehensibly dangerous. The way to avoid nuclear escalation control is to not use these weapons in the fi rst place. Nuclear use kills both deterrence and the remnants of arms control.

The norm of nonbattlefi eld use is reinforced by the norm of not testing nuclear weapons. Together these norms set nuclear weapons apart from other instruments of warfare. They are central to the nuclear peace. A third, related norm that sets nuclear weapons apart is that of nonproliferation: states that do not possess the Bomb agree not to seek it. If we are to extend the nuclear peace and revive arms control, we are obliged to reaffi rm these core norms, and to nurture others, as well.

While norms are fundamental, the purposes of arms control are broader: Arms control seeks to stabilize the competition between rivals and to re- duce nuclear danger. Treaties were designed for these purposes, but there is more to arms control than treaties. The nuclear peace was also nurtured by codes of conduct, tacit or explicit. Arms control opened new lines of com- munication. Some were technical in nature, such as “hotlines.” Other lines of communication were opened between leaders, military establishments, and experts. This practice was utterly novel at fi rst but became routinized. Arms control succeeded so well that, when conditions permitted, the deployed war- heads and the means to deliver them long distances possessed by Washington and Moscow were reduced by 85 percent. Deterrence helped produce condi- tions for these reductions; the reductions themselves fl owed from obligations embedded in treaties.

The end of the Cold War was accompanied by disinterest in arms control. Other concerns became paramount, especially climate change. Russia under Vladimir Putin was intent to change the post–Cold War order. He violated treaties that codifi ed Moscow’s loss of empire and reversed other decisions made by his predecessors. The Republican Party became hostile to arms control. Presidents George W. Bush and Donald Trump jettisoned treaties in favor of freedom of action. Other nuclear-armed rivals weren’t ready for arms control. One consequence was to rely more heavily on deterrence. As relations between rivals deteriorated and as channels of communication at- rophied or never opened, crises became more frequent and more hair-raising.

Diplomacy isn’t optional if the United States and other nuclear rivals wish to navigate through harrowing crises without warfare and dampen nuclear arms competitions. Reassurance can take many forms. Treaties are the hard- est to negotiate and, in the United States, the hardest to enter into force. Other instruments can take the form of strengthened norms, guardrails, and stabilization measures. Not everyone will be reassured by the revival of arms control. Opposition will come, as before, from those who believe that deter- rence will be weakened and that deals struck will be unfair. And yet national leaders will turn, sooner or later, to the varied practices of arms control be- cause relying on deterrence alone is far too dangerous.

The most precious jewels in the crown of arms control have been extraor- dinary treaties that have prevented nuclear proliferation, greatly reduced nuclear forces, and banned nuclear testing. Other treaties banned chemical and biological weapons. The negotiation of ambitious treaties seems beyond reach in the near future for several reasons, beginning with the partisan divide in the United States. A Republican Party that champions national sovereignty is likely to oppose ambitious treaties advanced by Democratic presidents. We also customarily defi ne success in arms control by numbers: the lower the numbers, the better the treaty. Deep reductions are also beyond reach as long as Washington is divided about their advisability, Moscow refuses to accept them, and Beijing refuses to engage in trilateral numbers-based treaty making unless its numbers are equal to those granted to the United States and Russia.

Audacious treaty making is beyond reach because it requires more than fi guring out how to stabilize triangular interactions between the United States, Russia, and China. The global geometry of nuclear competition is now refl ected in two interlocking triangles (the second involving China, India, and Pakistan) and no less than four paired rivalries—the United States and Rus- sia, the United States and China, China and India, and India and Pakistan. This complex geometry suggests that the revival of arms control will entail new as well as familiar arrangements.

Political fashions and national security calculations change over time. The diplomacy of reconciliation that has been out of fashion might someday return. If this appears remote, what are we to do in the interim? I propose a shift in our thinking about arms control, which has long been focused on treaties and numbers. I propose that instead of ambitious treaties, we now seek audacious goals by means of the daily accretion of small victories. This can be accomplished by extending norms against the battlefi eld use of nuclear weapons and nuclear testing. I suggest that the numbers that matter most are zero mushroom clouds and zero nuclear tests. I propose that we seek to extend these zeroes to the 100th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The norm of nonuse in warfare is already three-quarters of the way toward this goal. While all states that possesses nuclear weapons conduct nuclear experiments, all but one have refrained from testing them for over twenty years. The outlier—North Korea—reinforces this norm because test- ing reaffi rms its outlier status. The two crucial norms of not using nuclear weapons in warfare and not testing them have been extended for many rea- sons—foremost among them is that these norms are the hardest to break. We can succeed in extending the non-battlefi eld-use norm because, in deep crises, national leaders and their hawkish advisers considering fi rst use have no good answer to the question “And then what?” The no-testing norm can be extended because the political and geopolitical costs of being the fi rst to resume and to prompt a cascade of further testing are extremely high. These norms become harder to break every day, every month, and every year they are extended.

If we succeed in extending these two norms on a daily basis until the 100th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nu- clear weapons will be perceived as having very little military utility, despite the enduring calculations of deterrence strategists. As a consequence, their numbers will be reduced as rival leaders reallocate resources to far more useful instruments of national power. If this seems wildly unrealistic, con- sider how far we have traveled in fencing off what were once considered “war winning” weapons from actual battlefi eld use. Consider, too, the efforts recounted in these pages to stop nuclear testing, which seemed like another Herculean task. Achieving the goal of extending these two norms to 2045 is not nearly as hard as establishing and maintaining them up until now. We can succeed in the future in the same way that others have succeeded before us— one day at a time and one crisis at a time—by rousing and asserting ourselves whenever the battlefi eld use and testing of nuclear weapons are contemplated and appear imminent.

The companion norm of nonproliferation also remains crucial. The last state to cross this threshold—North Korea—did so in 2006. The immediate predecessors, India and Pakistan, tested nuclear devices in 1998. There are many reasons for this elongated timeline, including the efforts described in these pages to negotiate the Nonproliferation Treaty, to reaffi rm its founding ethos of abstention linked to the pursuit of disarmament, to build out the ranks of state parties, and to improve safeguards against dangerous practices. New challenges to the viability of the Nonproliferation Treaty are clearly within view; success in extending this norm until the 100th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as with the norms on non- battlefi eld use and no testing, will be hard but achievable.

To reinforce these three fundamental norms, I advocate reaffi rmations of the canonical pledge by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev that a nuclear war must not be fought and cannot be won. I also seek advancement of another norm—the norm of not threatening to use nuclear weapons. The respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, and the peaceful settlement of disputes, are crucial norms. When these norms are broken, we are obliged to impose costs on the norm breaker. Arms control then takes a hiatus, but we return to its practices to reduce nuclear danger. We revive arms control out of need, not sentimentalism. Existing treaties still matter greatly. The revival of bilateral strategic arms control between Washington and Moscow rests on the foundation of ex- tending New START and updating it. Besides the Nonproliferation Treaty, three other surviving treaties are in need of reinforcement: the Comprehen- sive Test Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Biological Weapons Convention. One of these treaties, the Comprehensive Test Ban, has not entered into force but remains a bulwark against the resumption of nuclear testing.

The history of nuclear arms control described in these pages is one of reducing excess. Nuclear excess continues to exist, as the United States still possesses nearly 6,000 warheads; Russia’s stockpile could be greater. The United States and Russia, with by far the two largest arsenals, are obliged to pursue further reductions and to reduce nuclear danger on a bilateral track. Reductions could be undertaken unilaterally to reallocate funds for usable instruments of national defense or for other purposes. Alternatively, further reductions could be pursued in parallel by means of a politically binding agreement. If enough Republican senators could be persuaded to lend their support, and if the effort and expense of ratifi cation are not too high, another round of reductions could take treaty form.

Bilateral strategic arms control, while essential, is too narrow a pursuit. There are other important vectors of nuclear danger. India and Pakistan as well as China and India clash over disputed borders. The next limited war between states possessing nuclear weapons, like the last, could well be be- tween India and Pakistan. China has engaged in power projection, increasing the likelihood of crises with the United States. Vladimir Putin has elevated cyber-intrusion campaigns to new heights. The militarization of space is well advanced, with China, the United States, and Russia leading the way. Codes of conduct to prevent dangerous military-related activities on the ground, at sea, in the air, and in space, as well as in the cyber domain, need to be clari- fi ed and implemented properly. The United States, Russia, China, Great Brit- ain, and France—the Permanent Five members of the UN Security Council, all of whom possess nuclear weapons—have convened periodic meetings on nuclear-related issues, limiting themselves to lowest common denominator initiatives. Its membership refl ects the Cold War nuclear order, not the post– Cold War challenges to it. Even if P-5 deliberations on nuclear issues could somehow become more purposeful, their deliberations are unlikely to have a direct bearing on the actions of India and Pakistan, each of which possesses growing, three-digit-sized nuclear arsenals.

The Trump administration proposed a novel trilateral agreement to count every U.S., Russian, and Chinese warhead. This formula was bound to fail. Beijing refused Trump’s proposal and the Kremlin responded by reviving long-standing calls for France and Great Britain to engage in strategic arms control. Because guardrails, norms, and stabilization measures are needed for all crisis-prone regions and because all nuclear dilemmas are connected, I suggest creating a broader forum of engagement that includes India and Paki- stan as well as the United States, Russia, China, Great Britain, and France. I acknowledge great complications with this approach, and yet expanding the scope of dialogue might paradoxically increase prospects for success—if the focus of conversation is on norms rather than numbers. I also suggest a multilateral build-down approach where these seven states reduce the size of their arsenals as they modernize them. This approach is admittedly prone to derailment, but I lay out the logic for it, a logic that serves arms control’s fun- damental objectives of stabilization and reduction of nuclear danger. These ideas are explained in further detail below.

ADDING REASSURANCE TO DETERRENCE

So far, the fi rst two detonations in warfare over Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been the last, much to the surprise of those who revealed the Bomb and those who were stunned to learn about it in August 1945. The subsequent record of nonbattlefi eld use constitutes an extraordinary success story—the most unacknowledged diplomatic success of the Cold War. There was no master plan to accomplish this success. Instead, success happened by accre- tion, by uncommon restraint, by chance, by luck, by respect for our common humanity, and by a sense of dread about retaliation.

Most people during the early, virulent Cold War competition expected further use of nuclear weapons in warfare. The Bomb, after all, had lived up to the expectation that drove its designers: it was a “war-winning” weapon. Because it was a war-winning weapon, the Soviet Union needed to have its own nuclear arsenal. And once both superpowers possessed the atomic bomb, followed by far more destructive hydrogen bombs, the nuclear peace depended initially and only on the mutual threat of horrifi c destruction.

Deterrence was never more dangerous than in its formative decades. New technologies to deliver the Bomb were being perfected, including technologies associated with ocean-spanning ballistic missiles that seemed ideally suited to surprise attack. Production lines for missiles, submarines, and strategic bombers refl ected wartime urgency. New weapon designs were developed and needed to be tested. Every test was a demonstration of resolve and dec- laration of readiness to use nuclear weapons. Initially, weapon designs were tested in the atmosphere. The mushroom cloud became the indelible image of nuclear danger. Nuclear weapons and their means of delivery were kept in a high state of readiness for use, even though safety mechanisms to prevent accidental and unauthorized detonations were initially woefully inadequate.

The Bomb and all of its accoutrements of deterrence didn’t make Ameri- cans feel safer. President Eisenhower recognized that deterrence was too nar- row and too toxic a base to keep the nuclear peace. He therefore autho- rized the fi rst awkward engagements with Soviet negotiators on measures short of abolition. Eisenhower’s insight—that deterrence needed reassurance to succeed—was acknowledged by all his successors during the Cold War. The obvious common ground was mutual survival. The essence of mutual survival was the nonuse of nuclear weapons in warfare. No treaty ever en- shrined this norm. In fact, Washington and Moscow adhered to military doctrines incorporating the fi rst use of nuclear weapons if the need arose. Eisenhower almost talked himself into considering nuclear weapons as just another instrument of warfare, but he always had second thoughts when pressed to push the proverbial red button. No U.S. or Soviet leader crossed the nuclear threshold. The reasons for their restraint went far beyond the precepts of nuclear deterrence, which were too coldly analytical to account for how human beings act in deep crisis.

The norm of nonuse evolved, as one crisis after the next passed without a decision to seek temporary tactical advantage by using nuclear weapons fi rst. In virulent passages of the Cold War, deterrence strengtheners obsessed over a massive “bolt out of the blue” attack. This worst-case scenario rested on the improbable assumption that a leader would risk the end of days to somehow achieve a victory at a price far, far greater than those who lost previous wars. President Kennedy rejected advice to undertake a preventive war and pre- emptive strikes during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, as have other presidents in lesser crises with nuclear-armed states. These crises clarifi ed that deter- rence could fail. With this recognition came treaties and other instruments of arms control to stabilize nuclear rivalry and to reduce nuclear danger.

The diplomacy of arms control has gone out of fashion. Multilateral treaty negotiations are moribund. As treaties have been discarded, what forms will reassurance now take? How can we extend the nuclear peace in a world of growing competition between rivals that possess nuclear weapons and deep partisan division in the United States? The decade of extraordinary treaty making between 1986 and 1996 is long behind us. Reassurance is unlikely to be found in ambitious treaty making and deep cuts will elude us for the foreseeable future. And yet we cannot be indifferent to the numbers of nuclear weapons because increased numbers usually equate to increased nuclear danger, while reductions refl ect reduced threat levels. Limitations and inspections on U.S. and Russian strategic forces remain necessary. They are also insuffi cient to reduce nuclear danger when friction between other nuclear-armed rivals is growing. These complex conditions suggest that the revival of arms control requires broader scope. A broader scope that includes all nuclear-armed rivals is unlikely to be found by formalizing numerical lim- itations. A more promising approach lies in extending key norms.

NO USE

The norm against battlefi eld use has survived despite great errors in judg- ment, faulty intelligence, and poor situational awareness in crises. This norm gained strength after each and every crisis and close call. “Something quite unanticipated happened,” wrote Thomas Schelling, a founding father of arms control. “Rather, something widely expected didn’t happen.”1 The chronicler of the norm of nonuse, Nina Tannenwald, rightly characterizes it as “the most important phenomenon of the nuclear age.”2 Without this norm, we are truly lost. Reaffi rming and maintaining the norm of nonuse in warfare is the fundamental basis for any strategy to revive nuclear arms control. A norm that has survived for seventy-fi ve years can be broken tomorrow, or the day after. The nuclear future will turn on how well we defend this norm in future crises involving nuclear-armed rivals.

The norm of nonuse is typically tested most severely during the fi rst fi fteen years of a nuclear rivalry when arsenals rise precipitously, when technologi- cal advances are embraced, and when there are few, if any, guardrails to the competition. This period is usually marked by harrowing crises and clashes over sensitive locales and contested borders. For the United States and the Soviet Union, the severest tests were over Berlin and Cuba. The fl ashpoints for the Soviet Union and China, as well as for India and Pakistan, were over contested borders. Deterrence in these cases was not yet fully formed, and reassurance was nonexistent.

It took fi fteen years after the Bomb’s appearance for the practice of arms control to be conceptualized in the United States. The initial conceptualiza- tion focused on behavioral practices and stabilization measures rather than numbers. The key concern back then, as explained in a primer written by Thomas Schelling and Morton Halperin, was to ease reciprocal fears of a surprise attack.3 Schelling and Halperin proposed a broader conception of national security in which deterrence and arms control could be synthesized, but opposing camps formed quickly. Staunch believers in deterrence instinc- tively opposed steps for reassurance because they weakened credible threats, while arms controllers took strong exception to proposals for more credible threats. This endless tug-of-war in the United States remains hard-wired be- tween arms controllers who believe that deterrence strengtheners go too far, and deterrence strengtheners who believe that arms controllers go too far.

The fi rst, most obvious and essential arms control step—the cessation of atmospheric testing because of its clear public health hazards—was op- posed by deterrence strengtheners like Edward Teller on the grounds that health hazards were overblown or were justifi ed in moral terms to check Soviet Communism. Every subsequent step that arms controllers sought was subject to criticism on the grounds of weakening credible threats. No arms control measure struck at the very essence of deterrence strategy more than the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the culmination of four decades of effort since Eisenhower was fi rst lobbied by his scientifi c advisers to en- tertain this radical notion. President Clinton characterized this treaty as the longest-sought, hardest-fought accomplishment in the canon of arms con- trol. It was a bitter pill to swallow for deterrence strengtheners, since limits on nuclear testing constituted surrogate constraints on the credible threat of battlefi eld use.

The norm of not testing nuclear weapons has great symbolic and political value because it buttresses the norm against mushroom clouds on battle- fi elds. The absence of testing for over two decades by the United States, Rus- sia, China, Great Britain, France, India, Pakistan, and Israel did not con- strain replacement programs for missiles, submarines, and bombers, as well as other means to deliver reliable warhead designs. The norm of not testing did, however, reinforce the essential distinction that nuclear weapons were a breed apart. When the Bomb fi rst appeared, Bernard Brodie edited a book that introduced the term “the absolute weapon.”4 Abolition wasn’t possible, but by categorizing the Bomb in this way, Brodie began to build the scaffold- ing to set it apart from other instruments of warfare.

In truth, the absolute weapon wasn’t really absolute, since it lent itself to the quest for relative advantage, or at least the avoidance of relative dis- advantage. Arms control initially became a public imperative because of atmospheric testing and then because there seemed no end to the number of warheads both superpowers were building. Nuclear “overkill” became a household word. Then came greater accuracies for warheads launched half a world away, enabling “counterforce” strikes against missiles in their silos and other hardened targets. The nuclear arms race wasn’t self-regulating, as some early critics of negotiating with the Kremlin like Robert Strausz-Hupé pro- jected it would become.5 Instead, it was growing more dangerous. Arms con- trol was needed to stabilize the nuclear competition. The absolute weapon absolutely required forms of reassurance to accompany deterrence in order to create conditions for the nuclear peace.

Arms control didn’t explicitly prevent the fi rst use of nuclear weapons in warfare by treaty. This norm relied mostly on moral and prudential re- straints. Some nuclear doctrines expressly allowed fi rst use, while others were suspect for promising no fi rst use. These nuclear use doctrines didn’t take suf- fi cient account of the human factor. The seventy-fi ve-year-long record of non- battlefi eld use can only be partially explained by deterrence theory, threats of mutual retaliation, diplomacy, reassurance, and arms control. Missing in this standard list, besides luck, is the factor of human connectedness. Some close calls have been averted by human beings far down as well as at the top of the chain of command who chose not to open the Gates of Hell.

These individuals appear fl eetingly in this and other texts. They are not household names, but we owe much to their allegiance to our common humanity. Vasili Alexandrovich Arkhipov was the captain aboard a Soviet Foxtrot diesel submarine during the Cuban missile crisis that was being depth-charged to the surface to enforce President Kennedy’s quarantine of Cuba. No U.S. offi cial suspected at that time that Foxtrot submarines carried nuclear-armed torpedoes. No one knew at that time that the captain, second captain, and deputy political offi cer on board this particular submarine had made a private compact that if they were unable to reach authorized chan- nels, they would make their own decision about fi ring a nuclear weapon. If all three voted in favor, they would do so. If the vote was not unanimous, they would hold their fi re. On October 27, 1962, two of the three offi cers voted to fi re their torpedo. Arkhipov voted nyet.

Stanislav Petrov was the commanding offi cer of a post dedicated to pro- viding early warning of missile attacks. During the night shift on Septem- ber 26, 1983, he saw indications of what looked like the opening salvo of a U.S. surprise attack on his screen. It was a year of great nuclear danger, when new counterforce NATO missiles were being deployed in Europe and nuclear negotiations had broken down. Petrov was faced with the choice of notifying superiors during a period of heightened alert, superiors who would then notify key members of the Politburo, including a general secretary with paranoid tendencies, Yuri Andropov. Andropov, like his minister of defense and another Politburo member, the head of Soviet intelligence, was convinced that the Reagan administration intended to fi ght and sought to win a nuclear war. Petrov chose not to send his warning up the chain of command, assum- ing a technical malfunction. He did not follow regular procedures, thereby helping to extend the post-Nagasaki record of nonbattlefi eld use.

The norm of nonbattlefi eld use—the norm upon which every other ele- ment of keeping the nuclear peace rests—has been sustained because during periods of great crisis, individuals under intense pressure held due regard for the survival of their fellow human beings. So far, national leaders in suffi cient and sometimes barely suffi cient control of events, regardless of nationality, religion, authoritarian tendencies, and grotesque treatment of their fellow citizens, have not wished to be the person responsible for opening the Gates of Hell by authorizing the fi rst use of nuclear weapons. The individual who crosses the nuclear threshold for the fi rst time since Nagasaki will live in in- famy thereafter—if there is recorded history after the use of nuclear weapons. This pillar of the nuclear peace remains in place in the absence of treaties. It is in perpetual need of strengthening.

National leaders who have resolved in the privacy of their own conscious- ness to do their utmost not to use nuclear weapons have nonetheless been entirely willing to preside over plans for battlefi eld use. Some may even have taken comfort in these plans. For most leaders, nuclear doctrines for use are tolerable as long as they remain in locked safes.6 The appearance of a sin- gle mushroom cloud, for whatever reason, makes escalation control deeply problematic in a crisis. How does a national leader who authorizes the use of a mushroom cloud in warfare signal stoppage? How does an opponent armed with nuclear weapons not react in kind, or up the ante? The possibility of uncommon restraint exists, particularly for a stronger adversary, but so, too, does the possibility of retaliating in greater strength.

The precepts of nuclear escalation control, like the precepts of arms con- trol, are the provenance of gifted analytical minds—in this case, Herman Kahn, Henry Kissinger, Paul Nitze, and James Schlesinger, among others. Nuclear escalation control, unlike arms control, has never been tested in the real world. After fi rst use, the theorems of escalation control would be tested by human beings under unimaginable strain. Computer and human simula- tions suggest abject failure. Individuals with a profound sense of consequence might produce better results; the future of human, animal, and plant life depends on it if the nuclear threshold is crossed.

The superstructure of deterrence theory fails with fi rst use and collapses without escalation control. This edifi ce has a weak point at its core, like the death star in Star Wars. The weak point is humanitarian laws of warfare, to which advocates of nuclear deterrence must and nominally do accept fealty. Without escalation control, there is no way to square the fi rst use of nuclear weapons with the precepts of international humanitarian law. The strongest safeguard against disproportionate and possibly incalculable damage is to not cross the nuclear threshold fi rst. The value of fi rst use is unalterably di- minished by the prospect of subsequent use. The norm of nonbattlefi eld use has been extended as a result of these calculations, which remain in place even as treaties have been discarded.

The U.S. fi rst-use policy was fi rmly rooted in the context of the Cold War when NATO’s conventional forces in Europe were weaker than those of the Warsaw Pact. The military context is starkly different today. Now, fi rst-use contingencies are postulated for a NATO alliance that has expanded to outposts such as the Baltic states that are hard to defend by conventional means, as well as for allies in Asia facing North Korea and China. Deterrence strengtheners have sought new ways to be able to employ low-yield warheads to control escalation in such contingencies, mirroring what they view as Rus- sian nuclear-use doctrine. Why Vladimir Putin would see value in crossing the nuclear threshold fi rst remains puzzling, when he has demonstrated suc- cess in hybrid, information, and cyber warfare without having to come any- where near to it. Nonetheless, mirror imaging—emulating what you presume your adversary is able to do—remains an enduring and troubling aspect of the nuclear competition, with or without treaties.

The weakest link of extended deterrence has never been the absence of nuclear weapons with low yields available for use. Instead, the weakest link of extended deterrence is the very notion of fi rst use. First use prompts re- taliatory use because that is the very essence of deterrence. When deterrence fails, the use of nuclear weapons in warfare compounds failure. Prospects for escalation control are never better than before the nuclear threshold is crossed, and never worse than after its crossing. Actual, as opposed to hypo- thetical, fi rst use kills nuclear deterrence. It is likely to kill what remains of arms control, as well.

Nuclear fi rst use by the United States is not the answer to localized mili- tary contingencies in the Baltics, against China, or on the Korean Peninsula, where U.S. conventional military advantages cannot quickly be brought to bear. Far better answers lie in acquiring conventional capabilities, as usable military instruments matter far more than weapons a president will do his or her utmost to avoid using. Thinking about deterrence and war-fi ghting as combining nuclear and conventional arms is fundamentally unsound. The nuclear peace rests on setting nuclear weapons apart.

After decades of nonuse, fi rst-use doctrines have credibility problems. There is no compelling evidence that the threat of fi rst use—as opposed to the possession of nuclear weapons—has helped to deter war or lesser forms of aggression. First-use postures have not prevented limited wars between nuclear-armed rivals. Two have already occurred—the Soviet Union against China in 1969 and Pakistan against India in 1999. First-use postures have not changed the outcome of these wars; nor have they prevented dangerous crises. “No First Use” doctrines also have credibility problems. China and India have both adopted No First Use postures, but deterrence strengthen- ers do not place great credence in China’s doctrine, just as Pakistan’s strate- gic enclave does not believe India’s declarations. Crises will occur whether nuclear-armed states adopt fi rst use or No First Use postures. The outcome of future crises will not depend on nuclear doctrine; they will depend on the disposition of usable weapons and forces near the crisis, the stakes in dispute, and the risk-taking disposition of national leaders.

#### It is better to declare a norm of no use rather than a norm of no first use.

Michael Krepon 21, cofounder of the Stimson Center, a prolific author, and the winner of a lifetime achievement award from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for his work to reduce nuclear dangers, “Reaffirming Norms, Reducing Numbers,” Winning and Losing the Nuclear Peace: The Rise, Demise, and Revival of Arms Control, Stanford Security Studies, an imprint of Stanford University Press, 2021, pp. 493–530

Why, then, not drop the pretense and fully embrace No First Use? Because Donald Trump has made a hash of alliance relationships in an era of major power competition and because adopting a No First Use posture would un- settle allies even more. So far, there are no instances of a state that has relied upon the threat of fi rst use that has subsequently thought better of it and embraced No First Use. (For a time, the Kremlin advertised this change, but subsequent revelations after the Cold War ended proved these declarations to be false.) An additional reason is that seeking to change U.S. fi rst-use doctrine is a battle whose effort is greater than the reward. Rebuttals are easy, begin- ning with the obvious one that Russia doesn’t accept No First Use. Pakistan won’t accept No First Use either and India is hedging its bets. Embracing No First Use would not make the United States demonstrably safer, nor is it likely to change the calculations of other states possessing nuclear weapons. Doc- trinal debates don’t expand public support, and besides, nuclear orthodoxy usually wins doctrinal debates, as Obama administration offi cials can attest.

The George H.W. Bush administration temporarily succeeded where the Obama administration later came up short. Bush, Scowcroft, and Baker at- tached great importance to signaling Gorbachev that the Soviet retreat from East Germany would not be met with a reaffi rmation of U.S. nuclear ortho- doxy. During the apogee of arms control, Bush and Baker convinced Mar- garet Thatcher, a deeply skeptical British prime minister, and more willing NATO allies to drop the formulation of fi rst use. Baker skillfully maneuvered consensus support for the alternative formulation of “weapons of last re- sort,” as Thatcher was not willing to risk an Anglo-American clash on this issue. The resulting NATO communique also dropped the terminology of “fl exible response” and “forward defense.”7

Despite massive reductions in Cold War-sized arsenals, we still live in a world of over 13,000 nuclear weapons. The use of one of these weapons in warfare can result in a slow motion or speedy chain reaction of detonations. The United States is highly unlikely to be the fi rst user of nuclear weapons, despite the Pentagon’s nuclear doctrine. Since nothing is ever assured when it comes to nuclear weapons except the dangers inherent in fi rst use, public opposition to fi rst use in democratic societies remains essential. Offi cial doc- trine speaks to the calculations of deterrence strategists; popular campaigns under the banner of No First Use speak to our common humanity. Extending the record of nonbattlefi eld use requires assuring allies as well as respecting public opinion. Nuclear doctrine is too important to remain solely in the hands of deterrence strategists. It is conceived behind closed doors; when un- leavened by public consent, it becomes otherworldly, lending itself to excess. By speaking to different audiences, the defenders and opponents of nuclear orthodoxy can in this instance serve a complementary purpose in extending the norm of not using nuclear weapons in warfare.

If the doctrinal adoption of No First Use remains out of reach and ill- timed, what phraseology best supports the most important norm backstop- ping the nuclear peace? Public defenders will continue to champion No First Use. I prefer a variation on this theme that lends itself to broader public sup- port and that makes rebuttals harder. I suggest the phrase “No Use” because these words resonate and move beyond doctrinal debate into the domains of common sense and public safety. The phraseology of No Use is readily understandable and simple. Deterrence strengtheners have occasionally used simple, reasonably sounding formulations to their advantage because they require multiple paragraphs of rebuttal. The phraseology of No Use reverses this dynamic. The formulation that the George H.W. Bush administration en- dorsed—“weapons of last resort”—is pointed but less succinct. An alternate approach is to declare that the “sole purpose” of nuclear weapons is deter- rence. Both constructions are better than reaffi rming fi rst use and both would prompt fewer perturbations for extended deterrence than No First Use.

There are no shortcuts to extending the historical record of nonbattle- fi eld use when the global nuclear order—which encompasses two triangular competitions and four pairings of nuclear-armed rivals—raises many possi- bilities of use. Whatever the formulation one prefers—No Use, sole purpose, weapons of last resort, or No First Use—success is achieved one day at a time and one crisis at a time, despite nuclear doctrines poised toward use. Political campaigns supportive of arms control have helped to stigmatize the use of nuclear weapons in the past; they remain essential in the future. American presidents have been well served by public opposition to doctrinal ortho- doxy, even when they have found it particularly unwelcome.

One of the great early struggles in arms control was countering the ex- pectation that the use of nuclear weapons would be inevitable. The inevitable hasn’t happened in the past three-quarters of a century and need not hap- pen in the future. Setting the goal of a century without the battlefi eld use of nuclear weapons seems daunting. Political campaigns for noble end-states typically peter out. Campaigns to abolish nuclear weapons, for example, lose steam because domestic and geopolitical conditions become roadblocks. The sooner the proposed end state for abolition, the more politically unrealistic it seems; the more distant the end state, the easier it becomes to discount its probability and to lose focus. Success in a norm-building approach is far easier, as the seventy-fi ve-year record of nonbattlefi eld use attests. Success happens every day, every month, and every year without battlefi eld use. We succeeded yesterday, we can succeed today, and the day after that by rising to the defense of No Use during the next crisis. My proposal of setting the goal of nonbattlefi eld use to the 100th anniversary of the detonations over Hiroshima and Nagasaki isn’t original; it has been passed on to me from Lewis Dunn.8 If enough of us focus on this goal, the likelihood of success will increase.

We can achieve this goal even when domestic U.S. politics are riddled with partisanship, when the Republican Party has lost its moorings, and when competition between major powers and nuclear-armed rivals is sharp- ening. No treaty ratifi cation is needed to extend the norm of No Use, which can continue on the same moral and prudential grounds that have produced success for seventy-fi ve years. Heightened competition between the United States and China does not make crossing the nuclear threshold any more likely; it makes extending the norm of nonbattlefi eld use and the revival of public activism in support of arms control more imperative. The norm of No Use was fragile during Cold War crises in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. It is much stronger now but is in serious need of reinforcement.

The challenges posed by Moscow do not require nuclear use. Putin’s ir- redentism pales by comparison to the extent of NATO expansion after the Cold War ended. The loss of Soviet dominion cannot be reversed. Moscow does not have the resources, the lure, or the military muscle to regain its former holdings. Putin’s pushback was directed at the farthest reaches of the George W. Bush administration’s hubris in seeking to extend NATO to include Georgia and Ukraine. Putin’s annexation of Crimea, as with the So- viet annexation of the Baltic states, will go unrecognized, and the occupation of eastern Ukraine by his proxies can be made more costly, as have prior instances of Moscow’s overreaching.

Nuclear weapons remain Moscow’s strong suit, but the use of these weap- ons risks all, and Putin is not a great risk taker. He has found other means to seek to undermine democracies, such as the use of hybrid, information, and cyber warfare. The use of nuclear weapons is a self-defeating substitute for them. Putin’s gains have been abetted by Washington’s mistakes. They can be nullifi ed by better U.S. decisions, not by the battlefi eld use of nuclear weap- ons. A strategy that extends the norm of nonbattlefi eld use has no downsides because fi rst use risks far more than whatever might be gained.

#### Unilateral adoption of an NFU would logically establish doctrinal and operational changes. Consultation between allies would be the obvious consequence of a U.S. declaration. Such would increase conventional extended deterrence, preventing a decline in military capabilities, as well as create a political space for Russia to follow suit, through a unified policy which is a necessary first step to resolve alternative concerns. That solves the AFF’s follow-on and credibility internal links.

Tannenwald 19 (**Nina Tannenwald**, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science @ Brown University, 8-1-2019, "It’s Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy," Texas National Security Review – Vol 2, Issue 3, https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/, accessed 4-26-2023)

Implementation

The United States ought to unilaterally adopt an NFU policy, and ask other nuclear-armed states to do the same. This would constitute the formal adoption of what is already essentially de facto U.S. policy.33 A U.S. NFU policy would create political space for Russia to follow suit: For Russia to consider NFU, its concerns about U.S. ballistic missile defenses, imbalances in conventional forces, and issues of NATO enlargement would need to be addressed. The United States would also need to tackle the issue of extended deterrence with its allies and move toward conventional extended deterrence.34 India and Pakistan would need a modus vivendi on Kashmir, while the United States and North Korea would need to sign a non-aggression pact. In fact, the United States could actually negotiate a mutual NFU agreement with North Korea. The United States is extremely unlikely to use nuclear weapons first on North Korea, therefore an agreement that provided a basis for imposing some restraint on the North Korean arsenal would be in America’s interest.35

Doctrinal and operational changes would need to follow such a declaration. China’s restrained nuclear arsenal provides the best example of an NFU pledge implemented in practice. Unlike the United States and Russia, China keeps its warheads and missiles separated. It has not developed precision-strike nuclear war-fighting capabilities, such as tactical nuclear weapons, and it does not keep its forces on “launch-on-warning” alert. China has also invested heavily in conventional military modernization so that it would not have to consider nuclear escalation in a conventional war.36 India, too, keeps its warheads and missiles separate in support of its NFU pledge, though some analysts argue that India’s NFU policy does not run especially deep and that it “is neither a stable nor a reliable predictor of how the Indian military and political leadership might actually use nuclear weapons.”37 Nevertheless, both countries’ operational postures reflect (to some degree) their NFU policies.38 The United States and the other nuclear powers should move in this direction.

Conclusion

What are the prospects for an NFU policy? On Jan. 30, 2019, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA) introduced legislation that declared, “It is the policy of the United States to not use nuclear weapons first.”39 But Congress is divided on this.40 Skeptics have objected that the geopolitical preconditions are not ripe for an NFU policy at this time. In 2016, the Obama administration seriously considered declaring an NFU policy but then hesitated at the last minute largely because of pushback from European and Asian allies who are under the U.S. nuclear umbrella.41 Donald Trump, for his part, has been busy dismantling arms control agreements, not creating them.42

Adoption of an NFU policy will require close consultation with allies, but the U.S. administration should begin this task. As an initial step on the way to NFU, U.S. leaders should consider the recent proposal by Jeffrey Lewis and Scott Sagan that the United States should declare it will not use nuclear weapons “against any target that could be reliably destroyed by conventional means.”43 This policy would not solve the problem posed by highly asymmetric crises, as noted above. Nevertheless, it would represent an initial important declaratory statement of nuclear restraint.

The most important goal of the United States today is to prevent the use of nuclear weapons. The policy of relying on the threat to use nuclear weapons first is an outdated legacy of the Cold War. As even card-carrying realists such as the “four horsemen” recognized, given U.S. conventional capabilities, there are no circumstances in which the United States ought to start a nuclear war.44 Relying on the pretense that it might do so in order to deter a conventional threat unacceptably increases the chances of nuclear escalation. Moving toward declared NFU policies is the best way to reduce the risks of nuclear war.

#### This evidence directly answers most NEG warrants that indict an NFU, and cements than an NFU would establish U.S. credibility related to non-proliferation.

Tannenwald 19 (**Nina Tannenwald**, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science @ Brown University, 8-1-2019, "It’s Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy," Texas National Security Review – Vol 2, Issue 3, https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/, accessed 4-26-2023)

A second theoretical perspective, “liberal institutionalism,” emphasizes the role of rules and institutions, both domestic and international, in stabilizing expectations and behavior. According to this theory, even if no-first-use pledges are unenforceable, they are not necessarily meaningless. To be meaningful, an NFU pledge must be built into domestic institutions, that is, the structure of operational military capabilities.7 A genuine NFU policy would require that nuclear forces be consistent with an “assured retaliation” posture that eschews counterforce objectives — the ability to destroy an adversary’s nuclear arsenal before it is launched.

This perspective thus emphasizes the value of an NFU pledge in structuring operational forces to make them smaller and less threatening. When Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, soon after entering office in 1961, sent a directive to the Joint Chiefs of Staff about strategic force requirements, he stated that the first assumption shaping requirements was that “we will not strike first with such weapons.”8 McNamara’s directive was undoubtedly partly an effort to stem Air Force demands for a first-strike capability and the vast procurement of weaponry it would require. This directive, in effect, repudiated the extended deterrent doctrine that the United States would respond to a Soviet conventional attack in Europe with nuclear weapons.

At the international level, liberal institutionalists emphasize the value of rules and institutions to prevent nuclear war. They argue that NFU has become a de facto norm anyway and therefore should be declared publicly and multilaterally. As Morton Halperin, who later became deputy assistant secretary of defense for arms control, wrote as early as 1961, “There now exists a powerful informal rule against the use of nuclear weapons,” and it would be advantageous to the United States to transform this tacit understanding into a formal agreement.9 Indeed, the “negative security assurances” first issued by the United States and the other P5 countries in 1978 and renewed periodically — commitments to non-nuclear states that are members of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them — already constitute a partial NFU regime. Liberal institutionalists would also point out that constantly touting the value of a nuclear threat for security sends signals that nuclear weapons are useful and undermines nonproliferation goals.10

Finally, constructivists, who focus on the role of norms, identity, and discourse, emphasize that a declared NFU policy is an important way to strengthen norms of nuclear restraint and the nearly 74-year tradition of non-use. Strong statements from leaders about the need to avoid using nuclear weapons can help reduce tensions, just as irresponsible tweets can increase them. In the constructivist view, an NFU policy is also a diplomatic tool that can be used to signal that a state is a responsible nuclear power. As Modi recently put it, “India is a very responsible state. We are the only country to have a declared NFU [sic]. It’s not because of world pressure, but because of our own ethos. We will not move away from this, whichever government comes to power.”11 Indeed, India’s NFU pledge has proved useful for portraying Pakistan as a relatively irresponsible custodian of its nuclear arsenal. Likewise, Indian leaders use their NFU pledge as a way to resist pressures to sign any treaties that would restrict India’s nuclear arsenal.

#### NFU solves crisis stability, Chinese and Russian miscalc

Blair, research scholar in the Program on Science and Global Security at Princeton University and co-founder of the Global Zero movement, 2018 (Bruce G., with Jessica Sleight and Claire Foley, “The End of Nuclear Warfighting: Moving to a Deterrence-Only Posture an alternative u.s. nuclear posture review”, Global Zero, <https://www.globalzero.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ANPR-Final.pdf>, DoA 4/27/2023, DVOG)

**Stability would be further strengthened if the nuclear rivals eschewed the first use of nuclear weapons. A no-first-use (NFU) policy would reduce the risk of decision makers misconstruing intentions and striking preemptively or launching missiles immediately upon receiving initial indications of a strike in progress. NFU would encourage restraint and reinforce the taboo against using nuclear weapons in conflict. The United States has good reason to embrace NFU. It would gain no military or political advantage from using nuclear weapons first in response to attacks of any kind—cyber, conventional, chemical, or biological. First use would only invite nuclear retaliation and carry a risk of spiraling into a vast conflagration. Furthermore, the United States would have other tools at its disposal. Ample conventional means would be available to deter and respond to non-nuclear aggression**.

NFU enjoys growing support among U.S. leaders. The Obama presidency laid the groundwork for its formal adoption. In January 2017, Vice President Joe Biden articulated the position that “given our non-nuclear capabilities and the nature of today’s threats—it’s hard to envision a plausible scenario in which the first use of nuclear weapons by the United States would be necessary. Or make sense. President [Barack] Obama and I are confident we can deter—and defend ourselves and our Allies against—non-nuclear threats through other means.” This view rejects the contention that taking first use off the table weakens deterrence and allies’ confidence in U.S. security guarantees.

**A clear and credible U.S. position on NFU would** have the opposite effect. It would **reduce ambiguity and uncertainty and would increase predictability. It would thus tend to be calming and stabilizing during a confrontation. NFU might not remove all suspicion and anxiety about U.S. intentions, but it could substantially allay an adversary’s apprehension of a sudden first strike, thus relieving pressure to preempt.** A universal NFU commitment by all of the nuclear-armed states would multiply these salutary effects. Getting as many of these states as possible to agree to renounce first use should be a high priority for U.S. nuclear diplomacy.

Some discontent with this agenda remains to be addressed. **A few leaders within the U.S. alliance network have voiced reservations on the grounds that NFU may embolden Russia, China, or North Korea to carry out regional conventional aggression. This concern throws a spotlight on the credibility of the U.S. guarantee of extended deterrence and places a burden on the United States to reassure its allies that it is ready to employ whatever means are necessary to respond effectively to aggression. But nuclear weapons simply are not needed to respond to non-nuclear aggression. The United States can offer credible assurance to allies that conventional capabilities are adequate to repel and defeat such aggression**. In the past, some allies correctly assumed that the United States was prepared to initiate nuclear strikes if necessary to blunt or defeat an adversary’s nuclear or conventional capabilities. But today, **no ally should expect a U.S. president to employ nuclear weapons first when effective non-nuclear options are available. Nuclear first use would not look credible to either adversaries or allies under such circumstances**.

This same argument can be generalized to the case of an imminent or actual attack with biological weapons. **Some argue that the United States should not let an enemy think it can use bioweapons and escape a nuclear response**. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review thus leaves open the possibility of responding with nuclear weapons to a biological attack from a nuclear state. However, the situations in which this might make sense are highly speculative, highly conditional, and very narrowly circumscribed. Only if a state were conducting ongoing attacks using a short-action biological agent stored in a secure location that could be eliminated only with nuclear weapons, and only if the United States were working with very reliable intelligence on those points, could a case for a first nuclear strike possibly exist. Such a situation is very unlikely. Given the extremely limited possibility that this situation might occur, a more applicable, credible, and effective deterrent for the risks of biological attacks on the United States or its allies would be to make clear that the United States possesses the means and the will to respond to such an attack with some of its immense capabilities beyond its nuclear arsenal, and would hold accountable those responsible for ordering and executing such an attack. **Relying on conventional strikes against the offending regime, in some circumstances with the aim of destroying it, and other non-nuclear means, including international legal prosecution for war crimes, remains a far more credible option for responding to a biological attack.** Some defenders of threatening first use of nuclear weapons see continued value in the ambiguity of such threats in response to the use of other weapons of mass destruction. In the minds of these advocates, it does not make sense to reduce the ambiguity a potential adversary might see as it contemplates the possibility of unleashing such weapons on the United States.

The value of making this exception, however, does not come close to equaling the myriad benefits of adopting an NFU policy. **Among those benefits is the value of NFU in strengthening the NPT by endorsing a clean negative security guarantee that assures non-nuclear nations that they will never be attacked by U.S. nuclear weapons. Under NFU, the United States still retains the option of responding to an adversary’s nuclear strike with U.S. nuclear force if necessary. In sum, extended deterrence does not necessarily require the employment of U.S. nuclear weapons, and insofar as it does, such use would only occur in response to an adversary’s nuclear attack. NFU appeals to some U.S. allies and partners for a completely different reason: they worry that the United States might prematurely resort to the first use of nuclear weapons and provoke nuclear retaliation that inflicts great harm and possibly threatens their very survival. A NFU policy that removes this danger would be welcomed by these allies.**

NFU is often dismissed as empty rhetoric that could easily be overturned if the parties changed their minds. But the operating systems of nuclear postures can be modified in ways that show a genuine commitment to the policy. **To reinforce the credibility of a U.S. pledge not to strike first and assure adversaries that such a strike would not negate their ability to respond, the United States could greatly reduce the number of warheads on launch-ready alert. The number should be kept well below the threshold at which a sudden decapitating strike is possible; about 270 warheads pose such a first-strike threat to Russia. The U.S. delivery vehicles carrying the deployed warheads—submarines only, after the elimination of silo-based missiles—could incorporate this principle by adopting a “modified alert” posture that requires 24–72 hours of preparations to reach launch-ready status**. Russia would be called upon to return to its pre-1993 commitment to NFU and adopt comparable confidence building measures that align operations with it. China already keeps its strategic forces at a low level of readiness in keeping with its longstanding NFU pledge.

#### Threat of first use undermines the global non-proliferation regime

Holdren 20 – Teresa and John Heinz Professor of Environmental Policy in the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Professor of Environmental Science and Policy in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, and Affiliated Professor in the John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Science, at Harvard University.

John P. Holdren, “The overwhelming case for no first use,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 76, no. 1, 2020, pp. 4, https://mahb.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/The-overwhelming-case-for-no-first-use\_BAS\_01-2020.pdf.

With respect to nonproliferation

When the country with the most capable conventional forces the world has ever seen insists that it nonetheless needs nuclear weapons to deter and respond to nonnuclear attacks, it is logically conceding, to any country that fears or professes to fear attack by another, the right to acquire its own nuclear weapons to deter or respond to such attacks. The US stance of “first use if we think we need to” undermines, in the eyes of most of the world, any moral authority the United States might wish to assert against the acquisition of nuclear weapons by others. And if potential adversaries that don’t possess nuclear weapons think the United States would use nuclear weapons against their conventional forces or in retaliation for an actual (or suspected!) chemical or biological attack, that can only increase their incentive to acquire nuclear weapons of their own.

#### No assurance DA

Holdren 20 – Teresa and John Heinz Professor of Environmental Policy in the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Professor of Environmental Science and Policy in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, and Affiliated Professor in the John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Science, at Harvard University.

John P. Holdren, “The overwhelming case for no first use,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 76, no. 1, 2020, pp. 5, https://mahb.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/The-overwhelming-case-for-no-first-use\_BAS\_01-2020.pdf.

The argument that Germany, Japan, and South Korea would necessarily resist and resent a US shift to a no-first-use policy and posture – and indeed might be propelled into acquiring their own nuclear deterrent – is questionable.

First of all, nobody is proposing that the US nuclear umbrella deterring nuclear threats or attacks against US allies would be withdrawn under no first use. To misunderstand this reality is to conflate the two forms of extension in the term “extended deterrence”: extension of the nuclear umbrella to protect allies, as opposed to extension to cover nonnuclear threats. It’s the latter form of extended deterrence, extension to non-nuclear threats, that would be renounced under no first use. The United States should be crystal clear in reassuring its allies – and reminding potential adversaries – on this point.

Second, public and leadership opinion on the proper role of US nuclear weapons is undoubtedly not uniform in any of these countries. Whether people think they want non-nuclear threats against them to be deterred or responded to with US nuclear weapons varies with many factors, including whether they think deterrence will assuredly work and whether they think, if it doesn’t, nuclear weapons will end up exploding on or near their own territory. (The Cold War saying that “the towns in Germany are two kilotons apart” is relevant here.) And Japan’s leaders would do well to consider the direction the fallout would travel if the United States attacked North Korea with nuclear weapons.

Third, US allies should see a declaration of no first use as an expression of this country’s confidence in the capabilities of its conventional forces to deter or defeat any nonnuclear threat from a state adversary. (Non-state adversaries, of course, may not be deterrable.) And, if US allies are thinking clearly, they will conclude that the US pledge to come to their defense if they are attacked is actually more believable by all concerned if it based on defending them with conventional rather than nuclear forces.

### NFU--Miscalc

#### An NFU AFF would build off of Ukraine to solve scenarios of miscalc. NEGs would be afforded excellent links to assurance, deterrence, politics, etc.

Quiggin 22 - (John Quiggin is Professor of Economics at the University of Queensland, Fellow of the Econometric Society, the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia; 10-20-2022, Independent Australia, "A 'no first use' U.S. nuclear policy could save the world," doa: 4-27-2023) url: https://independentaustralia.net/life/life-display/a-no-first-use-us-nuclear-policy-could-save-the-world,16881

THE RISKS of nuclear war are greater than at any time since the Cuban Missile Crisis. Not only is Vladimir Putin threatening to use nuclear weapons to stave off defeat in Ukraine, but the North Korean Government has continued to develop and test both missiles and nuclear warheads.

U.S. President Joe Biden has responded to Putin’s threats with admirable calm so far, playing down the risk that Putin will use nuclear weapons and avoiding any threat of escalation.

Leaks from the U.S. Administration have indicated that the response to a tactical nuclear weapon would be massive but confined to conventional weapons.

Yet the official doctrine of the U.S. would call for the use of nuclear weapons in exactly the situation faced by Putin today: a conventional war going badly.

Unlike Russia and China, the U.S. military maintains the right to a "flexible response" in which nuclear weapons may be used against an adversary who hasn’t used nuclear weapons and doesn’t pose an existential threat to the U.S. itself.

If Putin is threatened with massive retaliation for breaking a supposed taboo on nuclear weapons, the U.S. should commit itself to "no first use" of nuclear weapons. But why hasn’t this happened already?

Throughout the Cold War, U.S. military planning was based on the assumption that the Soviet Union would have a massive advantage in conventional weaponry, most notably because of its tens of thousands of tanks and other armoured vehicles, not to mention millions of artillery shells.

In the scenario favoured by Pentagon planners, these forces would pour the Fulda Gap, on the border between East and West Germany, rapidly overwhelming North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces.

Only the use of "tactical" nuclear weapons would even the balance. The term "tactical" might sound moderately comforting, but some of these weapons would have many times the explosive power of the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They would obliterate the advancing forces.

The end of the Cold War shifted the frontier hundreds of kilometres to the east, but the planners found another "gap" to worry about near Suwałki in Poland. And, as Putin rebuilt the crumbling armed forces he had inherited, it seemed that he still had at least 3,000 modern tanks, with another 10,000 in reserve.

But the failed invasion of Ukraine has shown Putin’s army to be a paper tiger. More than half of Russia’s front-line tanks have already been destroyed or captured by Ukraine. Indeed, Russia has been the biggest single supplier of tanks and armoured vehicles to the Ukrainian armed forces.

Meanwhile, the vast reserves turned out to be largely illusory. Thousands of tanks had been left to rust in the open air or pillaged for parts to be sold on the black market. By June, Russia was reduced to deploying ancient T-62 tanks, first produced in the 1960s and then updated in the 1980s. These have already been destroyed in large numbers.

After failing to conquer its near neighbour, there is no prospect that Russia could launch a successful conventional attack on NATO. There is, therefore, no need for tactical nuclear weapons. The same is true of a hypothetical invasion of Taiwan by China.

By adopting a "no first use" policy, the U.S. could greatly reduce the risk of an accidental nuclear war or an unintended process of escalation. Such a policy would certainly face resistance from the U.S. military, which never saw a weapons system it didn’t find essential — as it would from the Republican party.

The U.S. is one of a handful of countries that don’t ban the use of landmines. The Trump Administration revoked restrictions on the use of landmines and sought to develop new ones.

Still, there is hope. Richard Nixon, of all people, committed the U.S. to ban chemical weapons and stocks were finally destroyed under George W Bush.

And the Biden Administration has moved towards a ban on landmines. A "no first use" commitment once made, would be difficult to roll back, even for a future Trump Administration.

### NFU---Post-Ukraine

#### There are advocates for NFU who take the Ukraine war into account.

Manpreet Sethi 22, Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS), New Delhi, has been leading the project on Nuclear Security at the Centre for the last 20 years, “Nuclear Overtones in the Russia-Ukraine War,” Arms Control Today, vol. 52, no. 5, Arms Control Association, 06/2022, pp. 12–15

Nuclear weapons today occupy center stage in an unexpected theater in Europe. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has drawn attention to these weapons of mass destruction and the alarming possibility of their use in a manner that had mostly been forgotten. When the Cold War ended more than three decades ago, it was not anticipated that the threat of nuclear weapons use would make such a comeback. South Asia and the Korean peninsula were considered the more likely nuclear flashpoints, not Europe.

More than two months have elapsed since the start of the conflict. Although the actual fighting is taking place between nuclear-armed Russia and non-nuclear Ukraine, the threatening shadow of the nuclear weapons possessed by the United States and NATO is palpable. Since the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, this is the first real engagement between the United States and Russia where they are indirectly yet directly involved. Millions of lives have been disrupted, and several thousand people have died. This is an irreparable and inconsolable human loss.

There also will be long-lasting implications for states, whether possessing nuclear weapons or not, as to how these capabilities are perceived in the future. This experience has created profound nuclear challenges, but also offers some opportunities for reducing nuclear risks.

Nuclear Challenges

One immediate concern is the manner in which nuclear Russia has used force against non-nuclear Ukraine. A popular view emerging internationally is that Russia exploited its nuclear status to invade its neighbor and that its nuclear weapons, in effect, gave it the immunity to wage a war against a non-nuclear-weapon state.

This perception raises the stock value of nuclear weapons and could lead a nonnuclear-weapon state to reexamine its security requirements, especially when it experiences hostile relations with countries that possess nuclear weapons. It will have implications for how a non-nuclear-weapon state evaluates the worth of negative security assurances provided to it by the nuclear-weapon states. Despite such assurances being made to Ukraine in the 1994 Budapest Memorandum by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia, for instance, Russia has used the threat of the potential use of nuclear weapons as a way to deter Ukraine from soliciting and receiving outside support. This episode raises the possibility of similar instances of nuclear coercion against additional non-nuclear-weapon states, which, in turn, could lead these states to acquire their own nuclear weapons to fend off nuclear-armed adversaries.

A second challenge arises from the heightened risks of nuclear use when two nuclear-armed states engage in conventional war with each other. During the Cold War, it was generally assumed that, in case of a direct conflict between two countries with nuclear weapons, presumably the United States and the Soviet Union, the fighting would turn quickly into a nuclear exchange. As a result, the planning process in both countries shifted to the realm of nuclear war-fighting. The size and structure of the U.S. and Russian nuclear forces, targeting strategies, and civil defense measures were constructed with the inevitability of a nuclear war in mind. Little attention was paid to containing a war at the conventional level.

Fortunately, incidents of direct military engagement between nuclear-armed states were few. The only direct conflict during the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States took place in 1962 over Cuba, and a direct military clash between the Soviet Union and China took place over the Ussuri River in 1969. All other confrontations between nuclear superpowers were fought through their proxies in third countries that were themselves non-nuclear. This record, not surprisingly, reinforced the thinking among scholars and political leaders that nuclear deterrence averts war between nuclear-armed nations. Tomes have been written about how the presence of nuclear weapons induces nations to be prudent and to establish "tools for crisis management to reduce the prospect of the outbreak of unintended warfare, either nuclear or conventional."1 Such a belief is also responsible for the positive spin around nuclear weapons as keepers of stability and peace between nucleararmed nations and hence against the case for nuclear disarmament.

Interest and concern about the possibility of conventional wars that could be fought between nucleararmed states picked up after India and Pakistan tested nuclear weapons in 1998. Given their historically troubled relationship and geographical contiguity, the possibility of conventional war within this nuclear shadow presented a significant new challenge. The West rushed to provide Islamabad and New Delhi with "nuclear learning" from its experience. Over the years, India and Pakistan have found ways of navigating the narrow space of conventional military operations against the backdrop of their nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, the risk of escalation can never be obviated.

The experience of Southern Asia, a term used to define the nuclear dynamics among China, India and Pakistan, underscores that when caught in a direct confrontation, nuclear-armed states, irrespective of their doctrine or apparent nuclear bluster, are cognizant of the consequences of intentional use and the risks of inadvertent use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, leaders take conscious measures to avoid risks and are forced to do two things: show high tolerance for their adversary's military and political actions, and moderate the use of their own military capability to remain below the other side's perceived nuclear threshold. A former Indian defense minister made this observation after the nuclearization of South Asia: "Nuclear weapons did not make war obsolete; they simply imposed another dimension on the way warfare was conducted.... [Conventional war remained feasible, though with definite limitations, if escalation across the nuclear threshold was to be avoided."2 As history has shown, nuclear-armed states of all hues are compelled to impose constraints on the use of their conventional military forces to avert raising the level of the crisis.

When India fought the war with Pakistan in 1999 over the Kargil district that had been clandestinely occupied by Pakistani army troops disguised as mujahideen, the Indian Air Force was instructed to operate without crossing the Line of Control, which divides the Indian- and Pakistani-controlled parts of Kashmir. Air operations to evict the intruders were conducted in a constrained space in order to avoid any chance of provoking Pakistan into expanding the conflict, thereby risking nuclear escalation. In more recent times, India's response to continued cross-border attacks from Pakistan have taken the form of short, swift surgical strikes, as in 2016, or carefully calibrated air attacks, as in 2019. These operations have been crafted by India to punish without exploiting the full force of its conventional military capabilities. Pakistan's retaliatory attacks also appear to have been prudently tailored to keep escalation in check.3

A similar pattern seems to be emerging in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, where in order to steer clear of the specter of nuclear escalation, both sides are moderating their military actions. The United States and NATO have refrained from undertaking any overtly provocative actions. The Ukrainian demand for help in imposing a no-fly zone has been rejected. The United States cancelled a scheduled test of an intercontinental ballistic missile and refused to raise the alert levels of its nuclear forces despite Russian President Vladimir Putin's threats and order to put his nuclear forces on somewhat higher alert. The objective of these Western efforts has been to avoid any action that could be misread by Moscow as a provocation.

Meanwhile, Russia has had to tolerate a certain level of arms and ammunition transfers to Ukraine. Even a strategic blow such as the sinking of the Russian flagship Moskva or reported high casualties among Russian troops have been absorbed. Despite the nuclear brinksmanship suggested when Putin threatened consequences "such as you have never seen in your entire history," concerns about the use of nuclear weapons to redeem losses on the ground appear farfetched. This is true even though the Russian leadership has not hesitated to draw attention repeatedly to nuclear weapons, whether by testing a Sarmat missile on April 20 or reiterating the threat of "unpredictable consequences" if heavy arms were supplied to Ukraine by Western powers. Indeed, keeping the nuclear threat in the news is part of the Kremlin's nuclear strategy of deterrence.

As it appears now, the war could progress in slow motion indefinitely until both sides can find an off-ramp that allows them to avoid the appearance of defeat, or the war could "break out of the boundaries that have currently kept it contained."4 More often than not, outright victories and defeats are difficult to ascertain in such conflicts. Nations are forced to tailor their political-military objectives along more and more limited lines as the conflict stretches on. In fact, the success of military campaigns is claimed more frequently in the individual narratives articulated by each side rather than on the ground. IndianPakistani military engagements since 1998 illustrate these facts.

The challenge remains that when two nuclear-armed states engage in conflict, they have the capacity to hold the world hostage to nuclear destruction. Executing conventional wars in the shadow of nuclear arsenals may be possible, but it is not devoid of high risks.

Norm-Affirming Opportunities

Incidences of direct military engagement between nuclear-armed adversaries and the manner in which they have been conducted also illuminate another interesting issue pertaining to the perceived military utility of nuclear weapons. Nuclear strategists and practitioners understand well that nuclear deterrence is a game of psychological manipulation. Nuclear bluster and brinkmanship are an important dimension of nuclear deterrence, especially by weaker conventional powers. Like Pakistan or North Korea, Russia appears to have used nuclear saber-rattling to deter its adversary from the large-scale use of conventional forces. Despite all the noise that must accompany strategies of first use of nuclear weapons or those premised on the notion of "escalate to deescalate," it is never easy to find the appropriate military use for nuclear weapons. The nature of the armament as a weapon of mass destruction and the attendant risk of retaliation after first use make it a blunt instrument, at least from the point of view of war-fighting.

Therefore, in all crises between nuclear-armed states, nuclear weapons have not shown themselves to be useful for achieving any worthwhile political or military objectives through premeditated first use. This is particularly the case when both sides have assured secondstrike capabilities, thereby raising the risk of an exchange that would cause unacceptable damage to both sides.

Once this logic is understood, it is possible to envision some opportunities that can be exploited to strengthen the norm of nonuse of nuclear weapons and reinforce the basics of nuclear deterrence. What needs to be underscored is the fact that nuclear weapons are distinct from conventional weapons. The instantaneous release of large amounts of energy in the form of blast and thermal heat, ionizing radiation, and the long-term radioactivity from nuclear fallout are unavoidable with nuclear detonations.5 The empirical data from the destruction wrought on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by, respectively, 15-kiloton and 20-kiloton nuclear warheads are widely available. Today's warheads are even more powerful and destructive. Although lower yields have been experimented with as one way of reducing the deleterious effects of nuclear explosions, a 2001 report concluded that even a ground burst of a nuclear yield as small as 1 percent of the Hiroshima weapon would "simply blow out a massive crater of radioactive dirt, which rains down on the local region with especially intense and deadly fallout."6

Given that this is the true nature of the weapon, there hardly can be any credible scenarios where it could be used effectively to achieve an objective. Could any war aim be worth this cost to the adversary and to one's own self given the retaliation that would likely follow? Over time, Washington and Moscow accumulated large stockpiles of varying yields in the hope of gaining an advantage in nuclear exchanges. Yet, neither country has been seriously inclined to test this hypothesis in real-life situations.

Nations cannot defend themselves by using nuclear weapons. They can only do so by deterring the adversary's use of a nuclear weapon by the threat of retaliation. In fact, the threat of using these weapons in any scenario other than retaliation, such as against terrorists, conventional offensives, and cyberattacks or space attacks, could only be counterproductive by escalating hostilities. Clearly, these weapons are most effective for only a narrow role.

Embracing this simple reality could make it possible for nations to agree to accept no first use of nuclear weapons as a doctrinal precept. If deterrence is the only function that nuclear weapons can credibly perform, then a no-first-use doctrine does not put nuclear-armed states at a disadvantage. Rather, it brings many benefits. For one, it allows countries to retain their nuclear weapons for the sense of notional security derived from their presence until such time as nucleararmed states begin to see them as useless. At the same time, the no-first-use policy liberates nations from the need to build and maintain large arsenals with firststrike capabilities, which bring their own risks of safety and security.

Moreover, the policy releases national leaders from having to make the momentous decision to breach the nuclear taboo, which can never be easy because the act will provoke retaliation. It also frees adversaries from the use-itor-lose-it dilemma, which could trigger nuclear preemption. Thus, a no-first-use policy offers crisis and arms race stability even in the presence of nuclear weapons.7 Because nuclear weapons possessors are unwilling to relinquish their arsenals until conditions are "right," a no-first-use policy can help create those conditions by constricting possibilities for using the weapon, thus making them useless over time.

Backing Off the Nuclear Precipice

Six decades after the Cuban missile crisis, the Russian-Ukrainian war has brought nations yet again to the nuclear precipice. Talk of World War III is in the air. Of course, the United States and NATO have taken adequate precautions to avoid any move that could propel the world toward nuclear escalation. Some Russian ministers have announced that their country has no reason to use nuclear weapons except to defend against an existential threat. These efforts contribute toward minimizing the chance of intentional nuclear use. Nevertheless, the inadvertent use of the weapons due to miscalculation, misperception, or accident should not be overlooked. Given that tensions are high and information warfare well in progress, one cannot dismiss the presence of a thick fog of war that could make countries stumble into nuclear use.

As a result, it is imperative that this moment be seized by all those who believe that living with nuclear weapons is too risky to drive home the dangers of nuclear weapons and the alarming challenges that they pose for states with nuclear weapons and those without. The very existence of these armaments adds to the risk of escalation to the nuclear level in every war. Additionally, these weapons trigger anxieties about nuclear blackmail and coercion among nonpossessor states.

The war raging in Ukraine offers an important opportunity to sensitize nations and their populations to nuclear risks. All could do with a stiff dose of nuclear learning. The fate of future generations will rest on the world's behavior today.

#### Broadly, it is a good time to rethink the utility of negative security assurances and debate about ways to make them credible.

Francesca Giovannini 22, Executive Director of the Project on Managing the Atom at the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science & International Affairs, Adjunct Associate Professor at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, where she designs and teaches graduate courses on global nuclear policies and emerging technologies, “Negative Security Assurances After Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine,” Arms Control Today, vol. 52, no. 6, Arms Control Association, 08/2022, pp. 6–11

On February 24, the international community took a catastrophic blow. Already battered by two years of the COVID-19 pandemic and deteriorating interstate relations, it stood in horror as Russian forces unleashed an unprovoked war on a neighboring country. Russia's decision to invade Ukraine and reject Ukraine's very existence as a separate state is ominous and highly momentous for the future of the world order.

The immediate consequences have been easily observable. More than seven million refugees have now crossed borders into other neighboring states, and many more remain internally displaced without supplies and assistance. Almost all major Ukrainian cities have been destroyed, and now a global food shortage is looming if agricultural exports from Ukraine and Russia are not promptly resumed. The long-term consequences might be, if possible, even more catastrophic.

There are legitimate growing concerns that Russia's invasion of Ukraine might herald a new era of territorial conquest.1 Whether the norm of territorial sovereignty is upended or endures largely depends on whether the international community as a whole, not only the Western bloc, decides to rebuff and isolate Russia. So far, the reaction against Russian President Vladimir Putin's power grab has been lukewarm at best in many world capitals.

The significance of the Russian invasion is even more acute if analyzed through the lens of nuclear weapons. More than any other non-nuclearweapon state except Belarus and Kazakhstan, Ukraine, received through the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, an unprecedented set of tailored negative security assurances from Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, the three depositary states of the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). These assurances were extended at the time of Ukraine's accession to the NPT as a potent political reward in support of the country's decision to become a nonnuclear-weapon state by eliminating all nuclear weapons from its territory.

Thirty years later, the country has been set ablaze by the Russian army. Europe and the world are now held hostage by a Russian president willing to resort to the threat of nuclear weapons use. As the war in Ukraine rages on, it is fair to ask, Do negative security assurances mean anything at all in the age of irresponsible nuclear-armed states?

A Patchwork Regime

For years, as they sought to establish a collective norm that would allow a more predictable coexistence with nucleararmed states,2 non-nuclear-weapon states have demanded negative security assurances as binding commitments from nuclear-weapon states not to threaten and not to use nuclear weapons against their territory.

As George Bunn once remarked, "Since the first attempts to negotiate the [NPT], security assurances to [non-nuclear-weapon] states have been considered an important component of a credible worldwide nuclear nonproliferation regime. They have been viewed by [non-nuclear-weapon states] as one of their major requirements for achieving an adequate balance between their obligations and those of nuclearweapon states."3 Achieving a universal regime of negative security assurances proved difficult from the start. The first UN Security Council resolution on security assurances passed with the support of the Soviet Union, the UK, and the United States and simply committed the signatory countries to provide assistance to any non-nuclear-weapon state coming under a nuclear attack.4

Over time, a patchy regime of negative security assurances has emerged although it remains incoherent, fragmented, and as the Ukrainian case demonstrated, profoundly inadequate to provide the kind of reassurances that non-nuclearweapon states might require in a highly unpredictable global nuclear order.5 Today, there are four main mechanisms by which assurances are granted to a nonnuclear-weapon state: The UN Charter, unilateral pledges by nuclear-armed states, no-first-use policies, and regional nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties.

Article 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibits UN member states from using force against the territorial integrity or political independence of another state or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations. The charter should serve theoretically as the most authoritative guarantee. Yet, the irony of entrusting the five acknowledged nuclear-weapon states, which are also permanent members of the UN Security Council, to act as the main global security guarantors can be hardly missed. Although the charter in principle gives all member states a guarantee against threats to and attacks on their territory and sovereignty, the reality is that many such threats and attacks have occurred since the UN was founded. If states are worried about being threatened by states armed with nuclear weapons, the fact that each of the five acknowledged nuclear-armed states has a veto in the Security Council hardly offers much confidence that the council will be able to address a threat emanating from one of them.

Nuclear-armed states have also provided unilateral pledges that are important but also qualified upon specific conditions.

The 2018 U.S. Nuclear Posture Review provides negative security assurances by stating that the United States "will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear nonproliferation obligations." The document added the qualification that the United States reserves the right to amend its negative assurance if warranted by "the evolution and proliferation of non-nuclear strategic attack technologies."6

Russia has made notable changes to its nuclear doctrine. For example, in 1993, to mitigate its own conventional military weaknesses, Russia adopted a defense posture heavily reliant on nuclear weapons and rejected the Soviet-era no-first-use pledge. Ever since, the Russians have reserved the right to use nuclear weapons in response to an attack involving any weapon of mass destruction or in response to conventional attacks "when the very existence of the state is under threat."

France and the UK have opted for strategic ambiguity and have left open the possibility of using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states in specific cases, including in response to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threats or to an attack from a state acting "in association or alliance with a nuclearweapon state."7

Unlike other nuclear-armed states, China and India have adopted no-firstuse pledges but it is unclear how long they will maintain them. As Steve Miller has argued, if a no-first-use policy "is to be more than a declaratory policy, then it must be meaningfully reflected in the war planning and force postures of the nuclear powers. Because the possibility of first-use inheres in the possession of a nuclear arsenal, it is not easy to create a posture that effectively displays genuine fidelity to the [no-first-use] pledge."8 Miller has suggested several steps to make a no-first-use commitment more than just an empty statement, yet none of these steps is necessarily irreversible and permanent in nature. No-first-use policies are malleable depending on the needs of nuclear-armed states and the context in which they operate.

Regional nuclear-weapon-free zones offer more protection in that they contain a nonuse additional protocol that binds nuclear-weapon states not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against state-parties to a zone treaty. As Leonard Spector and Aubrie Ohlde suggest, "Non-use guarantees provided in the latter context offer NPT non-nuclearweapon states one crucial advantage in comparison to more generalized, unilateral negative security assurances: There is no question that, if a [zone] treaty is in force, duly ratified protocols to that treaty are legally binding vis-â-vis the zonal parties."9

The record of the regional nuclearweapon-free-zone treaties is promising but mixed. The Treaty of Tlatelolco, affecting Latin America and the Caribbean, is the only one that has been ratified by all nuclear-weapon states. The impediments facing the others can be seen in the case of the United States. Although the United States signed additional protocols for the remaining zone treaties and submitted them to the U.S. Senate for ratification, the protocols are unlikely to be concluded soon given increasing U.S. political polarization.10

Even when a nuclear-weapon state ratifies a zone treaty, the commitment usually comes with qualifications that shrink the legal protection offered by the treaty.11 For example, in ratifying the additional protocols of the Africa-focused Pelindaba Treaty, France specified that nothing in "the protocols or the articles of the treaty shall impair the full exercise of the right of self-defense" as provided in article 51 of the UN Charter.12

Similarly, the UK imposed conditionality on its ratification of the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone, arguing that it "reserve[s] the right to exercise the right to withdraw from the Protocol under Article 6, or where [it] considers that the threat, development and proliferation of other weapons of mass destruction, for example chemical and biological, make it necessary.

The case of the Southeast Asia NuclearWeapon-Free-Zone Treaty also reveals the insurmountable obstructionism of nuclear-weapon states when regional power projection is at stake. Since 1995, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has been negotiating with the nuclear-weapon states to achieve ratification of the treaty protocols, but none of the five has done so. They claim that the treaty extends protection over continental shelves and exclusive economic zones, thereby potentially limiting port visits or landing rights for foreign vessels and aircraft.13 In a time of great-power competition and the U.S. pivot to Asia, it is plausible to argue that the fate of this treaty will remain in limbo for years to come.

All existing mechanisms are important but deemed insufficient even by many non-nuclear-weapon states. Several official statements over the years pointed out the need for a more comprehensive, legally binding multilateral treaty. During the opening of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the official statement of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) reiterated "the importance of concluding a universal, unconditional, and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon states as a matter of priority, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons."14

In 2015 the NAM argued even more forcefully that "pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, it is the legitimate right of all nonnuclear-weapon states-parties to receive effective, universal, unconditional, nondiscriminatory, and irrevocable legally binding security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances."15

Finally, in a working paper tabled for the upcoming 10th NPT Review Conference in August, Algeria called for states-parties to "reaffirm the right of non-nuclear-weapon states to credible security assurances to ensure their security and sovereignty against the use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons while awaiting nuclear disarmament."16

The War's Impact on Ukraine

Russia's violation of Ukrainian sovereignty marks an inflection moment in the delicate relationship between nuclear-armed states and the rest of the international community and "sets a dangerous precedent by abrogating a longstanding convention and undermining the wider framework of security assurances and guarantees that nuclear-weapons states offer to non-nuclear-weapon states."17

As the war in Ukraine rages on, experts are debating how it will affect the security calculations of non-nuclear-weapon states. Some experts have claimed that the Russian invasion, if successful in its scope, could set a dangerous precedent so as to embolden other nuclear-armed states to launch military campaigns to conquer neighboring countries. The case of China over Taiwan is front and center in these specific discussions.

In a scenario where nuclear-armed states become increasingly predatory, non-nuclear-weapon states could seek protection by joining existing nuclear alliances. The hasty accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO seems to validate this argument. Yet, it is unclear how much political appetite exists in the United States to further expand nuclear guarantees to countries not already under the protection of U.S. nuclear extended deterrence.

Alternatively, the ruthless way in which Russia has chosen to disregard its commitments to Ukraine's territorial sovereignty and the glibness with which its leaders threaten the use of nuclear weapons today may prompt countries with advanced nuclear know-how to pursue or fast-track the development of their individual nuclear capabilities. The path to the bomb is not easy or cost free, however, and is not a choice that any country can pursue lightheartedly.

A more likely, less discussed, but equally consequential scenario is that the war in Ukraine will deepen alienation, grievances, and mistrust among non-nuclear-weapon states. Such estrangement could lead to even more fierce political obstructionism against any new nuclear policy and a dangerous institutional paralysis across multiple institutions. This scenario is not one the international community can afford to face.

Rethinking Negative Security Assurances

Nuclear weapons-possessing states, especially the five acknowledged by the NPT, have often defined themselves as responsible guardians of the nuclear order. Yet, from the perspective of many non-nuclear-weapon states, history is riddled with examples of lawless behavior by nuclear-weapon states that, hiding behind the shield of their nuclear arsenals, have embarked on senseless military adventures without ever being held accountable. If anything, the war in Ukraine has validated the security concerns harbored by many non-nuclear-weapon states and further exacerbated their mistrust of the current nuclear order.

In such a precarious moment, there needs to be an urgent rethinking of the relationship between the nuclear-armed states and the rest of the international community by launching and sustaining a global dialogue with the goal of developing a new regime of universal, unconditional negative security assurances as a first concrete step. This regime will build on the existing mechanisms while expanding the responsibilities of nuclear-armed states and deepening their accountability.

Specifically, the new regime should start with a UN Security Council resolution declaring that honoring unilateral pledges of negative security assurances is a precondition to maintaining veto power in the council. The UN General Assembly should then agree to convene a special session every year in which all nuclear-armed states recommit to universal, unconditional negative security assurances to be delivered during the annual meeting of its First Committee. Finally, the UN Economic and Social Council should adopt a resolution stating that all regional trade agreements concluded in regions with nuclear-weapon-free zones should include a clause obliging all nuclear-armed states to honor the commitment to nonuse and nonthreat of nuclear weapons. Even the simple threat of nuclear weapons use could be sufficient to invalidate a regional trade agreement if the regional contracting parties choose to do so.

To enhance the existing regime of negative security assurances, it is critical for the UN to take a leading role. For too long, discussions about negative security assurances have been relegated almost exclusively to the domain of the NPT review conferences. Yet, as the Ukraine war demonstrates, in an age of predatory nuclear-weapon states, protecting non-nuclear-weapon states from the threat of nuclear weapons has to be a priority for the international community. In addition and perhaps most promising, the Ukraine war is bringing about significant changes in the power distribution within the UN itself for the benefit of non-nuclear-weapon states.

In the aftermath of the UN Security Council's inaction over the Ukraine invasion, the General Assembly on April 26 adopted a resolution aimed at holding the council accountable for its use of vetoes. The resolution grants power to the General Assembly president to convene a formal meeting of all 193 UN members to demand an explanation when a veto is exercised by one or more Security Council members and the results undermine the UN's role in maintaining global peace and security. By itself, the resolution may not be radical, but it comes amid an expanding movement demanding significant reforms, including more democratization in UN operations. For the first time, UN members are insisting on more accountability from the nuclear-weapon states that hold veto power in the council. A coalition of countries could take the discussion further and work with the General Assembly on an initiative that links the veto power of the five permanent Security Council members to the provision of negative security assurances to the international community.

It is equally essential for all nuclear-armed states, not just the acknowledged five, to reaffirm their commitment annually to honor universal, unconditional negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon states. Demanding accountability from all nuclear-armed states is critical if non-nuclear-weapon states want to establish and maintain a universal regime of security assurances. In this regard, it would be also important for the UN General Assembly to launch consultations between nuclear-armed states and the rest of the international community. An existing proposal that is part of the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament calls for nuclear-weapon states "to deepen discussions on nuclear doctrine and declaratory policies, both among themselves and with the Non-Nuclear-Weapon States, at the upcoming NPT Review Conference and throughout the next NPT review cycle."18

Finally, the new negative security assurance regime should aim to rebalance the enormous power asymmetry between nuclear-armed states and non-nuclear-weapon states. Such an asymmetry makes it challenging to keep nuclear-weapon states accountable. To do this, negative security assurances must be linked to domains that non-nuclear countries can reasonably control.

One such domain is economics. For countries seeking to receive negative security assurances, a possible way forward is to integrate these assurances into any economic agreement they sign with nuclear-weapon states. Given the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the vulnerability of the supply chain, economic agreements, especially those with natural resource-endowed countries in the global South, are crucial for many nuclear-weapon states. Linking security and economic demands could make compliance by nuclear-armed states more likely. An important study on the relationship between the United States and its allies notes that "statistical studies of extended deterrence have found that political and economic connections between a deterrer and its protégé are a good indicator of the interests at stake for the deterring state. The greater the ties the more likely extended deterrence is to succeed."19

The Limits of Security With Nuclear-Weapon States

These proposals probably would not have halted Putin's plan to conquer Ukraine. In fact, it is reasonable to assume that, in high-stakes crises, almost nothing will cause a predatory nuclear-weapon state to change course. In addition, some of these proposals could be too costly for non-nuclear-weapon states that seek commercial deals with countries such as China and the United States. In some instances, countries in the global South may decide it is more important to sign trade agreements with great powers than to gain negative security assurances.

Finally, it will be argued that, after Ukraine, the time of progressive confidence-building steps between nuclear-armed states and the rest of the world has passed, that nuclear disarmament is more urgent than ever, and that efforts to achieve it should take precedence over modestly ambitious proposals. Although not wrong, in a time of great insecurity and higher nuclear risks, something ought to be done to bring together these two groups that have drifted further apart.

Establishing a process of confidence building between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states over the right of non-nuclear-weapon states to live in peace without the menace of nuclear weapons is an important starting point and something within reach. As a German official stated in a recent meeting,

In our eyes the rationale for moving forward with [negative security assurances] is simple:

[they] serve as an important intermediary step on the way towards a world free of nuclear weapons and therefore constitute a concrete element of a step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament. But they are-if granted and implemented in good faith-per se also an element of risk reduction in the overall strategic environment and a practical contribution to increasing confidence and trust in international relations.20

The pursuit of a nuclear-weapon-free world remains critical, indispensable, and non-negotiable. Yet, at this historical juncture, where near-anarchy reigns and normative principles are being lost, the international community must fully honor the request of many countries to be spared death by nuclear weapons.

### Cutting

#### Must be stigmatization against nuclear threat-making

Michael Krepon 21, cofounder of the Stimson Center, a prolific author, and the winner of a lifetime achievement award from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for his work to reduce nuclear dangers, “Reaffirming Norms, Reducing Numbers,” Winning and Losing the Nuclear Peace: The Rise, Demise, and Revival of Arms Control, Stanford Security Studies, an imprint of Stanford University Press, 2021, pp. 493–530

NO THREATS TO USE NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The three central norms of no battlefi eld use, no testing, and nonprolifera- tion remain in place despite the demise of arms control treaties and increased friction between the Bomb’s possessors and abstainers. Related norms are in need of reinforcement, including the norm to improve safety and security for fi ssile material. Another important norm is in need of affi rmation—the norm of not threatening to use nuclear weapons. Like the norm of no testing, a norm of not threatening to use nuclear weapons impinges on the prerogatives of possessors. I propose that we seek to stigmatize brandishing and threaten- ing to use nuclear weapons, just as we have stigmatized the testing of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear threats can be explicit or thinly veiled. They can be rhetorical or inferential, such as when forces that are integral to planning for nuclear weapons’ use are deployed to forward areas or their alert rates are increased to place an adversary on notice. Those who have studied nuclear threat mak- ing have found no shortage of examples, with Washington leading all other states by a considerable margin, and with Moscow coming in second.12

Nuclear threat making dropped precipitously after the Cold War ended. Moscow was in no position to make them, and Washington relied instead on conventional military instruments of suasion along with diplomatic and economic levers.13 The United States did not threaten the use of nuclear weapons when Russian troops threatened the Georgian capital of Tbilisi in 2008, when Putin carried out hybrid warfare in eastern Ukraine and annexed Crimea in 2014, and when he authorized wholesale cyber intrusions in 2020.

When the Cold War ended, the greatest incidence of nuclear threat mak- ing shifted to the subcontinent, as India and Pakistan experienced a series of harrowing crises before and after they tested nuclear devices in 1998. The fi rst fi fteen years of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry were the most nuclear threat- laden. The peak period of threat making between India and Pakistan has lasted longer.14 Measures of reassurance haven’t begun to catch up to in- creases in nuclear capabilities on the subcontinent. Pakistan’s conventional capabilities lag behind India, so Pakistan has resorted to threat making in crises, believing that they would prompt both caution by New Delhi and U.S. crisis management. Pakistani threats typically prompt Indian rejoinders. Threats and counterthreats have so far reinforced rather than altered the ter- ritorial status quo in the disputed region of Kashmir.

Beijing has issued far fewer threats with nuclear overtones than Washing- ton and Moscow, as is consistent with China’s declared No First Use posture. Beijing has, however, occasionally threatened nuclear use, beginning with its 1969 border clash with the Soviet Union. The most instances of Chinese threat making with nuclear overtones have occurred over the status of Tai- wan.15 As tensions with the United States over Taiwan’s status increase, veiled or explicit nuclear threat making might, as well.

Threats during crises between nuclear-armed rivals has not changed outcomes since they could be countered in kind. The possession of nuclear weapons has so far deterred worst cases—nuclear exchanges and full-scale conventional wars—but they haven’t compelled wanted behavior, even when a nuclear-armed adversary clearly lags behind in the competition. Nor do nu- clear weapons help in warfare against abstainers. The outcomes in these wars have favored the abstainers, as has been evident in the military misadventures of the United States and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The determining factors in the outcome of crises and wars are usually the coercer’s ability to impose its will by conventional military means, the competing stakes in dis- pute, and the presumed costs of military confl ict.16 The presumption that more nuclear fi repower equals greater coercive power is more intuitive than real.

This presumption helped fuel the super- power nuclear competition during the Cold War, just as it fuels the two in- terlocking triangular nuclear competitions and the four bilateral rivalries at present. Nuclear weapons have instilled caution in crises and border clashes, thereby helping the weaker state to defend, without helping the stronger state to impose its will. The most credible threats of nuclear use occur when a state lacks conventional military capabilities or fi nds itself in a desperate situation with its back to the wall.

These arguments and the case studies to back them up fall on deaf ears to those who fi nd safety in nuclear advantage in crises and in the event the nuclear threshold is crossed. Taking this view to its logical conclusion, the greatest advantages in crises and limited warfare derive from enjoying nu- clear superiority. The purpose of nuclear superiority, in this view, is not to fi ght and win, but to avoid having to fi ght. It follows that, if outright superi- ority cannot be achieved, nuclear advantage is still worth gaining because it provides coercive bargaining leverage.17

Real crises and real warfare have defeated these arguments, and with it, the utility of nuclear threat making. Just as absolute nuclear advantage has not prevented defeat in wars against highly motivated abstainers, an advan- tageous nuclear order of battle has not provided leverage against a state able to retaliate in kind. Nuclear threat making, whether against an unarmed or similarly armed opponent, lacks credibility after a seventy-fi ve-year-long re- cord of nonbattlefi eld use. These threats refl ect poorly on the threat maker, who broadcasts being unsettled at least as much as being resolved. Even so, trend lines of nuclear threat making could well increase, as dangerous mili- tary practices are on the upswing in all four pairings of nuclear-armed rivals.

The stigmatization of nuclear threat making is gaining ground among abstainers, as refl ected in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that includes a provision banning this practice. Nuclear-armed states will steer clear of the Prohibition Treaty, but leaders care about their public im- age and the practice of arms control has helped to constrain behavior. Pos- sessors do not use nuclear weapons in war, and they do not test them. Just as the practice of arms control can affect what leaders do, it can affect what they say. I propose that we try to relegate nuclear threat making to outliers; when they threaten use, they reinforce their outlier status. Leaders of states that wish to be regarded as responsible stewards of nuclear weapons do not threaten mushroom clouds. The incidence of nuclear threats can be reduced by stigmatizing the threat maker.

THE CANONICAL PLEDGE

Late in 1983, Ronald Reagan began to appreciate how disturbed key Po- litburo members were by his rhetoric, his policies, and his administration’s actions. His fi rst corrective step was to announce before the Japanese Diet that “a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought” on Novem- ber 11, 1983. Even as he was speaking in Tokyo, U.S. and NATO authorities were engaged in an exercise, Able Archer 83, that greatly worried key mem- bers of the Politburo. Reagan’s formulation before the Diet didn’t change any material aspect of the strategic competition, but it was a start. All good affi rmations require repetition. Reagan repeated his during his 1984 State of the Union address. Speaking at one and the same time to the U.S. Congress and the Kremlin, he said, “There is only one sane policy, for your country and mine, to preserve our civilization in this modern age: A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. The only value in our two nations possessing nuclear weapons is to make sure they will never be used.”18 Reagan’s canoni- cal statement was, in effect, an approximate declaration of No Use. Repeat- ing it a second time still wasn’t convincing because very few people were then aware that Reagan was dead set against Armageddon happening on his watch and that he harbored abolitionist views. When Reagan and Gorbachev jointly repeated this formulation at their Geneva summit in 1985, skeptics began to take notice.

The hard edges of nuclear doctrines can be softened by leadership decla- rations of responsible nuclear stewardship. Reagan’s formulation was a sharp and necessary contrast to the Pentagon’s nuclear posture and his secretary of defense’s public commitment to prevail in the event of a nuclear war of extended duration. Straightforward declarations of No Use raise questions about extended deterrence; Reagan’s unerring talent for strategic communi- cation found the right public approximation. Temperatures during a period of heightened competition between nuclear-armed states could be lowered if leaders include the canonical affi rmation that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought in the summit communiques after every bilateral or larger group meeting. The canonical pledge might then serve as the basis for action plans to affi rm public declarations.

RESPECTING NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

If the norms of responsible behavior among major powers and nuclear-armed rivals are weak, prospects for arms control cannot be strong. Strategic arms control has always been predicated on the principles of respecting the territo- rial integrity and national sovereignty of states and of the peaceful settlement of disputes. Arms control comes to a temporary halt when nuclear-armed states disregard these norms. Prospects for the Senate’s consent to ratify SALT II were troubled before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and ended after it. Similarly, prospects for arms control ground to a temporary halt in 2014 when Putin annexed Crimea and conducted hybrid warfare in eastern Ukraine. When these norms are trashed, arms control efforts go into cold storage as the refl exive response of leaders is to spend more for national de- fense. When circumstances dictate, arms control is taken out of cold storage. Reagan initiated negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear forces within two years of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan while making the Kremlin pay dearly for its decision.

Norms that are broken are in need of repair. While refusing to recognize the violation of the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of states by a nuclear-armed rival, American presidents have pursued the imperatives of stabilizing nuclear competitions and reducing nuclear danger. At the same time, they have increased costs to the norm breaker through varied means. The United States negotiated with the Soviet Union over the limitation and reduction of nuclear arsenals while refusing to recognize the Kremlin’s en- gorgement of the Baltic states and its control over unwilling Eastern Euro- pean populations. Likewise, the United States can negotiate with Moscow to reduce nuclear danger while refusing to recognize Russia’s annexation of Crimea and while making the Russian presence in eastern Ukraine more painful and costly. This template has succeeded in the past, and it can suc- ceed again.

#### Russia/china deterrence DA answers

Michael Krepon 21, cofounder of the Stimson Center, a prolific author, and the winner of a lifetime achievement award from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for his work to reduce nuclear dangers, “Reaffirming Norms, Reducing Numbers,” Winning and Losing the Nuclear Peace: The Rise, Demise, and Revival of Arms Control, Stanford Security Studies, an imprint of Stanford University Press, 2021, pp. 493–530

CHALLENGES FROM RUSSIA AND CHINA

Russia and China are serious competitors, but they are not pre–World War II Germany and Japan. They want to increase their spheres of infl uence at the expense of the United States, not engage in aggressive wars to occupy their neighbors. The Russian annexation of Crimea is not the functional equivalent of the German occupation of the Sudetenland in 1938. Russia is not on the march; it spends heavily on nuclear weapons to cover manifold weaknesses. It seeks toeholds abroad in failed states like Syria, Venezuela, and Libya. It has carved out autonomous zones in Georgia that only Nauru, Nicaragua, Syria, and Venezuela recognize. Moscow’s sole natural ally, Belarus, is restive. Putin’s Russia has managed to contain itself by poor governance, economic malpractice, and systemic corruption. As a consequence, a strategy of con- tainment by the United States is not a heavy lift. It requires less sums that are now devoted to nuclear weapon programs and more attention to what William J. Burns calls “America’s tool of fi rst resort”—diplomacy. Russia’s weaknesses will remain exploitable, while U.S. weaknesses can be mended.19

Threats posed by China are more challenging than those posed by Rus- sia because China’s capacity for growth is greater despite its demographic challenges, because Beijing has invested strategically in usable military and economic instruments of power, and because Beijing seeks to achieve around its periphery what the United States has enjoyed close to home—a security environment conducive to its interests, unencumbered by external challenges. Xi Jinping engages in muscle fl exing toward China’s neighbors while effec- tively challenging the U.S. Navy’s freedom of action in the South and East China Seas. Beijing’s pattern of behavior there, along the contested border with India, and in its dealings with Hong Kong, makes all its neighbors uncomfortable, including friends and allies of the United States. China has invested smartly in technologies that exploit the Pentagon’s reliance on too few and too vulnerable high-end naval combatants. Beijing, like Moscow, has practiced its belief that silicon can wreak havoc over steel through cyber war- fare. Some are alarmed by China’s strategic modernization programs, as well. The number of Chinese nuclear warheads could double in size over the next decade, although it will continue to lag far behind U.S. and Russian totals. Its force levels will grow as the number of U.S. missile defense interceptors and Indian missiles grow. Like the United States, Russia, and India, China will replace old means to deliver nuclear weapons with better ones.

The status of Taiwan is an obvious fl ashpoint between Washington and Beijing. China does not accept that a national border exists across the Tai- wan Strait and Washington has conceded this point since the Carter admin- istration declared a “one China” policy in 1979. A military move by Bei- jing against Taiwan would nonetheless be momentous in many ways, one of which would be its dramatic impact on prospects for including China in a multilateral process of arms control. Future crises over Taiwan’s status will be marked by asymmetrical conventional power equations favoring the main- land. Coercive maneuvering is likely to grow, just as coercive maneuvering between the United States and Russia is likely to grow after Donald Trump’s electoral defeat. Friction is most likely to involve naval capabilities operating in close quarters, while the Bomb remains ever present in the background. The United States has work to do to counter China’s military advances and to repair diplomatic and economic instruments of national power. These will be required whatever Beijing’s approach to Taiwan might be. The battlefi eld use of nuclear weapons is not among them.

REASSESSING ARMS CONTROL OBJECTIVES IN NEW CIRCUMSTANCES

As Thomas Schelling and Morton Halperin wrote, arms control was concep- tualized to open useful channels of communication. It was pursued “to avoid false alarms and misunderstandings.” Channels developed through arms con- trol could provide insight and utility for crisis management. Arms control could help signal reassurance. Strategic competitors needed to know that “restraint on the part of potential enemies will be matched by restraint on our own.” They conceived of arms control as pursuing a “mutual interest in the avoidance of a war that neither side wants, in minimizing the costs and risks of the arms competition, and in curtailing the scope and violence of war in the event it occurs.”20

The original precepts of arms control still apply, as do the diffi culties in achieving them. The objective of arms control to lessen risk taking was ini- tially achieved by means of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty that recognized national vulnerability. It then took decades of work to reduce dangers as- sociated with offensive capabilities because diplomacy lagged behind tech- nological advances that neither superpower was willing to forego. As for signifi cantly reducing or at least controlling costs, arms control failed until the demise of the Soviet Union. Before then, cost controls were weak because presidents endorsed strategic modernization programs to accompany agree- ments reached, the competition was unfl agging, and the price extracted for treaty ratifi cation by deterrence strengtheners was high. Later on, when the size of deployed forces was greatly reduced, budgetary outlays remained high because replacement costs were exorbitant.

As for the objective of curtailing the scope and violence of war in the event it occurs, arms control succeeded primarily by setting nuclear weapons apart from other instruments of warfare. Even deep arms reductions could not ensure the curtailment and scope of violence if the nuclear threshold were crossed, followed by uncontrolled escalation. Arms control can continue to help with mutual reductions of weapons that national leaders are deeply re- luctant to use, and to provide cost savings that can be applied to other needs. This was accomplished in the past by focusing on numbers. Numbers can be reduced by treaties, executive agreements, or tacit understandings. Numbers can also be reduced signifi cantly over time by extending the three key norms of nonuse, not testing, and nonproliferation.

These three norms have survived even as treaties have been discarded. Continued adherence to these norms will be absolutely essential if even mod- est new arms reduction agreements are beyond reach. In the near term, it will be hard to negotiate much deeper reductions when deterrence strengtheners in the United States and Russia dig in their heels, when China, India, and Pakistan increase the size of their arsenals, and when competition between states that possess nuclear weapons is becoming sharper. The problem of re- ducing nuclear danger has become enlarged. If arms control is to be revived, its scope must be enlarged, as well.

## Other Arms Control

### Cutting

#### Testing AFF

Michael Krepon 21, cofounder of the Stimson Center, a prolific author, and the winner of a lifetime achievement award from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for his work to reduce nuclear dangers, “Reaffirming Norms, Reducing Numbers,” Winning and Losing the Nuclear Peace: The Rise, Demise, and Revival of Arms Control, Stanford Security Studies, an imprint of Stanford University Press, 2021, pp. 493–530

NO TESTING

Conventional weapons and missiles are regularly tested. Nuclear weapons have been stigmatized to the extent that they are not. National leaders ac- knowledge that nuclear weapons are a breed apart by not breaking morato- ria to resume testing. These constraints were partial at fi rst, allowing under- ground tests, followed by limitations on their yield. After four decades of episodic diplomatic ambition, test constraints became comprehensive—or nearly so—in 1996. That was when, at Clinton’s urging, negotiations on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty were completed, as promised, one year after the Nonproliferation Treaty was indefi nitely extended.

Clinton tried and failed to secure the Senate’s consent to ratifi cation in 1999. Senate Republicans found the risks of permanently ending testing and their antipathy toward Clinton stronger than the arguments in favor of ratifi - cation. Clinton authorized an expensive and open-ended “stockpile steward- ship” program so that U.S. nuclear laboratories could provide assurance of the effi cacy of existing warhead designs without further testing, but this ini- tiative was unproven in 1999. Internationally minded Republican stalwarts in the Senate, including John Warner and Richard Lugar, believed ratifi cation to be premature until the stockpile stewardship program had demonstrated its effi cacy.

Even when the Senate consents to ratify the CTBT, other hurdles to the treaty’s entry into force will remain. No less than forty-four states possessing the Bomb or the infrastructure to produce one need to consent to ratifi cation. This was the price that reluctant leaders in Great Britain, France, Russia, and China extracted before agreeing to terms. Eight holdouts remain—the United States, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, Egypt, Iran and North Korea. And yet the treaty has still performed its declared function, fostering moratoria that are now over two decades old. The Soviet Union stopped testing in 1990, the United States in 1992, and China in 1996. India and Pakistan started and stopped in 1998. Testing moratoria have served as a surrogate for entry into force.

The norm of not demonstrating prowess through nuclear testing, like the norm of no battlefi eld use, has taken hold in the absence of a treaty in force codifying its terms. Both norms require and have received daily affi rmation. Every day without a nuclear test is a success story, and every subsequent day increases the degree of political diffi culty associated with being the fi rst na- tional leader that resumes testing. The only state that has tested since 1998 has been North Korea. No other nuclear-armed state has wished to follow its example. If, however, the United States, Russia, or China were to decide to resume testing, a cascade of tests is likely to follow. Continued moratoria re- fl ect these calculations. The passage of time without testing doesn’t foreclose a future cascade, but the longer moratoria continue, the harder it will be for a national leader to become the norm breaker.

The central object and purpose of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is that signatories pledge “not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion.” The Clinton administration deemed further precision regarding this defi nition both as unwarranted and as an invitation to workarounds. The CTBT does not prohibit nuclear experiments. Every state that possesses nuclear weapons conducts them. The Clinton administra- tion advocated a “zero yield” standard for the treaty, meaning that experi- ments involving nuclear material not produce “a self-sustaining, supercriti- cal chain reaction.” The Clinton administration stated its understanding that Russia and China understood and accepted this standard.9

In 2020, the Trump administration publicly questioned whether Rus- sia and China are adhering to the Clinton administration’s standard. The State Department’s 2020 report on this matter does not charge Moscow and Beijing with a material breach because the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty has not entered into force. Nor does it assert that nuclear experiments like those  described have military utility. Rather, the Trump administration as- serted that Russia has not adhered to the zero-yield standard and that China’s actions “raise concerns,” suggesting a weaker evidentiary base for China’s citation.10

Treaty opponents will argue that any experiment above zero yield defeats the object and purpose of the CTBT. Supporters will argue otherwise, as miniscule yields do not facilitate the advanced development and certifi ca- tion of new warhead designs. Before a serious effort is made to again seek the Senate’s consent to ratifi cation, a formal, common understanding among the United States, Russia, and China of the zero-yield standard will likely be needed, along with new monitoring devices at the locations where experi- ments are conducted.

These whispers are all that remain from a legacy of almost 2,000 nuclear tests. Existing warhead designs and variations do not require new testing. The certifi cation of entirely new warhead designs would. Extending the two- decade-long norm against testing depends primarily on decisions made in Washington, Moscow, and Beijing. An important constraint against the re- sumption of testing is a common understanding that whatever gains might be pocketed in pursuing an exacting new warhead design would be outweighed by the collective advances of others that resume testing. Old technologies and designs suffi ce to underscore deterrence. As long as existing designs remain durable and duplicable—and their plutonium cores might well last a century or more—there is no need to resume underground tests.11

Moratoria on testing are an important stabilization measure for the com- plex geometry of global nuclear competition. Any doubts on this score can be dispelled by imagining the impact of a cascade of testing by the United States, Russia, and China in one triangle, and by China, India, and Pakistan in the other. The treaty of greatest help to stabilize both triangles has already been negotiated but has not entered into force. The Senate’s consent to ratify the CTBT could set in motion positive cascade effects, as China has repeatedly declared a readiness to ratify, but only after the U.S. Senate provides its con- sent. To affi rm this sequencing, the Senate could insist that the United States not deposit its instrument of ratifi cation until China, India, and Pakistan ratify. India will not sign and ratify until China ratifi es, and Pakistan will not sign and ratify until India does. Both competitive triangles could benefi t from this cascade of ratifi cations. And yet those who argue that it is necessary to engage Beijing and to change China’s status from a free rider to an active participant in strategic arms control oppose the Senate’s consent to ratify the CTBT. No single step by Washington would provide greater reinforcement in extending the twin norms against nonbattlefi eld use and nuclear testing.

Ratifi cation seems a distant prospect during a time of rampant partisan- ship on Capitol Hill. It will happen eventually, either because of losses in the ranks of America First Republican senators or a Republican president who is ready to take this step. This possibility is not completely far-fetched, given the variation of post–Cold War Republican presidents. In the meantime, the extension of the nuclear peace and the revival of prospects for nuclear arms control depend on extending testing moratoria.

Patience as well as insistence can be a virtue. In the case of the CTBT, patience is a necessity. It took fi fty years for two-thirds of the Senate to sup- port ratifi cation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol that banned the use of poison- ous and asphyxiating gases, like those used indiscriminately during World War I. The Senate is now halfway toward this lamentable historical marker, as the CTBT was negotiated a quarter-century ago. As long as moratoria on testing are extended, we can continue to wait. It should not take fi fty years for enough Republican senators to regain their international moorings and to recognize the immense obstacles that must be overcome before resuming tests. The Nevada Test Site will remain open for nuclear experiments but not for tests that shake the casinos in Las Vegas. The Stockpile Steward- ship program is a major success story. The U.S. nuclear laboratories have done their part and continued bipartisan support for stockpile stewardship is assured.

The passage of time without nuclear testing makes ratifi cations more likely. No state possessing nuclear weapons wants to use them on battle- fi elds. Every state’s nuclear enclave would welcome resumed testing, but with every passing day, it becomes harder to do so. Thanks to the work of previous generations, it is harder to cross the nuclear use and testing thresholds than to maintain them. Continued success in protecting these two essential norms can compensate for shortcomings on other fronts, such as the absence of am- bitious treaty making. The longer these norms are honored, the more nuclear weapon stockpiles will be reduced, with or without treaties.

#### Nonprolif AFF?

Michael Krepon 21, cofounder of the Stimson Center, a prolific author, and the winner of a lifetime achievement award from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for his work to reduce nuclear dangers, “Reaffirming Norms, Reducing Numbers,” Winning and Losing the Nuclear Peace: The Rise, Demise, and Revival of Arms Control, Stanford Security Studies, an imprint of Stanford University Press, 2021, pp. 493–530

NONPROLIFERATION

The third crucial norm undergirding the nuclear peace is nonproliferation. Given the attention paid to North Korea and Iran—the two hardest prolif- eration cases—it is easy to overlook how deeply rooted the norm of nonpro- liferation has become and the degree to which the pace of proliferation has been slowed. This is a remarkable success story that began when the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency overcame the State Department’s reser- vations to negotiate the Nonproliferation Treaty. This treaty was ACDA’s greatest legacy, a reminder of why having a dedicated cadre of leaders and experts within the executive branch focused on arms control matters. Since ACDA’s demise, the State Department’s expertise on arms control and the priority accorded to this pursuit have not fared well.

The North Korean proliferation problem lends itself to diplomatic man- agement but not solutions. Kim Jong Un has succeeded in producing nu- clear weapons and the means to deliver them against U.S. allies and against the U.S. homeland. In doing so, he has gained some measure of protection against suffering the fate of Saddam Hussein and Muammar Qaddafi . Air strikes, like those Israel carried out against nuclear facilities in Iraq and Syria, seem unlikely against North Korea, as no presidential adviser or occupant of the Oval Offi ce could be confi dent of their complete success to enforce de- nuclearization, let alone neutralize North Korea’s other capabilities to punish Seoul and other cities. Under these circumstances, U.S. and allied security, as well as the avoidance of war on the Korean Peninsula, rests on the twin pil- lars of containment and deterrence.

North Korea is producing more, and more powerful, nuclear weapons. Diplomacy could yet succeed in limiting North Korean nuclear capabilities, while abolition seems unrealizable. Whether Pyongyang’s stockpile growth prompts further proliferation depends on its behavior and on the strength of U.S. alliance ties to South Korea and Japan. While these relationships have corroded during the Trump administration, they remain capable of repair. The elements of containment and deterrence that matter most in both cases are mending diplomatic ties, maintaining forward-deployed forces and mis- sile defense capabilities, and enhancing conventional military capabilities in the region.

Kim Jong Un will continue to act out in search of leverage and rewards. Sanctions will remain in place until this pattern of behavior changes. There is no evidence that he wishes to place at risk that which he holds dear. Con- sequently, there is no need to overreact to provocations that leave his regime more isolated. There will be a need, however, to react to provocations that harm U.S. allies. Diplomacy with Kim Jong Un can be resumed without Don- ald Trump’s bluster, erratic behavior, and delusions. Partial diplomatic gains may once again be achievable, but only after Kim Jong Un realizes that better offers are illusionary. Nuclear threats do not help in this regard. A long game is called for—as long as it takes for North Korea’s leader to change course to help his economy grow.

Iran, unlike North Korea, has yet to cross the nuclear threshold, but the timeline for doing so has shortened considerably since Trump walked away from the agreement struck by Obama and by other leaders in Europe, China, and Russia. In the case of Iran, as with North Korea, the most likely candi- dates to seek the Bomb if Washington’s diplomatic exertions fail are states that have historically depended on the United States for their sense of secu- rity. Washington’s standing and infl uence to prevent these states—principally Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey—from acquiring nuclear weapons has been greatly diminished and is only partially recoverable.

If Iran’s leaders move resolutely toward possession of nuclear weapons, they invite U.S., if not Israeli, air strikes that will set back Tehran’s nuclear ambitions, further impair Iran’s ability to sell oil, and wreak even more dam- age to the Iranian economy. Consequently, while a concerted Iranian push for nuclear weapons remains a possibility, further incremental steps appear more likely, as Tehran seeks leverage in return for sanctions relief. Distinguishing between leverage in the form of reversible actions and the pursuit of bomb making will lie in the eyes of the beholder. Renewed diplomatic efforts to curtail Tehran’s nuclear capabilities face formidable challenges, not the least of which is hardened opposition among congressional majorities, as was the case during the Obama administration.

It is a testament to those who have been dedicated to nonproliferation norm-building and to the centrality of the NPT that both remain in decent shape despite North Korea’s nuclear stockpile and Iran’s posturing near to, but below, possession. Decades of purposeful diplomatic effort have paid off. Sanctions have become far more effective tools to deal with outliers, cyber warfare, and other forms of sabotage have been added to the nonprolifera- tion toolkit, and military options remain available in rare cases. Even so, new proliferation challenges lie ahead, depending on how the North Korean and Iranian cases play out. What makes new challenges different is that the most likely aspirants to acquire the Bomb in the future have all been friends of the United States in the past.

Since the Cold War ended, Democratic presidents have attempted to revive nonproliferation diplomacy and Republican presidents have viewed these ef- forts with skepticism. Despite cyclical diplomatic successes and setbacks, the third key norm of nonproliferation abides. With more appreciation for its consensual foundations, the norm of nonproliferation can become stronger still. If this sounds Pollyannaish, consider the surprisingly slow track record of nonproliferation, and how many times predictions of cascading prolifera- tion danger have proven to be false.

#### Numbers-based arms control good

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NUMBERS

When nuclear arms control was conceived at the outset of the Kennedy administration, its central design feature was stabilization, not numbers. Schelling and Halperin treated reductions as an “open question.” In their view, reductions might make sense in some areas and increases in others. To advance stabilization, they focused on qualitative aspects of the competition and the way nuclear weapons were deployed. The “essential feature” of arms control was “the recognition of common interest,” not numbers.21

A numbers-based approach to stabilization was challenging but feasible in a bipolar competition. With China’s ascent, a numbers-based approach to strategic arms control becomes far more complicated. Beijing has long- standing reasons to remain aloof from numbers-based strategic arms control since its forces and warhead totals pale by comparison to those of the United States and Russia. Neither Moscow nor Washington is willing to accept Bei- jing in a trilateral compact except as a second-tier state, a status that Beijing is unlikely to accept. Seeking China’s inclusion would thus incentivize Beijing to compete harder than before. While China has increased the pace of its strategic modernization programs as U.S. offensive and defensive capabili- ties evolve, its priorities appear to lie in platforms, techniques, and weapons that have demonstrable military utility. In contrast, Moscow relies on high numbers of warheads atop missiles. Its nuclear forces are the last vestiges of Moscow’s Cold War status. The Kremlin’s high-cost insurance policies refl ect perpetually wariness of U.S. missile defense plans, while keeping an eye out for China’s growing arsenal. The Kremlin also believes it gains geopolitical leverage from its nuclear forces, despite plentiful evidence to the contrary. Deterrence strengtheners in Washington are also extremely wary of deeper reductions, however modest.

Numbers provide a snapshot of progress, stagnation, or backsliding to reduce nuclear danger. The Biden administration took offi ce in a period of backsliding, with across-the-board strategic modernization programs in Rus- sia and the United States, and growing strategic forces in China, India, and Pakistan. The geometry of nuclear competition, featuring two triangular and four bilateral rivalries, presents signifi cant barriers to success in numerical arms reduction. Bilateral U.S.-Russian reductions remain diffi cult but pos- sible; multilateral numerical limits are another matter.

Prior multilateral attempts to limit the most fearsome weapon systems did not fare well. During the years between the two World Wars, naval powers engaged in arms control. “Capital ships” were the strategic forces of this era. Heavy tonnage warships with sixteen-inch guns could traverse long distances and appear offshore to deliver threatening messages or heavy fi repower. At the instigation of Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes, a three-tiered ratio system was devised in the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty. Great Britain and the United States were evenly situated in the top tier, Japan was in the second tier, and France and Italy were in the third tier. These ratios were adjusted at the 1930 London Treaty, where Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson led the U.S. delegation. These treaties did not take into adequate account dramatic changes in the technology of naval warfare represented by the advent of the submarine and the aircraft carrier. They were bedeviled by workarounds, violations, exclusions, and most of all, by the clear intent of two states—Japan and Germany—to radically alter the status quo in the Pacifi c and in Europe. Japan was a signatory to naval limitations; Germany was not.22

This troubling history would intrude on any effort to devise ratios among states that possess nuclear weapons at a time of advancing technologies and sharpened competition. Thorny issues of defi nition and scope would be- devil a ratio-based system of arms limitation. What would the range limita- tions be for the missiles to be counted? Would they include intermediate- and m edium-range missiles like those formerly banned under the 1987 INF Treaty, as well as ocean-spanning missiles? Would missiles designed for bal- listic missile defense count along with missiles used for offensive purposes? How would missiles designed to carry either conventional or nuclear war- heads be counted? All of this, and more, would need to be sorted out if a ratio-based approach for Russia, the United States, and China could be agreed upon. China is unlikely to accept constraints if India doesn’t, and In- dia wouldn’t accept limits if Pakistan remains an outlier. Devising numerical ratios among China, India, and Pakistan would be a very tall order.

A numerical approach to multilateral strategic arms control is just too hard. And yet numbers matter because they refl ect the state of competition between possessors and because additions tend to be more destabilizing than stabilizing. Numbers also matter because the more they rise, the more they undermine the norm of nonproliferation. If bilateral strategic arms control is necessary but insuffi cient, if it is important for China to engage in nuclear restraint, and if a hierarchical, multilateral ratio-based system is impractical, where does this leave us?

Sometimes, when the nature of a problem seems intractable, the wisest course might just be to expand the scope of the problem. Because numbers matter greatly and because numerically based, multilateral strategic arms control is beyond our grasp, I propose that we pursue multilateral norm ex- tension among the United States, Russia, China, France, Great Britain, India, and Pakistan. The key norms of No Use, no testing, and nonproliferation can be strengthened and extended even when multilateral numerical limitations and reductions are beyond reach. Over time, success in extending these three norms can lead naturally to reduced numbers—with or without treaties.

SEVEN-NATION NORM BUILDING

U.S. and Russian negotiations began very late in the Trump administration, with neither expressing an interest in further arms reductions because of China’s trajectory. Moscow responded to the Trump administration’s call for Beijing’s participation in trilateral talks by reviving calls for France and Great Britain to be included—a negotiating position that dates back to the fi rst stra- tegic arms limitation talks. Paris and London would bring expertise to any negotiation but expressed no enthusiasm to engage—stances that also date back to the Nixon administration. Their nuclear arsenals and force structures are not threatening. They have no pressing disputes that could lead to the use of nuclear weapons. Nor are they increasing the size of their force structure.

In contrast, the force structures of China, India, and Pakistan are grow- ing. They have disputed borders and border clashes. China and India, like India and Pakistan, have no substantive security dialogue over nuclear weap- ons and nuclear risk-reduction measures. There are no bilateral measures in place that place limits on interactive nuclear competitions in Asia. Conven- ing a triangular nuclear forum with China, India, and Pakistan is unlikely because New Delhi would be outnumbered. This triangular competition is as resistant to hierarchical ratios as the triangular competition among the United States, Russia, and China.

Dangerous military practices are rising in both triangular competitions and in all four bilateral rivalries. Every pairing of nuclear-armed rivals could benefi t from the establishment of guardrails, the reinforcement of norms, and the acceptance of stabilization measures. Codes of conduct governing dan- gerous military practices exist but are in need of reaffi rmation between Wash- ington and Moscow. They barely exist for China, India, and Pakistan. Just as it is worthwhile to change China’s role from a free rider to a participant, it is also worthwhile to seek ways to change the status of India and Pakistan from free riders to participants. Common restraint measures are applicable to all four pairings of nuclear-armed rivals. Progress in this daunting agenda might have a greater chance of success if everyone has a seat at the table, as well as France and Great Britain.

Engaging seven states in multilateral discussions on nuclear restraint, norm building, and risk reduction would be complicated and diffi cult, but not as diffi cult as seeking these results in bilateral or trilateral discussions. For all of the manifold diffi culties seven-nation discussions would face, there is suffi cient connective tissue to try. All seven have signifi cant concerns about the intentions and capabilities of states with dynamic nuclear modernization programs. Each state has its own reasons to participate, as well as to be wary. None of the states with dynamic modernization programs are willing to relax requirements unless others do.

All seven states have respected the norm of nonbattlefi eld use, but further reinforcement is needed for the crises that lie ahead. All seven have adhered to nuclear test moratoria for more than twenty years. Discussions on how to strengthen this norm among the seven could produce tangible results. Bi- lateral lines of communication could become more meaningful as a conse- quence of discussions initiated in a seven-nation forum. India and Pakistan might see value in having seats at the high table of nuclear possessor states. Their participation could also complicate matters even more as Pakistan would seek to bring bilateral disputes to the table. Ground rules would be necessary at the outset to clarify that bilateral issues are off-limits. If India and Pakistan are ready to participate, it would be harder for Beijing to re- main an outlier. Each of the fi ve states with dynamic nuclear modernization programs has good reason to engage—as long as everyone engages.

A MULTILATERAL BUILD-DOWN

Seven-nation discussions centered around norm building might yield divi- dends. But what about numbers? Numbers cannot be completely divorced from norms, and yet a direct approach to discuss numbers is bound to fail. Washington and Moscow have a long history of negotiating numbers, but no one else does. It would be senseless to try to set ratios and hierarchy for all seven states. China, India, and Pakistan do not even advertise or ac- knowledge numbers—a situation comparable to the beginning of U.S.-Soviet strategic arms limitation talks when Washington provided the data for both superpowers. Setting a hierarchical order for the Asian competition would be particularly problematic, as China rarely acknowledges challenges by India, and Pakistan would be unlikely to accept an inferior position to India. All three would be as unwilling to accept intrusive inspections at sensitive sites as the Soviet Union was until 1986.

I propose an indirect approach: that the seven consider a norm of build- ing down numbers as new nuclear armament is deployed. This isn’t a new idea. During the Reagan administration, Alton Frye conceived the concept of a strategic build-down.23 Frye was writing at a time of intense debate in the United States over Soviet intentions, the Reagan administration’s negotiat- ing stance, and the Pentagon’s strategic modernization programs. One severe crisis followed another during 1983, and negotiations over arms reductions were deadlocked. Frye’s build-down concept was an attempt to break domes- tic and negotiating impasses. Under his proposal, both superpowers would be obliged to reduce as they modernized. Frye’s concept of a superpower strategic build-down was overtaken by events. The elevation of Gorbachev and his pairing with Reagan opened up extraordinary negotiating outcomes and led to deep cuts in opposing arsenals.

The build-down concept still has great utility, however, and might be considered and adapted for use in seven-nation discussions. This approach would avoid some of the problems inherent in trying to devise a ratio-based system, but not all of them. Under a build-down regime, states do not have to agree to a hierarchy or a ratio-based system. Instead, they would proceed from where they already are. States would, however, be obliged to acknowl- edge numbers that other states have already discovered for themselves by ob- servation from space and by other means, just as the Soviet Union did at the onset of the strategic arms limitation talks. Nations would also be obliged to confi rm what other states will eventually discover with respect to their plans to modernize nuclear forces. Nothing would prevent them from proceeding with modernization plans, but they would be obliged to reduce in agreed fashion as they replace old systems with new ones.

There are many potential advantages in attempting to apply a build-down concept to seven states. Among the advantages are making a virtue of budget- ary necessity. It will be diffi cult for Washington and Moscow to afford replac- ing existing missiles, submarines, and bombers on a one-for-one basis, given the exorbitant costs of doing so, and other calls on national resources. China is the country most able to afford a nuclear buildup and is engaged in doing so. And yet China’s claims for the value of nuclear weapons are far more modest than those of the United States and Russia. India has strong domestic constraints on defense spending. Pakistan doesn’t, but can least afford it.

China’s long-held position is that the United States and Russia must build down to its level. It would be harder to maintain this position if the United States, Russia, India, Pakistan, France, and Great Britain are inclined to consider a multilateral build-down scheme. Depending on the particulars, a multilateral build-down could alleviate security concerns for both triangular nuclear competitions and all four pairings of nuclear rivals. Drawing down multilaterally might well be less diffi cult than drawing down bilaterally or trilaterally. Strategic modernization would continue, but at a lesser scale un- der a build-down regime.

There are many diffi culties that would have to be surmounted if a multi- lateral build-down concept were to be agreed upon, beginning with agreed baselines for a multilateral build-down. States would need to be willing to accept transparency beyond their comfort levels. They would need to release verifi able information on their holdings and their plans. Under a build-down, states might hold on to older systems longer than would otherwise be the case so that they can be traded off later, as modernization proceeds. This is a minor problem. Others are more signifi cant.

Diffi cult questions regarding the scope of a multilateral build-down would need to be addressed. Would missile defense interceptors be included in na- tional counts, and if so, what threshold capabilities would make a missile defense interceptor accountable? If defenses are included in national totals, states would presumably insist on being free to choose between offense and defense and to have freedom to mix, depending on their perceived national security interests. Another diffi cult issue relates to the unit of account for a multilateral build-down. Would the unit of account be warheads, delivery ve- hicles, or both? Would intermediate- and medium-range missiles be counted along with ocean-spanning missiles and strategic bombers? If so, what would be the range threshold for inclusion? How would missiles above the range threshold be considered if they are deployed with conventional and not nuclear warheads? And how would states distinguish between nuclear and conventionally armed missiles? How would advancing technologies, such as hypervelocity glide missiles, be treated?

These and other questions could well lead to different answers about inclusion and exclusion, based on each nation’s security perspectives. The pursuit of preferred outcomes could provide incentives to participate in seven-nation talks. Perhaps trade-offs could be agreed upon, or perhaps these divisions would be so great as to foreclose agreements. Discussions about a multilateral build-down are likely to be prolonged because of differing U.S. and Russian perspectives, and because China, India, and Pakistan have had no prior basis for such discussions. Great Britain and France might not wish to engage in a build-down, arguing that they already adhere to minimum deterrence postures. Or they might see value in doing so, given budgetary constraints. Given all this and more, multilateral discussions about establish- ing a build-down norm might not make headway. Even so, there are good reasons for exploratory talks, even if positive outcomes remain distant.

The reaffi rmation of norms need not await exploratory discussions about a build-down. Seven-nation talks might proceed in phases. Norm building and the construction of guardrails and stabilization measures would come fi rst. Successful results could facilitate multilateral talks over a build-down. Even if agreements are not reachable or fully inclusive, preliminary discus- sions with free riders could still have utility. Negotiating a multilateral build- down would be a diffi cult and time-consuming task. Nonetheless, it might be useful to begin thinking through this approach and assessing different parameters on how best to proceed.

#### AT: generic arms control fails cards

Michael Krepon 21, cofounder of the Stimson Center, a prolific author, and the winner of a lifetime achievement award from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for his work to reduce nuclear dangers, “Reaffirming Norms, Reducing Numbers,” Winning and Losing the Nuclear Peace: The Rise, Demise, and Revival of Arms Control, Stanford Security Studies, an imprint of Stanford University Press, 2021, pp. 493–530

CONCLUSION

Deterrence isn’t self-regulating; it’s self-generating. Nuclear deterrence with- out reassurance is dangerous and prone to catastrophic failure. The basis for reviving arms control rests on this recognition. Arms control was conceived to advance public safety in ways that deterrence alone could not possibly provide. Paul Warnke often said that if arms control was torn down, it would have to be rebuilt. The burden of reconstruction falls on us.

We will revive arms control because our lives depend on it. We will revive arms control because deterrence without reassurance is too dangerous and crisis prone. Guardrails, norms, and stabilization measures can take many forms; reinvention depends on our creativity and wisdom. It also depends on the state of relations between nuclear-armed rivals. If their competition sharpens, and if national leaders are content to intensify that competition, then no proposals to reverse course will succeed. If and when leaders decide to pursue course corrections, or if and when leaders change, opportunities will arise. When they do, it is essential to have plans in mind on how best to proceed.

A standard critique of arms control riffs off of what Samuel Johnson is believed to have said about second marriages: The pursuit of arms control, in this jaundiced view, constitutes the triumph of hope over experience. Not true. Many who remarry live happily ever after. More to the point, arms control didn’t fail. Arms control cut deeply into nuclear excess; it created a nonproliferation norm for nuclear weapons and disarmament norms for chemical and biological weapons. Most importantly, arms control set nuclear weapons apart from other instruments of warfare. Without arms control, it is highly unlikely that we would have survived three-quarters of a century without the battlefi eld use of nuclear weapons.

Accomplishments in this fi eld are never unblemished. Outliers can be eas- ily identifi ed because they do not abide by the foundational norms of arms control. Most treaties are not everlasting. Some never enter into force or do so after extended waits. Others, like the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, served useful purposes for three decades but not longer. These treaties accomplished what they set out to do until one of the parties wanted to be relieved of constraints.

Foundational norms are advanced by and can outlast treaties. Three of them—no use of nuclear weapons in warfare, no testing, and nonprolifera- tion—are stanchions of the nuclear peace. These norms have taken hold; it is our responsibility to extend them. Despite many setbacks, norms-based arms control endures. Norms can be extended even in a period of intense polariza- tion on Capitol Hill and sharpened competition between states possessing nuclear weapons. Treaties, by comparison, fare less well when domestic and geopolitical circumstances change. There will be a next phase of arms control because the need to stabilize competition between nuclear-armed rivals is everlasting. The future of arms control will build on successes, require re- invention, and explore new possibilities.

My approach accepts ground realities and does not place upon arms con- trol the impossible burden of transcending them. For this reason, these pages do not dwell on abolition. While I endorse visionary end states and salute those who seek them, I also recognize political and geopolitical conditions that militate against these agendas. Political will cannot be manufactured when ground realities do not permit success. I steer clear of grand treaty making in deference to deep partisan divides and the complications posed by the complex geometry of nuclear-tinged competitions. We are obliged to be agile; if new treaties remain beyond reach, there are other ways to proceed, including by executive agreement, politically binding accords, tacit agree- ments in the form of parallel steps, or by unilateral measures.

While I do not seek ambitious treaties, I do seek visionary outcomes by other means. I advocate a synthesis of pragmatism and idealism. Seeking the nonuse of nuclear weapons in warfare for a full century after Hiroshima and Nagasaki is extraordinarily ambitious, as is seeking to extend testing mora- toria until 2045. And yet these goals are achievable because the norms of No Use and no testing are the hardest for any national leader to break. Unlike a treaty calling for abolition, extending the norms of No Use and no testing lend themselves to a sense of daily accomplishment. Every day that passes without use or testing is a victory. Setbacks can happen tomorrow, which is why these norms demand our protection, as well as game plans in the event they are broken.

Convening a seven-nation forum to reaffi rm norms might well be a bridge too far. Implementing a build-down norm for all seven nations lies even far- ther afi eld. These ideas are nonetheless worth exploring. Every major ac- complishment in arms control seemed inconceivable when fi rst advocated, including the permanent cessation of nuclear testing. I was a teenager when the United States and the Soviet Union stopped testing in the atmosphere. When I graduated high school, there were over 60,000 nuclear weapons on this planet. At present, there are 13,000. Our parents and grandparents never expected to reach, let alone pass, the seventy-fi ve-year mark for the absence of mushroom clouds on battlefi elds, or the twenty-year mark on testing mor- atoria, and yet here we are. Those who practiced arms control accomplished great things; they have left more work for us to do. It is now up to us to extend the nuclear peace. When we get knocked down, we pick ourselves up and press forward.

We live at a time of great lamentation, when profound success stories go unrecognized. The absence of mushroom clouds on battlefi elds, the cessation of testing, deep nuclear arms reductions, and a near-universal membership in the Nonproliferation Treaty are profound successes. We are, however, ca- pable of backsliding as well as accomplishment. We make bad decisions as well as good ones. Much of the edifi ce of nuclear arms control has been torn down. It’s up to us to rebuild it. Success is again possible because failure would be too costly.

## NSA Affs

### NSAs---Top

#### The U.S. currently does not provide binding, unconditional negative security assurances to non-nuclear states – that means it retains the ability to attack non-nuclear states in some circumstances – raises the risk of nuclear use in a crisis involving these countries

Cronberg 22 – Distinguished Associate Fellow at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Tarja Cronberg, “The Security of Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones: The Middle East as a Test Case for Unconditional Security Assurances,” *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2022, pp. 49-50, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/25751654.2022.2090097.

Security Assurances to NWFZ States

Today there are five regional nuclear weapon-free zones6 with 118 member states. In addition, Mongolia is a one-state zone. These zones are comprised of states that have voluntarily committed to abstinence and renounced nuclear deterrence in all forms. They agree not to manufacture, acquire, test or possess nuclear weapons and to prohibit the development, stationing or testing of nuclear weapons in their respective regions. No member state has ever withdrawn from a zone and there are no examples of suspicious nuclear weapon programs by any state party to a zone treaty. All members have signed their IAEA safeguards agreements. Compliance may even be controlled at the regional level, as in the case of Argentina and Brazil7 States in the nuclear weapon-free zones seem, at least during the first 50 years of their existence, to be “non-proliferation proof” (for a review, see Lacovsky 2021).

The NWFZ treaties include annexed protocols for the P5 to sign and ratify8 According to these protocols, each party undertakes not to use or threaten to use a nuclear weapon or other nuclear devices against any state of the treaty. The Latin American and the Caribbean Treaty is the only one where all the P5 states have ratified the protocol. In the case of the South Pacific, African and Central Asian treaties, all of the P5 states except the United States have ratified the protocol. The Southeast Asia treaty has neither been signed nor ratified by any of the P5. Mongolia’s status as a single-country zone was confirmed by the United Nations in 1998 (United Nations General Assembly 1998). In this case, there is a Joint Declaration of the P5, which only refers to the negative security assurances that P5 gave to non-nuclear NPT members in 1995 (see below).

The legal status of these assurances has not been clarified. In theory, if the zone treaty is in force and a P5-state has ratified it, it is binding for the state in question. Nevertheless, it is claimed that these statements only express an intention and are not legally binding (Bunn 1997, 12). For example, the United States does not consider these guarantees as international agreements. Nor have they been approved domestically according to the procedures of the US Congress. Furthermore, there are domestic disagreements. In the case of the African treaty, the US State Department and the Pentagon disagreed on whether or not to sign. The Pentagon was reluctant to accept any limitations on its use of nuclear weapons. The United States signed the treaty but accompanied with it a declaration that it would not ”limit options available to the US if attacked by an African country with weapons of mass destruction” (in Schell 2007, 99). The United States has so far not ratified this protocol.

Calculated Ambiguity

The security assurances are not only conditional, but they are also ambiguous. A declassified report prepared by the US Strategic Command already reaffirmed in 1995 that ambiguity was a built-in quality of nuclear threats9 In 1998, Defence Secretary William Cohen stated: “We think that the ambiguity involved in the issue of nuclear weapons contributes to our own security, keeping any potential adversary who might use either chemical or biological [weapons] unsure of what our response would be. We think it is a sound doctrine”.10

The final decision to use or not use nuclear weapons in any crisis of fundamental national interest will be made on the spot and will not be constrained by published doctrines and public statements. An example of how agreements related to nuclear weapons may be disregarded is the Budapest Memorandum of 1994. In this agreement, the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia guaranteed the borders of former members of the Soviet Union that had agreed to remove their nuclear weapons to Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Budapest Memorandum on Ukraine was referred to in the case of Crimea in 2014 (Budjeryn 2014). Having changed Ukrainian borders, Russia was seen to be in breach of the agreement. Russia has claimed that the situation in Ukraine was revolutionary and the country has become a different one, to which Russia had not made any commitments. Accused of breaking the promise given in the Memorandum, the United States and the United Kingdom in turn argued back that the guarantees in the memorandum were not legally binding. For Ukraine, this raises the question of whether security assurances are to be trusted. One of the possible outcomes of the current war is a neutral Ukraine with guarantees from other states for its security.

In summary, during the lifetime of the NPT, the options for using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states and the NWFZs have expanded from the case of attacks in alliance with a nuclear state to the case of other WMD-attacks, to non-nuclear strategic attacks, and even to limiting damage by a nuclear attack. The latest US conditions are even linked to the evolution of technologies. More and more conditions attached to security assurances increase the risk of abstaining states to be attacked by nuclear weapons in the future.

#### Solvency advocate – the proposal would promote non-proliferation goals

Cronberg 22 – Distinguished Associate Fellow at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Tarja Cronberg, “The Security of Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones: The Middle East as a Test Case for Unconditional Security Assurances,” *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2022, pp. 52, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/25751654.2022.2090097.

Three Options

The first option is that nuclear weapon states – especially the P5 in the first phase of this process – should approve unconditional security assurances. By accepting unconditional and legally binding security guarantees, nuclear weapon states could show that they are serious about creating conditions for disarmament12 These would further ensure the nuclear-free security of other states that have agreed to abstain from nuclear weapons. This would also be in line with the early NPT intentions to secure the safety of nonnuclear states against a nuclear attack.

#### Aff is inherent/yes link uniqueness/fiat key

Cronberg 22 – Distinguished Associate Fellow at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Tarja Cronberg, “The Security of Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones: The Middle East as a Test Case for Unconditional Security Assurances,” *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2022, pp. 52, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/25751654.2022.2090097.

Seen from the P5 perspective, these would, firstly, limit their nuclear options and the geographic space for deterrence (Cronberg 2021b). Secondly, this would imply a departure from the practice of calculated ambiguity. The latter, as indicated, is an organic part of the art of issuing nuclear threats. Furthermore, unambiguous assurances would challenge the logic of deterrence. Consequently, it is highly unlikely that they would voluntarily take action13

#### It’s the key internal link to non-proliferation goals, but shoring it up is key

Giovannini 22 – Executive director of the Project on Managing the Atom at the Belfer Center of the Harvard Kennedy School.

Francesca Giovannini, “Negative Security Assurances After Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine,” *Arms Control Association*, July/August 2022, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2022-07/features/negative-security-assurances-after-russias-invasion-ukraine#endnote05.

A Patchwork Regime

For years, as they sought to establish a collective norm that would allow a more predictable coexistence with nuclear-armed states,2 non-nuclear-weapon states have demanded negative security assurances as binding commitments from nuclear-weapon states not to threaten and not to use nuclear weapons against their territory.

As George Bunn once remarked, “Since the first attempts to negotiate the [NPT], security assurances to [non-nuclear-weapon] states have been considered an important component of a credible worldwide nuclear nonproliferation regime. They have been viewed by [non-nuclear-weapon states] as one of their major requirements for achieving an adequate balance between their obligations and those of nuclear-weapon states.”3 Achieving a universal regime of negative security assurances proved difficult from the start. The first UN Security Council resolution on security assurances passed with the support of the Soviet Union, the UK, and the United States and simply committed the signatory countries to provide assistance to any non-nuclear-weapon state coming under a nuclear attack.4

Over time, a patchy regime of negative security assurances has emerged although it remains incoherent, fragmented, and as the Ukrainian case demonstrated, profoundly inadequate to provide the kind of reassurances that non-nuclear-weapon states might require in a highly unpredictable global nuclear order.5 Today, there are four main mechanisms by which assurances are granted to a non-nuclear-weapon state: The UN Charter, unilateral pledges by nuclear-armed states, no-first-use policies, and regional nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties.

#### Ukraine war means that the risk of proliferation due to non-credible security assurances is higher than ever

Schepers 22 – Senior Researcher in the Swiss and Euro-Atlantic Security Team at the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich.

Névine Schepers, “Russia’s War and the Global Nuclear Order,” *Policy Perspectives*, vol. 10, no. 6, June 2022, pp. 2-3, https://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/bitstream/handle/20.500.11850/550039/2/PP10-6\_2022-EN.pdf.

Non-Proliferation at Stake?

By bringing nuclear weapons back in the international limelight, the war seems to have emphasized the benefits of relying on nuclear deterrence, inciting fears of renewed proliferation. Given that the outcome of the war remains unknown, it is too early to draw conclusions about whether this will encourage more states to develop nuclear programs. However, some preliminary effects are already apparent.

On the one hand, Ukraine’s history as a former Soviet Republic that inherited and subsequently returned Soviet nuclear weapons to Moscow in exchange for security assurances gives a different tone to Russia’s use of deterrence in this war. The appeal of such negative security assurances has therefore diminished. Within the NPT regime, many non-nuclear weapon states have previously placed particular emphasis on negative security assurances as a means to protect themselves from nuclear conflict. The breaching of such an assurance to Ukraine further undermines efforts to address security gaps posed by the imbalance between nuclear haves and have-nots. More than 100 non-nuclear weapon states rely on negative security assurances included in the protocols to Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones treaties. If those are no longer deemed credible and a state feels under existential threat, developing a domestic nuclear deterrent may appear more appealing in the future.

### NWFZs---Top

#### Current nuclear weapon free zone agreements are ineffective because they lack legally-binding, unconditional buy-in from the P5.

Tarja Cronberg 22, Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control Cluster, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), “The Security of Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones: The Middle East as a Test Case for Unconditional Security Assurances,” Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, vol. 5, no. 1, 01/02/2022, pp. 45–60

The nuclear weapon-free zones1 cover the majority of states and a third of the world´s population. According to the UN, the establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZ) is a regional approach to strengthen global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms and consolidate international efforts towards peace and security. Article VII of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) states: “Nothing in this Treaty affects the right of any group of States to conclude regional treaties in order to assure the total absence of nuclear weapons in their respective territories”. A number of authors have focused on whether nuclear weapon-free zones could be seen as stepping stones to a nuclear-weapon-free world. An example of this approach is presented by Ambassador Thomas Graham in his book “The Alternate Route”. Here, the long-time US ambassador on nuclear arms control and disarmament looks at each of the nuclear weapon-free zones and explores the possibility of expanding these zones to eventually encompass the entire world, region by region. In his words: “An alternative route to nuclear disarmament is needed. The nuclear weapon-free zone (NWFZ) movement, little heralded in conferences on nuclear policy around the world, might be such an alternative” (Graham 2017, 1).

This article explores two of the structural hindrances to this alternative route. Firstly, the existing zones lack credible assurances against being attacked by nuclear weapons. Not all nuclear weapon states have signed nor ratified the security assurances annexed to the regional zone treaties. Furthermore, general security assurances to non-nuclear states are being watered down as the nuclear weapon states want to keep their options – to threaten to use or to use nuclear weapons – open. The article explores whether legally binding and unconditional negative security assurances could be achieved, given the way calculated ambiguity is built into deterrence. Furthermore, in order to be included in a legally binding treaty, for example, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), each of the nuclear weapon states has a veto to any changes in the NPT according to its article 8.

Secondly, the creation of a nuclear weapon-free zone takes time and is extremely difficult, if not impossible, in cases where there is a nuclear weapon state in the zone not willing to abolish its arsenal. Successful zones have been established in regions with former nuclear states. South Africa in the African zone and Kazakhstan in the Central Asian zone are such examples, although nuclear weapons of the two states existed for different reasons. In the Latin American zone, Argentina and Brazil abolished their nuclear weapon programs after the process of zone creation. Today, they are good neighbours.

This is not the case in the Middle East. A Middle East nuclear weapon-free zone (later expanded to a WMD-free zone) has been 50 years in the making without any real progress. There is not only a lack of trust but also outright hostility among some of the potential members. The second question in the article is about whether unconditional and legal security assurances, if achieved for the zone states collectively, could provide an intermediary solution to the WMD-free zone in the Middle East. Could the example of Argentina and Brazil inspire a more cooperative process five decades later between Israel and Iran?

The article is structured in two parts. The first part concerns negative security assurances to the NWFZ-states. Two kinds of negative security assurances apply to the NWFZ states. First, assurances that are issued to non-nuclear weapon states in general. Second, assurances that apply specifically to a certain zone and are issued as specific protocols to the zone treaty. These assurances are analysed in relation to their conditionality and ambiguity in order to understand the security provided. On this basis, the feasibility to achieve unconditional and legally binding security assurances collectively for all the zone states will be examined. The second part links the analysis of security assurances to the Middle East. Introducing a thought experiment, this part poses a question: Could security assurances, if legally binding and unconditional, be a way to guarantee the nuclear security of the states in the Middle East during an interim period of trust-building and to provide a path to a full-fledged zone free from nuclear weapons (and other WMD)?

Achieving Unconditional and Legally Binding Security Assurances

During the negotiations of the NPT in the 1960s, security guarantees were debated. To give states abstaining from nuclear deterrence option guarantees of no attack by nuclear weapons was seen as a just bargain. Nevertheless, the treaty does not include the negative security assurances although US President Lyndon Johnson made the pledge on 16 October 1964 that “the nations that do not seek national nuclear weapons can be sure that, if they need our strong support against some threat of nuclear blackmail, then they will have it” (Willrich 1966). Not only did the NPT not confirm that these states would not be attacked by nuclear weapons, but the assurances on the table at the time have also been watered down since then.

Security Assurances to Non-Nuclear States

In 1968, when the NPT was approved, the United States, the USSR and the United Kingdom gave, in the form of a UN resolution, vague positive security assurances to nonnuclear states. They would, if an NPT-state was under nuclear threat or aggression, provide assistance to the nuclear weapon state. The nature of the assistance was not defined; the resolution only talked about “obligations under the UN Charter”. These socalled “positive security assurances” actually implied that non-nuclear states might be targeted or threatened by nuclear weapons2

More serious action followed in 1995, at the time when the extension of the NPT was up for a decision. In 1995, the P5 issued individual statements that they would not use nuclear weapons against states that had agreed to binding international agreements to abstain from possessing nuclear weapons3 Nevertheless, these statements were not unconditional. The United Kingdom, the United States, Russia and France formulated a common exception (here quoted after the UK formulation): ”except in the case of an attack on the United Kingdom, its dependent territories, its armed forces or its allies by such a State in association or alliance with a nuclear weapon state” (NPT Rview Conference 1995).

Although there is a difference between collectively issued security guarantees and an individual nuclear weapon state´s no-first-use policy, the latter may also include both direct and indirect assurances for non-nuclear states. China’s statement in 1995 and the 2019 White Paper are the clearest example: “China is always committed to a nuclear policy of no first use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, and not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear weapon-free zones unconditionally”.4

The United States has never had a no-first-use policy although this was seriously considered during the Obama administration. The United States had been deliberately vague about whether or not it would use nuclear weapons in response to a chemical or biological attack, regardless of whether the state had nuclear weapons or was in compliance with its NPT obligations. This doctrine implies that the United States does not take for granted that it would not use nuclear weapons in response to a chemical or biological attack; it is not ruled out.

The Obama administration’s Nuclear Posture Review in 2010 declares that the “fundamental role” of US nuclear weapons is deterrence. The Strategic Posture Commission, a congressionally mandated committee led by former Defence Secretaries William Perry and James Schlesinger, stated in 2009 that a no-first-use policy would “undermine the potential contributions of nuclear weapons to the deterrence of attack by biological weapons” and would be “unsettling to some U.S. allies” (Perry and Schlesinger James 2009).

The US Nuclear Posture review in 2018 defines the situations of nuclear use and mentions about extreme circumstances:

“The United States would only consider the employment of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States, its allies, and partners. Extreme circumstances could include significant non-nuclear strategic attacks. Significant non-nuclear strategic attacks include, but are not limited to, attacks on the U.S., allied, or partner civilian population or infrastructure, and attacks on U.S. or allied nuclear forces, their command and control, or warning and attack assessment capabilities” (US Department of Defence 2018, 21).

Furthermore, the United States reserves the right “to make any adjustment in the assurance that may be warranted by the evolution and proliferation of non-nuclear strategic attack technologies and U.S. capabilities to counter that threat” (US Department of Defence 2018, 21). In addition, the United States indicated limiting damage of an attack by using nuclear weapons.

The official Soviet policy5 , set in the 1970s and confirmed in 1982, allowed for the use of nuclear weapons only in response to a nuclear attack. This was in fact a nofirst use policy. The 1993 doctrine paved the way for the first use of nuclear weapons, but only as deterrence of a large-scale attack that threatened the sovereignty and the very survival of the country (Feferation 1993). President Putin`s doctrine 2000 expands the first use of nuclear weapons to: “other weapons of mass destruction against itself or its allies and also in response to large-scale aggression involving conventional weapons in situations that are critical for the national security of the Russian Federation and its allies” (in Arms Control Today, 2000).

The current doctrine of 2015 confirms this policy. However, the Russian 2000 military doctrine has been interpreted to assert a first-use policy, which enables even conflict deescalation with nuclear weapons (Stowell 2008; Sokov 2004).

Security Assurances to NWFZ States

Today there are five regional nuclear weapon-free zones6 with 118 member states. In addition, Mongolia is a one-state zone. These zones are comprised of states that have voluntarily committed to abstinence and renounced nuclear deterrence in all forms. They agree not to manufacture, acquire, test or possess nuclear weapons and to prohibit the development, stationing or testing of nuclear weapons in their respective regions. No member state has ever withdrawn from a zone and there are no examples of suspicious nuclear weapon programs by any state party to a zone treaty. All members have signed their IAEA safeguards agreements. Compliance may even be controlled at the regional level, as in the case of Argentina and Brazil7 States in the nuclear weapon-free zones seem, at least during the first 50 years of their existence, to be “non-proliferation proof” (for a review, see Lacovsky 2021).

The NWFZ treaties include annexed protocols for the P5 to sign and ratify8 According to these protocols, each party undertakes not to use or threaten to use a nuclear weapon or other nuclear devices against any state of the treaty. The Latin American and the Caribbean Treaty is the only one where all the P5 states have ratified the protocol. In the case of the South Pacific, African and Central Asian treaties, all of the P5 states except the United States have ratified the protocol. The Southeast Asia treaty has neither been signed nor ratified by any of the P5. Mongolia’s status as a single-country zone was confirmed by the United Nations in 1998 (United Nations General Assembly 1998). In this case, there is a Joint Declaration of the P5, which only refers to the negative security assurances that P5 gave to non-nuclear NPT members in 1995 (see below).

The legal status of these assurances has not been clarified. In theory, if the zone treaty is in force and a P5-state has ratified it, it is binding for the state in question. Nevertheless, it is claimed that these statements only express an intention and are not legally binding (Bunn 1997, 12). For example, the United States does not consider these guarantees as international agreements. Nor have they been approved domestically according to the procedures of the US Congress. Furthermore, there are domestic disagreements. In the case of the African treaty, the US State Department and the Pentagon disagreed on whether or not to sign. The Pentagon was reluctant to accept any limitations on its use of nuclear weapons. The United States signed the treaty but accompanied with it a declaration that it would not ”limit options available to the US if attacked by an African country with weapons of mass destruction” (in Schell 2007, 99). The United States has so far not ratified this protocol.

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The security assurances are not only conditional, but they are also ambiguous. A declassified report prepared by the US Strategic Command already reaffirmed in 1995 that ambiguity was a built-in quality of nuclear threats9 In 1998, Defence Secretary William Cohen stated: “We think that the ambiguity involved in the issue of nuclear weapons contributes to our own security, keeping any potential adversary who might use either chemical or biological [weapons] unsure of what our response would be. We think it is a sound doctrine”.10

The final decision to use or not use nuclear weapons in any crisis of fundamental national interest will be made on the spot and will not be constrained by published doctrines and public statements. An example of how agreements related to nuclear weapons may be disregarded is the Budapest Memorandum of 1994. In this agreement, the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia guaranteed the borders of former members of the Soviet Union that had agreed to remove their nuclear weapons to Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Budapest Memorandum on Ukraine was referred to in the case of Crimea in 2014 (Budjeryn 2014). Having changed Ukrainian borders, Russia was seen to be in breach of the agreement. Russia has claimed that the situation in Ukraine was revolutionary and the country has become a different one, to which Russia had not made any commitments. Accused of breaking the promise given in the Memorandum, the United States and the United Kingdom in turn argued back that the guarantees in the memorandum were not legally binding. For Ukraine, this raises the question of whether security assurances are to be trusted. One of the possible outcomes of the current war is a neutral Ukraine with guarantees from other states for its security.

In summary, during the lifetime of the NPT, the options for using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states and the NWFZs have expanded from the case of attacks in alliance with a nuclear state to the case of other WMD-attacks, to non-nuclear strategic attacks, and even to limiting damage by a nuclear attack. The latest US conditions are even linked to the evolution of technologies. More and more conditions attached to security assurances increase the risk of abstaining states to be attacked by nuclear weapons in the future.

The NWFZ States: Creating Conditions

A just nuclear order based on voluntary abstinence by states and the promotion of nuclear weapon-free zones would require more credible negative security assurances than provided by the current non-proliferation regime. The question here is: how to create the necessary conditions for such a change? To achieve these guarantees was on the agenda in the early NPT negotiations but was rejected and replaced by less legally binding statements outside the NPT. Another chance was missed when the NPT was made indefinite in 1995. After this, non-nuclear states lost their leverage, although progress on the zone of WMDF Middle East was – and still is – on the agenda.

### NWFZs---Middle East

#### A US negative security assurance in the Middle East opens a window for trust-building that can culminate in meaningful regional deescalation.

Tarja Cronberg 22, Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control Cluster, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), “The Security of Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones: The Middle East as a Test Case for Unconditional Security Assurances,” Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, vol. 5, no. 1, 01/02/2022, pp. 45–60

States in the nuclear weapon-free zones are the best organized among non-nuclear states with a common non-nuclear regional identity. Furthermore, given their double commitment to nuclear-free status, both as signatories of the NPT and their regional treaty, no one can claim that they have secret interest in nuclear weapons program. Of the non-nuclear states, the NWFZ-states have potentially the power to change the current nuclear order, as they constitute the majority of states. What is missing is a global organization. These zones are regionally organized, but the states in the zones have no tradition or experiences of collective action within the NPT framework. Many of the states are active and have participated in drafting proposals during the TPNW negotiations or at the NPT Review Conferences but not collectively as NWFZ states.

Nevertheless, attention is being paid to this fact, and there have been efforts to increase global cooperation among the zones. The Vienna Centre for Disarmament and NonProliferation organized a Task Force in 2017 to increase cooperation between the existing zones (Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation 2018). The Task Force made recommendations on how to increase cooperation in fields such as information/ communication, research and disarmament, and non-proliferation. Notably, the Task Force did not offer recommendations on how these zones could better defend their common security interests and goals in the nuclear order, such as legally binding and unconditional security assurances.

Three Options

The first option is that nuclear weapon states – especially the P5 in the first phase of this process – should approve unconditional security assurances. By accepting unconditional and legally binding security guarantees, nuclear weapon states could show that they are serious about creating conditions for disarmament12 These would further ensure the nuclear-free security of other states that have agreed to abstain from nuclear weapons. This would also be in line with the early NPT intentions to secure the safety of nonnuclear states against a nuclear attack.

Seen from the P5 perspective, these would, firstly, limit their nuclear options and the geographic space for deterrence (Cronberg 2021b). Secondly, this would imply a departure from the practice of calculated ambiguity. The latter, as indicated, is an organic part of the art of issuing nuclear threats. Furthermore, unambiguous assurances would challenge the logic of deterrence. Consequently, it is highly unlikely that they would voluntarily take action13

A second option is a forceful lobby. As I have indicated before, only NWFZ states have a common regional identity and, most importantly, they represent a majority of states in the world. Furthermore, there is even a historical precedent for how a group of NWFZ states changed a superpower´s nuclear policy within the context of the NPT.

The “Mexican amendments” during the final negotiations of the NPT are an exceptional case where the states of a newly established nuclear weapon-free zone in Latin America14 were able to change a superpower´s nuclear policy. According to Dean Rusk, the United States accepted, for the first (and so far the only) time, unambiguous limitations on its power to use its nuclear weapons. In the spring of 1968, Mexico, leading the Latin American states, proposed a number of changes to the final NPT text. These “Mexican amendments”, as they came to be known, sought several objectives. Among others, the amendments demanded that disarmament not only be mentioned in the preamble but also be rendered an independent article. Furthermore, the nuclear weapon states (P5) were expected to sign an annexed protocol of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, where they would give a negative security assurance not to attack any state in the zone with nuclear weapons.

All the P5 states except the United States have ratified this protocol. Nevertheless, weary of losing the votes of 24 Latin American states in the approval process for the NPT in the UN, the United States ultimately decided to sign and ratify the protocol (Hunt 2017, 186). Potentially, NWFZ states could use this historical model as inspiration in order to achieve unconditional and legally binding security assurances. United by their interest in legally binding and unconditional assurances, NWFZ states could, as a wellorganized lobby, press for the approval of these guarantees. Within the NPT review process or outside it as a separate negotiation.

Finally, there is a third option of more radical action such as a walkout from the NPT review process. This would threaten the survival of the NPT and possibly the deterrence monopoly of the P5 as well. The P5 deems their right to nuclear deterrence as permanent, although initially agreed to as temporary15 In the current situation, both due to the crisis of the NPT and the existence of the prohibition norm introduced by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the P5 fears the future of the NPT. Thus, changes that otherwise might not be feasible might be possible today.

Harries (2015, 5) has rightly pointed out that a walkout from the review process is only a theoretical possibility, as long as “the widespread security benefits of continued nonproliferation” exist. Nevertheless, he asks the question as to “whether dissatisfaction of the slow pace of disarmament will create political momentum that cannot be contained, with detrimental side-effects for the NPT”. The question today is whether the combination of the P5´s aggressive opposition against the TPNW and the current modernization plans of nuclear weapon states have created such a momentum.

A walkout by one or a few states would have very little impact as opposed to that of a majority of the signatories of the NPT. If a state walks out, this would no doubt be criticized in strong words by the international community with the state’s potential interest to access nuclear weapons in sight. This would not be the case for NWFZ states due to their double commitment. They could also argue that negative security assurances were intended to be included in the NPT and would be a compensation for 50 years´ lack of respect for article VI of the NPT.

These assurances would have to be legally stronger than is the case today. In contrast to the statements or protocols quoted above, the assurances would have to be included in an international agreement. The first alternative is to renegotiate the NPT to include these assurances either as a new article or an annex. The second is to separately negotiate a multilateral international agreement assuring, in an unconditional and legal manner, that NWFZ states will not be attacked or threatened by nuclear weapons (see Spector and Ohlde 2005).

The WMD-Free Zone in the Middle East: A Test Case

The creation of a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East has intimately tied to the negotiations of the NPT. Progress in the zone was one of the preconditions for the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. Today, the future of the zone in the Middle East is at crossroads as there is an acute risk of proliferation. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the deal that restricted Iran’s nuclear program and defined Iran as a non-nuclear state, is being renegotiated after the US exit in 2018. The outcome is uncertain. If there is no US re-entry, Iran may opt for nuclear weapons, which Saudi Arabia is likely to follow.

So far, the establishment of a nuclear-free zone16 has been prevented by the fact that the zone includes Israel, the only nuclear state in the zone. The question here is more general: could unconditional security assurances, if ever approved, be a tool in cases where a proposed NWFZ will include a state that has nuclear weapons but is unwilling to abolish them? The assumption here is that these assurances could provide a tool for a transitional period and an innovative approach to secure trust-building. After this transition, the nuclear state(s) might enter not only a regional treaty of the future zone but also ratify the NPT as a non-nuclear state.

50 Years in the Making

Let us first look at the history of the zone and analyse the hindrances and current potential for change. Discussions on the zone have already taken place, but it was only in 1974 that the issue was formally brought into the UN by a joint declaration of Iran and Egypt. Following this, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) endorsed the proposal in a resolution in December of 1974. From 1980 to 2018, similar resolutions were passed annually without a vote by the UNGA. Endorsement has been incorporated in a number of UN Security Council Resolutions. In 1990, the resolution was broadened to include biological and chemical weapons, and the zone was named WMDFZ thereafter.

In 1995, the zone became part of an agreed package intended to transform the NPT, which had initially been approved for a trial period of 25 years and became a permanent treaty in the year. The corresponding resolution on the Middle East calls upon all states in the Middle East to take practical steps towards the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery systems. It further calls the states to refrain from taking any measures that preclude the achievement of this objective.

The 1995 resolution has been followed by a number of failed efforts to proceed with a regional treaty. A limited proposal was made by the Gulf Research Council, which included the states in the Gulf Cooperation Council and Iran, Iraq and Yemen. In 2010, the NPT Review Conference in its final document called for a conference to be held on the zone:

“The Secretary-General of the United Nations and the co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution, in consultation with the States of the region, will convene a conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region, and with the full support and engagement of the nuclear-weapon States. The 2012 Conference shall take as its terms of reference the 1995 Resolution”.

A facilitator was named to support implementation of the 1995 resolution. Consultations with the states of the region and preparations for the convening of the 2012 Conference were on the agenda. In spite of the fact that a number of consultative meetings took place, plans for the conference were cancelled in November 2012. There was no agreement on the agenda or on the issues to be discussed.

Nevertheless, the promotion activities did not end here. In 2013, the Arab states sent the Secretary-General of UNODA letters supporting the zone. At the 2015 NPT Review Conference Egypt proposed a conference on the WMDFZ in the Middle East, but the proposal was rejected17 An Egyptian delegation walked out of the meeting stating, “We cannot continue to attend meetings and agree on outcomes that do not get implemented, yet to be expected to abide by the concessions we gave for this outcome” (Reaching Critical Will 2014, 7).

In 2018, the UN General Assembly decided to hold yearly conferences to establish a Middle East WMD-free zone until this would become a reality. Although this UN initiative was taken out of the NPT review process, it builds on the NPT, as well as the 1995 Middle East resolution. The first session took place in 2019 and the second, postponed due to the pandemic, in November–December 2021 at the UN in New York. The latter was attended by 19 Middle Eastern states and observed by China, France, Russia and the UK as well as relevant international organizations18 Israel did not attend nor did the US as a P5 observer.

In the report of the second session, the participating states reaffirmed the importance of Israel’s accession to the NPT. Furthermore, a future treaty on a Middle East WMD-free zone should recognize the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences resulting from any WMD use. On verification, the report noted that the treaty should avoid duplicating other existing international arrangements and should rely on existing instruments, including the comprehensive safeguards of IAEA and the verification regime of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. These could be supplemented by a “regional verification mechanism”. The report underlined the responsibility of all nuclear-armed states to provide legally binding negative security assurances to treaty members.

A Thought Experiment

Imagine that the states gathering in the UN for the yearly conference on the WMD-free Middle East would agree to test a solution where unconditional, legal negative security guarantees would assure the security of all non-nuclear states in the zone. They would not be attacked by nuclear weapons by any nuclear state and after a certain number of years the nuclear state in the zone would agree to abolish its nuclear weapons.

This thought experiment would provide a solution to one of the core conflicts in establishing a zone in the Middle East, the issue of sequencing. The lack of progress has been blamed for different approaches taken by Egypt and Israel. Egypt has insisted on the abolition of nuclear weapons as an initial stage of the process. Israel has maintained that this should come only after an agreement on solid arms control and the establishment of a lasting and reliable peace. While Israel has focused on a negotiation mechanism by and meetings of heads of states, Egypt has not proposed discussions by states or defined state obligations. There is also a difference of opinion on verification. Israel wants a regionspecific system with national inspectors, if not replacing, at least complementing, international inspections. The Arab states have indicated that the IAEA is the appropriate body. Finally, the question of what to do in cases of non-compliance is still open (Cronberg 2010).

By providing a transitional period of trust-building and a negotiating table to all the states of the zone, the problem of what comes first could at least be discussed among the parties. Israel has so far not shared the same table either at the consultations in 2012 or at the UN conferences since 2018. This situation could potentially change. Firstly, the dividing line between Israel and the Arab states has already been broken by the Abraham Accords19 Even military ties are on the agenda, and Israel has recently participated in naval drills alongside some of the Gulf states. Secondly, in anticipation that the United States will withdraw from the region as a major security guarantor, new communication lines have even been established between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, the signals are contradictory: an emerging strategic alliance between Israel and the Gulf states may potentially lead to further tensions with Iran.

At this time when the relations among the states in the region are being remade, there should be free space for new thinking on the zone, that is, ideas that do not imply immediate action for Israel to abolish its nuclear weapons. A partial model could be found in the treaty of Tlatelolco. Spurred by the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962, the first UN resolution to de-nuclearize Latin America was introduced by Brazil. This resolution was the starting point of a process that eventually led to the Treaty of Tlatelolco in Mexico City in 1967. At that time both Brazil and Argentina had a nuclear program. They were suspected by the international community – as well as by each other – to be pursuing covert nuclear weapon programs. The two countries did not ultimately become nuclear weapon states, but became, in fact, partners in civilian nuclear policy.

When the civilian rule returned in both countries by the late 1980s, one of the priorities for their civilian leaders was to secure only civilian use of nuclear technology. Argentina became a full member of the zone in 1994; Brazil also fully accepted the obligations of the treaty in the same year. Parallel to the dismantling of nuclear and missile programmes, the two former rivals have established not only a free-trade zone but also a common market. At the 25th anniversary of the treaty in 1992, the presidents of the two states issued a declaration on common nuclear policy, and both states signed the NPT confirming their non-nuclear status in 1994.

Israel: A Nuclear State

The idea that Israel should acquire a nuclear-weapon capability is as old as the state itself. After Hiroshima, Ben Gurion believed that Israeli scientists could provide the ultimate answer to Israel’s security problem (Cohen 1998). Lessons of the holocaust and the encirclement by a hostile Arab world provided for the justification of the project. Adding to this was a fascination with and faith in science and technology. Nuclear weapons might persuade the Arabs to accept Israel’s existence, leading to peace in the region. Today, Israel is the only nuclear weapon state in the region. Its nuclear policy is seen as ”opaque”, as the state has never declared itself as a nuclear weapon state.

Although the current moment may be historic in relation to the Middle East, a thought experiment raises a number of questions. Suppose that assurances not to attack a non-nuclear state with nuclear weapons are issued by the P5. These would not cover Israel’s or for that matter Pakistan’s or India’s nuclear weapons. This exposes one of the main problems of the current nuclear order. There are four nuclear weapon states outside the NPT. These states have had no obligation to sign the additional protocols of the regional zone treaties. Since these four states have a regional, rather than global reach for their nuclear weapons, the risk of any of them attacking a member of any of the zones may not be great. Nevertheless, ratification by all nine nuclear states would increase the security of the NWFZ states.

To achieve this, the idea would be to include the four nuclear-possessing NPT outliers in the process of adopting a legally binding instrument for the assurances. If the approval was in a separate treaty, all nine could participate. A more problematic alternative would be to renegotiate the NPT or an annex to it on the assurances. The four states are currently outside all NPT processes and are not, at least now, open to joining the NPT as non-nuclear states. An optimistic view would assert that this would be an ideal process to discuss the issue together. So far, universalization of the NPT has only been a demand from the outside, by the P5 or the EU states, not a negotiation involving the four states directly concerned.

In the case of the Middle East NWFZ, Israel would be directly involved in multiple roles. It would be a zone member, a state issuing the security assurances to the other members, and finally, a state abolishing its nuclear arsenal. Israel would even have to openly declare that it had nuclear weapons. While this would seem impossible decades ago, the situation today is different on at least two accounts. First, the TPNW has established the global prohibition norm. Nuclear weapons are to be prohibited. Secondly, Israel is building new relations with the Arab world.

On the other side, it is not immediately likely that all the other potential state parties in a WMD-Free Middle East would welcome the security assurances as a temporary substitution for Israel abolishing its nuclear weapons at the outset of a zone process. Would Saudi Arabia and Iran be satisfied if they were guaranteed that Israel would not attack them, or even threaten to attack them, by nuclear weapons? Would they believe that Israel would abolish its nuclear weapons in the end? Here, the example of Argentina and Brazil should be seen as a starting point. Relations between hostile nations cannot be improved immediately. In the case of Argentina and Brazil, it took more than a decade after the Latin American zone treaty was approved before both states entered the NPT and formally became non-nuclear states. In this process, the ABACC verification mechanism worked as an important tool.

To establish a regional nuclear weapon-free zone is a trust-building process that should be tested in a situation where relations among potential member states are changing not only as a result of the Abraham Accords but also due to the changing role of the United States in the region. A successful zone would also ease the pressures currently plaguing the NPT and its future. Finally, one of the conditions of the 1995 NPT agreement would be met. Furthermore, the state of Israel has military supremacy in the region in conventional weapons and traditional warfare as well, so the military power balance would not necessarily change with the creation of a nuclear weapon-free zone. But a peace treaty could finally be within reach.

Conclusions

According to the United Nations, NWFZs are a regional approach to strengthen global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms and consolidate international efforts towards peace and security. In spite of these positive prospects, there are hindrances on the way to improve the function of these zones and to increase their numbers. Firstly, the security of states in the existing zones has to be improved. States that made a legally enforced double commitment, both to the NPT and the regional treaty, to a nuclear-free status should not fear a nuclear attack by one of the nine nuclear-armed states. Unconditional and legally binding security assurances have never been accepted by these states. Instead, the existing political statements on such assurances have been watered down by excluding certain attacks (conventional, biological and chemical) from the scope of the assurances.

The article proposes that the states in these zones should use their collective power to achieve the binding negative security assurances. As calculated ambiguity is a built-in property of nuclear threats and a pre-condition for deterrence, the nuclear weapon states are not likely to limit their options voluntarily. Pressure has to be exerted to achieve this goal. In the current situation where the NPT is in a crisis, there is a potential for change. Faced with a new prohibition norm, nuclear weapon states, particularly the P5, fear for the loss of their legal deterrence monopoly. They not only oppose the prohibition norm but also defend the NPT in spite of its discriminate nature.

With strong political pressure or threatening to walk out from the NPT review process, the NWFZ states could force a renegotiation of the NPT to include these guarantees and make them legally binding. Alternatively, a new negotiation process could be initiated to achieve a multilateral and international treaty on these security assurances. The advantage of the former is that the P5 might ratify the content to guard the NPT. The advantage of the latter is that it could potentially include all the nine nuclear states.

Currently, the Middle East is a region where a NWFZ is most acutely sought. The lack of progress to achieve this will haunt the NPT review conferences and deepen the crisis, until some positive steps are takenplace. If unconditional and legally binding security assurances are agreed to, this could provide an interim first phase for a WMD-free zone in the Middle East and expedite discussions to resolve some of the disagreements among potential participants of such a zone. The transformation of the hostile relations between Brazil and Argentina into a friendly one could provide a necessary inspiration for the Middle East case.

Unconditional security assurances to NWFZ states would not only be a symbolic goodwill gesture for states with a double commitment to nuclear-free security. They would also improve the security of these states and provide a just security regime for states that abolish nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the assurances would strike a better balance between the obligations of nuclear weapon states and those of non-nuclear states in the nuclear order.

#### NEG---fails---the US isn’t key.

Tarja Cronberg 22, Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control Cluster, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), “The Security of Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones: The Middle East as a Test Case for Unconditional Security Assurances,” Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, vol. 5, no. 1, 01/02/2022, pp. 45–60

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#### NEG---fails---can’t renegotiate the NPT.

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#### NEG---Threaten CP.

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Three Options

The first option is that nuclear weapon states – especially the P5 in the first phase of this process – should approve unconditional security assurances. By accepting unconditional and legally binding security guarantees, nuclear weapon states could show that they are serious about creating conditions for disarmament12 These would further ensure the nuclear-free security of other states that have agreed to abstain from nuclear weapons. This would also be in line with the early NPT intentions to secure the safety of nonnuclear states against a nuclear attack.

Seen from the P5 perspective, these would, firstly, limit their nuclear options and the geographic space for deterrence (Cronberg 2021b). Secondly, this would imply a departure from the practice of calculated ambiguity. The latter, as indicated, is an organic part of the art of issuing nuclear threats. Furthermore, unambiguous assurances would challenge the logic of deterrence. Consequently, it is highly unlikely that they would voluntarily take action13

A second option is a forceful lobby. As I have indicated before, only NWFZ states have a common regional identity and, most importantly, they represent a majority of states in the world. Furthermore, there is even a historical precedent for how a group of NWFZ states changed a superpower´s nuclear policy within the context of the NPT.

The “Mexican amendments” during the final negotiations of the NPT are an exceptional case where the states of a newly established nuclear weapon-free zone in Latin America14 were able to change a superpower´s nuclear policy. According to Dean Rusk, the United States accepted, for the first (and so far the only) time, unambiguous limitations on its power to use its nuclear weapons. In the spring of 1968, Mexico, leading the Latin American states, proposed a number of changes to the final NPT text. These “Mexican amendments”, as they came to be known, sought several objectives. Among others, the amendments demanded that disarmament not only be mentioned in the preamble but also be rendered an independent article. Furthermore, the nuclear weapon states (P5) were expected to sign an annexed protocol of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, where they would give a negative security assurance not to attack any state in the zone with nuclear weapons.

All the P5 states except the United States have ratified this protocol. Nevertheless, weary of losing the votes of 24 Latin American states in the approval process for the NPT in the UN, the United States ultimately decided to sign and ratify the protocol (Hunt 2017, 186). Potentially, NWFZ states could use this historical model as inspiration in order to achieve unconditional and legally binding security assurances. United by their interest in legally binding and unconditional assurances, NWFZ states could, as a wellorganized lobby, press for the approval of these guarantees. Within the NPT review process or outside it as a separate negotiation.

Finally, there is a third option of more radical action such as a walkout from the NPT review process. This would threaten the survival of the NPT and possibly the deterrence monopoly of the P5 as well. The P5 deems their right to nuclear deterrence as permanent, although initially agreed to as temporary15 In the current situation, both due to the crisis of the NPT and the existence of the prohibition norm introduced by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the P5 fears the future of the NPT. Thus, changes that otherwise might not be feasible might be possible today.

Harries (2015, 5) has rightly pointed out that a walkout from the review process is only a theoretical possibility, as long as “the widespread security benefits of continued nonproliferation” exist. Nevertheless, he asks the question as to “whether dissatisfaction of the slow pace of disarmament will create political momentum that cannot be contained, with detrimental side-effects for the NPT”. The question today is whether the combination of the P5´s aggressive opposition against the TPNW and the current modernization plans of nuclear weapon states have created such a momentum.

A walkout by one or a few states would have very little impact as opposed to that of a majority of the signatories of the NPT. If a state walks out, this would no doubt be criticized in strong words by the international community with the state’s potential interest to access nuclear weapons in sight. This would not be the case for NWFZ states due to their double commitment. They could also argue that negative security assurances were intended to be included in the NPT and would be a compensation for 50 years´ lack of respect for article VI of the NPT.

These assurances would have to be legally stronger than is the case today. In contrast to the statements or protocols quoted above, the assurances would have to be included in an international agreement. The first alternative is to renegotiate the NPT to include these assurances either as a new article or an annex. The second is to separately negotiate a multilateral international agreement assuring, in an unconditional and legal manner, that NWFZ states will not be attacked or threatened by nuclear weapons (see Spector and Ohlde 2005).

#### NEG---Threaten CP.

Tarja Cronberg 22, Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control Cluster, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), “The Security of Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones: The Middle East as a Test Case for Unconditional Security Assurances,” Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, vol. 5, no. 1, 01/02/2022, pp. 45–60

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The article proposes that the states in these zones should use their collective power to achieve the binding negative security assurances. As calculated ambiguity is a built-in property of nuclear threats and a pre-condition for deterrence, the nuclear weapon states are not likely to limit their options voluntarily. Pressure has to be exerted to achieve this goal. In the current situation where the NPT is in a crisis, there is a potential for change. Faced with a new prohibition norm, nuclear weapon states, particularly the P5, fear for the loss of their legal deterrence monopoly. They not only oppose the prohibition norm but also defend the NPT in spite of its discriminate nature.

With strong political pressure or threatening to walk out from the NPT review process, the NWFZ states could force a renegotiation of the NPT to include these guarantees and make them legally binding. Alternatively, a new negotiation process could be initiated to achieve a multilateral and international treaty on these security assurances. The advantage of the former is that the P5 might ratify the content to guard the NPT. The advantage of the latter is that it could potentially include all the nine nuclear states.

## Sole Purpose Aff

#### Current threat to use nuclear weapons in response to non-nuclear threats is non-credible – undermines credibility of U.S. nuclear threats broadly, which kills deterrence and assurance

Pifer 20 – William Perry Research Fellow at Stanford’s Center for International Security and Cooperation and a retired U.S. Foreign Service officer.

Steven Pifer, “Nuclear Weapons: It’s Time for Sole Purpose,” *Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies*, 15 September 2020, https://fsi.stanford.edu/news/nuclear-weapons-it%E2%80%99s-time-sole-purpose.

A Declaratory Policy That Lacks Credibility

Those opposed to the sole purpose argue that the current ambiguity about U.S. readiness to use nuclear weapons first contributes to the deterrence of adversaries and the assurance of allies. That is a serious argument, but it made far more sense during the Cold War when the choice that might confront U.S. and NATO leaders was to use nuclear weapons or lose the war. Maintaining that ambiguity carries risks. Given the prospect of nuclear escalation once any nuclear weapons are used, and the changes in conventional force balances over the past thirty years, the chance that an American president would choose to use nuclear weapons first is vanishingly small. In virtually every conceivable scenario, he or she would look for other options, since the likely nuclear retaliation for a first-use effort by the United States would inevitably turn a bad situation into something much worse.

Does it make sense to continue a declaratory policy aimed at deterring adversaries and assuring allies and partners that, on serious examination, neither foes nor friends would find credible? As America’s allies and partners see the U.S. threat to use nuclear weapons first lacking credibility, that could undermine their confidence in the U.S. threat to use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack on them.

Eliminating the ambiguity by adopting the sole purpose might not provide a huge security bonus, but it would have a positive security impact. Russia likely would not follow, at least not in the near term. However, the change could help defuse the current situation, in which both Washington and Moscow believe that the other seeks to lower the nuclear threshold and thus is adjusting its own nuclear policy accordingly. It is not in the U.S. interest that the Russians believe America might go nuclear first and develop (or further develop) a posture to beat Washington to the nuclear punch. That fosters conditions that could be very dangerous in a conventional crisis or conflict and make nuclear use more likely.

Adopting the sole purpose would send an interesting signal to China. Some analysts question whether Beijing will continue to adhere to a no first use policy, but the Pentagon reports that “China almost certainly keeps the majority of its nuclear force on a peacetime status—with separated launchers, missiles, and warheads,” a posture consistent with that policy. Adoption of the sole purpose could open the path to a strategic security dialogue with Beijing that has eluded Washington for years. It would raise the political costs to China of abandoning its no first use posture. A change in American policy might even help avoid the development of a U.S.-China nuclear standoff somewhat similar to that between Washington and Moscow during the Cold War.

The adoption of a sole-purpose policy would reduce the ability of a U.S. president to use nuclear weapons for saber-rattling. But giving up the option to rattle a saber that the adversary believes Washington would never draw seems to give up little.

#### Aggressive deterrence posture makes arms racing and instability structurally inevitable – only a limited role for nuclear weapons solves

Blair 19 – Research Scholar, Program on Science and Global Security, Princeton University.

Bruce Blair, “Outside Perspectives on Nuclear Deterrence Policy and Posture Update,” *Testimony for the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives*, One Hundred Sixteenth Congress, First Session, 6 March 2019, pp. 7-8, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-116hhrg36235/pdf/CHRG-116hhrg36235.pdf.

Now I first learned that simply being able to destroy Russia as a viable country was not, in fact, the reality of our nuclear weapons policy when I became a nuclear missile launch officer and a support officer for the Strategic Air Command’s Looking Glass airborne command post. Our planners saw nuclear weapons quite differently. They saw them as tools for the actual or coercive use during a nuclear conflict, primarily to destroy the deterrent capabilities of the Soviet Union and China/North Korea.

This warfighting strategy thus ran contrary to and contradicted the idea of stability based on mutual deterrence, which is the very foundation of our nuclear security. And as we tried to neutralize each other’s second-strike forces, we managed only to fuel an arms race and increase the chances of nuclear war by design or by accident.

Thousands of U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear weapons aimed largely at each other stood—and still stand today—ready for immediate first use or launch on warning. Back then, as now, the President would have just a few minutes to authorize launch on warning, on the basis of enemy attack indications that could be false or misleading, and today possibly caused by cyber interference.

We heard during the opening remarks about false alarms during the Cold War. None of them rose to the level of a President of the United States. Over the last 10 years we have had, on multiple occasions, ambiguous ballistic missile threats that have risen to the level of Presidents. So this is not a historical concern.

Our and Russia’s hair-trigger launch postures, driven by vulnerabilities of our own making, continue to run the risk that fear, miscalculation, misperception, accident, or false warning could trigger a nuclear exchange. As you have heard—and I agree—the risk of blundering into nuclear war presents what is, by far, the greatest immediate threat to the United States today.

So what do we do? I agree with all the suggestions that I have heard from Joan. But I would also propose that we return to first principles, and design for ourselves a posture for assured retaliation that is smaller, but is more survivable and more stable than the one we presently have and the one that we currently plan to have.

This posture would hold at risk Russia’s, China’s, and North Korea’s key elements of state power, economy, and leadership. It would require, by my estimation—and I think the Pentagon planning is in—aligned with this—it would require covering about 450 aim points in those 3 countries, coverage that, in my view, would easily meet any reasonable judgement of actual deterrent requirements.

But pivoting away from targeting opposing forces and from the fantasy of controlling and dominating nuclear escalation would allow us to eliminate most of the 4,000 weapons in the current active stockpile. Only five or six of the planned Columbia-class submarines would be needed to be built. That is it.

All other existing and planned U.S. nuclear weapons could be scrapped. This would mean eliminating the land-based missile force, the ICBMs. But it is a vulnerable force that weakens, not strengthens the triad. We are better off without it.

If you want a stable triad that includes land-based missiles, then a mobile basing mode is required. Are you prepared to go that way?

The most important project in this modernization program should be fixing our vulnerable command, control, communications, and intelligence systems, C3I. It has always been the Achilles heel of our posture. It would likely collapse within hours into a nuclear conflict. So fixing this is essential for any strategy, including assured retaliation, and for enabling the President to intelligently choose a response if deterrence should fail.

So instead of modernizing the—all three of these legs, I think it is most important that we—as Joan indicated—increase Presidential decision time. That should be our top priority.

And last but not least, pivoting away from warfighting means recognizing that the sole purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter their use by others. It is not to deter conventional aggression. We have ample capabilities with our allies to deter, defeat, and punish conventional aggression.

#### Sole purpose avoids the DAs to NFU while capturing its upsides

Panda and Narang 21 – Ankit Panda is the Stanton Senior Fellow in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Vipin Narang is associate professor of political science and member of the Security Studies Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Ankit Panda and Vipin Narang, “Sole Purpose is Not No First Use: Nuclear Weapons and Declaratory Policy,” *War on the Rocks*, 22 February 2021, https://warontherocks.com/2021/02/sole-purpose-is-not-no-first-use-nuclear-weapons-and-declaratory-policy/.

In short, U.S. adoption of a no-first-use pledge in the near term would likely be highly controversial.

Sole Purpose Is Not No First Use

The constituencies in allied states that have vociferously objected to a no-first-use U.S. policy view a sole purpose declaration as effectively tantamount to one. It was these precise concerns that kept the Obama administration from ultimately adopting a sole purpose declaration. The administration, at the eleventh hour, deemed that the “conditions” for a sole purpose declaration were not present in 2016. Furthermore, in the present environment in East Asia, the challenge of sustaining extended deterrence is more — not less — difficult than it was then, largely because of the Trump administration’s behavior toward allies. The allies may profess an even stronger allergy to sole purpose today than they did in 2016.

But is sole purpose equivalent to a no-first-use declaration, as so many have argued? Not quite. Even in its most stringent formulation, a sole purpose declaration is not equivalent to a no-first-use pledge — it comes close, but is not the same thing. No first use is a statement about when the United States would (and would not) use nuclear weapons. It is an explicit employment constraint: It commits a state to not use nuclear weapons except in retaliation for nuclear attacks. Sole purpose, in contrast, is as its name implies a statement about why the United States possesses the nuclear arsenal that it does, not how it will use it. It does not, in extremis, impose employment constraints as a no-first-use policy might. Rather, it explicitly de-emphasizes the role of nuclear weapons in overall U.S. national security strategy.

A person can possess a car for what she declares to be the sole purpose of driving to work, but if one day she has to drive to the emergency room, nothing will stop her from using the car for that purpose. A no-first-use pledge, by contrast, explicitly declares ex ante that the car will never be used to drive to the emergency room. Sole purpose stops well short of that.

As such, a meaningful sole purpose declaration can be constructed that is not, in fact, tantamount to a no-first-use declaration — one that simultaneously de-emphasizes the role of nuclear weapons in American security strategy without eroding the robustness of extended deterrence. The search for an alternative formulation to a no-first-use declaration is itself informative — if the administration wanted to declare a no-first-use policy it could simply attempt to do so. We argue that, instead, an appropriately crafted sole purpose declaration could help to realize the president’s stated vision on nuclear weapons without unduly jeopardizing U.S. alliances. Allies, too, once fully consulted, should be ready to avoid a knee-jerk response to policy shifts — especially if U.S. declaratory policy continues to account for their interests.

Whereas a no-first-use declaration is relatively straightforward, sole purpose maintains some of the traditional ambiguity in U.S. nuclear declaratory policy. How it does so depends on the precise formulation. The amount of daylight between these various formulations and “we will not use nuclear weapons first” varies from a sliver to a bay window. Despite this, some formulations do come very close to a no-first-use pledge and might understandably cause concern in allied capitals.

## TNW Affs

#### Non-strategic nukes pose a current and relevant issue—offers multiple advantages/internal-links with advocates either way.

CRS 22 - (Congressional Research Service; Updated March 7, 2022, "Nonstrategic Nuclear Weapons," doa: 4-26-2023) url: https://sgp.fas.org/crs/nuke/RL32572.pdf

Recent debates about U.S. nuclear weapons have questioned what role weapons with shorter ranges and lower yields can play in addressing emerging threats in Europe and Asia. These weapons, often referred to as nonstrategic nuclear weapons, have not been limited by past U.S.- Russian arms control agreements. Some analysts argue such limits would be of value, particularly in addressing Russia’s greater numbers of these types of weapons. Others have argued that the United States should expand its deployments of these weapons, in both Europe and Asia, to address new risks of war conducted under a nuclear shadow. The Trump Administration addressed these questions in the Nuclear Posture Review released in February 2018, and determined that the United States should acquire two new types of nuclear weapons: a new lowyield warhead for submarine-launched ballistic missiles and a new sea-launched cruise missile. The Biden Administration may reconsider these weapons when it conducts its Nuclear Posture Review, which may be released in early 2022.

During the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union both deployed nonstrategic nuclear weapons for use in the field during a conflict. While there are several ways to distinguish between strategic and nonstrategic nuclear weapons, most analysts consider nonstrategic weapons to be shorter-range delivery systems with lower-yield warheads that might attack troops or facilities on the battlefield. They have included nuclear mines; artillery; short-, medium-, and long-range ballistic missiles; cruise missiles; and gravity bombs. In contrast with the longer-range “strategic” nuclear weapons, these weapons had a lower profile in policy debates and arms control negotiations, possibly because they did not pose a direct threat to the continental United States. At the end of the 1980s, each nation still had thousands of these weapons deployed with their troops in the field, aboard naval vessels, and on aircraft.

In 1991, the United States and Soviet Union both withdrew from deployment most and eliminated from their arsenals many of their nonstrategic nuclear weapons. The United States now has, according to unclassified estimates, approximately 230 nonstrategic nuclear weapons, with around 100 deployed with aircraft in Europe and the remaining stored in the United States. Estimates vary, but experts believe Russia still has between 1,000 and 2,000 warheads for nonstrategic nuclear weapons in its arsenal. Some experts argue, however that Russia seems to have increased its reliance on nuclear weapons in its national security concept.

Analysts have identified a number of issues with the continued deployment of U.S. and Russian nonstrategic nuclear weapons. In the past, these have included questions about the safety, security, and location of Russia’s weapons. Analysts have also questioned the role of these weapons in U.S. and Russian security policy; the role they play in NATO policy and whether there is a continuing need for the United States to deploy them at bases overseas; possible implications of the disparity in numbers between U.S. and Russian nonstrategic nuclear weapons; and the relationship between nonstrategic nuclear weapons and U.S. nonproliferation policy.

Some argue that these weapons do not create any problems and the United States should not alter its policy. Others argue that the United States should expand its deployments in response to challenges from Russia, China, and North Korea. Some believe the United States should reduce its reliance on these weapons and encourage Russia to do the same. Many have suggested that the United States and Russia expand efforts to cooperate on ensuring the safe and secure storage and elimination of these weapons; others have suggested that they negotiate an arms control treaty that would limit these weapons and allow for increased transparency in monitoring their deployment and elimination. Congress may review some of these proposals.

#### Russia will say yes but it requires cuts.

Gottemoeller 22 - (Rose Gottemoeller is the Steven C. Házy Lecturer at Stanford University’s Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and its Center for International Security and Cooperation, former deputy secretary general of NATO from 2016 to 2019; CNS OCCASIONAL PAPER #55 · MAY 2022, "Building a Control Regime for Nonstrategic Nuclear Warheads in Europe," doa: 4-26-2023) url: https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/op55-everything-counts.pdf

The scene appeared set for further progress on nuclear arms control when President Joe Biden entered office in January 2021. As one of his first foreign-policy acts, he agreed with Russian President Vladimir Putin to extend the 2011 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) by five years, until February 2026. Biden and Putin subsequently spoke on the phone in April and met in Geneva in June 2021 to launch a strategic stability dialogue (SSD). The goal of the dialogue begun before the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine was twofold: first, to begin the process of replacing New START, and second, to conduct a wide-ranging discussion of issues affecting strategic stability. These issues include traditional topics on the US-Russian agenda such as missile defense and conventional long-range weapon systems—the latter in the context of what the Russians call “conventional weapons having strategic effect.” The talks were also to cover the emergence of new and disruptive technologies in the cyber arena and in artificial intelligence and quantum computing, synthetic biology, and other realms.

Even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, all of this would have taken much time and focused effort. The United States and Russia would have had to consider how to include China in the discussion—ideally, directly at the table, either in a parallel bilateral setting or in a trilateral or P5 setting.1 Early on, however, the most important step seemed to be for Washington and Moscow to consider the implications of China’s evident nuclear buildup.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine upended the European security order and US arms control priorities and led the United States to suspend the SSD. In the short term, the US-Russian bilateral agenda is in a very negative place and arms control is taking a back seat to addressing the Ukraine crisis.

Nonetheless, the 2026 expiration of New START looms. At some point, both sides are likely to see the benefit of returning to the negotiating table to develop a follow-on to New START, no matter how the Ukraine conflict turns out. Somewhat heartening in this dreadful period is the fact that as of this writing, both sides continue to implement New START without interruption. Nuclear arms control, therefore, might become an early priority for resuming interaction.

As is frequently the case with new negotiations, the two sides have quite different starting positions and priorities. The Russians have already been clear that they continue to be concerned about US missile defenses, and they have said clearly that they want to see limits on the US conventionally armed missiles that have strategic effect. These limits will no doubt include US conventional hypersonic glide vehicles (HGVs). Russia also continues to seek the removal of US nuclear weapons from Europe and the elimination of NATO’s nuclear-sharing arrangements and related infrastructure as a condition for any talks on nonstrategic nuclear weapons.

The United States, for its part, is focused on constraining the new “exotic” Russian systems (the six systems Putin announced in his March 2018 speech)—in particular, the air-launched ballistic missile (the Kinzhal or Killjoy),2 the nuclear-powered cruise missile (Burevestnik or Skyfall), and the nuclear-propelled, nuclear-armed unmanned undersea vehicle (Kanyon or Poseidon). The new multiwarhead, heavy, liquid-fueled ICBM (the Sarmat or Satan 2), and the new nuclear HGV (the Avangard warhead to be launched from existing ICBMs) already fall under the limits of New START. The sixth system is not a missile system but a ground-based mobile dazzling laser (Peresevet).

The United States for many years has also been clear that it places a priority on limiting Russian warheads designated for nonstrategic delivery systems (gravity bombs and air-, sea-, and land-launched theater and shorter-range missiles). These warheads are deployed on aircraft, ships, and missiles—many of them within range of US allies in NATO Europe and Asia—or are held in reserve in central storage facilities. This will be the second major objective of the United States in the negotiations, and it is important to both Republican and Democratic political players. It is enshrined in US law as part of the Resolution of Ratification of the New START Treaty. A treaty limiting nonstrategic nuclear warheads on the Russian side could thus gain bipartisan support in the executive branch of the government and in the Senate.

Bringing these different Russian and US objectives together will be tough work for negotiators, but it is doable. The United States has already made it clear, for example, that it will not accept demands to limit its missiledefense systems without consideration of the new Russian missile-defense systems that are being built and deployed, especially the S-500. Therefore, the discussion will not be all about limiting US systems, but about what the two sides are willing to do to build confidence that they will not seek to subvert each other’s missile-defense capabilities in the future. As one Russian expert has put it, we each should be willing to allow the other to build and maintain a limited defense of its homeland.

Russia has also made it clear that it is not willing to consider limits on its nonstrategic nuclear warheads if the United States will not constrain its warheads available for upload onto strategic delivery systems—ICBMs and submarine-launched ballistic missiles. Thus, the stage is set for direct limits on all warheads—strategic and nonstrategic, deployed and non-deployed. Before the Ukraine invasion, some Russian experts had again been saying that the Russian position is to support the freeze on all warheads first proposed by President Donald Trump in 2020. They saw such a freeze as a first step toward verifiable limits on warheads, which can be considered only once a monitoring regime is developed and agreed between the two sides.

It is this monitoring regime for verification of warhead limits that is at the heart of the CNS project. The United States and Russia have never before tried to limit warheads directly because of the great sensitivity of warhead storage, handling, and maintenance facilities, as well as deployment sites. Past agreements have focused on missiles and their launchers because they are large pieces of hardware that can be easily seen and accounted for, even from outer space. Once missiles and launchers are eliminated under a treaty, their warheads are returned to storage and are considered “eliminated” for purposes of the treaty but can be repurposed unless eliminated in a verifiable manner—a goal for the START III framework agreed in 1997, but never implemented. Miles A. Pomper and Nikolai Sokov provide information on US and Russian nonstrategic-nuclear-warhead history, posture, and policy in their respective chapters of this volume.

In the future, however, the United States will seek direct limits on warheads, which means they must be accounted for and tracked in different portions of their life cycle. This will be a difficult undertaking— again, because of the sensitivity of the warheads themselves (especially their design) and all of their related facilities and dedicated storage, moving, maintenance, and training equipment. Both the United States and Russia will want to ensure that the other party receives only the information necessary to verify that the limits of the treaty are being respected and that no sensitive information that could advantage the other side is revealed. An innovative approach to achieving these objectives is outlined by William Moon and colleagues in our technical chapter and related appendices.

#### TNWs are destabilizing – they lower the threshold for nuclear use, which raises the risk of escalation

UCS 22 – Union of Concerned Scientists.

Union of Concerned Scientists, “What are Tactical Nuclear Weapons?” 1 June 2022, https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/tactical-nuclear-weapons.

The United States and Russia hold 90% of the world’s stockpile of almost 13,000 nuclear weapons. Neither has the capability to wipe out the other’s nuclear arsenal in an initial attack. Both countries understand that any use of strategic nuclear weapons would invite a nuclear counterattack, and the potential of a civilization-ending nuclear exchange.

Tactical nuclear weapons, however, introduce greater ambiguity, raising the possibility that a country might think it could get away with a limited attack, such as using a low-yield tactical nuclear weapon to strike an isolated military target where few civilians would be harmed. Another possibility is a demonstration strike, without any military utility. For example, Russia could explode a nuclear weapon over the Black Sea to warn NATO countries against aiding its adversaries, such as Ukraine.

Because tactical nuclear weapons are considered more “useable,” they increase the risk of nuclear war. US wargames predict that a conflict involving use of tactical nuclear weapons will quickly spiral out of control. A Princeton University simulation of a US-Russian conflict that begins with the use of a tactical nuclear weapon predicts rapid escalation that would leave more than 90 million people dead and injured.

#### Deterrence failure is inevitable – TNWs will prompt retaliation that escalates

Tannenwald 22 – Professor of International Relations in the Political Science Department at Brown University.

Nina Tannenwald, “‘Limited’ Tactical Nuclear Weapons Would Be Catastrophic,” *Scientific American*, 10 March 2022, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/limited-tactical-nuclear-weapons-would-be-catastrophic/.

Tactical nuclear weapons exist because each side fears it would be deterred from using its big city-razing weapons by their very destructiveness. By making nuclear weapons smaller and the targeting more precise, their use becomes more thinkable. Paradoxically, while this makes deterrence threats more credible, it also makes the arms more tempting to use first, rather than simply in retaliation.

No one should imagine, however, that it makes sense to use a tactical nuclear weapon. A thermonuclear explosion of any size possesses overwhelming destructive power. Even a “small-yield” nuclear weapon (0.3 kilotons) would produce damage far beyond that of a conventional explosive. (For a graphic depiction, the interactive site NUKEMAP, created by nuclear historian Alexander Wellerstein, allows you to simulate the effects of a nuclear explosion of any size anywhere on the planet.) It would also cause all the horrors of Hiroshima, albeit on a smaller scale. A tactical nuclear weapon would produce a fireball, shock waves, and deadly radiation that would cause long-term health damage in survivors. Radioactive fallout would contaminate air, soil, water and the food supply (Ukrainians are already familiar with this kind of outcome because of the disastrous meltdown of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in 1986).

No one knows if using a tactical nuclear weapon would trigger full-scale nuclear war. Nevertheless, the risk of escalation is very real. Those on the receiving end of a nuclear strike are not likely to ask whether it was tactical or strategic. In testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on February 6, 2018, then–Secretary of Defense James Mattis stated “I do not think there is any such thing as a tactical nuclear weapon. Any nuclear weapon used any time is a strategic game changer.” Russian leaders have made clear that they would view any nuclear attack as the start of an all-out nuclear war.

Especially worrisome is the possibility that the war could escalate to the use of nuclear weapons. By increasing the alert level of Russian nuclear forces, Putin increases the risk of nuclear use through miscalculation or accident in the fog of war. In the worst scenario, if the war is going badly, Putin could reach for a tactical nuclear weapon out of desperation. While this is still unlikely, the risk is not zero. And increasing that risk is unacceptable. Although innumerable nuclear weapons have been tested over the years, not one has been used in warfare (or terrorism) since 1945. The 77-year-old tradition of nuclear nonuse—the nuclear taboo—is the single most important accomplishment of the nuclear age. It is a primary obligation of leaders today to make sure nuclear weapons are never used again. Putin and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov should stop threatening nuclear weapons. Other leaders should express shock and outrage, and make it clear that nuclear threats are irresponsible and unacceptable.

Nuclear deterrence comes with tremendous risks and enormous costs. The arguments in favor of deterrence, although sometimes convincing, are not always true. We must acknowledge that nuclear deterrence could fail. That’s why, despite the trillions of dollars spent on nuclear arsenals, no one sleeps soundly under a nuclear umbrella—especially during a crisis such as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

This war will likely upend the European security order. It also demonstrates how little real protection nuclear weapons provide. The world would be better off without these weapons.

#### Limited nuclear war is a myth – nuclear use at any level of escalation becomes uncontrollable

Perry and Collina 20 – William J. Perry served as the Secretary of Defense in the Clinton Administration. Tom z. Collina is director of policy at Ploughshares Fund.

William J. Perry and Tom Z. Collina, “5: No First Use,” *The Button: The New Nuclear Arms Race and Presidential Power from Truman to Trump*, BenBella Books 2020, non-paginated epub.

Advocates of limited nuclear war take advantage of the happy fact that there has never been a nuclear exchange between two atomic states, and thus we do not really know how it would go. They suggest that if one side used a “low-yield” nuclear weapon, the other side would stay at that level because they would not want to escalate to full-scale war for the obvious reason that it would mean utter destruction for both sides.

But to us, this is exactly why no one should ever use a nuclear weapon —of any yield—in the first place. There is every reason to believe that, once attacked with atomic weapons, a nation would be so outraged and/or would assume a full attack was on the way that it would respond with everything they’ve got. Expecting a limited response is wishful thinking and dangerous in the extreme.

Some policy analysts, sitting at their desks, write about “escalation control,” but the reality is that, in a real war, these analysts would not be making the decisions. Indeed, it is unlikely that the president would have full control over all decisions on weapons use. In the heat and fog of war, decisions could be made by the commanders doing the fighting, dealing with the tactical situation as it evolves and using the weapons they have to their best advantage.

Fundamentally, it is unlikely that there is such a thing as a limited nuclear war, and preparing for one is folly. “A nuclear weapon is a nuclear weapon,” said George Shultz, who served as President Ronald Reagan’s top diplomat. “You use a small one, then you go to a bigger one. I think nuclear weapons are nuclear weapons and we need to draw the line there.”47 Former defense secretary Jim Mattis said, “I don’t think there’s any such thing as a tactical nuclear weapon. Any nuclear weapon used at any time is a strategic game changer.”48

As Congressman Adam Smith said in a nuclear policy conference keynote in 2019, “One of the things that I would like to communicate to the Russians is, yeah, it doesn’t work that way. Use a nuclear weapon, we are going to respond and we are not going to be overly concerned about being ‘proportional.’ A nuclear weapon is a nuclear weapon, and if you use it, we will nuke you. So don’t.”49

# Aff—Kritikal Cases

### Aff---General

#### Nuclear weapons are relevant to a wide range of international and domestic impacts – the frame of “nuclear injustice” allows affs to examine the multifaceted role that nuclear weapons have played in systems of oppression from global white supremacy, climate change, and militarism

Faines 23 – Mari Faines is the partner for mobilization at Global Zero, a social justice, diversity and equity activist, and a former podcast host. ("No justice is possible without studying the injustices of nuclear weapons," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 2-2-2023, <https://thebulletin.org/2023/02/no-justice-is-possible-without-studying-the-injustices-of-nuclear-weapons/>)

It is long past time that nuclear security scholars engage an injustice framework to better understand the full extent of the impacts of the global nuclear complex.

There is no question the nuclear status quo upheld [since 1945](https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Nuclearweaponswhohaswhat) is rooted in [colonial systems of power](https://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=23490) and White supremacy that started centuries ago. But nuclear security scholarship that explicitly makes this connection and examines the harm resulting from this socio-political, cultural, economic, and ecological history is still incredibly limited.

This is exactly where Frankiska Stärk and Ulrich Kühn’s [proposed outline](https://thebulletin.org/2022/10/nuclear-injustice-how-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-shows-the-staggering-human-cost-of-deterrence/) of a “nuclear injustice” research framework can propel the security community into a multitude of new methods of understanding. Such a framework is important because of its potential to create connections with other scholarly fields and social movements.

For example, in [transitional justice](https://www.ictj.org/what-transitional-justice)—a subfield of a multitude of disciplines that examines how societies respond to the legacies of massive and serious human rights abuses—there are ongoing conversations about the importance of utilizing [intersectional frameworks](https://www.elgaronline.com/view/book/9781839108273/book-part-9781839108273-15.xml) to incorporate the histories of victims and perpetrators as it pertains to their role in a conflict. (In sociology, intersectionality refers to the interconnectedness of social categories including but not limited to race, gender, and socio-economic class. These simultaneous and intertwined social identities can create inequities for an individual or group of individuals, not faced by other majority groups. For example, a working-class woman of color can simultaneously face economic, gender, and racial discrimination.) In turn, this helps build a more holistic definition of “justice” from both a legal and socio-cultural perspective, which can lead to a fuller understanding of what remediation could look like.

If such a framework were to be applied in a nuclear policy context, one would not solely study the immediate effects of nuclear weapons. For example, when studying the legacy of [nuclear testing on the Marshall islands](https://www.mei.ngo/_files/ugd/503583_f68ab8c447a740e48c59cfa3f5eb8e12.pdf), one would not limit their study to those still living on the islands. Rather, an intersectional and intergenerational approach to this issue would mean working with individuals across the diaspora and incorporating their perspectives on the challenges posed by their new socio-cultural environments.

In the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, there are instances where more equitable policies were enacted based on justice frameworks. For example, increased research on the intersections between [policing and militarism](https://issuu.com/wcapsnet/docs/yap_publication_2_) led to policies across the country that [divested](https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/state-policing-reforms-george-floyds-murder) from traditional forms of militarized police and reinvested instead in community care. These policies were executed in part thanks to the synergies created by these research approaches and social movements. Nuclear injustice could have similar positive impacts on communities globally, creating greater safety and security—but only if nuclear policy scholars make a greater commitment to advance this framework.

A serious scholarly examination of nuclear weapons policy should also specifically address the effects of colonialism, White supremacy, and racial justice.

Many Black, indigenous, and communities of color have been unfairly and disproportionately impacted by the global nuclear order. This includes—but is not limited to—[uranium mining](https://mitpress.mit.edu/9780262526869/being-nuclear/), the impacts of [proxy wars](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2022/05/19/africa-and-the-new-cold-war-africas-development-depends-on-regional-ownership-of-its-security/), and the impact of policies and [racialized language](https://inkstickmedia.com/ukraine-and-the-global-color-line/) that uphold the global nuclear order.

Research on these topics and incorporating these viewpoints can provide a direct and credible counterargument to the nuclear status quo. Moreover, by reframing nuclear history in a way that is more inclusive, young people who are determined to tackle existential threats will better understand how they bear the brunt of this uncertain future. They have already made it clear that they see the interconnectedness of systems of injustice and inequality in issues such as [climate change](https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2021/05/26/gen-z-millennials-stand-out-for-climate-change-activism-social-media-engagement-with-issue/), [racism](https://www.ohchr.org/en/get-involved/stories/youth-are-standing-against-racism), and [militarism](https://truthout.org/articles/students-are-pushing-us-colleges-to-sever-ties-with-military-industrial-complex/). Nuclear security scholars have a responsibility to build on this foundation.

If a research framework on nuclear injustice is to be effective, however, it will need to pay attention to who is included in such studies. Marginalized voices must be included if a framing is to be just and equitable.

The global nuclear order is based on an inherently unjust and inequitable system. But this does not mean that it must continue this way forever. Virtually everyone on Earth could be potentially impacted by the use of nuclear weapons, so everyone should be concerned about the nuclear threat. Scholars must therefore enact forward-thinking policies that address current injustices, and they must continue to work toward the abolition of these weapons and a more equitable world beyond the bomb.

#### Historical antinuclear activism has connected to a number of political and social causes – these examples are central to the topic’s history and allow teams to connect nuclear proposals to a multitude of literature bases

Intondi 20 – Vincent J. Intondi is a professor of history and director of the Institute for Race, Justice, and Civic Engagement at Montgomery College in Takoma Park, Maryland. (“Reflections on Injustice, Racism, and the Bomb,” 2020, pg. 13-14) julian

To me, it was simple. These were not separate issues. Jobs, racial equality, climate change, war, class, gender, and nuclear weapons were all connected and part of the same fight: universal human rights, with the most important human right being the freedom to live…live free from the fear of nuclear war.

Of course, this thinking is not new. Contrary to the narrative that nuclear disarmament has been and remains a “white” issue, since 1945, the anti-nuclear movement has included diverse voices who saw the value in connecting all of these issues. Moreover, the nuclear disarmament movement has been most successful when it left room for diverse voices and combined the nuclear issue with social justice.

The movement to abolish nuclear weapons began even before the first bomb was dropped. Among the earliest critics of nuclear weapons were the atomic scientists, members of the Roman Catholic Church, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and many in the Black community. Specifically, regarding African Americans, for some, nuclear weapons were directly linked to racism.

Many African Americans agreed with Langston Hughes’ assertion that racism was at the heart of President Harry Truman’s decision to use nuclear weapons in Japan. Why did the United States not drop atomic bombs on Italy or Germany, Hughes asked. The Black community’s fear that race played a role in the decision to use nuclear weapons only increased when the U.S. leaders threatened to use nuclear weapons in Korea in the 1950s and Vietnam a decade later. For others, the nuclear issue was connected to colonialism. From the United States obtaining uranium from Belgian-controlled Congo to the French testing a nuclear weapon in the Sahara, activists saw a direct link between those who possessed nuclear weapons and those who colonized the nonwhite world. For many ordinary citizens, Black and white, however, fighting for nuclear disarmament simply meant escaping the fear of mutually assured nuclear destruction and moving toward a more peaceful world.

Today, many people love to quote Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., especially his “I Have a Dream” speech, while also ignoring the full title and focus of the march: “Jobs and Freedom.” Throughout his life, King made the connections of what he called the “triple evils” of capitalism, racism, and militarism.

King was not alone among civil rights activists in making these connections. To put it in today’s context, to singer, actor, and activist Paul Robeson, “Black Lives Matter” meant not only speaking out about racism in the United States but also highlighting where the United States obtained its material to build nuclear weapons. To W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Lives Matter meant not only forming the NAACP or writing Souls of Black Folk, but also getting millions to sign the “Ban the Bomb” pledge to stop another Hiroshima in Korea. To civil rights leader Bayard Rustin, Black Lives Matter meant not only organizing the March on Washington but also traveling to Ghana to stop France from testing its first nuclear weapon in Africa. To Lorraine Hansberry, Black Lives Matter meant not only A Raisin in the Sun, but Les Blancs, her last play, about nuclear abolition. To Representative Ronald Dellums (D-Calif.), Black Lives Matter meant not only bringing jobs and education to Oakland, California, but also making sure President Ronald Reagan did not build the MX missile.

The prominent Black writer James Baldwin put it best on April 1, 1961, when he addressed a large group of peace activists at Judiciary Square in Washington. Baldwin was one of the headlining speakers for the rally, titled “Security Through World Disarmament.”

When asked why he chose to speak at such an event, Baldwin responded, “What am I doing here? Only those who would fail to see the relationship between the fight for civil rights and the struggle for world peace would be surprised to see me. Both fights are the same. It is just as difficult for the white American to think of peace as it is of no color.… Confrontation of both dilemmas demands inner courage.” Baldwin considered both problems in the same breath because “racial hatred and the atom bomb both threaten the destruction of man as created free by God.”

The power of diversity in the nuclear disarmament movement was perhaps most evident in the 1980s. With Reagan’s rhetoric of a “winnable nuclear war” and massive budget increases for nuclear weapons while cutting social programs that hurt the most vulnerable, the antinuclear movement grew exponentially. The nuclear freeze movement emerged.

New groups such as the Women’s Actions for Nuclear Disarmament, Feminists Insist on a Safe Tomorrow, Performers and Artists for Nuclear Disarmament, Dancers for Disarmament, and Athletes United for Peace formed. Established organizations such as Committee for a ~~Sane~~ Nuclear Policy, the Union for Concerned Scientists, and Physicians for Social Responsibility all saw their membership skyrocket.2

For some, ending the nuclear arms race was and still is linked to their religious faith. Others saw a direct link between the amount of money being spent on nuclear weapons and eliminating badly needed social programs that benefited the poor. Many viewed and still view nuclear weapons as part of the overall military industrial complex, which included U.S. intervention in Central America and the Middle East, while for others, there was a genuine fear that the United States and Soviet Union would start a nuclear war.

This new sense of awareness, fear, and action culminated in the June 12, 1982, demonstration in New York’s Central Park, in which 1 million people of different races, genders, class, and religions marched and rallied for nuclear disarmament. As Randall Forsberg, one of the principal authors of the proposal for a nuclear weapons freeze, said in her speech to the throngs that day, “Until the arms race stops, until we have a world with peace and justice, we will not go home and be quiet. We will go home and organize.”

The rally, combined with other actions of the 1980s, contributed to the Reagan administration changing course on nuclear weapons, effectively showed the power of grassroots organizing, challenged the idea that the movement was not diverse, and paved the way for a new generation of activists committed to saving the world from nuclear annihilation.

The questions that we must ask ourselves today are how have we avoided nuclear war for the last 75 years and how can we sustain the popular support and awareness that is necessary to move policymakers to take the steps necessary to reduce and eliminate nuclear dangers. The answers: good luck and good organizing. There is nothing we can do about luck, except hope it is on our side. But by learning from the past, it is clear that there is much we can do as organizers, advocates, lobbyists, artists, writers, teachers, and just concerned citizens.

#### And the literature is excellent at establishing itself domestically.

Rubinson 20 – Paul Rubinson is Associate Professor of History at Bridgewater State University. (“Against the Bomb: Nuclear Disarmament And Domestic Politics,” 2020, pg. 841-843) julian

But while grassroots antinuclear protest may have declined well into the 1970s, a look at the movement’s influence and resonance shows an enduring legacy. The social movements reshaping U.S. society at the time all incorporated critiques of nuclear weapons into their ideology and saw the nuclear issue as part and parcel of the imperialist tendencies, squandering of resources, and endemic violence dragging down America. To some extent, then, the decline of the antinuclear movement has been heavily overstated. historian James Cameron (2014) has shown how in the late 1960s, grassroots groups successfully protested the deployment of antiballistic missiles, while others have studied scientists’ arguments against the weapons in Congress (York 1987, pp. 237–242; Rubinson 2016, pp. 155–163). But it is true that the LTBT meant that nuclear weapons were out of sight and out of mind, as increasing opposition to the war in Vietnam began to draw activists away from nuclear protest (Wittner 2009, p. 115). WSP quickly shifted from nuclear protest to the antiwar movement, as did SaNe. Scientists soon followed suit. Pugwash, for example, dedicated its conferences to halting the war, while historian Sarah Bridger (2015) has shown how U.S. government scientists debated whether conducting research on defoliants for use in Vietnam amounted to participating in chemical warfare (Rubinson 2016, pp. 127–130).

Rather than disappear, opposition to nuclear weapons became a substantial part of the protest movements of the 1960s and ’70s, as they drew on antinuclearism to shape their vision for the transformation of U.S. society. Intondi (2015) has detailed how the civil rights movement, dedicated as it was to ending Jim Crow and securing voting rights, also frequently aligned itself with the antinuclear cause. James Baldwin and martin Luther King Jr. took part in SaNe protests, while many African‐American women participated in protests by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and WSP King often voiced a desire to merge the civil rights crusade with the movement against nuclear weapons, stating: I definitely feel that the development and use of nuclear weapons should be banned. It cannot be disputed that a full‐scale nuclear war would be utterly catastrophic … even countries not directly hit by bombs would suffer through global fall‐outs. all of this leads me to say that the principal objective of all nations must be the total abolition of war. War must be finally eliminated or the whole of mankind will be plunged into the abyss of annihilation. (Intondi 2015, p. 63)

Antinuclearism resonated beyond mainstream civil rights activists: Malcolm X mocked U.S. nuclear policy as laughably impotent. In his iconic “Ballot or the Bullet” speech (1964), X described the U.S. black community as “more explosive than all the atomic bombs the Russians can ever invent,” and added that the atomic bomb was essentially useless because other countries had atomic weapons as well. “The white man today is without a weapon,” he chided.

Other movements practically beg for scholars to trace the antinuclear strain within them, along the lines of Intondi’s study of the civil rights movement. In particular, an analysis of the feminist movement’s interaction with antinuclearism would be especially enlightening. Women have been perhaps the most consistent opponents of nuclear weapons, and the movement brought radical feminists into common cause with the most traditional of mothers and housewives. Like other social movements of the late 1960s and early ’70s, women’s organizations, particularly the WSP and WILPF, shifted their activism toward protesting the Vietnam War. But feminist critiques of U.S. society, such as Betty Friedan’s Feminine Mystique (1963) and Valerie Solanas’ SCUM Manifesto (1968), linked nuclear weapons to critiques of traditional gender roles. Solanas in particular made it clear that many feminists saw nuclear weapons as reflecting the inherently violent and destructive nature of patriarchy, a viewpoint that would fully bloom during the antinuclear uprising of the 1980s.

The student movement, fueled by the Baby Boom generation, also erupted during the 1960s, mobilizing on behalf of civil rights and free speech, challenging conformity and inequality in U.S. society. And while the leading group of the age, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), became known for its opposition to the Vietnam War, the group identified nuclear weapons as the impetus for its initial activism. The Port Huron Statement, SDS’s manifesto, declared that “the enclosing fact of the Cold War, symbolized by the presence of the Bomb, brought awareness that we ourselves, and our friends, and millions of abstract ‘others’ we knew more directly because of our common peril, might die at any time” (Flacks and Lichtenstein 2015, pp.  239–283). The statement went on to argue that spending money on nuclear weapons neglected a vast array of social needs – an argument frequently voiced by African‐American antinuclear activists. Vietnam became the priority of the student movement, but nuclear weapons were not forgotten. Rather, the war in Southeast Asia came to be seen as just an extension of U.S. militarism and imperialism, of which nuclear weapons were also a part. Students’ direct‐action protests at the University of California challenged the university’s connection to the nation’s nuclear‐weapons labs, Los alamos and Livermore, showing that it was impossible to separate nuclear weapons from critiques of war and U.S. national‐security policy.

The rising environmental movement of the 1960s and ’70s also drew from the campaign against nuclear weapons. Marine biologist and science writer Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring (1962), a groundbreaking work of ecology, frequently compared pesticides to nuclear fallout, showing the similarly destructive consequences of each. others followed similar lines of thought, associating nuclear energy with the destructive potential of nuclear weapons. When an energy crisis gripped the United States in the 1970s and nuclear power expanded to fill the shortage, activists emerged to challenge its safety. In New Hampshire, a coalition of activist groups known as the Clamshell alliance brought together veterans of the previous decade’s civil rights, antiwar, feminist, and antinuclear movements in opposition to the construction of a nuclear power plant in the town of Seabrook. Clamshell activists occupied the Seabrook construction site in 1977, reviving activists’ tactics of the previous decade. The 1979 partial meltdown at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania helped further turn public opinion against nuclear power. Though the dangers of nuclear energy are vastly different from the threat of nuclear weapons, the two often blended in activists’ eyes. When the antinuclear movement was supposedly in abeyance, movement against nuclear power was growing, creating a tremendous opposition force in the 1980s.

### Aff---Anti-Blackness

#### Antiblackness is central to nuclear policy, and fights for nuclear disarmament are also fights against white supremacy – aff teams can use the topic to draw connections between the U.S.’s nuclear policy and uranium mining and nuclear testing in Africa, disinvestment in black communities, and enforcement of racist foreign policy abroad

Intondi 20 – Associate professor of history at Montgomery College and director of research for American University’s Nuclear Studies Institute. He is the author of *African Americans Against the Bomb: Nuclear Weapons, Colonialism, and the Black Freedom Movement*.

Vincent Intondi, “Reflections on Injustice, Racism, and the Bomb,” *Arms Control Today*, vol. 50, no. 6, July/August 2020, https://search.proquest.com/docview/2425622578?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true.

The moment in August 2005 is seared into my memory. The train pulled up to the Hiroshima station from Kyoto. I stepped out with my mind full of images from 60 years ago, when the United States dropped the first atomic bomb on this pristine city of 340,000 people. (Hiroshima had been one of the few cities that escaped the fire-bombing campaign of Japan's major cities led by U.S. Air Force General Curtis LeMay.) Initially, I was taken aback by what I saw: a modern city, filled with restaurants, hotels, shops, and lots of people, much like any other in the industrialized world.

Suddenly, everything changed. Clearly, I was not ready; and before I could prepare myself, I was standing in front of the iconic Atomic Bomb Dome-one of the few structures still standing in its original form near the hypocenter. Throughout my life, I had seen photos of the dome standing alone amid the total destruction wrought by the 15-kiloton atomic blast. But it was different being there in person. I could feel myself starting to change.

The next two days were filled with conversations with atomic bomb survivors (hibakusha), museum visits, and retracing the places about which John Hersey wrote in his historic work, Hiroshima. On the night of August 6, I saw thousands of Japanese citizens gathered at the Motoyasu River. People reflected on those who lost their lives, making paper floating lanterns and putting them in the water.

That night, with a few of my new Japanese friends (I was a student at the time at American University, which partnered with Ritsumeikan University), I put our lantern into the water. I still remember what I wrote on our lantern: "I will dedicate my life to making sure this never happens again." As it floated away, I began to look around and think that 60 years ago, everyone here was dead. I thought of the human suffering that had taken place, and all of my anger, guilt, and sorrow boiled over as tears rolled down my face. At that moment, Koko Tanimoto Kondo, a hibakusha with whom I had grown close, immediately came over to console me.

When I returned to the United States, friends, family, and colleagues began hearing me talk about abolishing nuclear weapons. Many were perplexed. I had been known as an activist who fought for civil rights. I had become conscious when the phrase "Free Mumia" was dominant. I had spent my time protesting the murder of Amadou Diallo and the police assault on Abner Louima. "Who cares about nuclear weapons?" I heard. "Nukes will always be there...no one is crazy enough to use them," and "That's an issue for old, white dudes."

But I could not forget what I learned, who I met, or how I felt in Hiroshima. Regardless if I was fighting for civil rights; against the inequities perpetuated by the World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund; for justice for the indigenous people of Chiapas, Mexico; or to stop the U.S. war in Iraq, I kept coming back to one thought: What does any of this matter if we were all dead from nuclear war?

To me, it was simple. These were not separate issues. Jobs, racial equality, climate change, war, class, gender, and nuclear weapons were all connected and part of the same fight: universal human rights, with the most important human right being the freedom to live.live free from the fear of nuclear war.

Of course, this thinking is not new. Contrary to the narrative that nuclear disarmament has been and remains a "white" issue, since 1945, the anti-nuclear movement has included diverse voices who saw the value in connecting all of these issues. Moreover, the nuclear disarmament movement has been most successful when it left room for diverse voices and combined the nuclear issue with social justice.

The movement to abolish nuclear weapons began even before the first bomb was dropped. Among the earliest critics of nuclear weapons were the atomic scientists, members of the Roman Catholic Church, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and many in the Black community. Specifically, regarding African Americans, for some, nuclear weapons were directly linked to racism.

Many African Americans agreed with Langston Hughes' assertion that racism was at the heart of President Harry Truman's decision to use nuclear weapons in Japan. Why did the United States not drop atomic bombs on Italy or Germany, Hughes asked. The Black community's fear that race played a role in the decision to use nuclear weapons only increased when the U.S. leaders threatened to use nuclear weapons in Korea in the 1950s1 and Vietnam a decade later. For others, the nuclear issue was connected to colonialism. From the United States obtaining uranium from Belgian-controlled Congo to the French testing a nuclear weapon in the Sahara, activists saw a direct link between those who possessed nuclear weapons and those who colonized the nonwhite world. For many ordinary citizens, Black and white, however, fighting for nuclear disarmament simply meant escaping the fear of mutually assured nuclear destruction and moving toward a more peaceful world.

Today, many people love to quote Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., especially his "I Have a Dream" speech, while also ignoring the full title and focus of the march: "Jobs and Freedom." Throughout his life, King made the connections of what he called the "triple evils" of capitalism, racism, and militarism.

King was not alone among civil rights activists in making these connections. To put it in today's context, to singer, actor, and activist Paul Robeson, "Black Lives Matter" meant not only speaking out about racism in the United States but also highlighting where the United States obtained its material to build nuclear weapons. To W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Lives Matter meant not only forming the NAACP or writing Souls of Black Folk, but also getting millions to sign the "Ban the Bomb" pledge to stop another Hiroshima in Korea. To civil rights leader Bayard Rustin, Black Lives Matter meant not only organizing the March on Washington but also traveling to Ghana to stop France from testing its first nuclear weapon in Africa. To Lorraine Hansberry, Black Lives Matter meant not only A Raisin in the Sun, but Les Blancs, her last play, about nuclear abolition. To Representative Ronald Dellums (D-Calif.), Black Lives Matter meant not only bringing jobs and education to Oakland, California, but also making sure President Ronald Reagan did not build the MX missile.

The prominent Black writer James Baldwin put it best on April 1, 1961, when he addressed a large group of peace activists at Judiciary Square in Washington. Baldwin was one of the headlining speakers for the rally, titled "Security Through World Disarmament."

When asked why he chose to speak at such an event, Baldwin responded, "What am I doing here? Only those who would fail to see the relationship between the fight for civil rights and the struggle for world peace would be surprised to see me. Both fights are the same. It is just as difficult for the white American to think of peace as it is of no color.... Confrontation of both dilemmas demands inner courage." Baldwin considered both problems in the same breath because "racial hatred and the atom bomb both threaten the destruction of man as created free by God."

The power of diversity in the nuclear disarmament movement was perhaps most evident in the 1980s. With Reagan's rhetoric of a "winnable nuclear war" and massive budget increases for nuclear weapons while cutting social programs that hurt the most vulnerable, the antinuclear movement grew exponentially. The nuclear freeze movement emerged.

New groups such as the Women's Actions for Nuclear Disarmament, Feminists Insist on a Safe Tomorrow, Performers and Artists for Nuclear Disarmament, Dancers for Disarmament, and Athletes United for Peace formed. Established organizations such as Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, the Union for Concerned Scientists, and Physicians for Social Responsibility all saw their membership skyrocket.2

For some, ending the nuclear arms race was and still is linked to their religious faith. Others saw a direct link between the amount of money being spent on nuclear weapons and eliminating badly needed social programs that benefited the poor. Many viewed and still view nuclear weapons as part of the overall military industrial complex, which included U.S. intervention in Central America and the Middle East, while for others, there was a genuine fear that the United States and Soviet Union would start a nuclear war.

This new sense of awareness, fear, and action culminated in the June 12, 1982, demonstration in New York's Central Park, in which 1 million people of different races, genders, class, and religions marched and rallied for nuclear disarmament. As Randall Forsberg, one of the principal authors of the proposal for a nuclear weapons freeze, said in her speech to the throngs that day, "Until the arms race stops, until we have a world with peace and justice, we will not go home and be quiet. We will go home and organize."

The rally, combined with other actions of the 1980s, contributed to the Reagan administration changing course on nuclear weapons, effectively showed the power of grassroots organizing, challenged the idea that the movement was not diverse, and paved the way for a new generation of activists committed to saving the world from nuclear annihilation.

#### The frame of the “nuclear color line” creates a fantastic way to link critiques of antiblackness with critiques of nuclear weapons discourse

Munster 21 – Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Southern Denmark. Researcher, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), Copenhagen.

Rens Van Munster, Octerber 21 2021, “On whiteness in critical security studies: The case of nuclear weapons,” Security Dialogue, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029

Although I take issue with the general approach and some of the larger conclusions of Howell and Richter-Montpetit, I find their argument that non-white experiences of (in)security have been theoretically and empirically marginalized productive. In my own research, the idea of epistemological or methodological whiteness has certainly been helpful in addressing a core question: to what extent has nuclear weapons scholarship (too) an in-built whiteness? This line of questioning appears particularly pertinent given that, as [Benoit Pelopidas (2016](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029#bibr44-09670106211015029): 326) has noted, nuclear weapons scholarship in security studies is ‘particularly prone’ to ‘forms of self-censorship’ that suppress normativity and serve to reproduce the status quo and restrict our political imagination.[6](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029#fn6-09670106211015029)

While recent nuclear weapons scholarship in international relations has sought to recover or develop a more critical perspective on nuclear weapons technology, this body of work continues to occlude questions of colonialism and race. For example, Pelopidas’s suggestion to ground a critical research study in the recognition that all nuclear weapons scholarship is inherently normative given its commitment, in one way or another, to the prevention of nuclear war remains insufficiently attentive to non-white experiences of nuclear violence. It locates nuclear weapons violence in a future that hopefully never happens, yet ignores the multifaceted forms of nuclear violence that happened in the past and that are still ongoing today. Since the production, testing, (threat of) use and stockpiling of nuclear weapons are all deeply entangled with the violent histories of imperialism and colonialism, much of these past and present forms of nuclear violence disproportionally affect (former) colonial and non-white populations. A genuinely critical study of nuclear weapons must also include a focus on their imperial foundations and racial dimensions, including how the nuclearization of international politics has shaped non-white experiences of (in)security. To ignore the ‘nuclear colour line’, its history and fallout, severely limits our understanding of the violent effects of nuclear weapons and the human costs associated with a security policy based on deterrence. It is also at odds with the most recent developments in anti-nuclear discourse, most notably the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Here, the illegitimacy of nuclear weapons is argued not just in the context of warfare, but also in relation to the contaminating and destructive activities that occur across the entire nuclear fuel cycle (from uranium mining to radioactive waste disposal).

Recent developments in black and African American studies offer one avenue through which to decentre whiteness in nuclear weapons scholarship and attune critical security studies to the racialized realities of nuclear weapons. A substantial literature on black internationalism and the anti-nuclear struggle has existed for a long time, but this scholarship has remained outside critical security studies – an occlusion that admittedly also characterizes my own work on progressive anti-nuclear intellectuals during the Cold War ([Van Munster and Sylvest, 2016](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029#bibr55-09670106211015029)).[7](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029#fn7-09670106211015029) [Vincent Intondi’s (2015)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029#bibr35-09670106211015029) African Americans Against the Bomb, in particular, offers a fruitful starting point on which to base such an intellectual conversation.[8](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029#fn8-09670106211015029) Intondi shows that African Americans viewed nuclear weapons from the perspective of colonialism and black liberation globally, a perspective that fundamentally challenges the dominant view in international relations that the pursuit of nuclear weapons can be understood as the horizontal competition between sovereign states under conditions of anarchy. African Americans pointed out that the development of nuclear capabilities critically relied on the continuation of an unfree (neo)colonial system of rule, including uranium mining in the Congo and the appropriation of overseas territories as designated test sites.

The foregrounding of race also cuts through the distinction between the domestic and the international, inside and outside, upon which much nuclear weapons scholarship in security studies is predicated. African American intellectuals and activists such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Bayard Rustin and Martin Luther King strongly resisted the claim that nuclear weapons were a matter of international politics only and consciously linked the colonial system in which these weapons were rooted to their own struggle for freedom and civil rights. African American critiques of nuclear weapons decentre white experiences and crucially link nuclear weapons to structural forms of violence, including racism and colonialism, that are embedded within the larger social and political structures of domestic and international society. Their uptake in critical security studies would broaden the intellectual ancestry of nuclear weapons scholarship, while offering inspiration to the current movement, spearheaded by non-Western states, to ban the bomb.

#### And the conversations put black studies in fascinating conversations with a litany of different fields.

Yusoff 18 – Professor of Inhuman Geography at Queen Mary University of London.

Yusoff, 2018 “[Golden Spikes and Dubious Origins](https://manifold.umn.edu/read/6b94c453-792a-4a6e-8aea-5a2c8c8155bd/section/ae14049a-4ac3-4c72-b2d9-afc8e1dea124#ch02),” in A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None, https://manifold.umn.edu/read/untitled-5f0c83c1-5748-4091-8d8e-72bebca5b94b/section/ae14049a-4ac3-4c72-b2d9-afc8e1dea124#node-71b0e9a626bb13c9e891ae79e1be483b93316765

While the biostratigraphic signal from colonizing the Americas remains incompletely documented according to the AWG, the favored stratigraphic marker by many authors, owing to its widespread and globally synchronous signal, is the nuclear radioisotope’s from the fallout from weapons testing. According to the AWG, the geochemical residue from the Trinity atomic device at Alamogordo, New Mexico, detonated on July 16, 1945, is the start of the Global Standard Stratigraphic Age (Zalasiewicz et al. 2015). Plutonium (239,240Pu) is suggested as a good trace due to its ability to absorb into clays and organic compounds within marine sediments and because of its mostly artificial radionuclide suite, with a half-life of 24,110 years, that will be detectable in sedimentary deposits for some 100,000 years into the future (Waters et al. 2016). But as Elizabeth DeLoughrey (2013, 179) reminds us, it is not just the environment that bears the trace of these “tests”; “the body of every human on the planet now contains strontium90, a man-made by-product of nuclear detonations and forensic scientists use the traces of militarized radioactive carbon in our teeth to date human remains (as before or after the 1954 Bravo shot).” The nuclear stratigraphic trace would mark the more geologically dispersed events of the “Great Acceleration” of the 1950s, with its material conversions of fossil fuels; dissemination of black carbon, inorganic and spherical carbonaceous particles, worldwide; new geochemical compounds of polyaromatic hydrocarbons, polychlorinated biphenyls, and pesticide residues; doubling of soil nitrogen and phosphorus due to the Haber Bosch process of artificially producing nitrogen fertilizer; and dispersals of new materials, such as aluminum, concrete, plastics, and synthetic fibers. This array of material transformations and new mineral evolutions has both transformed the balance of geochemical materials on the earth’s surface and introduced new geological substances and forces into the planetary mix.

Japanese artist Isao Hashimoto’s 2053[[5]](https://manifold.umn.edu/read/6b94c453-792a-4a6e-8aea-5a2c8c8155bd/section/e1651fe0-dc33-4287-9d2f-0dbaaee3bdc8#en10) records a time-lapse map in a series of blips and flashes of the nuclear explosions that have taken place between 1945 and 1998, signaling that the test does not hold exclusive rights to any one domain; it overflows, accumulates, and seemingly disappears, all the while reorganizing exposures. These blips and flashes do, however, have a black and indigenous intensification. Nuclear testing marks the displacement and exposure of indigenous peoples in the Pacific Islands and the radiation of Native American and Aboriginal peoples in North America and Australia. Many islanders in the Pacific were moved and removed during U.S. nuclear tests. Bikini Atoll, for example, was subjected to thirty years of nuclear explosions, during which time islanders were moved to a range of islands (to Rongerik, then to Kwajalein). Islanders in the Atolls were both proximate to the nuclear fallout, where they were exposed to radioactive ash, and moved to uninhabitable islands, where islanders “sucked stones” to keep hunger at bay and starvation was common. Many returned to Bikini Island, despite the contamination of its water sources and foodstuffs, because the uninhabited islands to which they were moved were uninhabited for a reason. Islanders on Rongelap and Utrok exposed by the Bravo detonation (six islands were vaporized and fourteen left uninhabitable) were subject to immediate radiation from the blasts and suffered visible burns, causing both immediate and lasting epidemiological legacies and toxic intimacies with leukemia, neoplasms, and thyroid cancers. The white powder of irradiated coral dust that fell throughout the Atolls was dangerously radioactive. Not recognizing this new material substance, children played in it. As Maori poet Hone Tuwhare’s 1964 poem goes, this was “No Ordinary Sun.” The fallout coated Marshallese bodies, ground, trees, bread fruit, coconuts, crabs, fish, and water. This nuclear colonialism fused thermonuclear sand and poisoned air, water, and soil, dispersing radioactive elements of strontium, cesium, and iodine across strata and into bone in brown bodies.

After Bravo, the U.S. military waited seventy-two hours to pick up those exposed and transport them to Kwajalein Atoll (the location of the U.S. base) for medical examination. The 236 Marshallese were stripped naked and sprayed down before boarding the vessel. At the army base, they were treated as test subjects for the effects of radiation. The Bravo detonation instigated the human experiments in Project 4.1,[[6]](https://manifold.umn.edu/read/6b94c453-792a-4a6e-8aea-5a2c8c8155bd/section/e1651fe0-dc33-4287-9d2f-0dbaaee3bdc8#en11) a secret U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) study, which was planned for and then authorized while Marshallese were being treated on Kwajalein and continued for years to monitor the effects of radiation on a human population. Marshallese were subjected to unconsented medical testing, and a “cross section of happy, amenable savages” (as the scientist in the AEC promotional film informs us) were brought to Chicago for examination as specimens for experimentation in a human zoo dressed up in suits “that they had to return to the U.S. government in Hawaii.”[[7]](https://manifold.umn.edu/read/6b94c453-792a-4a6e-8aea-5a2c8c8155bd/section/e1651fe0-dc33-4287-9d2f-0dbaaee3bdc8#en12) Spillers (2003, 208) suggests (on the practice of medical experimentation on sick Negroes and the profitable “atomizing” of diseased body parts) that “the procedures adopted for the captive flesh demarcate a total objectification, as the entire captive community becomes a living laboratory.” Women gave birth to what they called “jellyfish babies” because of their translucent skin and soft or absent bones. There were many congenital disorders and miscarriages. “Marshallese cancers” were some of the highest recorded in the world. The AEC film Operation Castle narrates, “These islands, functioning as s, gave us our first real clues to the vast area affected by contamination from a high yield surface burst” (quoted in DeLoughrey 2013, 171). Islanders were returned when it was known that the island was heavily contaminated to study them as fallout “collectors” of nuclear bombs. As Spillers (2003, 207) elucidates, the grammar of containment in Blackness was a category mobilized to obscure and subjugate the human in these human experiments:

The anatomical specifications of rupture, of altered human tissue, take on the objective description of laboratory prose. . . . These undecipherable markings on the captive body render a kind of hieroglyphics of the flesh whose severe disjunctures come to be hidden to the cultural seeing by skin color.

This nuclear colonialism in the Pacific and Marshall islands used a brown strata of bodies to mitigate and absorb its geochemical shocks.

The geographies of colonial territories were key sites and subjects for the performance of militarization and scientific development (but there is no such thing as a nuclear “test”). As DeLoughrey (2013, 172) argues,

Western colonizers had long configured tropical islands into the contained spaces of a laboratory, which is to say a suppression of island history and indigenous presence. This generation of AEC ecologists embraced nuclear testing as creating a novel opportunity to study a complete ecosystem through the trace of radiation. . . . An American empire of tropical islands, circling the globe from the Pacific to the Caribbean, became a strategic space for military experimentation and the production of new scientific epistemologies like ecosystem theory.

For example, Britain exploded seven nuclear tests and seven hundred subtests[[8]](https://manifold.umn.edu/read/6b94c453-792a-4a6e-8aea-5a2c8c8155bd/section/e1651fe0-dc33-4287-9d2f-0dbaaee3bdc8#en13) on the Aboriginal land of Maralinga Tjaruta in southern Australia, home of the Pitjantjara and Yankunytjatjara peoples, in 1956 and 1963. Many were forcibly resettled at Yalata, but attempts to curtail access to the Maralinga site were often unsuccessful due to strong ties to country, leading to exposure to nuclear contamination. The first French test, Gerboise Bleue, was conducted in February 1960, in the context of the Algerian War (1954–62). From 1960 to 1996, France carried out 210 nuclear tests, 17 in the Algerian Sahara and 193 in French Polynesia in the South Pacific, causing vast swaths radioactive fallout across Polynesia. In the Anthropocene backloop, these very islands in Polynesia and the Marshall Islands are now subjected to rising sea levels from climate change. The Anthropocene fossil of the waste repository in the Marshall Islands, the nuclear, forty-six-centimeter-thick “Runit” dome of Portland cement that covers the radioactive material from Bikini and other islands (there were forty-two tests in total on Enewetak Atoll alone from 1948), is leaching radioactive material, causing radionuclide migration into the marine environment. Rising sea levels and the intensification of storm events threaten to take the islands and their nuclear-fused strata into the sea.

The nuclear marker both commemorates a certain period of militarization and its global dissemination and distances the impacts and responsibility for those acts, tethering them to the Cold War and its “past” geopolitical concerns. The dialogic relation of this Golden Spike to the politics of the event is truncated, as it is lodged in the event of the atomic bomb and its technological achievements rather than the effects on the peoples and ecologies of the Pacific and the more widespread nuclear colonialism and its ongoing presents in nuclear waste. Canada and Australia, for example, as settler-colonial states, are the biggest extraterritorial mining countries and are involved in the disposal and location of nuclear waste on indigenous land, often in conflict with native title claims and predating on economic impoverishment. The disposal of wastes mobilizes a new frontierism in the designation of sacrifice zones within and beyond national borders that aggregates environmental harms with anti-Blackness.

Earth Archives, Geologic Subjects, and the Race of Strata

The continued siting or marking of indigenous territories and intergenerational flesh of indigenous populations through the exposures of environmental wastes—what is called environmental racism—prompts a need to extend Achille Mbembe’s “Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive”[[9]](https://manifold.umn.edu/read/6b94c453-792a-4a6e-8aea-5a2c8c8155bd/section/e1651fe0-dc33-4287-9d2f-0dbaaee3bdc8#en14) to explore the role of earth archives as material deposits that maintain a colonial relation through the extractive and waste industries, particularly through the cojoined violences of extraction practices and their ongoing legacies of toxicity (see Bebbington and Bury 2013). For example, in the New World silver mines of South America, where as much as 136,000 metric tons of silver were produced between 1500 and 1800 (80 percent of global production), enslaved Africans (estimated to be about 4 million) were put work in the mines, replacing indigenous slaves because they were deemed to be better workers and more immune to diseases such as smallpox and typhus. Spanish slavery records show that Africans were considered essential in the operation of the mines and used them to extract enormous wealth, particularly from the mountain of Potosi (which received additional investment after the British 1833 slavery payout), where the average “working” life of a miner was six to eight years (on Southern sugar plantations, it was eight to ten years). It is estimated as many as 8 million may have died from mining accidents, lung diseases caused by the mineral dust, and contamination by the mercury used in processing the silver. Nicholas Robbins (2011) argues that there was a double genocide: the initial invasion of the New World and its impact on indigenous people, then a second wave of genocide through silver mining and the afterlives of mercury pollution into the soil, ecologies, and bodies of local communities.

Similarly, the uranium mining for nuclear industry exploited and polluted Native American lands and bodies in the United States and returns in the nuclear colonialism of waste and superfund sites, where economic poverty is used as an exploitative means to reterritorialize land with the “by-products” of nuclear testing (see Kuletz 1998, 126–27). Contemporaneously, the effects of ecoimperialist measures such as REDD in the Amazon that evicted indigenous peoples of their land in attempts to offset carbon emission created elsewhere and the location of waste sites in low-income and predominately black neighborhoods continue this disproportionate legacy of harm. The imperative is to recognize the regime of offsetting—of carbon, ecosystems, deforestation, pollution, forced migration, land grabs, climate change—as a neocolonial enterprise that continues extraction through displacement of waste and the ongoing legacy of colonial “experiments.” This offsetting is achieved through the grammar of materiality that privileges equivalents above relation. As poet Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner from the Marshall Islands says, “these two issues—they’re so much bigger than us, nuclear issues and climate change and yet we [the Marshall Islands] are at that crossroad” (Laubscher 2017). In rejoinder, fellow Marshellese poet Terisa Tenei Siagatonu claims, “Everyone is effected [sic] by climate change but some are effected [sic] first. . . . For those of us who might not have the language but are still able to speak, for those of us that can’t afford rent but can’t afford to wait.”[[10]](https://manifold.umn.edu/read/6b94c453-792a-4a6e-8aea-5a2c8c8155bd/section/e1651fe0-dc33-4287-9d2f-0dbaaee3bdc8#en15) Placed at the axis of environmental impacts, the language of “dispassionate” geology betrays itself as an economy of displacement (subjective and environmental).

As the Anthropocene names a universal geology from below, it renders a violent homogenization of subjective affects and material possibilities. The move toward a more expansive notion of humanity must be made with care. It cannot be based on the presupposition that emancipation is possible once the racial others and their voices are included finally to realize this universality but must be based on the recognition that these “Others” are already inscripted in the foundation formulation of the universal as a space of privileged subjectification. Through the categories of nonbeing, trajectories of colonial enterprise exclude the very subjects who make up the racialized strata of extraction and exposure. This flesh gets spiked by the Anthropocene. Thinking flesh with Spillers, as the conceptual expansion and excess of the contraction of a person into a thing, then, “we mean its seared, divided, ripped-apartness, riveted to the ship’s hole, fallen, or ‘escaped’ over board” (Spillers 2003, 206) muscularity. The division between body and flesh is an essential category difference between a captive and liberated subject position. Flesh is the “zero degree of social conceptualization that does not escape concealment under the brush of discourse or the reflexes of iconography” (Spillers 2003, 206). The geologic claims on and in black and brown flesh establish stratigraphic traces that are both bone deep and intergenerational, marking bodies with nuclear radioisotopes and skin with codes of disposability in the proximity to power and toxicity.

Precisely because modernity (and premodernity) is secured in a subjectivity that is inscripted at the onset in race, the diagnostic of the Anthropocene does not unleash any ethical crisis in liberal discourse about who is targeted by these material practices. What is at stake and what is on the front line are defined through the color line. The disembodied monuments and matter of the Golden Spike point but don’t name. This is why the Anthropocene is configured in a future tense rather than in recognition of the extinctions already undergone by black and indigenous peoples. Following in the wake of humanism, the production of the Anthropocene is predicated on Whiteness as the color of universality. While the ethical distinction of humanism rests on the distinction between what is human and what is inhuman, Blackness is established, as Mbembe argues, as the exception to this coda, consigned to the objecthood of inhuman matter. One major implication of Wynter’s (2015, 23) thought is that “humanness is no longer a noun. Being human is a praxis” and cannot be taken for granted as a self-explanatory category or reason. And human as praxis intersects with geological classificatory practices to inform the category designations of what is inhuman. It is this very intimacy with the life of the inhuman that the tradition of critical black thought has engaged to resurrect the domains of life that seem to be in excess of this objective language, which transmutes black subjects into different categories of materiality. This is the unseen fragment of the Anthropocene archive that needs attention, as subject and relation. Silva (2007) argues that race is foundational rather than simply formative to the production of global subjectivity and space; race cannot be dismantled through acts of inclusion, because it is the building block in the modern world system and its anchor. Furthermore, the violence of grammars of geology must change to acknowledge this inscription and develop a mode of writing that speaks beyond the objecthood of geologic materiality to its inhuman and inhumane dimensions, as material praxis and subjective condition.

If we look at the suggested natal moments of the Anthropocene, the formative role of race in the genealogy of an Anthropocenic subject and the set of environmental processes that accrue in the new subjective mode of geologic force become apparent. This genealogy from Colonial Man to Anthropocene Man is evident in the constitution of Anthropocene scientific cultures and in the body of popular personifications of the Anthropocene. On the front cover of the scientific journal Nature (519, no. 7542 [2015]), the white male body of “Anthropocene Man” is pictured gently hemorrhaging biodiversity, with an atom cloud glowing a temperate warm orange on his shoulder. Ships crisscross the Middle Passage on his chest with the wind beneath their sails, like hipster tattoos, and little black bodies stand on Africa and the Americas, populating the corners of their triangular passage. The miniature blacks are only other bodies on display, inside the peeled back skin of white masculine modernity, posited alongside the equally sized cocoa, maize, and wheat. A cyborgian working of industry is revealed on his arm. The Human Epoch is blazed across his well-defined abs. Now read these images of Anthropocene Man next to Spillers’s words: “That order [sociopolitical order of the New World], with its human sequence written in blood, represents for its African and indigenous peoples a scene of actual mutilation, dismemberment and exile. First of all, their New World, diasporic plight marked a theft of the body—a willful and violent (and unimaginable from this distance) severing of the captive body from its motive will, its active desire” (Spillers 2003, 206). Or take the cover of the Smithsonian magazine. What is represented is a Western scientist surveying the geologic bedrock, the lone liberal subject, individualized and in possession of the horizon that he surveys as his territorial acquisition. Such imagery, unsurprisingly, echoes with the colonial paintings that underpin this man’s genealogy (such as the painting of Lewis and Clark’s Western Corps of Discovery expedition 1804–6, An Evening Reading by Thomas Lorimer in 1941), where the cartographic imagination of the privileged surveyor accords both power and truth over the territory and a benign foresight that naturalizes the colonial gaze, reproducing and reinforcing this geopolitical conquest within a Western claim to globalism, with resonances of “Manifest Destiny.” Rather than offering humanity as a cohesive possibility for Anthropocene politics, “the ‘middle passages’ of black culture to and in the New World are not marked so much by ‘humanity’ as by an acute lack thereof; a ‘black hole’ of humanity, so to speak” (Weheliye 2002, 26). Akin to Wright’s idea of the Middle Passage to the New World as a “big bang of blackness,” Ishamel Reed calls it “an Atlantic of blood. Repressed energy of anger that would form enough sun to light a solar system. A burnt-out black hole. A cosmic slave hole” (quoted in Weheliye 2002, 21). The passage to universalism in ecological or planetary terms without a redress of how that humanity was borne as an exclusionary construct, coterminus with the enslavement of some humans and the genocide of others, remains a questionable traverse.

However, contrasting (White) posthumanism and Afro-diasporic thinking, Weheliye (2002, 26) suggests that rather than dispensing with this category that was invented to hide its opposite (the inhuman), black scholars have sought to appropriate this category: “Afro-diasporic thinking has not evinced the same sort of distrust and/or outright rejection of ‘man’ in its universalist, post-Enlightenment guise as Western antihumanist or posthumanist philosophies. Instead, black humanist discourses emphasize the historicity and mutability of the ‘human’ itself, gesturing toward different, catachrestic, conceptualizations of this category.” As King (2016, 1029) argues, “Blackness is raw dimensionality (symbol, matter, kinetic energy) used to make space. As space, Black bodies cannot also occupy space on human terms.” Denied the space-time of the human, black people, King argues, must imagine place outside of humanist configurations of geography. While this other space-time of Blackness finds itself in the stars in Afro-futurism, there is considerable scope to find it in the quotidian spaces of the earth.

In the Anthropocenic reinscription of earth forces and global relations, Man is placed as a central organizing concept for planetary relations. This Man is both a figure of address and a mode of comprehension (if not a unit of analysis) that repositions the human in its liberal-humanist structural form at the axis of planetary concern. The “Age of Man” is a dominant and dominating mode of subjectification—of nature, the non-Western world, ecologies, and the planet. As in the illustration on the cover of Nature, Man is the body politic of global environmental change. This Man is heir apparent to the historical formations of Colonial Man and the privileged subject of biopolitical life. This ethical subject substantiates the hierarchies of subjectification while simultaneously maintaining the production of marginalities and minorities that fall outside of consideration in this secular yet universalizing mode. As Weheliye (2014, 8) suggests,

since bare life and biopolitics discourse largely occludes race as a critical category of analysis, as do many other current articulations of critical theory, it cannot provide the methodological instruments for diagnosing the tight bonds between humanity and racializing assemblages in the modern era. The volatile rapport between race and the human is defined above all by two constellations: first, there exists no portion of the modern human that is not subject to racialization, which determines the hierarchical ordering of Homo Sapiens species into humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans; second, as a result, humanity has held a very different status for the traditions of the radically oppressed. Man will only be abolished “like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea” if we disarticulate the modern human (Man) from its twin: racializing assemblages.

The question Weheliye asks (after Wynter) in his book Habeas Viscus of these twins—the human and racializing assemblages—is, what different modalities of the human would come to light if the liberal-humanist figure of Man is not taken as the master-subject? Humanity continues to persist in its current forms of inhumanity precisely because it is a humanity that is racially constituted and where racial difference is produced as an oppositional form on the outside when it is really, as Silva argues through spatialized and subjective modes, internal to the formation of such humanity. This coterminous birth of Man and his Others forms the basis for the enlightenment subject of ethical consideration, the subject around which an understanding of humanity (and inhumanity) coheres (on the conatality of liberal notions of freedom in Hegel and the organization of slavery in Haiti, see Buck-Morss 2000). This birth codifies Whiteness with freedom and Blackness with objectification and slavery,[[11]](https://manifold.umn.edu/read/6b94c453-792a-4a6e-8aea-5a2c8c8155bd/section/e1651fe0-dc33-4287-9d2f-0dbaaee3bdc8#en16) Blackness being the position of both the unfree and the unthought (Hartman and Wilderson 2003). And this is precisely why Whiteness (as a formation of power) gets to “choose” environmental conditions and black and brown are still the colors of environmental exhaustion and the exposures to excess.

Thinking, alongside Silva, toward a global idea of race that is not at the margins of the conceptualization of the Western ethical subject but a crucial consideration of all its modes of spatial and subjective production would mean the abandonment of Colonial Man, alongside a shift in the forms and modes of expression outside of Western epistemic traditions. In the words of Angela Last, this would be to undo geopolitics through geopoetics (Last 2015, 2017). In Last’s proposal, made through the work of Caribbean geopoetics, “decolonization utilizes the geophysical not as a model for human or human–world relations, but as a tool for re-situating oneself and for reimagining global divisions” (56). This matter relation that reterritorializes the inhuman as a geopoetic resource alerts us to the grammar of material divisions that organize subjective modes, wherein geopolitical agency is designated as a quality of a privileged biopolitical subject but also the potentials for a redescription of inhuman relations. As I have argued elsewhere, “it is the very division between ‘dead matter’ and the privileged ‘live subject’ that constitutes the active politics of recognition in late liberalism. This axial division of materiality into passive and active forms, that might or might not become subjects (depending on their status on the color line), is the current bite of geopolitics” (Yusoff 2018). A new language of the earth cannot be resolved in biopolitical modes (of inclusion) because of the hierarchical divisions that mark the biocentric subject.

### Aff – Colonialism

#### Nuclear weapons owe their existence to settler colonialism – the uranium used to produce nuclear weapons is mined from indigenous land, indebting U.S. nuclear policy to ongoing processes of cultural genocide. Affs can examine this history and the relationship between nuclear weapons and race, colonialism, spatial imaginaries, geography, and more.

Maurer and Hogue 20 – Anaïs Maurer is Assistant Professor of French and Comparative Literature at Rutgers University, and Faculty Associate at Columbia University’s Center for Nuclear Studies. Rebecca Hogue is a Lecturer on History and Literature at Harvard University. (“Special Forum Introduction: Transnational Nuclear Imperialisms,” 2020, pg. 29-33) julian

Rather than embarking on a comprehensive survey of the transnational scope of the nuclear industrial complex, we invite the reader to a story: the life cycle of an atom of uranium. This atom will cross countless national borders, be shipped and driven and flown to several processing sites, and transmitted across and between military bases to civil plants to Indigenous communities and back again. By following this fictional atom, we hope to provide an incomplete yet striking overview of the transnational environmental racism underpinning the nuclear industry.

If you live in the United States, there is a one in five probability that your light is powered by uranium mined on stolen Indigenous land in Australia, Canada, Kazakhstan, Russia, and the continental United States. In all of these countries, Indigenous communities have been displaced to make room for mining and have been heavily affected by the radon-induced health issues linked to the mines. Even after mine closures, imperfect—or non-existent—cleanups have resulted in further health issues for Indigenous communities living near or returning to former mining sites. For example, Indigenous uranium miners of the Navajo nation and their families experience rates of cancer at least fifteen times the national average, even after the closure of the mines.14 Moreover, uranium mining goes beyond inflicting health issues onto Indigenous communities; it participates in recurring cycles of cultural genocide. Resource extraction at these sites was originally made possible by Indigenous forced removal and is extended by the impossibility of Indigenous people returning to contaminated land. Indigenous communities across the globe have had to organize against uranium mining, activism which has been complicated by convoluted legal battles to prove that their members still have links and relationships with these lands, even though they had been living on those lands long before uranium was discovered underground. In Australia, Joan Wingfield, spokesperson of the Kokatha people and antinuclear activist, eloquently summarized the transnational scope of this uranium-fueled cultural genocide by asking a settler audience: “I ask you what would happen if we came along and dug up [your] cemetery ... ? Everybody would be complaining. White people can do that to people like the Kokathas, to Aboriginal people in Australia. That is not right. There are white laws protecting your cemeteries and yet they have done nothing to protect our places like that.”15 For Indigenous residents near mining areas, the damage brought by nuclear colonialism is cyclical, and does not read as a series of events spaced out with a standard deviation. The effects of uranium mining are experienced sporadically and multigenerationally.

After having been mined on stolen land, uranium is most likely to be transported by crossing other Indigenous territories—and endangering other Indigenous communities. Thus, uranium-filled ships travelling from Australia to the United States approach or cross the national waters of many Pacific nations that have repeatedly opposed the presence of radioactive material within their national borders. In solidarity with the Indigenous people affected by uranium, the participants of the 1983 Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movement, which took place in Vanuatu, called for a global moratorium on uranium mining and the “whole nuclear cycle” so that the UN could conduct an investigation of the devastating effects on the “lands and lives of Indigenous people through the world.”16

Nuclear power plants continue to present undeniable risks to nearby inhabitants, but new technologies have greatly diminished the probability of nuclear accidents. However, very little technological progress has been made when it comes to storing nuclear waste. National priority was clearly given to securing nuclear plants located near populated (predominantly white) areas, rather than to ensuring the safety of nuclear storage facilities mostly located near Indigenous communities. Indeed, nuclear waste sites are often located on Indigenous land considered already contaminated by previous nuclear testing. For example, the Apache community in the Mesca-lero reservation, already contaminated by the fallout from the first atomic bomb in 1945, has since been targeted as a national site for highly radioactive waste processing (Matsunaga, this Special Forum). 17 Additionally, between 1944 and 1972, the Hanford Nuclear Site was used as a plutonium production reactor in developing nuclear weapons and dumped more than 1.7 trillion gallons of radioactive materials in the Columbia River near the Yakima and Nez Perce tribes. Such dumping has had subsequent negative effects on both water and fish sources.18 Nuclear waste also threatens Indigenous communities well into the future: The Western Shoshone have been fighting the US federal government’s desire to deposit nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain for nearly fifty years and the issue has not yet been resolved.19 The environmental racism that dictated the development of military nuclear technology continues to inform the development of civil nuclear ones.

Barbara Flick, Gamalroi antinuclear activist from Australia, thus aptly cautions: “I think it is important for you to think about pushing a button and light flooding a room, in relation to how many aboriginal [one might extrapolate to Indigenous] lives it is going to cost for you to be able to do that.”20 The International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nation’s nuclear equivalent of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has argued that nuclear energy is going to be an essential component of any plan to seriously avoid climate collapse. Yes, it is true that nuclear energy does not produce dangerous quantities of greenhouse gases. Nevertheless, a transition to nuclear energy should not happen at the expense of Indigenous nations being forced to host uranium mines, nuclear plants, and radioactive waste storage on their lands. Nuclear power production has significant environmental and human impact that should not be ignored due to our current preoccupation with the climatological impact of fossil fuel consumption. It is particularly urgent to decouple nuclear energies and nuclear imperialisms.

The civil and military nuclear complexes are so closely interlinked that a uranium atom used in a nuclear plant may very well be reused in an atomic bomb created for the military. For many decades, the generation of electricity remained a secondary purpose for existing reactors whose main function was to produce fuel for weapons, and electricity profits were used to fund the weapons program.21 Nuclear testing sites are systematically situated far from the nuclear countries’ economic and political centers, in lands occupied by differently racialized, disenfranchised, and impoverished people. The first five countries to develop atomic bombs—the United States, the USSR, the United Kingdom, France, and China—all conducted their tests on Indigenous land. The US tested its weapons on Native American Indigenous land, near reservations in Nevada and New Mexico; in Kiribati; in Hawaiʻi; and on Marshallese land in Pikinni and Ānewetak. The UK tested on Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara peoples’ land in Maralinga and Emu Field (Australia), before bombing Kiritimati and Terapukatea Island (Kiribati). France began its nuclear tests on Amazigh land in Algeria, before moving to Moruroa and Fangataufa (French-occupied Polynesia) on Māʻohi land and waters. The USSR tested primarily on Kazakh land at Semipalatinsk and on Nenets land in Novaya Zemlya. China detonated its bombs in Lop Nur, in the Xinjiang region ( ڭاجنىش( predominantly inhabited by Muslim Uighur peoples. Despite publicized oppositions between these nuclearized countries, they have developed their deadly weapons through the same means: the dispossession and displacement of Indigenous peoples. While detonating nuclear weapons on Indigenous lands does not constitute war for the metropole, in seeing nuclear testing and its contemporary aftermath through an Indigenous perspective, it becomes clear that Indigenous peoples are under attack. Though these five countries detonated nuclear weapons on “foreign” soil, the bombings do not constitute war for the metropole because the nuclearized sites were on Indigenous land that did not possess the same political stature as nation-states. Like uranium mining, nuclear testing thus reiterates the effects of land dispossession and Indigenous removal of prior centuries.

Even though the United States ended its testing on September 23, 1992, the life cycle of our uranium atom did not end on that date. The ongoing impact of these tests on Indigenous communities ranges from health issues, reproductive issues, forced relocation, and psychological trauma. For example, in the United States, the Atomic Energy Commission is guilty of having launched in the 1950s the controversial Project 4.1, a top secret medical research program which studied the effects of radiation on human beings in the Marshall Islands without patients’ consent.22 This project, involving five hundred and thirty-nine people, included experimental surgery and injections of chromium-51, radioactive iodine, iron, zinc, and carbon-14.23 Project 4.1 was not the only one of its kind during the period. In the 1950s, as part of Project Sunshine, the Atomic Energy Commission collected tissue from human cadavers, often those of babies and children, and primarily without the consent of their next of kin, to study the amount of strontium-90 detectable in human tissue and bone.24 Thus far the only recourse for these human rights violations have been lawsuits, most of which have not been paid in full.

Nor are the deleterious effects of nuclear testing likely to abate anytime soon. In the 1970s, on Runit Island (Ānewetak), the US army built a massive concrete dome over a crater created by the nuclear blast “Cactus,” covering several tons of nuclear waste placed directly into the dome without a concrete lining. This highly radioactive waste has since been leaking in the ocean—a process that could accelerate with the rise of sea levels.25 As Traci Brynne Voyles has eloquently shown in Wastelanding, the way imperial powers treat a land is coconstitutive of the way they also treat the peoples inhabiting this land—and vice versa.26 In the case of nuclear imperialisms, sites of empire are not only the theater of the annihilation of land, but also of the continued erasure of Indigenous communities.

Today, long after the end of nuclear testing, the US Army continues to pollute Indigenous territory through ongoing training involving radioactive elements. The US has organized military exercises using depleted uranium on the military bases Schofield Barracks and the Pōhakuloa Training Area (respectively located on Oʻahu and Big Island of Hawaiʻi).27 The US Army has also been using Indigenous waters in Kuwajleen (Kwajalein, Marshall Islands) to test its antiballistic system since 1959—a military occupation that will continue with increased intensity in the twenty-first century given that the Trump administration declared that developing an anti-Chinese missile shield was crucial for Republicans.28 This type of contemporary exploitation still does not come with financial compensation: Despite American “aid,” the Marshall Islands is still the poorest country in Micronesia. As historian Ruth Oldenziel has concluded, the development of high-tech antinuclear shields coincides with the ongoing impoverishment and exploitation of Indigenous peoples.29

Even after the end of nuclear tests and other contaminating experiments, Indigenous land continues to be stolen to stockpile nuclear weapons and harbor nuclear-powered submarines. This phenomenon is particularly perceptible in the Pacific, where large portions of entire islands, such as Guåhan (Guam) and Kuwajleen, have been consumed by foreign nuclearized military. Not even the open seas are spared: During RIMPAC (the biennial Rim of the Pacific Exercise), the world’s largest maritime war game, the US Army occupied the ocean with nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. CHamoru demilitarization activist Kisha Borja-Quichocho-Calvo thus commented on this ongoing land dispossession: “When looking at the current map of what the military already owns, I see a cookie cutter landscape. It’s as if the military has taken cookie cutters and [taken] the lands that it wanted then left my people with the scraps of dough.”30 Indigenous peoples who refused to have their lands and waters transformed into a nuclear playground were relentlessly pressured by the American administration to cave in. The people of Belau (Palau) wrote the world’s first antinuclear constitution in 1979, banning the United States from using their island as a nuclear submarine base and an ammunition storage dump. Yet Americans have made Belauans revote on their constitution seven times between 1979 and 1986 to try to obtain the “right,” nuclear-friendly result on these referendums.31 The US imposed these demands for Belau to remove antinuclear elements of their constitution, threatening to cancel the Compact of Free Association (COFA) the two countries had entered.

Unlike other forms of imperialism, nuclear imperialisms are not only interested in occupying another given territory simply to exploit its resources or merely to pollute it. They annihilate their chosen sites of empire. The transnational nuclear complex vaporizes islands in the Republic of Marshall Islands and replaces land with lakes and craters in Kazakhstan. Nuclear imperialisms are ongoing processes that rely on largescale terra-deforming, excavating, biociding, mining, transporting, detonating, stockpiling, and waste disseminating and disposing associated with nuclear energies and weaponry. The life cycle of a uranium atom, thus, has a convoluted journey. It is likely to cross several national borders, and to adversely affect more than one Indigenous peoples. The full temporal and geographical scope of nuclear imperialisms are, therefore, impossible to assess—because they are still ongoing, and the multitude of their effects are both present and yet to be determined.

### Aff---Cold War / American Empire

#### Nuclear weapons are integral to the broader system of American empire – the nuclear threat has been the key driver of imperialist policies domestically and internationally. The impact of criticizing the bomb is not limited to nuclear policy, but provides a key vehicle for broader movements against empire, teaching the students to question government policies and militarism

Martin 12 – Brian Martin is emeritus professor of social sciences at the University of Wollongong, Australia. (“Reform - when is it worthwhile?,” 2012, <https://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/12as.html>)

If war is the health of the state, nuclear weapons are the health of state terror: the very threat of nuclear attack is a type of state terrorism.[23] Nuclear weapons were at the core of the cold war. Leaders of dominant nuclear states still use the alleged nuclear threat from some enemy state - Iraq, Iran, and others - as justification for their own arsenals and for repressive policies including surveillance of the population and criminalisation of internal dissent on national security.

Ever since the development of nuclear weapons, peace campaigners have opposed them. There have been two major mobilisations against nuclear weapons, the first in the late 1950s and early 1960s and the second in the early 1980s. At other times the issue has not had the same prominence, yet many campaigners have continued efforts against the nuclear threat.

Lawrence Wittner, in his comprehensive study of anti-nuclear-weapons campaigning,[24] argues that movements have had a crucial impact on governments: when there is little opposition, states proceed with greater nuclear deployment, whereas public protest has restrained government leaders. To the extent that anti-bomb campaigning has prevented nuclear war, or reduced the risk, it has made a vital contribution to struggles for a better world, because nuclear war, as well as causing massive devastation to humans and the environment, could also usher in a much more repressive world order.[25] The terrorist attacks on 9/11 provided the pretext for a massive expansion of the security state; a nuclear attack, even if relatively limited, would offer a far stronger rationale.

One limitation of anti-bomb campaigning is that it targets just one manifestation of the military system, namely a particular type of weapon. Getting rid of nuclear weapons would be a tremendous benefit to the world, but it would not remove the threat of war. Indeed, it could be argued that as long as military systems exist - with their deployment of science and technology for warfare - then nuclear weapons, or some other advanced method of destruction and killing, will remain as a threat. It is worth remembering that far more people were killed through aerial bombing with conventional explosives in World War II than from the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In this context, anti-bomb campaigning is best seen not solely in terms of its immediate goal of getting rid of nuclear weapons, but more deeply as a means for mobilising support for other demands to restrain and shrink military systems. Campaigning against nuclear weapons is valuable on its own if it reduces the risk of nuclear war; depending on the style and orientation of the campaigning, such campaigning may or may not help move towards alternatives to military systems.

Two aspects of campaigning are relevant. One is the nature of demands. Much anti-bomb campaigning is oriented to governments, in the form of appeals for controlling or reducing arsenals. The underlying assumption is that governments can provide a solution to the weapons threat. Of course, governments are the cause of the threat in the first place and will only act under pressure. The second aspect of campaigning is getting people involved in actions that question and challenge government policy - being out in the streets in a mass rally changes people's understandings of themselves and the world, even if their nominal demand for change is limited.

#### Affs could interrogate nuclear weapons as a remnant of Cold War containment policy. This card analyzes this phenomenon through its exploration of United States nuclear weapons as a barrier to decolonization for the Marshall Islands.

Hirshberg 15 – Lauren Hirshberg is an Associate Professor and Director for the Center for the Study of War Experience teaching History in Regis College. (“‘Navigating sovereignty under a Cold War military industrial colonial complex: US military empire and Marshallese decolonization’,” 2015, pg. 261-263) julian

To help navigate the intersection between Cold War containment policy, weapons testing, and the Marshallese path towards decolonization, this essay begins by contextualizing the agreement framing US imperial expansion into the region in the postwar period. In doing so, I examine how the 1947 United Nations Trusteeship Agreement straddled the imperatives of Cold War containment and military imperial expansion alongside the rising tide of global decolonization. The Trusteeship Agreement allowed the United States to promote itself to the decolonizing world as a nation committed to supporting self determination, while simultaneously authorizing the expansion and further entrenchment of US military imperialism into the Pacific.

The depth and breadth of the U.S imperial reach in the Pacific preceded the post-World War II era, with colonial competition bringing Hawai’i, Guam, Samoa, and Wake Island into the growing imperium in the late nineteenth century. During this period, the Marshall Islands came under German rule, with their trajectory of colonial administration shifting to Japanese rule during World War I. As American and Japanese competition for control over the Pacific exploded into World War II, decisive naval victories brought the Marshall Islands under US control. Four months after President Truman introduced his Cold War containment policy to Congress in 1947 – a strategy of creating a protective shield around nations and territories perceived as vulnerable to a Soviet takeover – he ratified the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement siloing off Micronesia. Containing Communist penetration into the region, the Agreement sanctioned the United States to take over administration, legislation and jurisdiction of those islands formerly under Japanese control through a League of Nations mandate. The timing of these two major policies – containment and its Micronesian manifestation through the Trusteeship Agreement – signaled a shift in US international politics, economics and military expansion foundational to the origins of the Cold War. The UN Trusteeship system shared similarities with the post-World War I League of Nations in straddling a contradictory vision for supporting self-determination while creating a mandate system for the governance of territories of former imperial powers. As the literature on Wilsonian diplomacy has suggested, President Wilson did not anticipate the employment of his rhetorical commitment to self-determination by an array of colonized populations who embraced this discourse to further their ongoing struggles for independence. What perhaps distinguished the new formulation of a global body supporting self-determination through the United Nations in the wake of World War II – was a distinctive window that saw the momentum of several anti-colonial struggles culminating to take advantage of the economic and military collapse of former imperial powers alongside the emergence of a bi-polar competition. The latter created new incentives for the United States and the Soviet Union to gain alignment with the decolonizing world that created pressure to at least give the appearance of support for global decolonization, while negotiating a contradictory imperial mission of expanding global military and economic power.

Reflecting the priorities of such expansive global influence, the Truman Doctrine informed US nation-building activities aimed at erecting an impermeable shield around non-aligned countries from Soviet incursion. The Trusteeship Agreement positioned the United States to take up nation building in Micronesia by obligating the US to support the region’s inhabitants towards self-determination. But the Agreement also included a contradictory mandate to use the islands for defense. Never soliciting input from Micronesians themselves, it supported a US quest to take whatever means necessary – including any land desired – within the Trust Territory to carry out an indeterminate mission to promote national security and global peace.6 As a new American colony, the Marshall Islands would become the primary testing grounds for America’s growing nuclear arsenal and a catalytic site of postwar US military expansion.

By sanctioning US imperial expansion into Micronesia for military buildup, the Trusteeship Agreement hastened the rise of a US military industrial colonial complex during the Cold War.7 In his 1961 farewell speech, President Eisenhower warned Americans of the potential consequences that would emerge from the disproportionate influence of the ‘military industrial complex’ on American society. He did not however identify the simultaneous consequences awaiting colonial subjects around the world, whose homes would become the testing grounds for such military industrial growth. Marshallese became aware of such consequences first through the US nuclear testing campaign and at its conclusion through Kwajalein’s transformation into a missile range.8

Consistent with American imperial ambitions in the Pacific since the late nineteenth century, the demarcation of Micronesia as a distinct kind of Trust Territory enabled the US military to avoid oversight of its activities in the region, and ensured the territory would come to play a central role in buttressing the postwar US security state. Through the Trusteeship Agreement, the newly designated Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands became one trust within a trusteeship system set up through the United Nations Charter.9 This larger system placed eleven former colonies and territories of the Axis powers under new administration.10 Out of these eleven territories, the United Nations categorized the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands as the only ‘strategic trust.’ This distinction placed the territory under United Nations Security Council supervision rather than the UN Trusteeship Council. In doing so, the United States gained significant control over the islands through its veto power in the Security Council on any matters the nation identified as threatening national security or international peace.11 Such power authorized the United States to close off any or all parts of the Trust Territory to UN inspection or supervision for security reasons as the US deemed necessary. For the Marshall Islands this provision meant the United States could conduct its nuclear testing campaign and subsequent missile-testing mission without outside interference (Figure 1).12

According to former US Ambassador to the United Nations Donald F. McHenry, the Trusteeship Agreement proved riddled with contradictions from the get go, given the dual mandates to use the territory to ensure international security and to promote development towards self-government in the region.13 The Agreement’s Article Five committed the United States to ensuring the territory played its part in maintaining global peace, which included establishing military bases in the region.14 Signaling the tensions embedded in sanctioning an expansive military imperial project in the region amidst the context of global decolonization, Article Five butted up against Article Six, which delineated how the United States would support the region’s inhabitants towards self determination. Article Six detailed a variety of support measures that included political education, health care, support for economic sustainability, protection against discrimination, and protection against native land loss.15 Land destruction, displacement and disease resulting from the US nuclear testing campaign in the Marshall Islands most tragically exemplified early on which of these article mandates would become the US priority.

#### There’s ample literature on the question of nuclear weapons, Empire, and settler colonialism.

Jacobs 22 – Historian of science and technology at the Hiroshima Peace Institute and Graduate School of Peace Studies at Hiroshima City University.

Robert Jacobs, 2022, “Chapter 3: Falling Apart Inside,” in *Nuclear Bodies.*

When people are dislocated from traditional lands, their losses transcend the material. Community and familial identities can be deeply tied to the historical and mythic origins of specific places. This includes connections to landscape, food sources and flavors, weather patterns, and countless other dynamics that shape local patterns of living and meaningmaking. “Songs encode rich knowledge of the social and ecological worlds of Aboriginal people living in the arid interior of the Australian continent, a desert with one of the most variable rainfalls in the world,” explained a 2019 study. “People have shaped the ecology of this region in continuous feedback loops over many generations such that there is nowadays a complex system of interdependence between cultural practices and the local ecosystems. Singing traditions are an integral part of the spiritual health of the ecosystem and the means by which biocultural knowledge is carried on over many generations and through shifting social and ecological contexts.”58 The Pitjantjatjara people, who live in the region of South Australia where the British tested nuclear weapons, have lived on their lands for tens of thousands of years. This part of the desert outback is a difficult environment in which to live, with limited wildlife or plants for food and very little water. However, communities have lived and thrived in this area, in part because of the high value of information that is passed from generation to generation via stories and songs:

Returning to country with nguraritja, people belonging to that place, is like walking into the land as a multi-dimensional text . . . ; the marks of the ancestors’ footprints are clear to see for those who have memorised the long song sagas that recount the ancestors’ activities at sites along their travelling routes. A trained eye notes the subtle signs of the human hand in the clearing of vegetation around sacred sites, stone arrangements, engraved or painted marks on rocks or cave walls. The cultural landscape is not one of constructed temples and monuments, but rather the land itself is imbued with religious significance. The interconnectivity of humans and the sentient land is celebrated in song, story and dance. The land comes alive as the places, food and water sources created by the ancestors are re-energised through caring for Tjukurpa in place and spirit. . . . Western Desert peoples lived lightly on the land, their only possessions those that they could carry as they traversed the land seasonally. The desert environment is characterised by low rainfall with cycles of plenty followed by long droughts, cycles of boom and bust. Survival for humans depended on high mobility and knowledge of water and food sources across vast tracts of country. 59

When the British, and Australians, removed the families of the Maralinga and Oak Valley communities from their traditional lands to use them for nuclear weapon testing, they were also fracturing bonds that extended through both space and time between the families, ancestors, and the ecosystem. These bonds can be rebuilt, but the trauma of the disruption is a violence braided into the radiological violence of the nuclear weapon tests. The ancient web of sustenance provided by the songs was itself attacked. The people who had been displaced from their land were not envisioned by the authorities as being embedded in the landscape or of thriving because of the living memory culture they inherited through mythic narration and song; they were dismissed as primitive. “In the interests of the testing program, it was decided to curtail the movements of those Aboriginal people traversing the Maralinga area. In addition, a number were taken to a reserve which had recently been established at Yalata, some distance to the south, across the transcontinental railway line,” writes political scientist Peter Grabosky. 60

In addition to being removed from their homeland, they were confronted with how the land was then treated: “Equally significant was their awareness that their land and its sacred sites and water-holes were being devastated by enormous explosions; the emotional and psychological stress that this certainly engendered has never been, and can probably never be, properly evaluated.” Anthropologist Kingsley Palmer notes the deliberate nature of this neglect: “The potential effects of the bomb tests on the sacred sites and on the socio-religious life of Aborigines was ignored because it was considered irrelevant. According to [Australian anthropologist Adolphus P.] Elkin, in time Aborigines would leave their traditional ways and lifestyle behind, and all of its associations, and would develop into ‘modern’ men and women with singular and identifiable characteristics.”61 Witnessing the nuclear detonations being conducted on sacred land, modernity appeared barbaric.

When the Marshallese were removed from their home atolls and unable to return, both knowledge and connection to place were lost. “Knowledge of the tide, the climate, the weather, the winds, the stars have accumulated independently on each atoll. Voyages relying on specific stars differ for every atoll. And this knowledge is not shared by all residents of each atoll but basically handed down from generation to generation from one person to one person.” This knowledge loss was accompanied by less use and manufacture of canoes. These simple and powerful tools of transportation and food production marked a significant disruption of cultural and interpersonal bonds, as they were the primary means of visiting family on distant atolls and arranging marriages.62 Musicologist Jessica Schwartz analyzes Marshallese songs and points out how the relationship of the community to land and ancestral space, as well as historical violence, is embedded into the lyrical structure of many traditional and modern songs. She describes the lyrics of the song “Ailiñ eo in” (This is our atoll), which was “composed as a celebratory gesture in anticipation of the Rongelapese visit to their homeland around 2004–5.” Schwartz explains that “The abstracted territory is the core of the song, and the spatial instability of an abstract territory is reaffirmed in the final verse: ‘Where are you now? Where am I now? Between death and life, phase one, and phase two, they are still in front of us.’ The phrase ‘between death and life’ (ikotaan mej im mour) references ‘Ioon, ioon miadi kan,’ and it refers to both the people and the land as being between death and life. The land and the people, as between death and life, are the relational space themselves.”63

Mary X. Mitchell comments on how the people of Enewetak explained to US military commanders that seeing nuclear detonation craters on their land was equivalent to a medical patient awakening to find that doctors had amputated a limb without their knowledge or consent: “They explained, ‘In Enewetakese culture man and his atoll environment—land, lagoon, sea and sky—are one integrated whole.”64 Nuclear disruptions rippled throughout Pacific society: “I think that the issue of nuclear testing here has accelerated that rejection of our traditional medicine,” explained Roland Oldham, the leader of the French Polynesian hibakusha group Moruroa e Tatou, reflecting on how traditional practices and wellness were slipping away, “especially when you get told, you have to take this tablet or you’re gonna die. Today, we have to go through certificate doctors. If your grandmother is a healer, no good. Even if she has a cure, it’s just no good. You don’t exist.”65

### Aff---Eco-criticism

#### A salient debate on both sides of the literature exists for ecological critiques of nuclear weapons. Teams can criticize the ecological impacts of nuclear weapons production, coupled with persuasive and impactful data for their impact arguments.

Thomson and Samuels-Jones 22 – Ryan Thomson is an Assistant Professor of Rural Sociology in the College of Agriculture at Auburn University. Tameka Samuels-Jones is Assistant Professor in the School of Administrative Studies at York University. (“Toxic Colonialism in the Territorial Isles: A Geospatial Analysis of Environmental Crime Across U.S. Territorial Islands 2013–2017,” 2022, pg. 472-473) julian

In 2019, research from Columbia University (Hughes et al., 2019) revealed that radiation levels across much of the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean were higher than areas impacted by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The formerly pristine islands became an unwilling home to 67 US nuclear bomb tests during the Cold War and now, decades later, continues to suffer the radioactive impacts of these tests. Prior to 1856, unincorporated territories were previously called “overseas possessions” and they have historically been treated as such.

The indigenous inhabitants of Bikini Atoll endured decades of occupation from missionaries, Spanish, German, and Japanese Navies; but everything changed when the United States (US) took control following WWII. In 1946, Navy Commodore Ben Wyatt pressured King Juda and the islands 167 inhabitants into temporarily relocating from their ancestral lands to the nearby uninhabited Rongerik Atoll with minimal supplies and the promise they could return (Kiste, 1974). The resettlement failed and the Bikinians starved; they were then relocated to Kili Island (1948), then Kwajalein Atoll (1948), back to Kili (1948), and partially to Jaluit (1949), (Niedenthal, 2001). Weeks after the initial relocation, the US began experimenting with thermonuclear hydrogen bombs and radioactive fallout on Bikini Atoll. A 1945 Naval environmental impact assessment report asserted that “no measurable amount of radioactivity” would be released into the Pacific Ocean (Branch, 1984). However, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) would detonate 23 nuclear bombs for a combined fission yield of over 42.2megatons: and another 43 tests on nearby Enewetak Atoll for an additional 31.8megatons. The US’s three largest nuclear detonations took place on Bikini and the fourth in Enewetak (Bauer & O’Reilly, 2016). Each of the 67 tests constituted an ecological disaster.

Castle Bravo was the outlier, the 15m megaton blast (three times its expected size) was the largest US detonation ever with the worst nuclear fallout in history (Weisgall, 1994). The explosion created a 1.2-mile-wide crater and entirely vaporized Bokonijien, Aerokojlol, and Nam islands (Weisgall, 1994). Fallout quickly spread around the world and was recorded as far away as Europe, India, and the US (DeGroot, 2004). Radioactive powder from Bravo snowed on other Marshall Islands contaminating Rongelap, Alinginea, Utirik, and Rongerik atolls (where the Bikini inhabitants were residing). Rongelap and Rongerik Atolls were evacuated 2 days after the detonation, but the residents of the more distant Utrik Atoll were not evacuated for 3 days (Cronkite et al., 1997). Approximately 90% of Rongelap children that were under 12 years of age at the time of the Bravo detonation developed thyroid tumors and more than 40% of exposed Marshallese developed thyroid problems and other abnormalities (McHale, 1981; Thaman, 1988). These dentonations are still reporting significant lasting genetic abnormalities and cancerous impacts from the fallout over a half-century later (Simon et al., 2010).

When the US ceased testing on the islands in 1958, the radioactive Bikini was used as a graveyard for 95 ships and 150 airplanes (Guyer, 2001). However, the densest concentration of nuclear waste (approximately 85,000 cubic meters) was placed in the 1958 “Cactus” crater on Renuit Enewetak; referred to simply as “the dome” (Wargo, 2009). In 1968 after being told Bikini was safe, a group of elders and their extended families (roughly 100 people) returned to the island. Exposure to radioactive isotopes resulted in miscarriages, still births, genetic abnormalities, and numerous deaths until they were evacuated a second time in 1978 (Niedenthal, 2001). The inhabitants of Bikini have resided on Kili ever since and remain dependent on imports since the island does not provide enough food (Niedenthal, 2001). The relocation of the inhabitants of Bikini exemplify experiences of many environmental refugees and complex links between environmental harms and green victimology (Hall, 2020). When the US decided to use Bikini Atoll as a nuclear testing site, the military governor of the Marshall Islands persuaded islanders to leave “for the good of all mankind.” as it seemed unlikely that the residents of Bikini would ever be able to return, given the high radiation levels. (Niedenthal, 2001; Sumner, 2016). In true colonial fashion, the narrative advanced by US representatives at the time was that the Marshallese left their homes voluntarily (Robison et al., 1997). When the inhabitants of Enewetak returned in 1980, they shared the island with the leaking contents of the dome which is increasingly exacerbated by intense storms and rising sea levels (Willacy, 2017).

#### There’s also so many solvency mechanisms for affs under this subsection of the topic.

Packer 21 – Melina Packer is a Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of California, Riverside. (“Chemical Agents: The Biopolitical Science of Toxicity,” 2019, pg. 34-35) julian

Critical historians and practitioners are increasingly unsettling Western onto-epistemology (including the natural and social sciences), situating the development of this worldview in legacies of imperialism and its attendant schemes of racialization and sexualization.4 Historicizing the scientific enterprise in this way compels re-analysis of knowledge producers as well as knowledge produced. Phenomena such as “the” body or chemical are inextricable from the social relations that conceive them (Barad 2007). Toxicants are thus better understood as “imperial formations” (Stoler 2008) than as preextant or discrete entities, for it was racialized and sexualized projects of empire (Anderson 2006; Lugones 2007; Markowitz 2001) that seeded what is now widely referred to as “Science,” inclusive of its material and semiotic objects. This historical emergence means that, in addition to toxic exposures, the toxicant too is racialized and sexualized. How might critical thinkers and EJ activists proceed from this “permanently polluted” place (Liboiron et al. 2018)?

Indigenous and postcolonial scholars rightfully insist that research methods be as committed to decentering Euro-Americanness as research topics (Lyons et al. 2017; Tuck and Yang 2012). In response to these calls, a growing community of engaged researchers are building from empire and empirics critiques to productively dismantle disciplinary boundaries. Scholar-activists such as Kim Fortun (2014), Nicholas Shapiro and colleagues (2017), Katherine McKittrick (2015, 2021), and Julie Sze (2020) are among those who insist on repoliticizing the depoliticized quantifications of dominant science by way of nonhierarchical collaboration between physical scientists, social scientists, humanists, artists, activists, and other “creatives” (Prescod-Weinstein and McKittrick 2021). Empire and empirics analyses further reveal that “living in a toxic world” (Nading 2020) includes radical forms of care work. Caitlynn Beckett and Arn Keeling (2019) rethink the kinds of toxin removal projects critically analyzed by Balayannis (2020), for example, by insisting on new forms of remediation that are “ongoing, creative [processes] of community healing” (2019: 216). Reframing remediation processes as ongoing, rather than as finite events delimited by the bureaucratic technics of toxic cleanup, centers public participation and the affected public’s EJ demands. Nerea Calvillo’s (2018) ethnographic work in Madrid, Spain, likewise calls attention to different ways of attuning to toxicity. In response to government offi - cials moving air pollution monitors so that less was officially tallied, Madrid residents acted in collective ways to “shift the focus from asking ‘what is toxic?’ to asking ‘what do we need to know about the toxic to act?’” (Calvillo 2018: 374). Resonant with Lyons (2018), Manuel Tironi (2018) highlights “intimate” forms of activism, documenting the small yet powerful acts of care-work-as-resistance that marginalized Chilean residents engage in, such as cleaning chemical residues off their tenderly cultivated gardens or healing their loved ones’ toxicant-induced ailments. Tironi urges EJ advocates to acknowledge these “hypo-interventions” and “intimate activism” as care-full forms of everyday resistance to the unavoidable, unending crises of permanent pollution.

Critical scholars more identified with the natural sciences are also studying toxicity differently. For example, Max Liboiron’s Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research (CLEAR) practices generative methods of toxicant research that are at once feminist, queer, anticolonial, and firmly grounded in the material realities of unjust exposures (CLEAR 2017a). CLEAR studies do not simply measure the quantity of plastics polluting a given fish system, for instance, but also intentionally include the colonial legacies that produce these ongoing toxic relations, and meaningfully involve local residents, embracing their different sets of expertise (Liboiron 2020b). Sara Wylie’s (2018) Public Laboratory for Open Technology and Science (Public Lab) engages in community-based, participatory scientifi c knowledge production as well, using “low cost, do-it-yourself environmental monitoring tools.” Cleo Woelfle-Erskine’s (2020) Feminist Research in Eco-Social-Hydrologies (FRESH) lab conscientiously experiments in ways that make Black, Indigenous, queer, and trans liberation movements central to urban ecological restoration, or what they term “science for the riparian dispossessed.” Whether through “improvisational realism” filmmaking (Povinelli 2015), Tribal protocol (as opposed to colonial/university-defined Institutional Review Boards; Hoover 2017), intersectional feminist lab meetings (CLEAR 2017b; Woelfle-Erskine 2020), or DIY environmental-monitoring tools (Wylie 2018), undisciplined, engaged scholarship refuses—and prefigures alternatives to—the technocratic abstractions and obfuscations generated by official risk assessment, remediation, or accountability regimes (see Mansfield 2021). In sum, approaches like bioethnography (Roberts and Sanz 2018) and chemo-ethnography (Shapiro and Kirksey 2017), or the participatory practices of CLEAR and Public Lab, produce scientific knowledge with intention, rejecting the dominant view of science as disinterested and acultural. Expanding early feminist analyses of the situatedness of all knowledge (Haraway 1988), even that which makes claims to objectivity (Harding 1995), today’s critical feminist studies of toxicity embrace care and collaboration out of their recognition that (embodied) experiences, practices, and knowledges are always incommensurable and nevertheless valid.

Such transdisciplinary eff orts are not without their challenges, from unsupportive academic departments to funding scarcities to government-led attempts to “cancel” critical race theory (Goldberg 2021). Moreover, given that tens of thousands of toxicants are currently circulating (Birnbaum 2013), many of which will never disappear even once production ends, vital questions endure: who is to be held accountable and how do “we” (Liboiron 2020a) move on when toxic effects are forever? Empire and empirics analyses help reveal care work and collaboration as liberatory pathways through today’s bio-chemical-political predicaments. In the poetic phrasing of Black feminist theorist Saidiya Hartman: “[Care] is the antidote to violence” (Kaba 2017). Toxicants cannot be put back in their bottles, but cultural-scientific spaces can center the embodied experiences of frontline communities and relational onto-epistemologies of other/ed cosmogonies. Clearly, the dominant Western approach to toxicants has not adequately protected environmental health. I encourage conventionally trained scientists to more care-fully and collaboratively confront the biochemical and the biopolitical of toxicity. We may all learn from cultural scholars, artists, and EJ activists to better understand toxicants’ imperial formations and unruly residues, and rise to the challenges that such creative, undisciplined studies demand. Only through truly decolonizing actions will we co-create more pleasurable, livable lives on a swiftly turning planet.

### Aff---Fem IR

#### Feminist approaches to nuclear policy allow affs to link gendered understandings of war and nuclear weapons to colonialism

Choi and Eschle 22 – Shine Choi is Lecturer in Politics and International Relations, Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand. She is also Associate Editor for International Feminist Journal of Politics. Catherine Eschle is a Senior Lecturer, School of Government and Public Policy, University of Strathclyde. (“Rethinking global nuclear politics, rethinking feminism,” 2022, pg. 1133-1137) julian

What might a feminist approach that takes coloniality seriously reveal about global nuclear politics? To help us answer that question, we draw from diverse sources, not only on postcolonial theorizing in IR but also on decolonial thought;20 on nuclear imperialism and colonialism;21 on critical literary, area, and race and ethnic studies;22 and on Indigenous studies and perspectives.23

We begin with what seems the most aobviously striking characteristic of nuclear technologies and particularly nuclear weapons—their destructiveness. A feminist approach reframes our understanding of that destructiveness in two ways. On the one hand, it leads us to reconceptualize the temporality of destruction, which dominant discourses contain in the long-since past of the Second World War, or within a speculative future.24 Nuclear apocalypse is, rather, a lived reality of the contemporary global order, experienced daily by communities who live with the consequences of each stage of the ‘nuclear fuel chain’—the mining, processing, storage and waste disposal of radioactive materials— and of the testing of nuclear bombs. As Māori campaigner Titewhai Harawira put it in 1985 when describing the experiences of Indigenous people across the Pacific region, this is ‘a nuclear war that we’ve been forced to live in for forty years’.25 Those targeted in this war—‘radiogenic communities’, as Barbara Rose Johnston has described them26— have been ‘ selected because of their subaltern status. This was the result of their race, their socio-economic status, and their location at the peripheries of what was defined as civilization.’ 27 As a result, such communities suffer health impacts passed down through generations, in part through the damage caused by ionizing radiation to women’s reproductive systems and hence to their children.28 Moreover, the land which radiogenic communities call home has also been targeted for nuclear destruction, not just for occupation but often for physical annihilation, through the ‘largescale terra-deforming, excavating, biociding, mining, transporting, detonating, stockpiling, and waste disseminating and disposing associated with nuclear energies and weaponry’.29 We might thus interpret nuclear technologies as a key instrument of modern ‘necropolitics’, in which sovereignty is articulated through ongoing, deathly violence against a racialized other and the Earth itself.30

On the other hand, a feminist approach that takes coloniality seriously should also question the commonplace assumption that nuclear technologies are uniquely destructive. Shampa Biswas has argued that the routine separation of nuclear weapons ‘from the category of “normal”, that is, “conventional weapons”, functions to fetishize the former, disguising their materiality and removing them from their embeddedness in social, cultural, and economic networks and relations’.31 We are reminded by Biswas, and other feminist and postcolonial scholars who make gender, race and coloniality their foci, that nuclear weapons are sustained by broader processes of necropolitical war-making, militarism and politics that normalize violence against those who can be marked as subhuman, surplus and other.32 In this way, nuclear weapons are returned from the realm of the exceptional to the mundane, and to the political. Moreover, if we pay attention to the view from the radiogenic communities most affected by nuclear politics, we are reminded that the destructive impacts of nuclear weapons and the nuclear fuel chain compose just one moving part in a series of catastrophes inflicted by coloniality.33 From this perspective, it becomes difficult and indeed undesirable to separate out the nuclear issue from the broader challenges facing the people entangled in these specific locations, and correspondingly to separate out anti-nuclear struggles from other demands for justice and self-determination.

It is important to acknowledge at this point that there is no one homogeneous category of radiogenic community, or of colonized peoples, which allows easy analogous comparisons among them as nuclear victims. For instance, peoples still struggling for self-determination and self-governance—such as the Indigenous communities in the occupied territories of Hawai‘i, Guam/Guahan and the Marshall Islands; First Nations and Aboriginal peoples; or Uyghur communities—experience nuclear impacts today differently from those in postcolonial states and their diaspora who achieved political independence through the decolonization that started in the middle of the twentieth century.34 Indeed, the discourse of nuclear victimization can get in the way of criticizing the specificity of political structures underpinning experiences of victimhood, that is, of how the colonial matrix of power plays out in different contexts, shaped by different global and local histories. Christine Hong’s critical analysis of the case of Japanese hibakusha (victims of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) in relation to US empire secured by its military force in the Pacific is illustrative.35 Works like Hong’s show us how feminist interrogations need to be attentive to the connections and disconnections between locations that arise as a result of the colonial matrix of power. As a further example, we note the ‘transoceanic fluidarity’ of the movement for a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific,36 which emerged from a conference in Suva, Fiji, in 1975, and was for many years an umbrella for struggles against nuclear testing and dumping, and for self-determination, across Pacific island communities.37 We note also the relative disconnection of Mā’ohi Nui communities fighting French nuclear testing from this network and subsequent regional initiatives.38

Feminist understandings of the destructive impacts of nuclear technologies gain depth when we further contextualize them in relation to feminist interrogations of the discursive dimensions of nuclear politics, and particularly the gendered, racialized and colonial tropes that render nuclear destruction sayable and doable. On this point, the feminist critique of what has been called ‘nukespeak’, involving the use of ‘abstractions, technical jargon, acronyms, metaphors, playful euphemisms, meaning-laden weapons names and titles, and the wide use of passive voice’,39 is already well known. As articulated in Cohn’s pioneering analysis, the discursive mechanisms of nukespeak delegitimize ‘the emotional, the concrete, the particular, human bodies and their vulnerability, human lives and their subjectivity—all of which are marked as feminine in the binary dichotomies of gender discourse’ and thus become unsayable within the dominant frameworks for discussing nuclear weapons.40 Other feminists have integrated postcolonial insights to show how these gendered discursive dichotomies are overlain with an Orientalist imaginary, which enables the representation of states in the global South, especially those contesting or attempting to join the nuclear hierarchy, as feminized, irrational and immature.41

Or take ‘nuclear deterrence’, the notion that the utility of nuclear weapons lies not in their use in war but in the credible threat of their use and capacity to deter aggression from others. Deterrence discourse is propounded by advocates as guaranteeing not only the national security of states that possess nuclear weapons but also world peace. From the vantage-point of the kind of feminist perspective we advocate here, deterrence is not only narrowly reliant on masculinist rationality in its interpretation of state motivation, but also a topsy-turvy doctrine in which weapons of mass destruction wielded by the most powerful states are positioned as essential to peace, civilian populations kept in a state of terror, and the boundary between war and peace thoroughly blurred.42 Finally, what about ‘nuclearism’, which legitimates ‘the entire complex of nuclear weapons testing, research and development, production, stockpiling, and waste disposal from nuclear weapons development and nuclear power plants’,43 through a multi-pronged faith in and desire for nuclear technologies?44 We learn from scholarship that begins with the colonial matrix of power and the empire-making politics of states such as the US and France that the desirability of nuclear technologies for states in the global South is linked to reactive modernization, ‘catching up’ and redressing the colonial wound of humiliation, all variously linked to nationalist projects.45 For imperial powers, this desirability is linked to securing ‘prestige’ and ‘grandeur through nuclear and other technologies’ in the face of either waning imperial ‘radiance’ (in the case of France), or assertion as a new imperial power (in the case of the US).46 Nuclearism’s discursive connection to colonial and postcolonial identity constructions also has gendered dimensions. Anaïs Maurer, for example, has shown how French nuclear adventurism in the Pacific has leant heavily on stereotyped imagery of the sexuality and bodies of Indigenous Pacific islander women, rooted in the symbolic economy of past colonial exploration and the myth of the South Seas paradise, while also obscuring the impact of nuclear testing on actual women’s bodies.47

#### And a variety of mechanisms for this area too.

Choi and Eschle 22 – Shine Choi is Lecturer in Politics and International Relations, Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand. She is also Associate Editor for International Feminist Journal of Politics. Catherine Eschle is a Senior Lecturer, School of Government and Public Policy, University of Strathclyde. (“Rethinking global nuclear politics, rethinking feminism,” 2022, pg. 1137-1139) julian

As Maurer’s work indicates, simply studying discourse on its own is insufficient for a feminist approach that takes coloniality seriously. This takes us to the final theme we want to explore in this section: how feminist IR must also attend to the ways in which nuclear technologies are dependent on and help to sustain the material relations of colonial and postcolonial power arrangements. One way to do so would be to engage with the literature on ‘nuclear colonialism’. This concept, which emerged from Indigenous studies, indicates ‘a system of domination through which governments and corporations disproportionately target and devastate indigenous peoples and their lands to maintain the nuclear production process’.48 According to its critics, nuclear colonialism is pursued internally, within nuclear states, as well as externally; relies on the continued control of territory; and is underpinned by a racist imaginary that positions subaltern, non-white and especially Indigenous communities as invisible and/or disposable.49 Taking this analytic seriously would push feminist scholars to contextualize their accounts of nuclear discourses in global processes of dispossession and the use of force at the root of supposedly rule-based political relations.

To help with this task, we can draw in addition on a body of critical feminist research that brings coloniality to centre stage when explaining the militarism and war theatre of nuclear powers in the Pacific and beyond.50 Across regions and despite a changing cast of testing states in lands that are not their own, in deserts, oceans and skies deemed terra nullius, nuclear powers have effectively pursued nuclear testing in the Pacific as a form of neo-colonial war in the post-Cold War era, with the enforced participation of people in both colonized territories and postcolonial states.51 Feminist research into this phenomenon has revealed, for example, how US military bases within US states or territories (Hawai’i, Guam) or supposedly independent territories or states (Okinawa, South Korea, the Philippines) produce analogous effects on local women, whether they are at home or travelling through the corridors these bases create.52 The violence and terror inflicted on these women’s lives, and their claims to life beyond coloniality, need to be understood in the context of neo-colonial dispossession that rids them of a language in which to assert self-determination. Importantly, such a language would also have to exceed racialized and gendered categories. After all, ‘gender’, ‘race’ and even sexuality among others are colonial categories that need to undergo decolonial delinking.53

Trinh T. Minh-Ha’s creative theoretical intervention on US wars, Lovecidal: walking with the disappeared, helps us crystallize the argument we are building in this section. 54 A film-maker and theorist, Trinh pieces together and pulls apart the discourses from US-led wars—Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, the ‘war on terror’— to map out ‘the profoundly unsettling nooks and corners in the netherworld of consciousness’ in the war story, in order to get to what is actually going on and accomplished through wars.55 One of her bricolages, which is Trinh’s main method of working with texts, helps to flip on their head the assumptions about nuclear politics and their relation to militarism that have run through this article thus far:

Compelled to reassure their citizens about the legality of their own spying activities when given access to information collected by Washington, they [US allies] are also left in deep quandary about American global power politics in what Germany’s liberal Süddeutsche Zeitung considers ‘the worst imaginable nuclear accident for legality and Atlanticism’.56

Rather than enquiring into how nuclear weapons perpetuate war and militarism, or vice versa, this almost accidental appearance of nuclear imagery in Trinh’s rendering of the ‘war on terror’ discourse shows us that nuclear weapons (like the multiple and ongoing US-led wars) are a symptom of ‘the profound crisis of our civilization—a crisis far more dangerous than the nuke nightmare itself—[in which] man forgets to be man ... one finds oneself living by one’s shadow, hiding and drifting dazed as one witnesses one’s own participation in the darkest side of humanity’s inhumanity’.57 Trinh is here pointing to the cruelty that underlies power politics, and to power politics not as the cause of war but as war. Her kind of creative, holistic approach to studying politics, history and war reminds feminist and postcolonial enquiries to stay attuned to this deeper crisis in political consciousness. In other words, although mapping imperial government activities, corporate and institutionalized forms of power, and the colonial logics under pinning them, might tell us what is occurring in plain sight, Trinh’s exploration encourages us to search for what lies beyond existing stories or official documents, undetectable to the eye, and thus to move towards the darkest ‘nooks and corners in the netherworld of consciousness’.

### Aff---Masco / Nuclear Nationalism

#### One approach allows teams to use the frame of “nuclear nationalism” to critique the U.S.’s technocratic drive to master the world around us

Masco 21 (Joseph Masco - Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, “The Future of Fallout, and Other Episodes in Radioactive Worldmaking”, Duke University Press, Pages 232-235, 2021, MG)

It is important to pause here for a moment to ask, **what was that Enlightenment dream again—the one about human mastery of nature, accelerating revolutions in science and technology, and the ultimate perfectibility of Man?** In the mid-twentieth century, **the splitting of the atom seemed to supercharge this imaginary in the United States, signaling the imminent arrival of superabundance, promising continuing breakthroughs in health, energy, and a consumer economy. After 1945, Americans embraced a dream world based in nuclear nationalism and petrochemical capitalism that, if it did not end in the fiery flash of nuclear war, would push relentlessly and inevitably toward a perfected capitalist society. This was the first “Age of Man”—a nuclearpowered fantasy that miraculously transformed an unprecedented destructive force into the expectation of a world without limits. The new rational order of science and engineering would remake everyday life in all its qualities, generating a series of new frontiers to be sequentially colonized, linking extractive industries to new urban landscapes to global communication and transportation systems to outer space in a spasm of industrial-scale worldmaking.** Pause, just for a moment, to consider the intoxicating rush of this conceptual enterprise, the creative energy of making things that work on this kind of scale, of believing that people could finally shape reality rather than merely submit to it. **The nuclear revolution promised to remake war, health, energy, and security, inaugurating a new golden age of human achievement in which long-standing social problems would fall in rapid order to the combined achievements of American technoscience.**

The physicist Edward Teller, chief architect and advocate of the Plowshare program, put it succinctly to a broad American readership in Popular Mechanics magazine: “We’re going to work miracles” (1960, 97). For Teller, weather control is not out of the question in 1960, and the global environ- ment is positioned as an unruly domain that will be sorted out in short order via the explosive power of nuclear science. His vision is galactic and transcendent, identifying an earthly landscape to be remade for human commerce and convenience, as well as a communist foe to be endlessly fought via military nuclear power. As perhaps the most vigorous twentieth-century advocate for nuclear weapons, Teller pushed for hydrogen bomb development in Los Alamos before the first atomic explosion was achieved in July 1945. The United States built Teller his own California research facility in 1952: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory was designed to be competition for Los Alamos in the field of nuclear weapons science, but also a place for Teller to pursue his vision of the nuclear revolution.

For the next forty years, Teller argued in favor of **one high-tech weapons system after another and against every nonproliferation and disarmament effort**. Indeed, he promised presidents from Truman to Reagan that **weapons science would fix the problem of the nuclear age—the minute-to-minute possibility of global nuclear war—not by eliminating the bomb but by perfecting it. Resistant to test bans and dismissing radioactive fallout concerns,** Teller **provided a rationale for a vigorous arms race with the Soviet Union while also promising a world remade via the benefits of nuclear science. By the 1980s he convinced President Reagan that the way out of the Cold War’s nuclear danger was to embrace yet another technological revolution, a socalled “third wave” of nuclear science after those of the atomic and thermonuclear breakthroughs** (Broad 1992). Teller proposed to surround the earth with space-based lasers that could destroy Soviet missiles on launch in midair, a proposal that President Reagan embraced as the Strategic Defense Initiative, nicknamed Star Wars (which in lesser forms continues as a research project to this day without objective success despite hundreds of billions of dollars spent on research). Reagan ultimately chose to pursue the Strategic Defense Initiative over President Gorbachev’s proposal that the United States and USSR simply dismantle their nuclear arsenals by the year 2000 (FitzGerald 2000).

**In his commitment to remaking the world through nuclear weapons science, Teller approached the earth system as something that was filled with vital resources but deficient in significant ways.** In 1958 he proposed the concept of “geographical engineering” to overcome such natural barriers to commerce, launching Operation Plowshare at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (Teller et al. 1968). The timing of his proposal was sublime, coming **in the midst of worldwide fears about nuclear war as well as amplifying worries about the health and environmental effects of radioactive fallout from atmospheric nuclear detonations, and as the United States and USSR began discussions about a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Thus, Plowshare offered a positive image of nuclear detonations in the midst of intensifying global nuclear fear, offering a vision of a world that—if it could just avoid nuclear war or permanently damaging the biosphere and humanity via radioactive fallout—might be a utopia for industry, commerce, and society. At a historical moment of maximum nuclear terror** (with biologists discussing the effects of nuclear testing on the human genome, civil defense asking citizens to regularly rehearse nuclear war, **and a geopolitics of nuclear intimidation underpinning Cold War conflicts around the world**), Plowshare was offered as a means of recapturing the utopian potential of the bomb. **Teller sought to publicly transform the bomb from a global menace to a vital form of capitalist creative destruction.**

**In the current expert search for the golden spike of the Anthropocene— that indelible marker in the strata of planet Earth that will end the Holocene epoch in favor of a new Age of Man—earth scientists are increasingly focused on the radioactive signature of early Cold War nuclear explosion**s (see Bonneuil and Fressoz 2016). Earth scientists report that plutonium from atmospheric nuclear explosions will be “identifiable in sediments and ice for the next 100,000 years” and have identified a sharp spike in cesium, strontium, and plutonium beginning in 1952 with the first thermonuclear detonation (see Waters et al. 2016). **This Anthropocene—this new Age of Man—by infusing political time with geological time now threatens to swallow whole historical eras like the Cold War, transforming that planetary-scale national competition into a permanent postnatural formation visible in the stratigraphy of the earth.**

November 1, 1952, is the date on which the first thermonuclear explosion, known as Ivy Mike, was detonated by the United States at Eniwetok Atoll. Designed by Edward Teller and Stanislaw Ulam, it produced a ten-megaton detonation that created a mushroom cloud twenty-five miles high and one hundred miles wide. The fallout from Ivy Mike circled the globe and remains so comprehensive that it offers today one key marker of planetary-scale industrial effects. This explosion is now part of a nested series of temporalities: it is the start of a thermonuclear age inside an already established atomic age, a key moment in the Cold War, and now one possible anchor for a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene.

Teller’s **vision of a world transformed by nuclear science has come true but in a highly perverse fashion. For we all now live in a world that is still capable of nuclear war and that is marked by the plutonium, strontium, and cesium of Cold War–era nuclear weapons tests. It is a world still committed to ever more dangerous forms of resource extraction (deep-water drilling and hydraulic fracturing) and is increasingly interested in a geoengineering fix to the resulting damage to the earth system from a petrochemical-based economy. Transformed by the nuclear modernist visions of the mid-twentieth century, earth systems are now influenced in ways subtle and profound by industrial activity**. Thus, perhaps our increasingly dangerous era is best thought of as a specific industrial-modernist achievement—the Age of Man as the materialized dreamscape of one radical but highly influential man— a Teller-ocene.

#### Calls to get rid of nuclear weapons challenge the violent worldviews underpinning the nuclear state

Masco 21 (Joseph Masco - Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, “The Future of Fallout, and Other Episodes in Radioactive Worldmaking”, Duke University Press, Pages 292-299, 2021, MG)

**It is hard to describe the extraordinary conceptual, financial, and industrial energy empowering this system**. Literally **millions of experts, designers, engineers, military personnel, and politicians were coordinated through nuclear logics, need-to-know command and control systems, and the politics of shock. The nervous system of the nuclear state has also always been actually nervous—a quivering universe of experts building systems for, and imaginatively rehearsing over and over again, apocalyptic scenarios**. The study of shakes and shaking also has meant quivering and worrying, threatening and bullying on a global scale. A total social formation, **the U.S. nuclear project remade American politics, science, environment, and emotions, informing today how business, defense, education, geopolitics, and danger itself are now understood** (see Masco 2014).

**The affective universe produced by the nuclear revolution has always been one of its most powerful achievements. In 1945, the future became radically split for Americans between apocalyptic visions of nuclear war and utopian hopes for advanced technology and a world without war**. Key moments of global nuclear terror—1955, 1962, 1983, to locate a few famous geopolitical emergency moments—turned international order into a quivering system, beset by worst-case scenarios and nightmare visions of the end. **However, we tend to forget today how energizing the bomb was for activists of all political agendas. From the late 1950s on, the fight to denuclearize the world empowered and linked social movements devoted to peace, the environment, and human rights. Nuclear fear and the critique of Cold War militarism enabled vast networks of actors to see each other as allies, mobilizing alternative notions of society and the future in ways that have also foundationally remade American society across race, gender, justice, and the environment** (see Zaretsky 2018).

**Activists marched by the millions from the late 1950s through the end of the Cold War, sympathetically linked by national security affect and the desire for a dif­ferent and better world** (see Wittner 2009). **Some of these protests started small, as when a few women took their children to the park in New York in the late 1950s** instead of practicing the end of the world in civil defense drills. **The Mothers against the Bomb movement brought gender into antinuclear activism** immediately, as did protests from inner-city groups noticing that atomic civil defense was focused almost exclusively on white suburban families rather than on a **multiracial, urban, and rural Amer- ica. Indigenous and colonial subjects organized globally as their homelands were threatened by nuclear tests, uranium mining, and military expansion. Sexuality was always central to the Cold War system, as officials prosecuted homosexuality as a national security threat and weaponized sex. The politics of radioactive fallout generated similarly foundational concerns about the stability and toxicity of the global environment, energizing activists to protect not only Americans from total nuclear war but also living beings from the cumulative biological** effects of the nuclear test programs themselves.

**The nightmarish world of nuclear danger—which promised to end everything in a radioactive flash—invited everyone to think about the qualities of life and the nature of politics and power, and to articulate their commitments to one another and the future. The bomb became both a symbol of American military power and a direct challenge to a democratic system increasingly organized through the official secrecy, covert actions, and the end-time visions of the Cold War**. People from all walks of life sought to articulate the terms of a better way of living in the face of the Cold War system, a state-based emotional management project seeking to ground Americanness in a specific kind of naturalized militarism, technological determinism, and apocalpyticism. Camping out in front of nuclear production sites and military bases, **some activists devoted their lives to visibly opposing the nuclear state on precisely these terms; others sought to build alliances capable of supporting alternative visions of everyday life not based on managing apocalyptic potentials as a standard mode of politics—opting out, tuning in, mobilizing, critiquing.**

In addition to the protests and marches (and arrests and acts of sabotage), there were explicit opportunities to shake it up. Consider the Give Peace a Dance project, an annual twenty-four-hour dance marathon organized in Seattle in the mid-1980s to raise money for local antinuclear groups as part of the larger Nuclear Freeze campaign seeking a halt to the nuclear arms race. It was formally a “legs against arms” campaign, fighting Cold War doom and gloom with activism, social energy, and humor. Participants organized into costumed teams, collected sponsors, and danced through the night, trading turns on the dance floor to keep their team (and, one could say, antinuclear activism itself) alive. The project soon went global with dance-a-thons for a nuclear-free world occurring on multiple continents. Instead of offering end-of-the-world images, Give Peace a Dance promoted the idea of a denuclearized planet, one that could be free of the minute-to-minute danger of nuclear war.

Art Chantry’s posters for the event immediately became iconic Cold War political statements and constitute perhaps the happiest antinuclear art ever produced. For the 1986 event (see figure 14.5), Chantry created a montage of dance step diagrams (the fox trot, monkey, twist, polka) overlaid against an atomic bomb (marked “the big reason”). Playing off John Lennon’s antiwar song “Give Peace a Chance” (introduced during his famous Bed-Ins for Peace protests with Yoko Ono in 1969), the dance marathon suggested that more collective agency is needed to remake the world, inviting participants to dance their way to a better geopolitics. For the following year’s dance marathon, Chantry famously offered a waltzing, cross-dressing Reagan and Gorbachev, presenting them as couples in a spectacular (anti)nuclear dance (see figures 14.6 and 14.7). These posters play on the October 1986 summit in Reykjavik, Iceland, in which, as leaders of the United States and Soviet Union, Reagan and Gorbachev discussed **a radical end to the Cold War arms race—namely, the complete elimination of nuclear weapons**. Reagan’s commitment to the idea of a space-based laser shield against intercontinental ballistic missiles (known as the Strategic Defense Initiative, or Star Wars) killed the possibility not only of an end to the arms race but also of an affirmative global project of immediate denuclearization. The U.S. has spent hundreds of billions of dollars on space-based missile defense over the past three decades but has not yet produced a viable technology, leaving the world with around fourteen thousand nuclear weapons in 2019.1 Chantry’s posters are subversive not only for imagining Reagan and Gorbachev in drag but also for suggesting that an arms race requires a partner, just as peace requires a dance team.

For his 1988 poster, Chantry literally changed the frame on everyday reality. **A jitterbugging couple, ecstatic in their physical and musical connection, literally kick the bomb out of the frame, creating a disjointed view that points to a new world almost in sight** (see figure 14.8). **Rejecting the rectangular format of the standard poster, Chantry here demands that we change our perception, break with convention, and ignore the rules of the Cold War system. Inviting viewers to “Kick the habit!” and “Vote with your feet!,” the poster promises not just a less violent world but also a happier one without nuclear weapons.** The kinetic energy of dancing and denuclearizing at the same time is **beautifully illustrated as a worldview-altering process, one in which participants are not isolated in the despair of Cold War apocalypticism but rather energized by social action and an elimination of collective dangers. Here the good vibrations involve the coming together of people across class, race, gender, and sexuality to confront military states and argue for a better social contract and an alternative notion of security. The Give Peace a Dance project is the flipside of the international seismic signaling of nuclear tests, a world of technologies, bodies, and affects remade by both fear and promise, sympathetically organizing on behalf of specific futurities.** The excitability of the national subject in the nuclear age—under forms of terror, outrage, and hope—has been as powerful as the technology itself in reshaping American society.

#### These affs can link policy demands to critiques of social imaginary

Masco 21 (Joseph Masco - Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, “The Future of Fallout, and Other Episodes in Radioactive Worldmaking”, Duke University Press, Pages 261-264, 2021, MG)

In a striking passage from his “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” Walter **Benjamin** (1969) **evokes geological time as a way to shift the story of human beings on planet Earth. All human history becomes a brief moment of planetary time from this perspective, which raises the important question of how temporality itself informs the cataclysmic and whether human beings have the right senses to understand collective danger at all.** Prefiguring the language of the Anthropocene, Benjamin **uses geological time to disrupt the time of capital and to reposition humanity as merely one kind of life on planet Earth, a species that may or may not be able to avoid the cataclysmic end most creatures meet.** But if danger incubates in the present, revealing itself in the catastrophic act, **how can we see through a normative everyday to assess accruing danger operating on all possible temporal scales—particularly the forms that people generate and thus could collectively control?** Benjamin suggests that **a radical emancipatory insight is also incubating in the present, a messianic potential that could shift perception itself, allowing a dif­ferent kind of time to emerge, one that is not coded as progress (tied to homogenous empty time) and that is outside of capitalism**. For Benjamin, just as the cataclysmic is coded into everyday life, so is the possibility for a radical shift in perception and with it an emancipatory politics. That this potential has not been activated is, for him, the ongoing state of emergency that he critiques so forcefully. In this way, he shifts the emergency from the narratives of violence that can function as heroic vehicles for self-sacrifice and warfare in the moment to **a more structural assessment of how social institutions normalize and render invisible the violence of capitalism itself. What Benjamin asks us to consider is how social institutions function as an expression and achievement of human engineering, and thus how the human-made can be remade under dif­ferent concepts of value and with dif­ferent futures in mind. Catastrophe’s apocalypse would, in this case, be to see the agentive behind the everyday crisis, to see the possibility of a social order not yet conceived as forestalled in the name of history, class, or the status quo; that is, it would be to think beyond nuclear nationalism and petrochemical capitalism. Catastrophe’s apocalypse would be to enter into a radically dif­ferent temporality, a perspectival space for Benjamin in which structural violence is revealed as manufactured (tied to racial formation, property relations, and imperial state competition), enabling the current moment to be opened as a space of revolutionary critical potential.** From this perspective, perhaps the proliferation of catastrophic images and narratives today has less to say about new objective degrees of endangerment than a shift in the psychosocial mechanisms of normalization and absorption. And here we might focus on a temporal paradox of our security culture today concerning the relation of nuclear danger to climate disruption.

**The nuclear confrontation of the Cold War—the fear of a war that would consume global civilization in an instant—seems distant to many Americans in the twenty-first century, but the technological systems built to enable it are still present and active. The global nuclear infrastructure remains on high alert, and nuclear war could still be launched at a moment’s notice and between ever more nuclear powers.** The presidents of the United States and of Russia still carry launch codes with them every second of the day, and weapons scientists and defense personnel maintain a state-of-the-art global system for nuclear war fighting. Americans tend to see nuclear danger now as an issue of the past, a matter for the last century (replaced by a wide range of terrorist threats). But today there are many more nuclear weapons on the planet than in 1958 when The Power of Decision was made, and the U.S. has committed to maintaining a state-of-the-art arsenal for the indefinite future (see U.S. Department of Energy 2013; Wolfsthal, Lewis, and Quint 2014). Thus, while perceptions of nuclear danger have changed markedly since 1958, the technological possibility of a total ending has only increased in sophistication: Americans live today on the edge of nuclear war and just do not seem to notice it anymore (see McKinzie et al. 2001). **What was once a national fixation on nuclear danger no longer mobilizes in the same way, attaining an embeddedness in everyday life that can be ignored by most citizens in favor of other concerns, other dangers, other fears.**

Similarly, the climate emergency of the twenty-first century was already present in 1958, when The Power of Decision articulated the terms of national nuclear danger and Unchained Goddess warned viewers of a destabilized future environment. In the first decade of the Cold War, earth scientists publicized disturbing trends in their data sets, documenting shifts in air, water, and land quality via industrial pollutants. The debates about radioactive fallout from nuclear testing led in 1963 to the Limited Test Ban Treaty, which moved U.S. nuclear testing underground, eliminating the production of new radioactive fallout from the U.S. test program. However, the larger lesson of how industrial activity was harming the biosphere was left unaddressed as a major security problem for decades. Had climate change risen to the level of a collective emergency in the 1950s, the world would have been spared the coming destabilization of ecosystems, species die-offs, flooding, illness, and drought projected in the ipcc reports. Indeed, climate scientists now identify the mid-twentieth century as the beginning of the “great acceleration”—a period of startling changes in human consumption patterns linked to the advance of the middle class and escalating carbon emissions (Steffen et al. 2011; see also McNeill and Engelke 2014).

In other words, **the inauguration of the global nuclear danger was also the inflection point for global warming, simultaneously installing two catastrophic potentials into everyday life that operate on vastly dif­ferent time scales. Americans focused on the immediacy of nuclear war in the twentieth century while ignoring the other incremental but existential danger of their own making, the expansion of a consumer economy that has become a highly destructive force on planet Earth. Thus, nuclear and climate dangers are engineered emergencies decades in the making and are deeply embedded within a petroleum-based capitalist-militarist-industrial system. After World War II, the security state embraced nuclear danger as its coordinating principle while rejecting the environment as a major security concern. Partly this is explained by the radically dif­ferent temporalities evoked by each kind of danger: nuclear danger playing out in minutes and hours while climate danger plays out over decades and centuries. However, each emergency also evokes a dif­ferent kind of sovereignty and requires very dif­ferent kinds of governance. A global denuclearization project could substantially reduce the nuclear danger very quickly, but global warming is a multifaceted planetary phenomenon that requires vast international cooperation across industries and consumer habits—indeed, it now demands a postnational security logic of planetary defense**. Perhaps this is also why so many images of climate change in the U.S. rely on tropes developed to communicate the danger of nuclear weapons, a way of acknowledging a collective danger without forcing a change in existing conceptual structures or modes of response.

In U.S. public discourse, **nuclear and climate dangers are both grounded in images of a world that is no longer capable of supporting human society. This kind of catastrophic narrative, in its depiction of a perfect and total loss, however, requires an apocalyptic rendering precisely because it is a historical and highly politicized artifact. What is required now is a critical engagement that assesses not only the possibility of total endings but also the instrumentalities, ideologies, and practices that inform them. Perhaps today this could take the form of a reassessment of industrial reasoning itself and an effort to cancel the apocalypse**, not by a heroic suicide bombing (as in Pacific Rim or The Power of Decision) but rather **by attending to local infrastructure itself as a social project that needs constant critical reassessment and reinvention to acknowledge radically changing environmental conditions. This would mean embracing both middle and deep futures as a collective security project and thinking through multigenerational toxic legacies as well as threat** (see Masco 2014; Murphy 2017a; Orff and Misrach 2012). Above all, it would mean focusing expert and public energies not on rehearsing the perfect catastrophes of total endings, but rather on the qualities, consequences, and insights of living in messy aftermaths.4

### Aff---Mourning

#### There’s a historically grounded aff about nuclear imperialism in the Japanese context.

Hurley 19 – Jessica Hurley is Assistant Professor of English at George Mason University. (“Complicity, for the time being: nuclear entanglements from atoms for peace to Fukushima,” 2019, pg. 754-755) julian

On December 8, 1953, President Eisenhower launched the Atoms for Peace program into the world. At a speech given to the United Nations as part of a larger public relations campaign to reconcile world audiences with America’s rapidly expanding nuclear stockpile, Eisenhower proposed the development of an international atomic energy agency whose task would be to mobilize experts to “apply atomic energy to the needs of agriculture, medicine, and other peaceful activities. A special purpose,” he emphasized, “would be to provide abundant electrical energy in the power-starved areas of the world.”8 Against the apocalyptic potential of America’s nuclear arsenal, especially that of the hydrogen bomb, Atoms for Peace promised to “[find] the way by which the miraculous inventiveness of man shall not be dedicated to his death, but consecrated to his life.”9

A closer look at the language used to describe Atoms for Peace, and especially Atoms for Peace in the Japanese context, however, reveals the program to be less concerned with energy generation in the Third World (the technology for which, as Mara Drogan has demonstrated, did not even exist in 1953) than with the incorporation of America’s nuclear activities into a Christian framework of redemption.10 The promise of Atoms for Peace is that it will move the world from the apocalyptic present into a millennial future of guaranteed peace and prosperity: “my country’s purpose,” Eisenhower announces, “is to help us to move out of the dark chamber of horrors into the light, to find a way by which the minds of men, the hopes of men, the souls of men everywhere, can move forward towards peace and happiness and well-being.” The benefit of Atoms for Peace, in Eisenhower’s account, can be summed up in a single word: in the face of the apocalyptic destruction threatened by nuclear weapons, Atoms for Peace will bring “salvation.”11

Atoms for Peace thus proposes a new theology for the nuclear age in which the original sin of atomic annihilation will be redeemed by the arrival of atomic energy. Indeed, the logic of Christian redemption is the only framework in which the Atoms for Peace program makes any sense. The apocalyptic threat of massive, growing nuclear arsenals is impacted not at all by the fact that there will now also be nuclear power plants; this logic is akin to addressing the danger of a rattlesnake by putting it next to a tiger. The problem that Eisenhower describes, that of an ever-expanding stockpile of ever-more-destructive nuclear weapons, can only be addressed—then as now—by robust programs of demilitarization and denuclearization. What Atoms for Peace really offers, then, is an ideologically potent framework within which putting more resources into nuclear technology (which has never been separate from the military use of the atom) and exposing more people to the catastrophic dangers of that technology can be interpreted as redemptive rather than as destructive: nuclear power will bring a millennial future to pass and save our souls from nuclear bombs.

The American desire for nuclear redemption only intensified when Atoms for Peace was translated into a Japanese context. The program was particularly urgent in Japan because Eisenhower’s speech to the United Nations (UN) was followed after only three months by the disastrous detonation of America’s first hydrogen bomb at the Bravo test, which showered Japanese fishermen aboard the Daigo Fukuryu Maru (Lucky Dragon no. 5)—located 85 miles from the test site, and outside the official danger zone—with radiation, killing one, and led to a national panic in Japan after radioactive tuna was found to be being sold in fish markets across the country. These incidents led to a powerful uprising in Japan against the hydrogen bomb in particular and U.S. nuclear weapons more generally; by 1955, thirty-two million people, one-third of Japan’s population, had signed a petition launched by women in Tokyo to ban hydrogen bombs. As the only country to have been bombed with nuclear weapons in wartime, Japan had a moral claim in the struggle against those weapons, which no other country could match. The United States thus launched one of the biggest psychological operations of the cold war, using Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)-trained journalists and politicians to promote Atoms for Peace in Japan as an appropriate response to, rather than a continuation of, the nuclear violence that the country had experienced at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Because Japan had experienced the violence of nuclear weapons, this operation argued, it only made sense that Japan should be among the first to benefit from “nonviolent” uses of the atom.12

### Aff---Pomo

#### Of course, there’s ample ground for the aff when it comes to high theory.

Munster 23 – Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Southern Denmark. Researcher, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), Copenhagen.

Rens Van Munster, January 27 2023, “Nuclear weapons, existentialism, and International Relations,” Review of International Studies, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB

Given the global avalanche of images, past and present, which were beamed into living rooms synchronously from all corners of the world, Anders argued that humans no longer possessed a world to make their own. They now inhabited ‘too many worlds at once’, assembling their identities from multiple and even conflicting cultural sources.[Footnote37](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn37) In short, the problem was no longer that of Weltfremdheit but Weltlosigkeit – the absence of a world. As a myriad of actors, including multinationals, advertisement agencies, broadcasters, politicians, and the entertainment industry, imposed their respective fictions upon reality, the latter turned into hyperreality:[Footnote38](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn38) ‘[W]hen the actual event is socially important only in its reproduced form, i.e., as a spectacle, the difference between being and appearance, between reality and image of reality, is abolished.’ The original event had been reduced to the status of ‘master copy’: ‘The real world is forfeited.’[Footnote39](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn39) One of the main effects of this Weltlosigkeit was ‘the death of affect’, which Ballard described as ‘the most sinister casualty of the century’.[Footnote40](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn40) Anders similarly mused that the constant bombardment with images should lead us to ponder the meaning of the ‘supra-liminal’, the stimulus too big to provoke a reaction. Like Ballard, he feared that mass communication reduced humans to voyeurs and undermined any possibility of genuine or autonomous action. The inability to respond to or speak back to the mediated reality created unfree subjects who, increasingly detached from their own emotions, were unable to recognise their situation as one of unfreedom. At a time when humans increasingly performed their actions as parts of larger technological circuits and infrastructures that appeared to run through them, Existentialist notions of autonomous agency or authentic freedom seemed outdated. Individuals were no longer autonomous agents, but commodified subjects reduced to spectators caught in an endless feedback loop where the psychically numbed mind demanded ever more spectacle for its arousal.

2. Nuclear modernity, insanity, and the Hiroshima pilot

Recent engagements with Existentialism in IR generally note its value as a philosophy of crisis or anxiety, but so far scholars have mainly appropriated Existentialism more narrowly as a framework for understanding state practices of ontological security.[Footnote41](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn41) Although such accounts have nuanced our understanding of security dynamics between states, they largely bracket broader Existentialist concerns with the character of modern life and the conditions for individual freedom. The work of Anders and Ballard, by contrast, squarely places the international issue of nuclear war within a broader analysis of the increased pervasiveness of technology in postwar everyday life. To them, the postwar pathologies of Weltlosigkeit – technological acceleration, consumerism, and the death of affect – were intimately linked to the development of nuclear weapons. To them, the invention of the hydrogen bomb offered a key to understanding technological estrangement and unfreedom in postwar modernity.

This did not mean, however, that Anders and Ballard saw eye to eye on the desirability or necessity of nuclear weapons. Anders, who was a self-declared radical and activist-philosopher, was an early and fervent opponent of nuclear weapons, which he considered totalitarian and genocidal. To him, they represented the most dangerous and extreme manifestation of a thoroughly disenchanted modernity, an argument he would develop over the course of several books, articles, and diaries, including both volumes of Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen (1956 and 1980), Burning Conscience (1962), and Visit Beautiful Vietnam (1968). If the Holocaust had made clear that anyone could be killed for no reason, the invention of nuclear weapons revealed to him that the fate of extermination now hung over the human species in its entirety.[Footnote42](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn42) Given the urgency of this wholly new condition, he had little patience with Existentialist philosophy. At a time when Weltlosigkeit had taken on a literal character, he considered the concern with abstract ontology and metaphysics outright irresponsible. The preoccupation with ‘human beings without a world’ was now superseded by a far more pressing problem: ‘a world without human beings’.[Footnote43](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn43) Ballard, who eschewed activism and described his own political beliefs as ‘middle of the road’, subscribed to a more permissive view on nuclear weapons.[Footnote44](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn44) He staunchly defended the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, expressed faith in the political management of the nuclear arms race, and maintained that deterrence contributed to peace and stability.[Footnote45](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn45) To a considerable extent, Ballard's view on the bomb was based on his personal experiences during the Second World War. Born and raised in Shanghai, he spent the final two years of the war in Lunghua, a Japanese internment camp for British civilians on the outskirts of Shanghai. He firmly believed that the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had shortened the war, prevented unnecessary suffering, and almost certainly saved his life and that of his family.[Footnote46](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn46) Still, like Anders, Ballard considered nuclear weapons central to grasping human existence in postwar modernity, and in several of his novels, including The Atrocity Exhibition (1970), Empire of the Sun (1984), and Rushing to Paradise (1994), their presence is directly felt.[Footnote47](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn47) In The Atrocity Exhibition, arguably his most notorious and experimental novel,[Footnote48](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn48) Ballard hypothesised that the development of nuclear weapons transferred private, lunatic fantasies of world-ending violence to the collective level. On several occasions, Ballard approvingly cites Edward Glover's psychoanalytical analysis of nuclear war as directly linked to insanity as rooted in the unconscious economy of desire:

The actual and potential destructiveness of the atomic bomb plays straight in the hand of the Unconscious. The most cursory study of the dream-life and fantasies of the insane shows that ideas of world-destruction are latent in the unconscious mind … Nagasaki destroyed by the magic of science is the nearest man has yet approached to the realization of dreams that even during the safe immobility of his sleep are accustomed to develop into nightmares of anxiety.[Footnote49](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn49)

Anders agreed that the fractured nature of human existence in the nuclear age was best captured through psychological tropes of madness or insanity, and he couched his main contribution to philosophy – the theorisation of the ever-widening gap between production (Herstellen) and imagination (Vorstellen) in the age of technological acceleration[Footnote50](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn50) – in terms of schizophrenia. He argued that human beings were schizophrenic in the sense that they were incapable of imagining the effects of the artefacts they produced. The modern subject was attached to and concerned with the execution of small, specialised tasks yet unaware of their larger social totality. As the activity of work was increasingly rationalised, routinised, and automatised, factory workers experienced a double alienation: from work as a meaningful activity and from the purpose and qualities of the final product that emerged from the assembly line. This, Anders argued, is ‘the raging schizophrenia of our days; that is: the fact that our diverse faculties work independently of each other, like isolated and uncoordinated beings, who have lost all contact with each other’.[Footnote51](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn51) In his writings on television he had already characterised Weltlosigkeit as an artificially produced form of schizophrenia,[Footnote52](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn52) but he associated the most extreme manifestation of this schizophrenic discrepancy with the manufacturing of nuclear weapons – devices, he argued, that served no other end than the end itself.

Anders concretely elaborated on this view in his discussion of Claude E. Eatherly, a reconnaissance pilot for the Hiroshima mission who was said to stage absurd drug store robberies (using toy guns and running off without the money) out of a desire to be punished by society as a replacement for the one crime he could not be convicted for: the destruction of Hiroshima. Having been repeatedly admitted to a military mental hospital – Eatherly received sixty hours of insulin shock therapy to ‘cure’ his anxiety neurosis[Footnote53](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn53) – he was finally diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1962. Anders, who learnt of Eatherly's story from a Newsweek publication, initiated a correspondence with the pilot, which was published as Burning Conscience.[Footnote54](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn54) In the book, he describes Eatherly's predicament as representative of the schizophrenic split at the heart of technological modernity, an argument he summed up in a support letter addressed to the county judge in Waco, who was to rule on Eatherly's insanity:

Eatherly's condition is not an isolated and unique case. I consider it rather a first and unprecedented and prophetic example which indicates to us how man in the technological age is bound to react after being entangled in actions which, in the most ambiguous way, are his and not his. In short: make him guiltlessly guilty. The decision about the Eatherly case is, in my opinion, not the decision about an individual crank, but about ‘man in the technological age’.[Footnote55](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn55)

Anders’ philosophical statement about ‘guiltless guilt’ may not have been the kind of support Eatherly's legal representatives were hoping for, but the broader message was clear. Today, Anders argued, we are all virtual Claudes.[Footnote56](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn56) What distinguished Eatherly from others, however, was his ability to recognise the banality of his actions for their complicity in the production of evil. Eatherly's subsequent actions, therefore, were not pathological but moral and, at least to Anders, offered a glimmer of hope that humans could overcome the schizophrenic condition of their age – if only at a high personal cost of being declared insane.[Footnote57](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn57)

Ballard had also taken note of the Eatherly case, which, partly because of Anders’ book, became a matter of debate during the early 1960s. Ballard, who most likely learned of Eatherly's predicament through British media reporting, incorporated Eatherly as a fictional character in his short story ‘The Terminal Beach’ (1964), as well as in his later novel The Atrocity Exhibition. In ‘The Terminal Beach’, which is situated on Enewetak, one of the Pacific atolls used for nuclear testing by the United States, Ballard refers to Eatherly as ‘the prototypical’ subject of the atomic age ‘carrying a full load of cosmic guilt’ and contrasts him to the main protagonist, Traven, for whom the hydrogen bomb instead is a ‘symbol of absolute freedom’ giving him ‘the right – the obligation, even – to ‘do anything’ he wants.[Footnote58](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn58) The Atrocity Exhibiton, which was published five years later, revolved around a similar theme in its exploration of the burdened terrain between nuclear death and the political and cultural landscape of the 1960s, a framing the the book's opening page vividly captures as a ‘fusion of Eniwetok and Luna Park’.[Footnote59](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn59) To Ballard, the deliberate juxtaposition of a nuclear test site with an amusement park aptly captured the prevailing mood of the 1960s, when ‘the endless newsreel clips of nuclear explosions’ broadcast on television seemed ‘a powerful incitement to the psychotic imagination, sanctioning everything’.[Footnote60](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn60) To Ballard, the constant circulation of images of atomic explosions signalled that violence had become an integral and acceptable part of everyday life during the 1960s. In The Atrocity Exhibition, Ballard explores this tension through his protagonist, Travis, a psychiatrist who is suffering a psychological breakdown. Confronted with fragmented images of nuclear explosions, newsreels from the Vietnam War, and the televised celebrity deaths of John F. Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe, Travis seeks to create meaning in a world that appears violently out of joint. In a 2006 interview with Jonathan Weiss, the director of the book's filmed version, Ballard recalls the 1960s as ‘living in a kind of madhouse’, where ‘the world had become a sort of deranged psychiatric institute’.[Footnote61](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn61) Like Anders, Ballard thus juxtaposed Eatherly's insanity with that of his protagonists. The Freudian idea of the Death Drive, a concept coined by Freud to explain the human predisposition towards death and destruction, underpinned such views. Unless humans would find a way to tame the Death Drive, Freud warned, the future of the species was at stake. With the invention of nuclear weapons, Freud's speculations had entered the realm of the possible. Unlike Anders, however, Ballard did not just use metaphors of insanity in a pejorative sense. He believed that experiences of madness could be transformative episodes from which the traveller could return with important insights. In The Atrocty Exhibition, as well as elsewhere, Ballard appropriates the discourse of the madman as the assertion of the self in a world that refuses to make sense. His views on madness were closely affiliated with those of R. D. Laing, a controversial Scottish psychiatrist associated with the development of Existentialist Psychology. Laing's global best-seller, The Divided Self (1960), criticised the often coercive and violent methods with which psychiatry treated schizophrenia and argued, controversially, that attempts to reorder reality in one's own categories were a sensible response to a reality that increasingly appeared as irrational and insane.[Footnote62](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn62) Insanity, upon this view, could be a self-healing journey. In retrospect, it is easy to denounce Anders and Ballard's reliance on metaphors such as ‘insanity’, ‘madness’, ‘schizophrenia’, and ‘derangement’ as discursive instances of ableism. Anders’ depreciatory use of schizophrenia, as well as Ballard's romanticisation of madness as a liberating state of mind, both risk discounting real, embodied experiences that may contribute to the further stigmatisation of neurodiversity.[Footnote63](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn63) Yet, during the early and mid-twentieth century, the question of ‘madness and civilization’[Footnote64](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn64) preoccupied many intellectuals and was at the heart of debates about individual pathology, normalcy, and conformism to the social and cultural conventions of (bourgeois) society. It was also at a time, when many began to question the validity of traditional psychiatric treatment and critically interrogated the function of the asylum – a mood that was captured by Ken Kesey's highly popular novel One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest from 1962.[Footnote65](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn65) Against this broader background, Surrealists and Existentialists both wondered to what extent madness was pathological or, instead, a sign of authentic being. André Breton, the founder of the Surrealist movement, conceived of the lunatic as someone who was no longer limited by social rules or conventions, finally free to fully focus on their own subjectivity and creativity. As a result, he strongly rejected a clear division between a sane society and mentally ill people. Sartre, who had a profound personal and philosophical interest in madness, similarly explored to what extent madness could be said to offer an authentic alternative to bourgeois conformity.[Footnote66](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn66) In their own ways, Anders and Ballard contributed to these debates. With the invention of nuclear weapons, moreover, such questions seemed to take on an additional urgency. In 1957, Erich Fromm, a famous psychoanalyst, published The Sane Society, which asked the provocative question whether society could be sick. While he counted capitalist alienation, commercialisation, and social conformism among the main symptoms of the pathological condition of normalcy, his later book, May Man Prevail? (1961), zoomed in on the nuclear policies of the United States and the Soviet Union as the most dangerous example of insanity's reign. Laing, who had long argued for the normalisation of mental illness, specifically argued that the possibility of nuclear destruction meant that in no way could society be said to represent a baseline for normality or a desirable status quo to which individuals should adapt: ‘The statesmen of the world who boast and threaten that they have Doomsday weapons are far more dangerous, and far more “estranged” from reality than many of the people on whom the label “psychotic” is affixed.’[Footnote67](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn67) Like Anders, critics of nuclear strategy and the national security state often fell back on ableist metaphors to denounce the self-proclaimed realism and rationality of their political adversaries. In 1946, Lewis Mumford, a prominent historian of technology and anti-nuclear intellectual, argued that ‘[w]e in America are living among madmen’ whose ‘fatal symptom’ is to ‘[carry] through a series of acts which may lead eventually to the destruction of mankind, under the solemn conviction that they are normal, responsible people, living sane lives, and working for reasonable ends’.[Footnote68](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn68) In 1958, C. Wright Mills, the rebel sociologist, bluntly referred to nuclear strategy as the ‘crackpot’ ideas and actions of ‘madmen and idiots’.[Footnote69](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn69) Metaphors of insanity also infused both the everyday language and acronyms: the main anti-nuclear organisation in the United States was called SANE, while the nuclear policy of mutual assured destruction is commonly referred to as MAD.

Anders and Ballard agreed that the human condition was pathological and best understood through tropes of insanity. While we today may choose to frame such issues differently, their use of such metaphors was not unreflective but critical. As their reflections on Eatherly showed, they were highly attentive to the fact that mental disability was an identity forged through relations of power, and both stressed the importance of recognising insanity as a psychological condition intimately linked to the sociopolitical and cultural demands imposed upon subjects by the nuclear age. To Anders and Ballard, the question of insanity was profoundly entangled with the radical estrangement or worldlessness humans experienced in the nuclear age.

#### And solvency.

Munster 23 – Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Southern Denmark. Researcher, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), Copenhagen.

Rens Van Munster, January 27 2023, “Nuclear weapons, existentialism, and International Relations,” Review of International Studies, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB

According to Anders and Ballard, nuclear weapons were not just one among many pathological obsessions of postwar modernity. They viewed the nuclear revolution as an event that forged a qualitative break in the human condition, a view they shared with leading classical Realists, who – themselves inspired by Existentialist theory – gradually came to understand nuclear weapons as a fundamentally novel situation that negated previous conceptions of war, death, and the future.[Footnote70](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn70) ‘We continue to think and act’, warned Morgenthau in 1961, ‘as though the possibility of nuclear death portended only a quantitative extension of the mass destruction of the past and not a qualitative transformation of the meaning of our existence.’[Footnote71](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn71) With the invention of the H-bomb human beings no longer only had to confront their own mortality, as Existentialists hitherto had argued, but the extinction of the entire human species.

Anders and Ballard agreed with classical Realists that the advent of nuclear weapons marked an epochal change, and both argued that the atomic bomb disrupted linear or progressive forms of temporality. With the bombing of Hiroshima, Anders argued, the human species had entered a new and final stage of its existence: ‘On August 6, 1945, the Day of Hiroshima, a New Age began: the age in which at any given moment we have the power to transform any given place on our planet, and even our planet itself, into a Hiroshima.’[Footnote72](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn72) Hiroshima now signalled a ‘worldwide condition’ from which there was no escape, neither spatially nor temporally. This is ‘“The Last Age”’, he concluded, ‘for there is no possibility that its “differentia specifica”, the possibility of our self-extinction, can ever end – but by the end itself.’[Footnote73](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn73) Ballard likewise referred to the postwar period as the ‘Pre-Third’, a kind of protracted purgatory where the meaning of human existence was graspable solely in terms of what would come after: World War Three.

In fact, Ballard considered the idea of the future as anything else but catastrophic deeply anachronous: ‘Probably the first casualty of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was the concept of the future. I think the future died some time in the fifties. Maybe with the explosion of the hydrogen bomb.’[Footnote74](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn74) To Ballard, the death of the future also heralded the death of the American Dream and the belief in a better tomorrow. The science-infused dreams of yesterday had mutated into today's technological nightmares. To Anders, too, a catastrophic future was ‘already throwing a shadow on the present’ challenging the ubiquitous-but-unwarranted faith in never-ending progress, a belief that foreclosed any conception of endings.[Footnote75](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn75) We go on, he lamented, under an illusion of eternity.[Footnote76](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn76) In short, Anders and Ballard developed new temporal categories to capture human existence as suspended in time, a new condition in which previous distinctions – between present and future, peace and war, continuity and finality, utopianism and conservatism – had collapsed.

Despite their rendition of postwar being as a being-towards-extinction, neither Anders nor Ballard fully succumbed to fatalism. Although both towards the end of their lives grew increasingly pessimistic about the conditions for transformation and individual freedom, their respective framings of the future as the final stop on the road to nothingness remained firmly based on the hope that a different world was possible. Both men vested such hope in the transformative powers of the individual imagination.[Footnote77](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn77) Ballard, who viewed himself as a detached scientist exploring extreme hypotheses and issuing warnings, insisted that his fiction was ‘affirmative’ and ‘positive’ rather than the work of ‘a decadent, celebrating the pleasures of the evening light’.[Footnote78](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn78) He was adamant that his message should not be mixed up with the décor in which it was delivered. While often set in bleak man-made landscapes, he viewed his fiction as tales of psychic fulfillment, metamorphosis, and transcendence. While Ballard was sceptical about sociopolitical utopianism and the emancipatory potential of science and technology, he considered the ‘inner space’ as a site of ‘utopian desire’, where individuals could obtain some sense of psychic fulfillment. Anders pursued a similar analytical strategy in his writings, which he consciously categorised as philosophical exaggerations. [Footnote79](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn79) Exaggeration functioned like a microscope, he argued, and could bring into view dimensions of reality that would otherwise remain hidden. The false reality imprinted upon the world by the media landscape also framed people's understanding of nuclear weapons and concealed their true, horrific nature. Time and again, he admonished his readers not to tolerate the application of ‘honest sounding, “keep smiling” labels’ to the H-bomb.[Footnote80](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn80) Exaggeration, Anders suggested, could instill a ‘courage to fear’ in human beings, and he implored his readers to contemplate the real possibility of the end of the world in their mind as a first step towards preventing it from happening in real life.

In the promotion of the individual imagination, the writings of Anders and Ballard also contrasted sharply with the kind of Existentialism that underpinned the nuclear writings of Morgenthau and other classical Realists. While the latter sought to secure the future by lending support to the institutional solution of the world state, Anders and Ballard instead viewed the mind and the individual imagination as the primary battleground for future transformation. Institutions were clearly important, as both Anders and Ballard recognised, but they did not consider institutional change the primary priority. To them, the main source of danger consisted in the rule of technology and the psychosocial dynamics of Weltlosigkeit rather than the anarchical nature of the international system. Moreover, the Second World War had taught Anders and Ballard that reality was little more than a stage set that could collapse at any moment. Institutional reform offered no guarantees, and since no great power was likely to give up their weapons, Ballard considered such discussions purely academic.[Footnote81](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn81) Moreover, whereas Realists cautiously anticipated the birth of a new universal class, which would conceive of security in terms of the survival of both present and future generations, and hopefully speculated about the emergence of a world community supported by the new means of ‘global intercommunication’,[Footnote82](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn82) neither Anders nor Ballard considered it plausible that such technologies would facilitate universal solidarity. Instead, they highlighted that such technologies were fertile ground for populists. There was little doubt in either man's mind that in the (near) future a charismatic demagogue again would seize mass communications technologies to create a ‘new vocabulary of violence and sensation’ that tapped directly into the irrational fear, anxiety, and unease of individuals.[Footnote83](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn83)

Given that modern technology was not about to be halted in its tracks, the imagination offered the main hope of freedom left to individuals. In their respective attempts to cultivate the imagination, both Anders and Ballard sought inspiration in Surrealism, a twentieth-century movement in art and literature that sought to release the creative potential of the unconscious mind and balance a rational vision of life with one that asserts the power of the unconscious and dreams. Surrealists sought to achieve this through a range of techniques – including the use of dream-like scenes, the use of biomorphic space and symbolic images, as well as the deployment of illogical juxtapositions or bizarre assemblages of objects – of which both Anders and Ballard made extensive use. Anders’ philosophy of exaggeration relied on typically Surrealist methods, including juxtaposition and index to create new pathways and associations in a non-linear way. His fragmented use of narrative, most obviously visible in the second volume of Antiquiertheit des Menschen and Visit Beautiful Vietnam, is non-linear, yet offers a composite portrait of political violence in the postwar period.

Ballard, who counted Surrealist painters such as Max Ernst and Salvador Dalí among his main sources of inspiration, also experimented with non-linear narrative and explicitly sought to capture the visual techniques of Surrealists in textual form.[Footnote84](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn84) His psychological notion of the ‘inner space’, which he conceptualised as the meeting ground between the world out there and the secret engine of the unconscious, was fundamentally Surrealist in origin. Yet, Ballard also argued that the analysis of postwar modernity called for the reversal of the Surrealist juxtaposition between the unconscious and reality. The domain of fantasy was no longer a property of the unconscious, but reality had itself taken on a dream-like character: ‘It's the external world, which is now the real, the paramount realm of fantasy. And it's the internal world of the mind which is the one node of reality that most of us have. The fiction is all out there.’[Footnote85](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn85) Anders agreed: ‘It is not in the wide land of imagination that escapists of today like to hide, but in the ivory tower of perception.’[Footnote86](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn86) As Anders observed with horror after his visit to the Hiroshima Museum, Surrealist juxtapositions – of the organic with the inorganic, humans and artefacts, or dreams and reality – were no longer projections of the unconscious but part of empirical reality. Recalling, among others, a picture of a man whose arm had been smelted together with a glass bottle, he characterised the exhibition as essentially Surrealist.[Footnote87](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn87) Coming to terms with the monstrous hybridity of the nuclear age was the first step towards transforming it. Distinguishing between real, realistic fear of the future catastrophe and the kind of fake anxieties conjured up by the proponents of the nuclear weapons complex, he believed that fear could be helpful in recovering the emotional abilities of human beings.[Footnote88](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn88)

#### And critiques of the high theory affs!

Munster 21 – Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Southern Denmark. Researcher, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), Copenhagen.

Rens Van Munster, Octerber 21 2021, “On whiteness in critical security studies: The case of nuclear weapons,” Security Dialogue, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029

Advances in the nuclear humanities and environmental humanities have generally also been more attentive to (post)colonial and non-white experiences with nuclear weapons. In focusing on communities affected by uranium mining, nuclear testing and waste disposal, these, too, fundamentally challenge the view that nuclear weapons violence lies in an abstract future ([Hecht, 2012](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029#bibr25-09670106211015029); [Kuletz, 1998](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029#bibr41-09670106211015029); [Stawkowski, 2016](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029#bibr50-09670106211015029)). For example, the focus on communities affected by nuclear testing offers much-needed nuance to the persistent myth that nuclear weapons have never been used since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a belief that continues to inform both formal theories of strategy and post-structuralist critique. For example, [Jacques Derrida (1984](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029#bibr20-09670106211015029): 23) maintained as late as 1984 that the ‘fabulously textual’ phenomenon of nuclear weapons first and foremost depends ‘upon structures of information and communication, structures of language, including non-vocalizable language, structures of codes and graphic decoding’. The emphasis on nuclear weapons as discursive entities with symbolic power in a game of signalling contrasts sharply with non-white experiences with this technology and serves to conceal the real violence nuclear tests enacted upon indigenous communities and their lands. Such communities had no stake in the production and acquisition of nuclear weapons, yet are the ones affected most by their development. Indeed, nuclear powers detonated scores of bombs on colonial or dependent territories, including Algeria, French Polynesia, the aboriginal Australian territories of Maralinga, Emu Field and Monte Bello Island, and the Marshall Islands. In short, when it comes to nuclear weapons, tests are not just tests: they are experiments that reflect deeply racial and geographic hierarchies of worth ([Barker and Johnston, 2008](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029#bibr8-09670106211015029); [Immerwahr, 2019](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029#bibr34-09670106211015029)).

The study of such hierarchies also complicates the dominant perspective of nuclear weapons violence as highly spectacular and world-ending. Whereas the danger of a nuclear war that results in the immediate death of millions of people across the planet remains a real risk, the ongoing continuous suffering of communities exposed to nuclear testing (as well as other nuclear activities) draws attention to the more intricate, less spectacular and less visible ways in which nuclear weapons perform their everyday violence.[9](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211015029#fn9-09670106211015029) For these communities, the original violence of the explosion has long since mutated into what Rob Nixon (2011: 2) has referred to as ‘slow violence’, ‘a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all’. The extent to which ‘slow violence’ is the right term to capture such events is a matter of debate, but one of its advantages is that it enables a discussion of nuclear violence that temporally as well as spatially reaches beyond the moment of detonation. Leaking radioactive waste, irradiated landscapes and contamination continue to shape the postcolonial realities of those that have been forcefully removed from their lands or suffer from radiation-related illnesses. Gradual deaths, radiation sickness, biological mutations, geographical displacement and intergenerational trauma must all be included among the central human experiences of what it means to live, die and survive in the nuclear age.

### AT: DAs

#### Critical affirmatives can also critique the framing of existential risk in relation to nuclear weapons as an answer to core topic DAs

Munster 23 – Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Southern Denmark. Researcher, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), Copenhagen.

Rens Van Munster, January 27 2023, “Nuclear weapons, existentialism, and International Relations,” Review of International Studies, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3fB500098BE0722DB

Despite these shortcomings, the oeuvres of Anders and Ballard remain a relevant resource for Existentialist theorising in IR. To the extent that Existentialism is indeed a type of thinking concerned with ‘concrete existence’, the ‘here and now’, or the ‘human situation, as it is lived’,[Footnote99](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn99) the social and cultural characteristics that Anders and Ballard identified as central to the nuclear age – technological acceleration, mass mediasation, the deadening of affect, and the introduction of extinction as a novel horizon in politics – remain the hallmarks of our time. Especially their rendition of human being as being-towards-extinction continues to resonate strongly with current attempts in IR to formulate new vocabularies of planet politics in the Anthropocene. Given that the period of fervent nuclear testing during the early decades of the Cold War – events that crucially shaped the writings of Anders and Ballard – is now increasingly viewed as a primary marker of the Anthropocene, Anders and Ballard's analyses offer important historical nuance to IR theorising about existential crisis and extinction.[Footnote100](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn100) Their work constitutes an early attempt to grasp the theoretical and political relevance of extinction as a sui generis category rather than a reference to mass death in extremis, that is, not just ‘in the ontic terms of life and death, but rather in the ontological context of be(com)ing and negation’.[Footnote101](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn101)

Moreover, the arrival of cable television, the Internet, mobile phones, social media, and platform capitalism seem to only have further intensified the pathologies Anders and Ballard associated with worldlessness. Fake news, conspiracy theories, popularism, and affective polarisation all underline the enduring significance of their perspectives on technology, mass communication, and violence. Although neither Anders nor Ballard lived to see the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States in 2016, they would have had little problem recognising how his mobilisation of the disenchanted masses fundamentally relied on technologically mediated feedback loops of fabricated anger and outrage. Already a decade prior to Trump's election, Ballard speculated that today's ‘cable channel chat show host’ might well be to the early twenty-first century what the ‘ranting führer’ was to the previous one. He was convinced that the next populist demagogue would emerge from the ‘vast desert’ of consumerism, its ‘shopping malls’ and ‘retail places’, a proposition he worked out in his last novel before his death, Kingdom Come (2006).[Footnote102](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/nuclear-weapons-existentialism-and-international-relations-anders-ballard-and-the-human-condition-in-the-age-of-extinction/627A26F5E958E27C3B500098BE0722DB#fn102)

I also suspect that neither of them would have been much surprised to learn that twenty-first-century doomsday men continue to rely on the threat of nuclear war as a prominent spectacle in global politics. In fact, almost eight decades after the bombing of Hiroshima, the main question Anders and Ballard asked about their age remains eerily relevant: What does it mean to be, remain, or again become human in a world that wagers on its own destruction?

### AT: Ks

#### Topical K affs can also beat the K – a robust literature base discusses the importance of movements for disarmament for leftist goals, giving teams offense in favor of the perm

Baker 22 (John Carl Baker - senior program officer at Ploughshares Fund, “Anti-Imperialists Today Must Push for Full-Scale Nuclear Disarmament”, JacobIn, 15 June 2022, <https://jacobin.com/2022/06/nuclear-arms-war-ukraine-treaties>, MG)

**If nuclear weapons are at the center of today’s imperialism, nuclear disarmament should be at the center of anti-imperialism.**

Since nuclear weapons are enabling new forms of imperial aggression, **today’s anti-imperialism should staunchly support nuclear disarmament. Many parts of the Left already do so, at least in theory. But it isn’t enough to express rhetorical support and then bask in the satisfaction of holding the correct position.**

**A renewed commitment to nuclear disarmament means work — a lot of it.** It means educating each other and the broader working class about the role ordinary people played in ending the Cold War arms race. **It means reinvigorating legacy disarmament organizations and potentially forming new ones. It means organizing against the industries that profit from the production of catastrophic arms. It means recognizing that nuclear weapons are killing people right now, even as deterrence holds. It means calling out world leaders who heighten nuclear tensions, as well as those who exploit crises to advocate for still more weapons.**

**It also means operating on different scales. At the international level, the Left should push for more countries to sign and ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**, which entered into force last year and whose states-parties will hold their first meeting this month. Relatedly, **we should insist that the nuclear-armed states uphold Article VI of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which requires them to make a good-faith effort toward disarmament, something they clearly are not doin**g. International work will be particularly important in NATO states as well as in places like Belarus, which may soon host Russian nuclear weapons.

**At the national level, the Left should not shy away from legislative fights over specific policies and weapons programs. These efforts are incremental and sometimes arcane, but they have a real impact and are far more likely to succeed than shouting demands for disarmament into the void**. Here in the United States, **we should support a “no first use” policy for nuclear weapons and work to reform launch authority**, which until recently rested solely with Donald Trump. **We should aid legislative efforts to block tactical or “low-yield” nuclear weapons that lower the threshold for use. We should also favor phasing out ground-based ICBMs, which compress presidential decision time and heighten the chances of a mistaken launch.**

**Disarmament is a goal, yes, but it is also a process — one we can help restart.**

# Neg—Disadvantages

## Link Uniqueness

### General

#### U.S. nuclear policy hasn’t changed for decades AND isn’t going to change in the future --- any changes would be huge and destabilizing.

TAS 22 – One of the largest and most respected newspapers in Japan.

The Asahi Shimbun, “EDITORIAL: U.S. nuclear strategy remains same, but world is now different,” The Asahi Shimbun, 10-31-2022, https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14756418

While Russia has repeatedly threatened to use nuclear weapons in its war against Ukraine, China declared that it will “not renounce” the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control.

At a time when the menacing actions of these two major powers are fueling tensions, the U.S. government released a document describing its nuclear strategy.

The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden, which has inherited the Obama administration’s vision of “a world without nuclear weapons,” considered reviewing Washington’s traditional nuclear strategy.

But the Nuclear Posture Review, part of the Pentagon’s 2022 Strategic Reviews, signals no significant change concerning the roles of nuclear arms and the situations in which they would be used.

The review reaffirms that a top priority is deterring attacks against the United States and its allies with its nuclear arsenal.

The Biden administration decided against adopting a “sole purpose” nuclear policy, which means nuclear weapons would be used only to deter and, if necessary, retaliate for nuclear attacks.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has clearly shown that the world is fraught with security risks. But the aggression has also highlighted problems with nuclear deterrence, which is based on the assumption that leaders of nuclear weapons states will make rational decisions.

The U.S. nuclear strategy document endorses a policy of continuing to rely on nuclear deterrence while being aware of the risk of global destruction posed by this approach. We are deeply concerned about the implications of this conclusion.

Russia, which has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to break the nuclear taboo, bears grave responsibility. China should also be strongly criticized for its military buildup in blatant disregard of neighboring countries’ anxieties.

However, the United States, one of the world’s largest nuclear powers along with Russia, should reflect on its own responsibility for the deteriorating situation.

We still have fresh memories of the Trump administration enhancing the U.S. nuclear arsenal under the ideology of “peace by force.”

The world is constantly vulnerable because the foundation of security and peace could be shaken by U.S. policy changes.

#### There are high barriers to significant shifts in current nuclear posture.

Cirincione 22 – Distinguished Fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, former Director for Non-Proliferation at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, M.S. from Georgetown University.

Joseph Cirincione, “Biden promised nuclear-policy reform. He’s not delivering.,” Washington Post, 02-15-2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/02/15/nuclear-review-first-use-biden/

It is not hard to fathom why Biden has not followed through on his campaign promises and his own long-held views. He is struggling with multiple crises, from inflation to the pandemic to the standoff over Ukraine. He also holds a slim congressional majority, still can’t get top officials confirmed and is besieged by critics. To make the kinds of changes in nuclear policy he favors, Biden would have had to confront an entrenched nuclear bureaucracy that has historically given little ground. Understandably, though regrettably, he appears to have punted.

Scores of experts and members of Congress, alarmed at reports signaling a weak review, have urged him to change course. Nearly 700 scientists, including 21 Nobel laureates, wrote in favor of cutting the 1,550 deployed strategic weapons in the U.S. arsenal by one-third and canceling the new ICBM program. They urged him to change the protocol that allows a president, alone, to order a nuclear strike. Fifty-six members of Congress, too, asked for more cuts in weapons. “Your forthcoming [Nuclear Posture Review] should reflect your Administration’s views, not embrace President Trump’s nuclear weapons programs,” they wrote on Jan. 26.

While Biden’s failure to challenge the nuclear status quo is not unique, the forces constraining Biden are different from those facing earlier presidents.

Whereas the U.S. nuclear posture used to be shaped by grand strategic debates involving hundreds of experts and scores of congressional hearings — and often massive public protest — nuclear policy today is driven largely by domestic political factors, including intensified lobbying by the defense industry.

Strategic considerations are not entirely absent from today’s debates. There are those who see nuclear superiority as a necessary component of U.S. global primacy, for example. That is a strategic view, if a somewhat Strangelovian one. Like those who railed against treaties with the Soviets during the Cold War, they see nuclear reductions as weakness and agreements with adversaries as concessions.

“It is very expensive and hard work to win an arms race,” Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) said last year, reflecting this view, “but it is much better to win an arms race than to lose a war.”

Another formidable barrier to nuclear-policy reform is erected by those who cynically use security as a wedge issue in partisan politics. Being “weak on defense” has been a Democratic fear for decades. Members of Congress can therefore easily be persuaded that a vote to cut nuclear weapons or Pentagon budgets is a liability for their campaigns, even if they may privately favor reform.

The status quo is further protected by a powerful consortium of arms corporations that realize vast profits from manufacturing and maintaining these arsenals. Since the start of the Afghanistan war, Pentagon spending has totaled $14 trillion, with one-third to one-half going directly to military contractors. The annual budget is now at its highest level since World War II. Nuclear spending is soaring as the Pentagon orders new fleets of nuclear-armed bombers, submarines and missiles.

To protect their contracts, arms companies deploy a small army of lobbyists in Washington, spending $2.5 billion over the past two decades to fund an average of 700 lobbyists a year. The companies run a revolving door that shuttles officials between top policy jobs and top contractor jobs. The companies also disperse contracts to nearly every congressional district, contribute generously to lawmakers on the key committees that oversee their programs (the five major nuclear weapons contractors made $31 million in campaign contributions in 2020 alone) and flood Washington think tanks with grants to mute criticism.

The equation is further tilted by giving those most interested in continuing nuclear programs the authority to write the policy. In a Nuclear Posture Review, the Pentagon holds the pen, with only token involvement by other departments. As American University professor Sharon Weiner recently wrote: “Biden can expect the review process to offer him few real options for nuclear policy reform; these options will likely allow, at best, only narrow deviations from the status quo. The nuclear weapons establishment will limit choice by presenting everything as an interlocking set of military requirements instead of multiple options for meeting deterrence goals.”

#### The status quo is functionally unchangeable. Biden gave up on pushing nuclear posture, and an appointee was fired because they even thought about alternatives. The topic is timely, but not subject to sudden movements.

Cirincione 22, nuclear policy analyst and author with over 35 years’ experience in the field. (Joe, 10-28-22, “A failure to review America’s nuclear posture,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, <https://thebulletin.org/2022/10/a-failure-to-review-americas-nuclear-posture/#post-heading>, Accessed: 4/24/23)—js

President Joe Biden has passed on his best chance to operationalize his stated goal of reducing the role in US security policy of America’s more than 5,400 nuclear weapons with the public release on October 27 of the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR).

Biden is now the 14th president over eight decades to attempt to reconcile the risks that derive from nuclear deployments with the demands of deterrence. He has discovered how difficult this can be.

Biden’s NPR adjusts nuclear policy and programs at the margins while making no significant changes to the Pentagon’s budgets and deployments. It endorsed dozens of nuclear-weapons programs that will cost an estimated $634 billion over this decade, according to a May 2021 assessment from the Congressional Budget Office. Including in that estimate missile defense programs, weapons programs added after the Congress report and expected inflation could bring the cost to almost $1 trillion per decade for several decades to come.

This includes proceeding with a new land-based, long-range missile rushed toward production in the last months of the Trump administration without examining less expensive and less dangerous alternatives to its production. That project alone could cost $264 billion overall.

This failure is not unique to Biden. Every president in the nuclear age has struggled to control the weapons supposedly under his sole authority. Primarily this is because US nuclear posture is not a rational response to an external threat environment. It is driven by those who see nuclear superiority as a tool of global power, those who use nuclear security as a wedge issue in partisan politics, and by those powerful arms corporations that realize vast profits from manufacturing, marketing, and maintaining these deadly arsenals.

The question is complicated by a process that gives those most interested in continuing nuclear programs the authority to write the policy governing these weapons. The Pentagon controls the pen. Biden appears to have concluded that it is too costly in political terms to fight for his views, which included repeated statements that the United States has no need to ever use a nuclear weapon first. He has let the Pentagon dictate his strategy rather than challenge a bureaucracy resisting any alteration of current programs and doctrine.

Elsewhere, I have detailed how a safer, more rational nuclear policy could have included, among other steps, reducing the number of deployed strategic warheads by one-third, to about 1,000, taking nuclear-armed missiles off hair-trigger alert, embracing no first use or sole purpose doctrines, and requiring an additional senior official to authorize launch. Pacts such as AUKUS that encourage the spread of nuclear weapons technology must also be rethought.

But consideration of these and other steps were effective excluded early in the process when the Defense Department fired then-Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Leanor Tomero, whom Biden had placed in charge of nuclear and missile defense policy and who had been pressing, following Biden’s presidential guidance, for consideration of some of the alternatives. According to knowledgeable sources, Pentagon staff complained to Republican staff on the Senate Armed Services Committee that Tomero wasn’t sufficiently supportive of “nuclear modernization” – the euphemism for the mountain of contracts that drive the nuclear posture.

Tomero was an early casualty of an entrenched nuclear bureaucracy fiercely protective of its contracts, secrecy, and privilege. As American University Professor Sharon Weiner wrote: “The nuclear weapons establishment will limit choice by presenting everything as an interlocking set of military requirements instead of multiple options for meeting deterrence goals.” She was right.

As Weiner predicted and the NPR reflects, “These options will likely allow, at best, only narrow deviations from the status quo.”

#### The U.S. and all other nuclear powers are increasing the roles of their nuclear arsenals.

SIPRI 22 – Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

SIPRI, “Global nuclear arsenals are expected to grow as states continue to modernize–New SIPRI Yearbook out now,” SIPRI, 06-13-2022, https://sipri.org/media/press-release/2022/global-nuclear-arsenals-are-expected-grow-states-continue-modernize-new-sipri-yearbook-out-now

Signs that post-cold war decline in nuclear arsenals is ending

The nine nuclear-armed states—the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea)—continue to modernize their nuclear arsenals and although the total number of nuclear weapons declined slightly between January 2021 and January 2022 (see table below), the number will probably increase in the next decade.

Of the total inventory of an estimated 12 705 warheads at the start of 2022, about 9440 were in military stockpiles for potential use. Of those, an estimated 3732 warheads were deployed with missiles and aircraft, and around 2000—nearly all of which belonged to Russia or the USA—were kept in a state of high operational alert.

Although Russian and US total warhead inventories continued to decline in 2021, this was due to the dismantling of warheads that had been retired from military service several years ago. The number of warheads in the two countries’ useable military stockpiles remained relatively stable in 2021. Both countries’ deployed strategic nuclear forces were within the limits set by a bilateral nuclear arms reduction treaty (2010 Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, New START). Note, however, that New START does not limit total non-strategic nuclear warhead inventories.

‘There are clear indications that the reductions that have characterized global nuclear arsenals since the end of the cold war have ended,’ said Hans M. Kristensen, Associate Senior Fellow with SIPRI’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Programme and Director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists (FAS).

‘All of the nuclear-armed states are increasing or upgrading their arsenals and most are sharpening nuclear rhetoric and the role nuclear weapons play in their military strategies,’ said Wilfred Wan, Director of SIPRI’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Programme. ‘This is a very worrying trend.’

Russia and the USA together possess over 90 per cent of all nuclear weapons. The other seven nuclear-armed states are either developing or deploying new weapon systems, or have announced their intention to do so. China is in the middle of a substantial expansion of its nuclear weapon arsenal, which satellite images indicate includes the construction of over 300 new missile silos. Several additional nuclear warheads are thought to have been assigned to operational forces in 2021 following the delivery of new mobile launchers and a submarine.

Table

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#### Posture has been unchanged for decades

Richard 21 – Retired U.S. Navy admiral and 11th commander of United States Strategic Command.

Charles R. Richard, “Remarks to the Defense Writers Group,” *Project for Media and National Security, George Washington School of Media and Public Affairs*, 5 January 2021, pp. 7, https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.gwu.edu/dist/2/672/files/2021/01/DWG-Admiral-Charles-R.-Richard.pdf.

Validation, that we like the strategy that we have. And it’s kind of important on the strategy discussion. Like I said before, this nation has had basically the same strategy dating back to the Kennedy administration. It’s been repeatedly validated through multiple administrations. It would be useful to do that again. And then to be satisfied that the capabilities that we have are able to accomplish that.

### AT: South Korea Deal

#### Q: What is the South Korea Deal and How Does It Implicate the Topic?

#### A:

On April 27th, the U.S. and South Korea agreed to a new nuclear deal designed around countering what both countries view as a large nuclear threat from North Korea. As part of the deal, the U.S. will deploy nuclear submarines in South Korea from time to time and more heavily involve South Korea in discussions of nuclear strategy while South Korea will reaffirm its commitment not to nuclearize.

Overall, this change only really helps the negative uniqueness/link uniqueness story. From an Assurances standpoint, South Korea is both more confident and more reliant on the U.S. nuclear umbrella, making any shifts radically destabilizing. Additionally, there is greater reasoning to believe that South Korea is not willing to proliferate in the status quo. From a Deterrence standpoint, the U.S. is increasing its commitments in East Asia against countries like China and North Korea, which improves negative uniqueness.

In addition to the DAs, the South Korea deal also serves to prove how timely and relevant the topic is for debaters to learn about.

#### This deal is only good for the negative --- it strengthened the U.S.-South Korean alliance AND increases the importance and role of U.S. nuclear weapons.

Klein et al. 04/26 – \*White House Reporter for CNN; \*\*National Security Correspondent for CNN; \*\*\*White House Producer for CNN.

\*Betsy Klein, \*\*Kylie Atwood, and \*\*\*Sam Fossum, “Biden and South Korea’s Yoon announce agreement to deter North Korea, including deploying nuclear-armed submarine,” CNN Politics, 04-26-2023, https://www.cnn.com/2023/04/26/politics/biden-yoon-south-korea-state-visit/index.html

President Joe Biden and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol announced a key new agreement at the White House on Wednesday that aims to deter North Korean aggression, including a new US commitment to deploy a nuclear-armed submarine in South Korea for the first time since the early 1980s.

In a joint news conference at the White House Biden hailed what he called the “ironclad” alliance between the two countries.

“The alliance formed in war and has flourished in peace,” Biden said from the Rose Garden at the White House. “Our mutual defense treaty is iron clad and that includes our commitment to extend a deterrence – and that includes the nuclear threat, the nuclear deterrent.”

“They’re particularly important in the face of DPRK’s increased threats and the blatant violation of US sanctions,” Biden added.

The product of monthslong discussions between officials from both countries, the new agreement will say that the US “(intends) to take steps to make our deterrence more visible through the regular deployment of strategic assets, including a US nuclear ballistic submarine visit to South Korea, which has not happened since the early 1980s,” the official said. Officials made clear that such assets will not be stationed permanently, and there is “no plan” to deploy any tactical nuclear weapons to the Korean peninsula.

“The bottom line here is there’s even closer cooperation, closer consultation and, and we’re not going to be stationing nuclear weapons on the peninsula, but we will have visits to ports, visits of nuclear submarines and things like that,” Biden said as he heralded the agreement, which he called a “prudent step” to reinforce extended deterrence.

The decision to strengthen extended deterrence – a US policy that uses the full range of military capabilities to defend its allies and position additional American nuclear resources in the region amounts to an acknowledgment that attempts to deter North Korea from advancing its own nuclear program have stalled. Attempts at diplomacy with dictator Kim Jong Un have gone mostly unanswered as the North escalates its missile tests and potentially prepares for another nuclear test.

Warning to Kim

Biden offered a stark warning to Kim in the press conference.

“A nuclear attack by North Korea against the United States or its allies and partners is unacceptable, and will result in the end of whatever regime were to take such an action,” Biden said.

It was direct notice to the North Korean dictator that the United States would defend its treaty ally to his south, and precisely the type of message Yoon arrived in Washington hoping to hear.

“Sustainable peace on the Korean Peninsula does not happen automatically,” Yoon said, “Our two leaders have decided to significantly strengthen extended deterrence of our two countries against North Korea’s nuclear and missile threats so that we can achieve peace through the superiority of overwhelming forces and not a false peace based on the goodwill of the other side.”

Biden welcomed Yoon to the White House for the full pomp and circumstance and hospitality of an official state visit – a high-stakes meeting amid ongoing provocations from North Korea, China’s growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region and a recent leak of Pentagon documents.

As he welcomed Yoon, Biden called the alliance “the linchpin of regional security and prosperity” in the Indo-Pacific.

And more broadly, the visit signals the importance with which the US views its relationships with allies in the Indo-Pacific, this trip coming one week before Biden hosts Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos and weeks before Biden is expected to travel to the region himself.

In the news conference the President also noted the trilateral relationship between US, South Korea and Japan, praising President Yoon’s efforts.

“I want to thank you again Mr. President for your political courage and personal commitment to diplomacy with Japan,” Biden said.

The ‘Washington Declaration’

Biden and Yoon unveiled the “Washington Declaration,” a set of new steps to boost US-South Korean cooperation on military training, information sharing and strategic asset movements in the face of a recent spate of missile launches from North Korea.

It is intended to send a clear message: “What the United States and the ROK plan to do at every level is strengthen our practices, our deployments, our capabilities, to ensure the deterrent message is absolutely unquestioned and to also make clear that if we are tested in any way that we will be prepared to respond collectively and in an overwhelming way,” a senior administration official said.

The declaration includes the deployment of the nuclear ballistic submarine. Additionally, the US and Korea will also “strengthen our training, our exercises and simulation activities to improve the US-ROK alliance’s approach to deterring and defending” against North Korean threats, per the official.

It also creates the “US-ROK Nuclear Consultative Group,” which the official said will convene regularly to consult on nuclear and strategic planning issues, with the hope that it will give allies “additional insight in how we think about planning for major contingencies.” That group is modeled after US engagement with European allies during the height of the Cold War, the official said.

#### Biden committed to deterrence, abandoned diplomacy, and increase the role of nukes.

Baker and Sanger 23 – \*Chief White House correspondent for The New York Times; \*\*White House and National Security Correspondent for the New York Times.

\*Peter Baker and \*\*David Sanger, “In Turn to Deterrence, Biden Vows ‘End’ of North Korean Regime if It Attacks,” New York Times, 04-26-2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/26/us/politics/biden-south-korea-state-visit.html

In his public comments with Mr. Yoon on Wednesday, Mr. Biden all but abandoned any talk of a negotiated diplomatic resolution of the 30-year-old confrontation over North Korea’s nuclear ambitions. While saying he would still “seek serious and substantial diplomatic breakthroughs,” he and Mr. Yoon offered no path for doing so and instead emphasized their plans for “extended deterrence,” implicitly acknowledging that North Korea’s nuclear weapons were a reality unlikely to be reversed anytime soon.

As part of the new agreement, the United States and South Korea will create a Nuclear Consultative Group to coordinate military responses to North Korea, and Washington vowed “to make every effort to consult” with Seoul before using nuclear weapons to retaliate against the North.

Still, the agreement made clear that the American president reserves the sole authority to decide whether to launch a nuclear weapon. And Mr. Biden noted that beyond the mainly symbolic submarine visits, he had no intention of stationing nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula. The United States withdrew its last tactical nuclear weapons from South Korea in 1991.

### AT: Biden Campaign Pledges

#### Biden gave up on those.

Cirincione 22 – National Security Analyst at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, former Vice President for National Security at the Center for American Progress, former Director for Nonproliferation at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, former Advisor to Obama

Joseph Cirincione, “Achieving a Safer U.S. Nuclear Posture,” Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, 02-07-2022, https://quincyinst.org/report/achieving-a-safer-u-s-nuclear-posture/

It appears that Biden will pass on his best chance to operationalize his stated goal of reducing the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. security policy when the administration issues its Nuclear Posture Review in early 2022.1

The administration seems to have decided to adjust nuclear policy and programs at the margins while making no significant changes to the Pentagon’s budgets and deployments. Press reports indicate that the 2022 NPR may cancel one or two small weapons programs begun during the Trump administration, retire an older warhead, and ratchet back Trump-era policies that allowed the use of nuclear weapons in a wide variety of conflict situations.2

At the same time, the review will endorse dozens of nuclear-weapons programs that will cost an estimated $634 billion over this decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office.3 This includes proceeding with a new land-based strategic missile rushed toward production in the last months of the previous administration without examining less expensive and less dangerous alternatives to its production.4 This project alone could cost $264 billion over its lifetime.

This failure is not unique to Biden. Every president in the nuclear age has struggled to control the weapons supposedly under his sole authority.

#### In fact, Biden is increasing U.S. reliance on nukes as part of military strategy.

Gronlond 22 – Research Affiliate with the Department of Nuclear Science and Engineering at MIT.

Lisbeth Gronlond, “The new US nuclear posture review is a major step backward,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 11-04-2022, https://thebulletin.org/2022/11/the-new-us-nuclear-posture-review-is-a-major-step-backward/

In contrast, Biden’s NPR states that the United States is “taking steps to advance the goal of reducing reliance on nuclear weapons.” Moreover, moving in this direction will require that several (quite substantial) “security, political and technology conditions evolve in ways that allow [the United States] to do so.” Clearly, reducing reliance is no longer on the Pentagon’s agenda. (Ironically, the NPR states that Russia and China “have demonstrated little interest in reducing their reliance on nuclear weapons.”)

An essential element of reducing reliance on nuclear weapons is a “sole purpose” policy in which the only purpose of US nuclear weapons is to deter the use of such weapons against itself and its allies and partners and, if necessary, respond.

Obama’s NPR stated the US goal was to adopt a sole-purpose policy and, during the 2021 presidential campaign, Biden pledged he would adopt do so if elected. However, his NPR does not include this policy and, far worse, it rejects a sole-purpose policy now and far into the future, stating that it “would result in an unacceptable level of risk” and that “for the foreseeable future US nuclear weapons will continue to provide unique deterrence effects.” These “unique deterrence effects” refer to the belief that nuclear weapons are uniquely capable of deterring and responding to some non-nuclear threats.

### AT: Nuclear Posture Review

#### The NPR explicitly increases the role of nukes in U.S. strategy.

Kristensen and Korda 22 – \*Director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists; \*\*Senior Research Associate and Project Manager for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, M.A. in International Peace & Security from the Department of War Studies at King’s College London.

\*Hans Kristensen and \*\*Matt Korda, “The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review: Arms Control Subdued By Military Rivalry,” Federation of American Scientists, 10-27-2022, https://fas.org/blogs/security/2022/10/2022-nuclear-posture-review/

Although Joe Biden during his presidential election campaign spoke strongly in favor of adopting no-first-use and sole-purpose policies, the NPR explicitly rejects both for now.

From an arms control and risk reduction perspective, the NPR is a disappointment. Previous efforts to reduce nuclear arsenals and the role that nuclear weapons play have been subdued by renewed strategic competition abroad and opposition from defense hawks at home.

Even so, the NPR concludes it may still be possible to reduce the role that nuclear weapons play in scenarios where nuclear use may not be credible.

Unlike previous NPRs, the 2022 version is embedded into the National Defense Strategy document alongside the Missile Defense Review.

Below is our summary and analysis of the major portions of the NPR:

The Nuclear Adversaries

The NPR identifies four potential adversaries for U.S. nuclear weapons planning: Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran. Of these, Russia and China are obviously the focus because of Russia’s large arsenal and aggressive behavior and because of China’s rapidly increasing arsenal. The NPR projects that “[b]y the 2030s the United States will, for the first time in its history, face two major nuclear powers as strategic competitors and potential adversaries.” This echoes previous statements from high-ranking US military leaders, including the former and incoming Commanders of US Strategic Command although the NPR appears less “the sky is falling.”

China: Given that the National Defense Strategy is largely focused on China, it is unsurprising that the NPR declares China to be “the overall pacing challenge for U.S. defense planning and a growing factor in evaluating our nuclear deterrent.”

Echoing the findings of the previous year’s China Military Power Report, the NPR suggests that “[t]he PRC likely intends to possess at least 1,000 deliverable warheads by the end of the decade.” According to the NPR, China’s more diverse nuclear arsenal “could provide the PRC with new options before and during a crisis or conflict to leverage nuclear weapons for coercive purposes, including military provocations against U.S. Allies and partners in the region.”

Russia: The NPR presents harsh language about Russia, in particular surrounding its behavior around the invasion of Ukraine. In contrast to the Trump administration’s NPR, the assumptions surrounding a potential low-yield “escalate-to-deescalate” policy have been toned down; instead the NPR simply states that Russia is diversifying its arsenal and that it views its nuclear weapons as “a shield behind which to wage unjustified aggression against [its] neighbors.”

The review’s estimate of Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons –– “up to 2,000 –– matches those of previous military statements. In 2021, the Defense Intelligence Agency concluded that Russia “probably possesses 1,000 to 2,000 nonstrategic nuclear warheads.” The State Department said in April 2022 that the estimate includes retired weapons awaiting dismantlement. The subtle language differences reflect a variance in estimates between the different US military departments and agencies.

The NPR also suggests that “Russia is pursuing several novel nuclear-capable systems designed to hold the U.S. homeland or Allies and partners at risk, some of which are also not accountable under New START.” Given that both sides appear to agree that Russia’s new Sarmat ICBM and Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle fit smoothly into the treaty, this statement is likely referring to Russia’s development of its Burevestnik nuclear-powered cruise missile, its Kinzhal air-launched ballistic missile, and its Status-6 Poseidon nuclear torpedo.

It appears that Russia and the United States are at odds over whether these three systems are treaty-accountable weapons. In 2019, then-Under Secretary Andrea Thompson noted during congressional testimony that all three “meet the US criteria for what constitutes a “new kind of strategic offensive arms’ for purposes of New START.” However, Russian officials had previously sent a notice to the United States stating that they “find it inappropriate to characterize new weapons being developed by Russia that do not use ballistic trajectories of flight moving to a target as ‘potential new kinds of Russian strategic offensive arms.’ The arms presented by the President of the Russian Federation on March 1, 2018, have nothing to do with the strategic offensive arms categories covered by the Treaty.”

North Korea: In recent years, North Korea has been overshadowed by China and Russia in the U.S. defense debate. Nonetheless this NPR describes North Korea as a target for U.S. nuclear weapons planning. The NPR bluntly states: “Any nuclear attack by North Korea against the United States or its Allies and partners is unacceptable and will result in the end of that regime. There is no scenario in which the Kim regime could employ nuclear weapons and survive.”

Iran: The NPR also describes Iran even though it does not have nuclear weapons. Interestingly, although Iran is not in compliance with its NPT obligations and therefore does not qualify for the U.S. negative security assurances, the NPR declares that the United States “relies on non-nuclear overmatch to deter regional aggression by Iran as long as Iran does not possess nuclear weapons.”

Nuclear Declaratory Policy

The NPR reaffirms long-standing U.S. policy about the role of nuclear weapons but with slightly modified language. The role is: 1) Deter strategic attacks, 2) Assure allies and partners, and 3) Achieve U.S. objectives if deterrence fails.

The NPR reiterates the language from the 2010 NPR that the “fundamental role” of U.S. nuclear weapons “is to deter nuclear attacks” and only in “extreme circumstances.” The strategy seeks to “maintain a very high bar for nuclear employment” and, if employment of nuclear weapons is necessary, “seek to end conflict at the lowest level of damage possible on the best achievable terms for the United States and its Allies and partners.”

Deterring “strategic” attacks is a different formulation than the “deterrence of nuclear and non-nuclear attack” language in the 2018 NPR, but the new NPR makes it clear that “strategic” also accounts for existing and emerging non-nuclear attacks: “nuclear weapons are required to deter not only nuclear attack, but also a narrow range of other high consequence, strategic-level attacks.”

Indeed, the NPR makes clear that U.S. nuclear weapons can be used against the full spectrum of threats: “While the United States maintains a very high bar for the employment of nuclear weapons, our nuclear posture is intended to complicate an adversary’s entire decision calculus, including whether to instigate a crisis, initiate armed conflict, conduct strategic attacks using non-nuclear capabilities, or escalate to the use of nuclear weapons on any scale.”

During his presidential campaign, Joe Biden spoke repeatedly in favor of a no-first-use and sole-purpose policy for U.S. nuclear weapons. But the NPR explicitly rejects both under current conditions. The public version of the NPR doesn’t explain why a no-first-use policy against nuclear attack is not possible, but it appears to trim somewhat the 2018 NPR language about an enhanced role of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear strategic attacks. And the stated goal is still “moving toward a sole purpose declaration” when possible in consultation with Allies and partners.

In that context the NPR reiterates previous “negative security assurances” that the United States “will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states that are party to the NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations.”

“For all other states” the NPR warns, “there remains a narrow range of contingencies in which U.S. nuclear weapons may still play a role in deterring attacks that have strategic effect against the United States or its Allies and partners.” That potentially includes Iran, North Korea, and Pakistan.

Interestingly, the NPR states that “hedging against an uncertain future” is no longer a stated (formal) role of nuclear weapons. Hedging has been part of a strategy to be able to react to changes in the threat environment, for example by deploying more weapons or modifying capabilities. The change does not mean that the United States is no longer hedging, but that hedging is part of managing the arsenal, rather than acting as a role for nuclear weapons within US military strategy writ large.

The NPR reaffirms, consistent with the 2013 Nuclear Employment Strategy, that U.S. use of nuclear weapons must comply with the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) and that it is U.S. policy “not to purposely threaten civilian populations or objects, and the United States will not intentionally target civilian populations or objects in violation of LOAC.” That means that U.S. nuclear forces cannot attack cities per se (unless they contain military targets).

Nuclear Force Structure

The NPR reaffirms a commitment to the modernization of its nuclear forces, nuclear command and control and communication systems (NC3), and production and support infrastructure. This is essentially the same nuclear modernization program that has been supported by the previous two administrations.

### AT: Biden “Fundamental Role” Policy

#### The “Fundamental Role” policy is just the same as Obama’s.

Geller 22 – former Senior Policy Analyst for Nuclear Deterrence and Missile Defense in the Center for National Defense at the Heritage Foundation.

Patty-Jane Geller, “Biden’s Change in Nuclear Policy Weakens Deterrences,” Heritage Foundation, 04-04-2022, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/bidens-change-nuclear-policy-weakens-deterrence>

While we can expect a more comprehensive explanation once the full Nuclear Posture Review is released, Mr. Biden’s “fundamental role” policy appears very similar to that declared by former President Barack Obama in 2010. But 12 years ago, the threat environment was far more benign than it is today. Since then, Russia has invaded Ukraine (twice), Russian President Vladimir Putin has demonstrated an active chemical-weapons program with attacks on political opponents, and China has greatly expanded its military forces.

### AT: Biden Cut the SLCMs

#### The program was irrelevant, the cut didn’t mean anything or affect the balance of power, and the Republican Congress will probably reverse it.

Ali and Stewart 22 – Journalists at the Washington Free Beacon.

Idrees Ali and Phil Stewart, “Biden Admin Scraps Sea-Launched Nuclear Missile Over Military Objections,” The Washington Beacon, 10-27-2022, https://freebeacon.com/biden-administration/biden-admin-scraps-sea-launched-nuclear-missile-over-military-objections/

However, it is unclear if Congress, which could come under Republican control after next month's elections, will resist the efforts to scrap it.

The Biden administration released three documents on Thursday: the National Defense Strategy, Nuclear Posture Review and Missile Defense Review. Together, they laid out the military's priorities for the coming years and underscored that Washington would maintain "a very high bar for nuclear employment."

Under President Donald Trump's administration, the military made a decision in 2018 to develop a new nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile, with a focus on the threat from Russia.

But the Biden administration said in its review the sea-launched cruise missile program (SLCM-N) was unnecessary and would be cancelled because the United States already had the "means to deter limited nuclear use."

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told reporters the military did not need the SLCM-N because there was enough capability in the nuclear inventory already.

"I don't think this sends any message to Putin. He understands what our capability is," Austin said when asked if the scrapping would send a dangerous message to Russia and China.

In April, top U.S. general Mark Milley told lawmakers that his position on the SLCM-N had not changed and he believed multiple options were needed.

Asked whether any military officials had recommended canceling the SLCM-N, a senior U.S. defense official told a briefing that "everyone's voices have been heard." The official added the program was scrapped because even if it had been fully funded, the missiles would not be ready until 2035.

"As it stands right now, there is no need to develop SLCM-N," the official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said.

#### The U.S. still has a sub-launched arsenal, the decision was predictable, the program had already been cut before, and Congress could still reverse it.

Mitchell 22 – Senor Defense Reporter for The Hill.

Ellen Mitchell, “Biden moves to scrap Trump-era sea-launched nuclear missile program,” The Hill, 10-27-2022, https://thehill.com/policy/defense/3708054-biden-moves-to-scrap-trump-era-sea-launched-nuclear-missile-program/

The U.S. will still maintain a submarine-launched nuclear arsenal.

The Biden administration said the Trump-era program was “no longer necessary,” as the United States already has the “means to deter limited nuclear use.”

Asked about the decision on Thursday, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the U.S. nuclear weapons inventory is already significant and that officials had determined the submarine-launched cruise missile wasn’t a necessary add.

“We determined, as we looked at our inventory, that we did not need that capability. We have a lot of capability in our nuclear inventory,” Austin told reporters at the Pentagon.

He added that he doesn’t believe the move sends any message to Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose current nuclear saber-rattling over Ukraine has prompted renewed scrutiny of the United States’ nuclear arsenal.

“He understands what our capability is, and … we’ll continue to move forward,” Austin said.

The administration’s decision to cancel the missile is not entirely surprising, as it falls in line with its Navy’s fiscal 2023 budget request released earlier this year. The service hoped to eliminated funding for research and development into the new SLCM-N, indicating that the program was “cost prohibitive and the acquisition schedule would have delivered capability late to need.”

Ahead of the document’s release, a senior U.S. defense official told reporters that the program was cut because even with full funding, the missiles would not be ready until 2035.

The Biden administration still wants billions of dollars to refurbish the three legs of the U.S. nuclear triad — composed of ground-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, bomber aircraft and submarine-launched weapons, all with nuclear payloads — but looks to save by slashing the development of the SLCM-N.

But Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in April told lawmakers that his views on the SLCM-N and other low-yield nuclear weapons have not altered.

Milley had backed the Trump-era weapons decision in written answers during his 2019 Senate confirmation process, writing that they “are necessary to enable our flexible and tailored deterrence strategy as we modernize aging nuclear forces.”

“My position on SLCM-N has not changed,” Milley told the House Armed Services Committee in April. “My general view is that this president or any president deserves to have multiple options to deal with national security situations.”

Congress could still move to resist the Pentagon effort to cancel the missile.

## Assurances DA

### UQ---General

#### All assurance thumpers have answers

O’Hanlon 22 – Michael E. O’Hanlon, senior fellow and director of research in Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution, directs the Strobe Talbott Center on Security, Strategy and Technology, as well as the Defense Industrial Base working group, and is the inaugural holder of the Philip H. Knight Chair in Defense and Strategy

Michael E. O’Hanlon, 10-6-2022, "Two cheers for Biden’s national security record", Brookings, https://www.brookings.edu/essay/two-cheers-for-bidens-national-security-record/

Almost two years into his presidency, U.S. President Joe Biden’s hopes that his lifetime of foreign policy experience in Washington would make national security a natural political strength have encountered rough seas. After a reasonably good start in early 2021, his popularity took a nosedive that summer and has not really recovered, remaining around 40 percent or less ever since. The botched Afghanistan withdrawal and unseemly unveiling of the AUKUS deal took the sheen off his young presidency that year. COVID-19’s persistence, inflation’s return, and the Ukraine war have since taken a further toll. Most of the latter scourges may not have been his fault, but incumbents are rewarded or penalized for what happens on their watches, whether fair or not.

Twenty months into the Biden presidency, his team had not even released national security or national defense strategy documents — probably out of uncertainty about how to spin their vision and purpose amidst so many troubles. An interim national security strategy in early 2021 underscored several principles that would undergird Biden’s foreign policy — to include multilateralism, cooperation with allies (especially democratic allies), an emphasis on America’s middle class (translating in part into a reluctance to push a traditional free-trade agenda), and a focus on the new transnational threats like pandemic disease and climate change, as well as traditional military challenges. The public summary of his classified national defense strategy prioritizes China as the “pacing challenge” and Russia as the “acute threat.” But these limited pronouncements do not themselves add up to an integrated approach to the world. Moreover, some of these priorities are in clear tension with each other. For example, how can we successfully address climate and pandemic disease while treating China as an emergent adversary? And why is China the main problem if it is Russia that is violently challenging the global order more than any other power in 2022?

[Biden’s] national security record may not deserve three cheers, but it does merit two.

However, despite these mistakes and this inchoate grand strategy, Biden’s national security track record is better than widely perceived. (About 40 percent of Americans give him good grades, while more than 50 percent typically give him an unfavorable assessment in recent polls.) The reason is this: the country is still reasonably safe. That is the key metric by which to judge any grand strategy, and any president’s performance. Biden inherited a turbulent world in 2021; avoiding large-scale conflict in that world should count as a major accomplishment. Unlike his immediate predecessor, who took the nation closer to the brink of war against North Korea in 2017 than is commonly appreciated, and unlike certain prominent Republicans who have suggested the country consider recognizing Taiwan independence even at heightened risk of war with China, Biden has been calm and de-escalatory, yet resolute on core matters of national interest. His national security record may not deserve three cheers, but it does merit two.

### UQ---Europe

#### Biden’s shored up US influence with European allies.

Madhani 23 – Aamer, White House Correspondent at USA Today

Aamer Madhani, 2-22-2023, "Biden shores up Western allies as Putin digs in on Ukraine", AP NEWS, https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-biden-nato-politics-ad9f665011c50de28c13a23798107f17

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — President Joe Biden closed out his wartime visit to Europe on Wednesday, working to shore up partnerships with allies on NATO’s perilous eastern flank — even as Russia’s Vladimir Putin was drawing closer to China for help as his invasion of Ukraine neared the one-year mark.

Biden’s meeting with leaders of the Bucharest Nine nations in Warsaw came at the conclusion of a whirlwind, four-day visit to Ukraine and Poland meant to reassure allies that U.S. support in fending off Russia isn’t at risk of waning.

In dramatic counterpoint, Putin on Wednesday played host in Moscow to Wang Yi, the Chinese Communist Party’s most senior foreign policy official, as U.S. intelligence warned that Beijing is considering supplying arms and ammunition to the worn-down Russian military.

The flexing of alliances was a fresh indication that both sides are digging in for prolonged conflict in Ukraine with the fighting expected to intensify with the arrival of spring.

Biden’s trip had provided yet another moment of telling counterprogramming on Tuesday when he delivered a ringing speech on Western unity in Warsaw, a day after he swept into Kyiv unannounced for a visit with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. As Biden spoke in Poland, Putin announced that Russia was suspending its participation in the last remaining U.S.-Russia nuclear arms control treaty.

### UQ---Japan

#### US Japan alliance is strong as well.

Funatsu et al 23 – Naoko Funatsu, Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) in November 2016 as a Research Fellow for American politics, Takeshi Iida Craig Kafura, assistant director for public opinion and foreign policy at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Shoko Kohama, Associate Professor Public Policy School, Hokkaido University, IR PhD from UVA, Satoshi Machidori, Satoru Mori, Ryo Sahashi.

Naoko Funatsu, Takeshi Iida Craig Kafura, Shoko Kohama, Satoshi Machidori, Satoru Mori, Ryo Sahashi, 3-29-2023, "The US-Japan Alliance in the Age of Crisis", Chicago Council of Global Affairs, https://globalaffairs.org/research/public-opinion-survey/us-japan-alliance-age-crisis

This suggests that President Biden’s explicit statement that the United States would not directly intervene militarily in the crisis in Ukraine had the converse effect of making Japanese citizens feel more confident in US commitment to its alliance with Japan. Although there is only a limited amount that can be concluded on this subject from this survey alone, one possibility is that the knowledge that the United States would not devote military resources to Ukraine made Japanese respondents feel more confident that the United States would honor its commitments in East Asia. Moreover, Biden’s refusal to send US forces to the aid of a non-allied nation could reinforce the view that the United States only intervenes on behalf of official allies, meaning the Japanese public could feel secure given their official alliance status (and the administration’s frequent emphases of the importance of the US-Japan alliance). Again, in this experiment, Biden’s remarks had no effect on any of the other hypothetical scenarios other than those of a Chinese or North Korean attack on Japan.

Fear of Abandonment vs. Fear of Entrapment

In any alliance, two conflicting feelings inevitably coexist: a fear of being abandoned, and a fear of getting unwillingly entangled involved in a conflict. There is always a worry that an ally might fail to come to the aid when a country is attacked by an adversary. But if the country attempts to deepen the relationship with its ally to assuage this fear, it may increase the risk of being dragged into a conflict between the ally and other countries.

According to the results of the September 2022 survey, the percentage of respondents who said they worried a great deal that Japan might “get involved in a conflict between the US and other countries” (32%) was higher than the percentage who said they worried a great deal that the US might “distance itself from Japan” (20%). This suggests that for Japanese citizens, the fear of getting dragged into a third-party conflict is stronger than the fear of being abandoned.

Role of the Self-Defense Forces

The fact that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has dented the confidence of some Japanese citizens in US commitment to its alliance with Japan raises the possibility that some Japanese people might also have changed their minds about the desirable extent of Japan’s contribution to the alliance. This fear of abandonment could push the public to work more closely with the United States in order to persuade the US of the value of the alliance and guard against any potential abandonment. However, few Japanese want the country to increase its military contribution to the US-Japan alliance: 17 percent, up only slightly from 2021 (13%). A majority prefer instead to maintain the present level of military commitment (54%).

#### Strategic convergence over China drives the US-Japan alliance forward.

Solís 22 – Mireya Solís, Director - Center for East Asia Policy Studies Senior Fellow - Foreign Policy, Center for East Asia Policy Studies Philip Knight Chair in Japan Studies

Mireya Solís, 1-20-2023, "As Kishida meets Biden, what is the state of the US-Japan alliance?", Brookings, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2023/01/20/as-kishida-meets-biden-what-is-the-state-of-the-us-japan-alliance/

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida’s first visit to Washington as leader on January 13, 2023 marked a major transformation in the U.S.-Japan alliance. Japan’s new security reforms and Tokyo’s proactive response to the Ukraine crisis have been warmly received in Washington. They underscore a Japan more determined to strengthen its own defense capabilities and contribute to regional deterrence, and reveal new potential to leverage the bilateral partnership to address serious challenges to the international order.

Not surprisingly, U.S.-Japan relations moved at a fast tempo in the weeks and days prior to the arrival of the Japanese leader, with major policy announcements and bilateral agreements. At the end of 2022, the Japanese government revised its National Security Strategy (NSS), National Defense Strategy, and Defense Buildup Program. A major pledge ran through the revised strategic documents: that Tokyo is ready to marshal its comprehensive national power to meet the challenges derived from the most severe security environment of the past 70 years.

Early in the new year, Yasutoshi Nishimura, head of Japan’s Ministry of Trade, Economy and Industry, traveled to Washington to sign agreements to strengthen cybersecurity cooperation with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and to collaborate in eradicating forced labor from global supply chains with the U.S. trade representative. Just a fortnight before Kishida’s arrival, the Security Consultative Committee (2+2 foreign and defense ministers) issued a joint statement praising a modernized alliance attuned to the current era of strategic competition and ready to move in lockstep to implement a shared commitment to integrated deterrence. A week of U.S.-Japan high-level diplomacy yielded commitments to improve allied defense posture in Japan’s southwestern islands and to cultivate a more agile U.S. Marine littoral regiment in Okinawa. It also extended Article 5 of the security treaty to apply U.S. defense commitments to space and cemented the bilateral partnership on space exploration. Agreements materialized on defense R&D and supply chain security as well.

To cap it all, the Biden-Kishida joint statement immediately following the summit noted not only that the “security alliance has never been stronger,” but that the allies “strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, anywhere in the world,” (emphasis mine). This captures an ongoing and portent transformation: While bilateral security commitments remain the anchor of this partnership, the United States and Japan increasingly regard the alliance as an instrument to project their combined influence to promote stability and rule of law in a turbulent international system. This includes efforts to preserve peace in the diplomatically choppy waters of the Taiwan Strait. The shock of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine dramatically expanded the geographical boundaries of U.S-Japan strategic coordination, since Tokyo was among the first to publicly condemn the violence and join the international coalition to punish Putin’s war of aggression. Ukraine left an indelible mark on the Japanese public mindset and its government during the precise year that the country’s overall security and defense policies were under review. It imbued a strong awareness that only nations prepared to defend themselves can expect to muster wide and sustained international support.

The Biden-Kishida summit reaffirmed the strategic convergence between the two nations. The specter of three revisionist powers has helped focus their agenda: North Korea’s missile and nuclear threats; China’s use of coercion, not international law, to advance expansive territorial claims; and Russia’s large-scale war in Europe. Even so, Japan’s response to the adverse international environment stands out. Of America’s allies in Asia, Tokyo has been the most willing to explicitly call out Chinese behavior that undermines the rules-based order, and the newly revised National Security Strategy went further, naming China as Japan’s biggest strategic challenge. A key objective for Kishida in coming to Washington at this juncture was to explain, and gain support from Japan’s core ally, how his administration intends to operationalize a far more ambitious strategic agenda on defense, diplomacy, and development.

### UQ---South Korea

#### The US-South Korea alliance is solid.

Snyder 22 - Scott A. is senior fellow for Korea studies and director of the program on U.S.-Korea policy at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR).

Scott A. Snyder, 5-21-2022, "Yoon Is Revitalizing a Seventy-Year-Old Alliance by Taking Political Chances", Council on Foreign Relations, https://www.cfr.org/blog/yoon-revitalizing-seventy-year-old-alliance-taking-political-chances?amp

Since his inauguration in May 2022, South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol has placed the “comprehensive strategic alliance” with the United States as the centerpiece of South Korea’s foreign policy, fulfilling the campaign pledges he made as a presidential candidate. Yoon’s favorable attitudes toward the United States broadly reflect South Korean public support for close relations with the United States, which regularly garners public approval ratings of over 80 percent. Under these circumstances, one would think that leading a state visit to the United States to mark the seventieth anniversary of the U.S.-South Korea alliance would both consolidate South Korea’s foreign policy strategy and provide a political boost to Yoon, whose approval ratings have hovered in the low thirties and recently dipped below 30 percent. Paradoxically, it is increasingly likely that a successful anniversary summit may not give Yoon an immediate political boost, even though the summit is likely to elevate and reaffirm the U.S.-South Korea alliance.

The Joe Biden administration has warmly welcomed Yoon’s prioritization of the alliance with the United States precisely because it bolsters the Biden administration’s objective of strengthening alliances with like-minded countries to support a rules-based international order in the face of growing authoritarianism. Yoon is also clearly on the same page as Biden in opposing North Korea’s internal repression and military modernization, including the regularization of joint U.S.-South Korea military exercises to enhance readiness and bolster deterrence against North Korea. Yoon has undertaken, at great political cost to his own domestic popularity, a bold effort to prioritize future-oriented relations with Japan that has received strong approval from the Biden administration. In doing so, Yoon brushed aside historical grievances over forced labor that had paralyzed Japan-South Korea relations under his predecessor, Moon Jae-in.

#### Recent summit between South Korea and the US strengthened the alliance.

Klein et al 23 – Betsy Klein, White House Correspondent at CNN.

Betsy Klein, Kylie Atwood, Sam Fossum, 4-26-2023, "Biden and South Korea's Yoon announce agreement to deter North Korea, including deploying nuclear-armed submarine", CNN, https://www.cnn.com/2023/04/26/politics/biden-yoon-south-korea-state-visit/index.html

President Joe Biden and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol announced a key new agreement at the White House on Wednesday that aims to deter North Korean aggression, including a new US commitment to deploy a nuclear-armed submarine in South Korea for the first time since the early 1980s.

In a joint news conference at the White House Biden hailed what he called the “ironclad” alliance between the two countries.

“The alliance formed in war and has flourished in peace,” Biden said from the Rose Garden at the White House. “Our mutual defense treaty is iron clad and that includes our commitment to extend a deterrence – and that includes the nuclear threat, the nuclear deterrent.”

“They’re particularly important in the face of DPRK’s increased threats and the blatant violation of US sanctions,” Biden added.

The product of monthslong discussions between officials from both countries, the new agreement will say that the US “(intends) to take steps to make our deterrence more visible through the regular deployment of strategic assets, including a US nuclear ballistic submarine visit to South Korea, which has not happened since the early 1980s,” the official said. Officials made clear that such assets will not be stationed permanently, and there is “no plan” to deploy any tactical nuclear weapons to the Korean peninsula.

“The bottom line here is there’s even closer cooperation, closer consultation and, and we’re not going to be stationing nuclear weapons on the peninsula, but we will have visits to ports, visits of nuclear submarines and things like that,” Biden said as he heralded the agreement, which he called a “prudent step” to reinforce extended deterrence.

### Link---General

#### Allies care a lot about U.S. nuclear policies. Alternatives to the status quo would shake their confidence.

Costlow 21 – Senior Analyst at the National Institute for Public Policy, PhD in Political Science from George Mason University, M.S. in Defense and Strategic Studies from Missouri State University.

Matthew R. Costlow, “Believe It or Not: U.S. Nuclear Declaratory Policy and Calculated Ambiguity,” War on the Rocks, 08-09-2021, https://warontherocks.com/2021/08/believe-it-or-not-u-s-nuclear-declaratory-policy-and-calculated-ambiguity/

Words in the age of nuclear weapons have taken on even greater importance as the consequences for misperceptions can change — perhaps even end — civilization. Paradoxically though, clarity is not always preferable. U.S. nuclear strategists have long recognized there is a place for ambiguity in declaratory policy — stating one’s intentions and “red lines” clearly enough to deter attacks, but not so explicitly as to restrict freedom of action or encourage adversary aggression just short of the “red lines.” The current U.S. policy of “calculated ambiguity” states that America will only consider nuclear employment under “extreme circumstances” when its “vital interests,” or those of its allies and partners, are threatened. This leaves it to America’s adversaries to wrestle with whether the United States would consider their actions “extreme” or threatening “vital interests.” Most of the long-running debate on U.S. nuclear declaratory policy centers on the question of the value of this purposeful ambiguity, and in what circumstances it should apply, for deterring attack and assuring allies and partners.

The Obama administration twice reportedly considered adopting a new, more restrictive, nuclear declaratory policy. However, it twice rejected the move as unwise because the security environment had not improved enough and because allies such as Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany fiercely objected. More recently, then-candidate for president, Joe Biden, wrote that he wants to revisit this issue at least once more, likely in a forthcoming Nuclear Posture Review. Given the potential consequences of a changed U.S. nuclear declaratory policy — whether it is shifting adversaries’ threat perceptions, alliance dynamics, or domestic weapons procurement — it is well worth exploring whether change is desirable.

America’s current policy of “calculated ambiguity” is worth keeping because it contributes to deterring a growing range of strategic non-nuclear threats (chemical, biological, and conventional), provides U.S. leadership freedom of action in a crisis or conflict, and assures allies and partners. However, influential politicians such as House Armed Services Committee Chairman Adam Smith and Sen. Elizabeth Warren, plus a host of non-government analysts, are proposing changes to U.S. nuclear declaratory policy now because the Biden administration is in the early stages of formulating U.S. nuclear policy. As nuclear modernization programs advance through Congress, the likelihood of restricting or outright eliminating them falls. They hope that if the Biden administration adopts new declaratory policy, that may provide enough impetus to achieve their visions of a reduced U.S. nuclear arsenal. These alternative policies — including nuclear “no first use,” “sole purpose,” and an “existential threat policy” — miss the mark because they seek to restrict U.S. deterrence options through declarations that opponents are unlikely to believe, and allies and partners believe are to their detriment. Instead, U.S. officials should articulate a strong defense of the current nuclear declaratory policy of calculated ambiguity because its flexibility is its strength, and a true necessity in a dynamic security environment.

#### Shifts in nuclear posture freak out allies.

Rose and Bahney 19 – \*Senior Fellow for Security and Strategy at the Brookings Institute; \*\*Senior Fellow at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's Center for Global Security Research.

\*Frank Rose and \*\*Benjamin Bahney, “Reassuring Allies and Strengthening Strategic Stability: An Approach to Nuclear Modernization for Democrats,” War on the Rocks, 04-16-2019, https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/reassuring-allies-and-strengthening-strategic-stability-an-approach-to-nuclear-modernization-for-democrats/

Democrats should remember that America’s nuclear capabilities underpin its key alliances and are a crucial bulwark against growing Russian and Chinese regional aggression, which has caused trepidation among U.S. allies. The Trump administration’s rhetoric and actions have raised further doubts about America’s willingness and ability to support its allies. If Congress opposes elements of the extended deterrent — particularly nuclear cruise missiles — it will only push allies further away, as these missiles are the most credible and visible operational means of deterring Russia and China while reassuring key allies like Japan, South Korea, and NATO countries.

#### Strong nuclear umbrella is key to prevent allied proliferation.

Rose and Bahney 19 – \*Senior Fellow for Security and Strategy at the Brookings Institute; \*\*Senior Fellow at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's Center for Global Security Research.

\*Frank Rose and \*\*Benjamin Bahney, “Reassuring Allies and Strengthening Strategic Stability: An Approach to Nuclear Modernization for Democrats,” War on the Rocks, 04-16-2019, https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/reassuring-allies-and-strengthening-strategic-stability-an-approach-to-nuclear-modernization-for-democrats/

But unlike most other nuclear powers, the United States must deter direct threats against its homeland while also extending its nuclear umbrella to allies around the world. This contributes to U.S. nonproliferation objectives by discouraging other nations from obtaining their own nuclear arsenals and keeps democratic states from having to politically accommodate Russia and China. But this policy of “extended deterrence” requires that the United States has policies and a force structure that demonstrate its commitment to the security of its allies. And given Trump’s continued questioning of U.S. security commitments to our allies, it is even more important that Democrats eschew a “no first use” policy and support modernization programs that reinforce the U.S. extended deterrent.

The U.S. nuclear weapons system that operates most seamlessly with allied systems is by necessity non-strategic. The B61 air-delivered gravity bomb, the only tactical U.S. nuclear weapon system, can be operated on dual-use aircraft owned by both the United States and European partners and is a key component of our strategic commitment to NATO. But in a hypothetical future conflict with China or Russia, getting dual-capable fighter bombers directly above targets will be difficult without an extensive bombing campaign on adversary soil because of the marked advances in these countries’ air defense systems. Thus, the B61 is mostly a defensive weapon and a political symbol, to be used to thwart massive Russian conventional aggression, much as Russian tactical nuclear weapons systems are designed to offset Moscow’s own conventional inferiority.

Enter the new B-21 strategic bomber and the LRSO cruise missile, with their ability to penetrate sophisticated air defense systems. These strategic weapon systems give the U.S. military credible and highly visible options that can be used to signal to Russia, China, and other potential adversaries in support of our partners in a regional crisis (as one of us argued previously in WOTR). The U.S. can use the B-21 and LRSO operationally to both deter our adversaries and to reassure our allies. The survivability of the B-21 and LRSO against modern air defenses gives the United States a key deterrent capability against regional threats that other U.S. weapons systems do not have.

#### Allies are strongly against shifts in U.S. nuclear policy.

Geller 22 – former Senior Policy Analyst for Nuclear Deterrence and Missile Defense in the Center for National Defense at the Heritage Foundation.

Patty-Jane Geller, “Biden’s Change in Nuclear Policy Weakens Deterrences,” Heritage Foundation, 04-04-2022, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/bidens-change-nuclear-policy-weakens-deterrence>

U.S. allies supported the Trump administration’s declaratory policy and have consistently messaged their opposition to making any changes. In fact, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Sasha Baker testified in March: “I can’t say that I’ve found an ally who is urging us to reduce our nuclear deterrence or our declaratory policy in particular.”

### Link---Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan

#### Specifically, undermining the U.S. nuclear strategy would cause proliferation in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Geller 22 – former Senior Policy Analyst for Nuclear Deterrence and Missile Defense in the Center for National Defense at the Heritage Foundation.

Patty-Jane Geller, “The U.S. Must Strengthen Its Nuclear Forces to Deter Growing Nuclear Threats,” Heritage Foundation, 11-30-2022, https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/the-us-must-strengthen-its-nuclear-forces-deter-growing-nuclear-threats

Moreover, failing to develop a more credible nuclear strategy in the face of rising threats could signal to allies a lack of commitment and make them uneasy about relying on the U.S. nuclear umbrella. Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called for Japan to consider hosting U.S. nuclear weapons,50 and a senior Japanese ruling party lawmaker recently called for a national debate on the adequacy of the U.S. nuclear umbrella.51 Additionally, a significant majority of South Koreans continue to express support for an indigenous nuclear weapons capability or nuclear-sharing agreement with the United States as they face increasing nuclear threats from both China and North Korea.52 U.S. allies can do more to advance their own conventional capabilities in response to the growing threats, but if Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan believe the United States will not come to their defense in the event of a strategic attack, they have the ability to develop nuclear capabilities of their own, which would jeopardize the longstanding U.S. commitment to nonproliferation and risk greater global instability.53

### Link---Biological/Conventional/Cyber Posture

#### Not using nukes to deter conventional, chemical, or biological attacks would worry allies.

Costlow 21 – Senior Analyst at the National Institute for Public Policy, PhD in Political Science from George Mason University, M.S. in Defense and Strategic Studies from Missouri State University.

Matthew R. Costlow, “Believe It or Not: U.S. Nuclear Declaratory Policy and Calculated Ambiguity,” War on the Rocks, 08-09-2021, https://warontherocks.com/2021/08/believe-it-or-not-u-s-nuclear-declaratory-policy-and-calculated-ambiguity/

Yet, the United States keeps the option open of employing nuclear weapons first to deter massive conventional, chemical, or biological attacks as well as a number of other strategic non-nuclear attacks. It is precisely these sorts of attacks that allies and partners are greatly worried about, and which U.S. officials could likely not even threaten nuclear employment against for deterrence purposes under their preferred policy. A policy that essentially forbids even threatening nuclear employment in defense of an ally unless it is under imminent threat of attack by nuclear weapons is hardly reassuring. When allies inquire about U.S. nuclear policy, they are not asking U.S. officials to wax eloquent on the purpose of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, they are asking how it would apply in real world situations, (i.e., “use”), exactly the kind of conversation the sole purpose policy is meant to avoid.

### Link---De-Alerting

#### De-alerting would make allies nervous.

Dodge 21 – Research Scholar at the National Institute for Public Policy, PhD in Political Science from George Mason University, M.S. in Defense and Security Studies from Missouri State University.

Michaela Dodge, “Michaela Dodge, ICBMs and Their Importance for Allied Assurances and Security,” National Institute for Public Policy, 01-12-2021, <https://nipp.org/information_series/dodge-michaela-icbms-and-their-importance-for-allied-assurances-and-security-information-series-no-475-2/>

\*Offensive language omitted

De-Alerting Could Make U.S. Allies Nervous

ICBMs are the most responsive leg of the nuclear triad. Unlike significantly slower bombers, ICBMs can reach any target in the world in about 30 minutes. Their speed makes it extremely difficult and costly for adversaries to develop countermeasures against them. ICBMs are always on alert and can be launched anytime within minutes of a presidential decision to do so. They can impose devastating costs on an adversary under the most extreme circumstances. Their promptness strengthens deterrence because an adversary seeking to attack the United States or allies must consider the prospect of a swift effective [devastating] counterattack in response.

The responsiveness of U.S. ICBMs should not be confused with assertions that they are on “hair trigger” alert and prone to causing an accidental nuclear war.[9] Such assertions are simply incorrect due to multiple command and control factors and launch arrangements designed to prevent such scenarios. The U.S. State Department notes that U.S. nuclear forces are not on hair-trigger alert because they are only “ready to launch upon receipt of an authenticated, encrypted, and securely transmitted order from the President of the United States.”[10] “De-alerting” would strip ICBMs of some of their most important attributes, including promptness and responsiveness, which could weaken their overall deterrent effect. No U.S. administration has supported an option to de-alert ICBMs. Even the Obama Administration’s 2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) noted, “The NPR examined possible adjustments to the current alert posture of U.S. strategic forces [and] concluded that this posture should be maintained.”[11] Most recently, the 2018 NPR rejected the “de-alerting” option, concluding that it would create “the potential for dangerous deterrence instabilities.”[12]

Current proponents of de-alerting argue that the United States would have the option to re-alert in a crisis. But re-alerting in the face of a crisis or conflict would likely prove difficult. Such steps could be interpreted as escalatory by U.S. adversaries—and by U.S. allies. Steps to re-alert ICBMs would likely lead to domestic opposition and could be politically challenging given the general U.S. aversion to nuclear weapons and any action that could be perceived as increasing the risk of nuclear conflict. Other countries, however, may not hold the same disdain for nuclear weapons as the United States. For example, some see nuclear weapons as a symbol of national pride and prestige. A Russian influential Orthodox priest recently called nuclear weapons “guardian angels.”[13] By contrast, the body politic in Western countries generally views nuclear weapons as a necessary evil at best, and the United States has consistently strived to decrease its reliance on them for its security.

Some argue that the United States should de-alert its ICBMs unilaterally to incentivize others to take similar steps. For example, a 2012 Global Zero U.S. Nuclear Policy Commission Report states “If unilateral U.S. de-alerting of its strategic offensive forces would cause Russia to follow suit, it would buy a large margin of safety against the accidental or mistaken launch of Russian missiles on hair-trigger alert aimed at the United States.”[14] That example of wishful thinking is not supported by history. Recent history between the two countries is instructive. As the United States decreased the number of its nuclear weapons and delayed or cancelled nuclear weapons modernization programs, Russia took the opposite approach. Disparities between the U.S. and other countries’ approaches to nuclear forces continue to negatively shape U.S. and allied national security and would be even more pronounced should the United States cancel the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent Program to replace the aged force of Minuteman III ICBMs.

### Link---Existential Threat Policy

#### An existential threat policy is an existential threat to U.S. allies.

Costlow 21 – Senior Analyst at the National Institute for Public Policy, PhD in Political Science from George Mason University, M.S. in Defense and Strategic Studies from Missouri State University.

Matthew R. Costlow, “Believe It or Not: U.S. Nuclear Declaratory Policy and Calculated Ambiguity,” War on the Rocks, 08-09-2021, https://warontherocks.com/2021/08/believe-it-or-not-u-s-nuclear-declaratory-policy-and-calculated-ambiguity/

According to George Perkovich and Pranay Vaddi, an existential threat policy would make it U.S. policy to only consider employing nuclear weapons, “when no viable alternative exists to stop an existential attack against the United States, its allies, or partners.” Or, in the words of James Acton:

because of the possibility of escalation, it [the United States] considers that any use of nuclear weapons against itself, its allies, or its partners would constitute an existential threat. But, because existential threats are not limited to nuclear use, this declaratory policy would allow the United States to employ nuclear weapons to defend allies from the most extreme nonnuclear threats.

As its proponents acknowledge, a great deal hangs on the word “existential” and at what point a threat transitions from “severe” to “existential.” Therein, however, lies the weakness of the existential threat policy. For smaller U.S. allies and partners neighboring revisionist powers like China and Russia, even relatively small conventional incursions can be considered “existential threats.” Or, in the example of Seoul, South Korea, massive conventional attacks on the city combined perhaps with chemical and biological weapons use would undoubtedly permanently affect the sovereign political entity of South Korea. But with a potentially sustained and very bloody U.S. response to defend its ally, South Korea could remain a functioning political unit on the world stage. But in those moments when Seoul is under siege and millions of people are fleeing, South Korean and U.S. leaders cannot be absolutely certain that North Korea has war aims that represent an existential threat. Put simply, the United States and its allies may not agree on the severity of an emerging threat during a crisis or conflict and whether it warrants a threat of nuclear first use. But the growing speed and destructiveness of strategic non-nuclear weapons makes an existential threat policy untenable because by the time the United States and an ally agree that a threat has become existential, it may be too late for the threat of U.S. nuclear employment to have the potential deterrent effect.

In addition, an existential threat policy is arguably more vague, detrimentally so, than the current policy of considering nuclear employment only under “extreme circumstances.” Perkovich and Vaddi do not deny that raising the threshold at which the United States would consider employing nuclear weapons may tempt Russia and China to engage in aggression right up to, but not crossing, the “existential threat” line. Their proposed solution is to essentially increase U.S. conventional forces to strengthen deterrence below the nuclear threshold, which the United States is already doing under its current declaratory policy. Thus, it is unclear what net security benefit the United States would gain from adopting an existential threat policy given likely allied reactions and potential adversary responses.

### Link---ICBMs

#### ICBMs are key to both European and Asian allies’ security and assurances.

Dodge 21 – Research Scholar at the National Institute for Public Policy, PhD in Political Science from George Mason University, M.S. in Defense and Security Studies from Missouri State University.

Michaela Dodge, “Michaela Dodge, ICBMs and Their Importance for Allied Assurances and Security,” National Institute for Public Policy, 01-12-2021, https://nipp.org/information\_series/dodge-michaela-icbms-and-their-importance-for-allied-assurances-and-security-information-series-no-475-2/

Since the development of U.S. intercontinental-range ballistic missiles (ICBMs), every U.S. administration—both Republican and Democratic—has considered them indispensable to U.S. national security. However, ICBMs are important not only for deterrence, but to allied security as well.

The United States extends its nuclear security guarantees to more than 30 countries, including allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Other countries like Japan and South Korea, which rely on the so-called “nuclear umbrella” for their security, have nuclear-armed adversaries in their vicinity. In the past, U.S. nuclear guarantees have allowed allies to forego their own nuclear weapons programs, even though many have the technological know-how and access to nuclear materials to build them if they decided to do so. They have refrained from doing so in large part due to their confidence in U.S. nuclear guarantees, and that important role for U.S. nuclear weapons continues today.

Strategic Systems and Allied Assurances

Extending deterrence and assuring allies and partners are primary objectives of U.S. nuclear force posture, as stated in the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR).[1] In the context of NATO, the 2018 NPR states “The United States will make available its strategic nuclear forces, and commit nuclear weapons forward-deployed to Europe, to the defense of NATO. These forces provide an essential political and military link between Europe and North America and are the supreme guarantee of Alliance security.”[2] The dependence of Asian allies on U.S. strategic nuclear capabilities is even more apparent because the United States does not forward deploy any nuclear warheads on allied territories in that region: “the United States currently relies almost exclusively on its strategic nuclear capabilities for nuclear deterrence and the assurance of allies in the region.”[3]

Allies appreciate the link between U.S. strategic nuclear weapons and nuclear assurance. When visiting U.S. Strategic Command in April 2018, Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General, stated “we have to make sure that NATO continues to have credible and strong deterrence. And of course nuclear forces is a[n] absolutely necessary part of a credible deterrence from the Alliance.”[4] Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono issued a statement upon the release of the 2018 NPR that “Japan highly appreciates the latest NPR which clearly articulates the U.S. resolve to ensure the effectiveness of its deterrence.”[5] In the past, a Dutch official even went as far as to suggest that NATO ought to rely more heavily on U.S. strategic systems rather than develop a new dual-capable aircraft.[6]

The importance of U.S. strategic nuclear weapons for extended deterrence and allied assurance was also recognized by the bipartisan congressionally mandated Strategic Posture Commission Report in 2009. The Commission noted that requirements for extended deterrence in Europe and Asia are “evolving,” implying the need for a degree of flexibility in a way that the United States postures its nuclear forces.[7] The Commission also noted that allied “assurance that extended deterrence remains credible and effective may require that the United States retain numbers or types of nuclear capabilities that it might not deem necessary if it were concerned only with its own defense.”[8] The nuclear triad, including its ICBM leg, provides such flexibility, and linking U.S. strategic forces with U.S. nuclear assurances has been U.S. policy for decades. Even though ICBMs do not have the signaling potency and physical visibility of other U.S. delivery systems, particularly long-range nuclear-armed bombers and dual-capable aircraft, they create important synergies that contribute to deterrence.

Since ICBMs are dispersed over large swaths of U.S. territory, an adversary would have to spend hundreds of nuclear warheads in a direct attack on the U.S. homeland to destroy them. This reality—enforced by the U.S. deployment of ICBMs—likely serves to frustrate any nuclear attack planning against the United States. By bolstering deterrence of attacks on the U.S. homeland, ICBMs enhance the credibility of U.S. security guarantees to allies, as the United States is more likely to come to the defense of others when the risks to its own territory are minimized. Without ICBMs, adversaries could concentrate their attack on just three bomber bases and two submarine bases on U.S. territory, leaving submarines at sea as the only strategic system available for retaliation. Such a limited homeland attack would be well within the reach of other nuclear powers. And, without ICBMs, adversaries could then concentrate their resources and focus on countering U.S. submarines at sea. Moreover, without ICBMs, adversaries would have more warheads available to cause damage to U.S. cities.

Unlike ICBMs, other nuclear delivery systems can be destroyed by conventional weapons, notwithstanding the fact that an adversary would have a difficult time finding U.S. strategic submarines, at least for the foreseeable future. The vulnerability of these systems to conventional weapons could result in a substantive ambiguity as to the intentions of an adversary should a nuclear aircraft or a strategic submarine be lost to a conventional attack. Bombers and dual-capable aircraft flying conventional missions add to the complexity of this problem. No such ambiguity is plausible when an adversary chooses to destroy ICBMs.

#### It would ruin all future arms control with adversaries and crush allied confidence --- empirics.

Dodge 21 – Research Scholar at the National Institute for Public Policy, PhD in Political Science from George Mason University, M.S. in Defense and Security Studies from Missouri State University.

Michaela Dodge, “Michaela Dodge, ICBMs and Their Importance for Allied Assurances and Security,” National Institute for Public Policy, 01-12-2021, https://nipp.org/information\_series/dodge-michaela-icbms-and-their-importance-for-allied-assurances-and-security-information-series-no-475-2/

A unilateral elimination of U.S. ICBMs would cost the United States leverage in any future arms control process. Unilateral U.S. nuclear reductions have often gone unreciprocated. The 1990s Presidential Nuclear Initiatives (PNIs) are instructive. PNIs were a series of reciprocal political commitments between the United States and the Soviet Union to withdraw from operational deployment and eliminate various short-range nuclear weapons.

While the United States delivered on its PNI pledges, Russia did not follow suit. The result is at least a 10:1 advantage in short-range nuclear weapons in Russia’s favor in the European theater. Russia’s battlefield weapons directly threaten U.S. forward-deployed forces and allies. Russia has no incentive to give up its superiority in non-strategic nuclear forces, particularly given NATO’s conventional advantage. If meaningful reductions in this class of weaponry were possible at all, Russia would likely propose trade-offs that would significantly hamper U.S. and allied security and be therefore unacceptable to the United States and NATO. For example, Russia could ask the United States to dismantle components of its missile defense system in Europe in return for nominal reductions in Russia’s tactical nuclear forces that would not significantly diminish Moscow’s clear advantage.

Conclusion

Allies perceive changes to U.S. nuclear weapons posture in the broad context of overall U.S. defense policy. These changes are more than just a sum of their operational implications. While allied assurances require a lot more than modernization of a single nuclear weapons delivery system, U.S. unilateral elimination of the ICBM leg of the triad is unwise at this time and for the foreseeable future. It would leave adversaries free to exploit coercive advantages, eliminate U.S. leverage for arms control negotiations, place greater stress on the other elements of the Triad that may not be available for allied defense, elicit doubts on the part of U.S. allies about the credibility of U.S. commitments to their security, and encourage others to seek nuclear weapons as a result—a course of action that could be potentially fatal for the nonproliferation regime the United States has championed for decades.

In the face of pressures on the incoming Biden Administration to eliminate the ICBM leg of the U.S. strategic Triad, such a move would be dangerously destabilizing to allies who rely on the U.S. nuclear umbrella for their ultimate security. Unless we want to face a more unpredictable world with yet more nuclear players, it is critical that U.S. allies remain convinced of credibility of U.S. nuclear assurances. ICBMs are an integral part of that credibility.

### Link---NFU

#### NFU ruins allies faith in U.S. deterrence.

O’Neil 21 – Professor of Political Science at Griffith University, PhD in Political Science and M.A. in International Relations from Flinders University.

Andrew O’Neil, “A “No-First-Use” doctrine would undermine American nuclear deterrence,” The Interpreter, 01-21-2021, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/no-first-use-doctrine-would-undermine-american-nuclear-deterrence

But the most disconcerting aspect of a US No-First-Use commitment is that it would raise serious questions about the credibility of US alliances. America’s allies want to lower the risks of nuclear war, but they do not want this to occur at the expense of their own security. If the Biden Administration adopts No-First-Use, it is effectively stating that US security guarantees will not include the US’s most powerful weapons, unless allies are first attacked with nuclear weapons. This is cold comfort for countries like Japan, Taiwan, and Australia all of which would have to contend with superior PLA conventional forces in the event of hostilities with China. While this does not mean that US alliances would become redundant, with the adoption of No-First-Use they would cease to provide the existential guarantee that allies have come to expect. When doubts have arisen about US commitments in the past, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and even Australia have toyed with their own nuclear weapons programs. There is no reason to assume they will not do so again.

It is clearly in the interests of the US and its close allies to keep Beijing, Moscow, and Pyongyang guessing about the precise threshold at which the US would consider using nuclear weapons. Calculated ambiguity is smart policy, because the more certainty adversaries have about the threshold at which certain levels of force are used, the more confident they will feel about retaining the initiative below that threshold. Does anyone seriously believe that Beijing will be any more restrained during a crisis if it is assured the US won’t resort to nuclear weapons unless China carries out a nuclear strike first?

#### Spurs mass proliferation.

Hong 22 – International Security Opinion Writer at The Asia Times, former Researcher at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University, MPhil in Politics and International Studies from the University of Cambridge.

Taehwa Hong, “The Case Against the No First Use Policy,” The Stanford Review, 01-26-2022, https://stanfordreview.org/the-case-against-the-no-first-use-policy/

However, NFU cannot be a step towards a “Nuclear-Free World.” In fact, it could precipitate unwarranted nuclear proliferation. The urge for an independently nuclear South Korea already exists among Koreans. During South Korea’s 2021 presidential primary, the conservatives openly called for nuclear armament, should the US nuclear umbrella fail. Leading Korean politicians have also called for Washington’s reintroduction of US tactical nuclear weapons into the Korean peninsula, a rejection of which would amplify demands of our own nuclear weapons program. An op-ed in the Washington Post advocating for arming South Korea with nuclear weapons was popular in Seoul, although few in Washington share this view.

A NFU declaration by the United States would embolden US allies to pursue their own nuclear armament. If one country does somehow develop nuclear weapons, it would certainly not be the last one to do so. A domino of nuclear proliferation would kickstart across different regions. A South Korean nuclear program would lead to Japan and Taiwan pursuing their own, which would in turn provoke China into an additional build-up. Watching the developments in East Asia, Saudi Arabia might quickly “import” nuclear weapons from Pakistan. And the contagious nuclear arms race would continue. This would mark the end of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime as we know it.

#### Best studies prove.

Chambers et al. 21 – \*Assistant Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration for the U.S. Air Force; \*\*Researcher at the Institute for Defense Analyses, former Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the RAND Corporation, PhD in Public Affairs from Princeton University; \*\*\*Assistant Director of the Institute for Defense Analyses, PhD in Physics from Michigan State University; \*\*\*\*Director of the Project on Nuclear Issues and a Senior Fellow in the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, former Visiting Fellow at the Project on Managing the Atom in the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University, PhD in War Studies from King’s College London, M.A. in Security Policy Studies from the George Washington University.

\*William A. Chambers, \*\*Caroline R. Milne, \*\*\*Rhiannon T. Hutton, and \*\*\*\*Heather W. Williams, “No-First Use of Nuclear Weapons: A Policy Assessment,” Institute for Defense Analyses, 01-xx-2021, https://www.ida.org/-/media/feature/publications/n/no/no-first-use-of-nuclear-weapons-a-policy-assessment/p-20513.ashx

How an NFU Policy May affect the Views of U.S. Allies

¬ IDA found consistently that allies place high value on their relationship with the United States and consider the U.S. security guarantee critical. Allies see a need for strengthened bonds with the United States and suggest a number of mechanisms to do so, none of which relate to declaratory policy.

¬ For those states that are most linked to U.S. nuclear security assurances and most concerned about Russian and Chinese aggression, a shift to NFU can be expected to increase anxieties, dilute assurance, and potentially drive the need for the United States to offer material compensation.

¬ North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members perceive a troubling gap in regional deterrent capabilities vis-à-vis Russia that an NFU policy might exacerbate.

¬ Without a nuclear-sharing arrangement or permanent regional presence, the current U.S. extended nuclear deterrence commitment in the Asia-Pacific is likely seen as little more than a possibility. NFU would dilute that promised commitment even further.

#### NFU would confirm allies worst fears.

Chambers et al. 21 – \*Assistant Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration for the U.S. Air Force; \*\*Researcher at the Institute for Defense Analyses, former Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the RAND Corporation, PhD in Public Affairs from Princeton University; \*\*\*Assistant Director of the Institute for Defense Analyses, PhD in Physics from Michigan State University; \*\*\*\*Director of the Project on Nuclear Issues and a Senior Fellow in the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, former Visiting Fellow at the Project on Managing the Atom in the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University, PhD in War Studies from King’s College London, M.A. in Security Policy Studies from the George Washington University.

\*William A. Chambers, \*\*Caroline R. Milne, \*\*\*Rhiannon T. Hutton, and \*\*\*\*Heather W. Williams, “No-First Use of Nuclear Weapons: A Policy Assessment,” Institute for Defense Analyses, 01-xx-2021, https://www.ida.org/-/media/feature/publications/n/no/no-first-use-of-nuclear-weapons-a-policy-assessment/p-20513.ashx

A. Likely Allied Reactions to NFU

Widespread perceptions of a deteriorating international security environment, combined with waning or low confidence in the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence suggest the allies, are unlikely to perceive NFU as beneficial or useful policy. U.S. adoption of NFU could be interpreted as further erosion of the U.S. security guarantee and as a signal that the United States is deliberately limiting its obligations to allies. That said, the allies are not a monolith, and the degree of disapproval would vary from extreme to moderate to low. Despite domestic pressures to demonstrate progress toward nuclear disarmament in many NATO states, European allies—but more markedly those in Eastern Europe—would be largely opposed. In the Asia-Pacific, Japan appears to remain in firmest opposition to such a shift, but NFU would exacerbate overall concerns about the U.S.’ ability to counter China’s aggressive behavior and North Korea’s unpredictability and would intensify existing doubts in the region about the U.S. willingness to intervene on behalf of an ally.

The other two nuclear-armed countries in NATO, France and the United Kingdom, are particularly sympathetic to strategic ambiguity. They have similar policies but rely on substantially smaller and less diverse nuclear arsenals. During the development of the 2010 NPR, one reason for rejecting NFU was the desire to remain aligned with these two allies, who were not prepared to adopt NFU or support U.S. adoption of NFU. An NFU pronouncement would have put the United States at odds with the policy of the British, the French, and NATO, all of which have long stood by a policy of calculated ambiguity.61 Since there is no indication that the British and French stances have changed, such a discontinuity could reinforce Russia’s expected objectives—disarray among Western allies— in the midst of a burgeoning crisis, perhaps increasing Russian leaders’ willingness to take risk.

Fundamental to this likely reaction is recognition of increasingly challenging and dangerous regional security trends.62 Allies are concerned by the development or refinement of concepts, capabilities, and doctrines by nuclear-armed potential adversaries like Russia, China, and North Korea that may threaten the U.S. ability to intervene decisively in a local contingency. NATO/European allies are particularly uneasy about Russia’s reliance on non-strategic nuclear weapons (NSNW) and dual-capable systems in times of crisis. There are concerns that Russia, in particular, sees limited nuclear first use as a means to control escalation and that allies may perceive a deterrence “gap” in this regard. Challenges in the Asia-Pacific are motivated by the expansion of Chinese anti access/area denial (A2/AD) capability, including counter-stealth technology together with medium range missiles that can target Guam, and by a consistently provocative and unpredictable nuclear North Korea.63 Allies see these developments as bolstering the adversary’s position in the regional balance of power. While short or no-notice nuclear attacks are viewed as unlikely, “deterrence gaps” are believed to loom over a future crisis or conflict. Threats of limited nuclear use by the adversary could force the United States and its allies to capitulate or back down.64 Against this backdrop, the constraints that NFU may place on the United States are at odds with the direction in which adversaries are moving from the allied perspective.

Similarly, dissatisfaction with the array of available and prospective conventional options for allies to manage the risks of escalation in this environment will circumscribe allied views about the potential advantages of an NFU policy. IDA found consistently that allies place high value on their relationship with the United States and consider the U.S. security guarantee critical. Yet, across the board, allies in Europe and the Asia-Pacific are worried about the fading (or loss) of the U.S. conventional advantage vis-à-vis Russia— and especially China.65 Multiple interview participants observed that Japan and South Korea are in the same position regarding China as NATO was during the Cold War regarding the Soviet Union, underscoring the imperative of a declaratory policy based on strategic ambiguity. Aside from quantitative differences in regional strike capabilities, allies are also tracking the relative U.S. inability to operate forces across domains. China, and increasingly Russia, is seen as better integrated. 66 The ability of the United States to redress any conventional imbalance—and position itself to do so in a sustainable way over the long term—will thus likely endure as a key challenge for NFU proponents.

An NFU policy would also likely call into question the credibility of U.S. extended nuclear deterrence at a point when allied confidence in that relationship is shaken. Even with disarmament debates ongoing in many European countries, NATO members perceive a troubling gap in the deterrent balance with Russia that NFU might exacerbate. Maintaining the capability for first use was seen as especially important in the Asia-Pacific, where the extended deterrence architecture is seen as “undercapitalized” and “neglected.” Without a nuclear-sharing arrangement or permanent regional presence, U.S. extended nuclear deterrence capabilities in Asia may be seen as little more than a “possibility that they will be deployed as a contingency or during a crisis in the Asia-Pacific region.”67 NFU could undermine that promise even further.

#### The credibility of extended deterrence would crumble.

Rose and Bahney 19 – \*Senior Fellow for Security and Strategy at the Brookings Institute; \*\*Senior Fellow at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's Center for Global Security Research.

\*Frank Rose and \*\*Benjamin Bahney, “Reassuring Allies and Strengthening Strategic Stability: An Approach to Nuclear Modernization for Democrats,” War on the Rocks, 04-16-2019, https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/reassuring-allies-and-strengthening-strategic-stability-an-approach-to-nuclear-modernization-for-democrats/

A ‘No First Use Policy’ Risks the Credibility of U.S. Extended Deterrence

Some Democratic lawmakers have introduced legislation calling on the United States to adopt a declaratory policy of “no first use” of nuclear weapons. Proponents argue that it would reduce the risk of nuclear use and miscalculation and set an example for the rest of the world to follow. However, given the worsening security environment and the renewed need to reassure allies, we strongly caution Democrats against embracing this policy. A “no first use” declaration would signal to allies that the United States might not support them in the face of Russian and Chinese coercive nuclear threats.

Indeed, the Obama administration weighed — and rejected — the possibility of adopting such a policy in both 2010 and 2016. According to press reports, one of the key reasons this proposal was rejected was concerns raised by U.S. allies, especially the United Kingdom, France, Japan, and South Korea, who feared that such a policy could undermine deterrence. As a 2017 Brookings report, endorsed by a number of former Democratic national security officials, notes: “adopting sole purpose or No First Use, especially at a time of heightened tension and threat, could erode confidence in the efficacy of the U.S. extended nuclear deterrent on the part of allies in Northeast Asia and Central and Eastern Europe, who have traditionally been very wary of disavowing the first-use option.”

Congressional Democrats should also be aware that serious allied strategists are beginning to publicly question the U.S. commitment to extended deterrence. For example, Paul Dibb, a respected professor emeritus at Australian National University, wrote recently: “If, in extremis, we can no longer depend on the US to defend us from threats from a nuclear-armed China, Australia might have to revisit the technological lead time we need to develop an independent nuclear weapon.”

While we agree that the United States should work to create the security conditions to be able to adopt such a policy in the future, those conditions do not exist today. Adopting such a policy has the potential to seriously disrupt the existing network of U.S. alliances, at a time when Trump is already putting its strength to the test.

### Link---Nuclear Posture Review/Declaratory Policy

#### Strategic ambiguity in the NPR is key to assurances --- clarity ruins allied confidence.

Costlow 21 – Senior Analyst at the National Institute for Public Policy, PhD in Political Science from George Mason University, M.S. in Defense and Strategic Studies from Missouri State University.

Matthew R. Costlow, “Believe It or Not: U.S. Nuclear Declaratory Policy and Calculated Ambiguity,” War on the Rocks, 08-09-2021, https://warontherocks.com/2021/08/believe-it-or-not-u-s-nuclear-declaratory-policy-and-calculated-ambiguity/

Words in the age of nuclear weapons have taken on even greater importance as the consequences for misperceptions can change — perhaps even end — civilization. Paradoxically though, clarity is not always preferable. U.S. nuclear strategists have long recognized there is a place for ambiguity in declaratory policy — stating one’s intentions and “red lines” clearly enough to deter attacks, but not so explicitly as to restrict freedom of action or encourage adversary aggression just short of the “red lines.” The current U.S. policy of “calculated ambiguity” states that America will only consider nuclear employment under “extreme circumstances” when its “vital interests,” or those of its allies and partners, are threatened. This leaves it to America’s adversaries to wrestle with whether the United States would consider their actions “extreme” or threatening “vital interests.” Most of the long-running debate on U.S. nuclear declaratory policy centers on the question of the value of this purposeful ambiguity, and in what circumstances it should apply, for deterring attack and assuring allies and partners.

The Obama administration twice reportedly considered adopting a new, more restrictive, nuclear declaratory policy. However, it twice rejected the move as unwise because the security environment had not improved enough and because allies such as Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany fiercely objected. More recently, then-candidate for president, Joe Biden, wrote that he wants to revisit this issue at least once more, likely in a forthcoming Nuclear Posture Review. Given the potential consequences of a changed U.S. nuclear declaratory policy — whether it is shifting adversaries’ threat perceptions, alliance dynamics, or domestic weapons procurement — it is well worth exploring whether change is desirable.

America’s current policy of “calculated ambiguity” is worth keeping because it contributes to deterring a growing range of strategic non-nuclear threats (chemical, biological, and conventional), provides U.S. leadership freedom of action in a crisis or conflict, and assures allies and partners. However, influential politicians such as House Armed Services Committee Chairman Adam Smith and Sen. Elizabeth Warren, plus a host of non-government analysts, are proposing changes to U.S. nuclear declaratory policy now because the Biden administration is in the early stages of formulating U.S. nuclear policy. As nuclear modernization programs advance through Congress, the likelihood of restricting or outright eliminating them falls. They hope that if the Biden administration adopts new declaratory policy, that may provide enough impetus to achieve their visions of a reduced U.S. nuclear arsenal. These alternative policies — including nuclear “no first use,” “sole purpose,” and an “existential threat policy” — miss the mark because they seek to restrict U.S. deterrence options through declarations that opponents are unlikely to believe, and allies and partners believe are to their detriment. Instead, U.S. officials should articulate a strong defense of the current nuclear declaratory policy of calculated ambiguity because its flexibility is its strength, and a true necessity in a dynamic security environment.

#### Allies care a ton about declaratory policy.

Panda and Narang 21 – Stanton Senior Fellow in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Former Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Federation of American Scientists; \*\*Frank Stanton Professor of Nuclear Security and Political Science and Member of the Security Studies Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, PhD in Government from Harvard University, MPhil from Oxford University.

\*Ankit Panda and \*\*Vipin Narang, “Sole Purpose is Not No First Use: Nuclear Weapons and Their Declaratory Policy,” War on the Rocks, 02-22-2021, https://warontherocks.com/2021/02/sole-purpose-is-not-no-first-use-nuclear-weapons-and-declaratory-policy/

Nuclear weapons by themselves can say a lot. They may deter aggression, for example, through their simple existence, generating a “threat that leaves something to chance,” as Thomas Schelling famously put it. Sometimes the less said about them the better: This leaves adversaries guessing what may trigger their use. So why do states bother declaring why they have nuclear weapons or when they might use them? In the case of the United States, at least, nuclear weapons do more than deter adversaries — they should also reassure allies about America’s commitment to extending deterrence to them and assure the world that the United States is a responsible steward of nuclear weapons. As such, when U.S. government officials issue statements about the role or employment of the country’s nuclear arsenal — what’s known as nuclear declaratory policy — they are attempting to signal to adversaries, allies, and the rest of the world the role that nuclear weapons play in American security policy, and when they may potentially be employed. Rather than simply relying on an unstated threat that leaves something to chance, the United States broadly outlines when it might consider making such threats, and to what ends, in the first place. Although declaratory policy may sometimes be derided as irrelevant — adversaries care more about what America can do with nuclear weapons than what it says about them — the fact is that allies care a lot about what the United States says about its nuclear weapons, because their very existence may depend on the American pledge to use nuclear weapons in their defense. Given this, it is important to get declaratory policy right.

### Link---Sole Purpose

#### Sole purpose would freak out European allies.

Arndt et al. 21 – \*Research Assistant in the International Security Division of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs; \*\*Associate in the International Security Division of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs; \*\*\*Head of the International Security Research Division of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs; \*\*\*\* Senior Associate in the International Security Division of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs; \*\*\*\*\* Associate in the International Security Division of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

\*Anna Clara Arndt, \*\*Liviu Horovitz, \*\*\*Claudia Major, \*\*\*\*Jonas Schneider, \*\*\*\*\*Lydia Wachs, “Euro-Atlantic Concerns regarding a US »Sole Purpose« Policy,” Research Division International Security, 12-xx-2021, https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/arbeitspapiere/Working\_Paper\_European\_SP\_Perspectives.pdf

First, opposition towards SP based on anxieties over weakening deterrence

Several governments worried about Russian coercion and reliant upon US security provision appear to be strongly opposed to a policy change in Washington. For instance, officials in Estonia would react negatively to an SP, worried that it would weaken deterrence and embolden Moscow. Concerned with potential Russian conventional superiority within local theaters, Tallin could potentially react to an SP by seeking enhanced conventional reassurance through NATO. Lithuania considers the current US policy of “calculated nuclear ambiguity” as ensuring credible deterrence and, hence, serving its security interests vis-àvis Russia. Latvia might even see an SP as an additional bargaining chip for a wider and more permanent US conventional presence in the Baltic States. Poland’s negative stance towards a US SP is no secret, and Warsaw would worry about weakened deterrence and question SP’s benefits for arms control and non-proliferation. The Czech Republic would see an SP as harming NATO’s nuclear deterrence, as Moscow would likely perceive such a step as weakness. Slovakia would also be worried about the message such a change would send to Moscow, but also concerned about the credibility of US commitments, and would, like others, probably request enhanced reassurance. In a deteriorating security environment, Romania’s government assesses that the current US posture ensures credible extended deterrence, and seemingly concludes that changes should only be made in close consultations with allies.

Second, concerns regarding SP by European nuclear powers

The two European nuclear-weapon states seem also not enthralled with a sole purpose declaration. France would oppose a US SP, worried that it would weaken nuclear deterrence, send the wrong signals to both adversaries and friends, and create pressures to change French policy as well. The United Kingdom reportedly expressed its concerns in Washington, and UK officials appear to be worried that an SP might embolden Russia, challenge nuclear policy within NATO and put the spotlight on London’s own nuclear policies.

#### And Asian allies.

Kim 22 – Adjunct Senior Fellow with the Indo-Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security, former Senior Advisor for Nuclear Policy at the International Crisis Group, member of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific U.S. Committee, the International Nuclear Security Forum, the U.S. National Committee on North Korea, and the Korean Peninsula Future Forum in Seoul, PhD in International Relations from Korea University, M.S. in Foreign Service from the Georgetown University.

Duyeon Kim, “Biden Can Find Middle Ground in Heated Nuclear Debate,” Foreign Policy, 02-15-2022, https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/15/nuclear-weapons-review-biden/

Those who advocate for a no-first-use and/or sole purpose policy present many important arguments whose common denominator is enhancing crisis stability, reducing the chances of escalation to the nuclear level, and leading by example through unilateral nuclear restraint. The potential return of Trumpism (and a president’s sole authority to launch nuclear weapons) would add more weight to these claims, even though such policy could be reversed by a future president. Some experts also believe that no-first-use and sole purpose are different. The latter, they argue, avoids “eroding primary or extended deterrence” because such language leaves enough ambiguity about the circumstances in which the United States would use nuclear weapons.

However, U.S. allies do not want Washington to limit its nuclear use to only responding to a nuclear attack. For Asian allies in particular, the psychological effect of nuclear weapons is just as important as their physical destructive power. Even if high-tech conventional weapons could effectively respond to non-nuclear attacks from an operational standpoint, Asian officials say they still need something much stronger to scare and deter adversaries from waging any kind of attack.

#### An arms race would become likely.

Kim 22 – Adjunct Senior Fellow with the Indo-Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security, former Senior Advisor for Nuclear Policy at the International Crisis Group, member of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific U.S. Committee, the International Nuclear Security Forum, the U.S. National Committee on North Korea, and the Korean Peninsula Future Forum in Seoul, PhD in International Relations from Korea University, M.S. in Foreign Service from the Georgetown University.

Duyeon Kim, “Biden Can Find Middle Ground in Heated Nuclear Debate,” Foreign Policy, 02-15-2022, https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/15/nuclear-weapons-review-biden/

In Asia, allies have already been increasingly skeptical about the reliability of the U.S. extended nuclear deterrent, or nuclear umbrella, and would be tempted to seriously consider their own nuclear options because of threats from China and North Korea. South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and even Australia have previously toyed with nuclear weapons programs. South Koreans tell me that progressives might use a no-first-use/sole purpose policy as rationale—arguing that the nuclear umbrella is gone or broken—to question the need for U.S. troop presence and the United Nations Command, while moderates and conservatives would likely use the same rationale to call for the country’s own nuclear weapons. Prospects of Japan’s nuclear armament would ignite a nuclear arms race in the region as well.

## Deterrence DA

### UQ---China

#### The US will pursue a successful deterrent policy against China now.

Glaser 23 - Bonnie S, Asia program director at the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

Bonnie S. Glaser, 2023, "Biden’s Midterm Report Card", Foreign Policy, https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/01/19/biden-2-year-report-card-foreign-policy/

The Biden administration deserves high marks for sustained focus on China and the Indo-Pacific despite Russia’s war in Ukraine. It has begun to deliver on what it calls its “invest, align, and compete” strategy toward China, including by channeling billions of dollars into U.S. semiconductor manufacturing and science research, retaining most of former U.S. President Donald Trump’s restrictions on China, and going a significant step further by restricting semiconductor exports in an attempt to thwart China’s development of high technology.

Little progress, however, has been made in putting guardrails around intensifying Sino-U.S. competition, such as risk reduction measures between the two countries’ militaries. Cooperation on climate change, global public health, and even narcotics trafficking has stalled. Beijing has either set unworkable preconditions or suspended talks due to U.S. policies toward Taiwan.

Biden officials have taken welcome steps to strengthen Taiwan’s security (including almost $3.8 billion in arms sales approvals), bolster economic ties, and cooperate on semiconductor supply chains. U.S. allies have been persuaded to warn Beijing against the use of force to change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. But Biden’s suggestion that Taiwan can declare independence if it chooses to do so, along with other gaffes and decisions, have undermined the credibility of U.S. support for the “one China” policy, thus increasing the risk of war. The U.S. military still hasn’t addressed its dependency on large, fixed bases and vulnerable aircraft carriers to defend Taiwan, which could tempt Chinese President Xi Jinping to try to seize the island. A plan to transform the U.S. force posture in the region is in the works, but it’s unclear whether it can restore a more favorable military balance.

The administration’s Indo-Pacific Strategy, released in February 2022, makes a strong case for a bigger U.S. role in the region. Its implementation is a work in progress. Achievements have been most significant in the diplomacy bucket, including two presidential trips to the region, annual Quadrilateral Security Dialogue summits, a U.S.-Pacific Island Country Summit, and the launch of the U.S.-Association of Southeast Asian Nations Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

#### AND hawkish GOP house will ensure Biden’s hardline remains.

Marlow 22 – Iain, senior diplomatic correspondent for Bloomberg News in Washington, D.C., covering the State Department and US foreign policy

Iain Marlow, Eric Martin, 11-17-2022, "Hard-Line China Push Is Vowed by Republicans Taking Control of the US House", Bloomberg, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-17/gop-takeover-of-house-ensures-hard-line-on-china-despite-biden-xi-conciliation#xj4y7vzkg?leadSource=uverify%20wall

Republicans are expected to pressure President Joe Biden to pursue a more hawkish approach to China now that they’ve won control of the House of Representatives, with promises to probe White House policy toward Asia and confront Beijing more forcefully.

The GOP is likely to portray Biden’s attempt in Bali this week to ease tensions with China as a sign of weakness rather than a cause for celebration. Biden met President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of a Group of 20 summit on Monday and pledged to resume some contacts that had been severed in recent months.

House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy, who’s in position to replace Democrat Nancy Pelosi as speaker, has said he’ll lead a congressional trip to Taiwan, in an echo of her August visit. It would be likely to again produce a fierce response from China including military exercises and missile test launches near the self-governed island, and it might lead China to cut communications that were resumed as a result of Biden meeting Xi.

Beyond that, McCarthy wants to form a special congressional committee to go after China on everything from trade and national security to the origins of Covid-19. Each issue on his list may provoke Chinese condemnation and perhaps retaliation.

“We are looking at a much more dangerous deterioration of relations,” said Yun Sun, director of the China Program at the Stimson Center in Washington.

Republicans gained House control in the Nov. 8 midterm vote, winning at least the 218 needed of 435 seats, according to the Associated Press tally. Democrats kept narrow control of the Senate.

Despite the display of relative collegiality in Bali, the Biden administration continues to push back against China’s growing technological and military prowess, including through export controls targeting advanced semiconductors in an effort to prevent China from eventually outpacing America’s advanced industries and military arsenal.

Representative Michael McCaul of Texas, the top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and its expected next chairman, has questioned whether the administration is going far enough, asking Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo to provide data to determine whether technology curbs on China were being undermined by an “overly lax licensing process.”

Biden has kept in place about $300 billion in tariffs on Chinese goods that were first imposed more than four years ago by former President Donald Trump.

#### The US is taking a laundry list of actions to deter China.

Mousavizadeh 22 - Philip, BA in political science from Yale

Philip Mousavizadeh, 7-8-2022, "The Biden Administration’s China Policy: An Inventory of Actions to Address the Challenge ", Just Security, https://www.justsecurity.org/82252/the-biden-administrations-china-policy-an-inventory-of-actions-to-address-the-challenge/

President Joe Biden and his administration have made clear since taking office that its primary foreign policy challenge is what it sees as China’s increasingly aggressive actions that threaten the international order cultivated over decades by the United States and its allies. While Russia’s war in Ukraine has become the immediate concern and has heightened awareness of Russia’s persistent threat, China remains a strategic priority for the United States, as demonstrated by Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s May speech outlining the administration’s policy toward China. Just last week, Biden and other NATO leaders meeting in Madrid for their annual summit cited China’s “challenge” to “our interests, security and values” in their updated Strategic Concept 2022 for the alliance going forward.

In an attempt to understand the U.S. position and its aims in navigating the China challenge, it is useful to catalog the most significant measures the Biden administration has taken to date. The overarching approach, as outlined through numerous statements and speeches, appears to be one of framing the relationship as a contest between democracy and authoritarianism, in pursuit of a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific region, and alliances characterized by cooperation rather than coercion. The administration’s policy toward China represents the merging of a hard-line approach partially inherited from its predecessor with a greater emphasis on taking action with allies and partners.

The concrete steps detailed below suggest that the administration has sought to cooperate with its allies where it can; some of the most strategically and symbolically significant actions have been taken in lockstep with key allies, from the agreement on nuclear submarines with Australia and the United Kingdom to the new Indo-Pacific Economic Framework and the NATO strategy document referenced above. At the same time, the Biden team has been prepared to act unilaterally to impose a wide array of sanctions on Chinese individuals and firms and has maintained some key Trump-era trade restrictions. The administration has expanded its commitment to halting China’s malign efforts to gain undue or harmful regional influence through diplomatic and military means as well. This includes both actively expanding America’s presence in the region through broad multilateral agreements and through a bolstered relationship with Taiwan.

The following catalogs Biden administration actions that directly address the relationship with China: in his speech outlining U.S. China policy, for example, Blinken talked about the importance of investment at home in boosting America’s global competitiveness; such broader aspects of the dynamic are not included here. This compilation also does not attempt to be exhaustive: there are, of course, myriad decisions made on a daily basis that are part of the wider approach to China that are not detailed here. Rather, this seeks to highlight the most significant steps, so as to create an overall understanding of the administration’s approach.

Blacklisting Chinese Companies

Blacklists are designed to direct American investors and suppliers away from certain companies or individuals. Often, working with those on a blacklist can lead to the imposition of further sanctions. From the early days of the Biden administration, leading Chinese companies have been placed on Federal Communications Commission, Department of Defense, and Commerce Department blacklists due to national security concerns, including alleged involvement with the Chinese military, or for alleged involvement with Chinese human rights abuses.

In March 2021, five Chinese companies, including Huawei, were blacklisted by the FCC, having been “deemed to pose an unacceptable risk to the national security of the United States or the security and safety of United States persons.” In addition to Huawei, the other companies are ZTE Corp., Hytera Communications Corp., Hikvision Digital Technology Co., and Dahua Technology Co.

The following month, the Commerce Department added seven Chinese supercomputing companies to its blacklist, citing activities contrary to the national security or foreign policy interests of the United States. These activities include building supercomputers used by China’s military actors, and in its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs. American companies are barred from doing business with companies on the entity list without first obtaining a U.S. government license.

In July, the Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) added a slate of Chinese companies to its Entity List over their role in human rights abuses in Xinjiang, and for their ties to China’s military. According to the announcement, these companies “enabled Beijing’s campaign of repression, mass detention, and high-technology surveillance against Uyghurs.”

The primary impact of being added to the Entity List is that a license from the Commerce Department is required for exports, re-exports, or transfers to these companies, which face tough scrutiny when they seek permission to receive items from American suppliers.

Sanctioning Chinese Officials

In March 2021, ahead of the Alaska talks between U.S. Secretary of State Blinken and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, the United States imposed sanctions on 24 Mainland China and Hong Kong officials.

The individuals were sanctioned for their involvement in China’s crackdown in Hong Kong.

As a result of the sanctions, foreign financial institutions that are engaged in significant transactions with the listed individuals will be subject to the U.S. sanctions.

Later the same month, the European Union and the United Kingdom joined the United States in sanctioning two more Chinese officials, this time for their involvement in human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

In retaliation, China sanctioned 10 EU citizens and four entities.

Sanctioning Chinese Companies

In June 2021, Biden expanded a Trump-era ban on American investments in Chinese companies.

Pursuant to the new executive order, Americans were barred from investing in Chinese firms with ties to defense or surveillance-technology sectors.

The new order expanded on the Trump-era list to include the major Chinese telecommunications company Huawei.

American investors were banned from buying or selling publicly traded securities in targeted companies, beginning August 2, 2021, when the new order took effect.

“We see this is one action in the sort of broader sweep of steps we are taking to strengthen our approach to competing with China and to countering its actions that are against our interests and our values,” said one senior administration official in a briefing with reporters.

Later that month, Biden signed an executive order authorizing a broad security review of apps linked to foreign adversaries, including China, in order to determine whether they pose a threat to U.S. national security.

That executive order replaced a Trump-era order that sought to ban two major Chinese companies — TikTok and WeChat — outright from the United States. That order was deemed practically unenforceable.

Also in June 2021, the Commerce Department announced a ban on all U.S. imports of key solar panel materials from the Chinese company Hoshine Silicon Industry Co., Ltd., over concerns that the company was involved in the forced labor of Uyghurs and other Muslim minority groups in Xinjiang.

The Commerce Department also restricted exports to Hoshine along with three other Chinese companies and the paramilitary Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC),

In October, the FCC ended China Telecom America’s right to provide its services in the United States. China Telecom America is a subsidiary of China Telecom, the largest Chinese state-owned telecommunications company.

In December, Biden signed into law the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, which banned all imports from the Xinjiang region of China due to human rights abuses, including forced labor.

Expanding Economic Cooperation Elsewhere in the Region

In May 2022, Biden announced the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).

A dozen Asia-Pacific nations joined a new, loosely defined economic bloc meant to counter China’s dominance and reassert American influence in the region five years after then-President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the Trans Pacific Partnership. The partnership, which did not include China, was seen as a “counterweight” against China’s growing regional influence.

The following month, the US announced a series of new programs designed to boost its trade relationship with Taiwan. The new pact is designed to promote bilateral trade in areas such as digital trade, clean energy, and labor rights.

Separately, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo is launching a dialogue with Taiwan to address technology trade and investments, citing the importance of Taiwan as a leading supplier of advanced semiconductors.

“Taiwan is an incredibly important partner to us, especially as it relates to semiconductors,” Raimondo told reporters. “We look forward to continuing to deepen our economic ties with Taiwan.”

Continued Commitment to Certain Trump Administration Policies

In October, the administration committed itself to a string of policies inherited from the previous administration.

The Biden administration announced that it would maintain many of the Trump administration’s trade policies towards China, which include tariffs on US imports of Chinese goods.

In a major speech on the issue in October, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai said the administration won’t take any tools off the table, including the possibility of additional tariffs in the future. “Above all else, we must defend — to the hilt — our economic interests,” Tai said.

The administration also announced in October that it would remain committed to the Trump-era Phase One trade agreement with China and ensure that it is fully enforced. The agreement, signed in 2020, committed China to improving its enforcement of intellectual property rights, removing its non-tariff barriers to farm imports, and liberalizing its financial services sector. China also agreed to $200 billion of purchases of U.S. goods as part of the deal.

The administration announced in early July that it would extend its export controls on advanced technologies to China and other countries in instances where they might threaten U.S. national security. The administration has derived lessons from its approach to Russia, where the United States and its allies have blocked the export of advanced technology to Russia, hindering its war effort and economy. The purpose of the expansion is to change which technologies are deemed sensitive and could be used by militaries and security agencies, to include things like artificial intelligence.

Growing Support for Taiwan

In May this year, it was reported that the Biden administration was accelerating its military support for Taiwan by simultaneously increasing the American presence in the region and further developing Taiwan’s own defenses. Drawing lessons from the war in Ukraine, U.S. officials are working with Taiwan to develop a more robust force that could rebuff a Chinese invasion.

American officials have been quietly urging their Taiwanese counterparts to buy weapons designed for asymmetric warfare, U.S. and Taiwanese officials say.

This comes as the US has more openly deployed its own military in the region as a form of deterrence against potential Chinese aggression.

The Pentagon has begun revealing more details about the sailings of American warships through the Taiwan Strait — 30 since the start of 2020.

### UQ---Russia

#### Russia is deterred. Signaling and support for Ukraine are putting pressure on Putin.

Williams 22 – Heather, director of the Project on Nuclear Issues and a senior fellow in the International Security Program, CSIS.

Heather Williams, 10-14-2022, "Deterring Nuclear Weapons Use in Ukraine", CSIS, https://www.csis.org/analysis/deterring-nuclear-weapons-use-ukraine

Q3: How can the United States and NATO allies deter nuclear weapons use in Ukraine?

A3: Deterrence entails threatening to impose costs if an adversary takes an unwanted, aggressive action. Since deterrence is ultimately about perception, it needs to be tailored to the adversary. Deterring Putin therefore will require either threatening to retaliate and punish him or refusing to afford him the desired outcome of any nuclear use, i.e., winning the war in Ukraine or gaining regional preeminence. These costs could be military in nature, such as U.S. or NATO conventional intervention in Ukraine, or the costs could be economic or reputational, such as turning Russia into a pariah state similar to North Korea. Perhaps one of the biggest costs to Putin if he used nuclear weapons could be domestic backlash. As Lawrence Freedman has observed, “It is also hard to imagine that [Russian use of nuclear weapons] would be greeted calmly in Russia. It could intensify opposition in Moscow to Putin.” Additionally, the Biden administration and NATO can signal to Putin that nuclear use will not win him any advantages or achieve his ultimate objective of preventing Ukraine and other countries on Russia’s borders from turning toward the West.

But successfully deterring Putin will also require maintaining NATO unity. One of the greatest weapons against Russia’s invasion, aside from the Ukrainian people, has proven to be the alliance’s unity and continued support for Ukraine in the face of unprovoked aggression. If U.S. efforts to deter Putin are seen as escalatory or dangerous by some NATO allies and undermines unity, that would work at cross-purposes and could embolden Putin.

Q4: What has the Biden administration done so far to deter nuclear weapons use in Ukraine?

A4: The Biden administration and NATO leadership have had to strike a delicate balance in deterring nuclear use in Ukraine. Both sides have refrained from explicitly threatening a military response to any Russian nuclear weapons use. Instead, the Biden administration has taken a three-pronged approach. First, the president has been clear that Putin’s threats should not be taken lightly, and the threat of nuclear use is a serious matter. On October 3, Biden stated, “He’s not joking when he talks about potential use of tactical nuclear weapons or biological or chemical weapons because his military is, you might say, significantly underperforming.” Second, the administration has avoided any public mention of a military or nuclear response to a Russian nuclear attack. Instead, the U.S. president has used ambiguous and careful language, such as “You will change the face of war unlike anything since World War II.” Finally, the administration has been sending private messages to Moscow about the “grave consequences” it would face in the event of a nuclear weapons use in Ukraine. This public-private messaging is not new but is particularly important in the current crisis not only to avoid escalation but also to assure NATO allies.

### Link---General

#### The Deterrence DA is large and real. Maintaining a credible nuclear umbrella is integrally intertwined with deterrence.

Brown 20 – former Nuclear Scholar at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, M.A. in International Public Policy and Strategic Studies from the Johns Hopkins School of Strategic Studies, M.A. in International Relations from Webster University.

Gerald Brown, “Deterrence, Norms, and the Uncomfortable Realities of a New Nuclear Age,” War on the Rocks, 04-20-2020, https://warontherocks.com/2020/04/deterrence-norms-and-the-uncomfortable-realities-of-a-new-nuclear-age/

Nuclear deterrence is often assumed to work automatically, but in practice, nuclear states are inherently difficult to deter. Deterrence is not a condition achieved from simply possessing nuclear weapons; it is based on the perception of military power in general. Nuclear weapons drastically enhance a state’s strength by creating the capacity to cause catastrophic amounts of damage in a very short period of time, with strikes that are largely indefensible. Due to the unique characteristics of nuclear weapons, nuclear states become less likely to engage in conflict with each other. However, this makes it even harder to deter a nuclear state from campaigns against non-nuclear states.

The United States has extended its deterrence commitments to its allies in Asia and Europe. Unfortunately, this may be an empty promise. In the case of a crisis with a nuclear state like Russia or China, the potential for escalation to the nuclear level always exists. This begs the question: How far is Washington really willing to go to defend an ally, and how would the American people respond to risking nuclear war to defend an ally when there is no threat to the U.S. homeland?

If a nuclear power decided to use nuclear weapons against a state within the American nuclear umbrella (e.g., Australia, Japan, South Korea, and NATO allies, among others), the United States might refrain from responding with nuclear weapons, since doing so would risk its own survival. This dynamic is one of the reasons that the United States maintains a strong military presence and forward-deployed nuclear weapons in the territory of its European allies: The United States is far more likely to respond to aggression if American citizens are killed. This vulnerability allows states to build “theories of victory” that involve the use of nuclear weapons at the tactical level to offset conventional inferiority and deter foreign involvement.

Theories of Nuclear Victory

Nuclear use may be more plausible than many would like to believe. America’s adversaries invest a lot of resources in nuclear weapons, and a considerable amount of time thinking about situations in which they would use nuclear weapons and how to fight the United States under nuclear conditions. For example, if China decided to militarily retake Taiwan — a primary goal of the People’s Liberation Army — it faces two considerable obstacles. While it is possible it could succeed in an amphibious landing and take Taipei, the costs would be immense. Additionally, an invasion risks U.S. intervention and the outbreak of a war between the United States and China over the sovereignty of Taiwan. One of the goals of Chinese war planning against Taiwan is to ensure a quick and decisive occupation that would deter the United States from getting involved in the first place. Though China’s stated nuclear weapons posture claims a no first-use policy, this could be a situation where the cost-benefit ratio of using nuclear weapons is too good to easily overlook. The use of low-yield nuclear weapons against specific targets, such as Taiwanese military bases or coastal defenses, would have two effects. It would clear the way for a Chinese occupation with possibly fewer costs than a conventional approach, and would likely deter U.S. intervention. With no U.S. forces being harmed and China having demonstrated a willingness to escalate to the nuclear level, the United States is unlikely to find it worth the risk to intervene.

China would face economic and diplomatic costs from the international community, but it would face significant costs from annexing Taiwan anyway. Beijing could judge that using nuclear weapons would be worth it. Analysts have to honestly assess how much using nuclear weapons would improve Beijing’s chances of success, and weigh that against the repercussions of doing so.

Russia, with its aggressive nuclear posture, massive arsenal, and recent expansionist actions in Ukraine is another alarming case. Moscow’s calculated use of escalation controls shows a willingness and ability to calculate the appropriate use of force. If Russia can annex territory in Ukraine, it can conceivably do the same in the Baltics. A 2016 RAND study argued that Russian forces can rapidly move through and capture one or all of the Baltic states quicker than NATO would be able to effectively respond. Additionally, the Russian territory of Kaliningrad and its anti-access/area-denial capabilities provide an effective means of defending against NATO intervention. Countering such an offensive would almost certainly require strikes against Russian territory, which could trigger a nuclear response from Moscow. Russia is well practiced in utilizing the fear of further escalation and uncertainty to its advantage; limited nuclear strikes, or a nuclear demonstration in key areas, could be used to create uncertainty and fear of conflict escalating to a larger scale, deterring conflict at a lower level of escalation. If push came to shove, would NATO be willing to risk nuclear conflict for a small state in Russia’s backyard?

Of course, nuclear deterrence is most credible as a means to prevent foreign invasion. This has been the primary reason numerous states have sought nuclear weapons in the first place, including India, Pakistan, Israel, and even North Korea. A significant threat to the homeland of a nuclear state could lead to the use of nuclear weapons to make up for conventional inferiority, especially if the state is losing ground to advancing forces. The state may utilize a limited strike against an invader’s military bases, to cut off supply trains, or even against an adversary’s cities to coerce them into backing down. Furthermore, if the state feels its nuclear deterrent is being threatened, it may escalate by using its nuclear weapons under fear of a “use it or lose it” situation. Theoretically, this dilemma prevents invasion from occurring in the first place. But, if an adversary truly believes in this normative restraint and invades despite this deterrent, is it really believable that the state will continue to refrain from using nuclear weapons when its survival is at stake?

#### Maintaining and discussing nuclear deterrence is more important than ever now.

Schelling 22 – Professor of Foreign Policy, National Security, Nuclear Strategy, and Arms Control at the School of Public Policy at University of Maryland, College Park, former Professor at Harvard University, PhD in Economics from Harvard University.

Thomas Schelling, “The disturbing new relevance of theories of nuclear deterrence,” The Economist, 03-18-2022, https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2022/03/18/the-disturbing-new-relevance-of-theories-of-nuclear-deterrence

For a government hoping to deter an aggressor, the effectiveness of its deterrence strategy thus depends in part on the size of the retaliatory costs it can inflict on its attacker. But this is not an exact science. Both sides may have incomplete information about the relative costs they can expect to bear. When Vladimir Putin, Russia’s president, was preparing his invasion of Ukraine, for example, Western democracies threatened to impose stiff sanctions. Just how tough the sanctions could be was not necessarily knowable to either side beforehand, because the details needed to be negotiated with allies.

The credibility of retaliatory threats matters, as well; both sides of a potential conflict may issue grave threats, but if they ring hollow they may be ignored. The threat of stiff sanctions by Western democracies—clearly a powerful tool in hindsight—might well have been weakened by doubts that governments were prepared to expose their citizens to soaring oil and gas prices. Governments deploy a range of tools to bolster the credibility of their threats. An American promise to defend an ally may be strengthened by the placement of American troops within the ally’s borders, in harm’s way, for instance; an American president would presumably find it more difficult to back down in the face of an attack that claimed American lives. Schelling, for his part, noted that credibility can sometimes be enhanced by taking costly actions or limiting your own options. A general’s promise to fight to the bitter end if an enemy does not withdraw becomes more credible if he burns the bridges that provide his own avenue of retreat.

The problem of credibility becomes far more complicated in a showdown between nuclear-armed powers, which both have sufficient weaponry to retaliate against any first strike with a devastating attack of their own. If the first use of nuclear weapons is all but assured to bring ruin on one’s own country as well, then efforts to use the threat of nuclear attack to extract concessions are likelier to fail. Wars may nonetheless occur. The invasion of Ukraine could be seen as an example of the stability-instability paradox: because the threat of a nuclear war is too terrible to contemplate, smaller or proxy conflicts become “safer”, because rival superpowers feel confident that neither side will allow the fight to escalate too much. Some scholars reckon this helps to account for the many smaller wars that occurred during the cold war.

And yet the cold war also threatened to turn hot at times, as in 1962. Schelling helped explain why. He noted that the threat of a nuclear attack could be made credible, even in the context of mutually assured destruction, if some element of that threat was left to chance. As a showdown between nuclear powers becomes more intense, Schelling observed, the risk that unexpected and perhaps undesired developments cause the situation to spiral out of control rises. (When nuclear forces are on high alert, for instance, false alarms become far more dangerous.) The upper hand, in such a situation, is thus maintained by the side that is more willing to tolerate this heightened risk of all-out nuclear war.

This is the essence of brinkmanship. It is not merely a matter of ratcheting up the tension in the hope of outbluffing the other side. It is also a test of resolve—where resolve is defined as a willingness to bear the risk of a catastrophe. Mr Putin’s move to increase the readiness of his nuclear forces may represent an attempt to demonstrate such resolve (over and above the message sent by the invasion itself). President Joe Biden’s refusal to escalate in kind could be seen as an acknowledgment of the conspicuous fact that an autocrat embroiled in a pointless war has less to lose than the rich democracy to which Mr Biden is accountable.

#### Nuclear posture is a delicate balance --- any shifts collapse extended deterrence AND make war more likely with China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran.

Geller 22 – former Senior Policy Analyst for Nuclear Deterrence and Missile Defense in the Center for National Defense at the Heritage Foundation.

Patty-Jane Geller, “U.S. Nuclear Weapons,” 2023 Index of U.S. Military Strength, 10-18-2022, https://www.heritage.org/military-strength/assessment-us-military-power/us-nuclear-weapons

To assess U.S. nuclear weapons, one must understand the essential role they play in U.S. national security, the increasing nuclear threat posed by adversaries, and the current state of U.S. nuclear forces and their supporting infrastructure.

The Important Role of U.S. Nuclear Weapons

Understanding the importance of nuclear weapons allows for a better grasp of a framework within which to view the status of U.S. nuclear capabilities. U.S nuclear weapons have played a critical role in preventing conflict among major powers since the end of World War II. Given their ability to deter large-scale attacks that threaten the U.S. homeland, allies, and forward-deployed troops and to assure allies and partners, nuclear deterrence has remained the number one U.S. national security mission.1 Operationally, all U.S. military operations rely on the backstop of U.S. nuclear deterrence.2 It is therefore critical that the United States maintain a modern and flexible nuclear arsenal that can deter a diverse range of threats from a diverse set of potential adversaries.

The more specific roles of U.S. nuclear weapons outlined by U.S. policy have been adjusted over time. The most up-to-date policy documents that describe these roles are the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) and the 2020 Nuclear Employment Strategy, which reflected the deterioration of the threat environment since 2010. The NPR specifies that:

Given the diverse threats and profound uncertainties of the current and future threat environment, U.S. nuclear forces play the following critical roles in U.S. national security strategy. They contribute to the:

Deterrence of nuclear and non-nuclear attack;

Assurance of allies and partners;

Achievement of U.S. objectives if deterrence fails; and

Capacity to hedge against an uncertain future.3

These roles were outlined in more detailed language in the Obama Administration’s 2010 NPR and 2013 Nuclear Employment Strategy. The 2010 NPR, for example, lists the “five key objectives of our nuclear policies and posture” as:

Preventing nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism;

Reducing the role of U.S. nuclear weapons in U.S. national security strategy;

Maintaining strategic deterrence and stability at reduced nuclear force levels;

Strengthening regional deterrence and reassuring U.S. allies and partners; and

Sustaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal.4

The Biden Administration has not yet released its 2022 NPR to the public, but a fact sheet notes the continued commitment to deterring both nuclear and non-nuclear attacks and says that “[t]he United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or its allies and partners.”5 These roles or their prioritization may be adjusted over time—for instance, the Biden Administration’s fact sheet seems to deemphasize (although not eliminate) the role of nuclear weapons in deterring non-nuclear attacks—but generally are likely to endure.

To achieve these objectives, the U.S. nuclear portfolio must balance the appropriate levels of capacity, capability, variety, flexibility, and readiness. What matters most in deterrence is not what the United States thinks will be effective, but the psychological perceptions—among both adversaries and allies—of America’s willingness to use nuclear forces to defend its interests. If an adversary believes it can fight a limited nuclear war, for instance, U.S. leaders must convince that adversary otherwise. In addition, military roles and requirements for nuclear weapons will differ from adversary to adversary based on each country’s values, strategy, and goals.

The United States also extends its nuclear umbrella to more than 30 allies and partners that rely on the United States to defend them from large-scale conventional attacks and existential threats from regional adversaries. This additional responsibility imposes requirements for U.S. nuclear force posture beyond defense of the U.S. homeland. U.S. nuclear forces underpin the broad nonproliferation regime by assuring allies—including NATO, Japan, South Korea, and Australia—that they can forgo their own development of nuclear capabilities. Erosion of the credibility of American nuclear forces could lead a country like Japan or South Korea to pursue an independent nuclear option, in which case the result could be a profoundly negative impact on stability across the region.

In addition to deterrence and assurance, the United States historically has committed to achieving its political and military objectives if nuclear deterrence fails. This goal also contributes to deterrence both by convincing an adversary that it could not start and win a nuclear war and by minimizing U.S. subjection to nuclear coercion by peer nuclear adversaries. U.S. forces must therefore be survivable and postured to engage their targets successfully if such a deterrence failure makes it necessary to use nuclear weapons.

Finally, U.S. nuclear capabilities must have the capacity to hedge against an uncertain future. It takes years or decades to develop the capabilities of nuclear weapons and their supporting infrastructure—an infrastructure that the United States neglected for decades until quite recently. Decisions regarding nuclear forces that are made today will affect the United States for decades into the future. Since it cannot accurately predict the extent of the future threat, the U.S. must maintain a nuclear enterprise that can respond to changes in the global security environment.

An Increasingly Threatening Global Environment

Any assessment of nuclear capabilities requires an understanding of the threat environment, as any U.S. strategy or force posture must account for the threat it is meant to deter or defeat. The threat the United States faces today is unprecedented. For the first time in its history, the United States must face two nuclear peer competitors at once—Russia and China.6 This differs drastically from the paradigm based on the bilateral deterrence relationship involving the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, because a multipolar nuclear threat environment presents new and complex challenges. As a result, the assessment in this Index must be weighed against this emerging nuclear threat.

Russia is engaged in an aggressive nuclear expansion, having added several new nuclear systems to its arsenal since 2010. The United States is only beginning to modernize its existing nuclear systems, but Russia’s modernization effort is about 89 percent complete.7 Russia also is developing such “novel technologies” as a nuclear-powered cruise missile and nuclear-capable unmanned underwater vehicle and is arming delivery platforms with nuclear-tipped hypersonic glide vehicles.8

In addition, Russia maintains a stockpile of at least 2,000 non-strategic nuclear weapons, unconstrained by any arms control agreement.9 Defense Intelligence Agency Director Lieutenant General Robert Ashley has said that Russia is expected to increase this category of nuclear weapons—a category in which it “potentially outnumber[s]” the United States by 10 to 1.10 This disparity is of special concern because Russia’s recent nuclear doctrine indicates a lower threshold for use of these tactical nuclear weapons. According to the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, Moscow “mistakenly assesses that the threat of nuclear escalation or actual first use of nuclear weapons would serve to ‘de-escalate’ a conflict on terms favorable to Russia.”11 Russia has also been engaging in nuclear saber-rattling over its war on Ukraine, issuing both subtle and blatant nuclear threats in an attempt to coerce the West into staying out of the conflict.12

China is engaged in what Admiral Charles A. Richard, Commander of U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), has described as a “breathtaking” expansion of its nuclear capabilities as part of a strategic breakout that will require immediate and significant Department of Defense (DOD) capability shifts.13 The Pentagon’s 2021 report on Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China confirmed that China would have at least 1,000 nuclear warheads—roughly five times the size of its current stockpile—by the end of the decade.14 In addition, China “appears to be building more than 100 new missile silos in the desert” that would likely carry the DF-41, China’s most modern ICBM, which can carry multiple warheads.15

With respect to its nuclear capabilities, China has completed its nuclear triad with the addition of a strategic nuclear-capable bomber, is deploying hundreds of theater-range ballistic missiles in the Indo-Pacific that can strike U.S. bases and allied territory with precision, and is testing and deploying nuclear-capable hypersonic weapons including one that orbited the globe on a fractional orbital bombardment system (FOBS) before being released to glide to its target.16

Evidence also suggests that China is shifting a portion of its nuclear forces to Launch-on-Warning (LOW) posture as it improves its early warning systems.17

Combined with a refusal to discuss its forces or intent with the United States, this shift in posture increases the likelihood of mistakes and miscalculations.18 Unlike the United States and Russia, which share a long history of communicating through arms control discussions and treaties to reduce these risks, China has not participated in these risk reduction measures. The sheer magnitude of its nuclear expansion and qualitative upgrades has led senior leaders to conclude that China has become a nuclear peer to the United States and Russia and eventually could even surpass U.S. nuclear capabilities.19 China no longer has a minimum deterrence capability; instead, it “possesses the capability to employ any coercive nuclear strategy today.”20

In addition to two nuclear peers, the United States must account for the nuclear threats posed by its rogue state adversaries. North Korea is advancing its nuclear weapons and missile capabilities. It continues to produce fissile material to build new nuclear weapons; has developed a new “monster” ICBM that supposedly is able to carry multiple warheads; and as of the time this book was being prepared, had conducted 31 tests of its ground-based and sea-based ballistic missiles in 2022, including its first ICBM test since 2017.21 According to the U.S. Special Representative for North Korea, Pyongyang could conduct an underground nuclear test at “any time.”22

Iran, in addition to being the world’s principal state sponsor of terrorism, continues to enrich uranium at dangerous levels and has recently acquired enough fissile material to produce a nuclear bomb according to the International Atomic Energy Agency.23 A nuclear Iran would have significant implications both for stability in the region and for U.S. non-proliferation goals.

Finally, given the role of U.S. nuclear weapons in deterring attacks using conventional weapons, it is important to consider non-nuclear threats posed by adversaries. Both Russia and China are deploying advanced conventional capabilities like conventionally armed hypersonic missiles and even conventionally armed cruise missiles capable of striking the U.S. homeland just below the nuclear threshold.24 China, Russia, and Iran have been accused of violating both the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).25 North Korea also is in violation of the BWC and is thought to possess chemical weapons. (It is not, however, a signatory to the CWC.) Especially since the United States does not possess chemical or biological weapons of its own, nuclear weapons will continue to play a role in deterring these threats.

#### Less credible nuclear policy encourages aggression from adversaries.

Geller 22 – former Senior Policy Analyst for Nuclear Deterrence and Missile Defense in the Center for National Defense at the Heritage Foundation.

Patty-Jane Geller, “The U.S. Must Strengthen Its Nuclear Forces to Deter Growing Nuclear Threats,” Heritage Foundation, 11-30-2022, https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/the-us-must-strengthen-its-nuclear-forces-deter-growing-nuclear-threats

A less credible nuclear force allows adversaries to take greater risks in their aggression. If an adversary perceives that the United States is disadvantaged or unable to respond at higher levels of escalation during a conflict, it gains an incentive to escalate during a conflict to achieve its objectives.40 It might even gain an incentive to initiate a conflict if it has confidence in its level of escalation dominance. By the same logic, a less credible nuclear force may require the United States to take less risk in its own national security strategy, potentially impeding its ability to pursue vital national interests.

The impact of China’s expanded nuclear forces would become evident in the case of a military effort to unify with Taiwan. Backed by nuclear missiles that can strike targets ranging from Taiwan out to the second island chain (in addition to a strategic force capable of threatening the U.S. homeland), China can become more confident in its ability to wage conventional war if it believes its nuclear “backstop” provides an advantage over the United States that enables it to force the United States to back down.

In general, a perceived nuclear advantage gives adversaries a greater ability to employ nuclear coercion to achieve their goals. Russian President Vladimir Putin has clearly been attempting to use nuclear weapons to coerce the West to stay out of the conflict in Ukraine. With the backing of a strong nuclear force, China could attempt the same tactic in a conflict over Taiwan and threaten “consequences you have never seen,” as Putin threatened when his forces invaded Ukraine, to discourage the United States from coming to Taiwan’s defense.41

A less credible nuclear deterrent increases the risk of deterrence failure and adversaries’ use of nuclear weapons. If Russia or China doubt the capability or willingness of the United States to respond to a nuclear strike, they are more likely to see nuclear weapons as a viable way to accomplish their objectives. Given Russia’s and China’s advantages in non-strategic or regional nuclear weapons compared to the United States’ limited non-strategic nuclear capabilities, this risk becomes acute when considered within the context of limited nuclear escalation in a regional conflict. Without the ability to threaten an in-kind response, the United States would be forced to choose between backing down and responding in an escalatory manner, which adversaries might not find credible. This is why the 2018 NPR proposed a low-yield submarine-launched ballistic missile and a sea-launched cruise missile-nuclear (SLCM-N) as supplementary capabilities to improve deterrence of these threats.42 It is also why Admiral Richard has testified that without SLCM-N, a deterrence gap exists.43

#### Any shifts an U.S. nuclear policy risk eroding extended deterrence.

CSIS 17 – Commentary from the Nuclear Policy Division of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Center for Strategic and International Studies, “Fulfilling the Central and Enduring Role of U.S. Nuclear Weapons,” CSIS, 10-30-2017, https://www.csis.org/analysis/fulfilling-central-and-enduring-role-us-nuclear-weapons

Although the Nuclear Posture Review is ongoing, we can be confident that the deterring nuclear attack on the United States and its allies will remain the central role of U.S. nuclear weapons. This is not the only role, but it is the most important one. Effective nuclear deterrence is intrinsically tied to the other roles nuclear weapons play in U.S. strategy. If the United States lacks the forces to confidently deter nuclear attack, allies will not have confidence in extended deterrence over the long term. The ability to execute the nuclear employment strategy underpins deterrence. An important purpose of the Nuclear Posture Review is to articulate U.S. policy for fulfilling this enduring role.

### Link---ICBMs

#### Eliminating ICBMs would be extremely destabilizing.

Rose and Bahney 19 – \*Senior Fellow for Security and Strategy at the Brookings Institute; \*\*Senior Fellow at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's Center for Global Security Research.

\*Frank Rose and \*\*Benjamin Bahney, “Reassuring Allies and Strengthening Strategic Stability: An Approach to Nuclear Modernization for Democrats,” War on the Rocks, 04-16-2019, https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/reassuring-allies-and-strengthening-strategic-stability-an-approach-to-nuclear-modernization-for-democrats/

Some experts, including some prominent Democrats, have called for eliminating the U.S. ICBM force, arguing that it is militarily unnecessary and inherently destabilizing. However, we believe that Democrats should support moving forward with a replacement to the existing Minuteman III ICBM. First, a substantial ICBM force means that adversaries looking to significantly degrade U.S. nuclear weapons capabilities must strike deep and wide across the United States, thereby assuring they will provoke an overwhelming U.S. military response. Second, ICBMs provide the capability to hold at risk targets around the world on very short notice. And third, the ICBM force provides a hedge against technological risk, in case U.S. adversaries develop the capability to find and promptly target ballistic missile submarines.

While the SSBN force is currently undetectable, the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review notes that United States will need to “continue to hedge against the possibility that advances in anti-submarine warfare could make the SSBN force less survivable in the future.” China’s investments in artificial intelligence and space and airborne reconnaissance present risks, though difficult to measure, as does their development of an “underwater Great Wall” sensor network. All provide a compelling rationale for a land-based deterrent, like the the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent program, as a hedge against future risks to the submarine force.

#### ICBMs are a key a part of U.S. extended deterrence.

Huessey 21 – Senior Fellow focusing on Nuclear Deterrence at the Hudson Institute.

Peter Huessey, “Deterrence Assurance: The True Value of the Nuclear Triad,” The National Interest, 06-27-2021, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/deterrence-assurance-true-value-nuclear-triad-188543?page=0%2C1

Can America solve this problem by getting rid of ICBMs? Von Hippel notes that Dr. William Perry, a former secretary of defense, has called for the termination of all ICBM programs, including getting rid of the current Minuteman force.

However, ICBMs have real-world value. As President John Kennedy underscored, having the Minuteman ICBMs first on alert the very day the United States discovered the Soviet Union placed their own nuclear-armed missiles in Cuba, was his “ace in the hole” that ended the Cuban missile crisis without armed conflict and Armageddon.

Despite numerous subsequent crises between the United States and the Soviet Union or between the United States and Russia, no U.S. president has ordered the launch of an ICBM or submarine-launched ballistic missile in the seventy million minutes such weapons have been on alert since October 1962.

What is at the core of von Hippel’s worry is not that the United States will launch its missile prematurely in a crisis. His concern appears to be two-fold. He believes the United States should not have a policy of holding at risk its enemy’s nuclear forces by targeting them, which is known as a counterforce strategy. He is also concerned that nuclear weapons cannot really be used to terminate or “win” a conflict.

Both views require the United States to believe the Russians and Chinese, among its nuclear-armed adversaries, have the same view of human life and the use of nuclear weapons as the United States. The assumption is that deterrence of Russia and China simply requires the United States to have the ability—even delayed by many months—to blow up Russian and Chinese cities.

The assumption von Hippel makes is that the U.S. nuclear weapons strategy need not hold at risk the other guy’s military capability, as America’s enemies are assumed to value their people more than they do their weapons. Irrespective of their goal of being the world’s hegemon or bully, by brandishing their nuclear capability to “rule the roost.”

What are the facts? The Russians and the Chinese see nuclear weapons as their ticket to get the United States to stand down in a crisis, and let aggression succeed. As top nuclear professionals Professor Stephen Blank and Dr. Mark Schneider together outlined in detail speaking at a Mitchell Institute seminar in September 2020, that is what the Russians and increasingly the Chinese, see as the prime value of the nuclear weapons they possess—a coercive power to win conflicts or crises without having to fire a shot at the United States.

And a corollary to von Hippel’s objection to holding at risk the weaponry of the “bad guys” is the further assumption as the late Bruce Blair called for in House Armed Services Committee testimony in 2019, that the U.S. response to a nuclear attack need not be nuclear but indeed conventional, even if the United States is attacked multiple times with nuclear weapons. In this view, a U.S. nuclear response that attacks the bad guys’ weaponry is not needed. As Blair asserted, he did not want to be the first country to break the moral taboo against using nuclear weapons.

Von Hippel’s analysis also suffers from other severe deficiencies. He assumes the likely attack by the Russians, for example, is an all-out nuclear attack on the United States, seeking to pre-emptively disarm America of its forces based in the continental United States. Under that scenario, a U.S. retaliatory launch if undertaken only after warning of an attack, might be hitting empty Russian silos and port facilities and airfields. In von Hippel’s view, holding at risk Russian military capability gives Russia an incentive to also launch quickly in a crisis, causing grave instabilities

But how ironic that von Hippel himself rules out such an all-out Russian missile launch as the least likely Russian response in a crisis. And he repeatedly and accurately notes that no matter the extent of the Russian attack, U.S. survivable submarines can retaliate with a massive attack fully capable of taking down remaining Russian military assets.

But nevertheless, von Hippel’s fear is still based almost solely on the possible U.S. response to a highly irrational, unlikely, and suicidal all-out massive Russian attack.

That is why the Russians and the Chinese talk about using nuclear weapons “early but not often” and use limited strikes to get the United States to stand down and surrender, under a policy of “escalate to win”—to win the escalation dominance game in a serious game of high stakes nuclear poker.

Here is where a launch on warning posture for the United States does not even come into play. The U.S. ICBMs, in this case, would be fully survivable and a prime capability to hold at risk the Russian reserve second strike ICBM forces. Which deprives the Russians of a sanctuary from which to attack America.

Von Hippel displayed a map where hundreds of Russian targets were hit with over twelve hundred U.S. warheads as an initial strike on the Russian Federation. Von Hippel assumes U.S. missiles are postured only for first strikes against America’s enemies. But even if that were the case, which it is not, there is not anywhere near such a number of warheads on alert in the U.S. arsenal capable of hitting Russia with over twelve hundred warheads from a day-to-day normal alert posture.

In short, if Russia launches an all-out attack on the United States, then America has a secure retaliatory force that would eliminate what remains of Russian military power so as to render such power extinct. If a Russian attack is limited, then the U.S. ICBM response is credible after knowing with no doubt the United States or its allies have been attacked.

As former Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci told Congress in January 1989, the “United States does not rely on its capability for launch on waring or launch under attack to ensure the credibility of our deterrent. The ability to carry out such options complicates Soviet assessments of war outcomes and enhances deterrence,” according to the fiscal year 1989 Annual Report to the Congress.

However, reducing nuclear warheads to the point where the president’s options are limited to counter population targets only weakens the credibility of our extended deterrent commitments to say nothing of the immoral nature (and long rejected) of such a strategy.

#### All aspects of the nuclear deterrent would be put at risk.

Huessey 21 – Senior Fellow focusing on Nuclear Deterrence at the Hudson Institute.

Peter Huessey, “Deterrence Assurance: The True Value of the Nuclear Triad,” The National Interest, 06-27-2021, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/deterrence-assurance-true-value-nuclear-triad-188543?page=0%2C1

And under such a scenario, without ICBMs, stability cannot be preserved. A continental United States-based force of twelve submarines and sixty bombers could be taken out by destroying five soft bases—three bomber facilities and two submarine facilities. Then, an anti-submarine warfare breakthrough could put America’s remaining four to eight submarines at sea in the patrol box area or in transit, at risk. Thus, this would place the entire U.S. deterrent—all of nine to twelve (versus over five hundred today), discrete targets—at risk.

The elimination of which would put the United States out of the nuclear deterrent business. As a number of senior U.S. nuclear officials both military and civilian have explained, how is giving a country like North Korea the potential ability to put the United States out of the nuclear business stabilizing? And given the obvious objective, every Russian and Chinese technician and scientist would devote their time to finding the new coin of the realm—an anti-submarine warfare capability able to find America’s boomers at sea.

### Link---NFU

#### NFU is extremely dangerous.

Latham 21 – Professor of International Relations at Macalester College, PhD in Political Science from York University.

Andrew Latham, “The folly of a no-first-use nuclear policy,” The Hill, 11-18-2021, https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/582128-the-folly-of-a-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/

Supporters of NFU hope that the ongoing review will recommend abandoning the current nuclear posture in favor of a strategy that relies far less on the use of nuclear weapons. To them, and to many Americans, adopting such a nuclear posture seems like a very good idea.

But it isn’t. In fact, it’s a folly — and a dangerous folly at that.

Unsurprisingly, advocates of NFU – including organizations such as the Union of Concerned Scientists, the progressive wing of the Democratic Party and perhaps even President Biden himself – don’t see it that way. To them, NFU is simply the only rational nuclear posture possible.

To begin with, they argue, it is better suited to today’s strategic realities. The U.S. currently enjoys overwhelming conventional military superiority and simply does not need a nuclear first-use option to deter or defeat non-nuclear attacks.

Moreover, they argue, no U.S. president would ever order the use of nuclear forces to repel a conventional attack knowing full well that to do so would invite a retaliatory nuclear strike against the American homeland. The threat of first-use in response to conventional attack therefore lacks all credibility. Finally, advocates of NFU argue that adopting such a posture would reinforce the norm against the use of nuclear weapons, thus reducing the existential risk of all-out nuclear war.

Detractors, on the other hand, do view NFU as a dangerous folly.

Among the general criticisms of such an approach are that it would leave the U.S. without the ability to deter non-nuclear non-conventional attacks (involving, say, biological or chemical weapons); that such restraint would not be credible in the eyes of potential adversaries who would always have to assume that the U.S. would retain a practical first-use option; and that there is no reason to believe that other nuclear powers would follow suit.

But in today’s world of great power competition and near-peer rivals, perhaps the most telling criticism of NFU is that such a posture would weaken deterrence against conventional attack. Here the logic is both straightforward and compelling. Although the United States remains the world’s most powerful conventional military power, in recent years China and Russia have made dramatic gains in conventional capabilities.

Indeed, they may well have achieved local military superiority over the United States and its allies in some parts of the world. As a result, Washington cannot casually assume that U.S. and allied conventional forces would be sufficient to deter China or Russia from exploiting their local advantages and launching a conventional attack against America’s regional allies and interests.

Absent the threat of American first use of nuclear weapons, the advantage would thus lie with the aggressor, who would not have to factor even the possibility of the U.S. using nuclear weapons to reverse its early conventional military successes. But the possibility that those early successes might trigger the use of U.S. nuclear weapons on the battlefield – and that this might escalate to a general strategic nuclear exchange – would change the equation significantly.

If that possibility (the “threat that leaves something to chance,” in Thomas Schelling’s timeless formulation) had to be factored into the equation, the incentive to exploit whatever conventional military advantage a great power rival might possess would be greatly reduced. Indeed, under those circumstances, a conventional attack on U.S. interests and allies would be simply irrational.

Perversely, then, adopting NFU might well have the unintended consequence of increasing the likelihood of war. That is not to say that there would be no point to the Biden administration issuing a so-called “sole purpose” declaration. Unlike a declaratory policy of NFU, which would prohibit the use of nuclear weapons except in response to a nuclear attack on the U.S., a sole purpose declaration would state why the United States possesses nuclear weapons, without necessarily imposing constraints on their use.

#### Adversaries would become emboldened.

Hong 22 – International Security Opinion Writer at The Asia Times, former Researcher at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University, MPhil in Politics and International Studies from the University of Cambridge.

Taehwa Hong, “The Case Against the No First Use Policy,” The Stanford Review, 01-26-2022, https://stanfordreview.org/the-case-against-the-no-first-use-policy/

The US must reject NFU and continue to maintain a first-use option for nuclear weapons; the rationale for keeping the first-use option remains clear and relevant. America’s nuclear weapons help allies deter conventional aggression by their much more powerful adversaries. During the Cold War, Washington’s strategic ambiguity over first-use was intended to prevent Soviet and Chinese tanks from rolling across Europe and Asia. NATO has steadfastly opposed NFU since it adopted “Flexible Response” in 1967. South Korea and Japan relinquished nuclear weapons development trusting America’s nuclear umbrella—the coverage of the umbrella, until now, was assumed to include conventional invasion.

In the era of Great Power Competition with Beijing and Moscow, the situation is not so different. Nuclear weapons’ greatest strength comes from the deterrence they entail, not their physical impact on a battlefield. Keeping the first-use option deters the outbreak of a conventional war, the devastating impact of which would not be justified by the mere fact that nuclear weapons were not deployed.

Granted, some argue that the prospect of a US first-strike could force the aggressor to escalate the conflict, which otherwise would have remained conventional, into a nuclear war. However, in such a drastic scenario, what difference would it make whether the United States uses nuclear weapons first, or waits for the enemy’s nuclear attack before delivering its own? Deterrence comes first. Previous US administrations, Democrats and Republicans, all opted for strategic ambiguity for that reason.

My country, South Korea, is under constant threat from North Korea’s nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional weapons. The strongest deterrence against all types of war is the unwavering pledge that North Korean aggression will be met with the end of the North Korean regime, by all means possible including a nuclear strike. Strategic ambiguity ironically grants a sense of certainty by deterring an enemy that fears obliteration. The US limits South Korea’s uranium enrichment; it also holds wartime operational control of the US-ROK allied forces. Many South Koreans do not dispute these temporary holds on our national sovereignty as they are inevitable compromises for an ironclad alliance. But we do expect reciprocity when it comes to extended deterrence.

The same goes for Japan. Tokyo renounced the right to go to war after WWII, and has shied away from developing full-fledged offensive capabilities. How can America request that Japan step up its security role in the Indo-Pacific, if it is planning to partially fold its nuclear umbrella? How would European countries react to American NFU when the Russians are developing hypersonic missiles, which can carry both nuclear and conventional warheads? What about America’s Middle Eastern partners which live under the threat of Iranian aggression?

I am not claiming that Washington should change nuclear policy just to align with Korean interests. South Korea is not the center of the world. Indeed, US nuclear policy should align with the American Grand Strategy—but that’s precisely why America should not declare NFU. As President Biden himself has repeatedly asserted, alliance management is at the core of the US Grand Strategy. In an international security environment where America is no longer the omnipresent “global policeman,” abandonment remains a chief concern for US allies whose security depends on Washington’s commitments. US allies, especially those who suspect they are not on the priority theater in the Great Power Competition, fear abandonment more than entrapment into unwanted conflicts with America’s adversaries. Even if the US seeks to reassure them by detaching the broader collective security commitments from NFU, the fear will simply aggravate.

I appreciate the noble cause behind NFU. President Obama also sought it, only to face protests from allies and his own cabinet members. NFU was part of a broader “Nuclear Free World” initiative, accompanied by calls for nuclear arms control and the first visit to Hiroshima by an American president. With the US spearheading such discussions, President Obama hoped to herald an era of a “Nuclear Free World.” Perhaps President Biden shares his aspirations, and for good reason. In an ideal world, we would not have to worry about a nuclear apocalypse, which will always remain a possibility as long as the nine nuclear powers reject wholesale denuclearization.

#### It’s too large of a change too quickly.

Panda and Narang 21 – Stanton Senior Fellow in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Former Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Federation of American Scientists; \*\*Frank Stanton Professor of Nuclear Security and Political Science and Member of the Security Studies Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, PhD in Government from Harvard University, MPhil from Oxford University.

\*Ankit Panda and \*\*Vipin Narang, “Sole Purpose is Not No First Use: Nuclear Weapons and Their Declaratory Policy,” War on the Rocks, 02-22-2021, https://warontherocks.com/2021/02/sole-purpose-is-not-no-first-use-nuclear-weapons-and-declaratory-policy/

Detractors of a no-first-use policy in the United States argue that without drastic changes to American nuclear posture or alert levels to preclude at least rapid first use to make such a pledge credible — such as separating warheads from intercontinental ballistic missiles, as China is believed to do, or eliminating them altogether because they can be launched so promptly — the costs significantly outweigh the benefits. The military strongly opposes those changes, however, since they may reduce the overall survivability of U.S. nuclear forces. Furthermore, absent these practical changes to force posture — or even with them, for that matter — U.S. adversaries would never believe a no-first-use pledge because nothing would physically prevent the United States from violating it in a crisis or conflict.

Meanwhile, American allies might find such a declaration too credible. For allies, such as Japan, the fear that the United States may abandon them at the most crucial moment and fail to use nuclear weapons to defend them may drive them to develop their own nuclear weapons, as detractors often note. Allied fears have intensified in recent years in Northeast Asia in particular, where rapid advances in North Korea’s nuclear capabilities have introduced the Cold War specter of “decoupling” to the U.S. alliances with both South Korea and Japan. Furthermore, for Japan if not South Korea, the prospect of U.S. nuclear use to deter large-scale Chinese conventional aggression is a crucial pillar of its security strategy. They have therefore strongly opposed any movement toward an American no-first-use declaration. A no-first-use pledge may similarly cause concern in European capitals that Moscow would have a free hand to use overwhelming conventional force against them. A final argument against a strict no-first-use policy is that it would require the United States or its allies to suffer a nuclear attack — and countless fatalities — before retaliation. The risk of a no-first-use declaration, opponents therefore argue, is that not only would it fail to generate crisis stability against adversaries and incentivize allies to seek their own nuclear weapons, but that it is also immoral — even if U.S. retaliation against any aggressor were assured. Even if there are very few scenarios at present where the United States would ever contemplate using nuclear weapons first, skeptics of no-first-use argue that some scenarios do exist even today, and that others may arise in the future.

In short, U.S. adoption of a no-first-use pledge in the near term would likely be highly controversial.

#### There’s only a risk that an NFU is net-worse for deterrence.

Chambers et al. 21 – \*Assistant Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration for the U.S. Air Force; \*\*Researcher at the Institute for Defense Analyses, former Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the RAND Corporation, PhD in Public Affairs from Princeton University; \*\*\*Assistant Director of the Institute for Defense Analyses, PhD in Physics from Michigan State University; \*\*\*\*Director of the Project on Nuclear Issues and a Senior Fellow in the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, former Visiting Fellow at the Project on Managing the Atom in the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University, PhD in War Studies from King’s College London, M.A. in Security Policy Studies from the George Washington University.

\*William A. Chambers, \*\*Caroline R. Milne, \*\*\*Rhiannon T. Hutton, and \*\*\*\*Heather W. Williams, “No-First Use of Nuclear Weapons: A Policy Assessment,” Institute for Defense Analyses, 01-xx-2021, https://www.ida.org/-/media/feature/publications/n/no/no-first-use-of-nuclear-weapons-a-policy-assessment/p-20513.ashx

The opposing view posits that NFU will create additional risk elsewhere, ultimately making the United States worse off.73 Adversaries will interpret NFU as evidence that a major conventional, cyber, chemical, or biological attack against the United States or its allies will not induce a nuclear response.74 As an invitation to act with relative impunity, NFU would embolden U.S. adversaries and possibly make conventional conflict between nuclear-armed states more likely. 75 This concern is often expressed by U.S. allies in the Asia-Pacific, who worry that NFU will encourage China to behave more aggressively at the non-nuclear level.

The truth about the relationship between NFU and miscalculation—be it discouraging, conducive, or trivial—cannot be captured precisely. The risk of miscalculation can never be driven to zero, and only history will determine whether a decision-maker’s risk tolerance was correct. Furthermore, given the closely held nature of adversary perceptions on matters related to nuclear weapons, an unclassified attempt to answer such a question will be characterized by uncertainty.76 That said, the open-source literature offers an authoritative and empirically driven foundation for how potential adversaries like Russia and China perceive the credibility of an NFU pronouncement by the United States. Their interpretation will go far in determining the policy’s ultimate impact, if any, on the risk of miscalculation in a crisis.77

From the vantage point of Moscow or Beijing, how clearly would NFU signal U.S. intent about the circumstances under which it would consider employing nuclear weapons? In other words, to what extent could they rely on an NFU policy as a predictor of U.S. behavior? Consider how CDRUSSTRATCOM describes his framework for posturing U.S. nuclear forces in light of China’s NFU policy: “It’s my responsibility to make sure that I have thought through what we have to do to deter what they’re capable of doing as opposed o what they say they’re going to do.”78 Applying this perspective forward and drawing on existing and recent scholarship, it is reasonable to suppose potential U.S. adversaries will form an assessment of NFU’s credibility based on much more than the content of the policy declaration itself.79 As a statement of intent, and a quickly reversible one at that, declaratory policy may not necessarily guide decision making in a crisis-to-conflict transition or during active hostilities. Perceptions of the credibility of an NFU pledge thus combine with a host of other factors, including U.S. capabilities, doctrine, and operational war plans, to be important.80

### Link---Nuclear Posture Review/Declaratory Policy

#### Calculated ambiguity in the NPR is a key deterrent.

Costlow 21 – Senior Analyst at the National Institute for Public Policy, PhD in Political Science from George Mason University, M.S. in Defense and Strategic Studies from Missouri State University.

Matthew R. Costlow, “Believe It or Not: U.S. Nuclear Declaratory Policy and Calculated Ambiguity,” War on the Rocks, 08-09-2021, https://warontherocks.com/2021/08/believe-it-or-not-u-s-nuclear-declaratory-policy-and-calculated-ambiguity/

Calculated Ambiguity: The Deterrent Benefit

The current U.S. policy of calculated ambiguity seeks to signal U.S. intent clearly enough to highlight “red lines,” or situations in which the United States may consider employing nuclear weapons. Yet, it also refrains from telegraphing the type and size of an attack an opponent should expect, should it choose not to be deterred. In essence, it leaves open the possibility of a U.S. nuclear first employment to defend its vital interests, or those of its allies and partners in extreme circumstances. Without using the words “calculated ambiguity,” official U.S. policy states:

The United States would only consider the employment of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States, its allies, and partners. Extreme circumstances could include significant non-nuclear strategic attacks. Significant non-nuclear strategic attacks include, but are not limited to, attacks on the U.S., allied, or partner civilian population or infrastructure, and attacks on U.S. or allied nuclear forces, their command and control, or warning and attack assessment capabilities.

Except for the sentence identifying what could constitute a strategic non-nuclear attack, the Trump administration’s declaratory formula is essentially a word-for-word copy of the Obama administration’s policy.

Regrettably, U.S. defense officials have rarely discussed publicly the deterrence and assurance benefits of the U.S. policy of calculated ambiguity. When they have, they mostly frame their thoughts by discussing why they would disagree with a possible shift to an alternative policy like nuclear no first use. However, as I discuss in my latest report, there are a number of benefits to retaining a policy of calculated ambiguity.

First, the policy of calculated ambiguity provides a potentially vital deterrent threat before the outbreak of major conflict. By keeping the option open of employing nuclear weapons first, U.S. leaders can make a last-ditch deterrent threat to prevent a major crisis from escalating or a conflict from growing more costly. There is, of course, no guarantee such a threat would work. But alternative policies like sole purpose and nuclear no first use essentially eliminate the possibility of U.S. officials even being able to try in certain dire circumstances. When a crisis or conflict has reached a level of severity where leaders are considering nuclear employment, that is not the time they should be denied what could be their least bad option, threatening nuclear first use to stave off an even worse outcome.

U.S. nuclear declaratory policy requires an adversary to gamble twice. First, they gamble that the United States will not respond to an attack with its nuclear forces, and second, that the attack will achieve its goals in the face of a U.S. conventional response. These gambles, enabled by a policy of calculated ambiguity, can aid deterrence by increasing an adversary’s uncertainty regarding the type and consequences of a U.S. response.

Second, the policy of calculated ambiguity provides U.S. officials with a range of options for crises and conflict that, by their nature, will require U.S. flexibility. They are neither forced to threaten or carry out nuclear first use, nor are they constrained to only consider conventional responses. U.S. officials can keep the threat of nuclear first use implicit or make it more explicit depending on what type of signal they want to send to an adversary. Should they wish to signal their resolve or deter particular behavior, they can clarify U.S. nuclear policy either privately or publicly as the United States did during the Gulf War in 1991 to some effect. Despite the concerns of some like nuclear scholar Scott Sagan, leaving open the possibility of nuclear first use does not commit a U.S. president to employ nuclear weapons first in order to reinforce some vague notion that America keeps its word. When America’s word on the subject of nuclear employment is intentionally vague and non-committal, there is little reason to fear an overriding impulse to unnecessarily employ nuclear weapons. Again, keeping U.S. options open, even extreme ones, during a crisis or conflict allows greater freedom of action to pursue de-escalatory outcomes in addition to providing more chances for nuclear deterrence to “work.”

Third, the current policy of calculated ambiguity allows U.S. officials to consider all options, including nuclear first use, for deterrence in the face of a growing set of non-nuclear threats. The policies of sole purpose or nuclear no-first-use, on the other hand, would (depending on how they are formulated) exclude the possibility of the United States even issuing a nuclear first-use-deterrent threat. Nor would they allow a U.S. nuclear response to strategic non-nuclear attacks on itself, or its allies and partners. U.S. allies and partners, given their geographic location near or neighboring Russia, China, and North Korea, are at the highest risk of suffering large scale chemical or biological attacks — threats that certainly do not appear to be declining.

The United States itself will likely want to at least keep open the option of threatening or employing nuclear weapons first, not only to defend allies and partners, but also to deter or respond to attacks on critical U.S. targets. For example, a Russian conventional cruise missile attack on the U.S. homeland could destroy U.S. nuclear submarines in port (with potentially hundreds of nuclear warheads onboard), disable power plants, or damage terrestrial radars and sensors. Likewise, non-nuclear anti-satellite capabilities Russia and China are developing could target U.S. nuclear command, control, and communications.

Put simply, a U.S. nuclear no-first-use or sole purpose policy, depending on how it is crafted, will not allow the United States to make explicit nuclear threats to deter some of the potentially most-damaging non-nuclear attacks, much less conduct a nuclear response. In effect, these policies could essentially signal, whether intentionally or not, that U.S. policy values withholding even the deterrent threat of nuclear employment over sustaining massive casualties from strategic non-nuclear attack, perhaps up to the point of defeat. Critics may respond that withholding the threat of nuclear employment makes the U.S. commitment to defeating the adversary with conventional means that much more credible. However, like a boxer who ties one of his hands behind his back, it may demonstrate he is committed to only using his other hand, but he will inevitably take a greater beating in the end.

Yes, the United States may eventually win such a contest with its superior conventional forces, but this result is not guaranteed and may come at too high a cost. Given this possibility, why eliminate a valuable deterrent threat, especially when the threat of a U.S. nuclear response can help tip the balance towards preventing a conflict in the first place?

#### Altering declaratory policy would strongly embolden China and Russia.

Geller 22 – former Senior Policy Analyst for Nuclear Deterrence and Missile Defense in the Center for National Defense at the Heritage Foundation.

Patty-Jane Geller, “Biden’s Change in Nuclear Policy Weakens Deterrences,” Heritage Foundation, 04-04-2022, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/bidens-change-nuclear-policy-weakens-deterrence>

If our allies did not advocate for this change in policy, then perhaps Mr. Biden is retreating to Obama-era nuclear policy to placate the left side of his party that favors nuclear disarmament. But altering policy that impacts nuclear deterrence—the number-one issue for U.S. national security—for political purposes would be nothing short of irresponsible.

Perhaps the administration believes that weakening U.S. declaratory policy will demonstrate to Russia and China that our intentions are more benign than those of the previous administration and will therefore help deescalate tensions.

Such would be wishful thinking. More likely, this policy will suggest to adversaries and allies alike that the U.S. might be more reluctant to use nuclear weapons against major chemical, biological or conventional attacks. Our adversaries may interpret that message to mean they now have greater freedom to take more risks, so long as they keep the violence just below the nuclear threshold.

Moreover, weakening declaratory policy at a time when Mr. Putin is nuclear saber-rattling in Europe could signal that his threats are working, and that the U.S. is backing off. Mr. Biden’s decision to announce the reduced role of U.S. nuclear weapons as war wages on along NATO’s borders could also cause allies to question the administration’s assurance that it will live up to its extended deterrence commitments.

Unfortunately, there’s not much anyone can do to reverse this policy since the authority to use nuclear weapons lies solely in the president’s hands. But moving forward, support for a modern and flexible nuclear deterrent will remain more critical than ever. In the face of some of the greatest threats to national security, the U.S. must show strength.

### Link---Sole Purpose

#### Sold purpose and/or a NFU would crush deterrence.

Moulton 21 – Former Co-Chair of the Future of Defense Task Force, member of the House Armed Services Committee, M.A. in Public Policy from Harvard University.

Seth Moulton, “We must eliminate nuclear weapons, but a ‘No First Use’ Policy is not the answer,” The Hill, 11-29-2021, https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/politics/583433-we-must-eliminate-nuclear-weapons-but-a-no-first-use-policy-is/

But as we work to reduce and eventually eliminate the existential risks these weapons pose, we must always do so in ways that incentivize our adversaries to do the same and do not compromise our own national security or that of our allies in the process. A “no first use” or “sole purpose” doctrine, stating that America would use nuclear weapons only in response to a nuclear attack, would compromise our national security and that of our allies. It would embolden our adversaries in their efforts to expand their spheres of influence, undermine our commitments to our allies and partners, and even risk new proliferation of nuclear weapons around the world.

For that reason, as the administration considers this question during an upcoming meeting on nuclear declaratory policy with the National Security Council this month, I urge President Biden to reserve the option that the United States could use nuclear weapons in response to both nuclear and non-nuclear attacks on the U.S. or our allies.

Many of our treaty allies depend on our extended nuclear deterrence for our collective security, both across Asia and Europe. A “no first use” or “sole purpose” doctrine could encourage Russia and China to be even more aggressive in Europe and the Indo-Pacific. Such a policy might also make our allies afraid that the U.S. is abandoning our long-held commitments in the face of nuclear-capable aggressors. According to recent reporting, one European official said that a declaration of this policy would “be a huge gift to China and Russia.” In some cases, this policy may even incentivize our allies to acquire their own nuclear deterrents, which would undermine decades of American and international nuclear nonproliferation efforts.

Some argue that a “no first use” or “sole purpose” doctrine would eliminate the risk of miscalculation by an adversary; would set an example for other nuclear-armed states; and would encourage nuclear disarmament globally. More likely, our adversaries will never trust our declaration more than their own early warning systems; their buildup of nuclear arms will continue; and proliferation could worsen.

Our own senior leadership is skeptical of China’s proclaimed “no first use” policy: in congressional testimony last year, STRATCOM Commander ADM Charles Richard stated that he “could drive a truck through [China’s] no first use policy,” particularly given its ongoing expansion of their nuclear arsenal. Likewise, a unilateral American declaration of “no first use” would likely have minimal impact on future arms control talks while diminishing our security relationships with allies. President Obama, a leader who expressed a clear commitment to a nuclear weapons-free world, repeatedly considered a “no first use” doctrine and decided against it. In recent years, the nuclear threat from states like China and Russia has only worsened.

I fervently share the president’s goal of eliminating nuclear weapons entirely, but eliminating these weapons requires leverage we should not give up unilaterally, especially to nations that do not share our principled goals. And while we pursue arms reductions, we must also remain responsible to our own and our allies’ national security interests. For the sake of our national security, I urge President Biden against declaring a “no first use” or “sole purpose” doctrine in the upcoming Nuclear Posture Review.

#### Deterrence link vs sole purpose.

Kim 22 – Adjunct Senior Fellow with the Indo-Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security, former Senior Advisor for Nuclear Policy at the International Crisis Group, member of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific U.S. Committee, the International Nuclear Security Forum, the U.S. National Committee on North Korea, and the Korean Peninsula Future Forum in Seoul, PhD in International Relations from Korea University, M.S. in Foreign Service from the Georgetown University.

Duyeon Kim, “Biden Can Find Middle Ground in Heated Nuclear Debate,” Foreign Policy, 02-15-2022, https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/15/nuclear-weapons-review-biden/

However, U.S. allies do not want Washington to limit its nuclear use to only responding to a nuclear attack. For Asian allies in particular, the psychological effect of nuclear weapons is just as important as their physical destructive power. Even if high-tech conventional weapons could effectively respond to non-nuclear attacks from an operational standpoint, Asian officials say they still need something much stronger to scare and deter adversaries from waging any kind of attack.

Plus, decision-makers in both allied and adversarial countries will not spend time analyzing words and researching definitions and historical origins according to different formulations of the language presented in the upcoming Nuclear Posture Review. Several officials have told me that they will interpret no-first-use and sole purpose as the same concept, and either articulation will have the same effect on allies and rivals. A premature pledge would also bring back the ghosts of Trump’s “America first” nightmare, in which allies’ needs were abandoned in favor of a narrow concept of American security.

The United States can and should play a leadership role in reducing nuclear dangers worldwide. But the conditions or circumstances in the global security environment must support it. Not all nuclear-possessing countries have a no-first-use policy. Russia dropped it in 1993, and nuclear weapons play a key role in its military doctrine. This is important to remember amid increasing fears of another Russian invasion of Ukraine and the potential for Moscow to be further emboldened by an American no-first-use/sole purpose policy. China’s claimed no-first-use policy has been met with increasing skepticism. North Korea maintains a first-use policy. India’s conditional no-first-use policy reserves the right to use nuclear weapons against biological or chemical weapons attacks. Pakistan, France, and the United Kingdom have first-use policies.

What’s more, China and Russia have made strides in their conventional capabilities, continue to modernize their nuclear weapons capabilities, and are increasingly aggressive. North Korea’s nuclear weapons advancements and sophistication drive neighbors to want their own nuclear deterrent. Advanced weapons in both conventional and dual-capable systems risk blurring the distinction between an incoming conventional and nuclear attack. Emerging non-nuclear threats and new technologies have also increased uncertainties about their destructive power and impact on military strategies as well as possibilities for nuclear use. And there is no guarantee or evidence that other countries will follow America’s lead on no-first-use/sole purpose. The list goes on.

#### It would undermine broad nuclear deterrence AND NATO.

Kim 22 – Adjunct Senior Fellow with the Indo-Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security, former Senior Advisor for Nuclear Policy at the International Crisis Group, member of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific U.S. Committee, the International Nuclear Security Forum, the U.S. National Committee on North Korea, and the Korean Peninsula Future Forum in Seoul, PhD in International Relations from Korea University, M.S. in Foreign Service from the Georgetown University.

Duyeon Kim, “Biden Can Find Middle Ground in Heated Nuclear Debate,” Foreign Policy, 02-15-2022, https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/15/nuclear-weapons-review-biden/

From an alliance perspective, if the United States renounced its right to nuclear first use in extreme circumstances and declared sole purpose today, it would contradict NATO’s policy and undermine the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons. European allies object to no-first-use because of Russia’s revanchism and growing reliance on nuclear weapons. Washington would, therefore, need to manage any future no-first-use/sole purpose policy within NATO.

## Modernization DA

### UQ---General

#### The U.S. is broadly modernizing its nuclear arsenal BUT bipartisanship is key.

Geller 22 – former Senior Policy Analyst for Nuclear Deterrence and Missile Defense in the Center for National Defense at the Heritage Foundation.

Patty-Jane Geller, “U.S. Nuclear Weapons,” 2023 Index of U.S. Military Strength, 10-18-2022, https://www.heritage.org/military-strength/assessment-us-military-power/us-nuclear-weapons

The United States is working to modernize these nuclear forces, which continue to age beyond their original intended lifetimes. U.S. nuclear delivery systems, warheads, and nuclear supporting infrastructure were all developed during the Cold War and have no margin for further life extension. As stated by Admiral Richards:

We are at a point where end-of-life limitations and the cumulative effects of underinvestment in our nuclear deterrent and supporting infrastructure leave us with no operational margin. The Nation simply cannot attempt to indefinitely life-extend leftover Cold War weapon systems and successfully support our National strategy. Pacing the threat requires dedicated and sustained funding for the entire nuclear enterprise and NC3 Next Generation modernization must be a priority.29

Faced with this set of circumstances, the United States must contend with three overarching challenges:

The need to recapitalize all components of its nuclear forces,

The need to refurbish an aging and crumbling nuclear weapons infrastructure, and

The need to recruit and train talented personnel that has been created by an aging workforce.

This nuclear modernization program dates back to around 2010 and is based on the size of the current arsenal, which is meant to deter only one nuclear peer: Russia. The extraordinary technical and geopolitical developments being realized today—China’s nuclear breakout and Russia’s nuclear expansion—were generally not anticipated as the Obama Administration went about finalizing our nuclear force structure for the coming decades.30

This assumption of a more benign threat environment influenced decisions about the nuclear force structure that the United States is pursuing today.

The United States for the most part is replacing its nuclear forces on a one-to-one basis rather than adding new or additional capabilities. The Columbia-class nuclear submarine, for example, will have eight fewer missile tubes than its predecessor, the Ohio-class, and therefore less firing capacity.31 The only significant change in the U.S. nuclear arsenal was the deployment of W76-2 low-yield warheads for the SLBMs in 2020, and it did not increase capacity. The 2018 NPR also recommended a nuclear-armed, sea-launched cruise missile to develop in the longer term, but this proposal has not gained necessary support from the current Administration.

To provide assurance against changes in a geopolitical situation like those that are occurring today, as well as assurance against failures in the U.S. stockpile, the United States preserves an upload capability that allows it to increase the number of nuclear warheads on each type of its delivery vehicles. The U.S. Minuteman III ICBM, for example, is currently deployed with only one Mk12A/W78 warhead, but it can carry as many as three; the Trident II SLBM can carry several warheads at once; and the B-52 bomber can carry additional cruise missiles.32

The reduced number of missile tubes on the future Columbia-class SSBN will in turn reduce the strategic submarine force’s upload capacity. However, this hedge capacity is limited, as uploading warheads onto the Minuteman III missiles would prove to be both time-consuming and costly, and the United States could not exploit the bomber upload capacity during peacetime because bombers currently remain off alert. Uncertainty as to whether the United States will have enough modern warheads or air-launched cruise missiles will remain another potential impediment to upload capacity.

The United States also maintains an inactive stockpile that includes near-term hedge warheads that “can serve as active ready warheads within prescribed activation timelines” and reserve warheads that can provide “a long-term response to risk mitigation for technical failures in the stockpile.”33

The United States has not designed or built a nuclear warhead since the end of the Cold War. Instead, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) uses life-extension programs (LEPs) to extend the service lives of existing weapons in the stockpile, some of which date back to the 1960s. While LEPs replace or upgrade most components in a nuclear warhead, all warheads will eventually need to be replaced because their nuclear components—specifically, plutonium pits that comprise the cores of warheads—are also subject to aging.34

The United States is the only nuclear state that lacks the capability to produce plutonium pits in quantity. The NNSA’s fiscal year (FY) 2023 budget request notes that “[t]he Plutonium Modernization program provides funding for efforts across the nuclear security enterprise to restore the Nation’s capability to produce 80 pits per year (ppy)” and that “NNSA remains committed to achieving the statutory pit production capability goals on the path to 80 ppy.”35

Demographic challenges within the nuclear weapons labs also affect the ability of the U.S. to modernize its warhead stockpile. Most scientists and engineers with practical hands-on experience in nuclear weapons design and testing are retired. This means that the certification of weapons that were designed and tested as far back as the 1960s depends on the scientific judgment of designers and engineers who have never been involved in either the testing or the design and development of nuclear weapons. In recent years, NNSA has invested in enabling its workforce to exercise critical nuclear weapons design and development skills that have not been fully exercised since the end of the Cold War. These skills must be available when needed to support modern warhead development programs for U.S. SLBMs and ICBMs.

The shift in emphasis away from the nuclear mission after the end of the Cold War led to a diminished ability to conduct key activities at the nuclear laboratories. According to NNSA Administrator Jill Hruby, “the nuclear stockpile is safe, secure, reliable, and effective,” but “NNSA is aware that legacy infrastructure is well beyond its intended life designs and incapable of providing all the capabilities needed to deliver on the modernization efforts, especially with the demanding production schedules.”36

As a result of this neglect, NNSA must recapitalize the nuclear weapons complex at the same time the nation faces the need to modernize its aging nuclear warheads.

In recent years, bipartisan congressional support for the nuclear mission has been strong, and nuclear modernization has received additional funding. Preservation of that bipartisan consensus will be critical as these programs mature and begin to introduce modern nuclear systems to the force.

In FY 2022, the Biden Administration, supported by Congress, advanced the comprehensive modernization program for nuclear forces that was initiated by President Barack Obama and continued by the Trump Administration. Despite some opposition, Congress funded the two previous Presidents’ budget requests for these programs as well. Because such modernization activities require consistent, stable, long-term funding commitments, this continued bipartisan support has been critical.

The NNSA received $20.7 billion in FY 2022, which was about $1 billion more than it received in FY 2021 and included full funding for major efforts like modernization of plutonium pit production and five warhead modernization programs.37 The FY 2023 budget would continue these efforts with an NNSA topline of $21.4 billion.38 The FY 2023 budget also supports modernization programs to replace the triad, including the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD), recently named “Sentinel”; Long Range Stand Off Weapon (LRSO); Columbia-class nuclear submarine; and B-21 Raider bomber.

In FY 2022, Congress also provided funding to begin research and development on a nuclear-armed, sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM-N), which was proposed in the 2018 NPR in light of the worsened security environment with Russia and China.39 However, the Biden Administration removed funding for this capability in its FY 2023 budget request. President Biden’s Interim National Security Strategic Guidance describes a goal of “reduc[ing] the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy,” and it is likely that this goal influenced the decision to cancel the SLCM-N.40

#### All signs point to this trend.

Harper 21 – former Managing Editor at National Defense Magazine, M.A. in National Security Studies from Georgetown University.

Jon Harper, “Biden to Stay Course on Nuclear Modernization,” National Defense Magazine, 06-15-2021, https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2021/6/15/biden-to-stay-course-on-nuclear-modernization

Despite calls from some Democrats and arms control advocates to slash spending on strategic forces, the Biden administration appears committed to forging ahead with previous administrations’ nuclear modernization programs.

The U.S. nuclear arsenal comes with a high price tag. The Congressional Budget Office recently estimated that it will cost $634 billion to operate, sustain and modernize the nation’s forces during the 2021-2030 time frame, based on plans submitted by the Trump administration last year.

Some observers hoped — and others feared — that President Joe Biden would scale back these plans. But his budget request for fiscal year 2022 suggests that won’t be the case.

“Modernizing the nation’s nuclear delivery and command, control and communications systems is the [Defense] Department’s No. 1 priority,” according to Pentagon budget documents.

The Biden administration requested a total of $43.2 billion for the nuclear enterprise, including $27.7 billion for Pentagon systems and $15.5 billion for weapons activities of the National Nuclear Security Administration, which oversees the nation’s warhead stockpile.

The total amount is $1 billion less than was enacted for 2021, but major modernization programs saw funding increases. The Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent, or GBSD, would receive $2.6 billion, up from $1.45 billion in 2021. The Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine would get $5 billion, up from $4.5 billion. The B-21 bomber would be allotted $2.9 billion, up from $2.8 billion. And a new air-launched cruise missile known as the Long-Range Stand Off weapon, or LRSO, would receive $609 million, up from $385 million.

Todd Harrison, director of defense budget analysis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, noted that the requested amount for LRSO is about 70 percent higher than was previously projected for the program in 2022.

“It appears that they are accelerating that program. And that is something that had been a target by some arms control advocates and more progressive Democrats in Congress,” Harrison said during a recent panel. “They’re really doubling down on LRSO in this budget.”

Meanwhile, nuclear command, control and communication systems would get $2.9 billion, up from $2.7 billion in 2021.

Notably, the fiscal proposal doesn’t eliminate plans for a nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile, or SLCM-N, a new weapon that was proposed during the Trump administration. The Biden administration’s request includes $5.2 million for development work and $10 million for a low-yield warhead for the system. The SLCM-N and low-yield warheads were expected by many observers to be nixed under Biden.

“No change is the story here,” Harrison said of the new administration’s proposal. “There’s going to be very little change in nuclear modernization plans from the Obama administration to the Trump administration to the Biden administration. The big modernization programs are planning to continue on track.”

Arms control advocates are none too happy.

The Council for a Livable World denounced the request for $43.2 billion for strategic weapons, describing it as “exorbitant.”

“The fiscal year 2022 Biden budget requests funds for, or even expands, nearly every nuclear program from the Trump administration,” the group said in a statement. “We are particularly disappointed by the fact that the Biden administration is planning to move forward on Trump-era plans to develop a new nuclear sea-launched cruise missile. … We are further disheartened that the administration requested a dramatic increase in funding for the new Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent.”

Aviation Week subsequently reported that the Navy may try to cancel SLCM-N in future budget cycles.

Although some observers were taken aback by Biden’s budget proposal, Harrison said he wasn’t surprised.

“Look at who the Biden administration has been tapping for key positions in defense,” he said. “It’s not folks who have a history of wanting to cut nuclear modernization. It’s people who have a history of supporting it, and some people who served in the Obama administration who were instrumental in crafting these modernization programs. … It’s really a stay-the-course type of signal that we’re getting.”

#### This is true for every part of the nuclear arsenal.

Bugos 22 – Senior Policy Analyst at the Arms Control Association.

Shannon Bugos, “U.S. Nuclear Modernization Programs,” Arms Control Association, 01-xx-2022, https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/USNuclearModernization

The United States maintains an arsenal of about 1,700 strategic nuclear warheads deployed on intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and at strategic bomber bases. There are an additional estimated 100 non-strategic, or tactical, nuclear weapons at bomber bases in five European countries and about 2,000 nuclear warheads in storage.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated in May 2021 that the United States will spend a total of $634 billion over the next 10 years to sustain and modernize its nuclear arsenal, which is 28 percent higher than the previous 10-year projection released in 2019. This estimate in planned spending in fiscal years 2021–2030 is projected to consume 6.0–8.5 percent of projected total spending on national defense during those years. Over the next 30 years, the total sustainment and modernization costs of U.S. nuclear forces could reach $2 trillion.

The CBO estimate captures spending on the triad of nuclear delivery systems and command and control systems at the Defense Department and on nuclear warheads and their supporting infrastructure at the Energy Department’s semi-autonomous National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). Nearly every element of the U.S. nuclear arsenal is slated to be upgraded over the next 20 years. Most of these efforts are in the early stages, and a few others have yet to begin.

Other nuclear-armed states, notably Russia and China, are upgrading and may be posed to increase the size of their arsenals and have tested, produced, and deployed more brand new systems than the United States over the past decade. But the U.S. military has upgraded and refurbished nearly all of its existing strategic and tactical delivery systems and the warheads they carry to last well beyond their originally planned service life and is now in the early stages of replacing many of these aging systems with new systems. Though decades old, these modernized forces are more capable than the originals, and the new systems will include additional capability upgrades. The current and planned U.S. financial investment in nuclear forces is unrivaled by any other nuclear power.

Gen. Paul Selva, then vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noted in testimony to the House Armed Services Committee in March 2017 that while Russia and China continue to modernize their nuclear forces, the United States maintains "a qualitative advantage."

[Image Omitted]

Former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. John Hyten, acknowledged in January 2019 that the United States still leads in most capabilities. However, he argued that the Defense Department must move quickly in order to keep up with “the speed” at which Russia and China are moving.

The Trump administration, as outlined in its 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) released on Feb. 2, 2018, continued the modernization plan laid out by the Obama administration, as well as developed several new nuclear weapons capabilities that will add to the price tag for nuclear forces. This included the new low-yield nuclear warhead (the W76-2, which was deployed in 2019) for some submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and the longer-term development of a new nuclear submarine-launched cruise missile (SLCM).

The Biden administration's first budget request proposed to continue every part of the unnecessary and unsustainable nuclear weapons spending plans it inherited from the Trump administration. This includes funding for development of the new nuclear SLCM, continued early development of a new high yield submarine launched ballistic missile warhead (the W93) and associated aeroshell, and sustainment of the B83-1 bomb.

### Link---General

#### U.S. nuclear modernization is coming now BUT is contingent on bipartisanship --- the plan ruptures the existing coalition.

Nelson 22 – Partner at the Nebraska-based Heartland Strategy Group, former Governor of Nebraska, former Senator for Nebraska and member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Ben Nelson, “Modernizing US nuclear deterrence presents a rare bipartisan opportunity,” DefenseNews, 01-13-2022, https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2022/01/13/modernizing-us-nuclear-deterrence-presents-a-rare-bipartisan-opportunity/

Maintaining and modernizing America’s nuclear triad and the critical deterrence it provides our nation has long benefited from bipartisan support. Despite the challenging political divide, nuclear modernization presents an opportunity for lawmakers from both sides of the aisle to work together to make our nation safer, while failure to act leaves the United States and our allies extremely vulnerable.

America’s intercontinental ballistic missiles are the foundation of nuclear deterrence, but they have been in service since the 1970s — more than 40 years longer than intended — and must be modernized to remain effective.

The effort to modernize our ICBMs was first initiated under President Barack Obama. The Obama administration’s Nuclear Posture Review and subsequent analyses concluded that maintaining all three triad legs was in the United States’ national security interest, leading to modernization efforts.

And it continues to be a top priority of the Biden administration.

In 2017, then-Vice President Joe Biden said: “A nuclear deterrent has been the bedrock of our national defense since World War II. And so long as other countries possess nuclear weapons that could be used against us, we too must maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal to deter attacks against ourselves and our allies.”

And in March 2021, now-President Biden reiterated his position, noting that his administration remains committed to “ensuring our strategic deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective and that our extended deterrence commitments to our allies remain strong and credible.”

A safe, secure and effective nuclear arsenal requires modern systems that are capable of operating against 21st century threats. Our adversaries understand this: Russia and China have spent the last two decades modernizing their nuclear deterrent systems, including investing in new missiles, airplanes and submarines. Earlier this year, satellite images revealed new nuclear missile silo fields in China — the size and scope representing an unprecedented nuclear buildup. In the annual report on military and security developments in China, known as the “China Military Power Report,” the Department of Defense estimated that China will have 1,000 nuclear weapons by 2030.

The U.S. is modernizing its capabilities as well. During the 111th and 112th sessions of Congress, I served as chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, which has jurisdiction over Department of Defense and Department of Energy policy related to strategic deterrence, strategic stability, nuclear weapons and nonproliferation. During the modernization debate, I reached across the aisle to work with ranking member Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., to support these critical programs.

These programs were continued in the Trump administration and supported across multiple congresses. Bipartisanship will remain essential to modernization efforts in the U.S.

Continuing triad modernization programs is one of the Defense Department’s highest priorities. As then-Secretary of Defense Ash Carter observed in 2016, “most of our nuclear weapon delivery systems have already been extended decades beyond their original expected service lives. So it’s not a choice between replacing these platforms or keeping, it’s really a choice between replacing them or losing them. That would mean losing confidence in our ability to deter, which we can’t afford in today’s volatile security environment.”

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin also highlighted the essential nature of a robust nuclear deterrent capability: “Our nuclear deterrent has served a vital purpose in U.S. National Security Strategy for the past 70 years and continues to be an essential component of our strategy to preserve peace and stability by deterring aggression against the United States, our allies, and our partners.”

Polling conducted this fall by the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies shows that 91% of respondents, both Republicans and Democrats, believe that modernizing the United States’ nuclear deterrence system should be a priority for the Department of Defense. A full 80% say that replacing ICBMs with modern technology would make them feel safer. Those are strong numbers and demonstrate the bipartisan support for modernization.

#### Any change in U.S. nuclear posture risks ruining the bipartisan coalition behind nuclear modernization.

CSIS 17 – Commentary from the Nuclear Policy Division of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Center for Strategic and International Studies, “Fulfilling the Central and Enduring Role of U.S. Nuclear Weapons,” CSIS, 10-30-2017, https://www.csis.org/analysis/fulfilling-central-and-enduring-role-us-nuclear-weapons

Fourth, what impact would this decision have on the bipartisan consensus supporting the current nuclear modernization program of record? Maintaining and modernizing U.S. nuclear forces is impossible without bipartisan political support. Any decision that risks derailing political support for modernization could, at the end of the day, weaken deterrence if the result is insufficient funding for the current plan. The U.S. nuclear posture is more survivable, flexible, and versatile with the current force structure than with a dyad or less-capable triad (e.g., a triad with half as many Minuteman III ICBMs or a bomber with no cruise missile).

## Politics DAs

### Link---General

#### Politics is a salient debate for the topic---changes to nuclear policy are controversial.

Cirincione 22 – Distinguished Fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, former Director for Non-Proliferation at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, M.S. from Georgetown University.

Joseph Cirincione, “Biden promised nuclear-policy reform. He’s not delivering.,” Washington Post, 02-15-2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/02/15/nuclear-review-first-use-biden/

Another formidable barrier to nuclear-policy reform is erected by those who cynically use security as a wedge issue in partisan politics. Being “weak on defense” has been a Democratic fear for decades. Members of Congress can therefore easily be persuaded that a vote to cut nuclear weapons or Pentagon budgets is a liability for their campaigns, even if they may privately favor reform.

The status quo is further protected by a powerful consortium of arms corporations that realize vast profits from manufacturing and maintaining these arsenals. Since the start of the Afghanistan war, Pentagon spending has totaled $14 trillion, with one-third to one-half going directly to military contractors. The annual budget is now at its highest level since World War II. Nuclear spending is soaring as the Pentagon orders new fleets of nuclear-armed bombers, submarines and missiles.

To protect their contracts, arms companies deploy a small army of lobbyists in Washington, spending $2.5 billion over the past two decades to fund an average of 700 lobbyists a year. The companies run a revolving door that shuttles officials between top policy jobs and top contractor jobs. The companies also disperse contracts to nearly every congressional district, contribute generously to lawmakers on the key committees that oversee their programs (the five major nuclear weapons contractors made $31 million in campaign contributions in 2020 alone) and flood Washington think tanks with grants to mute criticism.

#### Empirics prove.

Cirincione 22 – National Security Analyst at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, former Vice President for National Security at the Center for American Progress, former Director for Nonproliferation at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, former Advisor to Obama

Joseph Cirincione, “Achieving a Safer U.S. Nuclear Posture,” Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, 02-07-2022, https://quincyinst.org/report/achieving-a-safer-u-s-nuclear-posture/

Primarily, this is because U.S. nuclear posture is not a rational response to an external threat environment but is driven by domestic actors who see nuclear superiority as a tool of U.S. global dominance, by those who use nuclear security as a wedge issue in partisan politics, and by a powerful consortium of arms corporations that realize vast profits from manufacturing, marketing, and maintaining these deadly arsenals.5

The question is complicated today by a process that gives those most interested in continuing nuclear programs the authority to write the policy governing these weapons. President Clinton was the first to issue an NPR in 1994; Biden should be the last. Policy should flow from the White House to executing departments, not the reverse.

The roots of the problem, however, go far deeper.

#### The one-time Biden attempted to reduce the role of the nuclear arsenal, he was stopped by a bipartisan Congressional coalition.

Ukenye and O’Brien 22 – \*Editorial Intern at POLITICO; \*\*Defense Reporter specializing in Congress for POLITICO.

\*Lawrence Ukenye and \*\*Connor O’Brien, “Congress poised to shoot down Biden’s nuclear rollback,” POLITICO, 07-06-2022, https://www.politico.com/news/2022/07/06/congress-biden-nuclear-rollback-00044344

Progressives were already disappointed with President Joe Biden’s plans for the nation’s nuclear arsenal. Now they’re poised to lose one of the few things about the White House’s blueprint that they liked.

In recent weeks, Democrats have joined Republicans in adding money back into the Pentagon budget to continue developing a sea-launched nuclear cruise missile that former President Donald Trump initiated in 2018. Biden proposed canceling the missile, which arms control advocates say is redundant, costly and potentially destabilizing.

Yet testimony from top military leaders, including Joint Chiefs Chair Gen. Mark Milley, in support of the missile prompted other Democrats to join Republicans in rebuking Biden’s plans.

“No one can tell in an uncertain world what we will need, but it’s important to keep this option available,” Rep. Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.), who authored the House proposal to keep the missile, explained during a committee markup in June.

The Pentagon’s still-classified Nuclear Posture Review, which lays out a long-term roadmap for the nuclear arsenal, spurred the decision to zero out funding for the missile in Biden’s most recent budget. The public split between top civilians and military commanders amounted to a “green light” for Democrats to hedge on the program, according to Tom Collina, policy director at Ploughshares Fund.

“If the president was making [the missile] a high priority, he’d tell the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to oppose the [missile],” Collina said. “So I think the administration made a decision that this simply wasn’t a high priority for them.”

“Once you have the administration saying one thing and the military brass saying something else, in this case, supporting continued development of the [missile] … then you’re not going to have the Democrats falling in line behind the system,” he said.

The situation marks a retreat from the campaign pledges of then-candidate Biden, who long advocated for reducing reliance on nuclear weapons, only to turn around and dedicate tens of billions of dollars to the modernization of all three legs of the triad for two years in a row. Arms control advocates also called on him to establish a “no first use” policy and cancel two weapons added on by the Trump administration: the cruise missile and a low-yield submarine-launched missile, which has already entered the fleet.

Biden’s nuclear plans, outlined in a brief summary released in March, omit a “no first use” policy. The low-yield warhead introduced during the Trump years remains a part of the arsenal.

As for the cruise missile, now that both the House and Senate Armed Services committees have authorized funding, albeit with differing conditions, Congress will likely send Biden a compromise defense policy bill this year that foils his plan to cancel the program.

# Neg—Counterplans

### Neg---Safety Alteration CP

#### Given the rapid pace of nuclear modernization, there is always a need for more safety measures.

Jason M. Weaver 15, Senior Systems Engineer and Nuclear Safety Lead at Sandia National Laboratories, Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin, “One in a Million, Given the Accident: Assuring Nuclear Weapon Safety,” Sandia National Laboratories, 08-25-2015, https://www.osti.gov/biblio/1426902

It is vital that nuclear weapon safety remain tightly integrated into both the design of new weapons and the surveillance of the existing stockpile. There are two main points to consider. The first is that continued vigilance is necessary to prevent unsafe designs or practices from creeping in. As experienced designers, manufacturers, testers, and handlers are gradually replaced by new personnel, the lessons from the past are likely to be forgotten unless carefully passed down to the next generation. The weapons labs have been forced to deal with this issue already—from the time that new weapon design stopped in the early 1990s until work started on the W76-1 in the mid-2000s, much experience was lost as the workforce contracted and shifted to other priorities. As a result, new engineers tasked with designing the W76-1 had a substantial learning curve as they tracked down the rationale for previous design choices and formulated their own safety architectures. A detailed record of past programs and a competent workforce must be maintained at each of the weapons labs to avoid repeating mistakes of the past or accidentally overlooking a potential safety concern.

The second reason nuclear safety must remain a core focus of research is that our understanding continually grows as new knowledge comes to light. Remember, most of the engineers in the 1950s and 1960s believed that their designs were safe too. It was not until accidents revealed possible flaws and key tests were performed that a paradigm shift occurred and changes were made. Although the Nuclear Weapons Complex maintains that the current stockpile is safe, future accidents or studies may reveal gaps in our understanding—accidents previously deemed infeasible, manufacturing flaws discovered in the field, unanticipated byproducts of design choices, or behavior by those handling the weapons not consistent with what is established in documented processes. Some of these may merely show the wisdom of future upgrades in the next round of life extension programs; others may possibly necessitate immediate removal of some weapons from the stockpile for repair or retirement.

Beyond the core responsibility of designing and maintaining safe weapons, the nuclear weapon safety community can contribute to the nuclear community in other ways. As seen previously, command & control has often been mentioned as an area of concern. Though the situation is much better coordinated than it has been in the past, it remains an area where substantial safeguarding and improvement is possible. The lessons learned in developing assured nuclear weapon safety may in many cases be carried over into this field. In particular, aspects of the command & control structure could be redesigned incorporating more design features that fail safe (minimizing false positives) without hampering the ability to transmit and verify legitimate messages. Better communication and coordination between those designing safety into the weapons themselves and those managing safety, security, and control administratively can help assure that instead of hardware and actual behavior possibly neutralizing each other’s effectiveness and introducing holes to the system, they can work together to keep the arsenal predictably safe and secure.

### Neg---Crisis Management CP

#### Necessary, solves, and must sequence the CP first

Frank Costigliola 23, Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Connecticut, Ph.D. from Cornell University, “Diplomacy defused Cold War crises. It can help again today.”, The Washington Post, 02-10-2023, https://www.washingtonpost.com/made-by-history/2023/02/10/kennan-diplomacy-war-china-russia

Both America’s deepening commitment to Ukraine and its widening dispute with China could escalate into a nuclear war. With such high stakes, understanding and resurrecting the successful strategies that forestalled similar disasters during the Cold War could reduce the risk of catastrophe. Today, American diplomat George F. Kennan is best known for being an architect of the policy of containment — the policy that aimed to limit the Soviet Union’s influence and block the expansion of communism in the late 1940s. However, Kennan’s most passionate advocacy was actually for a certain type of hardheaded, discerning diplomacy — a strategy that proved instrumental in helping defuse some of the Cold War’s most tense moments and could prove beneficial to easing such tense political situations again today.

In 1951, the United States was mired in a proxy war with the Soviet Union in Korea. With the Soviets fuming at the presence of foreign troops close to their frontier and the United States frustrated with the stalemated conflict, a direct confrontation between the superpowers loomed. Into the breach stepped Kennan, who after intensive study and several diplomatic postings in Russia, understood the Soviets better than anyone in the U.S. government.

To defuse the budding tensions over Korea, Kennan contacted the Soviet ambassador to the United Nations. In low-key talks behind closed doors, he assured his Russian counterpart that while Washington disputed Moscow’s arguments, the United States could understand why the Russians thought what they did. Kennan knew that negotiators, no matter how frostily professional they appeared, remained human beings subject to emotions and influenced by culture. Extending respect to a negotiating partner could soften resistance, whereas brusque talk and attempts to inflict humiliation invariably hardened opposition.

This formula worked for Kennan and his Soviet counterpart, who, acting with the approval of their respective governments, reached an understanding about limiting the conflict in Korea. Putting a lid on each side’s military commitment to its proxy spurred further talks that eventually led to an armistice in 1953. That prevented the Cold War from inadvertently becoming hot — something neither side wanted.

Kennan’s critical insight was that despite the policy chasms that separated the two sides, and the ruptured trust, neither sought a world war. He recognized the value of back-channel, informal, personal diplomacy in bridging divides. Such talks could also create opportunities to find common ground on other vital issues.

In October 1962, another deadly crisis loomed — potentially a nuclear one. The Soviets had secretly placed missiles in Cuba to forestall a feared U.S. invasion of the island and to counter American missiles close by Russia in Turkey. Discovery of the missiles in Cuba enraged American policymakers given the island nation’s proximity to the United States. Moreover, the uproar threatened to derail Democrats in the midterm elections that November.

Most of President John F. Kennedy’s advisers urged bellicose action: bombing or invading Cuba. Yet, Kennan’s friend, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Adlai Stevenson, counseled the president to take another course — diplomacy and a naval blockade. Although Kennedy personally disliked Stevenson, he recognized the good sense in these arguments.

The president undertook an exchange of personal letters with Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev. Kennedy emphasized that while he and Khrushchev could not escape disagreement on key matters, they could manage how they handled these disputes. Though Kennan didn’t advise Kennedy during the crisis, the private diplomacy the president embraced embodied the kind of hardheaded empathy for the other side that Kennan saw as so crucial, particularly in moments of tension. The personal letters translated the geostrategic crisis into human terms.

Diplomacy led to a secret trade: Kennedy pledged to remove obsolete U.S. missiles in Turkey in exchange for removal of the Soviet missiles in Cuba. The president also pledged not to invade Cuba. Reaching this settlement through negotiations — rather than by force — allowed Moscow to back down with less humiliation. Keeping the withdrawal of missiles from Turkey secret enabled Kennedy to make a concession without paying an immediate political price.

It's not an exaggeration to say that in 1962 diplomacy saved the world. Kennedy and his advisers remained unaware that the Russians had already installed tactical nuclear missiles in Cuba. The Soviet commanders on the island had orders to use those weapons to counter a U.S. invasion. The resulting slaughter could have triggered an all-out war with the Soviet Union.

Diplomacy enabled both leaders to back away from a catastrophe that neither wanted. Chastened by the impending doom they had faced in the crisis, Kennedy and Khrushchev developed a measure of mutual trust. They negotiated a limited nuclear test ban treaty and installed a hotline ensuring that misinterpreted signals or errors would not ignite a nuclear war.

This successful diplomacy did have one long-term cost — in 1964, hard-liners in the Kremlin deposed Khrushchev, in part because of the perception he had backed down in the missile crisis. That consequence reinforced the importance of letting the opposition save face, lest a deal create political problems at home.

These episodes reinforce for policymakers today Winston S. Churchill’s reminder that “jaw jaw is better than war war.” But their lessons tell us even more. Kennan championed a particular type of diplomacy — patient talks by experienced diplomats familiar with the language, history and culture of their opponents. Negotiators needed to be able to pick up on the subtle signals and gestures from the other side as well as grasping their imperfectly articulated fears and desires. Diplomats had to enter the conference room cognizant of their opponents’ long-term resentments and bottom-line aspirations. Secrecy was necessary to make concessions more palatable and politically achievable.

That philosophy offers much in the way of counsel for addressing China and Russia. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Kennan cautioned that expanding NATO eastward could spark a conflict like the current war between Russia and Ukraine. Having suffered multiple invasions, Russia remained fearful of foreign troops and alliances on or near its border. Kennan insisted that the Russians, despite their suspicions, ideology and bluster, remained human beings susceptible to feelings of pride and humiliation. They suffered from a persistent inferiority complex and resented American success while disdaining the United States’ supposed decadence.

Such insight into the Russian worldview and fears could help guide American diplomats today. The steady escalation of U.S. and NATO military aid to Ukraine has heightened the risk of a war with Russia, but it has also given Washington and its allies leverage in Kyiv. With absolute victory by either Russia or Ukraine unlikely, both sides need to save face to avoid a potentially catastrophic outcome.

The United States and its allies can acknowledge and seek to alleviate Russian complaints about their security concerns being ignored without endorsing these claims. A Russian military withdrawal coupled with genuine autonomy for Ukraine’s eastern, Russian-speaking regions, for example, might work. An internationally supervised referendum in Crimea might also be possible. Both solutions would aim to address the Russian fears that Kennan identified decades ago — and which persist today.

Similarly, the United States has adopted a hawkish posture toward China as it scrambles to lessen American economic and technological dependence on its rival while bolstering Taiwan. A top U.S. Air Force general recently predicted in a memo to the troops under his command that the two nations could be at war within two years. In the early 1950s, similar statements by Americans of inevitable war or of preemptive war with the Soviet Union heightened perceptions of peril.

But the lesson of Kennan’s career is that this bellicose rhetoric will be far less effective than quiet, hardheaded, informed diplomacy that accounts for Chinese fears and ambitions, deals with Chinese negotiators on a human level and demonstrates respect for China’s accomplishments. The United States canceled Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s visit to China because of the spy balloon discovered over the United States. But rescheduling that meeting can help ensure that conflicts over Taiwan and economic and technological competition do not grow into something more dangerous. There is also room for cooperation on climate change, nuclear proliferation and other common concerns that could benefit both sides and create momentum and trust necessary to make headway in the most perilous areas.

While diplomacy offers no abracadabra waving of the wand, it can offer an escape from Armageddon. Indeed, in view of the tectonic tensions building from China’s aspirations grinding against America’s predominance, diplomacy offers the only safe way forward. As Kennan liked to point out, seemingly irreconcilable positions were only the asking price. Patient bargaining can often yield a compromise not apparent at the outset, saving the world from disastrous wars that no one wants.

### Neg---Arms Control CP

#### Given that current arms control arrangements are unsuccessful and expiring in the status quo, many scholars are demanding novel approaches that rely on incrementalism, ensuring that the CP is able to link less to any DAs about the perception of U.S. weakness.

Lynn Rusten & Mark Melamed 23, Vice President of the Global Nuclear Policy Program at the Nuclear Threat Initiative, former Senior Deputy for Arms Control and Nonproliferation at the U.S. National Security Council; Deputy Vice President of the Global Nuclear Policy Program at the Nuclear Threat Initiative, former Director of Arms Control at the U.S. National Security Council, “The Three-Competitor Future: U.S. Arms Control With Russia and China,” Arms Control Association, March 2023, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2023-03/features/three-competitor-future-us-arms-control-russia-china

Instead of resigning itself to or embracing an accelerated three-party arms race, the United States should recommit to efforts to mutually constrain the nuclear arsenals of its competitors and to strengthen strategic stability in an increasingly complex security environment. This effort will require elements of continuity and new approaches.

China has resisted proposals to join U.S.-Russian arms control negotiations. Nevertheless, the complexities of an emerging nuclear order in which China, Russia, and the United States will become near peers demand continued efforts to expand multilateral efforts to manage nuclear risks. In recent years, China has been more open to engagement through the P5 process, involving the five nuclear-weapon states recognized under the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). The United States should explore opportunities for broader and deeper engagement in that channel.

China’s embrace of a January 2022 statement, issued with France, Russia, the UK, and the United States and asserting that a “nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought,” should be welcomed as an opening for deeper engagement. The nuclear-weapon states should build on the statement, which also said, “We each intend to maintain and further strengthen our national measures to prevent unauthorized or unintended use of nuclear weapons,” by considering a regular exchange of information on what each country is doing to strengthen such national measures. This could include commitments to undertake internal nuclear failsafe reviews, as the United States is now doing. Such reviews, which would be carried out independently by each nuclear-weapon state, would identify measures to strengthen safeguards against the unauthorized, inadvertent, or mistaken use of a nuclear weapon, including through false warning of an attack.

The United States also should explore the possibility of a modest trilateral Chinese-Russian-U.S. dialogue on nuclear risk reduction. Notwithstanding statements from Beijing and Moscow about the strength of their partnership and cooperation, Chinese concern about possible Russian use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine is evident. One sign came in November 2022 after Russian President Vladimir Putin made a thinly veiled nuclear threat and Chinese President Xi Jinping issued a public admonition that the international community should “jointly oppose the use of, or threats to use, nuclear weapons.” Although China stonewalled the Trump administration’s efforts to launch a formal trilateral arms control process, it is worth exploring whether the heightened tensions of the past year could provide an opening for engagement on a modest risk reduction agenda.

There are other important issues at the intersection of evolving technologies and nuclear risk to be explored bilaterally and multilaterally. Understanding and mitigating cyberrisks to nuclear command and control and warning systems are critical. Russia and the United States are probably best equipped to begin this dialogue on a bilateral basis and to develop norms and rules of the road, but China should be encouraged to join as soon as possible. Similarly, military activities in space and the risk and benefits of artificial intelligence are ripe for inclusion in a wide-ranging and in-depth strategic stability dialogue with China and Russia, among others.

#### Furthermore, many argue that negotiating from a position of strong nuclear posture is necessary to induce compliance in our adversaries, making the debate over what makes for effective arms control negotiations one that is well-covered in topic literature.

John Maurer 20, Jeane Kirkpatrick Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, “For Peace, America Must Negotiate From Strength,” Real Clear Defense, 06-17-2020, https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2020/06/17/for\_peace\_america\_must\_negotiate\_from\_strength\_115386.html

In an era of global pandemic, economic downturn, and social unrest, a growing chorus of voices is advising Congress to reduce spending on nuclear modernization in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021. This advice is misguided. In order to build a new arms control framework, the United States must negotiate from a position of strength. Slowing nuclear modernization would end any hope for arms control, even as the United States is pursuing new negotiations aimed at curbing competition between the United States, Russia, and China. Only a commitment to modernization of American nuclear forces will bring adversaries to engage in serious discussions about long-term nuclear restraint. In the meantime, the United States should take sensible steps to slow the growth of adversary forces, including extending the New START treaty with Russia, which further reduces and limits strategic offensive arms (including ICBMs, SLBMs, nuclear equipped-heavy bombers, and nuclear warheads).

Historically, arms control negotiations between the great powers have always been linked to a strong American military. The early Cold War was not a fruitful period for arms control, but as the Soviet and American nuclear arsenals approached numerical parity, an opportunity for serious negotiations arose in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT). The American nuclear modernization program played a clear role in instigating negotiations. Soviet negotiators were determined to limit the expansion of the American missile defense program begun in the Johnson and Nixon administrations. The result was the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and Interim Agreement on Offensive Forces. These agreements headed off a race for missile defenses, while also shifting competition into the realm of qualitative weapons improvement where the United States could overmatch the Soviet Union through superior technology.

After years of false starts to limit medium- and intermediate-range missiles, the United States and the Soviet Union began serious negotiations only after the United States deployed a new generation of advanced intermediate-range missiles in the early 1980s. These missiles served as an explicit bargaining chip to convince the Soviets to limit their own arsenal. The Soviets responded negatively to what they called nuclear blackmail, but after American missiles were deployed, Soviet leaders returned to the negotiating table to hammer out an agreement. Under the resulting 1987 Treaty on Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF Treaty), the superpowers agreed to dismantle all of their land-based intermediate-range missiles, while allowing the United States to retain its sea- and air-based capabilities.

Talks on strategic offensive weapons were also stalled by the early 1980s, as the United States and the Soviet Union struggled to reduce their arsenals of long-range missiles in a transparent way. In an effort to break the deadlock, the United States deployed a new generation of intercontinental ballistic missiles to pressure the Soviets into making real concessions. The deployment of the new Missile Experimental (MX) helped bring about the hoped-for Soviet concessions, leading to the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I).

Recognizing the historical importance of a strong defense program to achieve arms control goals provides important guidance for the present. Progress in arms control requires continued investment in American nuclear forces, without which rivals will have no incentive to negotiate seriously. In previous cases, real progress in negotiations occurred only after the United States had deployed real capabilities. Congress must resist the temptation to make unilateral cuts in American nuclear forces in the naïve hopes of generating reciprocal restraint from great power rivals.

Arms control is a long game. American leaders should acknowledge that future arms control talks will take time. Progress on arms limitation will only occur once the current phase of American strategic nuclear modernization matures — a process that will take years. Any realistic strategy for future arms control must be a long-term strategy to shape adversary behavior over the coming decade, not the coming year. This makes it all the more imperative that the United States retain what advantage it can from existing arms control arrangements like New START. Extending New START is not an alternative to progress on future arms control agreements, but rather a natural complement to a long-term strategy of great power arms limitation.

The United States’ long history of successful arms control negotiations offers hope for future success in this era of renewed great power competition. Though it may seem counterintuitive, history shows that only through strength can we hope to persuade our competitors to agree to meaningful arms control measures. As they hammer out the 2021 NDAA, the president and Congress should work closely together to ensure that the United States has the robust and well-funded nuclear forces it needs to bring Russia and China to the table. Rapid nuclear modernization is the key to future arms control success.

#### Arms Control Agreement CPs are very competitive against topical affs since many argue that negotiating from a position of strong nuclear posture is necessary to induce compliance in our adversaries, making the debate over what makes for effective arms control negotiations one that is well-covered in topic literature.

John Maurer 20, Jeane Kirkpatrick Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, “For Peace, America Must Negotiate From Strength,” Real Clear Defense, 06-17-2020, wehttps://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2020/06/17/for\_peace\_america\_must\_negotiate\_from\_strength\_115386.html

In an era of global pandemic, economic downturn, and social unrest, a growing chorus of voices is advising Congress to reduce spending on nuclear modernization in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021. This advice is misguided. In order to build a new arms control framework, the United States must negotiate from a position of strength. Slowing nuclear modernization would end any hope for arms control, even as the United States is pursuing new negotiations aimed at curbing competition between the United States, Russia, and China. Only a commitment to modernization of American nuclear forces will bring adversaries to engage in serious discussions about long-term nuclear restraint. In the meantime, the United States should take sensible steps to slow the growth of adversary forces, including extending the New START treaty with Russia, which further reduces and limits strategic offensive arms (including ICBMs, SLBMs, nuclear equipped-heavy bombers, and nuclear warheads).

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#### Now is a unique time for arms control---New START is functionally useless and expires in 2026, so negotiating a new deal can create international buy-in.

Amy J. Nelson & Michael O’Hanlon 23, David M. Rubenstein Fellow at the Brookings Institution Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology, Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley; Senior Fellow and Director of Research in Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution, Ph.D. in Public and International Affairs from Princeton University, “All START: a proposal for moving beyond US-Russia arms control,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 03-16-2023, https://thebulletin.org/2023/03/all-start-a-proposal-for-moving-beyond-us-russia-arms-control

Vladimir Putin’s decision to suspend Russia’s ongoing participation in the New START nuclear arms control agreement is hardly good news. Not only does it represent one more step in the deterioration of broader U.S.-Russia relations, it also undoes the solitary remaining link between the countries in the modern network of arms control treaties that has kept some constraints on their military competition in strategic domains in recent decades.

With that said, and although he certainly meant it as no favor to the United States, President Putin’s decision in February to suspend (but not annul) Russia’s participation in New START may serve a higher purpose, nonetheless.

The arms control void created by a recent pattern of treaty violations, withdrawals, and suspensions creates opportunities for creative thought about what if anything should replace New START when it definitively expires in 2026, including especially the particularly thorny issue of bringing China’s nuclear arsenal into an arms control regime. China has an arsenal that is currently dwarfed in size by the United States’ and Russia’s but seems likely, according to many Western projections, to grow significantly in the next decade. Numerous efforts to “include” China and its arsenal in legally binding arms control treaties have cropped up in recent years, ranging from the dramatic charade of awaiting a Chinese delegation that had not accepted an invitation to US-Russia arms control negotiations in Vienna, Austria to quieter efforts to build capacity for onsite inspections that would necessarily accompany China’s participation in any treaty.

As an alternative to bringing China into existing bilateral treaties, we propose a new strategic framework that would broaden participation in arms control and provide mechanisms to include all five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (the P-5), with China, Britain, and France joining the United States and Russia in a future accord. Let the brainstorming about the best name for such an accord begin—but one starting point might be to call it “All START,” to underscore that it would include all states that legitimately possess nuclear weapons under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Indeed, it could eventually even include Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea, countries that have refrained from or withdrawn from the NPT, which codifies the division between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states. Additionally, even though bilateral strategic nuclear arms limitation treaties have traditionally been of finite (and relatively short) durations, this should be an accord of unlimited duration to avoid the requirement to renegotiate at regular intervals when geopolitics may not be conducive.

To achieve its inclusive purpose, All START would de-emphasize quantitative arms limits without jettisoning them entirely. Limits on nuclear warheads and delivery devices, like those obtained under New START, would remain in place for Russia and the United States. The remaining countries would submit information on their own plans for nuclear arsenal modernization and nuclear force deployments. But in the new format, the main obligations of China, the UK, and France would be to accept the transparency and monitoring provisions that are at the heart of modern strategic arms control—and that remain useful even in an era when numerical limitations may now make less sense for many reasons.[i]

An All START accord would continue to emphasize the traditional goals of arms control as first underscored by Thomas Schelling and Morton Halperin in 1961—to reduce the chances of war, to reduce the damage of war should it occur anyway, and to reduce the costs of preparing for possible war. But it would do this through transparency that lowers uncertainty about capabilities and intentions. As such, it would emphasize managing uncertainty as a central purpose of modern arms control, with less devotion to the cause of numerical decline in the size of arsenals.

Time to move beyond bilateral nuclear arms control. Signed by US President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in 2010, the New START accord—a successor to the SALT agreements under US Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter of the Cold War and the START treaties under President George H.W. Bush—has been useful since its entry into force in 2011. New START limits long-range nuclear warheads that can be mounted on land- and submarine-based missiles and heavy bombers to 1,550 for each side–still several times what would be needed to destroy Russian and American society. But those numbers are 80 percent lower than Cold War levels. Not only has New START reduced the risk of a nuclear accident simply by reducing the number of devices in which such an accident could occur, it has also meant that Russia and the United States saved a lot of money compared to what they might otherwise spend on an unconstrained nuclear arms race. Additionally, through on-site inspections and data exchanges, New START has also fostered transparency and confidence-building—easing fears that either side might be planning a surprise buildup or even nuclear first strike against the other.

Except, of course, that Russia is now suspending those stabilizing measures.

But even without the latest shenanigans from Moscow, New START had become dated. Though it is a much-evolved version of earlier bilateral nuclear limitation agreements, it adheres too closely to the original formula to maintain long-term relevance in an increasingly complex strategic environment. Specifically, limitations on shorter-range or tactical nuclear weapons, where Russia has had a lead, were left for a successor agreement. Likewise, long-range precision-strike conventional weapons, where the United States generally sets the pace, were left for a future negotiation. Same for Putin’s Dr. No-like dream weapons, including silly contraptions without an obvious mission like intercontinental nuclear-armed torpedoes.

Most of all, New START leaves out China—a country that, after decades of being content to marshal nuclear forces less than a tenth the size of the US arsenal, now appears bent on owning 1,500 of its own nuclear warheads by 2035, according to the Pentagon’s latest assessments. The existing treaty also offers no sufficient incentive for Beijing to join. Now is a particularly opportune time for new ideas for bringing China into an arms control agreement. Even though China’s arsenal would likely remain no more than a third of our own arsenal’s size, in a world where Moscow and Beijing increasingly collaborate strategically, such a force level could no longer be considered negligible.

Why not bring China into the existing treaty? Early approaches to China’s nuclear arsenal and its challenge for arms control consisted of repeatedly asking China to join an existing or future arms treaty to, for example, cap its buildup at 1,000 to 1,500 warheads. That number would be several times the size of China’s arsenal today, but remain far below US levels, so, from the Western point of view, it seems reasonable. But unfortunately such a prospect never proved sufficiently enticing to Beijing. Additionally, Putin has called for a return to something like Cold War blocs by requesting that British/French nuclear strength of about 500 warheads be factored in alongside US strategic forces. Combined with US warheads, the British and French contributions could sustain a rough parity between the Western alliance system and the China-Russia “axis.”

Of course, there are several problems with this approach. Not only is China entirely uninterested in this or any other kind of formal arms control at present, Beijing may also feel it may need to grow its arsenal in the near future. If, for example, the United States tries to invoke nuclear superiority in a future Taiwan crisis upon deciding it can no longer count on just conventional military forces to protect the island, China may wish to checkmate that capacity by growing its arsenal to a size that approaches nuclear parity with the United States. Second, and in fairness to Beijing, China is probably tired of getting harangued for its supposedly aggressive nuclear behavior after more than half a century of considerable restraint. If entering arms control talks would subject the China to more criticism of this ilk, China may understandably have little interest.

Third comes a problem for the United States: Even if this kind of accord maintained a certain parity between “East” and “West” today, it would favor Chinese and Russian forces numerically in the long run (since Britain and France have no intentions of building up their own forces). Such an agreement could place the US at a numerical disadvantage and override potential US benefits from the treaty. Finally, such an approach risks pushing Beijing and Moscow even further together through the structure of future arms control accords, when the real US strategic goal should be the Nixonian one of eventually driving them apart.

Our new approach. The right approach taken for a future arms treaty must not to leave China out, yet not bring it in as part of the same bloc as Russia, either. A more creative third way is the approach needed.

Such an approach has many benefits. First, it reduces the uncertainty that drives aggressive behaviors like arms buildups. Should China, along with Britain and France, join the United States and Russia in a formal treaty that mandates verification measures, data exchanges, and consultations, it would foster transparency and reduce uncertainty. This could be a potentially more enticing and feasible negotiation agenda than imposing limits on the new participants.

This new approach would include treaty-based mechanisms to discourage big nuclear buildups—but without formal numerical constraints on China, France, or Britain. The three new participants would be asked to declare, as with the Paris climate-change convention, their nuclear goals for the future. Such declarations would be non-binding, in the sense that they could be modified. But all participants would be subject to inspection and assessments of compliance. They would also be expected to explain and defend their plans for nuclear modernization or expansion. These would be the new and unequivocal requirements for being a “responsible nuclear power.”

The larger logic of All START. All START would not by itself make the world a calm and safe place. No arms control treaty can do this. That is not, nor was it ever, the purpose of arms control. We know enough about the proper aspirations for any arms control regimen by this point to know full well that no technocratic arms control regimen can override or supersede the fundamental problems of international security and global order. The better part of arms-control wisdom is to keep goals in line with political reality.

So, the treaty we propose would neither attempt to curtail all nuclear competition, nor ban some degree of Chinese expansion of its arsenal, nor curb whatever plans the French and British may devise for the future of their arsenals. To attempt as much would be to run at crosscurrents with the prevailing forces and dynamics of today’s great-power relations. Arms control will still be useful under this new architecture—it will just look a little different. Or at least begin a little differently, inverting the process by seeking transparency en route to reductions, rather than transparency for the purpose of verifying reductions.

This approach is less of a departure from “traditional” arms control treaties than it may seem. Arms control is increasingly valuable for the information it provides, and treaties have grown in breadth to include multiple methods of providing information even since SALT I, which relied on national technical means (spy satellites) exclusively.

The treaty we propose could clearly state that by 2030, the onus would be on any country considering a nuclear buildup to justify to the other parties and the world why such an expansion is necessary. Such moral suasion is admittedly not always an adequate tool for limiting the assertive behaviors of nations. But if it did not suffice to limit nuclear arms racing, the other parties would retain the right to withdraw from the treaty framework. Moreover, any willingness by Moscow and Washington to agree, in this or a future accord, to further nuclear cuts would naturally depend in large part on the nuclear expansion efforts of China. That understanding would create at least some implicit leverage to employ with Beijing as well as Moscow.

Further, rather than a numerical limitation treaty of limited duration, this agreement ought to be one of unlimited duration, with provisions for flexibility and adaptation, including a consultative body and a mechanism for including additional members. The flexibility should afford consideration of novel technologies of relevance in the future, as needed. Since these technologies would not necessarily have to be limited or banned, the new treaty framework could aim for the more realistic and still desirable goal of ensuring transparency, such that new technologies do not generate fears of disarming first strikes or other paths towards greater crisis instability in the relations among the world’s nuclear powers. The hope is that, at a more conducive time, reductions and possibly even a missile defense-related declarations could follow.

This arms control framework would be a long-term means of managing uncertainty and enhancing transparency in the nuclear competition, while also keeping at least some lid on the cost of any multi-party nuclear arms race. We know information about nuclear arsenals has high value. This is a tried and tested truth. The proposed approach simply leverages what had become self-evident.

Given the state of great-power relations today, this kind of accord may well not prove negotiable for some time. However, in light of the current eroded state of the international arms control architecture, we are already overdue for a conceptual debate about how to think about the future of arms control once that is again possible. Perhaps Putin has just reminded us to get on with it.

#### CP that negotiates US force reductions and/or nuclear transparency with Russia and China.

Brad Roberts 21, Director of the Center for Global Security Research at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy in the U.S. Department of Defense, Ph.D. in International Relations from Erasmus University, “Orienting the 2021 Nuclear Posture Review,” The Washington Quarterly, Vol. 44, No. 2, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2021.1933740

This catalogue of rising nuclear dangers is rich in problems with difficult, unresolved political disputes at their core, presenting both opportunities and challenges for US nuclear diplomacy.

The Biden administration’s commitment to “engage in meaningful dialogue with Russia and China on … strategic stability”Footnote8 is a worthy starting point for renewed US diplomatic engagement. But the target has proven elusive—repeatedly. Dialogue with Russia has been episodic and unrewarding; Russia has embraced such dialogues as an opportunity to repeat its large catalogue of complaints about the United States, while rebuffing US counterarguments. China has rejected such dialogues as unhelpfully violating its sense of the necessary opacity in its strategic capabilities and intentions.Footnote9 Neither credits the United States with a sincere interest in stability, other than “absolute security” (by which they mean US freedom from attack and freedom to attack). Neither seeks to assuage US concerns about mounting nuclear dangers and risks, as they prize those concerns as sources of US restraint.

With the arrival of a new administration in Washington, the time is ripe to try again at Track 1 (official level) and also to get more out of Track 1.5 (unofficial). The challenge will be to overcome legacy concepts and approaches to try to find new clarity and possibly some common ground. In the US-Russia dimension, US thinking must catch up to the increasingly asymmetric strategic postures (nuclear and otherwise) of the two. In the US-China dimension, US thinking must catch up with China’s emergence as a near-peer at the strategic level (as defined in qualitative, not quantitative terms). In both strategic relationships, US thinking must catch up with new nuclear instabilities at the regional level of war.

An important question for strategic stability dialogue attaches to the potential value of a restatement of the joint Reagan-Gorbachev statement that nuclear wars cannot be won and thus must not be fought.Footnote10 The Biden administration should seek such a statement. But a too-hasty success could raise as many questions as it answers, given evidence suggesting that Russian military planners may believe that regional nuclear wars can be fought and won because such wars can be kept limited.Footnote11 To have a significant impact on perceptions of nuclear risk, such a declaration should result from, rather than precede, sustained, substantive, and high-level dialogue.

There has been some convergence in US and Russian thinking

The administration’s commitment to pursue new arms control agreements also makes good sense at a time of rising nuclear dangers. But here, too, the objective remains elusive. For a decade, the United States and Russia have been far apart on the essential elements of a follow-on to New START. Russia seeks a grand bargain based on a “new security equation” encompassing all strategically relevant offensive and defensive capabilities. The United States seeks nuclear predictability and reductions and to maintain the flexibility to adapt its deterrent to meet the challenges presented by North Korea and potentially by other nuclear-armed regional challengers. This divergence reflects the different responses of the United States and Russia to a multipolar security environment. There is not much middle ground here.

But relative to a decade ago, there has been some convergence of US and Russian thinking around views of the strategic military relationship as adversarial and of strategic stability as increasingly troubled by the offense/defense part of the equation. At a minimum, this convergence may make possible a new deal that provides transparency and predictability, though not reductions. It may also make possible new forms of informal measures establishing norms bearing on the introduction of new technologies into the strategic forces of both countries (and China). Something more ambitious would probably require a US willingness to accept binding legal restraints on future missile defenses (another topic where legacy thinking needs to be revisited).Footnote12

The administration’s commitment to renew its leadership of nonproliferation can be helpful in advancing multiple objectives, including renewing high-level efforts to promote nuclear materials safety and security as well as restoring US participation in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran. But here too, success has proven difficult. Part of the problem is the emergence of a set of problems for which US power is insufficient—for example, the DPRK nuclear issue. Part of the problem is the emergence of competitors pushing their own political agendas—for example, the coalition of states and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supporting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW, the so-called ban treaty). Part of the problem may be an over-reliance by the United States on leadership by example with actions that are sometimes dismissed as empty gestures. The experience of the Obama administration is salutary. Having taken many steps to demonstrate leadership by example with various forms of nuclear restraint and transparency, it could not lead key stakeholders away from what became the “international humanitarian consequences movement” and then the ban treaty.

With challenges so numerous, it is necessary to set some priorities. Faced with similar circumstances a dozen years ago, the Obama administration settled on a two-step approach. Step one involved focusing on New START, material security, and the NPT review process. Step two involved processes aimed at creating the conditions that would allow the United States to take additional steps at a later time to reduce the number and roles of nuclear weapons and to enable other nuclear-armed states to safely join in the process.Footnote13 Think of these possible additional future steps as stretch goals.

The Biden administration has already taken its own version of step one. It has settled on New START extension and renewal of the JCPOA and of the materials “lock down” process as first priorities for its nuclear diplomacy. What stretch goals might it consider? On strategic stability, a valuable stretch goal would be the beginning of a trilateral US-Russia-China dialogue. On arms control, a valuable stretch goal would be Chinese nuclear transparency consistent with the practices of the other four permanent members of the UN Security Council. On nonproliferation, a valuable stretch goal would be agreement at a conceptual level to the main elements of a comprehensive disarmament regimeFootnote14 and to the conditions that would have to be created to make it possible. Success in achieving any of these goals is unlikely, but not implausible—and the value for nuclear risk reduction could be significant.

#### Arms control is unique now because of Ukraine and new force modernizations, and it has empirically resulted in force reductions in other areas.

David Cortright 22, Professor Emeritus of the Practice at the University of Notre Dame Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, M.A. in History from New York University, “A nuclear reckoning,” Peace & Change: A Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 47, No. 3, July 2022, https://doi.org/10.1111/pech.12550

Russia has used the threat of nuclear annihilation to advance its war of aggression in Ukraine. As he launched his invasion in February 2022, Vladimir Putin ordered senior military officials to move Russia's nuclear forces “to a special regime of combat duty.” Days earlier, he warned that if Western powers intervene in Ukraine, “Russia will respond immediately, and the consequences will be such as you have never seen in your entire history.”

Russia's nuclear saber rattling prompted United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres to declare in March that nuclear war between Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is now “within the realm of possibility.” Putin's decision to raise the alert status of Russia's strategic forces increases the risk of nuclear weapons’ use through miscalculation or accident. It opens the way to a possible worst-case scenario in which Putin, faced with military reversals in Ukraine, is tempted to lash out with a tactical nuclear weapons strike, which could escalate to wider nuclear exchanges. A June 1, 2022, editorial in Scientific American notes a study by researchers at Princeton University that limited tactical strikes could quickly escalate to allout nuclear war, killing tens of millions of people.

Even without the actual use of these weapons, nuclear threats are playing a role in supporting Russia's assault. In April, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told Russian television that NATO is waging a proxy war against Russia and warned that weapon shipments to Ukraine are “a legitimate target” for attack. He added that the risk of nuclear war is “serious,” “real,” and “cannot be underestimated.”

These developments shatter the belief among military strategists that nuclear deterrence helps to prevent war and preserve peace and stability. The presence of nuclear weapons may reduce the risk of direct war between the US and Russia, although even that is uncertain now, but nuclear deterrence has not prevented other forms of war, which have continued throughout the nuclear age. The Ukraine crisis shows that nuclear weapon states can use their arsenals as a shield to carry out wars of intervention. Russia has brandished nuclear threats to deter NATO military involvement and to try to dissuade states from providing aid for Ukraine's defense.

Such threats represent a “new and sinister application for nuclear weapons,” writes former State Department and National Security Council official John Erath, “increasing their currency and motivating more governments to acquire them.” It is important to note that the United States also plays this deadly game, using the shield of nuclear deterrence to advance its strategic and military objectives. The former head of US Strategic Command in charge of all US nuclear weapons, Admiral Charles Richard, wrote in the Proceedings of the US Naval Institute last year, “we must acknowledge the foundational nature of our nation's strategic nuclear weapons, as they create the ‘maneuver space’ for us to project conventional military power strategically.” The admiral asserted that the US military should shift its principal assumption from “nuclear employment is not possible” to “nuclear employment is a very real possibility.” He argued that decision makers must be prepared to “act accordingly.”

Putin's war in Ukraine poses major challenges to the global nonproliferation agenda, which was already under severe strain before the crisis. North Korea continues its weapon development, India and Pakistan remain locked in a regional arms race, and Israel maintains its unacknowledged arsenal. The Trump administration turned its back on decades of arms control agreements and reneged on the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. The Biden administration has been unable to negotiate a renewal of the agreement, and Tehran has been proceeding with ever higher levels of uranium enrichment.

The major powers are upgrading their nuclear systems, with Russia developing new missiles, China building additional land-based missile silos, and the United States developing new long-range nuclear cruise missiles along with land-based missiles and missile-launching submarines. Nuclear dangers have increased around the world.

Under these circumstances, attempts to stem the spread of nuclear weapons, and to preserve the few arms control agreements that remain, are likely to become more difficult. The leaders of smaller states with potential nuclear capacity might look at these developments and plausibly conclude that the possession of nuclear weapons could save them from attack or political intimidation by more powerful states

Some argue that it was a mistake for Ukraine to sign the Budapest Memorandum in 1994 transferring to Russia the thousands of nuclear weapons that were on its soil after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Ukrainian authorities never had control over those weapons, however, and attempting to hold on to them would have created monumental problems for the fledgling Kiev government. The command-and-control and launch systems of the Soviet-era missiles and warheads always remained in the hands of Moscow.

The tragic irony in the Budapest agreement is that Moscow joined with Washington and London in pledging “to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine.” The parties offered to provide security assurances for Ukraine, but Putin long ago shredded that pledge and now threatens the country's very existence.

Ending this war is an imperative not only for the people of Ukraine but also for the fate of humankind. Progressive foreign policy groups such as Win Without War are urging stronger efforts to seek a diplomatic solution to the crisis. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke with his Russian counterpart General Sergey Shoigu on May 13 and urged an immediate ceasefire. So far, there is no sign of Russian forces relenting in their drive to dominate eastern Ukraine, but it is important to maintain channels of communication. In April, the New York Times editorialized in favor of offering sanctions relief as a way of incentivizing Moscow to consider a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Russian troops.

The diplomatic strategy for ending the war should include a resumption of the dual-track negotiations that took place in the weeks prior to the invasion. During those talks, Russian diplomats met with officials from Ukraine, Germany, and France to address border issues in Eastern Ukraine within the framework of the Minsk accords. Moscow held parallel talks with Washington on arms control and strategic stability issues. Those discussions began in 2021 and intensified in the weeks before the invasion. Among the topics under consideration were NATO expansion, limits on intermediate nuclear forces in Europe, and future strategic arms reduction talks. During these discussions, Moscow offered draft treaties to update and replace the agreements that were reached at the end of the Cold War.

In the late 1980s, nuclear negotiations served as a venue for broader strategic realignment between East and West. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (1987) eliminated all medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe and dramatically improved political relations between Washington and Moscow. This led to the negotiation of additional major treaties limiting conventional military forces in Europe and sharply reducing strategic nuclear arsenals. Arms control served as the political framework for ending the Cold War, and it created a pathway for achieving greater international security.

However the Ukraine war ends, this crisis demands a fundamental reckoning with the role of nuclear weapons in international policy. The risk of these weapons being used is arguably greater now than during the Cuban missile crisis. The threat is existential.

We stand at the abyss, the nuclear nightmare humankind has feared since the dawn of the atomic age, a madman with the bomb—in this case, a despot in the Kremlin with thousands of bombs. The fate of the world is in the hands of a leader described by Russian specialists as unhinged, vengeful, and erratic. The disutility and horrors of nuclear deterrence are starkly revealed.

The greatest assurance against the danger we face is to end reliance on nuclear weaponry and negotiate for progressive nuclear disarmament. This means returning to the now largely abandoned agenda of eliminating nuclear weapons. The goal of a world free of nuclear weapons may seem distant now amidst the sorrows of war, but it is necessary to maintain that vision and attempt to move in that direction.

#### Russia says yes.

James E. Doyle 22, Nuclear Security Specialist, former Member of the Technical Staff in the Nonproliferation Division at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, “Building a nuclear off-ramp following the war in Ukraine,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Vol. 78, No. 4, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.2022.2087383

Russia’s proposals before the war included prohibitions on the deployment of missiles previously outlawed by the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. The treaty required the elimination of both ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers (310 and 3,418 miles) regardless of whether they carried nuclear or conventional warheads. The United States, citing long-standing Russian violations of the treaty, withdrew from the INF treaty in August 2019 (Bugos 2019). Russia also announced it is no longer bound by the treaty.

Russia has indicated its interest in renewing formal limitations on this category of weapons. Because they can strike deep into the opponent’s territory with little warning time, ballistic and cruise missile with these ranges are particularly destabilizing in Europe. Following the war in Ukraine, Russia is likely to remain open to formal limits on medium- and shorter-range missile systems. This is because, in the absence of such prohibitions, NATO nations such as Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia may indeed deploy missiles with these ranges, either purchased from the United States or another allied nation. There will be an outcry from these nations on NATO’s eastern flank that they need strengthened military capabilities in the wake of Russia’s attempt to destroy Ukrainian independence.

A new agreement could exclude limits on these categories of missiles in the Asian part of Russia and the United States. This caveat would address US complaints that China remains unconstrained in deploying mediumand short-range missiles and thus will benefit if the United States is banned from even possessing such systems. A new treaty prohibiting land-based missiles in the European region will be most effective if it addresses shorter-range systems such as Russia’s Iskander missile launchers that can fire both ballistic and cruise missiles. The Iskander system has been used against Ukraine and is deployed in Western Russia, Russia’s Kaliningrad enclave, Belarus, North Ossetia in Georgia, and Armenia.

### Neg---Arms Control CP---AT: Links to Net Benefit

#### No, it does not!

Daalder et al. 21, President of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, former U.S. Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Chuck Hagel, Member of the Board of Trustees of the RAND Corporation, former U.S. Secretary of Defense; Malcolm Rifkind, Visiting Professor at King’s College London, Senior Associate Fellow of the Royal United Services Institute, former United Kingdom Secretary of Defense; Kevin Rudd, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Asia Society, former Prime Minister of Australia, “Preventing Nuclear Proliferation and Reassuring America’s Allies,” Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 02-10-2021, https://globalaffairs.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/report\_preventing-nuclear-proliferation-reassuring-americas-allies\_0.pdf

For more than 50 years, America’s security alliances have been critical to ensuring the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons. By extending the nuclear umbrella to defend its allies in Europe and Asia, the United States ensured their security against nuclear attack and intimidation and removed any perceived need on their part to acquire a nuclear capability. However, the security climate confronting allies is changing rapidly, as Russia moves aggressively to exert its influence, China grows ever bolder and more ambitious in its global reach, North Korea expands its growing nuclear and missile capabilities, and a politically divided America raises questions about the future of its global engagement. Confronted with these changing circumstances, US allies face growing uncertainty about the long-term viability of their alliances with the United States and are beginning to assess the possibility of alternative security arrangements, including regarding the nuclear dimension.

The Biden administration has made rebuilding America’s alliances a fundamental priority from the moment it takes office. Reaffirming collective defense commitments in Europe and Asia is a necessary and welcome step. But it will take more than presidential words to rebuild alliances. It will require transforming relationships in more fundamental ways—including bolstering deterrence and defense capabilities all around, bringing European and Asian allies into US nuclear planning processes, and expanding arms control efforts that involve not just Russia but also, and especially, China. This is hardly an impossible agenda; but its urgency is underscored by the reality that without rebuilding the alliance structures that have provided the foundation of security in Europe and Asia, the question of nuclear proliferation among allies could once again emerge on the agenda.

#### Failure to lead on arms control lets Russia win at the expense of American credibility.

Heather Williams 23, Director of the Project on Nuclear Issues and Senior Fellow in the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Ph.D. in War Studies from King’s College London, “American arms control leadership: What now?”, The Hill, 03-01-2023, https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/3879728-american-arms-control-leadership-what-now

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced on Feb. 21 he was suspending Russia’s participation in the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START). The suspension jeopardizes the existing arms control agenda, along with potentially increasing nuclear risks amidst the war in Ukraine. But it also presents the Biden administration with a difficult challenge: How can America lead on arms control and reduce nuclear risks when there is no arms control to be had?

At first glance, it would seem the Biden administration has backed itself into a corner. It has so fully committed to advancing arms control that to back off now, despite Russia’s aggression and China’s reticence, would risk a loss of credibility with the wider international community, to include among many allies and non-nuclear weapon states invested in the future of nuclear arms control and disarmament. Since Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the slow breakdown in dialogue, the United States has nonetheless maintained a commitment to advancing arms control initiatives.

Initially, the administration offered a bold statement and vision in its 2021 Interim National Security Guidance, stating, “We will head off costly arms races and re-establish our credibility as a leader in arms control.” This language was more nuanced in the October 2022 Nuclear Posture Review, which pledged, “a renewed emphasis on arms control, non-proliferation, and risk reduction to strengthen stability, head off costly arms races, and signal our desire to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons globally.” Pursuing even this more modest agenda faces at least three major challenges.

First, and most obviously, arms control partners are in short supply. Not only has Russia suspended participation in one of the last remaining agreements, but it also has a dismal track record of non-compliance with previous arms control agreements, such as the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Additionally, China has continued to resist overtures to engage in bilateral arms control and continues to quantitatively and qualitatively expand its nuclear arsenal.

The second challenge is internal: Any future arms control treaties would require the advice and consent of two-thirds of the U.S. Senate. Given current domestic polarization, along with a potential hawkish consensus within Congress, support for arms control could be perceived as foreign policy weakness. Russia’s suspension of New START has already prompted calls for the United States to withdraw from the treaty. In short, arms control does not have clear domestic support, though obviously it would depend on the details of any future agreement.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly at present, America must walk a delicate balance between leading on arms control and assuring allies of its commitment to their security. This is not a new challenge: During the Cold War, for example, President Reagan not only had to negotiate with President of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev but also had to reassure Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Margaret Thatcher and other NATO leaders to ensure any arms control agreements did not directly or indirectly undermine their security. Many of these allies’ concerns are political, whereby they fear cooperating with Russia on arms control could equate to a softening in U.S. resolve. The Biden administration cannot afford to be seen as jeopardizing credibility with allies at this moment.

Here it is important to clarify what arms control is and what it is not. Arms control is not a gift. Arms control is not disarmament, nor is it necessarily legally binding treaties with competitors. Arms control is neither Republican nor Democrat, neither hawkish nor dovish. Arms control, at its best, works in tandem with deterrence to strengthen strategic stability. In a recent event at Brookings, Mallory Stewart, assistant secretary of State for the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, noted, “Arms control is a tool. You can’t kill it.”

Arms control can be in the U.S. national interest. Historically, this entailed strengthening strategic stability to reduce risks of arms racing and crisis escalation. But now, arms control can play a more ambitious role by advancing America’s role in the evolving competition with Russia and China for influence in the world order. A broader approach to arms control — working in tandem with deterrence and as an enduring tool for security — offers a way ahead for the administration on arms control leadership while concurrently standing up to Russian aggression and bullying. Rather than begging Moscow to return to arms control is not an option or making unilateral cuts, the administration should focus on building partner coalitions for multilateral risk reduction efforts that strengthen America’s and allies’ security and are in the national interest.

To some extent, this work has already begun. In one recent example, in April 2022 the United States announced a ban on anti-satellite testing, which was subsequently picked up by like-minded states and was passed as a United Nations General Assembly Resolution in December 2022 with the support of 155 countries. And on Feb. 16, the Biden administration launched an initiative on responsible behavior in artificial intelligence, to include human control in nuclear decision-making. This announcement five days before Russia’s suspension of New START was a stark juxtaposition between Moscow and Washington’s commitments to risk reduction. While these initiatives may not appear as ambitious as dramatic reductions in nuclear arsenals, they work to lay the groundwork for a new nuclear order that will emerge in the aftermath of the war in Ukraine. The Biden administration is wise to differentiate itself from Putin in shaping that new order.

Arms control leadership in the current climate is nonetheless challenging for the administration. It must ensure any new initiatives work in tandem with the nuclear posture and partnership between the Departments of State and Defense. It must also ensure allies support these efforts and that arms control leadership does not undermine NATO unity or America’s credibility as a security guarantor.

In her exceptional 2022 Reith lecture, former White House national security official Fiona Hill outlined how Putin uses nuclear weapons to manipulate fear. She said, “He knows how to deploy fear for maximum effect. Putin has long threatened to play the nuclear card, because he knows the psychological impact it has and the sense of helplessness and hopelessness it engenders.” Gathering like-minded states, strengthening alliances and developing new ways to reduce nuclear risks are just a handful of the many ways of standing up to the man in Moscow. Leading on arms control is an act of defiance in the face of Putin’s attempts to tear down the rules-based international order. Leading on arms control in the midst of a crisis is hardly reckless. Rather, it’s what responsible nuclear states do.

#### It substantially enhances our nuclear credibility in alliances.

Daalder et al. 21, President of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, former U.S. Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Chuck Hagel, Member of the Board of Trustees of the RAND Corporation, former U.S. Secretary of Defense; Malcolm Rifkind, Visiting Professor at King’s College London, Senior Associate Fellow of the Royal United Services Institute, former United Kingdom Secretary of Defense; Kevin Rudd, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Asia Society, former Prime Minister of Australia, “Preventing Nuclear Proliferation and Reassuring America’s Allies,” Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 02-10-2021, https://globalaffairs.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/report\_preventing-nuclear-proliferation-reassuring-americas-allies\_0.pdf

The biggest nuclear unknown is the scope and eventual scale of the Chinese nuclear deterrent forces. Over the past decade, Beijing has embarked on an extensive nuclear modernization program, including the deployment of mobile medium- and intermediate-range missiles and a new mobile launcher for long-range missiles. It has continued developing a new mobile, multiwarhead ICBM and a dual-capable air-launched ballistic missile—both primarily designed to penetrate US and regional missile defenses. All of these advancements point to an ambitious nuclear weapons program, though its exact scope and scale remain shrouded in secrecy.

Beijing has long adhered to a strategy of minimum nuclear deterrence and a strict no-first-use policy. Both policies comported with a country that for decades stood in the shadow of US global military power and even that of the Soviet Union and Russia. Today, however, China’s economic, political, and military power vastly outpace those of Russia and are approaching those of the United States. To retain a minimal nuclear-deterrent posture under these circumstances, though not impossible, would certainly represent an exception to its expansion of overall power.

The United States and its allies, therefore, have a powerful incentive to penetrate China’s nuclear opacity and get a greater insight into its capabilities. No doubt, significant intelligence resources are directed at finding out the true nature of Chinese nuclear capabilities. But arms control can also play a role in this effort, providing greater transparency about capabilities, an exchange of views on intentions, and enhanced stability in the overall nuclear relationship. Therefore, it makes sense to complement long-standing US-Russian arms control negotiations with talks involving the other recognized nuclear weapons states—China as well as France and the United Kingdom, which deploy forces of comparable size. This expanded arms control framework should include a multipronged effort:

* Following the welcome extension of New START, the United States and Russia should negotiate a new bilateral arms control agreement. Given the size of US and Russian nuclear arsenals relative to the other nuclear weapons states, a new agreement that would include further reductions and new systems is a crucial confidence-building measure as the United States begins discussions on pursuing a multilateral nuclear arms control agreement. Such a new agreement—which could cover all nuclear warheads, including those in storage, as well as novel nuclear delivery systems—would provide crucial reassurance to America’s allies.
* The five permanent members of the UN Security Council (P5) should engage in a strategic dialogue on nuclear weapons issues. The P5 bear a unique responsibility for international peace and security, not only as permanent members of the Security Council but as nuclear weapons states that under the NPT are committed to reducing their nuclear arsenals. They should meet at the earliest opportunity and agree to engage in a dialogue on strategic stability, the role of nuclear weapons, the relationship between offense and defense, the impact of new technologies, and other critical strategic issues.
* The P5 should negotiate nuclear confidence-building and transparency measures. The strategic dialogue should aim to facilitate the opening of talks on nuclear confidence-building measures, including data exchanges on weapons and weapons systems, notification of missile testing and nuclear exercises, and visits to nuclear facilities. As a first step, the United States and Russia could invite representatives of the other nuclear powers to observe inspections that both countries conduct as part of existing arms control obligations.
* Efforts to multilateralize nuclear arms control should place particular emphasis on engaging China. China has long maintained that it will not participate in arms control agreements until Russia and the United States have reduced their nuclear arsenals to levels comparable to that of its arsenal. However, China’s potential for vertical proliferation cannot be ignored. The United States must engage China in dialogue akin to the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks and consider allowing China to participate in New START monitoring as first steps. The ultimate goal would be to agree on force limitations at the lowest possible level for each country

A multilateral arms control framework could significantly enhance strategic stability and contribute to reassuring America’s European and Asian allies about the commitment of the nuclear powers to maintain global nuclear stability. It would also help reassure non-nuclear weapons states party to the NPT that the nuclear states are committed to taking concrete steps toward fulfilling their Article 6 agreements under the NPT.

#### Reinvigorating nonproliferation cooperation solves the reasons allies would proliferate.

Robert Einhorn 21, Senior Fellow in the Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Initiative and the Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology at the Brookings Institution, M.A. in Public Affairs and International Relations from the Princeton University Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, “Revitalizing nonproliferation cooperation with Russia and China,” Brookings Institution, 01-25-2021, https://www.brookings.edu/research/revitalizing-nonproliferation-cooperation-with-russia-and-china

At a time when U.S. nonproliferation cooperation with Russia and China has all but disappeared, challenges to the global nonproliferation regime appear to be growing.

With the JCPOA largely hollowed out and Iran rebuilding its enrichment program, fear of an Iranian nuclear weapon or at least a latent nuclear weapons capability has returned and, with it, the prospect that Saudi Arabia and perhaps others in the Middle East will pursue a matching capability.

U.S. diplomacy with North Korea has reached a dead end. Pyongyang continues to advance its nuclear and missile programs, and U.S. allies South Korea and Japan, worried by the expanding threat from the North and increasingly uncertain about the reliability of U.S. security guarantees, may rethink the option of acquiring their own nuclear deterrents.

Assertive postures by Russia and China in their respective regions have elevated the security concerns of their non-nuclear neighbors, including Japan in the case of China.

Sophisticated illicit networks trafficking in proliferation-sensitive technologies have made detection of embryonic covert nuclear programs more difficult.

In their aggressive efforts to sell nuclear reactors, some nuclear supplier governments may relax the nonproliferation controls they require their customers to accept.

Continued polarization among parties to the NPT, fueled by dissatisfaction that progress toward nuclear disarmament has stalled and concern that U.S.-Russian arms control agreements are unraveling, has impeded efforts to strengthen nonproliferation controls and could weaken the authority of the treaty as a barrier to the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

Preventing the deterioration of the global nonproliferation regime will require the restoration of cooperation among the world’s three most influential nuclear powers.

### Neg---Adv CP---Liason Grup, China Negotiation, Exec Authority Guardrails

#### Text: The United States federal executive branch:

#### --establish a bipartisan liason group focused on nuclear risks;

#### --put guardrails around the president’s “sole authority”;

#### --sustain a regular diplomatic dialogue with the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China;

#### --work through the P5 process of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to [what the AFF does].

#### A liason group would create a consensus with US policy, which signals toRussia and China a political will for arms control. Guardrails clarify US nuclear policy and reduce the risk of nuclear weapons by reexamining post-launch devides and narrowing the use of, that signals commitment to non-proliferation. Diplomatic engagement encourages motivation for follow-on and makes the US commitment to non-proliferation credible and transparent. Working through the NPT’s P5 process to coordinate the AFF’s mechanism solves through the above analysis, but competes off of a different, multilateral process that is consultative, not certain.

Moniz and Nunn 21 (**Ernest J. Moniz**, , GCIH is an American nuclear physicist and former secretary of Energy in the Obama Administration, **Sam Nunn**, Former U.S. Senator, founded the Nuclear Threat Initiative, 6-10-2021, "U.S. Nuclear Policies for a Safer World," Nuclear Threat Initiative, https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/us-nuclear-policies-safer-world/, accessed 4-26-2023)

The essays in this report reflect the need for a multifaceted response, including (a) changes to U.S. nuclear policies and posture to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. security policy; (b) renewed engagement with Russia on strategic issues; (c) a deeper foundation of dialogue on nuclear issues with China; and (d) a recommitment to seeking multilateral solutions to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime and reduce nuclear risks. Also necessary is a renewed foundation of trust and cooperation with the invaluable network of U.S. allies and partners in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region, which is fundamental to U.S. national security and serves as a force multiplier for U.S. leadership and interests around the world.

It is crucial to build and sustain domestic support for nuclear security policies that will keep Americans safe. The administration and Congress should establish a new bipartisan liaison group—comprising House and Senate leaders and committee chairs working with senior administration officials—focused on Russia policy, nuclear risks, and NATO. Such a group would facilitate regular communication and greater coherence between the executive and legislative branches and help rebuild consensus in support of engagement and arms control as essential tools in advancing U.S. national security.

The Biden administration should also work to establish policies and processes to put guardrails around the president’s “sole authority” to order the use of nuclear weapons to ensure that any such decision would be deliberative and based on appropriate planning and consultation, including with leaders in Congress. Implementation would be dependent on the particular circumstances that are causing consideration of nuclear use. These policies would improve confidence in how the U.S. government makes critically important decisions and policies related to nuclear use.

The essays in this report recommend additional steps President Biden and his team could take to adapt U.S. nuclear policy and posture to reduce the risk of use of nuclear weapons.

These steps include:

Undertaking an internal “failsafe review” to ensure that U.S. nuclear weapons and command-and-control and warning systems are hardened against cyberattacks and to identify other steps that could increase decision time for leaders in a crisis and reduce the risk that a terrible miscalculation could lead to inadvertent nuclear conflict. This review should reexamine post-launch destruct devices on U.S. nuclear weapons and other measures to reduce the risk of nuclear war. Other states with nuclear weapons should be encouraged to conduct their own “failsafe reviews” to reduce the chances of a mistake, an accident, or a blunder leading to nuclear use.

As part of a new nuclear posture review, adopting a new declaratory policy that narrows the range of scenarios in which the United States would consider the use of nuclear weapons, including by declaring that deterring a nuclear attack against the United States and its allies and partners is the “sole purpose” of U.S. nuclear weapons. This will require careful consultations with U.S. allies in Europe and the Asia-Pacific and reassurances of the U.S. commitment to—and capabilities for—their defense.

It also is imperative that the United States and Russia reengage to strengthen strategic stability and further reduce both countries’ nuclear arsenals, while continuing to hold Moscow accountable for its violations of international law. As the two countries with the largest nuclear arsenals in the world, both have an obligation—despite their differences—to work to reduce the numbers of these weapons and the risks that they will ever be used. The extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) was an essential first step, and Washington and Moscow must build on that agreement to make further reductions and to address growing challenges to strategic stability.

Recommendations include the following:

In the near term, the United States and Russia should signal a new direction through unilateral, reciprocal commitments to modest nuclear warhead reductions below the level required by New START, underpinned by the treaty’s binding limits and verification provisions.

The two sides should immediately begin a strategic stability dialogue and initiate negotiations on a more ambitious follow-on set of agreements to

Limit all strategic-range delivery systems, including those not covered by New START.

Provide transparency and limits on the total nuclear warhead stockpile on each side.

Restore a verifiable ban on ground-based intermediate-range missiles west of the Urals, and when possible more broadly.

Encourage more stabilizing nuclear force postures with respect to both strategic forces and non-strategic forces in and near Europe.

Negotiations should take place in the context of a broader dialogue covering the wide range of factors that affect strategic stability, including the long-standing issue of missile defense and new concerns like cyber. New ideas and flexible forms of agreement are needed to address such issues productively.

While the next round of arms reductions should remain a bilateral U.S.-Russia process, the Biden administration must simultaneously engage China on strategic issues, taking into account the broader regional context. Growing tensions in the U.S.-China relationship, particularly against a backdrop of China’s continued expansion and modernization of its nuclear capabilities, are increasing the risk of conflict and possible escalation to the use of nuclear weapons in the Asia-Pacific.

Formal arms control agreements between the United States and China (or trilateral agreements among the United States, China, and Russia) are unlikely in the near term. Nonetheless, the United States and China should work to develop and sustain a regular dialogue on strategic issues, with a focus on (a) reducing the risk of use of nuclear weapons; (b) constraining the potential for an arms race; and (c) establishing a foundation of engagement that could lead to transparency and confidence-building measures and, over the longer term, potential arms control agreements. These issues cannot be isolated from the broader regional context of the threat posed by North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs and U.S. security commitments to its allies in Asia.

Steps explored in this report include:

Establishing regular, bilateral U.S.-China dialogues on key issues, including nuclear doctrine and policy, emerging technologies that could have a strategic impact, and the North Korean nuclear and missile threats and their implications for U.S. missile defense development. In the context of these dialogues, the two sides could pursue steps to increase predictability, such as exchanging information on each country’s plans for nuclear modernization, as well as current and planned development and deployment of hypersonic systems and missile defense capabilities.

Developing and strengthening bilateral crisis avoidance and management measures, including an agreement on advance notification of ballistic missile launches and the establishment of bilateral Nuclear Risk Reduction centers.

Lastly, the Biden administration should restore U.S. leadership of multilateral efforts to reduce nuclear risks. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, and the United States should work with all parties—and in particular through the P5 process—to strengthen the treaty and advance multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. The United States should work with the rest of the P5 to affirm their commitment to preventing the use of nuclear weapons; expand and deepen dialogue on nuclear issues, including doctrine, risk reduction, and strategic stability; increase transparency on total warheads stockpiles; reaffirm and uphold moratoria on nuclear testing; and declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

In today’s world, it is understood that the United States will continue to possess and deploy nuclear weapons for its security and that of allies and partners for as long as is necessary. At the same time, for decades—dating back to the darkest days of the Cold War—the United States has worked to steadily reduce the role and number of these weapons in its security policy. The Biden administration has an opportunity and a responsibility to build on that important legacy, recommitting to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons and working to make that goal a reality.

### Neg---Arsenal Transparency CP

#### Arsenal transparency would solve Russian threat perceptions.

Acton et al. 21, James M. Acton, Jessica T. Mathews Chair and Co-Director of the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Ph.D. in Theoretical Physics from the University of Cambridge; Thomas D. McDonald, Fellow in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Ph.D. in Nuclear Science and Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Pranay Vaddi, Fellow in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, former Congressional Advisor in the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, J.D. from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, “First Steps on a Tough Problem: A U.S.-Russian Transparency Regime for Empty Warhead Storage Facilities,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 12-16-2021, https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/12/16/first-steps-on-tough-problem-u.s.-russian-transparency-regime-for-empty-warhead-storage-facilities-pub-85959

Inspections of actual or suspected warhead storage facilities—even empty ones—would represent a new frontier for arms control but would build on experience from previous agreements. Russia and the United States would first need to negotiate a generic verification protocol. Then to implement the protocol, NATO and Russia would have to negotiate and select pairs of sites—each pair containing one facility on NATO territory (including the United States) and one on Russian territory. Sites would be selected on the basis of mutual consent from Russia, the United States, and, in the case of a NATO facility located outside of the United States, the host state. Establishing an iterative process, in which lessons from each round of inspections were used to improve the generic verification protocol, would be particularly useful.

NATO has previously considered a similar concept and, as a first step, attempted to draw up a list of former warhead storage facilities that Russia could inspect (presumably on the basis of reciprocity). However, this process stalled amid bureaucratic and legal difficulties, including those created by many such facilities now being privately owned. The process proposed here would be simpler. NATO would not have to determine a comprehensive list of sites for inspection. Instead, it would have to assess the feasibility of inspections only at those sites of interest to Russia.

There would be some risk of nuclear warheads’ being removed from a facility in the time between facility selection and inspection—though the inspecting state would certainly monitor the facility closely with national technical means (NTM). While this risk would not be acceptable in a more comprehensive treaty, it should be tolerable in a politically binding confidence-building measure. In fact, this problem could be solved in a treaty with a provision that permitted inspectors to notify the host state of the inspection site only after their arrival in country, as is standard practice.

VERIFICATION

Baseline information exchange. A prerequisite to on-site inspections would be the exchange of baseline information about the selected facilities and the negotiation of site-specific implementation details. A key challenge here would be reaching agreement on the boundaries for inspection activities. Inspections would be feasible only if Russia and the United States could agree where nuclear warheads might conceivably be stored in a facility—thus precluding the need to inspect highly sensitive areas, such as communication centers, and avoiding very disruptive inspections of, for example, barracks or offices.

On-site inspections. The data exchange would enable each state to plan and conduct its inspection. One complication is the potential presence of weapon storage containers—whether empty storage containers for nuclear warheads or containers used to store nonnuclear munitions. Additionally, nonnuclear munitions outside of containers and other sensitive equipment, such as components for security systems, may also be present. The inspection protocol seeks to balance the intrusive access needed for credible verification with the protection of classified information that is not germane to the task of verifying the absence of nuclear warheads.

The protocol gives the host state the right to shroud any objects it deems to be sensitive. Meanwhile, it gives inspectors access rights to any location where a warhead could be hidden—as determined by the use of a cylindrical test object, representing the smallest plausible warhead storage container. If any warhead storage containers are present, inspectors may look inside to verify the absence of warheads (doing so should not reveal classified information unless a warhead is actually present in contravention of the state’s declaration). Inspectors can also use radiation detection equipment to verify that shrouded objects and storage containers for nonnuclear weapons do not contain nuclear material. Such technology has been used successfully pursuant to various previous U.S.-Russian arms control agreements. Its application here could be somewhat more challenging because undeclared nuclear warheads could be more heavily shielded in storage than when deployed on delivery systems. On paper, this problem could be addressed by increasing the detection time—an issue that Russia and the United States could jointly consider while negotiating the generic verification protocol.

ASSESSMENT

Technical feasibility. In crafting a verification protocol, Russia and the United States could draw upon their considerable experience of conducting inspections at sensitive facilities and using radiation detection equipment for verification purposes. Moreover, they would not have to address the various complications associated with inspecting facilities at which nuclear warheads are present. Yet significant challenges—such as the need to agree on inspection boundaries—would remain. These challenges appear manageable, but the only way to know for sure would be for Russia and the United States to try to negotiate and implement the proposed agreement.

Political feasibility. The United States and its NATO allies have clear concerns about the locations of Russia’s nonstrategic nuclear warheads. And there is some evidence that these concerns are reciprocal.10 But even if Moscow does not currently have concerns about the locations of U.S. NSNWs in Europe, it could easily become concerned in the context of a reinvigorated arms race. Therefore, all states would benefit directly from enhanced transparency. This proposal would benefit the United States and NATO more than Russia, however, and so it would likely need to be paired with a measure of more interest to Russia—perhaps the confidence-building regime for Aegis Ashore launchers in Europe (see chapter 3).

At least three other political challenges could also arise. First, the proposed agreement may go too far for Russia and not far enough for the United States. The United States seeks a comprehensive regime for managing NSNWs. However, Moscow has repeatedly rejected this concept; indeed, it appears to be sticking to its long-standing position that U.S. nuclear weapons based in Europe must be returned to the United States and their storage infrastructure permanently dismantled before negotiations on limiting NSNWs can begin.11 This proposal could help to break the logjam. It would not require negotiations over limits on NSNWs but would build experience and confidence in inspecting warhead storage facilities, thus making progress toward the goal of a more comprehensive treaty.

Second, it could be challenging for Russia and the United States to select facilities for inspection. There would presumably be some empty actual or suspected warhead storage facilities at which an inspection request could not be accommodated; some are likely too sensitive, and others, such as former warhead storage facilities now in private hands, may present insurmountable bureaucratic and legal difficulties. Because facilities must be selected by mutual consent, the host state could always veto an inspection request. This veto power represents an important safeguard—though if it were used too often, the proposed agreement would likely fall apart amid reciprocal accusations of bad faith.

Finally, inspections in Europe could create particular legal, diplomatic, and political complications. While navigating these difficulties would not be entirely straightforward, they were successfully tackled in implementing the INF Treaty, which suggests that they should not be insurmountable.

### Neg---Hotlines CP

#### Transitioning to multilateral hotlines solves crisis escalation.

Sahil Shah & Leah Walker 21, Senior Fellow and Program Manager in the Janne Nolan Center on Strategic Weapons at the Council on Strategic Risks; Future Digital Security Fellow at the Institute for Security and Technology, “Zoom Won’t Stop a Nuclear War,” Foreign Policy, 04-19-2021, https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/04/19/zoom-hotline-red-telephone-nuclear-war-cuban-missile-crisis

Next year will mark the 60th anniversary of the Cuban missile crisis. The failure of U.S. and Soviet leaders to communicate personally, unambiguously, and with certainty in real time contributed to the misinterpretations and miscalculations that drove the superpowers to the brink of nuclear war. It took up to half a day for messages to travel between respective embassies in the deeply distrustful capitals. The delays added to the mistrust, and the world came within a hair’s breadth of a devastating nuclear exchange. The thin silver lining of the crisis was an increased understanding for both superpowers, as well as the rest of the world, of the need for swift and trusted leadership-level communications.

The resulting Washington-Moscow hotline has served as a model for other bilateral communication links for more than half a century. Although the U.S.-Soviet hotline was popularly referred to as the “red telephone,” this is misleading. What started in 1963 as written messages bounced between Washington and Moscow on trans-Atlantic cables across various nodes in Europe was then upgraded from radio to satellite circuits in 1978, to a high-speed fax service in 1986, and then to fiber-optic-based communications in 2008. Over the last 50 years, other bilateral hotlines have been put in place around the world, all varying in form, function, and level of seniority. However, even if bilateral hotlines existed for all nuclear-armed states, they would no longer meet the needs of a multipolar nuclear world.

Despite the nearly one dozen hotline links that now exist, not all countries with nuclear weapons are linked up at the level of heads of state or, in some cases, at any level. Astonishingly, in an age when any nuclear crisis or conflict could not be contained with certainty to two states, there are currently no multilateral communication lines that can be trusted. After all, trust is the issue: trust in the identity of the interlocutor; trust in the system itself, including its robustness under the most extreme conditions; and trust in the messages it carries.

In South Asia, where tensions remain high among India, Pakistan, and China over border disputes, there are no hotlines between the heads of states of any of these three countries and only limited bilateral ones at other levels of seniority between India and Pakistan, and, very recently, India and China. It is unclear if the military and political bilateral links in this area are reliable or have even been used consistently in real crises.

The military-operated India-Pakistan hotline established after the 1971 war was seen for decades as “noisy and unreliable with frequent breakdowns” and thus has not always been used when one would expect. In February 2021, it was resurrected after a number of years to discuss and agree to the current cease-fire between the two countries. The problem with this hotline is that, while it has been tailored to help de-escalate tensions related to the Line of Control, the issues between India and Pakistan are much more substantial. On the political side, the 1989 hotline between Indian and Pakistani Prime Ministers Rajiv Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto, which has been turned on and off multiple times ever since, and the 2004 nuclear hotline between the Indian and Pakistani foreign ministers are assumed by experts to be moribund.

When it comes to India and China, a hotline between the Indian Director General of Military Operations and the Chinese Western Theater Command was set up only in 2020 after years of protracted discussions. The Indian and Chinese foreign ministers also agreed to a political hotline in February of this year. Both were created in the wake of the 2020 border crisis between India and China.

While there is no leader-level hotline between the two nuclear neighbors, since Narendra Modi became the Indian prime minister in 2014 and until the crisis began last summer he and Chinese President Xi Jinping met in person at least 18 times. While such levels of personal engagement are quite rare, threats posed by sophisticated hacking, spoofing, or even simple voice imitation could even deceive leaders who have a high level of familiarity with one another. Several radio show hosts have even managed to talk to various heads of state while pretending to be a high-profile individual.

The world is increasingly riddled with emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence-produced audio or videos known as deepfakes, that heighten the risk of miscommunication and miscalculation. Even in cases where leaders such as Modi and Xi are familiar with and maybe even personally trust one another, interfering technologies, which are becoming more and more convincing each day, could cast a dark enough shadow of doubt that existing hotlines would not be trusted. Deepfake audio is already well advanced and, in one case, was used by hackers to mimic a CEO’s voice to great success.

As demonstrated by the shaky telecommunication quality of the first India-Pakistan military hotline, there are also technical challenges to communicating securely over long distances, particularly when the environment has been degraded by natural disasters, by conflict, or in the simultaneously worst and most necessary case of a nuclear detonation.

On top of these physical shortcomings, there is also the constant hailstorm of official announcements and documents, statements to the media, and tweets and other social media commentary, generating a great amount of information, both true and misleading, to filter through. As such, it is clear that existing communications pathways are not fit for today’s nuclear threat environment, and there is a blatant need for clarity in nuclear crisis management for the 21st century. A Zoom call might be adequate for world leaders to exchange pleasantries or insults, but it is neither assured nor secure enough for sensitive discussions when at the brink of nuclear war. Nor could it be relied upon in a degraded communication environment, where cellular networks and the internet might be down.

Emerging technologies, such as Prompt Global Strike and precision targeting, hypersonic missiles, and artificial intelligence, are already quickly changing the nuclear landscape, contributing to an environment where the potential use of nuclear weapons is more ambiguous and less easy to anticipate.

Nuclear-armed states are reemphasizing the role of nuclear weapons in their security doctrines as they engage in modernization efforts and in some cases are lowering the threshold of potential nuclear retaliation to include a broader range of significant nonnuclear strategic attacks, including cyberattacks. As a result, robust communications are critical, and any new multilateral hotline would have to be made resilient in the face of hacking; signal interception; firmware, software, and hardware vulnerabilities; environment degradation; and other threats such as electromagnetic pulses, which have previously fried satellites. As technology evolves, the next generation of hotlines must be secured from new risks and hardened technically.

While currently technically vulnerable, some hotlines have been useful in aiding communications in complex and hostile environments. The hotlines between the U.S. and Russian forces in Syria proved very effective in deconfliction, and North Korea and South Korea operate numerous hotlines between their militaries, presidential offices, and the inter-Korean liaison office to deconflict and communicate on everything from air traffic to maritime issues. The problem is that while hotlines are difficult to set up and secure, they are also easy to disconnect and discard, which North Korea has done in the past, in times of diplomatic spats and increased tensions.

These existing hotlines are not, however, the solution to dealing with nuclear crises. The dangers and complexities of nuclear crises demand a leader-to-leader capability uniquely dedicated to the avoidance of nuclear detonations and the rapid de-escalation of nuclear conflict when other efforts have failed.

As nuclear-armed states seek to reduce the risk of nuclear conflict in a new era of multipolar great-power competition, rethinking hotlines should be at the top of their agenda. In many ways, this is low-hanging fruit that could serve as the technical catalyst for expanded trust and dialogue. Indeed, France, as the new chair of the P5 Process, has embraced the concept of “strategic risk reduction” and will make improving crisis communication technologies like hotlines a key priority for discussion among the United Nations Security Council’s permanent five members ahead of and beyond the planned Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty this August.

In turn, various governmental and nongovernmental voices have made broad proposals for nuclear-weapons states to consider whether they are serious about improving the security environment. For example, the 16 countries participating in the Stockholm Initiative have identified a list of “stepping stones” toward nuclear disarmament, which includes improving hotlines. At the same time, another coalition of 12 countries that form the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative has also included the need for crisis-proof communication lines in its “landing zones,” or areas of potential agreement, to reduce nuclear risks. The Global Enterprise to Strengthen Non-Proliferation and Disarmament has also pointed out that communications links between nuclear weapons states “are not universal, and those that do exist warrant review.”

Our organizations—the Institute for Security and Technology and the European Leadership Network—are looking at nuclear weapon decision-making in the face of technological complexity. In particular, the Institute for Security and Technology team has closely examined global nuclear command, control, and communications systems and outlined what an innovative global hotline—dubbed “Catalink”—could look like. This project has gone beyond the conceptual stage and is ready for evaluation by the nuclear-armed states. Such an evaluation could be undertaken without change to their policies, postures, or arsenals, and it would feature well into their effort to take a more strategic approach to nuclear risk reduction while tensions rise in conflict zones across the globe.

Given the very real risks of nuclear escalation through misinterpretation of rhetoric or actions, or the miscalculation of responses due to ambiguity and secrecy, leaders must have the ability to speak clearly, confidently, and confidentially.

Maintaining stability and preventing nuclear use in an unstable multipolar world that includes nine nuclear-armed states is impossible using the bipolar logic and inadequate systems of the Cold War. Modern, robustly encrypted, and survivable multilateral communication systems available to nuclear decision-makers are needed to face the perils of the 21st-century nuclear reality. Hotlines are due for an urgent upgrade.

#### US-China nuclear diplomacy prevents miscalculation and results in the aff.

Sahil Shah 23, Senior Fellow and Program Manager in the Janne Nolan Center on Strategic Weapons at the Council on Strategic Risks, “The United States and China Still Need to Talk About Nuclear Weapons,” Foreign Policy, 02-06-2023, https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/02/06/spy-balloon-united-states-china-still-nuclear-weapons

Shortly before U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was slated to depart for Beijing on the Biden administration’s first cabinet-level visit, the trip was postponed. The last-minute schedule change came after a Chinese surveillance balloon was confirmed to be floating above sensitive U.S. military sites, including potentially an active nuclear missile silo field in Montana. Over the weekend, the balloon was shot down by a U.S. F-22 fighter jet once the expected debris no longer posed a threat to civilians.

The incident is reminiscent of those that occurred during the Cold War involving the United States and the Soviet Union—and it comes at a time when many are debating whether Washington and Beijing are now headed toward a similar relationship. Blinken’s now-postponed visit was an attempt to follow up on the Biden-Xi meeting at the G-20 summit in Bali, Indonesia, last year. Encouragingly, the summit provided the best recent opportunity for diplomacy between the United States and China—one that could provide some answers on how the two countries can best avoid a “new Cold War” and reduce the risks of unnecessary conflict and inadvertent escalation.

As was true during the Cold War, spy balloons are not the only things looming over the fraught relationship between the United States and China—nuclear weapons are, too. In addition to ever-increasing tensions over Taiwan, it is no secret that China’s ambition for a diversified nuclear arsenal and wider military modernization is accelerating, with Beijing expanding strategic and conventional forces to back up its “wolf warrior” diplomacy.

Since university researchers made it public two years ago that China is developing extensive missile silo fields and Beijing shocked U.S. intelligence services by testing a hypersonic fractional orbital bombardment system just weeks later, there has been a growing conversation on how Washington can adequately deter Beijing. However, there is another side that cannot be ignored: The United States and China must return to talks at the earliest available opportunity to discuss their shared responsibility to reduce the risk of nuclear war through crisis management and arms control.

While the prevailing assumption is that ​​China intends to move away from its traditionally minimal nuclear deterrent and build a larger and more diverse arsenal to ensure a second-strike capability, Washington has a limited understanding of both the technical and political motivations behind China’s shifted strategy. Is this a long-term strategy that has reached the next step? Have the Chinese simply become bolder because they got stronger? Or is it all because the domestic power structure has changed, and President Xi Jinping is doing whatever he wants?

Regardless of the reasoning, what the U.S. government has done so far has not been enough to get China to consider an alternative path. Policymakers in Washington have barely discussed how U.S. policies factor into Beijing’s calculations and, most importantly, how Chinese actions could be positively influenced away from their current arms-race trajectory.

China’s calculation of escalation risk is adapting to today’s geopolitical and technological realities, which have both increased the chance of conventional wars crossing the nuclear threshold.

Such developments should prompt Chinese leaders to speak with their U.S. counterparts directly about practical ways to manage potential crises and conflicts. However, a lack of political willpower seems to stand in the way of a sustained, structured bilateral dialogue on these issues.

The avoidance of nuclear weapons use during the Cold War resulted from a substantial amount of knowledge that could only be accrued through meaningful diplomatic, military, and scientific cooperation. However, any similar cooperation in the nuclear sphere between the United States and China at the moment will depend on whether China feels that such initiatives will disadvantage it or leave it vulnerable to manipulation. Those fears are why China has historically avoided crisis management and arms control measures.

However, times are changing, and such avoidance is increasingly untenable. Crisis management conversations should aim to result in formalized risk reduction measures, which are also inherently arms control measures. For example, the United States and China could revive the Crisis Communications Working Group that was only convened once in 2020 before China canceled the subsequent meeting in 2021. The group could work to address how the decades-old and seemingly moribund leader-level hotline and largely suspended military communication channels can be revived, expanded, and protected from technical threats. In particular, technical projects to make such hotlines more resilient in the face of emerging technologies such as AI-generated deepfakes would also be useful.

Blinken must make it clear to the Chinese that while the Biden administration is seriously interested in diplomacy, it will need proactive and positive Chinese engagement to sustain it. After all, many skeptics feel that they have seen this movie before. Direct conversations between the United States and China on strategic stability—namely, creating a stable security situation in which both sides are discouraged from initiating a first nuclear strike—have remained in a stage of infancy for too long. Across the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations, high-level political commitments to pursue more robust bilateral talks resulted in only a handful of engagements.

The Trump administration subsequently burned already-fragile bilateral bridges, including on the nuclear front as Beijing became even more uncomfortable with the concept of arms control because of the coercive nature of U.S. tactics to get China to come to the table. Given that China only has a fraction of either the U.S. or Russian arsenals—currently estimated at around 350 warheads and growing, compared to approximately 5,500 U.S. and Russian warheads each—Beijing opposed calls to join quantitative limits unless the United States and Russia came down to its level.

As a result, in recent years conversations on nuclear issues between the United States and China have primarily taken place in a multilateral setting. However, the P5 Process—the multilateral forum for the five nuclear weapons states under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)—has been substantially slowed down due to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. While P5 officials have met in Dubai in recent days to continue discussions on their positions on risk reduction, identifying common ground and practical measures to take forward as a collective will be difficult.

While the war in Ukraine has complicated such efforts, it has also highlighted to the Chinese—who have reportedly lobbied Russian President Vladimir Putin to step away from the nuclear brink—that cooperating in this area can improve China’s image as a responsible nuclear power, especially in the eyes of non-nuclear weapons states.

Strong communication on nuclear issues should therefore be seen as a central element of President Joe Biden’s bilateral agenda with China. While it may be too heavy a lift to obtain Chinese agreement on a full-fledged strategic stability dialogue immediately, the Biden administration should prioritize crisis management in the wake of the spy balloon incident. Nuclear risk reduction measures should be seen as a win-win proposition, just as they were during the Cold War.

Learning about each country’s risk perceptions would help sharpen the focus of future talks on the specific issues Washington and Beijing can work together on to lower tensions and reduce the likelihood of blundering into war because of misperception or miscommunication. As was true following the Cuban missile crisis, the pursuit of crisis management tools can pave the way for deeper arms control while protecting diplomatic space on various other key issues.

Chinese leaders must understand that engaging in direct discussions on managing risk with adversaries such as the United States is not an aspect of great-power competition but the very foundation of it. In order to improve chances for crisis and arms-racing stability, China’s unwillingness to discuss obligations that could provide guardrails around nuclear weapons use needs to change. If such efforts to reduce risks prove successful at building trust, qualitative (rather than quantitative) limits that focus on restraint from deploying certain types of weapons systems might also be of mutual interest in the long term. In the meantime, both sides lack a sober understanding of the other side’s nuclear intentions and have to start somewhere.

While luck often favors the bold, it also has a habit of running out. Crisis management would be a mutually beneficial and positive first step in the arms control process. As deterrence structures are made more complex and unstable, there is no sane option but for nuclear nations such as the United States and China to renew their diplomatic efforts. If they don’t, there will never be any hope of reducing the dangers that nuclear weapons pose. In the words of Stanford nuclear physicist Siegfried Hecker, Washington and Beijing are simply “doomed to cooperate.”

### Neg---Off-Ramp CP

#### Creating a nuclear off-ramp prevents accidental escalation without reductions perceived as unacceptable in the status quo.

Ernest J. Moniz & Sam Nunn 23, Co-Chair and CEO of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, Cecil and Ida Green Professor of Physics and Engineering Systems Emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, former Secretary of Energy, Ph.D. in Theoretical Physics from Stanford University; Co-Chair of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, former Chair of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, “Confronting the New Nuclear Peril,” Foreign Affairs, 04-05-2023, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/russia-confronting-new-nuclear-peril

In late March, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that Russia intends to return short-range tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus, underlining yet again the terrifying prospect of the use of such weapons in the war in Ukraine. Meanwhile, North Korea is pursuing an accelerated program of missile tests, including of intercontinental ballistic missiles that can strike the United States. China appears committed to a significant expansion of its nuclear weapons program. And the future of nuclear arms control looks bleak, following Russia’s announcement earlier this year that it was suspending implementation of certain obligations under the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) with the United States.

In view of these alarming developments, finding new approaches to preventing nuclear weapons use has never been more urgent. The available avenues for reducing the nuclear threat, strategies that have been built since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, continue to close. It is hard to imagine that any new treaty on nuclear arms can be negotiated between the United States and Russia and ratified by the U.S. Senate, when trust between Washington and Moscow is at zero and dialogue is frozen. Unrestricted nuclear competition between Washington and Moscow will now overlap not only with China’s expanding nuclear arsenal, and growing threats from North Korea and Iran, but also with efforts by India and Pakistan to advance their nuclear capabilities and even with some U.S. allies considering whether to acquire their own nuclear weapons. The warning bells are deafening.

And yet one effective form of global threat reduction is both feasible and doable: preventing the unauthorized or inadvertent use of nuclear weapons. The United States has already begun this effort internally—a crucial step in itself—with the hope that other nuclear weapons states will follow suit. There is a growing danger that nuclear weapons could be used based on faulty judgment, false warnings of attack, or other miscalculation. Aided by rapid shifts in technology, U.S. adversaries, including nonstate actors, could use cyberattacks to disrupt the command and control of nuclear weapons and early warning systems—the systems that can start the clock on a possible nuclear response leaving governments only minutes to decide whether to proceed.

If the world is going to survive a new era of nuclear competition, every nuclear-armed country must strengthen its defenses against cyberthreats and the possibility of rogue, accidental, or mistaken use of a nuclear weapon. Fortunately, they can do so even in the absence of bilateral or multilateral treaties, by advancing a global nuclear fail-safe—a system of self-imposed safeguards taken by each member of the nuclear weapons club. The responsibility that accompanies nuclear weapons capability should compel such states to actively focus on avoiding a nuclear catastrophe.

PROTECTING THE AMERICAN ARSENAL

The concept of nuclear fail-safe dates back to the 1950s, when it was focused on nuclear-armed bomber delivery systems. In later decades, it was applied more broadly to ballistic missiles. But it has been 30 years since the United States made its last comprehensive review of nuclear fail-safe. The commission appointed in 1990 by Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and chaired by the former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick recommended more than 50 specific steps to prevent accidental, mistaken, or unauthorized use of a nuclear weapon. Since then, a number of factors have combined to heighten the risk of a nuclear blunder: faster and more powerful delivery systems, the rise of cyberthreats, the increasing dependence of launch systems on digital technology, less communication between nuclear rivals, reduced decision time for leaders of nuclear-armed countries, and new defensive challenges resulting from advances in nuclear systems.

Washington has recognized the need to address these growing threats. On the recommendation of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, legislators included a provision in the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act requiring the secretary of defense to “provide for the conduct of an independent review of the safety, security, and reliability” of nuclear systems. This congressional authorization has given the White House a rare bipartisan foundation for advancing nuclear fail-safe at home and abroad. The Biden administration has also given priority to nuclear security, including by committing to a fail-safe review in its October 2022 Nuclear Posture Review. The administration has assigned the RAND Corporation and the MITRE Corporation to lead that effort under the direction of the Department of Defense.

The broader aim of the U.S. review of nuclear fail-safe protocols should be to reduce and, where possible, eliminate the risk of mistaken nuclear use. In particular, the review should seek to prevent the use of nuclear weapons through an accident, a miscalculation, a false warning, terrorism, or a deliberate act by an unhinged leader. The review should assess ways the government could improve technologies, processes, and policies related to the nuclear arsenal while maintaining required levels of command and control for deterrence. For example, the review could propose a system that would allow for the post-launch destruction of nuclear weapons or their associated delivery systems before they reached their target, in the event that a launch takes place in error. The review should also call for new guidance informing the president’s decision to use nuclear weapons, including specifying consultations with relevant officials in the executive branch and in Congress when the decision-making time allows for it. Importantly, a forward-looking U.S. fail-safe policy must look beyond the current Nuclear Posture Review and provide for regular reviews, perhaps every five years, to take account of rapidly changing technological and political realities.

The 1990–92 U.S. fail-safe review came at a crucial time: the Cold War was ending, and new technologies were rapidly emerging. New fail-safe measures were badly needed, and the review led to important enhancements in U.S. security, including steps to strengthen safeguards against the mistaken launch of a nuclear ballistic missile. Thirty years later, with cyberwarfare already well developed and a dangerous new nuclear age beginning, the new U.S. fail-safe review is even more urgent. Amid the erosion of arms control agreements and other global and regional security mechanisms, the U.S. review will be critical to reducing nuclear risks. Other nuclear-armed countries must take their own parallel steps.

A SAFER NUCLEAR CLUB

In today’s perilous era, every nuclear weapons state has a vital national interest in using all available tools to prevent a mistake or security breach from turning into a disaster. The same dangerous and potentially deadly dynamics that have spurred Washington to pursue a fail-safe review almost certainly exist in other nuclear capitals. No matter how recently such measures might have been incorporated into nuclear planning, the case for frequent, updated fail-safe reviews has never been stronger. The absence of such periodic reviews in most of the nuclear weapons club elevates the present and future danger to all.

Given that a nuclear accident, an act of sabotage, or a terrible miscalculation would surely have global implications, any country with nuclear weapons should conduct its own internal review of fail-safe protocols. When these reviews are completed, declassified portions could be shared with other nuclear powers. The five acknowledged nuclear weapons states in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT)—China, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom, along with the United States—could share their declassified reviews in the context of the P5 Process, the forum that brings together those countries to discuss their NPT obligations. Other nuclear-armed powers, such as India and Pakistan, may find it in their security interests to follow suit.

The United States can also encourage international cooperation as part of its own nuclear fail-safe review. For example, it could call on other nuclear states to work with the U.S. government to establish cyber-nuclear “rules of the road”—steps that governments should take to help define norms to protect their nuclear arsenals from cyberattacks. And it could seek to establish clear redlines, including cyberattacks on vital nuclear infrastructure such as early warning and command and control systems. The U.S. review should also call for the creation of a joint center of nuclear-armed states—and perhaps NATO member states, too—for the exchange of data from early warning systems and for notifications of missile launches. Such a step could provide a crucial guardrail to prevent a mistaken nuclear response.

Current geopolitical tensions must not stand in the way of such dialogue. Since its invasion of Ukraine, Russia has made reckless statements about its readiness to use nuclear weapons, and many Western powers are understandably reluctant to maintain communication with Moscow. But the Russian government, no less than any other nuclear-armed state, has a crucial interest in the safety and security of its own arsenal and the arsenals of the other nuclear powers. Moscow and Washington have discussed the issue in the past: during the Cold War, of course, but also as recently as June 2021, when Russia and the United States established a bilateral strategic stability dialogue, in which both sides committed to lay the groundwork for future arms control and risk reduction measures. Although the prospect of Russia taking action in coordination with the United States and other nuclear-armed states may now seem remote, it is still possible to envision Russia contributing to global nuclear risk reduction by engaging in a serious fail-safe review of its own nuclear weapons. The same could reasonably be expected of Beijing. In parallel with dialogue among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, internal fail-safe reviews could also lead to proposals for bilateral and multilateral risk reduction measures by nuclear weapons states.

To achieve meaningful progress, a broader fail-safe effort would benefit from strong endorsement in international forums. The G-7 meeting scheduled to take place in Hiroshima in May offers an important opportunity to address the issue. For example, a joint statement by France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, in which each country commits to undertaking its own internal fail-safe review and supports dialogue on nuclear dangers, could open the door to risk-reduction steps by all nuclear-armed states, including Russia and China. In turn, the nonnuclear members of the G-7—Canada, Germany, Italy, and Japan—have a shared interest in advancing a global nuclear fail-safe and could also support such an initiative.

THE WORLD CAN’T WAIT

As long as there is war in Ukraine, there will be a real risk of nuclear escalation in the region. The most effective and durable solution to reducing that risk would be a negotiated cease-fire that moves the conflict from the battlefield to the conference table. But such a breakthrough will only happen when Kyiv and Moscow conclude that it is in their best interests. Russian leaders must accept that while Russia can destroy Ukraine, it cannot own or peacefully occupy it. Ukraine’s leaders must be confident that they can defend their territorial integrity, independence, and sovereignty from any future Russian aggression.

Beyond Ukraine, it is clear today that an increasing reliance on nuclear weapons for deterrence by nine nuclear-weapons states threatens the future of humanity. A new global security paradigm is urgently needed. The ultimate nuclear fail-safe measure, of course, would be to verifiably eliminate nuclear weapons, once and for all. That historic step, however, is unrealistic in the near term, given the growing great-power tensions and the decline of arms control regimes. Indeed, it now seems more likely that the world could see global nuclear weapons inventories grow substantially in the coming years. Even if the goal of disarmament remains elusive, there is still much that nuclear-armed states can do now to prevent a possible catastrophe. The world cannot afford to wait for more peaceful times to reduce the risks of nuclear use.

### Neg---NFU Conditions CP

#### Offering a conditional, bilateral NFU to China diffuses tensions and ensures it is verifiable.

Hans Binnendijk & David Gompert 23, Roosevelt Chair at the National Defense University, Distinguished Fellow at the Atlantic Council Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, Ph.D. in International Relations from the Tufts University Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; Senior Fellow at the RAND Corporation, Distinguished Adjunct Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, former Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence, M.P.A. from the Princeton University Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, “Towards Nuclear Stewardship with China,” Survival Online, 02-16-2023, https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/survival-online//2023/02/towards-nuclear-stewardship-with-china

The NPR placed no emphasis on entering a ‘strategic dialogue’ with China, which we consider essential to enhancing nuclear stability in the vital and precarious Pacific region. Such a dialogue might be initiated by an offer to China to enter into a bilateral NFU agreement with three conditions. Firstly, the Chinese would acknowledge that such an agreement would cover US allies; logically, this should not give China cause to object, because it already pledges NFU globally. Secondly, the Chinese would agree to enter into a process to foster transparency and to build confidence in support of an NFU agreement, and nuclear stability more generally. Thirdly, China would agree to work with the United States to strengthen nuclear stewardship globally, which might include constraining Russian and North Korean nuclear belligerence – actions which are in China’s interest.

Compatible with a bilateral NFU pledge would be a mutual understanding that both sides are already highly vulnerable to the nuclear weapons of the other side. Thus far, the United States has resisted such an understanding. This would be an important element of any dialogue and could serve to limit China’s desire for a massive build-up.

Such talks should engender improved understanding of the dynamics of crisis and escalation instability, and thus reinforce the need to decouple nuclear weapons from such risks. Confidence-building measures should include crisis-management protocols, effective and tested hotlines for incident management, and talks aimed at gaining a clearer and ultimately converging understanding of why each power has the nuclear forces it does. In due course, other nuclear confidence-building measures worth considering could include agreement not to interfere with each other’s early-warning and nuclear command-and-control mechanisms, both of which could be highly destabilising; pre-launch warnings and shared early-warning agreements similar to those being negotiated with the Russians at the end of the Clinton administration; transparency measures to alert each side to future nuclear-modernisation efforts and to provide explanations for them; and mutual on-site inspections where helpful.

Towards the end of this strategic dialogue augmented by confidence-building measures, mutual limits might be agreed on deployed warheads held by the US and China. Such a goal would flow logically from greater strategic understanding, as it did with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. If China comes to understand that its minimal deterrent posture can be achieved, perhaps at a higher level, but without achieving parity with the US, then progress in achieving agreements similar to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty might be made. But given Russia’s aggressive nuclear doctrine, trilateral strategic arms-control limitations seem implausible and unwise. The United States will need to achieve one deterrence arrangement with an aggressive Russia that is used to nuclear parity, and another with a China that may still be searching for a new form of minimal deterrence.

The concept of nuclear stewardship should extend to joint efforts to lessen nuclear instability across the region. To this end, the two superpowers should affirm their commitment to denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. Meanwhile, the United States must bolster nuclear deterrence there, while keeping China abreast of its intentions as part of the process of confidence-building.

### Neg---NFU Conditions CP---AT: Links to Net Benefit

#### It’s not big enough to destroy alliances.

Hans Binnendijk & David Gompert 23, Roosevelt Chair at the National Defense University, Distinguished Fellow at the Atlantic Council Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, Ph.D. in International Relations from the Tufts University Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; Senior Fellow at the RAND Corporation, Distinguished Adjunct Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, former Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence, M.P.A. from the Princeton University Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, “Towards Nuclear Stewardship with China,” Survival Online, 02-16-2023, https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/survival-online//2023/02/towards-nuclear-stewardship-with-china

In contemplating a strategic initiative to lessen the danger of nuclear war in the Pacific, the United States should seek the full-throated endorsement of its allies. To achieve this, it must approach them with a compelling case before any approach is made to Beijing. That case rests on two beliefs: that instability in the Pacific region must not result in nuclear war; and that the United States and its allies should and can rely on non-nuclear military means to thwart Chinese aggression. This includes both conventional forces and cyber capabilities, in which the United States is superior.

Among US treaty allies in the region, only South Korea and Japan would have the most immediate concerns. South Korea will want to be sure that American adherence to Sino-US NFU would not prevent the United States from using whatever means necessary to defend against North Korean aggression. A US NFU pledge should not apply to North Korea. It cannot be ruled out that North Korea would threaten a nuclear attack on South Korea, Japan or the United States. Given the scale and locations of North Korea’s nuclear weapons, the United States cannot be sure that these could be destroyed in their entirety with conventional strikes. Therefore, the United States cannot foreclose the limited use of nuclear weapons to prevent a North Korean nuclear attack. The NFU agreement with China proposed here would not preclude such an action.

Some Japanese defence officials may be concerned that a US–Chinese NFU pledge would weaken America’s defence commitment to Tokyo. That concern can be dealt with by constantly strengthening US and allied militaries, and by demonstrating America’s ability to reinforce quickly and sustain conventional conflict in the region if need be. When combined with US conventional forces, Japan’s plans to improve its defence forces – including by extending their range – will ensure superiority over any Chinese conventional force threatening Japan for the indefinite future. Washington should provide Tokyo with its full support in assisting and integrating Japan’s growing military strength. Given its history, Japan should in general be supportive of an initiative to reduce the danger of nuclear war.

### Neg---Nuclear Security CP

#### Improving Biden’s nuclear security plan solves proliferation and NPT credibility.

Sitara Noor 23, Fellow in the Project on Managing the Atom at the Harvard University Belfer Centre for Science and International Affairs, “Why Biden’s new nuclear security agenda might not work as planned,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 04-04-2023, https://thebulletin.org/2023/04/why-bidens-new-nuclear-security-agenda-might-not-work-as-planned

Early in March, the Biden administration unveiled its 19th National Security Memorandum. While the operational part of this memorandum is classified, the White House shared a factsheet on the new strategy, which is centered around three main pillars: countering weapons of mass destruction terrorism, advancing nuclear material security, and improving radioactive material security. The three-pronged strategy aims to reinvigorate long-standing approaches to risks from weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and nuclear security and introduce new ways to deal with emerging threats.

While the Biden administration’s new strategy acknowledges emerging risks during crises, especially in the wake of the Russia’s invasion of Ukraine—and particularly as regard’s military activities in and around Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant—it also provides a sharp reminder that the traditional nuclear security risks demand continuous attention. Just the same, the Biden strategy falls short in terms of new ideas and concrete plans for dealing with emerging nuclear security challenges and for garnering the international support needed to transform those plans into reality.

A different international context. The new US strategy on nuclear security aims to prevent, mitigate, and respond to emerging threats posed by the WMD terrorism at national and international level. It specifically considers the implications of on‑and-over-the-horizon technologies that can affect the nature of threats and would require a corresponding response. The strategy also offers the first comprehensive policy for the security of radioactive materials. The strategy is intended to be President Biden’s agenda to reinvigorate and carry forward the work of the Obama administration on nuclear security. But, although President Obama managed to convene four successful Nuclear Security Summits between 2010 and 2016, those efforts came in an altogether different international political and security environment. The summits built momentum that resulted in some tangible results, including the entry into force of the 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, the removal and down-blending of highly enriched uranium from more than 50 facilities in 30 countries, and over 260 other national security commitments and pledges from participating countries.

President Biden’s new strategy also hinges on strong international support. However, the current political and security environment arguably offers less space for deep-rooted international collaboration. The international community may not reciprocate with the level of interest in joining hands for a new nuclear security initiative as existed for the past nuclear security summits.[1]

Biden’s strategy may not be able to gather such a critical mass, either because of differing priorities or competing security agendas between countries—or both. Without sufficient international cooperation, little can be done about nuclear security as those risks transcend international boundaries.

What worked that won’t. Biden’s nuclear weapon policy is driving on a different trajectory than Obama’s, as depicted in the latest Nuclear Posture Review. His administration is advocating a greater role for nuclear weapons across domains and across regions to maintain Washington’s competitive edge against both Beijing and Moscow. This obvious difference from the Obama approach[2] is likely to invite more criticism than garner the necessary international support for new nuclear security cooperation.

In addition, Biden’s new National Security Memorandum was released as the global non-proliferation regime is arguably in a state of chaos. When nuclear risks are at their highest, existing arms control treaties are falling apart, and new partnerships are being built only against perceived adversaries. The possibility of developing a new international momentum for nuclear security is highly unlikely.

Historically, new nuclear policies have gained traction primarily in reaction to current events. It was after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that international community realized the proliferation risks posed by these deadly weapons and worked to the development of safeguards and deterrence strategies. Later, it was the threat of total annihilation during the Cuban Missile Crisis that gave way to new arms control treaties resulting in the reduction of US and Soviet nuclear stockpiles. Similarly, it was only after the Chernobyl accident in the former Soviet Union (now Ukraine) that the international community got serious about the transboundary risks of nuclear accidents and agreed to some new nuclear safety measures such as the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and The Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. That no major nuclear security incident with radiological consequences at the scale of Chernobyl has subsequently happened partly explains why nuclear security risks remain an abstract threat for many countries.

Despite some remarkable achievements, the Nuclear Security Summit model was deemed unsustainable in the long run and eventually the work was shifted back to the relevant international organizations—including the UN, IAEA, and Interpol—which are more inclusive in terms of global representation and equipped to carry out the necessary technical work. Nonetheless, unlike the summits, these organizations had to work strictly within their legal framework and could not generate executive decisions for quick execution. They also have limited funding which is largely directed to other priority areas: For instance, the IAEA has relatively less funding for nuclear security as compared to safety and safeguards which are considered a bigger priority.

Likewise, for many countries that don’t possess nuclear weapons, nuclear security is a low priority because the risks of terrorism using weapons of mass destruction or misuse of nuclear materials remains a remote and low-probable outcome. Framed that way, Biden’s nuclear security agenda has little chance of recreating the international momentum achieved with the Obama summits. Yet, less-concerned countries should care: They may not possess nuclear weapons or even weapons-grade nuclear material, but they almost certainly possess radioactive sources for medical or industrial applications that could be used for terrorism purposes.

In view of the rapidly evolving threat landscape and potentially high consequences even from a small-scale nuclear security incident involving nuclear or radioactive material, nuclear security must remain a priority agenda. Biden’s new security strategy underscores his administration’s commitment to nuclear security and puts a necessary spotlight on this enduring challenge by putting it back on the national security agenda. However, it falls short of outlining some new ideas and devising a concrete plan of action to deal with emerging challenges and garnering necessary support, especially given the current conflicting priorities of the international community.

### Neg---P5 Consultation CP

#### Text: The United States executive branch should advance the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to expand non-proliferation efforts and commit to testing and stockpile limits, as well as other requirements for the treaties to be in line with [what the AFF does], through the P5 consultation process.

#### This is another solvency advocate for P5 negotiations as a process CP, different from the above. It contains China and Russia say “yes” and international follow-on, including other agreements that would limit emphasis on nuclear weapons and increase non-proliferation credibility. Separately, it can serve as a solvency advocate for altering the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to [do the AFF]. It uses the same competition mechanism as outlined in the Advantage CP, as well as executive action, while avoiding fiating international action.

Melamed 21 (**Mark Melamed**, deputy vice president of Nuclear Threat Initiative’s Global Nuclear Policy Program, 6-10-2021, "U.S. Nuclear Policies for a Safer World: Multilateral Steps to Reduce Nuclear Risks" Nuclear Threat Initiative, https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/us-nuclear-policies-safer-world/, accessed 4-26-2023)

Multilateral efforts among the five recognized nuclear weapon states (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States)—the so-called P5—cannot replace bilateral engagement between the United States and Russia and China, respectively, to reduce the risk of unintended escalation in those relationships. But the P5—and potentially other multilateral venues and approaches—can serve as a forum for dialogue, addressing issues that involve a broader range of states and advancing ideas for multilateral arms control and non-proliferation that will have to be a part of any long-term path toward nuclear disarmament.

Although the results of the “P5 process” have been disappointing in some respects since its inception in 2009, the process has successfully broadened the discussion of nuclear issues beyond the traditional U.S.-Russia arms control process. China, in particular, has played an increasingly active role and sought to portray itself as a champion of the P5 process, the one setting where it is most willing to engage in discussions of nuclear policy and posture.

Additionally, there are key areas where multilateral nuclear risk reduction, non-proliferation, and arms control efforts have already proven productive, and others where, despite impediments, they remain the best path forward. In the former category are the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as well as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which, though not in force, has been signed by 185 states and ratified by 170 states and has contributed to the widely accepted norm against explosive nuclear testing. Efforts to negotiate a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) fall in the second category. These efforts have not yet borne fruit, but a multilateral approach remains the only viable avenue for pursuing such an agreement.

Recommendations

The United States should seek to reenergize work in the P5 to strengthen the NPT and advance nuclear risk reduction and arms control objectives. This could include steps by the P5 to do the following:

Affirm their commitment to preventing the use of nuclear weapons. This could be achieved through a joint declaration—or parallel unilateral declarations—reaffirming the Reagan-Gorbachev statement that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be ” The P5 were reportedly discussing a statement along these lines in early 2020; this effort should be continued, with the goal of adopting a clean reaffirmation of the Reagan-Gorbachev formulation. Such a statement would be more impactful if paired with sustained dialogue on reducing the risk of nuclear use, as described below.

Expand and deepen dialogue on nuclear issues. Since 2016, the P5 have engaged in periodic exchanges on nuclear doctrine, and the group has made modest efforts on transparency, in particular through national reporting in the context of the NPT review process. Particularly given China’s declared support for strengthening the P5 process, the P5 should seek to deepen established dialogues and initiate new discussions on key topics, including by these actions:

Establishing a standing P5 working group dedicated to discussions of nuclear doctrine and posture. Such a group should include interagency representation from all five P5 members and should agree on a workplan centered around regular discussions that would build on each other, rather than one-off annual events that generally fail to move beyond baseline talking points.

Beginning a dedicated P5 dialogue on reducing the risk of use of nuclear weapons. The P5 should lay out a risk reduction agenda that includes (a) surveying existing crisis prevention and crisis management mechanisms and procedures; (b) identifying gaps and shortcomings as well as potential pathways to conflict and escalation; and (c) developing ways to improve crisis management and reduce the risk of unintended escalation due to miscalculation and/ or If successful, these efforts could serve as a foundation for discussions aboutpossible P5 coordination in managing other potential crises, including from North Korea and/or the risk of a regional nuclear conflict in South Asia.

Launching a P5 dialogue on strategic stability. This work should be focused on establishing a baseline mutual understanding of each other’s perceptions of strategic stability and the threats to building and maintaining such stability regionally and globally. This effort could build on the work the P5 have already done through their dialogue on doctrine as well as the P5 glossary of nuclear terms, which had a similar goal of establishing a shared foundation for further engagement. It will be important to define the scope and focus of this discussion to avoid duplicating bilateral discussions between the United States and Russia (and, eventually, the United States and China). But given the ways in which actions by any one of the P5 can affect the perceptions and thinking of other P5 states—particularly as new technologies introduce new uncertainty and complexity to the strategic landscape—a P5 discussion of strategic stability would be an important complement to bilateral efforts.

Increase transparency by publicly declaring their total warhead stockpiles and/or making unilateral political commitments not to exceed a specified numerical ceiling on total warhead numbers. The P5 should commit to regular public declarations of their respective total warhead stockpiles, as the United States did as recently as 2018. An alternative or complementary step would be for the P5—including China, France, and the United Kingdom, which have significantly smaller stockpiles than the United States and Russia—to each publicly commit not to exceed specified numerical ceilings on their total warhead numbers (a step the United Kingdom has already taken). These would be unilateral or reciprocal political commitments, and the respective ceilings would differ for each country. All of these ceilings should be near or below each country’s current numbers to discourage an arms build-up and facilitate further reductions by the United States and Russia.

Reaffirm their moratoria on nuclear testing and commit to work to bring the CTBT into force. In addition to reaffirming the moratoria, the P5 should commit to consultations—and eventual transparency measures—aimed at addressing concerns about each other’s activities related to nuclear testing. At some future date—and as appropriate—these efforts could be expanded to include other nuclear-armed states that also are observing moratoria on nuclear testing.

In this context, China and the United States should establish a bilateral working group that would identify specific parallel, sequenced steps toward completing the CTBT ratification processes in Washington and Beijing. Although CTBT entry-into-force is a multilateral challenge, the United States and China are the only two members of the P5 that have not ratified the treaty, and China has made clear that its ratification is tied to U.S. action on ratification. While this likely would be a long-term effort, given the need to build support for ratification in the U.S. Senate, bilateral engagement on sustaining the testing moratoria and building toward CTBT entry-into-force would help to build trust and lay out a path forward.

Declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Among the P5, only China has not yet declared such a moratorium. A P5 declaration along these lines would increase pressure on other key states—in particular, Pakistan—to follow suit and would be a critical step toward efforts to launch multilateral negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT). It also could serve as the basis for returning to the “P5 plus” format (i.e., the P5 plus India and Pakistan), which was used in the early 2010s, primarily to discuss FMCT.

### Aff---Arms Control CP

#### Material reductions must come prior to effective arms control.

Richard L. Garwin & Frank N. von Hippel 23, Emeritus Fellow in the Thomas J. Watson Research Laboratory at International Business Machines, Winner of the National Medal of Science and the Enrico Fermi Award from the U.S. Department of Energy, Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Chicago; Professor and Co-Director of Program on Science and Global Security at Princeton University, Co-Chair of the International Panel on Fissile Materials, former Assistant Director for National Security in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, “How to avoid nuclear war with China,” Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Vol. 79, No. 2, 2023, https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.2023.2178161

The Trump administration insisted that China join the US and Russia in trilateral negotiations over future nuclear arms reductions. China’s response was the same as it has been for decades, but with resettings of the goal posts as Washington and Moscow reduced their nuclear arsenals: China will be willing to join only when the United States and Russia have reduced their nuclear weapon stocks closer to China’s level.

But there are possibilities for progress in regard to arms control efforts and China. As Figure 2 shows, the United States and Russia have come down a long way, while the recent discovery of missile silos under construction suggests China plans to considerably increase its deployments.

China could agree that, if Russia and the US continue to reduce, it will not exceed a self-imposed limit on the size of its nuclear arsenal, and that, when Russia and the US approach that limit, it will join in the reductions process. It could also indicate a willingness to increase transparency about the size of its nuclear force.

For their parts, Russia and the United States could join China in declaring no-first-use policies for nuclear weapons. Such a declaration signals a recognition that crossing the boundary from conventional to nuclear war is extraordinarily dangerous. President Biden made this clear in his response to nuclear threats President Putin made to buttress Russia’s invasion of Ukraine: “I don’t think there’s any such thing as the ability to easily [use] a tactical nuclear weapon and not end up with Armageddon.”

As our late colleague Freeman Dyson pointed out, even if a country’s adversaries cannot rely on a no-first-use declaration, its own military must develop contingency plans in case it is not allowed to resort to nuclear weapons in a crisis. Under pressure from key foreign allies, factions in Congress, and the Pentagon not to take any options off the table, however, the Biden administration’s 2022 Nuclear Posture Review pointedly avoided such a declaration.

Russia and the United States have mutual but perhaps exaggerated concerns about the other’s first-strike abilities. These concerns have resulted in their silo-based ICBMs being maintained in launch-on-warning postures. China’s decision to build hundreds of missile silos, technically vulnerable to even a nonnuclear first strike, suggests that it too may adopt that same dangerous posture. The United States, which always has about 800 warheads in ballistic missile submarines, untargetable at sea, could take the lead by unilaterally renouncing launch on warning and agreeing to discuss the associated dangers with China and Russia. Once again, Russia and China could not have confidence that the United States would adhere to this policy in a crisis. But the US military would have to plan for the possibility that the country’s ICBMs would not be launched unless another country had used nuclear weapons against America or its allies first. In the most optimistic imagining of such a policy future, the Pentagon and its congressional supporters might even decide—as arms controllers led by former Secretary of Defense William Perry have urged—to retire the vulnerable ICBMs.

China and Russia are also concerned by the lack of limits on US ballistic missile defense since 2002, when President George W. Bush abandoned the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM). Given the ineffectiveness of current and foreseeable US ballistic missile defenses against Russia (and even against current Chinese strategic forces), the US should be willing to limit its deployments to levels that do not provoke Chinese and Russian buildups. This could be included in the initial agenda for arms-control discussions between China and the United States. The 1972 Soviet-US ABM Treaty was coupled with their first treaty, SALT I, limiting the buildup of their offensive strategic forces. This could be a useful precedent for arms control negotiations between China and the United States.1

China, Russia, and the United States also should engage in “strategic stability” talks—perhaps in pairs or, with France and the United Kingdom, as the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. The US and Russia began such talks after the Biden-Putin June 2021 summit in Geneva. Two sessions were held before the United States suspended the talks in February 2022 after Russia invaded Ukraine. The talks should be resumed in parallel with “track 2” nongovernmental brainstorming—perhaps also including governmental experts in their personal capacities (track 1.5). Infrequent in-person meetings can be much more productive if augmented by more frequent virtual meetings, as has become the norm in the COVID-19 era.

Postures that increase incentives for a first strike are of particular concern. Missile defense has that effect; it increases the concerns of an adversary that, after absorbing the losses from a first strike, its surviving offensive missiles might be too depleted to penetrate the attacking country’s defenses. Similarly, silo-based multiple-warhead missiles increase the incentive for a first strike by an adversary country because, if its warheads are accurate enough, one attacking warhead can destroy multiple warheads. This is the logic that led the United States to decrease the number of warheads on each of its silo-based missiles from three to one. This should have allowed US Strategic Command to take its ICBMs off a launch-on-warning posture.2 Unfortunately, it did not.

#### No one says yes.

Michael Albertson 22, Deputy Director of the Center for Global Security Research at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, former Senior Policy Advisor in the Office of Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, former Team Lead in the Office of Strategic Stability and Deterrence Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, M.S. in Strategic Intelligence from the National Defense Intelligence College, M.A. in Security Policy Studies from The George Washington University, “Practical Pathways: Assessing Potential Formats for Arms Control with Russia and China,” Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, 11-29-2022, https://www.osti.gov/servlets/purl/1900321

The arms control foundations of definitions and goals serve as a useful lens through which to view the current impasse in U.S.-Russian bilateral, U.S.-Chinese bilateral, and U.S.-Russian-Chinese tripolar arms control. Of the three countries, only the United States has an articulated set of arms control positions. These positions are hampered by bureaucratic debates about diplomacy with Russia given Moscow’s actions in Ukraine, as well as political divides on the efficacy of arms control as a national security tool in dealing with great power competition with Russia and China. They also lack specificity in how these positions meet armaments and security objectives in a environment dominated by Russia’s war in Ukraine and the emerging two-peer problem. Russia has no concrete proposals on next steps, only a long-standing set of harsh and vague preconditions and an increasingly hostile attitude to any engagement with the United States. Moscow’s refusal to engage on further arms control measures predates the current hostilities in Ukraine, with Russia rejecting over the years a wide variety of U.S. proposals on nuclear and non-nuclear issues over the last decade. China also lacks concrete proposals on next steps, maintaining a mistrustful skepticism of arms control and reiterating outdated lines on how the onus is on the United States and Russia to disarm further before China should be involved. All of this forms a significant impasse as the lack of a concrete U.S. proposal meets Russian enmity and Chinese skepticism. The current impasse demonstrates the need for managing expectations, discarding proposals that are aspirational and outdated, and seeking the necessary and the possible in line with U.S. armaments policy in the current and projected competitive security environment.

#### China views the US with too much skepticism for arms control to succeed.

Henrik Stålhane Hiim & Magnus Langset Trøan 22, Associate Professor and Head of the Centre for International Security at the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Oslo; Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, LL.M. in International Politics from Fudan University, “Hardening Chinese Realpolitik in the 21st Century: The Evolution of Beijing’s Thinking about Arms Control,” Journal of Contemporary China, Vol. 31, No. 133, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2021.1926095

Chinese assessments reveal a significant, increasing skepticism of nuclear arms-control efforts and strong suspicion of US intentions. Even during the Obama era, many Chinese observers doubted whether the United States had abandoned its ‘hegemonist’ nuclear policy and believed the United States primarily sought to bolster its military advantage. In recent years, as US nuclear policy shifted, Chinese suspicions concurrently hardened. There is a strong tendency to see arms-control initiatives as a trap—designed by the United States to either blame China for the demise of arms control or lock in its nuclear superiority.

Chinese observers diverge in views on several issues. Most notably, some saw the shifts in US policy between Obama and Trump as dramatic, whereas others regarded the Trump administration’s nuclear policies as little more than confirmation of the United States’ continued search for ‘hegemony’. Nevertheless, a clear majority of observers operate within a realpolitik paradigm. Some may adhere to a harder realpolitik view than others, viewing arms control almost exclusively through the lenses of conflict and struggle. However, moderate voices also display ambivalence about arms-control measures and strong skepticism of the United States.

This article’s findings underscore the strong continuity in Chinese strategists’ views of arms control. Even if there was a partial rethink during the late-1990s and early-2000s, the basic realpolitik paradigm remained intact. Even during the Obama administration’s first years—when US–China tensions were relatively limited and the climate for nuclear arms control was improving—skepticism of arms control in general, and of US intensions in particular, ran strong. In recent years, the realpolitik attitude of many Chinese observers has only hardened further.

The tendency to view arms control as an arena of struggle and competition illustrates a broader tendency in China to see relations with the United States in zero-sum terms, and to believe that policymakers in Washington harbor hostile intentions. Scobell and Nathan have argued that China commonly views the United States as seeking to ‘curtail Chinese political influence and harm China’s interests’.Footnote100 Other scholars have made similar observations in specific policy areas, such as with US alliances.Footnote101

The strong suspicions of US intentions make it difficult to be sanguine about prospects for Chinese involvement in arms control. Of course, one may argue that Chinese strategists’ skepticism of US policies are well-founded, and that the most important impediment is not lack of trust, but a lack of interest. Given the large size discrepancy between the Chinese and US (as well as Russian) arsenals, and arguably a failure by the United States to present concrete alternatives that would suit China’s security interests, it is not surprising that China has rejected calls by the United States. For example, the refusal by the United States so far to consider limits on missile defense—China’s most serious concern—certainly does not improve the prospects for engaging China.Footnote102 Nevertheless, with suspicions of the United States running high, convincing China to even join talks—much less to reach any agreement—is likely to be a daunting challenge.

If present trends continue, international nuclear arms-control might not just be characterized by deadlock, but also increasingly turn into an arena where the rivalry between the United States and China plays out. China appears to have intensified its efforts to push back against perceived US domination of this agenda. Like in other arenas, Chinese and US narratives about nuclear policy are on a collision course—and the struggle to win international support for their respective narratives is intensifying.

#### China would never agree to a bilateral, nuclear-only arms control deal.

Henrik Stålhane Hiim & Magnus Langset Trøan 21, Associate Professor and Head of the Centre for International Security at the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Oslo; Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, LL.M. in International Politics from Fudan University, “China’s Atomic Pessimism and the Future of Arms Control,” War on the Rocks, 06-21-2021, https://warontherocks.com/2021/06/chinas-atomic-pessimism-and-the-future-of-arms-control

China’s deep mistrust makes it difficult to be optimistic that U.S. arms control efforts will succeed, at least in the near term. So far, the dialogue has not even started, with China reportedly unwilling to hold bilateral talks on this topic with the United States. However, while overly cynical, Chinese skepticism is not completely unwarranted. So far, there have been few specific proposals from U.S. officials about efforts that could suit China’s interests. If the Biden administration really wants to include China, it needs to demonstrate to skeptical Chinese strategists how arms control can improve China’s national security.

An agreement that limits only nuclear weapons is likely to be almost impossible to achieve. Chinese officials and analysts frequently point to the major gap between the arsenals of the United States and Russia, on the one hand, and China on the other. China’s nuclear stockpile is currently estimated to be in the “low 200s,” compared to approximately 3,800 warheads in America’s arsenal and nearly 4,500 warheads in Russia’s stockpile. Even if China’s stockpile doubles in the next decade, as the U.S. Department of Defense claims it might, a major discrepancy will remain. Unless the threshold is set very high, China is unlikely to accept a deal that would cap its arsenal in exchange for U.S. reductions.

#### China would only agree if the US reduced its arsenal size first.

Tom O’Connor 22, Senior Writer of Foreign Policy and Deputy Editor of National Security and Foreign Policy for Newsweek, “If Biden Wants to Talk Nuclear Weapons, China Says U.S. Needs Less of Them,” Newsweek, 08-17-2022, https://www.newsweek.com/if-biden-wants-talk-nuclear-weapons-china-says-us-needs-less-them-1734277

As tensions over Taiwan continue to rage with the second visit by U.S. lawmakers in as many weeks to the disputed island, the United States and China remain at odds over Washington's efforts to add limits to Beijing's growing nuclear weapons arsenal, officials from both sides told Newsweek.

The People's Republic said that if President Joe Biden's administration wants to engage in nuclear talks in good faith, he must first take steps to reduce his own country's far larger arsenal.

The U.S. push for China to join in arms control measures began under former President Donald Trump, whose administration nearly allowed the last remaining bilateral non-proliferation treaty with Russia to expire over Chinese refusals. Biden renewed the pact, known as the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), shortly after taking office and days before it would have collapsed, but he too has called for Beijing to enter into discussions as the Tenth NPT Review Conference continued in New York.

A State Department spokesperson told Newsweek that China, as one of five nuclear-armed parties to the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and one of five members of the United Nations Security Council, "has a responsibility" to "engage in talks that will reduce the risk of miscalculation and address destabilizing military dynamics."

"We have raised, and will continue to raise, strategic risk reduction issues with the PRC," the spokesperson said. "We are prepared to engage in a substantive bilateral discussion with the PRC on transparency regarding our respective security strategies and other elements of strategic risk reduction. We continue to underscore to them that these are the types of discussions that responsible powers need to have with each other."

Liu Pengyu, spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., rejected this overture, saying it was an underhanded tactic by the U.S. intended to divert attention away from its own nuclear behavior.

"The U.S. asks China to be part of the nuclear disarmament dialogue on the occasion of the Tenth Review Conference of the NPT with one purpose only, which is to deflect blame and distract attention," Liu told Newsweek.

"As the country that possesses the largest nuclear arsenal in the world," Liu said, "the U.S. should, first and foremost, act on the U.N. General Assembly documents and international consensus to fulfill its special and primary responsibilities in nuclear disarmament and take further substantial and substantive cuts to its nuclear arsenal in a verifiable, irreversible and legally binding manner, so that there can be conditions for other nuclear weapon states to be involved in the multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations."

The U.S. and Russia currently possess around 90% of the world's nuclear weapons.

In its latest assessment, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) found that as of January the U.S. had a deployed arsenal of around 1,744 nuclear warheads out of a total stockpile of 5,428, while Russia had deployed about 1,588 out of a total of 5,977. In February, the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) estimated that the U.S. had deployed around 1,644 warheads and Russia 1,588 with total inventory counts identical to those of SIPRI.

Both SIPRI and FAS placed China's nuclear warhead stockpile at just 350, almost none of which, unlike a sizable portion of U.S. and Russian warheads, were believed to be actively armed to missile systems due to the low-alert nuclear posture of the People's Liberation Army. Also dissimilar to Washington and Moscow, Beijing has always maintained a "no first use" policy, indicating China would only resort to nuclear weapons if an adversary were to use them first.

The Pentagon has nonetheless expressed concerns about a growing and advancing Chinese nuclear arsenal. The latest U.S. military report on Chinese military power published last November assessed China's stockpile could expand to 700 warheads by 2027 and at least 1,000 by 2030.

And because Beijing was never a party to the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty that restricted Washington and Moscow from fielding land-launched platforms with ranges between 310 and 3,420 miles until the pact's collapse after the Trump administration's withdrawal in 2019, China is also believed to possess potentially the world's largest arsenal of short and medium-range missiles.

U.S. Strategic Command chief Navy Admiral Charles Richard also made a number of allegations regarding China's nuclear weapons during his April testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, among them claims that China's nascent nuclear triad made it a "nuclear peer," and that Beijing was expected to "increase the role of nuclear weapons in its defense strategies."

Liu, for his part, pointed out that the U.S., which is the only nation in history to have used nuclear weapons in combat, has also conducted "more nuclear tests than any other country in the world," and that "in recent years, it has invested enormously in modernizing nuclear weapons."

"It has also publicly stated that it will not ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty in its 2018 Nuclear Posture Review report," Liu said. "From time to time, there have been noises in the U.S. advocating the resumption of nuclear tests. We hope that the U.S. side can take the lead in honoring its responsibilities and obligations as a major nuclear country and set a good example on the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons."

Such discussions were widely reported to have taken place during the Trump administration, and the Senate Armed Forces Committee's version of the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act called for at least $10 million for

reducing the time required to execute a nuclear test if necessary, though the measure was ultimately blocked by the House of Representatives.

Liu also defended Beijing's approach to nuclear weapons, arguing that "China is committed to a self-defensive nuclear strategy, and we have exercised utmost restraint in developing nuclear capabilities, which have been limited to the minimum level required by national security."

"And we have never been part of any form of arms race," he added. "The size of our nuclear arsenal is not on the same level with the U.S. At the current stage, to ask China to be part of the multilateral disarmament process is not fair, nor is it reasonable."

Though making it clear that Beijing was not interested in signing up for any nuclear weapons caps owing to a much smaller stockpile, Liu said that China was still advocating for greater non-proliferation measures on the multilateral level.

"China has been working hard to advance the international nuclear non-proliferation process," he said. "Early this year, with China's efforts, the leaders of the five nuclear countries issued a joint statement on preventing nuclear wars and avoiding arms races, stressing that 'a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.'"

That phrase was first issued decades ago by then-U.S. President Ronald Reagan and his Soviet counterpart Mikhail Gorbachev during a 1985 meeting in Geneva. The two men would go on to sign the first START in 1991 just months before the collapse of the USSR, and a year before China acceded to the NPT.

More than three decades later, Beijing is calling on Washington to make good on the treaty.

"If the U.S. can lead by example and follow in real earnest the NPT stipulations, it will mean a lot both for improving the international security environment and for ensuring global strategic stability," Liu said. "We are ready to maintain close communication with other parties on this issue, which bears on global strategic stability and security."

#### Russia won’t do arms control for obvious reasons.

Steven Pifer 23, Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology, former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, former Senior Director for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia at the National Security Council, “How the war in Ukraine hinders US-Russian nuclear arms control,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 01-17-2023, https://thebulletin.org/2023/01/how-the-war-in-ukraine-hinders-us-russian-nuclear-arms-control

After 10 months of fighting, it does not appear the Russia-Ukraine war will end any time soon. That conflict has begun to impact US-Russian nuclear arms control efforts—first by raising mistrust between Washington and Moscow to levels not seen since the height of the Cold War.

In late 2022, Moscow postponed a planned meeting of the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty’s implementing body, the Bilateral Consultative Commission, and the bilateral dialogue on broader strategic stability issues hangs in limbo. Even when—hopefully not if—the dialogue resumes, the consequences of the war will make achievement of US goals on arms control more difficult, particularly as regards limiting Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons.

Nuclear arms control on hold. The Kremlin launched its unjustified invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The war—or the latest phase of a conflict that began in 2014 when Russian forces illegally seized Crimea—is now well into its 11th month. It has not gone as Moscow hoped, however. The Ukrainian military stopped the Russian army short of Kyiv, pushed the Russians out of northern Ukraine, and conducted successful counteroffensives against Russian forces in the Kharkiv and Kherson regions.

The bilateral strategic stability dialogue was paused shortly after Russia’s assault began. But senior US and Russian officials kept stating their interest in strategic arms control, raising hope that both sides understood the merit of maintaining constraints on their nuclear competition, even at a nadir in the broader bilateral relationship. In a message in June 2022, President Joe Biden wrote “we must continue to engage Russia on issues of strategic stability” even while holding Moscow accountable for its war. Russian President Vladimir Putin’s spokesperson responded a few days later, noting that the Kremlin was “interested in [such talks]” and that the sides would need to come back to the question “sooner or later.”

The war nevertheless has affected Russia’s approach to nuclear arms control. Last summer, Washington expressed readiness to resume on-site inspections under the terms of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START). They had been suspended by mutual agreement in 2020 due to COVID concerns. However, Moscow delayed their resumption, claiming that restarting the on-site visits would not “take into account existing realities” and would lead to unilateral US advantages. Russian officials had protested that its inspectors would be hampered by US visa and travel restrictions, issues that US officials could have resolved.

In early November, Washington and Moscow agreed to a meeting of the Bilateral Consultative Commission (BCC), New START’s implementing body, which would offer a venue to work out the details for resuming inspections and to address other treaty-related questions. Having this meeting mattered for the broader discussion of strategic stability issues as well as for New START, since US officials had conditioned their readiness to resume that discussion on the treaty returning to its normal functioning.

Unfortunately, the Russian government pulled the plug on the BCC session, literally on the eve of its scheduled November 29 start day. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, attributed the decision to “technical reasons,” adding “this is not a cancellation, but a postponement.” Ryabkov continued, however, that US-Russian arms control was not “immune” from other world events, an implicit reference to the war in Ukraine. Moscow’s decision to postpone the BCC meeting appeared far more political than technical. A few days later, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov confirmed Russia’s motivation for postponing the BCC meeting: “It’s impossible to discuss strategic stability nowadays while ignoring everything that is happening in Ukraine.”

So, as we enter 2023, both the BCC and the broader strategic dialogue sit on hold.

“Unacceptable” limits on non-strategic nuclear weapons. The BCC’s delay will raise questions about how the lengthening absence of on-site inspections affects the sides’ ability to effectively monitor New START’s constraints, particularly the treaty’s limit on deployed strategic warheads. The BCC also offered the venue for discussing new kinds of strategic nuclear delivery systems, such as the Russian nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed Poseidon underwater drone, which are not captured by New START’s definitions.

Delayed resumption of the strategic dialogue will also have deleterious effects on the Biden administration’s ability to achieve the nuclear arms control objectives it articulated in 2021. Those goals include addressing limits on all US and Russian nuclear arms, including non-strategic nuclear weapons, and maintaining limits on intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and heavy bombers beyond New START’s expiration in February 2026.

One challenge confronting the Biden administration is persuading Moscow to agree to a negotiation covering all nuclear arms, including non-strategic nuclear weapons. New START deals only with “deployed” strategic warheads—the actual number of warheads atop deployed intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles, plus one warhead attributed per deployed heavy bomber. Reserve strategic ballistic missile warheads, bomber weapons beyond one per deployed heavy bomber, and all non-strategic nuclear weapons therefore fall outside of the New START constraints.

An agreement covering all US and Russian nuclear warheads seems a logical next step after New START. That would appeal to American allies for whom non-strategic nuclear weapons pose a direct threat, and the Senate’s 2010 resolution of ratification for New START called for addressing non-strategic nuclear weapons.

Getting non-strategic nuclear weapons on the negotiating table was never going to be easy. Moscow showed no interest in the Obama administration’s proposal in 2011 for a new negotiation covering all US and Russian nuclear arms. In September 2021, Ryabkov qualified the US-proposed position on non-strategic nuclear weapons as “unacceptable.”

The Russia-Ukraine war will make it harder to gain agreement to limit non-strategic nuclear weapons. Russian conventional armed forces in Ukraine have dramatically underperformed Moscow’s expectations. A larger Russian military utterly failed to achieve its initial goals in February and March, even though it was equipped with far more modern equipment than its Ukrainian foe. (Significant amounts of heavy Western arms began flowing to Ukraine only late in the spring.) This almost certainly will lead the Kremlin and the Russian military to place greater importance on non-strategic nuclear weapons as a hedge against failure at the conventional level, particularly as they assess Russian conventional force capabilities in comparison to those of NATO and China.

Moreover, in the past, Moscow insisted that all nuclear weapons be based on national territory and that the infrastructure for their support overseas be eliminated as a precondition for any negotiation on non-strategic nuclear weapons. This would effectively end the nuclear-sharing arrangements under which some 100 US nuclear gravity bombs are deployed on the territory of NATO members for use, if needed in a conflict, by US and NATO member air forces. Those weapons fulfill an assurance role for allies as well as contribute to NATO’s deterrent posture. Given Russia’s use of military force against Ukraine, NATO allies understandably attach greater importance to the presence of those weapons than before—which makes the United States practically unable to accept Russia’s request.

A decade ago already, Obama administration officials rejected the Russian demand that all US nuclear arms be withdrawn to the national territory as a precondition for negotiations on non-strategic nuclear weapons, although some officials allowed that it could be an outcome of a negotiation, depending on the other provisions of a treaty. But, in current circumstances, many NATO allies would likely oppose the withdrawal of US nuclear bombs from Europe, even if that were to unlock the path to limiting Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons.

Unequal conventional strike capabilities. A second challenge arises regarding long-range, precision-guided conventional strike weapons, an area to which Russian officials attach priority but US officials prefer to avoid. The US military deploys thousands of conventionally-armed air- and sea-launched cruise missiles and has employed them extensively over the past three decades. These systems and their increasing accuracy have prompted growing concern in Moscow. In June 2013, Putin noted that US conventional strike capabilities “could come close to strategic nuclear weapons.”

In 2017, the Russian military demonstrated its own long-range, conventionally-armed air- and sea-launched cruise missiles against targets in Syria. That raised the possibility that, as Russia fielded more of these weapons, it would become less concerned about constraining them.

The Russia-Ukraine war will affect Moscow’s calculation in this regard. First, it turns out that Russia’s precision-guided conventional weapons have problems hitting their targets. One US official last year said the failure rate of Russian air-launched cruise missiles ran from 20 percent to 60 percent. Second, the Russian military appears to have already expended many of its precision-guided conventional weapons against targets in Ukraine, meaning that the United States will continue to maintain a large numerical advantage in this category of weapons. These two factors could lead Russian negotiators to be more insistent on limiting long-range, precision-guided conventional weapons, potentially complicating any negotiation on a follow-on treaty to New START.

The clock is ticking. A third challenge stems from the decreasing amount of time available to negotiate a new agreement. A specific negotiating mandate presumably would be developed within the strategic dialogue, but that dialogue remains in limbo as the clock ticks away. Conventional wisdom holds that an arms control treaty requiring Senate consent to ratification should be finished and submitted to the Senate before presidential politics heat up. The first primaries for the 2024 presidential election loom in just about one year’s time.

The lack of time could impact the question of limits on non-strategic nuclear weapons. Effective verification of such limits would require agreement on provisions for monitoring nuclear warheads—reserve strategic nuclear weapons as well as non-strategic nuclear weapons—maintained in storage, apart from their delivery systems. This would pose more daunting verification tasks than the limits in New START, for which on-site inspections serve to confirm the declared number of strategic warheads on deployed intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles. The sides would need considerable time to work out and agree on the required monitoring provisions, and time is fleeting—looking both toward early 2024 and New START’s expiration in February 2026.

The United States and Russia have an interest in nuclear risk reduction and in constraining their competition in nuclear arms. It was clear already in 2021 that non-strategic nuclear weapons and long-range conventional strike weapons would pose difficult issues in US-Russian discussions on strategic stability, nuclear weapons, and related questions, especially considering the mistrust between Washington and Moscow. That mistrust has only deepened over the past year, and the underperformance of Russian conventional forces in Ukraine, including by their precision-guided, conventional strike systems, will make stability discussions and any resulting negotiations even more difficult and time-consuming.

### Aff ---Arsenal Transparency CP

#### It’s political infeasible in the United States.

Rogers et al. 22, Jessica Rogers, Impact Fellow at the Federation of American Scientists, J.D. from the University of California, Hastings, College of the Law, M.A. in Security Studies from the Georgetown University Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service; Matt Korda, Senior Research Associate and Project Manager for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, M.A. in International Peace and Security from King’s College London; Hans M. Kristensen, Director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, Associate Senior Fellow at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, “The long view: Strategic arms control after the New START Treaty,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Vol. 78, No. 6, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.2022.2133287

A reduction of the verification regime may not necessarily create a compliance problem, but it could create a political one. Historically, Congress has been more amenable to support and provide the resources to implement agreements with robust verification regimes, whereas agreements with relatively looser verification mechanisms, such as SORT or the US-Iran Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), have faced fierce resistance. This challenge could be exacerbated by relying exclusively on national technical means for verification, which could potentially result in the intelligence community issuing ranged estimates of Russian warheads and delivery systems rather than knowing the exact numbers of warheads and launchers. Even though using a range in place of a definite number may not significantly affect the United States’ deterrence calculations, it could produce a domestic political backlash. For instance, if the range’s upper boundary ever came too close to the treaty’s central limits, the public debate would most likely crystalize over such a high-end estimate and cast doubt about Russia’s compliance. This challenge is evident in the current debate about how many non-strategic nuclear warheads Russia has. Because these warheads are not limited and declared under a treaty, the US Intelligence Community uses a range of 1,000–2,000 warheads, of which the Pentagon uses the higher number, even though the Department of State says it includes retired warheads (US Department of State 2022, 11).

### Aff ---Hotlines CP

#### Hotlines do not work.

Bryan C. Taylor & Hamilton Bean 22, Professor of Communication at the University of Colorado Boulder, Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Utah; Associate Professor of Communication and Director of International Studies Program at the University of Colorado Denver, Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Colorado Boulder, “Close Calls: Reclaiming the Nuclear Hotline as a Communication Technology,” International Journal of Communication, Vol. 16, 2022, https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/19678

By now, it should be clear that nuclear hotline discourse primarily expresses the rational, technocentric worldviews of scientists, engineers, and military officials dedicated to managing nuclear deterrence and crisis (Rapoport, 1974; Taylor, 2019). To a significant extent, these worldviews share an orientation to the premises of cybernetics and structural-functionalism (Edwards, 1997). These premises include the automation of functionality to attain programmed goals, conformity between human and nonhuman elements, the exploitation of information to ensure both external adaptation and internal regulation, the inherent moral and political neutrality of technology, and the exclusive legitimacy of elites in developing national security systems.

As we have noted, these worldviews interact to reinforce a particular abstract conception of nuclear communication—one emphasizing its status as “information” generated by, and transmitted between, system nodes. In this conception, the primary “problems” of communication include “breakdowns” caused by channel “noise” degrading signal quality or other factors that prevent message receivers from accurately decoding intended meanings encoded by message senders. These paradigms align with a sociopsychological model of communication (Craig, 1999), which foregrounds cognitive traits and processes associated with individual processing of information, and rational choice of behavioral response. One premise of this model is that there is an “optimal” communication process that can “maximize” preferred outcomes among speakers.

While there are clearly benefits associated with this view of communication, we believe it possesses three limitations. First, it valorizes the technical means of communication, while emptying this activity of its actual properties, including form, content, and significance. As a result, this worldview may create blind spots among nuclear hotline stakeholders concerning the uniquely practical and meaningful qualities of that communication, as it is jointly enacted by those users in particular situations. Second, the prioritization of system order and stability in this worldview may lead nuclear hotline stakeholders to prematurely normalize and limit the range of communication practiced by those users. Here, the neglected question is how that practice should be designed and performed, to foster the development of both stabilizing norms and beneficial learning (Shaheen, 2021). Finally, the emphasis in this view on (if not fetish of) the functional needs of hotline users may blind stakeholders to its unofficial, more widely circulating significance. This potential is signaled by Egilsson’s conclusion (discussed above) that, currently, most demonstrated hotline functions involve its persistent symbolism for external audiences, beyond its direct use in managing crises.

This condition raises the concern that nuclear hotline stakeholders may follow other security alerting systems in dubiously perpetuating “the appearance, but not the fact” of state efficacy in crisis management (Griffin & Miller, 2008, p. 167; see also Bean, 2019). Relevant here is Miller’s (2020) conclusion that actual hotline arrangements often do not conform to the communication capabilities (e.g., automatic, direct) attributed to them. This imperative of achieving the appearance of reliability is, of course, central to the effectiveness of deterrence (e.g., in allaying public fears). But stakeholders rarely consider how this imperative may shape the development of communication systems within NC3 infrastructure. Understanding these implications becomes easier when we consider Bracken’s (2020) observation that “communications” is an awkward and neglected “outlier” in deterrence discourse:

Communications is . . . both a darling and a stepchild of deterrence. It is a darling because there’s wide agreement that a country needs to communicate red lines that might trigger nuclear use. Yet it is a stepchild because most analyses overlook what is clear to the military— the biggest military vulnerability is often [NC3] communications . . . This vulnerability makes it a prime target, but one which at a strategic level no-one admits to. (pp. 2–3)

Here, Bracken acknowledges that NC3 stakeholders may respond to the intolerable knowledge of communication’s fallibility by promoting preferred (even if unattainable) images of its viability. Our concern here is not simply that this image is inaccurate (although that is surely important), but that it creates the metaphorical equivalent of an institutional “allergy” to communication that affects the evolution of nuclear deterrence and crisis management. That allergy may continue to be triggered by innovations of the nuclear hotline, leading to its suboptimal configuration within the NC3 infrastructure. This undesirable outcome is signaled by Peters, Anderson, and Menke (2018) in their conclusion that “the United States has yet to develop a cohesive, comprehensive approach bringing together . . . the “three Cs” of deterrence: capabilities, credibility, and communication” (p. 17).

### Aff ---NFU Conditions CP

#### China will never curtail its own arsenal.

Kathrin Hille 22, Greater China Correspondent for the Financial Times, “US and China are not ready to talk about nuclear arms controls,” Financial Times, 01-11-2022, https://www.ft.com/content/c591d7e1-00f0-44d2-98f9-49f2574d2c37

The world’s five most powerful nuclear weapons states delivered a New Year surprise: by stating last week that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought”, the US, Russia, China, the UK and France signalled their willingness to tackle growing nuclear conflict risk arising from geopolitical tensions, cyber warfare and the new delivery technologies.

The move from the permanent members of the UN Security Council — the so-called P5, and also the only countries recognised as nuclear weapons states under the Nonproliferation Treaty — invokes the most important moment in the history of nuclear arms control: It repeats the language of the 1985 joint statement of US president Ronald Reagan and Soviet general secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, which led to the two superpowers’ disarmament push and the end of the cold war.

It is unlikely that last week’s initiative will yield similar results, however. The statement comes in response to pressure from non-governmental groups and non-nuclear weapons states. But nuclear weapons experts say it does nothing to address the biggest issues involving the leading nuclear powers today, namely the distrust between the US and China and Beijing’s push to modernise its arsenal.

“This is the first time the P5 has ever agreed to this kind of language, and given the level of tension, it’s astonishing they could agree on anything,” says Heather Williams, an arms control expert from Kings College who currently works as a visiting research fellow at Harvard University. “China has been supportive of this kind of a statement and sees itself as a leader in the P5 process. But the real challenge is that Beijing has not shown any interest in getting involved in strategic risk reduction.”

None of the mechanisms Washington and Moscow developed over decades to reduce the risks of nuclear miscalculation — hotlines, treaties with disarmament targets, timelines and supervision structures — apply to China so far. And Beijing has been firmly pushing back against attempts to include it in arms control negotiations, fearing it would then soon face demands to reduce its arsenal, which is much smaller than those of the US and Russia.

But Beijing has started enhancing its nuclear capabilities, both by acquiring new launch platforms and by adding warheads. Moreover, China’s nuclear doctrine differs drastically from the concepts familiar to the US and Russia. For example, Beijing believes uncertainty enhances deterrence, contrasting with the transparency and verification mechanisms underpinning arms control designed by the US and Russia.

The P5 statement could provide a glimmer of hope for an opening. “Some Chinese nuclear experts have previously argued that the US was still thinking about nuclear war with China, and this statement helps mitigate that concern to some extent,” says Zhao Tong, a professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing. “Of course a bilateral statement would have been better, but this did something. China has been an important factor behind this proposal.”

However, progress beyond these warm words looks unlikely. “China wants to see more, in fact much more: It wants the US to acknowledge that the two countries have mutual nuclear vulnerability and mutually assured destruction,” Zhao says. “By accepting that, the US would confirm it no longer pursues nuclear primacy and accepts peaceful coexistence with China.”

Neither such bilateral issues nor progress in binding Beijing into concrete risk reduction mechanisms are likely to happen at the P5.

“I would not anticipate the P5 becoming the place where a breakthrough happens,” Williams says. She believes that China is using P5 diplomacy to deflect pressure to join arms control negotiations or provide transparency about its nuclear programme.

Last but not least, arms control experts warn that rivalry between the US and China stands in the way of meaningful dialogue.

“Ten years ago I would have argued it was possible to reach strategic stability and avoid an arms race between the US and China, but not now,” says Wu Riqiang, a professor at Renmin University in Beijing. In a repeat of the history between the US and the Soviet Union, “the two sides will need to reach a much higher level of build-up until we can talk”.

#### China circumvents any NFU conditions.

Denny Roy 22, Senior Fellow at the East-West Center, Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Chicago, “The Ukraine War Might Kill China’s Nuclear No First Use Policy,” The Diplomat, 05-11-2022, https://thediplomat.com/2022/05/the-ukraine-war-might-kill-chinas-nuclear-no-first-use-policy

China and India are the only nuclear-armed countries in the world with a nuclear “no first use” policy (NFU). Beijing pledges that in the event of a conflict, China would use its nuclear weapons only after an enemy nuclear strike against China. It is in the interest of the United States and other potential adversaries that China maintain NFU, which is a unilateral Chinese strategic self-restriction. China’s NFU, however, is increasingly under strain, and the Ukraine war might provide the final persuasive impetus for Chinese leaders to dump the policy.

Strategists in China are already questioning the usefulness of NFU, proclaimed in 1964, in an era when China is a nascent great power confidently moving to change the strategic status quo in the Asia-Pacific region.

NFU seems disconnected from the dramatic expansion of China’s nuclear capabilities. The U.S. Department of Defense assesses that China’s estimated total of 250 nuclear warheads will likely increase to 1,000 by 2027. China recently demonstrated hypersonic glide vehicle and fractional orbital bombardment capabilities and is shifting its readiness posture toward keeping some of its missiles loaded with nuclear warheads in peacetime.

Chinese analysts who dislike NFU have argued that China is already at a nuclear disadvantage vis-a-vis the United States, which has a much larger arsenal, and therefore cannot afford the additional disadvantage of unilaterally restricting its own options through NFU. NFU takes away the option of attempting to block an unwanted move by an adversary by credibly threatening to escalate to the use of a tactical nuclear weapon in certain circumstances.

Furthermore, some enemy military attacks against China using conventional weapons could produce damage comparable to an attack by a tactical nuclear weapon. An example is a hypothetical strike on the Three Gorges Dam, which could cause massive death and destruction. Hence, some analysts argue that China should not base its policy on a meaningless distinction between the most powerful conventional weapons and a small nuclear weapon.

Finally, some Chinese analysts have already suggested that a “large-scale foreign military intervention” attempting to impede China’s conduct of a “war of safeguarding national unity” – obviously referring to a Taiwan Strait war scenario – should be an exception to NFU.

NFU would not be the first principle Beijing discarded because it had become obsolete. For example, during the Cold War the Chinese government proudly cited its lack of foreign military bases as proof of China’s benevolence, in contrast to “imperialist” countries such as the United States that had many overseas bases. That stance became non-viable as China grew into a major economic power with global interests that needed protecting. Beijing has dropped this position since acquiring its first unambiguous foreign base, in Djibouti, in 2017. More are on the way.

There is also precedent for Beijing interpreting, or re-interpreting, principles in a way that effectively negates them in practical policy terms. In 2015, Chinese leader Xi Jinping told U.S. President Barack Obama that “China does not intend to pursue militarization” of its newly-built artificial islands in the South China Sea. Americans understood that to mean China would not turn them into military bases. Subsequently, however, the Chinese placed fighter jets, anti-aircraft and anti-ship missiles, and signals jamming equipment on the artificial islands. Shortly after the Obama-Xi summit, a Chinese government spokesperson had explained that not “militarizing” the islands would not preclude the installation of “necessary military facilities for defense purposes only.” She added, “There is no such thing [as] China ‘militarizing’ relevant islands and reefs.” Beijing had stated what seemed a clear principle but then defined it in a way that justified behavior that seemingly violated the principle.

Some U.S. observers have long been skeptical about Beijing’s willingness to honor NFU in practice. Statements by People’s Liberation Army generals have sometimes stoked this skepticism, even if misunderstood. One well-known anecdote involves a Chinese general, often identified as Xiong Guangkai, reportedly telling U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense Chas Freeman in 1996 that China was confident U.S. forces would not try to stop China’s military conquest of Taiwan because Americans “care more about Los Angeles than they do about Taiwan,” seemingly implying that China would respond to a conventional conflict by nuking a city on the U.S. mainland – and also implying that the PLA did not take NFU seriously. Freeman, however, later clarified that what his Chinese interlocutor actually said was that unlike during the 1950s, the United States could no longer expect to cow China with nuclear threats because China now has its own nuclear retaliatory capability. It was not a disavowal of NFU, even if many Americans mis-remember it that way.

In 2005, PLA Major General Zhu Chenghu told a group of visiting Hong Kong journalists that China would use nuclear weapons if the United States intervened in a cross-strait military conflict. Zhu was then a professor at China’s National Defense University, not directly involved in formulating China’s military policy. The Chinese government reportedly reprimanded him for speaking out of turn.

There are several aspects of the Ukraine War that should discourage China from attempting to forcibly annex Taiwan. Ukraine has put up a surprisingly tough fight against a much larger and better-armed opponent, thwarting some of Russia’s apparent objectives. The swiftness and harshness of international sanctions to punish Russia for its aggression, even by countries that do significant business with Russia, was also surprising. And the war has jolted Taiwan into making better preparations against a possible military attack from China.

At the same time, however, the Chinese government saw the Russians demonstrate the utility of threatening to escalate to the use of nuclear weapons. Just before invading Ukraine on February 24, Putin publicly warned that “whoever tries to interfere” would suffer “consequences that you have never experienced in your history,” a thinly veiled reference to nuclear weapons. That threat colored NATO’s early response to the war. Discussions of the risks of a no-fly zone highlighted the danger that Russian President Vladimir Putin would retaliate with a nuclear strike. Former U.S. ambassador to NATO Kurt Volker lamented that “we have been intimidated by Russia, fearing that [Putin] might reach for a nuclear weapon.”

Beijing’s main concern in a Taiwan Strait war is the likelihood of U.S intervention, which would probably also bring in Japan as a combatant against China. Keeping the United States and Japan out of the conflict would dramatically increase the PLA’s prospects for victory. Xi’s advisers might believe there is a fair chance that if Beijing issued a Putin-like threat to go nuclear if the U.S. military got involved, Washington would decide the risk of losing a U.S. city or even an aircraft carrier battle group is unacceptable.

This thinking would build on the premise that China enjoys an asymmetry of commitment: for Beijing, Taiwan is a piece of Chinese territory and a litmus test of the CCP’s fitness to rule China, while for Washington, Taiwan is only one of many security partners in a region far from the U.S. homeland. The CCP government is therefore prepared to sacrifice millions of lives to annex Taiwan, while it doubts whether Americans could continue fighting a war that resulted in the loss of a single capital ship.

If Beijing decides it is willing to issue a nuclear threat in the hope that this will win a cross-strait war for China, it must dispense with the obstacle of NFU. The Chinese government could announce an amendment to NFU stipulating that it does not apply to the Taiwan situation or, more generally, to cases of foreigners using military force to “split Chinese territory” – in other words, a “no first use” policy that actually allows for first use. Alternatively, Beijing could say it is dropping NFU altogether, justifying the change as appropriate for China’s new great power status and necessary to counter alleged intensified U.S. efforts to “contain” China.

If it abrogated NFU, the Chinese government would correctly claim that China was only bringing its policy in line with those of the other nuclear powers. But this development would be ugly indeed if inspired by Putin’s war in Ukraine and if intended to facilitate a new and equally odious war to conquer Taiwan.

### Aff ---Off-Ramp CP

#### Russia will never agree to a nuclear fail-safe.

Dmitri Trenin 19, Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, Senior Research Fellow at the NATO Defense College, “Strategic Stability in the Changing World,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 03-21-2019, https://carnegiemoscow.org/2019/03/21/strategic-stability-in-changing-world-pub-78650

In Russia, by contrast, nuclear weapons have been gaining more prominence since the early 2000s. Putin admitted that the Russian strategic nuclear forces had been put on high alert during the 2014 crisis in Ukraine. Putin was essentially warning Washington and its allies that Russia remains a nuclear power on a par with the United States, and that Moscow won’t hesitate to use nuclear deterrence to protect its vital interests.

Discussing nuclear retaliation, Putin has said that he “has no interest” in a world without Russia, making it clear that Moscow would absolutely strike back if attacked with nuclear weapons. He has stated that launch-on-warning retaliatory strikes—launched before enemy missiles have detonated—are Russia’s main strategy for using nuclear weapons. In such a scenario, he said, “we [Russians] as the victims of an aggression, we as martyrs would go to paradise while they will simply perish because they won’t even have time to repent their sins.” However, unlike a second strike, which is launched after nuclear weapons have already reached the country’s territory, launch-on-warning retaliatory strikes carry the risk of missile warning systems errantly identifying a nuclear attack.

NATO countries believe that, in recent years, Russia has adopted a so-called “escalate-to-de-escalate” strategy: Moscow would use nuclear weapons first to end a military conflict on preferable—or, at least, acceptable—terms. Russian defense experts disagree with this interpretation, pointing to the fact that Moscow hasn’t historically relied on conducting limited nuclear war. To the contrary, Russia’s military and political leadership has traditionally believed that limiting a nuclear war is impossible. The use of tactical nuclear weapons opens the door to uncontrollable escalation. Unlike the United States, which is separated by oceans from possible theaters of war in Europe and Asia, Russia would face a nuclear war close to its borders or on its own territory.

In the aftermath of the Soviet Union’s breakup, Russia dropped the its no-first-use pledge. Its conventional armed forces had been significantly weakened and the nuclear deterrent was seen as the only guarantee of Russia’s military security. According to the current version of Russia’s military doctrine, Moscow may use nuclear weapons if the state’s existence is under threat. The pivotal question, however, is what can be considered a “threat to the state’s existence”? What about a serious military defeat that might lead to the fall of the existing regime but doesn’t threaten the lives of most Russians? No major nuclear state is likely to accept humiliating defeat in a conventional conflict.

Possible first use of nuclear weapons to de-escalate a local or regional conflict desirably is a core element of deterrence strategy. While the U.S. military is focused on protecting its allies and defeating nuclear adversaries, the Russian leadership is looking for ways to offset Washington’s enormous conventional weapons advantage. Another important consideration is the use of nuclear weapons in local or regional conflicts beyond the U.S.-China-Russia triangle. If this were to happen, the major powers would likely try to stop the conflict before it impacted the rest of the world. This, however, would require a level of strategic cooperation that is currently difficult to imagine.

In the twenty-first century, nuclear deterrence—with all of its contradictions—continues to be the primary stabilizing factor in relations between the nuclear powers. However, the global strategic environment has become much more complex than it was during the Cold War: the accelerated development of technology encourages the pursuit of strategic advantages, psychological barriers that contributed to strategic restraint in the second half of the twentieth century have decreased substantially, and doctrinal changes intended to strengthen deterrence have effectively lowered the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons.

These technological innovations and the ensuing doctrinal changes, along with geopolitical shifts, necessitate expanding the concept of strategic stability itself.

# Neg—Kritiks

## Neg---Generic

### Link---Arms Control

#### Arms control is performative incrementalism that re-legitimizes the nuclear apparatus while siphoning energy from abolition. The perm fails.

Acheson, '22 – Visiting researcher from the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, where they lead the disarmament program Reaching Critical Will (Ray Acheson; "Abolition, not arms control: against reinforcing nuclear weapons through ‘reform’"; Springer; https://link.springer.c/om/article/10.1007/s42597-022-00080-w; 12-1-2022)

Arms control as reform

In Thomas Schelling (1961, p. 723)’s formulation, arms control is an attempt to “reduce the risk of war, its scope and violence if it occurs, or the costs of being prepared for it.” Some see arms control as a step towards full disarmament. But arms control measures do not in themselves delegitimize nuclear weapons or compel divestment from them; nor does arms control reduce the impacts of the use of nuclear weapons, which will be devastating even if a single nuclear bomb is detonated again. Instead, arms control has, over decades, left both the dominant ideological and financial support for nuclear weapons intact. It has taken us further from, rather than closer to, abolition.

Arms control can be considered a system of reform, through which modifications to nuclear weapon policies and practices are undertaken without getting us closer to their elimination. In this way, arms control can arguably help to sustain nuclear weapons. Schelling (1960, p. 104) argued that arms control was “designed to preserve a nuclear striking power;” today, arms control is even used to justify building new nuclear weapons. US Secretary of Defense James Mattis told Congress in February 2018 that he supported plans for new US nuclear-armed submarine-launched cruise missiles because, “I want to make sure that our negotiators have something to negotiate with” in talks with Russia on the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (Sonne 2018, para 6).

Thinking about arms control as reform allows comparisons to be drawn to other structures of state violence, such as police, prisons, and borders. Just as police reform, prison reform, or immigration reform work to make these institutions seem more palatable while ensuring their maintenance and perpetuation, arms control can be seen as being a process by which to reform nuclear weapon policy and practice, while upholding the alleged political power and the economic profiteering of weapons of mass destruction.

Reformism is counterinsurgency, argues prison abolitionist Dylan Rodríguez (2020, para. 2). Adjusting isolated aspects of a system’s operation to protect that system from total collapse is “bad faith incrementalism” that rests “on the fundamental assumption that these systems must remain intact—even as they consistently produce asymmetrical misery, suffering, premature death, and violent life conditions for certain people and places.”

For example, a reformist approach to prison seeks to make incarceration “more humane”—which invariably involves more investments in the structures of incarceration: new jails or prisons, hiring more staff and providing “training,” more equipment, etc. Rather than addressing the root causes of incarceration—which are primarily poverty, structural inequalities, and racism—prison reform upholds and even expands the institution of the prison.

Rodríguez (2020, para. 1) explains, “reform is best understood as a logic rather than an outcome: an approach to institutional change that sustains existing social, economic, political, and/or legal systems.” In essence, “Reformism limits the horizon of political possibility to what is seen as achievable within the limits of existing institutional structures” (Rodríguez 2020, para 10). Reformism makes it more difficult to achieve the real transformations we need in our societies—both because the act of reform legitimizes the overall system, but also because it takes away energy, resources, and people power from more meaningful changes.

For example, amid growing pressure from a grassroots feminist abolitionist movement to close Rikers Island Correctional Facility in New York City because of horrific conditions and human rights abuses, the NYC mayor’s office finally proposed closing the facility—and opening in its place four new jails at the estimated price of 11 billion USD. This plan “would clearly expand, not shrink, the footprint of incarceration in the city of New York,” note Davis et al. (2022, p. 73). In addition, it will siphon public money to for-profit corporations. Instead, abolitionists argue, this money should be used to address the conditions that lead to incarceration in the first place: housing for all, mental health services, harm reduction programs, education, and ending extreme poverty and food insecurity. This is just one example, but it provides a clear picture of how reform reinvests in institutions of violence, rather than helping to dismantle them, rather than preventing harm to human beings.

2 Nuclear reformism

The same reformist instinct is embedded within nuclear arms control. A look at the suggested “reforms” to nuclear weapon possession suggested by arms control provides a clear picture. Considered to be the only “practical,” “feasible,” and “realistic” approach to nuclear disarmament, for decade after decade the same arms control “steps” have been put forward by nuclear-armed states and their allies: ban nuclear testing, stop production of fissile material for nuclear bombs, be more transparent about nuclear arsenals, reduce the context in which governments would consider the use of nuclear weapons, etc. These all sound like reasonable steps—until you learn that the same measures have been talked about by governments since the 1950s without effective action. Or until you realize that during these decades of discussions, the nuclear-armed states have been investing billions of dollars into the modernization and expansion of their arsenals. Or until you understand that many “nuclear force reductions” are actually “nuclear force restructurings”—for example, as nuclear forces expert Hans Kristensen (2010, para 3) points out, the 2010 New Strategic Arms Control Treaty “does not require destruction of a single nuclear warhead and actually permits the United States and Russia to deploy almost the same number of strategic warheads” that they already deployed.

The process of reform does not advance disarmament; it stalls it indefinitely by constantly repackaging adjustments that are never actually taken up by any of the governments proposing them. The endless discussions about possible reforms provide an illusion of serious efforts. But the reality falls far short of the rhetoric. While governments hold countless meetings about their latest “progressive agendas,” nuclear weapons continue to put everyone in peril. Portraying themselves as being committed to nuclear disarmament, the nuclear-armed states and their allies deny harms, defer action, avoid responsibility, and try to repress confrontation. On the one hand they assert that they desire nuclear abolition, yet simultaneously prevent any meaningful action that could achieve it—and invest in nuclear armament instead. In short, arms control enables a performance of responsibility and statesmanship and misdirection. It allows for management of episodic public concerns about nuclear dangers—as Joseph Nye (1991, p. x) has argued, “Arms control has crucial political roles. The first is to reassure the publics in democracies.”

Yet even those arms control measures that have been adopted are coming apart at the seams. The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), adopted in 1968, has been mostly successful in stopping the spread of nuclear weapons around the world. However, the nuclear-armed states that are party to that treaty have not complied with the legal obligation contained in the treaty to eliminate their nuclear weapons—which was part of the “grand bargain” in exchange for other countries never acquiring atomic bombs. Article VI of the NPT requires the five NPT nuclear-armed states “to pursue in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament.” But not only have they not complied with this legal obligation, they also have refused to accept responsibility for failing to comply with the Treaty or with commitments made in 1995, 2000, and 2010 to implement the nuclear disarmament provisions, or to accept new commitments to do so in 2015 or 2022.

Other piecemeal efforts for nuclear arms control, including the call by several think tanks and non-governmental organizations for the US government to adopt a “no-first-use” policy, have also not only stalemated, but have arguably detracted from disarmament. No-first-use is essentially a declaration that a government will not use nuclear weapons in a first strike, but only in “defense” in the case of a nuclear attack. But again, such a policy does not affect the material reality of nuclear weapons—it leaves nuclear forces and deployments intact, while relying on the commitment of the president to refrain from a first strike. It also discounts the fact that the catastrophic impacts of a nuclear weapon detonation are the same whether they are part of a first or second strike—hundreds of thousands of people will still be murdered instantly, turned to shadows and smudges amidst the radioactive firestorm. Millions more will die in a wider nuclear exchange; most of humanity may perish from the resulting global famine.

The performativity of arms control, whether considered counterinsurgency or not, has meant that operational policies related to “nuclear deterrence” have become twinned with arms control, just like prisons are twinned with parole and probation. This is why abolition is the only answer. Until nuclear weapons are eliminated, any arms control measures are akin to moving around ticking time bombs on a chessboard. Reformism reifies rather than liberates us from the inherent violence, discrimination, exclusion, and inequality generated by nuclear weapons. Yet another insidious counterinsurgency tactic of reformism is to co-opt the language of inclusion and equality in an attempt to negate or deflect critique.

#### Cements a nuclearized world order that normalizes everyday violence and reproduces destructive militarism.

Acheson, '22 – Visiting researcher from the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, where they lead the disarmament program Reaching Critical Will (Ray Acheson; "Abolition, not arms control: against reinforcing nuclear weapons through ‘reform’"; Springer; https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42597-022-00080-w; 12-1-2022)

But disarmament and abolition are not the dominant processes at work in international discourses or endeavors in relation to nuclear weapons. Given the economic and political profits generated by nuclear weapons, some politicians, government officials, and certain elements of the non-governmental and academic industrial-complex see more value in controlling nuclear weapons rather than eliminating them.

Nine countries spend more than 70 billion United States dollars (USD) a year on nuclear weapons; most of this is taxpayer money going to fund private weapon contractors for maintenance of nuclear weapon laboratories and weapon systems. These contractors in turn fund lobbyists, think tanks, and academic institutions to uphold the nuclear mission. Politicians with nuclear weapon facilities in their districts have incentive to ensure the continued maintenance of a broad nuclear arsenal. Governments that possess the bomb have articulated a certain kind of omniscient power derived from their ability to end the world; they posit the “need” for nuclear weapons outweighs the risks, fashioning a narrative that suggests nuclear weapons keep the peace through their threat of use. This narrative forms the basis for public support for nuclear weapons; many people who believe in nuclear deterrence theory do so uncritically, unaware of the economic and political manipulation behind the myth.

In this context, the mainstream approach to nuclear weapons is that they are necessary and legitimate; that they must be maintained and kept operational in order to maintain a credible “deterrent”; and that arms control is sufficient to ensure safety, security, and stability in a nuclearized world order.

But arms control and non-proliferation, while helping in some cases to secure weapon stockpiles or prevent diversion of nuclear materials, do not on their own reduce nuclear violence—including the everyday violence generated by nuclear weapon production, testing, storage, or use. Arms control and non-proliferation also do not reduce the perceived “need” for nuclear weapons. Instead, arms control maintains the structures and thinking that makes nuclear weapons appear to be the only credible response to violence or uncertainty in the world. Arms control upholds, rather than challenges, the ways in which militarism governs international relations, determines states’ budgets, and creates harm globally.

By perpetuating the permanence of nuclear weapons, the arms control framework thus risks mass destruction. The longer nuclear weapons exist, the longer they are treated as credible objects needing control rather than immediate elimination, and the greater the risk of their use will be. Any use of nuclear weapons will have catastrophic consequences for people and the planet.

Arms control bestows prestige upon nuclear weapons. As a system of organizing who gets to have what weapons and how many weapons, arms control maintains inequalities between states. Some countries are “responsible” enough to have the bomb and others are not. This dichotomy is incredibly racialized and gendered, with Western, Global North countries generally considered to be more “responsible” nuclear stewards, and nuclear policy framed as belonging to the realm of masculinized rationality and strength. While arms control and non-proliferation measures can help ensure that nuclear weapons do not proliferate globally, these processes are rarely non-political. The rules of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, for example, are strictly applied against some governments and overlooked when it comes to others. The International Atomic Energy Agency inspects non-nuclear-armed states, but not those countries possessing nuclear weapons. Historically, arms control has set up a tiered system that does not object to nuclear weapons per se, but only to certain nuclear-armed states or behavior.

### AT: Perm---Generic

#### Permutation fails – denuclearism as an institutional apparatus extends the reach of the state and ensures endless violence

Biswas 14 (Shampa Biswas - Paul Garrett Professor of Political Science at Whitman College, “Nuclear Desire: Power and the Postcolonial Nuclear Order”, University of Minnesota Press, 2014, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt9qh3p6>, MG)

**It is not unusual for books on nuclear politics to end with blueprints— detailed step-by-step proposals—to get us to the utopia of a nuclear-free world. Most of these look to the state to deliver us to that world**, as do the bulk of efforts contained within the NNP that I described in chapter 1. But this book is much more about institutionalized forms of global inequality than how to pursue nuclear security or nuclear disarmament. Indeed, I have argued that **if inequality or hierarchy were at the center of our analysis, we would see that nuclear weapons and energy programs are always already harmful to some and enormously beneficial to** others. If we were to learn to think of the “costs” of nuclear weapons in the more expansive sense suggested in chapter 4, we would see that the costliness of nukes is more apparent in the peripheries of nuclear production than in the centers of nuclear decision making. So **instead of looking to the pursuers of nuclear power**, or for that matter, the consumers of more security and cheap electricity, **perhaps we need to look to those exploited, displaced, tested on, and in general the most vulnerable to nuclear use and accidents for a path toward nuclear zero. Or instead of focusing one’s energies on strengthening treaties such as the NPT or even bemoaning the end of the mass antinuclear peace movements in the West, perhaps we could turn our attention to facilitating and resuscitating the many grassroots anti-imperialist movements in many corners of the world** (Vanaik 2009). **What can we learn about “security” and the harms of nuclear possession and proliferation if we really tried listening to the subaltern?**

Critical of what he sees as “fashionable” attempts at indiscriminate expansion of the concept of security to concerns of environmentalism, human rights, and emancipation, Ayoob argues for holding on to a more conventional definition of state security, especially for third world states that can ill-afford these luxuries that more stable and affluent societies can enjoy (Ayoob 1997, 125–28; 2002, 40). However, **proposals for deepening or expanding the concept of security argue against subscribing to an abstract notion of security, making the case for restoring the experiential basis of security in people’s everyday lived practices** (Tuchman 1989; Booth 1991; Tickner 1993; Jones 1999). **Such accounts claim that global climate change, domestic violence, migration, corporate practices, and economic policies all affect people’s actual experience of security, some even suggesting replacing state security with the more inclusive category of “human security.” In that sense, calls to “re-vision,” “re-map,” “democratize,” “gender,” “race,” or “humanize” the concept of security appear to make the case for including the subaltern experience of insecurity. But subscribing to the logic of security in making the case for the subaltern voice is to surrender even more ground to the authority of the state, its vision of political order, and the institutional violence through which it maintains that order** (Neocleous 2008). **Rather than an ontologically preexisting condition, the demarcation of areas of “insecurity” has, after all, always accompanied the provision of security** (Weldes et al. 1999; Dillon 1996). **As “the master narrative of the state,” security is the technology through which the liberal, capitalist order is maintained and, ultimately, political practices neutralized and human lives administered** (Neocleous 2008). In that sense, **nuclear harms should simply be added to the long list of “shared human vulnerabilities” that could, in principle, enhance a global sensibility and global ethic, but securitizing such felt vulnerabilities is to extend the reach and power of the state, through the institutions of which we cannot hear the subaltern. Instead of speaking in the voice of the subaltern state to demand inclusion in an unequal world, perhaps we are better off looking to the subaltern made expendable in the production of a statist global order.**

In her response to critics, Spivak clarifies that it is not that the subalterns didn’t speak but that “if there was no valid institutional background for resistance, it could not be recognized” (Spivak 2010b, 228). **Resistance to uranium mining, nuclear testing, nuclear deployment, siting of nuclear power plants, storage of nuclear waste, by local communities directly affected by nuclear power, has existed for almost as long as the pursuit of nuclear power by states. Members of the Navajo Nation in uranium mining areas in the United States, villagers resisting nuclear power in Kudankulam in southern India, fishers and farmers all over Japan currently, have been speaking their sorrows and their rage in all manners of protests—some organized, some dispersed, some desperate**. These do not all form one cohesive, singular opposition to nuclearization, and some are linked to the vast apparatus of the NNP regime in complex and contradictory ways. Neither are these groups entirely outside of the state, and **the demands they make are often directed to the state. But it is not states**—neither President Obama as the representative of the most prominent nuclear weapons state nor an Iranian leader speaking in the name of the subaltern state—**that we should expect to convince us of the urgency of nuclear zero**. In a world with far too many nuclear weapons and a growing consensus on nuclear energy as the solution to the limitations of fossil fuels, **perhaps we may get to peace when we can find ways to hear the demands for justice that come from the subaltern, voices that we cannot hear when filtered through the institutional apparatus of the state.**

### AT: Perm---Nuclear War Rhetoric

#### The permutation sabotages political imagination – they catastrophize nuclear war and falsely universalize human agency, which collapses nuclear protest into a reinforcement of current institutional politics.

Considine, '16 – Associate Professor of International Politics (Laura Considine; "The ‘standardization of catastrophe’: Nuclear disarmament, the Humanitarian Initiative and the politics of the unthinkable"; European Journal of International Relations; https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1354066116666332#tab-contributors; 09-13-2016)

Cliché and the ‘déjà-dit’

The fact that nuclear language often falls into the rut of familiar themes and phrases has been well-established. There is much work across disciplines on the dominance of certain ways of speaking about nuclear weapons: on the standard tropes of guilt, redemption and responsibility (Peoples, 2016, Taylor et al, 2007; Taylor, 2010), on prevailing themes of mystery, secrecy, potency and entelechy (Kinsella, 2005), on the highly gendered language in nuclear strategy (Cohn, 1987) and on Nukespeak (Aubrey, 1982, Chilton, 1982, 1985: 21 Hilgartner et al, 1982; Schiappa, 1989). Indeed, the very idea of saying something ‘meaningful’ in the face of nuclear holocaust has often been characterised in literature as impossible (Schley, 1983; Schwenger, 1986) for, as Martin Amis writes, ‘everything that adapts to the nuclear reality is going to look preposterous – or ugly, or insane, or just preternaturally trivial’ (2002: 47). The language of the Humanitarian Initiative repeats many continuities and clichés, what Senn and Elhardt call the ‘commonplaces’ (2013: 326), of nuclear discourse. These commonplaces include conceiving of nuclear weapons as an ‘existential threat’ and as approaching ‘a point of no return’ with nuclear disarmament as ‘a possible way out’ (2013: 326). It also features what Masco describes as ‘an imagined end of the nation, or the human species’ which, he claims, ‘continues to this day to enable social movements both for and against the construction of the US nuclear complex’ (2006: 4). This can be seen by comparing the text of the Humanitarian Pledge, adapted by the UNGA in Resolution 70/48 (2015), with several historic UNGA documents on nuclear disarmament. These texts rest on the same fundamental bases. First, that the threat is both urgent and ‘unprecedented’ (UNGA, 1978), a ‘new and disastrous war’ (UNGA, 1959) which has ‘reached a dangerous stage’ with increasing proliferation (UNGA, 1961) or, as the pledge states, presents a risk that ‘is significantly greater than previously assumed and is indeed increasing with increased proliferation’ (UNGA, 2015). Secondly, that any use of nuclear weapons would bring about ‘indiscriminate suffering’ (UNGA, 1961) and destruction to mankind because of its ‘unacceptable humanitarian consequences’ (UNGA, 2015), and is thus ‘contrary to the laws of humanity and to the principles of international law’ (UNGA, 1961). Thirdly, that all states are affected by the threat and therefore ‘share the responsibility’ (UNGA, 2015) so must be ‘actively concerned with and contribute to the measures of disarmament’ (UNGA, 1978). Finally, that this action is necessary now to secure the ‘very survival of mankind’ (UNGA, 1978), for both ‘present and succeeding generations’ (UNGA, 22 1959), or, as put in the Humanitarian Pledge, ‘the very survival of humanity’ (2015). These texts assume a common responsibility to ‘humanity’ and to future generations that demands global cooperation ‘in efforts to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons’ (UNGA, 2015).

But, while the link between nuclear weapons and cliché has been previously established, this paper claims that this is not just a discursive side effect of a repeated cycle of nuclear power politics but that cliché, as part of the dominant framing of the nuclear as unthinkable with all its consequences, actually perpetuates the political status quo rather than simply reflecting it. Analysing the repetitive nature of the discourse in terms of cliché can highlight not only the current circumscription of the call for rethinking the unthinkable into a process of collectively re-knowing nuclear weapons, but also how this circumscription is an inevitable result of the restrictions of the original framing of nuclear weapons in terms of the politics of the unthinkable. A cliché is a phrase or opinion that is overused, considered trite and lacking in originality. Cliché, as such, has not received much specific attention in literary theory but is instead often subsumed into the terms of kitsch or stereotype (Norberg, 2010). Indeed, the idea of cliché might seem like a superficial critique of the politics of nuclear weapons, as mere grousing over style rather than engaging substantively with ‘the issues’: as not a meaningful criticism but an everyday throwaway comment on form. However, the cliché is in fact a useful frame through which to examine the limitations of our understanding of the nuclear for several reasons.

Cliché is about the formulaic, about a mechanical reproduction of function in speech. The cliché does not exist in classical rhetoric and only came into being at the end of the 19th century, referring to the sound made by the stereotype block used in mass printing and later 23 associated with photographic negatives (Princeton, 2012: 267). It originally referenced an industrial technique and its associated concept of repetition was thus intrinsically linked to the development of mechanical reproduction (Norberg, 2010). As Ruth Amossy (1982) notes, before this, repetition was less associated with the idea of overuse and its accompanying negative connotations, and more with the accepted use of stock examples to tell stories. To be alert to cliché thus supposes a move away from the previous ‘canonical use of tropes’ to a ‘dichotomy between Creation and Imitation, Originality and Banality, the Individual and the Collective’ (1982: 35). To label something as cliché is to make a judgement on an expression’s overuse but also, as Jakob Norberg writes, to link ‘questions of verbal form to the study of maintained consensus within groups’ (2010: 76). Because the cliché is about intelligibility, the reader or listener doesn’t need to work out its meaning because they are already ‘in full possession’ of its total recognisability and indisputability (Norberg, 2010: 77). In this way, the cliché in its very form is profoundly non-political, for, as Hannah Arendt states, it protects us against any ‘claim on our thinking’ (in Norberg, 2010: 85).

Amossy notes that cliché ‘dis-originates’ speech (1982: 35). The cliché is something that must exist in its recognition and recognition of overuse requires a familiarity with a preceding discourse, with the ‘déjà-dit’ (Amossy, 1982: 34). Because cliché is subsumed into the ‘déjà dit’, the prevalence of cliché in nuclear speech highlights how this political discourse does not need an originator, it is a self-perpetuating cycle stemming from the idea of the unthinkable, an unvarying, repeated call for the need for rethinking. Rather than just an aesthetic judgement, to call attention to the cliché that is widespread in non-proliferation and disarmament discourse is therefore to call attention to a conversation where meaning is completely set and agreed, where there is a lack of a need for active engagement but instead the mechanical repeated statements of, for example, the unthinkable and unspeakable 24 consequences of nuclear weapons. The Humanitarian Initiative may have been hailed as an innovative and transformative move but if so, it is one that resides not only in the longestablished institutions of international politics but also completely within its equally longestablished understandings and modes of speech, where everything is already fully intelligible. Examining the non-proliferation and disarmament discourse in terms of cliché therefore exposes the lack of politics as contestation in the current debate.

Furthermore, putting focus on the form of nuclear speech rather than questioning its content does not have the underlying assumption of much work on nuclear discourse, for example the literature on nukespeak, that there is somehow a deeper ‘reality’ of nuclear weapons to get to if only we were not inhibited by technocratic or euphemistic language. It also does not claim that we can solve the political problem of nuclear weapons by speaking them in a different way. Looking at the form of language and its repeated patterns through cliché and thereby asking what this could expose about the limitations of our political understanding of the nuclear itself, is different to the claim that we simply need to change the words that we use or the value we collectively assign to nuclear weapons. Trying to transform how we speak nuclear weapons while limited by the very same ways of speaking is itself conducive to the repetition that this paper has identified. Focusing on the form of cliché is one way of illuminating this repetition as the first step to understanding these limits. Placing critique on the form of expression rather than changing content is an attempt to expose the underlying formal limitations of the discourse, which are not a matter of calling things by their ‘real’ names but of how existing nuclear discourse is based on a structure of language that assumes a particular set of characteristics for its object and is limited by the implications of this assumption.

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Hannah Arendt sketched the most notorious example of this distinction in her reports of the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1963. Her characterisation of Eichmann’s inability to speak without using cliché is not the same as his use of what she terms the ‘language rules’ of the Nazi regime, which sanitised atrocities through euphemism and bureaucratic language (1994: 108). In fact, it was Eichmann’s ‘inability to think’ (1994: 49) as expressed in cliché that made him so receptive to these language games, according to Arendt. She notes, ‘officialese became [Eichmann’s] language because he was genuinely incapable of uttering a single sentence that was not a cliché’ (1994: 48). Similarly, it is the limitations of the form of the dominant means of rethinking the nuclear, exposed by the reliance on cliché that can illuminate how, as William Kinsella (2005: 57) contends, these responses ‘have been constrained by the same deep structure of meanings that produced the nuclear situation.’ Cliché points to the limitations of the framing of ‘the unthinkable’ and the ensuing receptiveness of the discourse on nuclear weapons to euphemistic and bureaucratic language, rather than attempting to find a better way to speak the nuclear within this current form.

Finally, thinking about cliché as reproduction of the ‘déjà-dit’ also reveals something about how the advent of the nuclear age was assimilated into earlier discourses. It highlights how nuclear talk became cliché almost instantly and how the ‘deep structure of meaning’ that Kinsella (2005) identifies was in place even before the weapons themselves existed. Nuclear discourse was cliché straight from the outset. As early as 1945 the humourist Frank Sullivan, writing for the New York Times as ‘Mr. Arbuthnot, the Cliché Expert’, satirised the oftenused phrases and early clichés still recognisable today, such as the inevitable use of the verb ‘usher’ in descriptions of the ‘ushering’ in of the atomic age’ (1996: 24). 15 ‘Harness’ Mr. Arbuthnot says to his interlocutor in the piece, who asks ‘Harness, Mr. Arbuthnot? What 26 about it?’- ‘Harness and unleash’ he replies, ‘You had better learn to use those two words, my boy, if you expect to talk about the atom.’ 16 That this language of cliché on nuclear weapons was so quickly established in the 1940s is, according to Spencer Weart (2012), a result of the fact that the set of meanings and language around nuclear weapons pre-dates the weapons themselves. When President Truman made the first public speech to announce the atomic bomb, the world public ‘immediately associated the news with certain long established images which held important personal meanings for almost everyone’ (Weart 1985). This was due to the fact that journalists and other writers had been writing for decades previously on radiation and atomic energy, HG Wells coined and popularised the term ‘atomic bomb’ as far back as 1913, and this language of the atomic age tapped in to an even earlier world of myth around themes of alchemy, transmutation, science fiction and millennialism (Weart, 2012). Indeed, Boyer notes that what is remarkable, though perhaps not surprising, about the early nuclear discourse is the ‘general banality and lack of originality’ (1985: 136) of the content and the extent to which calls for new thinking simply reproduced previous principles, concerns and assumptions about the world. The effort to speak the unthinkable must fall short and collapse into cliché and the ‘déjà-dit’, for any attempt to ‘think the nuclear sublime’ as Ferguson writes, ‘dwindles from the effort to imagine total annihilation to something very much like the calculations of exactly how horrible daily life would be after a significant nuclear explosion’ (1984: 7). The ensuing pattern of nuclear protest as a standardised repetition of the horrible imposes a limit on political action and imagination.

## Neg---Fem IR K

### Link---Non-Proliferation

#### Non-proliferation regimes draw upon hegemonic masculine conceptions that claim the mantle of “protection” against uncivilized nuclear possessors. That rationalizes Western nuclear aggression and causes endless wars.

Cohn et al., '05 – Director of the Boston Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights, and a Senior Research Scholar at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Carol Cohn, Felicity Hill, Sara Ruddick; "The Relevance of Gender for Eliminating Weapons of Mass Destruction"; Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission; https://genderandsecurity.org/sites/default/files/the\_relevance\_of\_gender\_for\_eliminating\_weapons\_of\_mass\_destruction\_-\_cohn\_hill\_ruddick.pdf; 2005)

Gender and Proliferation

“Proliferation” is not a mere description or mirror of a phenomenon that is “out there” but rather a very specific way of identifying and constructing a problem concerning weapons. Proliferation, as used in Western political discourse, does not simply refer to the “multiplication” of weapons of mass destruction on the planet. Rather, it constructs some WMD as a problem, and ~~turns a blind eye to~~ [neglects] others. With nuclear weapons, for example, it is able to do this by assuming pre-existing, legitimate possessors, implicitly not only entitled to those weapons, but to modernise and develop new generations of them as well. The “problematic” nuclear weapons are only those that “spread” into the arsenals of other, formerly non-possessor states. This is the basis for the “licit/illicit” distinction commonly found in arms control discourse, which does not refer to the nature of the weapons themselves, nor even to the purposes for which they are intended, but on who possesses them. The nuclear non-proliferation regime enshrined “we got there first” as a basis for arms control.

Most people in the world view WMD as intrinsically morally indefensible, no matter who possesses them. In addition to the abhorrence attached to their use, the wide array of social, economic, political and health costs associated with their development and deployment are repugnant. Rejecting proliferation discourse’s implicit division of “good” and “bad,” “safe” and “unsafe” WMD, (defined as such depending on who possesses them), it is imperative now to understand how some WMD are rendered invisible or benign (ours) and others visible and malignant (theirs).

In drawing a distinction between “the Self” and the (generally non-Western) “Unruly Other”, the prevailing arguments against proliferation appear patronising, ethno-racist and contemptuous. Not only does non-proliferation discourse draw on Occidentalist portrayals of third world actors; it does so through the medium of gender-laden terminology. For example, the nuclear possessors’ Self is responsible, prudent, rational, advanced, mature, restrained, technologically and bureaucratically competent (and thus “hegemonically masculine”). By contrast, the Unruly Others are irrational, unpredictable, emotional, uncontrolled, immature, primitive, undisciplined, incompetent, technologically backward (marks of an inferior or “subordinated” masculinity). Hence the terms of the debate are constructed to normalise and legitimate the Self/possessor states keeping weapons that the Others must be prevented from acquiring. By drawing on and evoking gendered imagery and resonances, the discourse naturalises the idea that “We” (the responsible father or sheriff) must protect, control and limit the “uncivilised”, out-of control “rogue” states – for their own good, as well as for ours.

This Western proliferation discourse has had a function in the wider context of US national security politics. With the end of the “Evil Empire” of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, until the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States appeared to be without an enemy sufficiently threatening to justify maintaining its sprawling military-industrial establishment. This difficulty for the military-industrial complex was forestalled by the construction of the category of “rogue states”, with governments portrayed as uncontrollable, irresponsible, irrational, malevolent, and antagonistic to Western values. Their unruliness and hostility is represented as intrinsic to their irrational nature, for to view the antagonism as politically rooted would have necessitated some soul-searching analysis into the role of Western policies and actions in contributing to disorder and breakdown in other states and regions. The discourse of WMD proliferation has been one of the principal means of portraying certain states as major threats. To say this is neither to back away from our position opposing all weapons of mass destruction, nor to argue about the degree to which WMD in the hands of “Other” states actually do threaten the United States, local populations, regional neighbours or international security. The point is that the underlying gendered symbolism in the WMD proliferation discourse helps make it feel natural and legitimate to fight wars and spend money on military programmes such as ballistic missile defence, which would otherwise be difficult to justify on rational security grounds.

### Link---Nukes

#### Their quest for nuclear weapons control reflects the drive for hegemonic masculine power, which posits peace as “submissive” and guarantees disarmament’s failure.

Cohn et al., '05 – Director of the Boston Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights, and a Senior Research Scholar at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Carol Cohn, Felicity Hill, Sara Ruddick; "The Relevance of Gender for Eliminating Weapons of Mass Destruction"; Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission; https://genderandsecurity.org/sites/default/files/the\_relevance\_of\_gender\_for\_eliminating\_weapons\_of\_mass\_destruction\_-\_cohn\_hill\_ruddick.pdf; 2005)

Weapons of mass destruction are not only physical objects, they are political objects; their symbolic importance is key in national and international security debates, as well as in domestic politics. And one aspect of political discourse – so obvious as to be usually taken for granted – is that gendered terms and symbols are an integral part of how political issues are thought about and represented, and an integral part of the image-production associated with political leaders. There is often, for instance, an anxious preoccupation with affirming manhood on the part of candidates for political office, for whom it is dangerous to be seen as “soft” or “wimpish”: recent US politics provides the example of the fevered Republican efforts to undermine presidential candidate John Kerry’s image as a leader by undermining his portrayal as a courageous warrior in Vietnam; or the pre-election spectacle of President George W. Bush striding across the deck of an aircraft carrier in his flight suit, proclaiming victory in Iraq in front of a “mission accomplished” banner.

There are also many instances in which political masculinity is linked with preparedness to use military action and to wield weapons. During the first Bush administration 1988-1992, for example, the US media speculated whether George H. W. Bush had finally “beat the wimp factor” by going to war against Iraq. In these and other cases, we see the link between war and a heroic kind of masculinity, which depends on a feminised and devalued notion of peace as unattainable, unrealistic, passive and (it might be said) undesirable.

But it is not only the political context within which weapons of mass destruction are situated that is deeply gendered. So are the practical and symbolic dimensions of weapons themselves. This is perhaps most obvious in relation to small arms. Governments and international institutions are increasingly accepting that small arms and light weapons (SALW) are practically associated with masculinity in many cultures, with men as the vast majority of the buyers, owners or users. After early policy failures, it is also becoming increasingly recognised that the symbolic associations of SALW with masculinity have political effects. Specifically, in relation to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes, real barriers to effective SALW disarmament are created by the ways in which masculine identities and roles have become conjoined with weapons possession for many (male) combatants.

There is now general recognition that there are significant gender dimensions to the possession of small arms and light weapons. It would be naive to assume that this association suddenly becomes meaningless when we are talking about larger, more massively destructive weapons. And more naïve still to think that it doesn’t matter. Given the dubious military value and problematic usability of most WMD, a focus on their symbolic dimensions has to be central to any effort at weapons reduction or disarmament. Without gender analysis, attempts to untangle and understand the symbolic value and meaning of WMD are incomplete and inadequate.

Some brief examples illustrate this important dimension. When India exploded five nuclear devices in May 1998, Hindu nationalist leader Balasaheb Thackeray explained “we had to prove that we are not eunuchs”. An Indian newspaper cartoon depicted Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee propping up his coalition government with a nuclear bomb. “Made with Viagra” 3 the caption read. Images such as these rely on the widespread metaphoric equation of political and military power with sexual potency and masculinity. Political actors incorporate sexual metaphors in their representations of nuclear weapons as a way to mobilise gendered associations and symbols in creating assent, excitement, support for, and identification with the weapons and their own political regime; in other words, the symbolic gendered dimensions of nuclear weapons are not trivial; they are an integral part of accomplishing domestic and political objectives.

That a nation wishing to stake a claim to being a regional or world power should choose nuclear weapons as its medium for doing so is too frequently characterised as “natural”: advanced military destructive capacity identifies a state as powerful. The “fact” that nuclear weapons are being instituted as the currency for establishing a hierarchy of state power is unremarked, unanalysed, and taken for granted by most analysts. By contrast, feminist theory, using a historical and post-colonial lens, is better able to understand nuclear weapons’ enshrinement as the emblem of power not as a natural fact, but as a social one, produced by the actions of states. Thus, when the United States, with the most powerful economy and conventional military in the world, acts as though its power and security are guaranteed only by a large nuclear arsenal, it creates a context in which nuclear weapons become the ultimate necessity for, and symbol of, state security. And when the United States (or any other nuclear power) works hard to ensure that other countries don’t obtain nuclear weapons, it is creating a context in which it is perceived as keeping other nations down, to subordinate and emasculate them – to render them eunuchs! Hence, regardless of their military utility nuclear weapons are turned into the ultimate arbiter of political/masculine power. Balasaheb Thackeray did not invent the meaning of India’s nuclear tests out of thin air.

### Link---Disarmament

#### Disarmament is shrouded in masculine techno-science that trades abolition for rampant nuclearization, justified under the guise of the “responsible nuclear state.”

Sreekumar, ’22 – Doctoral Researcher at the University of Adelaide, PhD in Politics and International Relations (Anand Sreekumar; "The Relevance of Gender for Eliminating Weapons of Mass Destruction"; Oxford University Press; https://academic.oup.com/ia/article-abstract/98/4/1189/6628405?redirectedFrom=fulltext#364435741; 07-05-2022)

I begin by reviewing the rich vein of scholarship that has employed a range of postcolonial, feminist and Gandhian frames to demonstrate how the Indian state has legitimized nuclearization through colonial and neo-colonial, gendered and racialized structures and discourses. Against the backdrop of the emergence of nuclearism and its attendant neo-colonial masculinity, which has structured relations of power across the world,18 nuclearization was seen as important for garnering international, geopolitical and domestic legitimacy for the Indian postcolonial state.19

As Priya Chacko explains, this development also has to be seen in the historical context of British colonial modernity and its politics of masculine forms of science and technology, which led to multiple gendered and racialized responses in the Indian anti-colonial nationalist landscape.20 While the Gandhian response during the anti-colonial struggles sought to valorize femininity and the politics of indigenous non-exploitative technology, it was subsumed by the Nehruvian paradigm, spearheaded by India’s first prime minister after independence, Jawaharlal Nehru. This paradigm was far more ambivalent, reflecting a faith in both the perils and promises of colonial modernity and masculine techno-science, manifested in the coexistence of rampant nuclearization alongside discourses on disarmament reiterating ‘a self-image of morality and ethical conduct’.21

However, of late, even this delicate balance has come under threat with the rise of Hindutva, a paradigm rooted in a communal, hypermasculine response to British colonialism. This has been manifest in the rise during the 1990s of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party or BJP (today the governing party in India), resulting in unbridled nuclear adventurism including the military tests of 1998.22 As Shampa Biswas, Runa Das and others have shown, the nuclear discourses of the BJP have effected new forms of racialization,23 giving rise to a vision of India fuelled by ‘a belligerent, male-supremacist, hate-driven, beggar-thy-neighbour nationalism’ that solidifies ‘Hindu nationhood against a communal, militaristic demonised Islam’.24 Drawing from Carol Cohn’s studies on nuclear masculinities, Das observes that in the post-9/11 era, the US nuclear policy of cooperation with India drew on Orientalist and gendered frameworks to infantilize India as a nation to be guided and surveyed. India’s regional-hegemonic masculinity in turn replays this Orientalist process of othering, infantilizing and gendering vis-à-vis Pakistan by characterizing itself as a ‘responsible’ nuclear state, framed by discourses of India’s democracy and pluralism in opposition to Pakistan, which is devoid of these ‘responsible’ credentials.25

Backed by a form of techno-scientific authoritarianism, the expertise of the postcolonial scientific community was considered non-political and had a predominant influence on policy decisions.26 Grounded in a modernist, neo-colonial, masculinist and extractivist paradigm, the Indian state sought to construct a technological society, undergirded by frames of benevolent tutelage (to discipline and produce the modern Indian citizen) as well as discourses valorizing public sacrifice.27 Nuclear power and weapons were part of this vision, and these efforts to institute development from above met with resistance, especially from those who were displaced. For instance, in the 1980s, the plans for the construction of the Kudankulam nuclear power plants and for uranium mining in Jaduguda (in central India) met with fierce protests.28 The tests conducted in the late 1990s further reinvigorated anti-nuclear activism, resulting in what Itty Abraham has called an ‘atomic public’, constituted by both a prominent civil society and the economically marginalized ‘quasi-publics’ who were most directly affected.29

#### **The imagination of denuclearization is not neutral but rather intertwined with a masculinization of the Self that constructs gendered difference in the international sphere**

Rosengren 20 (Emma Rosengren - Ph.D. in International Relations from Stockholm University, “Gendering Nuclear Disarmament”, Stockholm Studies in International Relations, 2020, <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1457572/FULLTEXT01.pdf>, MG)

Nuclear Weapons, Disarmament and Gender

The main contribution of this dissertation is directed to feminist IR theory and concerns the relationship between gender, nuclear weapons and disarmament. The introduction has discussed how previous feminist research has shown that **in contexts where positive associations are made between military strength, masculinity and nuclear weapon possession, it is hard to imagine nuclear renunciation and disarmament as anything other than potential emasculation or feminization. 583 Meanwhile, my empirical analysis has shown how neither** Swedish **disarmament policy, nor the defensive security strategy it was part of, was conceptualized as emasculated or feminized at the national level. On the contrary**, my findings suggest that Swedish **disarmament policy was strongly associated with certain forms of masculinity**. The dissertation thereby suggests that rather than assuming linkages between nuclear weapons possession and masculinity on the one hand, and disarmament and femininity on the other, it is necessary to challenge such binary conceptualizations and scrutinize how both masculinities and femininities, and nuclear weapon and disarmament policy, have been constructed in specific historical contexts. The opposite, to depart from prefixed conceptualizations about gender and policy not only contributes to the reconstruction of gender, but also rules out alternatives to nuclearized, and masculinized, protection logics.

For example, my analysis of Swedish disarmament policy in the 1960s shows how **the government’s disarmament policy primarily drew on identity representations related to nuclear weapon capability. The government represented itself as capable of producing nuclear weapons, and as a technologically sophisticated and advanced expert. Through its focus on nuclear weapon capability, the government represented the Self as developed and technologically advanced. Such representations relied on difference constructed between the developed and capable national Self, and what was relationally represented as the underdeveloped, incapable, and feminized Other non-aligned states**. In light of the associations between masculinity, development and technology, and relational representations of the Other as feminized, Swedish **disarmament policy was associated with notions of masculinity. Over time, the masculine identity of the potential nuclear-armed state was transformed into a “responsible technical expert” identity associated with masculinity. This means that nuclear weapon renunciation and disarmament were not related to an emasculation or a feminization of the national Self. Instead, the technical expert identity symbolized an adaptation, rather than a rejection, of the masculine identity of the potentially nuclear-armed state**. In the 1980s, disarmament was linked with both neutrality and peace, and social democracy and the welfare state project. **The Self was represented as a noble masculine protector of all of humankind. Such representations of the Self also (co)constructed relationally organized opposite Others. The nuclear weapon states in particular were represented as a threat to all of humanity. Hence**, Swedish **masculinity was distanced from what was represented as the aggressively masculine appearances of Others, both the monstrous and unreliable Soviet Other, and the over-armed nuclear weapon state Other. Hence, disarmament was associated with righteousness and responsibility, with the identity of a noble and peaceful** Swedish **masculinity ideal contrasted with offensive Others**. Through such representations, the Swedish Self was constructed as a morally superior, responsible protector of all of humankind. Drawing on notions of exceptionalism, a Swedish masculinity ideal was established associated with peace, righteousness and responsibility.

In conclusion, my study has shown how **dominant disarmament discourses contributed to the masculinization of the** Swedish **Self and supported a continued reliance on a defensive form of masculinized protection in security affairs. Both** Swedish **disarmament policy, and defensive security policy more generally were co-constructed with particular notions of masculinity over time. The defensive character of the Self was represented as morally superior to offensive Other(s), meaning that a difference was constructed between a moral masculinity ideal and what were represented as brutal and immoral masculinity ideals. Such representations drew on – and contributed to the remaking of – a defensive military masculinity** **ideal**. The empirical examples show that a relational approach to gender makes it possible to explore how gender has been constructed in policy, and how notions of masculinity have been established not only in relation to what is represented as feminized, but also in relation to other masculinities from which the Self is distanced. Hence, an open mind towards the relationship between gender, nuclear weapons and disarmament makes it possible to account for nuances.

Gender, War and Peace

This dissertation also feeds into the literature on nuclear history. A central contribution concerns how a relational approach to gender makes it possible to investigate how gender has been made in historical processes and thereby to challenge conventional associations between women and peace on the one hand, and men and war on the other.

My study shows that conventional associations between women and peace and men and war are problematic, not least since the meanings related to war and peace, and to sex and gender, are (re)constructed in historical processes, and differ in various contexts. **In the making of** Swedish **disarmament policy, the national Self was simultaneously associated with both masculinity and peace**. The discussion above has shown how certain notions of masculinity were co-constructed with disarmament policy. **Politicians** on all sides of the political spectrum, **along with military**, media **and civil society representatives, made peace a core**, and positively valued, **component of the masculinized national Self**. In debates about the NNWFZ in the 1980s, some even represented the Swedish Armed Forces as Sweden’s largest peace organization. Even though such representations can be argued to make the militaristic mandate of the armed forces invisible, and to legitimize sustained reliance on masculinized protection, they also challenge conventional associations between men and war.

Furthermore, **in debates about nuclear weapons and disarmament policy, difference was constructed around a national and peaceful Self, and what was represented as belligerent and sometimes monstrous Others. In the nuclear weapon debate, a potential** Swedish **nuclear weapon was described as inherently different from any possessed by the nuclear weapon states**. One advocate of Swedish nuclear weapon acquisition even questioned whether anyone would be threatened by Swedish nuclear weapons, given Sweden’s acknowledged peaceful status. Such representations made it possible to argue that Swedish nuclear weapons would be morally justifiable. Furthermore, the Swedish Armed Forces were repeatedly represented as “defensive”, and as having no hostile intentions. Temporal references to neutrality and a Swedish peaceful past were central to such representations. **Associations between neutrality, peace** and the defensive nature of Swedish defense policy **made it possible to distance the latter from what were represented as the aggressive security strategies of Others. Those against nuclear weapons also drew on notions of a peaceful past, and representations of the peaceful Self featured in government disarmament policy** in the 1960s. In disarmament debates of the 1980s, **temporal references to a peaceful past made it possible to construct disarmament engagement** around the NNWFZ as a Swedish responsibility.

## Neg---Liberal Militarism K

### Thesis

#### The aff is shrouded by the idea of “virtuous war”—by constituting nuclear weapons as the utmost moral evil, war is tinkered at the margins to make itself “more ethical.”

McCormack and Gilbert 22, PhD Geography and Planning @ University of Toronto, Professor of Canadian Studies and Geography @ University of Toronto. (Killian and Emily, “The geopolitics of militarism and humanitarianism.” *Progress in Human Geography*, 46(1), pp.179-197. Accessed: 4/27/23)—js

Not only has humanitarianism been invoked to justify wars, and to extend the spatial reach of warfare, but it is also intertwined with the legitimation of the means of war. This emphasizes the multiple scales at which the nexus of militarism and humanitarianism operates, moving from geopolitical discourse and processes, to the military-humanitarian practices that produce new spaces of war, to the modulation of bodily violence in warfare. Aligning with hierarchies of life embedded in IHL that delineate who can be killed, the means of killing in war are defined along a spectrum of humane and inhumane, legitimate and illegitimate, legal and illegal. As Asad (2015: 412) remarks, ‘ways of killing and dying are part of how we define the human’. He goes on to argue that some forms of killing are legitimized – for example, drone strikes – while others are seen to be inhuman, for example, ‘being hacked to death by a machete’. The designation of some weapons as civil and some as barbaric is historically contingent and underpinned by colonial power relations, and deeply entangled in war’s ‘becoming’, or what comes to count as war (Bousquet et al., 2020).

Nisha Shah’s (2017; 2019) work has traced the histories involved in the designation of certain rifle bullets as appropriate for use in war. Shah (2019: 216) shows how the quantification of bodily damage was used to calibrate a particular kind of bodily harm as appropriate in warfare, designating what kinds of injury ‘can be rendered militarily necessary and acceptable’. These developments did not prevent lethal weapons from being used, but instead served to govern what kinds of weapons could be used, because they are deemed to be ethical along the lines of proportionality. In contrast, arguments were made against new innovations, like the expanding Dum-Dum bullet – named after the factory in India where it was produced – because they went beyond what was deemed necessary to stop combatants (Shah, 2017: 96).

The development of ‘humane’ forms of killing has been paralleled by the development of non-lethal weapons and practices that incapacitate victims. Jasbir Puar (2017: x) has highlighted that purportedly humanitarian practices, such as those used by the Israeli Defence Forces, aim to ‘spar[e] death by shooting to maim’. Puar (ibid) identifies this ‘deliberate debilitation of a population’ as core to the ‘racializing biopolitical logic of security’, highlighting how seemingly benevolent humanitarian rationales and legal-moral frameworks can serve to justify certain forms of violence. The same is true for the development of non-lethal weapons, such as the taser gun, in the name of human interest, particularly that of the civilian (Anaı¨s, 2015). Though the objective of these weapons is to restrain and minimize lethality, such weapons are often deadly, as with the case of tear gas (Feigenbaum, 2017), or are used to make lethality possible in other ways (Anaı¨s, 2015). These rationales have also been deployed to roll out these kinds of weapons among other security agencies – for example, the use of tear gas by police and private security – for use both at home and abroad (Balko, 2013; Schrader, 2019), exemplifying the continuities across police power and war (Neocleous, 2014).

Such weapon developments that seek to identify and meet an acceptable level of violence are mirrored by wider developments to make war more ethical and humanitarian through technological innovation (De Landa, 1991; Owens, 2003). Writing about the military-industrialmedia-entertainment network of the 21st century, James Der Derian notes how the US deployed a ‘virtuous war’ premised in ‘technological and ethical superiority’ and presumed to be a ‘bloodless, humanitarian, hygienic war’ – but one which he suggests is rooted in ‘a felicitous oxymoron’ that makes war palatable (Der Derian, 2009: xx–xxi). The aspiration to better forms of technology is rooted in the idea that some wars are justifiable, the conditions just have to be right.

This move to ‘humanitarian’ war through technological advancements is perhaps best encapsulated in the contemporary widespread use of drones – and it is here where geographers have made the most significant interventions in these debates (e.g. Hall Kindervater, 2016; Shaw and Akhter, 2012). As Ian Shaw has argued, the technological turn ushered in by drones has produced new geographies of war, marking an intensification of volume centric security and warfare (Shaw, 2016) while establishing absolute spatial distance between operator and target. However, the language that surrounds the justification of drones – that of targeted strikes – suggests an ethics to the practice of killing, involving a surgical precision that neutralizes only those bodies identified as threat (Gregory, 2011a; Mégret, 2013). The distance between drone operator and battlespace reinforces this ethical, seemingly humanitarian rationale behind the technology. As Elke Schwarz (2016: 71) highlights, ‘drone technology provides the medium and expertise to undertake targeted killing with a professional ethos and neutral distance’. Of course, this distance gives lie to how lives are valued in humanitarian war: the personnel who operate the drones at a distance are protected while lives on-the-ground are maimed and killed. It is important to bear in mind Ticktin’s (2011) argument that there is a fine line between bodies perceived as victims and bodies being perceived as threat in such contexts. Rather than humanitarian, Gregoire Chamayou refigures drone warfare as ‘humilitarian’: ‘it is a power that both kills and saves, wounds and heals, and it performs these double tasks in a single gesture, in an integrated manner’ (Chamayou, 2015: 139).

The development of an ethical, technological way of war has seen a move away from certain forms of killing that are not deemed humane or humanitarian by the ‘international community’. Over the last two decades, a series of arms control policies and treaties have been introduced to regulate the global circulation of small arms. Frequently, these attempts at regulation are framed in terms of human security, mirroring the language that has been used to justify the deregulation of more technologically advanced weaponry (Cooper, 2011), such as drones. Anna Stavrianakis (2019: 58) highlights that though attempts to control weapon circulation, such as the UN Arms Trade Treaty, are underpinned by motives of human security and framed by IHL, they say little about intra-Western arms trade, the rise in global military spending, and the wider entrenchment of militarism in society. Small arms control treaties do nothing to question the wider political economy of the global arms trade, and instead reproduce imperial power relations (Stavrianakis, 2011). Shampa Biswas (2014) illustrates how these relations are mirrored in the current nuclear nonproliferation regime, which similarly helps to produce and maintain a global order riven with unevenness, while at the same time depoliticizing the problem of nuclear proliferation itself.

These questions resonate with Asad’s (2015) discussion of what form of killing is defined as humane and who, exactly, is deemed capable of accessing certain forms of violence. We do not highlight these issues to argue that there should be a more extensive spread of access to weapons, but instead to raise questions regarding who has access to certain weapons and who gets to determine the terms under which they are deployed. Here again we see how international relations are modulated through imperial discourses that cast some states as democratic and hence responsible, while others must be prevented from gaining weapons at all costs, for example, by way of economic sanctions. Geographers have investigated some of these questions with respect to drone violence, but much more could be addressed with respect to other weapons and other technologies.

#### The “virtuous war” increases wars and sustains geopolitical and racial inequalities. Turns case.

McCormack and Gilbert 22, PhD Geography and Planning @ University of Toronto, Professor of Canadian Studies and Geography @ University of Toronto. (Killian and Emily, “The geopolitics of militarism and humanitarianism.” *Progress in Human Geography*, 46(1), pp.179-197. Accessed: 4/27/23)—js

Humanitarian norms for warfare are perhaps as old as war itself, articulated, for example, through principles regarding protections for civilians or captured soldiers. For instance, Hugo Grotius’s On the Law of War and Peace, written in the early 17th century, was a foundational text in this sense. It established principles regarding protections for civilians or captured soldiers that were codified from the nineteenth century onwards, that in effect reified the differences between these two categories of people. Following World War II, legal principles governing the norms of war were established in what has become known as International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The objective of IHL is to limit the effects of war on the basis of humanitarian reason: reason that espouses a moral solidarity with humanity, but that is founded on uneven power relations in and between states and populations which is inherently unequal in its effects (Hong, 2015). As Didier Fassin (2011) argues, the laws are grounded in a fundamental hierarchy that determines who can be saved and who can save, and these relations of care are never reciprocated. Thus, not only do such activities perpetuate inequalities and uneven power relations, but they are also wrapped up in complex imperial dynamics pitched in terms of rescue or development (Seymour, 2012). This geopolitics is suppressed under the appeals to humanitarianism. This is the trick that the humanitarianism-military nexus performs: it hides the geopolitical inequities that it sustains, and the biopolitical violence that it enacts.

The tendency has been to presume that IHL creates a more humanitarian kind of war that offers protections for human rights, but this is a position that many have come to challenge (Orford, 2003). Eyal Weizman argues that it is through IHL that violence gets calculated and managed: a ‘humanitarian minimum’ is invoked – a moderation of ‘lesser evils’ (Weizman, 2011: 4). The principles of ‘proportionality’ and ‘distinction’ that are at the core of IHL and which are intended to limit ‘collateral damage’ actually provide the terms under which violence is permitted and legitimized (Gilbert, 2015a; Kinsella, 2011). As is now widely recognized, however, these limits effectively legitimize the deaths of civilians under specific conditions, in specific places (Gilbert, 2015a). The critiques of IHL are indebted to Walter Benjamin who maps out the violences enacted in and through both state law-making and the preservation of the law (Benjamin, 1986). Law is not (only) about the protection of human rights, or emancipation. As Weizman (2011: 4) argues, the moral technologies of humanitarian law ‘have become the means for exercising contemporary violence and for governing the displaced, the enemy and the unwanted’ that extend from the national to the international.

The consequences of the growing inclusion of humanitarian law in western practices of warfare, Laleh Khalili (2013: 7) suggests, is that ‘if policy makers think that war can be waged more humanely, they may choose to wage war more often’. And it is not just IHL, but as Craig Jones (2021) has shown, broader legal regimes and the courts that are used to legitimize and extend warfare, as military lawyers decide what makes military operations legal. In other cases, overlapping legal jurisdictions are used both to assert impunity of private military contractors and to ‘other’ the victims of violence so that they cannot access the law’s protections or compensation for harm (Snukal and Gilbert, 2015). As geographers have thus emphasized, the law is wielded in a form of lawfare against the enemy, while jurisdiction is drawn around both places and individuals to enforce separations of us and them and here and there.

There is a violence to this manipulation of the law, but the IHL is also inherently flawed in that it is rooted in principles of humanitarianism that appear to be premised on ideals of a universal value of life, but are enshrined in a ‘strict hierarchization’ as the lives of civilians are offset against presumed military effectiveness (Douzinas, 2003: 174; see also Dillon and Reid, 2009; Duffield, 2007; Pugliese, 2013). Judith Butler (2009: 31), discussing the value of lives under conditions of war, argues that in such hierarchies there are ‘lives that are not quite lives, cast as “destructible” and “ungrieveable,”’ on the basis of categories such as race, nationality, gender, class and sexuality. These emerge out of a geopolitics of enmity, rooted in colonial and capitalist relations of power and geopolitical control and conquest (Bhungalia, 2015). These are unquestionably racist, for as Ruth Wilson Gilmore has argued, ‘Racism is a practice of abstraction, a death-dealing displacement of different into hierarchies that organize relations within and between the planet’s sovereign political territories’ (Gilmore, 2002: 16).

### Link---Disarmament

#### Humanitarian disarmament discourse entrenches the permanent nuclearization of international politics while providing cover for military lash-out and destruction.

Considine, '16 – Associate Professor of International Politics (Laura Considine; "The ‘standardization of catastrophe’: Nuclear disarmament, the Humanitarian Initiative and the politics of the unthinkable"; European Journal of International Relations; https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1354066116666332#tab-contributors; 09-13-2016)

However, this paper contends that the dominance of the broadly international society-based approaches to the political problem of nuclear weapons carries with it limitations that not only render the approach ultimately ineffectual, but also potentially damaging. This is the case for two overlapping reasons. The first is related to what Campbell Craig and Jan Ruzicka (2012, 2013) have labelled as the ‘non-proliferation complex’.11 Craig and Ruzicka argue that the non-proliferation and disarmament agenda is doomed to failure because of the nature of 15 nuclear weapons and the vast benefits accruing to any state that would cheat on a disarmament process. Claiming that the problem of nuclear weapons can be solved while failing to challenge the interests of what they term the ‘nuclear haves’ (2013: 330) and while remaining within the current international system simply ignores the true nature and extent of the problem and the transformative effects of the thermonuclear revolution. They argue that there is a wide industry of think-tanks, NGOs, government agencies and academics, the aforementioned ‘non-proliferation complex’, who have access to a large amount of resources to push mainstream non-proliferation and disarmament agendas that do not significantly challenge the status quo and fundamentally ignore the completely revolutionary nature of the problem of nuclear weapons, instead proposing, as Deudney (1995) put it, a solution of reformation to an issue of transformation. While the limitations of the existing disarmament regime are well known and acknowledged by those within the complex, the response to these limitations, by continuing to push another variation of this approach, only acts to, as Craig and Ruzicka state, ‘entrench the permanent nuclearization of international politics’ as well as permitting action by powerful states, in particular by the United States, against those who they say may be attempting to gain nuclear weapons illegitimately (2013: 337). Attempting a solution to the problem of nuclear weapons within the current international environment is therefore not only a futile endeavour, but also sustains an unacceptable status quo through the maintenance of a facade of action.

This argument is an important challenge to a dominant mainstream consensus and makes a key intervention into the nuclear weapons debate that highlights how the existing nonproliferation and disarmament approaches have, so far, failed to really challenge entrenched global powers and power structures. Craig and Ruzicka wrote their article when the Humanitarian Initiative was still at a nascent stage but, while the new initiative pushes back 16 against the interests of the NWS and challenges the status quo and the ‘hypocrisy inherent in the NPT system’ much more strongly than previously, by continuing to promote the same goals without acknowledging the need for alternative political forms, it remains vulnerable to Craig and Ruzicka’s complaint of pushing for disarmament ‘within the current international environment’ (2013: 337). However, while critiquing the corruption of the NPT regime by the interests of the great powers, Craig and Ruzicka nonetheless give general support to the underlying idea of the NPT and the international society approach to nuclear politics. They do not challenge the value of strong anti-nuclear norms and institutions in the politics of nuclear weapons but rather lament how these have been damaged.12 The ‘endless betrayals’ of the ‘nuclear haves’ (2013: 341) have undermined the power of international regimes such as the NPT to effectively stigmatise nuclear weapons, subverting the original intentions of the NPT and weakening the anti-nuclear norm and the nuclear taboo. While contesting the institutional constraints of the current disarmament agenda and its overall compliance with existing power structures and international structures, they do not challenge the conceptual constraints of this agenda and its compliance with dominant modes of understanding and expressing the nuclear. Craig and Ruzicka speak about this in terms of interests and power. The great powers get to keep their weapons and the non-proliferation complex receives its publicity and funding and continues to push an uncontroversial, progressive disarmament agenda.

By contrast, the argument of this article is that there is something at work here that goes beyond interest as a reason for a lack of action or political imagination and instead can be investigated by returning to the dominance of the discourse of the unthinkable. The question to which the nuclear realists answered with a definitive negative in the 1950s and 60s, and which has been repeated since by authors such as Craig and Ruzicka, was ‘can nuclear 17 weapons be reconciled with the foundational institutions of international society?’ (van Munster and Sylvest, 2014: 535). This question, while crucial, needs to be supplemented with an additional query of whether we can reconcile the nuclear, as a political, cultural and conceptual change in our very way of being and understanding the world, with the foundational, institutional discourses of international society that dominate anti-nuclear politics. If, as so many have claimed, nuclear politics demand new ways of thinking, one must question how the dominant understanding of nuclear politics as the politics of the unthinkable and anti-nuclear politics as norm-creation and institution-building has constrained our ability to politically conceive of, and thus address, this demand and what this can show us about the limits of these approaches to international politics more broadly.

Indeed, it is not an International Relations scholar but the poet Seamus Heaney who has best articulated a central problem of the nuclear age as ‘our inability to trust too far a language of continuity’ (in Schley, ed. 1983: 150). The darkness of the shadow of nuclear annihilation is not only that of our own destruction but of the loss of what Morgenthau (1961) termed symbolic immortality: that which ‘gives the individual at least a chance to survive himself in the collective memory of mankind.’ The possibility of nuclear destruction changes this by ‘making both history and society impossible’ (1961). Heaney has eloquently expressed our resulting struggle to speak in a language of nuclear politics that is premised on universal claims. The mainstream approach to non-proliferation and disarmament replaces one ‘language of continuity’ (nuclearism and deterrence) with another (humanitarianism and universal anti-nuclear norms) without interrogating how the very form of this language is undermined and subverted by what Morgenthau (1961) terms ‘nuclear death’. Both the deterrence and humanitarian discourses, though oppositional in their content, are nonetheless based on the same foundation of nuclear politics as the politics of the unthinkable and 18 propose responses of containment based on similar claims to universality and continuity, whether through the perceived universal rationality of deterrence or the perceived universality of an appeal to humanitarian law. They are an extension of each other, both trying to address the nuclear through rethinking the unthinkable in a discourse that, as Chaloupka states, ‘constantly moves to universalistic levels’ (1992: 2).

An example of this universalistic tendency can be seen in the claims of the Humanitarian Pledge, which are founded on ‘the security of all humanity’ (Humanitarian Pledge, 2015). ‘Humanity’ is at once the object of security, the basis from which nuclear weapons are denounced and the foundation upon which universal anti-nuclear norms can be built. The danger to ‘humanity’ posed by nuclear weapons also leaches into a continuous future, simultaneously threatening the total destruction of human existence as well as an empty, postapocalyptic eternity, ‘enabling both the absolute end of time and the exponential proliferation of a toxic future’ (Masco, 2006: 12). The often-repeated goal of a ‘nuclear-weapons-free’ world (sometimes shortened to NWF as if it were a technical status) is another example of this language of continuity, representing the process as one of the permanent eradication of a condition, with nuclear weapons as an external affliction imposed upon ‘humanity’. This obscures the political structures and processes involved, instead predicating a future in which a global ‘we’ is ‘freed’ from nuclear weapons.13 Shampa Biswas has described this nuclear ‘we’ as a ‘mythical international community’, whose creation precludes certain questions about the existing nuclear order (2014: 3; also Chaloupka: 1992).

It is therefore important to think about the limits that our current ways of expressing the politics of nuclear weapons place on the possibility of political action. For, as Chaloupka has argued, political opposition to nuclearism is generally phrased within ‘familiar political ways 19 of speaking, despite their proponents’ considered judgment that precisely these understandings have made the world so different, so dangerous’ (1992: 1 – 2). Both the deterrence and the mainstream disarmament discourses propose the solution of containment as a response to nuclear weapons, whether containment as military strategy or containment through (re)speaking and thus taming the nuclear sublime. In fact, despite the drastic statements about the extreme, unthinkable consequences of nuclear weapons used in the repeated calls for non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, there is something conservative and conceptually limiting about this approach, which speaks to a deeper problem of the politics of nuclear weapons and of International Relations as a discipline than Craig and Ruzicka’s diagnosis of the sway of interests.

The Humanitarian Initiative as the latest manifestation of this approach continues the assumption of a particular relationship between speaking and thinkability as a way of addressing the problem of nuclear weapons, in which speaking and respeaking tame and contain the unthinkable. Rather than perpetuating or even contesting this relationship, one might better question this by challenging the idea of either unspeakability or unthinkability as permanent boundaries imposed by qualities of the nuclear, and instead, as W.J.T. Mitchell writes, consider them as ‘rhetorical tropes that simultaneously invoke and overcome the limitation of language and depiction, discourse and display’ (2005: 293).14 The unspeakable is, in fact, a ‘strategy’ that actually says something specific about the nuclear, for as Mitchell notes, ‘the invocation of the unspeakable is invariably expressed in and followed by an outpouring of words’ (2005: 293). This is borne out by the fact that the label of nuclear unspeakability does not generally result in silence but in ‘its rhetorical opposite; namely a proliferation of discourses about vulnerability and insecurity’ (Masco, 2006: 3). In antinuclear political discourse the ‘outpouring’ often takes the form of a series of contradictions: 20 the bomb is unthinkable but must be continually rethought; we are rendered dumb by the unspeakable effects of nuclear war but they must be spoken; the nuclear is uncontainable but has been contained by the pernicious effects of nukespeak; the bomb changes everything but can be managed within existing international political structures.

The prevailing conception of the nuclear as unthinkable demands speech and the dominant assumptions of mainstream anti-nuclear politics require that this speech takes the form of a ‘language of continuity’, where rethinking the nuclear is circumscribed into changing how we collectively think about the nuclear. Attempting to change the content of the politics of nuclear weapons while within this language of continuity, as so much of the literature does, or attempting nuclear critique while tied to its limits can only lead to another repeat of the cycle of discourse identified here. The problem identified by the nuclear realists, of reconciling nuclear weapons with international society is not only one of the limits of institutions, but also the limits of forms of speech, whose perpetual repetition maintains the political status quo. It is therefore in form that one can begin to challenge this discourse. The following section of the paper will propose that one way to accomplish this is by examining the form of nuclear speech through a study of cliché.

### AT: Perm---Crowd-out

#### Perm fails. Actors who buy-in to utilitarian visions of humanitarianism are over-prioritized because they set the bar too low. That crowds out the K.

Stavrianakis 20, Professor of IR @ University of Sussex (Anna, “Requiem for Risk: Non-knowledge and Domination in the Governance of Weapons Circulation,” *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 14, No. 3, Accessed: 4/27/23)—js

What we've seen so far is an explicit commitment from the UK state to prevent serious violations of IHL via risk assessment, arrived at in collaboration with NGOs, with an emphasis on whole-of-government and consensual decision making. This is set against the exclusion of DFID from decision-making, the wording of a policy that excludes the development angle of the Saudi-led war in Yemen, no refusals of export licenses, and no calls for refusals heard within government. Parliamentary scrutiny of policy that takes place after decisions have been made has been inconsistent and divisive. A legal stamp of approval was given to the government's policy in 2017 when the High Court ruled that the government was "rationally entitled to conclude" that the Saudi-led coalition was not deliberately targeting civilians and that it respects and is committed to complying with IHL (CAAT vs. Secretary of State for International Trade 2017a). This decision was overturned in June 2019 when the Court of Appeal found the government to have acted unlawfully as it "made no concluded assessments of whether the Saudi-led coalition had committed violations of international humanitarian law in the past, during the Yemen conflict, and made no attempt to do so" (Court of Appeal 2019). The government was granted the right to appeal this decision at the Supreme Court, a process that remains ongoing at the time of writing.

All risk actors agree that it would be "irresponsible not to take the prudent, preventive, and/or precautionary... measures necessary to protect oneself (and others)" (Leander 2011, 2256) from risk. What we see in the case of arms exports is precisely this agreement that masks domination: in practice, pro-export and pro-control actors do not agree on who is being protected, from what catastrophic future, and how. Pro-control actors have attempted to make complementary the different politics of risk--but they repeatedly lose out, in that their concerns are marginalized when commercially, strategically, or politically important weapons sales are in view. And domination takes full effect with the practices that are facilitated by a positive decision on an arms export license: the transfer of military equipment and weapons that have been used in likely war crimes. The way in which the licensing process screens out any potential dissent via claims of joined-up working and efforts at consensus and agreement facilitates exports despite the remit of assessing "clear risk." There is an emphasis on bureaucratic process and deference to the moment of executive decision, rather than the effects of the decision. One effect of this process-based mobilization of risk is to "displace responsibility for ... decision-making" (de Goede 2004, 213)--indeed, to "immunise decision-making against failure" (Luhmann, quoted in de Goede 2004, 213). Even if UK-made weapons are misused, the government can be deemed to have acted correctly because it engaged in significant amounts of risk assessment process. This is what compounds domination: the ability of pro-export actors not only to generate an ostensibly perverse outcome but also to claim to be benevolent in doing so.

## Neg---Nuclear Colonialism K

### Link---Nuclear Posture/Control

#### Debates about nuclear use prioritize anti-political universals and technical minutiae that mask colonial realities which shape nuclear politics. Focusing on the technopolitical spectacle of the nuclear makes violence that occurs at its behest banal.

Day 22, Associate Professor of English @ Mount Holyoke (Iyko, “Nuclear Antipolitics and the Queer Art of Logistical Failure,” in *Colonial Racial Capitalism*, Accessed: 4/24/23)—js

This essay sets out to challenge the technological universalisms invoked by Obama that fold Hiroshima into a morality tale of scientific progress, one that resonates contemporary narratives of the Anthropocene, an epoch in which humankind has achieved a disastrous level of geologic agency through its pursuit of technological modernity. The atomic bombing of Hiroshima is often periodized as the onset of the Anthropocene, initiating an irreversible surge in global human activity often characterized as the Great Acceleration.3 I question the normativity of this periodization as well as what I view as the scalar politics embedded in the symbolism of the atomic bomb. In challenging nuclear universalisms, I pursue alternative forms of representation that do not rely on visual transparency to contest the ahistorical nature of global memory culture, which Katherine Lawless describes as the tendency to “translate historical forms of exploitation into universal narratives of suffering.” In the case of Hiroshima, this means concealing the “slow violence of nuclear energy regimes by reducing nuclearity to the moment of explosion.”4 Shifting attention away from the spectacularity and radical uniqueness of nuclearism, I probe the largely unseen, banal violence of uranium mining undertaken on Indigenous lands. From the vantage point of the extracted and irradiated wastelands of nuclear modernity, I argue that technopolitics structure a postwar transformation of global power relations. In this case the anti - political frame of technopolitics reveals the coordinated expansion and technological intensification of imperial state power that is secured through its simultaneous depoliticization. Hence, relations previously constructed around the colonizer and the colonized have since been reconstituted as depoliticized, technopolitical relations shaped by nuclear modernity. These technopolitical arrangements maintain imperial power structures in the aftermath of global decolonization movements insofar as power relations between the colonizer and colonized have been transformed and reproduced as relations between the nuclear and non-nuclear.

Transparent visibility structures what Lisa Yoneyama refers to as a “nuclear order of knowledge,” one that limits the meaning of the atomic bomb to periodization: ending World War II and beginning the Cold War.5 The visuality of nuclearism enables what Manu Vimalassery [Karuka], Juliana Hu Pegues, and Alyosha Goldstein describe as “colonial unknowing,” whereby the slow violence of uranium mining is otherwise effaced by the spectacular violence of Hiroshima. 6 A large part of this unknowing occurs through the largely invisible, colonial sites of uranium mining. What is obscured from this order of knowledge is how the Belgian Congo and he Canadian Northwest Territories supplied the majority of the uranium for the atomic bomb that was detonated over Hiroshima, as well as the plutonium that was used in the bomb that exploded over Nagasaki. Highgrade uranium from the Belgian Congo’s Shinkolobwe mine was shipped to New Jersey and enriched in Canada, along with uranium from the Great Bear Lake region of the Northwest Territories. Thus, in playing with the homonyms nonsite/nonsight, I explore the ways in which colonial capitalism designates Indigenous lands as nonsites of nuclear modernity, making them available for what Traci Brynne Voyles calls “wastelanding.” As she elaborates in her important work on uranium mines on Navajo lands, “the ‘wasteland’ is a racial and spatial signifier that renders an environment and the bodies that inhabit it pollutable.”7 These are sites that are deemed unproductive, backward, and peripheral to the technological superiority of the global North but are nevertheless mined for resources while toxic waste is dumped or left abandoned.

Another difficulty in reordering our knowledge of Hiroshima is rooted in postwar geopolitics and the Cold War. Shaped by the US occupation of Japan and in the shadow of the Cold War, public commemoration of Hiroshima in Japan and the US has largely served to obscure or evacuate its historical context and political significance. Japan’s postwar economic ascendancy has largely deflected US responsibility for the human cost of the atomic bombs. As Yoneyama has shown, what is obscured by the Hiroshima museum’s universalizing message of peace are the atrocities Japan committed in its quest for imperial power in Asia, Japan’s postwar Cold War alliance with the United States, and a larger context of global warfare.8 As Benedict Giamo summarizes, “Hiroshima has become a facile trope for atomic victimization and pacifism.”9 Moreover, global pleas for nuclear disarmament and “No More Hiroshimas” altogether elide the existence of Japan’s many nuclear reactors while overlooking the sixty-seven nuclear tests conducted on the Marshall Islands over a twelve-year period, the largest of which was equivalent to a thousand Hiroshima-sized bombs.10

Although the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Park assails visitors with messages of peace and appeals to a world free of nuclear arms, these messages are undermined by Japan’s embrace of nuclear power technology. Under the guise of Dwight D. Eisenhower’s “Atoms for Peace” campaign in 1953, Japan’s early adoption of nuclear power was compelled through secret collaborations between US foreign intelligence and conservative Japanese politicians and the business elite. Before the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant meltdown in 2011, Japan had sixty nuclear reactors, the largest number in Asia, and had plans to generate 50 percent of all power from nuclear energy by 2030.11 Although Japan has since been forced to scale back, shutting down twenty-seven reactors and limiting nuclear power to 20–25 percent of total energy by 2030, the truth is that a nuclear-free future is nowhere to be found on Japan’s time horizon. The contradictory morality that surrounds nuclear energy and nuclear weapons is a refraction of a deeply embedded imperial regime of energy extraction. The antipolitical character of energy technopolitics similarly animates Japan’s continual refusal to be accountable to the victims of its fascist imperial regime in Asia, as much as the United States continues to justify the atomic bombing by claiming it saved lives and ended the war.

In the United States the visual spectacle of a ballooning mushroom cloud remains the primary symbol of nuclear destruction that both aestheticizes and anesthetizes many Americans’ engagement with the event, whereas the larger plutonium bomb that exploded over Nagasaki three days later has largely been relegated to an afterthought. Correspondingly, much of the historiography of the atomic bomb has focused on the technological and political ingenuity of the scientists involved in the Manhattan Project. Gabrielle Hecht refers to this bias as a form of nuclear exceptionalism that remains focused on First World electricity and military production, geographically delimited to the Cold War superpowers and Europe. She calls us to “witness the obsession with the historical minutiae of ‘the decision to drop the bomb,’ the endless stream of biographies of Manhattan Project scientists, and the insistence on the uniqueness of moral dilemmas posed by atomic activities.” Following Hecht’s reflection that “standing in an African uranium mine makes the contingent character of nuclearity much more visible,” I attempt to disrupt the self-evident character of nuclearism by situating Hiroshima in a history of colonial capitalism rooted in energy extraction, from coal and oil to uranium.12 Finally, by exploring these questions through an analysis of visual art by the Hiroshima-based artist Takahiro Iwasaki, I explore the racial and colonial dimensions of the atomic unconscious that probe the structural rather than the spectacular, and the violent social relations embedded in and required by energy infrastructures. Without such a materialist perspective, as Lawless notes, “we are left with the false radiance of a moral revolution whose advocates sit on the winning side of nuclear history and whose discourses serve the interests of postcolonial capital.”13 Iwasaki’s sculptures refract the haunting “urgency of the abyss” that condition the extractivism required for war and energy.14

#### The monopolistic control of uranium by the military creates literal sacrifice zones. The plan shuffles deck chairs that provide for continuance of global uranium extraction.

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In order to secure these arrangements in the unequal distribution of power—in terms of both energy and labor—an entire imperial infrastructure of extra-economic violence was built into this structure. The sale of enormous quantities of arms from the United States to suppress labor dissent and populist uprisings was put in place by Washington to secure the flow of dollars and Arabian oil. Looking back, as Mitchell observes, “if the emergence of the mass politics in the early twentieth century, out of which certain sites and episodes of welfare democracy were achieved, should be understood in relation to coal, the limits of contemporary democratic politics can be traced in relation to oil.”34 The physical properties and geopolitics of coal and oil had a major impact on the power of labor and its democratizing potential. As we see in the shift from coal to oil, the production of technological expertise generally diminished the power of workers involved in extractive labor. The control of oil by fewer and fewer “experts,” the deployment of military violence to secure arrangements for the production of oil, and the imperial ruse of “national security” coalesced into a denialist US imperial ideology that consigned the label of “undemocratic” and backward to non-Western oil-producing nations.

It is on this terrain of accumulative violence and the increasing disempowerment of labor that we can approach uranium as source of both military and electrical power. Unlike coal, which requires minimal if any processing once it is extracted, oil and uranium require significant processing, again distributing labor power upward into the hands of technical experts: managers, engineers, and scientists. In order for uranium to be used as a weapon or for fuel, its extracted form must undergo multiple stages of processing. Uranium is first mined as ore, processed into yellowcake, and then converted into uranium hexafluoride. From this point, if you need to construct a bomb, uranium hexafluoride is enriched to 90 percent; alternatively, if you need to produce fuel, uranium hexafluoride is enriched to 3.5 percent. Prior to enrichment, each stage of preparation produces tailings, the lowgrade uranium waste that is cast off.

If the social relations of oil extraction and distribution disempowered labor and manufactured scarcity to empower and enrich the transnational corporate class, the social relations of uranium extraction distribute power upward in even more unscrupulous ways. Although fuel and energy supply chains have long been central to military campaigns and national security, the dual purpose of uranium heightened the level of authoritarian, technocratic control over its extraction and distribution. Whereas state-supported oil corporations negotiated scarcity through monopolistic and cartel arrangements such as the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (opec), uranium was placed under US monopsony power. In the immediate aftermath of World War II, US efforts to preserve its status as the only nuclear superpower that could subdue the spread of communism involved monopolizing the supply of uranium through the formation of a uranium monopsony. In 1946 Congress passed the Atomic Energy Act, which gave the Atomic Energy Commission (aec) the power to act as the sole buyer and regulator of uranium ore, which effectively controlled the production and pricing of uranium. As Stephanie Malin explains, “Monopsonies create power dynamics that mirror those of monopolies . . . [whereby] the single purchaser of a commodity controls the terms of trade and largely shapes markets for the commodity, dictating prices for goods and often determining how they will be used or redistributed.”35 Such were the autocratic conditions for the postwar roller coaster of accumulation and abandonment that has ravaged uranium-extraction sites and poisoned mining communities in Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico, sacrifice zones exploited to benefit the development of military and energy technology.

Uranium is the ideal motif for Western imperial power because of its interweaving of economic and military domains of power. As part of the production of Cold War technocratic expertise, the race for uranium was veiled in secrecy and highly classified state operations. Secrecy and monopolistic and monopsonistic logistical controls over the supply chain are at the root of technopolitical authoritarianism, particularly in shaping and shifting the ideology of nuclearity. As a renewed mode of primitive accumulation after Hiroshima, Western states exploited their “highly classified” technopolitical authority to quell socialism and movements for decolonization, such that “the Atom bomb [could act] as a substitute for colonial power.”36 In the United States the aec’s monopsonistic control over the industry predictably led to the overproduction of uranium, which resulted in ruinous devaluation. Millworkers, prospectors, and independent miners described the commission as a “dictatorship in a democracy.” As communities dependent on the uranium boom were completely abandoned, left to contend with the industry’s long-term effects of toxic contamination and illness, the United States shifted to making large purchases of uranium from Canada and overseas.37

#### Nuclear authorities are used to maintain colonial control.

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Beyond the corruption of uranium’s commodification within the United States’ imperial war-finance nexus discussed above, the nuclearity of uranium was also subject to highly ideological technopolitical manipulation. The United States could not monopolize the supply of uranium given that lower grades of uranium were widely available, so uranium’s secret power diminished—along with its nuclearity. Beginning in the 1960s, by shifting emphasis toward the financial axis of the war-finance nexus, uranium was born again as an ordinary commodity that wasn’t “nuclear” until it had undergone substantial processing. No longer subject to monopsonistic control, uranium was neoliberated, subject to the invisible hand of the market. The “Atoms for Peace” campaign rebranded uranium as a source of peaceful energy that would spur economic development in Third World nations. In 1968 the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons invoked human-rights language to declare that the peaceful use of nuclear power was a fundamental right that was essential to developing areas of the world. Yet the “free market” was an imperial ruse for the politics that governed uranium’s market. As Hecht outlines, “Invoking the ‘free market’ validated a political geography in which imperial powers could continue to dominate former colonies after independence.”38 Here monopsony-driven pollution and the free-market protection emerge as two sides of the same imperial coin for maintaining power over natural resources. In this light, the depoliticization of uranium through so-called market liberalization was chiefly an antipolitical operation: depoliticizing uranium in order to maintain and expand Western imperial control over it.

Despite centuries of documented hazards associated with uranium extraction, part of the antipolitical technical authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency (iaea) was to completely extricate uranium ore as a nuclear source, exempting extraction zones from any regulatory protections, inspections, or safeguards. Uranium was not deemed “nuclear” unless it had already undergone significant conversion and processing. Excluding uranium mines and the workers, the iaea classified a “principal nuclear facility” as a “reactor, a plant for processing nuclear material irradiated in a reactor, a plant for processing nuclear material irradiated in a reactor, a plant for separating the isotopes of a nuclear material, a plant for processing or fabricating nuclear material.” As a result, as Hecht explains, “By the 1970s . . . the nuclearity of uranium ore and yellowcake had plummeted.”39 What this classificatory operation accomplishes is to racially and colonially segregate the technologically modern nuclear industry on one hand and a primitive mining industry on the other. Thus, the harm of uranium mining was diminished to the harms of mining in general, not the radioactive harms associated with the nuclear industry. Buttressed by the postwar ideology of peaceful economic development and human rights, Western imperial authorities expanded their command of uraniumextraction sites while rendering workers disposable, beyond the scope of “nuclear protection.” The coloniality of nuclear discourse comes clear, as Hecht discusses, in the fact that the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was premised on the discovery that Iraq had obtained “yellowcake from Niger” and was therefore “nuclear.” Yet neither Niger nor Gabon nor Namibia was ever reported as “being nuclear,” even though these nations accounted for more than one-fifth of the uranium that fueled power plants in Europe, the United States, and Japan that year.40 Nevertheless, “yellowcake from Niger” was automatically linked to weapons of mass destruction, as was the central justification for the war.

The technopolitical production of “nuclear” modernity effectively erased racialized, Indigenous labor through the legitimation of an imperial scale. Here scale emerges not as an objective or neutral orientation but as a deeply politicized mode of analysis and praxis. Connecting uranium production to the previous discussion of coal and oil extraction, then, we observed how the latter industries saw a progressive disempowerment of labor. In the case of uranium mining, however, extractive labor not only is disempowered but disappears altogether from the technopolitical scale of nuclear modernity—even as that labor is subject to the exploitative forces of imperial governance from which it is erased and obscured. This means, for instance, in the former French colony of Gabon, the mines from which uranium is extracted to fuel France are not subject to European regulatory or safety standards. Yet, in a neocolonial sleight of hand, when Gabon’s uranium crosses borders to French processing plants, that uranium becomes ultramodern and thus “nuclear,” and only then subject to international regulation. As Hecht observes, “When Gabon’s uranium became nuclear fuel, it switched nationalities, enabling France to assert national energy independence through nuclear power.”41 Here France’s continued “postcolonial” control over Gabon’s resources reproduces the colonial relation that both exploits and erases the Indigenous African labor that motors the metropole.

#### The plan’s indigenous erasure. Nuclear posture’s singular focus on international politics creates indigenous non-places, subsequently covering them up post-reduction. “*They wanted the land and the labor, just not the people.*”

Day 22, Associate Professor of English @ Mount Holyoke (Iyko, “Nuclear Antipolitics and the Queer Art of Logistical Failure,” in *Colonial Racial Capitalism*, Accessed: 4/24/23)—js

The practice of scalar segregation, what Johannes Fabian would refer to as the spatial “denial of coevalness,”42 is an imperial operation that maintains the continued wastelanding of racialized and Indigenous lands— lands that are taken off the map of nuclear modernity and its regulatory protections yet are subject to market laws. As a testament to the erasure of one of the world’s richest sources of uranium, the Shinkolobwe mine in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tom Zoellner notes that “Shinkolobwe is now considered an official nonplace.”43 Shinkolobwe’s disappearance is a legacy of Western imperial control over the region, one that began under the brutal regime of King Leopold II of Belgium, who expropriated the Congo as his own private estate from 1885 to 1908. Leopold acquired the “Congo Free State,” a nation seventy-five times larger than Belgium itself, during the European scramble for Africa under a humanitarian ruse of ending the Arab-controlled slave trade. Once in power, Leopold turned the country into a massive forced-labor camp occupied by his security corps, the ruthless Force Publique, which severed hands, kidnapped, murdered, and raped the Congolese to coerce high yields of rubber extraction. Historian Adam Hochschild estimates that ten million Congolese were killed under Leopold’s “humanitarian” regime.44 Never once setting foot in the Congo, Leopold amassed a billion-dollar personal fortune from the thousands of tons of rubber sap tapped by forced Indigenous labor, which was then exported to feed the many industries requiring rubber, including cars, bicycles, and telephone wires. Upon his death in 1909, the government of Belgium took over, leaving mostly intact the king’s regime of forced labor administered by the Force Publique, which now operated on behalf of monopoly companies, the largest of which was the Union Minière de Haut Katanga. In the region of Katanga, large quantities of bismuth, cobalt, tin, zinc, and eventually uranium were extracted by local Congolese workers under a system of debt slavery. When sought-after radium was discovered in a uranium-rich hill in Katanga in 1915, the mining company forced “more than a thousand African laborers to dig into what would turn out to be the purest bubble of uranium ore ever found on earth.”45 With the discovery of nuclear fission in 1938, uranium was transformed from a worthless waste product to a prized commodity. When the Nazis invaded Belgium, the Union Minière moved its headquarters to New York and transferred 1,250 tons of uranium to Staten Island, where it would sit in obscurity for more than two years before being sold to the Manhattan Project. During the war, under a shroud of secrecy to evade Axis powers, Congolese workers labored around the clock to send hundreds of tons of uranium to the US every month. In many ways, it was the exploited Congolese workers who were directly if inadvertently responsible for installing the United States as the new global hegemon. Isaiah Mobilo, chair of the Congolese Civil Society of South Africa, aptly observes that in assisting the United States in the race to build an atomic bomb, “Shinkolobwe decided who would be the next leader of the world.”46

The colonial counterpart to Shinkolobwe was the Eldorado mine in Canada’s Northwest Territories, on the shores of the Great Bear Lake in the appropriately named Port Radium. Between Shinkolobwe’s and Eldorado’s 2,500 and 1,000 tons of excavated uranium, respectively, these mines produced the majority of uranium used in the burgeoning nuclear industrial complex of the United States. In Port Radium, Sahtu Dene “coolies” transported sacks of radium and ore from the mine onto barges that would eventually be refined in Ontario for use in the Manhattan Project. Despite government knowledge of the harmful effects of radiation exposure, workers labored unprotected while radioactive waste contaminated their lake, and the mine was left unremediated for decades. They worked without knowledge of their participation in the Manhattan Project. In the midst of the Canadian government’s continual denial of responsibility for the postwar cancer epidemic, the Sahtu Dene sent a delegation to Hiroshima to apologize to ethnic Korean survivors of the atomic bombing. As Indigenous peoples who were also devastated by their exposure to nuclear radiation and environmental contamination, their trip to Hiroshima exposed the corresponding racist logic of imperial violence that undergirded the lethal exploitation of Sahtu Dene laborers and the annihilation of nonwhite peoples in Japan. Their presence in Japan violated the impersonal political abstraction intended by what filmmaker Raoul Peck describes as “killing at a distance.”47 President Harry S. Truman’s comment two days after the bombing of Nagasaki diverted responsibility on the grounds of the inhumanity of the racial enemy: “When dealing with a beast, treat it like a beast. It’s totally unfortunate, but it’s still the truth. Indeed, there is no more to say.”48 In stark contrast to the apology offered by the Sahtu Dene to victims of the atomic bombing, the long-standing imperial logic of the United States justified accumulation by nuclear atrocity.

After the war, pollutable Indigenous land in the Congo and the Northwest Territories became “protectable” and thus subject to new rounds of imperial governance, from the CIA-backed assassination of Patrice Lumumba, the first democratically elected leader of the newly independent Democratic Republic of the Congo, to the massive expansion of state control over the Northwest Territories in Canada to pave the way for nonrenewable resource development.49 The cancers that devastated communities in the Northwest Territories and in Katanga were actively disconnected from radiation exposure from mining and transport labor. Cancer, after all, is part of the epidemiological infrastructure of modernity: it is a “First World” disease. Of cancer-ridden African mining communities, Hecht observes that “many researchers have assumed that Africans simply don’t live long enough to contract most types of cancer.”50 In 2005 the Canadian Deline Uranium Table’s report—which contracted parts of its study to nuclear industry scientists—refuted any connection between spikes in cancer rates and heightened exposure to radiation when the Port Radium mine was open from 1942 to 1960. Instead, the report blamed the victims by attributing elevated cancer rates to the racially pathologized behaviors of smoking and drinking. The memory of past tragedy was sanitized and replaced with a future of economic prosperity through uranium mining. Then, after having opposed all future uranium mining until past issues related to the Port Radium mine were resolved, in 2008 the Dene-controlled Deline Land Corporation signed an amended agreement with the mining corporation Alberta Star granting it full authorization to permit the company’s iron, oxide, copper, gold, and uranium exploration and drilling activities. Port Radium’s rhetorical rebirth out of the wasteland of tragedy into a site of resource development demonstrates, as Yoneyama observes, the “uneven burden that the nuclear complex has placed on racialized and indigenous communities.”51 These technopolitical modes of social coercion serve to further dispossess Indigenous communities under the colonial subterfuge of modernization. This adds meaning to the way that colonial dispossession is interlinked with the erasure and disposability of exploited Indigenous labor, amplifying the significance of Kelley’s point that “they wanted the land and the labor, just not the people.”52

### Link---Disarmament

#### Setter colonialism is devoted to nuclear violence. Disarmament and arms control discourse shift arms racing to new subversive phases and cause the retooling of nuclear weapons.

Masco, '21 – Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, anthropologist and an expert on numerous subjects relating to national security and nuclear politics (Joseph Masco; "The Future of Fallout, and Other Episodes in Radioactive World-Making"; Duke University Press; https://www.dukeupress.edu/the-future-of-fallout-and-other-episodes-in-radioactive-world-making; 2021) \*Edited for ableist language.

If we follow the plutonium economy one community farther to the east in the New Mexico landscape, to Pojoaque Pueblo, which lies immediately adjacent to San Ildefonso and fifteen miles north of Santa Fe, we find a very dif­ferent articulation of a plutonium-mediated national security. Pojoaque is a pueblo with a difficult history. It has, as its governor says, “died twice” due 66 Chapter 3 to epidemics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and was only reconstituted in the 1930s. Pojoaque entered the plutonium economy in 1996 with a public announcement that it was going to pursue nuclear waste storage as a form of economic development. Pojoaque has taken only the first steps in this process, a series of conceptual studies, but their national security strategy shows how mediated by energy and waste issues indigenous politics in New Mexico have become (e.g., see Powell 2018). In the late 1980s, the DOE began a process of soliciting all indigenous nations about nuclear waste storage projects on tribal lands (Hanson 2001; Stoffle and Evans 1988). This was an explicit attempt to break the gridlock around nuclear waste caused by suburban American fears of living near nuclear materials. For many tribes, new recognition as a sovereign nation is quickly followed by invitations from federal bureaucracies and corporations for lucrative nuclear waste storage projects. In the post–Cold War era, the outlines of a transnational Native American nuclear waste storage economy were beginning to take shape in New Mexico: the Mescalero Apache began work on a short-term nuclear waste storage facility in southern New Mexico and signed agreements with an association of northern Canadian Cree nations for permanent storage of U.S. nuclear waste. The North American Free Trade Agreement explicitly marked radioactive waste as a nontariff item, paving the way for this kind of transnational indigenous nuclear waste infrastructure.

Pojoaque’s nuclear waste storage project was, however, also a political tactic designed to underscore what was at stake for the pueblo in debates over casino gaming. National security for the few hundred people that make up Pojoaque Pueblo today means economic independence. The government at Pojoaque Pueblo has been among the most vocal supporters of Indian gaming in New Mexico, and today the pueblo has one of the most successful casinos in the state. Its City of Gold casino plays off the ancient myth of the seven golden cities of Cibola that energized the Spanish conquest of the Southwest, and today it extracts money, with almost surgical irony, from tourists and residents of the mostly Spanish-speaking counties of northern New Mexico. In the mid-1990s, the legality of Pueblo gaming operations in U.S. courts remained in doubt, even though compacts had been signed by the governor of New Mexico and approved by the U.S. secretary of the interior. The consequences of these negotiations could not be more serious; as few industries are more profitable than casino gaming or nuclear waste, quite literally millions, and possibly billions, are at stake in these decisions (cf. Cattelino 2008). It is hardly surprising, then, that in response to a steady stream of new legal roadblocks on gaming from state and federal officials, a States of Insecurity 67 coalition of nine Pueblo nations in 1996 repeatedly threatened to shut down the highways in northern New Mexico (all of which cross Pueblo lands) if the gaming compacts were not honored.19

In their public announcement, Pojoaque representatives specifically stated that they were interested in storing high-level nuclear waste—that is, plutonium—from dismantled U.S. nuclear weapons, precisely the weapons that were designed a few miles up the road at LANL. The plutonium economy has come back to Los Alamos, as has the role of nuclear materials in defining national security. Pojoaque’s leadership played off fears of nuclear waste in Santa Fe to press their claims about tribal gaming. Pojoaque Pueblo’s tactical consideration of placing a nuclear waste site on tribal lands, however, is not only an example of the high-stakes international politics that have taken place around nuclear materials in New Mexico for over fifty years; it also suggests a strategy that privileges an economics-based national security over all other concerns. Thus, as the national security of San Ildefonso is compromised by the environmental and social costs of the laboratory’s nuclear waste dump, neighboring Pojoaque, a community that has already died twice in its history, can forward nuclear waste storage as the ultimate means of achieving its own national security. Pojoaque’s strategy is, however, a direct consequence of the settler colonial dynamic between Native American communities and the United States. Thus, while no indigenous nation currently produces nuclear waste, all are potential candidates for the disposal of the nuclear materials produced by the U.S. nuclear complex.20

If we follow our plutonium economy ten miles north from Pojoaque along Highway 68 to the town of Española, a dif­ferent, but equally charged, set of security issues is evoked. Española is the largest town in Spanish-speaking Rio Arriba County. Many Española residents are direct descendants of the first Spanish settlers in the region in 1598 and can self-identify as twentiethgeneration New Mexicans. Accounting for roughly half of the jobs in greater Rio Arriba County, LANL is the area’s largest single employer. Before Los Alamos was built in the 1940s, most Nuevomexicano families in the area lived on small-scale farms and spoke primarily Spanish (Forrest 1989; Weigle 1975). Many had to work as migrant laborers all across the Southwest to support their families. Currently, there are three generations of men and women from the tiny villages of northern New Mexico who have worked almost exclusively at the laboratory (see Garcia 2010; Kosek 2006). Traditionally they have been the security guards, laborers, and support staff. Although more Nuevomexicanos are now working in technical fields at the laboratory, in the early 1990s still very few had careers as scientists or project managers. Thus, 68 Chapter 3 an extreme cultural and economic, as well as geographical, divide separates Los Alamos from the valley: Los Alamos County is 94 percent white, with the highest number of PhDs per capita in the nation. Rio Arriba County is 75 percent Hispanic, with 10 percent of the population completing college degrees.21 The average income in Los Alamos is three times that of Rio Arriba County. Unemployment is 2 percent on the hill while over 27 percent in the valley. Some describe the trip from small villages in the region to the laboratory as a kind of time travel, linking small-scale agricultural life to a high-tech world of big science, militarism, and space travel via two-lane roads. Figures 3.3 to 3.6 are national recruiting advertisements for Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory from the 1960s that play on the idea of offering future workers experiences of time travel, cultural exoticism, and outer space research in New Mexico. Since the 1940s, however, for most people in Rio Arriba County who desire a middle-class lifestyle, LANL remains the primary game in town.

One Hispano, who recently retired from a thirty-five-year career as a construction foreman at LANL, put it this way, jabbing his finger into my chest for emphasis:

I’ll tell you what to write in your book—you write that the lab saved everybody in this valley! Without Los Alamos all these little Spanish villages wouldn’t exist. Everybody tries to work at the lab—because it’s good steady work. Before the lab, all the men in the valley had to go all over the country trying to find work—they would see their families only once or twice a year. With the lab we have good jobs that allow us to stay with our families. People drive from all over New Mexico to work at the lab—from Albuquerque, from Tierra Amarilla—because it’s such good work. People from the valley built Los Alamos and there are always big construction projects there. There’s always work.

*The lab saved everyone*. This narrative of endless economic security, however, broke down in 1995 as the laboratory laid off over one thousand people, predominantly Nuevomexicanos from the valley, and forecast more post–Cold War layoffs to come. Within this political context, Nuevomexicanos began expressing long-standing concerns that LANL holds northern New Mexico hostage economically, that it is more responsible to officials in Washington, DC, than to local communities. Employees began to talk openly about racism at the laboratory, about a glass ceiling in promotions, and about how Nuevomexicanos do most of the dangerous and dirty work. Outside the laboratory, residents of the valley measured the effects of having to speak English at the laboratory on Nuevomexicano culture and noted when LANL States of Insecurity 69 employees start pronouncing their Spanish surnames with an English accent. Without the security of employment provided by an endlessly expanding national laboratory, the post–Cold War public sphere surrounding LANL in northern New Mexico was being radicalized and racialized, with an increasingly public portrayal of LANL as a colonial institution. The laboratory’s post–Cold War layoffs, for example, were immediately interpreted by some in Española and neighboring communities as a federal declaration of war on northern New Mexico.

It is important to understand the historical context of such a conclusion. From the Nuevomexicano point of view, the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo has never been honored by the United States (see Acuña 1988; Chavez 1984; Trujillo 2009). Explicit provisions in that treaty for the protection of the culture and land of Mexican citizens being incorporated into the United States were negotiated and then stricken by Congress at the last moment. The Mexican government demanded, and received, further assurances that its citizens’ land rights would be protected in the United States (Griswold del Castillo 1990). The land grants that were the basis for both Spanish and Mexican social and economic organizations were, however, quickly broken apart by U.S. territorial judges who affirmed legal ownership of small plots of land to individuals but not the large collective landholdings that had traditionally been used for cattle grazing and that were the basis for communal life. Only a fraction of Nuevomexicano land claims were upheld by the U.S. courts in the late nineteenth century, and many were stolen outright by a corrupt legal system. Literally millions of acres changed hands, leaving almost every Nuevomexicano family in northern New Mexico with a story about how the U.S. government or someone manipulating the U.S. legal system took part of their land and impoverished their communities (see Briggs and Van Ness 1987; Ebright 1994). Consequently, much of the U.S. national forest land in New Mexico remains hotly contested to this day and is a perennial source of regional tension. In a discussion about California’s Proposition 187, an act that would deny public services (including hospitals and schools) to undocumented Mexican immigrants in California (and matters locally, as the University of California manages LANL), one Hispano activist summed it up for me with a casual shrug: “The United States and Mexico never signed the same treaty in 1848—they are still at war.”

For many Nuevomexicanos, and those who do not work at the laboratory in particular, there is bitter irony in the fact that New Mexico is now the center of the U.S. nuclear weapons complex. The U.S. government saturates everyday life in northern New Mexico, monitoring land and water use through the U.S. Forest Service and the Office of the State Engineer, housing and welfare through Housing and Urban Development and other agencies, and regulating employment through LANL. Thus, while the U.S. nuclear weapons complex provides an important job base in New Mexico, which perennially competes for the title of poorest state in the U.S., federal and state officials nonetheless practice a historical ~~amnesia~~ [erasure] about treaty obligations and the long-standing land claims of Nuevomexicano residents. As one Chicano land grant activist put it to me:

The real problem is dealing with white politicians, most of whom came to New Mexico very recently. You go to a public hearing and talk about land grants and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and they look at you like you’re from another planet—they don’t know what you are talking about. They treat you like you just got off the boat from Juarez and they want to see your green card. We’ve been here for hundreds of years. The real immigrants are all those people from New York, Boston, and California that come to live here and know nothing about us.

*You’re from another planet*. This political dynamic is what anthropologist John Bodine (1968) has called a “tri-ethnic trap,” a situation in which the legal and cultural position of Nuevomexicanos is doubly marginalized by white structures of power and by the cultural status of Native Americans as First Nations. Thus, while Pueblos as sovereign governments have gained a new post–Cold War legal discourse with the laboratory, equally affected Nuevomexicano communities have gained no such legal voice. In this context, Nuevomexicano concerns about the economic and environmental impacts of the laboratory can be dismissed, as they were following the 1995 layoffs by LANL leadership, as an expression of a welfare state mentality and not of legitimate political concern. Nuevomexicano participation in the plutonium economy is therefore double edged: through hard work it has allowed many access to a middle-class life, but it has also meant participating in an ongoing consolidation of northern New Mexico to Anglo-American and U.S. governmental interests. It is with new post–Cold War anxiety, then, that Nuevomexicanos continue to look to LANL as the future of northern New Mexico. Others, however, underscore their resistance by referring to the laboratory and town site simply as “Los Alamos, D.C.” (Romero 1995), acknowledging that, even decades after the Manhattan Project, Los Alamos remains, in their eyes, more properly a suburb of Washington, DC, than a legitimate part of New Mexico.

Our exploration of the plutonium economy concludes in Santa Fe, which is twenty miles equidistant from Española and Los Alamos and is home to several antinuclear NGOs that have been instrumental in organizing community debates about the laboratory in the post–Cold War era and raising awareness about the centrality of New Mexico within the U.S. nuclear complex. As figure 3.7 demonstrates, a key mission of these groups is to make visible the U.S. nuclear complex, including its transportation routes and waste storage plans—to show how all roads lead to New Mexico for things nuclear. The membership of these NGOs, notably the Los Alamos Study Group and Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety, is mostly Anglo, first-generation New Mexicans who self-identify as citizens of the United States. These antinuclear NGOs have become adept at utilizing environmental laws to gain a voice in nuclear weapons policy at LANL. In 1995, for example, they temporarily halted construction of the Dual Axis Radiographic Hydrodynamic Test Facility (darht), which the DOE has identified as the premiere post– Cold War facility for ensuring “the safety and reliability” of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile (U.S. Department of Energy 1995). They did so by forcing LANL, through U.S. courts, to do an environmental impact study of darht and to publicly justify the need for the project. Since the end of the Cold War, NGOs have provided consistent, technically and legally informed, public critique of U.S. nuclear weapons work at LANL. They have also sought to provide technical information about the laboratory and its environmental impacts to a fragile coalition of diverse Pueblo, Nuevomexicano, and Anglo interests.

For many in these organizations, the real achievement of the Manhattan Project was not the atomic bomb, but the institutionalization of a system of government secrecy and with it the curtailing of democratic process when it comes to U.S. national security policy (see Masco 2002). They view their work as combating the secrecy and public manipulation of an insurgent military-industrial complex and, more specifically, as exposing the environmental, social, and global security impacts of nuclear weapons work at LANL. As one Anglo peace activist put it: “Everything having to do with nuclear weapons is born secret in the United States—and the division between what is secret and what is not secret is also secret.” Thus, for antinuclear activists, U.S. citizens are eliminated from the decision-making process because federal authorities can argue that by definition citizens never have the information necessary to make informed statements about U.S. national security policy.22 Consequently, antinuclear NGOs in Santa Fe initiated an early post–Cold War project to lobby the World Court to outlaw nuclear weapons globally (a project that only reached a degree of formal success in 2017 with the passage of a prohibition on nuclear weapons at the United Nations).23 By appealing directly to a global legal body, NGOs not only call into question the legality of U.S. national security policy in New Mexico but also dramatically demonstrate that the federal government does not represent their national security interests. This act not only underscores a profound distrust of the United States when it comes to nuclear weapons policy; it also exemplifies how the local is now intersecting the global, how individuals are beginning to imagine their community as part of a post-nation-state world order. Through such actions, antinuclear NGOs publicly challenge and reject the state’s right to define authoritatively the meaning of security and danger for their communities (see figure 3.8).

For members of these groups who fear environmental contamination from the laboratory and identify nuclear weapons as the greatest threat to their personal security, the U.S. government remains the most immediate danger in the region. For many, LANL is both the symbol for, and the real- ization of, a society in love with violence. As another Anglo Santa Fe peace activist put it to me, the central question is:

How are we going to put an end to this monstrous development of weapons? How are we going to put an end to an institution which so far has existed, as far as I can see, primarily as an institution developing means of threat, an institution which works to instill fear in people, an institution basically which has devoted itself for over fifty years now to violence? We’re all very aware of the violence that we have around us. What is it like for young people to grow up in this city and to look out and see those lights every night and know what’s going on up there, that [lanl] is an institution devoted to violence . . . that Los Alamos is a place of death?

*Those lights*. Antinuclear NGOs critique LANL, therefore, on moral and ethical, as well as on environmental, grounds. They point out that the majority of the nuclear weapons in the current U.S. stockpile were designed after the United States signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 1968, in which government leaders promised to “achieve at the earliest possible date the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to undertake effective measures in the direction of nuclear disarmament” (United Nations 1968, 1). In 1996, as a comprehensive test ban was being negotiated by the Clinton administration, activists feared that the arms race was simply going into a new phase, emphasizing the design and testing of nuclear weapons in virtual reality. This is a major structural change in the nuclear complex, one that will generate few environmental impacts, thus eliminating one of the primary legal tools NGOs have for influencing U.S. nuclear weapons policy. These are not unfounded concerns, for U.S. weapons laboratories have been promised tens of billions of dollars’ worth of new facilities for their “science-based stockpile stewardship programs” (Zerriffi and Makhijani 1996). The DOE claims these facilities are necessary to ensure the safety and reliability of nuclear weapons in a world without underground nuclear testing, but these programs will also provide a state-of-the-art complex (with the world’s fastest computers, as well as numerous new nonnuclear testing facilities) as capable of designing new nuclear weapons as testing old ones (see Gusterson 1995; Masco 2006; Zerriffi and Makhijani 1996). Thus, the post–Cold War period has produced unexpected, and new, forms of insecurity for local antinuclear NGOs as the U.S. has rejected the opportunities for large-scale disarmament, renewed its commitment to a plutonium-mediated national security, and begun retooling for a new generation of nuclear weapons work.

### Link---Nuclear War

Confining nuclear war to the realm of apocalyptic imagery is a colonial discursive tactic that normalizes perpetual nuclear warfare on Indigenous territories.

Kato, '93 – Kato Masahide is a professor in the Philosophy department at University of Hawaii West Oahu (Masahide Kato; "Nuclear Globalism: Traversing Rockets, Satellites, and Nuclear War via the Strategic Gaze"; Sage Publications; Alternatives: Global, Local, Political , Summer 1993, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 339-360, Accessed thru JSTOR; 1993)

Let us recall our earlier discussion about the critical historical conjuncture where the notion of "strategy" changed its nature and became deregulated/dispersed beyond the boundaries set by the interimperial rivalry. Herein, the perception of the ultimate means of destruction can be historically contextualized. The only instances of real nuclear catastrophe perceived and thus given due recognition by the First World community are the explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which occurred at this conjuncture. Beyond this historical threshold, whose meaning is relevant only to the interimperial rivalry, the nuclear catastrophe is confined to the realm of fantasy, for instance, apocalyptic imagery. And yet how can one deny the crude fact that nuclear war has been taking place on this earth in the name of "nuclear testing" since the first nuclear explosion at Alamogordo in 1945? As of 1991, 1,924 nuclear explosions have occurred on earth.28 The major perpetrators of nuclear warfare are the United States (936 times), the former Soviet Union (715 times), France (192 times), the United Kingdom (44 times), and China (36 times).29 The primary targets of warfare ("test site" to use Nuke Speak terminology) have been invariably the sovereign nations of Fourth World and Indigenous Peoples. Thus history has already witnessed the nuclear wars against the Marshall Islands (66 times), French Polynesia (175 times), Australian Aborigines (9 times), Newe Sogobia (the Western Shoshone Nation) (814 times), the Christmas Islands (24 times), Hawaii (Kalama Island, also known as Johnston Island) (12 times), the Republic of Kazakhstan (467 times), and Uighur (Xinjian Province, China) (36 times).30 Moreover, although I focus primarily on "nuclear tests" in this article, if we are to expand the notion of nuclear warfare to include any kind of violence accrued from the nuclear fuel cycle (particularly uranium mining and disposition of nuclear wastes), we must enlist Japan and the European nations as perpetrators and add the Navaho, Havasupai and other Indigenous Nations to the list of targets. Viewed as a whole, nuclear war, albeit undeclared, has been waged against the Fourth World, and Indigenous Nations. The dismal consequences of "intensive exploitation," "low intensity intervention," or the "nullification of the sovereignty" in the Third World produced by the First World have taken a form of nuclear extermination in the Fourth World and Indigenous Nations.

Thus, from the perspectives of the Fourth World and Indigenous Nations, the nuclear catastrophe has never been the "unthinkable" single catastrophe but the real catastrophe of repetitive and ongoing nuclear explosions and exposure to radioactivity. Nevertheless, ongoing nuclear wars have been subordinated to the imaginary grand catastrophe by rendering them as mere preludes to the apocalypse. As a consequence, the history and ongoing processes of nuclear explosions as war have been totally wiped out from the history and consciousness of World community. Such a discursive strategy that aims to mask the "real" of nuclear warfare in the domain of imagery of nuclear catastrophe can be observed even in Stewart Firth's Nuclear Playground, which extensively covers the history of "nuclear testing" in the Pacific:

Nuclear explosions in the atmosphere . . . were global in effect. The winds and seas carried radioactive contamination over vast areas of the fragile ecosphere on which we all depend for our survival and which we call the earth. In preparing for war, we were poisoning our planet and going into batde against nature itself.31

Although Firth's book is definitely a remarkable study of the history of "nuclear testing" in the Pacific, the problematic division/distinction between the "nuclear explosions" and the nuclear war is kept intact. The imagery of final nuclear war narrated with the problematic use of the subject ("we") is located higher than the "real" of nuclear warfare in terms of discursive value. This ideological division/hierarchization is the very vehicle through which the history and the ongoing processes of the destruction of the Fourth World and Indigenous Nations by means of nuclear violence are obliterated and hence legitimatized. The discursive containment/obliteration of the "real" of nuclear warfare has been accomplished, ironic as it may sound, by nuclear criticism. Nuclear criticism, with its firm commitment to global discourse, has established the unshakable authority of the imagery of nuclear catastrophe over the real nuclear catastrophe happening in the Fourth World and Indigenous Nations almost on a daily basis.

Nuclear Criticism and Globalist Discourse

Nuclear criticism flourished particularly during the early 1980s in reaction to the imminent "threat of limited nuclear warfare," which swept the entire European continent as well as other countries in the First World bloc. Nuclear criticism has variants depending on the perspectives and targeted audiences. The most notable critics belong to what I call "popular nuclear criticism," which includes such authors as Jonathan Schell, Robert Lifton, and Freeman Dyson. The leftists, most notably E. P Thompson, on the other hand, made a less popularized and yet very serious critique of superpower nuclear imperialism. Those earlier versions of nuclear criticism have offered a good text for deconstructionists such as Jacques Derrida et al. in Diacritics.

Reflecting the historical context mentioned above, in which nuclear critique gained unprecedented popularity, one can say that nuclear criticism has been shaped and structured by the logic of super rivalry.32 The superpower rivalry has distracted our attention from the ongoing process of oppression/violence along the North-South axis. After all, the superpowers have functioned complementarity in solidifying the power of the North over the South.33 Therefore, nuclear criticism has successfully mystified the North-South axis as much as the superpower rivalry. Just as the facade of superpower rivalry (or interimperial rivalry in general for that matter) gave legitimation to the strategy of global domination of capital, nuclear criticism has successfully legitimated the destruction of periphery through nuclear violence. What is significant here is to locate the discourse in a proper context, that is, the late capitalist problematic. To do so, we need to shift our focus back to the questions of strategy and technology discussed earlier.

### Alt---Solves Case

#### Alt’s a pre-req to solvency. Imperialism is the primary factor that controls nuclear posture. US cling to power ensures nuclear use remains.

Desai 2022, PhD Political Studies @ Queens University. (Radhika, “The Long Shadow of Hiroshima: Capitalism and Nuclear Weapons.” *International Critical Thought*, 12(3), pp.349-369. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21598282.2022.2051582 Accessed: 4/24/23)—js

Nuclear arms control and reduction can only emerge from their present nadir if the US comes to the table in good faith. It is not just that “strategists and politicians who worry about nuclear proliferation should spend less time attacking small countries” and that the “road to a world with significantly fewer nuclear weapons passes through Washington, Moscow, Paris, Beijing and London, not Damascus, Tehran and Pyongyang” (Dombey 2008, 66). The centrality of imperialism in general and the singular role of the US in particular in the development, use and proliferation of nuclear weapons, and in the unwinding of arms control and in the increased possibilities for proliferation after the Cold War, mean that the historic imperial powers and particularly the US remain the chief block on that road.

Nuclear weapons early on became entwined with the pursuit of US imperial policy and remain there. US presidents have routinely expressed moral abhorrence of nuclear weapons privately. Eisenhower told a naval aide that “overkill . . . frighten[ed] the devil out of me”; Kennedy muttered to Dean Rusk, “and we call ourselves the human race” after a particularly nightmarish briefing; and Reagan even agreed with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 that, “A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.” However, they never publicly renounced the “all-out” option or stopped planning for it. None said “A nuclear war must never be threatened, or prepared for.” Such preparation continued because nuclear weapons became central to imperialism from the mid-twentieth century onwards. That they “continuously benefitted our military-industrial-congressional complex” (Ellsberg 2017, 271, 324), not to mention a declining US economy ever more reliant on it, also helped.

Since US imperial policy predated the Cold War and survived it, the world did not march toward liberal capitalist prosperity under benign US “hegemony” with a peace dividend in its bank account after the Cold War. Rather, it entered an increasingly tense space bounded by growing pluripolarity thanks to US economic decline and rapid growth in China and some developing countries and increasing US military aggression in response. Beginning by bombing retreating soldiers and civilians in violation of international law and the Soviet-brokered peace in the Gulf war (Hudson 2018, 158–159; citing the Committee to Stop War in the Gulf), the US went on to wage a string of illegal wars in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria and hybrid wars against other countries that sought autonomous forms of development unsuited to the interests of US and Western corporations. Today, this aggression has culminated in the New Cold Wars against Russia and China and has set off a new nuclear arms race even as declining US capacities become clear in Afghanistan and are about to become clear once again in the hybrid war against Russia over Ukraine.

It is, therefore, difficult to overstate the dangers of the current situation. In the original Cold War, the US and the USSR were comparatively stable and prosperous countries. Today US economic decline appears unstoppable and its drive to compensate for it militarily can only be more and more volatile and unstable, as the ignominious drawdown from Afghanistan and impending debacle over Ukraine show. In recent years, the US has also lost its historic technological lead as Russian and Chinese military modernisation programmes develop hypersonic missiles, some capable of delivering bombs at 27 times the speed of sound and evading US anti-ballistic missile systems (The Economist 2020; The Guardian 2019). On the other hand, China, though considerably less prosperous (per capita US GDP remains over 5 times higher than China’s), is vastly more stable. It is also on the rise, increasingly influential over more and more US victims and even allies and determined to ensure its own defence and aid allies amid ever-louder US sabre-rattling. This only unsettles the US more. The pandemic and the war over Ukraine have only exacerbated this divergence, with the US’s shambolic and economically destructive responses and deepening economic and political disarray contrasting ever more sharply with China’s competence, resumption of economic growth and adherence to international norms making it a far superior model and partner to other countries (Desai 2020b). For the first time in the history of capitalism, a non-capitalist country will be the leading state in the world, powering its growth and increasingly providing leadership (Desai 2020a, 2020b, 2020c).

The economically declining US is losing influence in strategically important zones such as the Middle East, the South China Sea, South Asia, the Korean Peninsula and even Central and Latin America. It is also eroding the relative post-war unity of the core capitalist powers and reducing US and Western capacity for domination. With Iran and Russia, for instance, Continental Western European countries wish to take a more cooperative stance than the US. Japan and South Korea as well as the European Union (EU) have recently concluded important trade and investment treaties with China much to US chagrin. Moreover, while other core capitalist powers are increasingly acting independently to subordinate certain parts of the Third World—such as Canada in Latin America and France in Africa—their options are narrower as productive power spreads and they face rival powers. Finally, with China’s superior economic performance increasing its attractiveness as a model and partner for other countries and continuing US economic decline forcing the US to operate with ever fewer economic carrots and ever more military and financial sticks, more and more countries will be able and willing to defy the US and its corporations. The dangers of not accepting the peaceful co-existence of pluripolarity can only grow.

The threat of nuclear weapons will only fade, and a true dawn of nuclear arms control and elimination will only lighten the horizon, if one or both of two possibilities are realised. Either transformation in US politics leads the US to forsake, or the diminution of its power on the world stage forces it to relinquish, its obsession for exercising an impossible domination over the ever more pluripolar world and for keeping it capitalist against the currents of history. In effect, the real question is whether the US, and the West, are willing to accept with equanimity, if not enthusiasm, the co-existence of different socio-economic systems, that is, the world’s growing pluripolarity. Will the ongoing turmoil in US politics, of which Trump and the Black Lives Matter demonstrations were both equal and opposite symptoms, issue in a political force capable of giving up that drive for world primacy based on a more realistic assessment of US interests and capabilities, not to mention a commitment to popular rather than corporate well-being? Will the acceleration of US relative decline amid the pandemic administer a dose of geopolitical economic reality to US leaders? Can secondary capitalist powers, such as Germany and Japan, ally with those that have acquired nuclear weapons defensively, chiefly China, and NNWSs, to demand that the weapon states adopt serious disarmament measures— above all the US but also Israel? Equally importantly, can a popular movement for disarmament arise with a sophisticated understanding of the real drivers of the nuclear arms race, those rooted in capitalist imperialism and the US drive for domination? These are the questions we are left with.

### AFF cards

#### Preventing nuclear war is an anti-racist struggle.

Intondi 20, Professor of History @ Montgomery College (Vincent, “Reflections on Injustice, Racism, and the Bomb,” *Arms Control Today*, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2020-07/features/reflections-injustice-racism-bomb>, Accessed: 4/27/23)—js

That night, with a few of my new Japanese friends (I was a student at the time at American University, which partnered with Ritsumeikan University), I put our lantern into the water. I still remember what I wrote on our lantern: “I will dedicate my life to making sure this never happens again.” As it floated away, I began to look around and think that 60 years ago, everyone here was dead. I thought of the human suffering that had taken place, and all of my anger, guilt, and sorrow boiled over as tears rolled down my face. At that moment, Koko Tanimoto Kondo, a hibakusha with whom I had grown close, immediately came over to console me.

When I returned to the United States, friends, family, and colleagues began hearing me talk about abolishing nuclear weapons. Many were perplexed. I had been known as an activist who fought for civil rights. I had become conscious when the phrase “Free Mumia” was dominant. I had spent my time protesting the murder of Amadou Diallo and the police assault on Abner Louima. “Who cares about nuclear weapons?” I heard. “Nukes will always be there…no one is crazy enough to use them,” and “That’s an issue for old, white dudes.”

But I could not forget what I learned, who I met, or how I felt in Hiroshima. Regardless if I was fighting for civil rights; against the inequities perpetuated by the World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund; for justice for the indigenous people of Chiapas, Mexico; or to stop the U.S. war in Iraq, I kept coming back to one thought: What does any of this matter if we were all dead from nuclear war?

To me, it was simple. These were not separate issues. Jobs, racial equality, climate change, war, class, gender, and nuclear weapons were all connected and part of the same fight: universal human rights, with the most important human right being the freedom to live…live free from the fear of nuclear war.

Of course, this thinking is not new. Contrary to the narrative that nuclear disarmament has been and remains a “white” issue, since 1945, the anti-nuclear movement has included diverse voices who saw the value in connecting all of these issues. Moreover, the nuclear disarmament movement has been most successful when it left room for diverse voices and combined the nuclear issue with social justice.

The movement to abolish nuclear weapons began even before the first bomb was dropped. Among the earliest critics of nuclear weapons were the atomic scientists, members of the Roman Catholic Church, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and many in the Black community. Specifically, regarding African Americans, for some, nuclear weapons were directly linked to racism.

Many African Americans agreed with Langston Hughes’ assertion that racism was at the heart of President Harry Truman’s decision to use nuclear weapons in Japan. Why did the United States not drop atomic bombs on Italy or Germany, Hughes asked. The Black community’s fear that race played a role in the decision to use nuclear weapons only increased when the U.S. leaders threatened to use nuclear weapons in Korea in the 1950s1 and Vietnam a decade later. For others, the nuclear issue was connected to colonialism. From the United States obtaining uranium from Belgian-controlled Congo to the French testing a nuclear weapon in the Sahara, activists saw a direct link between those who possessed nuclear weapons and those who colonized the nonwhite world. For many ordinary citizens, Black and white, however, fighting for nuclear disarmament simply meant escaping the fear of mutually assured nuclear destruction and moving toward a more peaceful world.

Today, many people love to quote Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., especially his “I Have a Dream” speech, hile also ignoring the full title and focus of the march: “Jobs and Freedom.” Throughout his life, King made the connections of what he called the “triple evils” of capitalism, racism, and militarism.

King was not alone among civil rights activists in making these connections. To put it in today’s context, to singer, actor, and activist Paul Robeson, “Black Lives Matter” meant not only speaking out about racism in the United States but also highlighting where the United States obtained its material to build nuclear weapons. To W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Lives Matter meant not only forming the NAACP or writing Souls of Black Folk, but also getting millions to sign the “Ban the Bomb” pledge to stop another Hiroshima in Korea. To civil rights leader Bayard Rustin, Black Lives Matter meant not only organizing the March on Washington but also traveling to Ghana to stop France from testing its first nuclear weapon in Africa. To Lorraine Hansberry, Black Lives Matter meant not only A Raisin in the Sun, but Les Blancs, her last play, about nuclear abolition. To Representative Ronald Dellums (D-Calif.), Black Lives Matter meant not only bringing jobs and education to Oakland, California, but also making sure President Ronald Reagan did not build the MX missile.

The prominent Black writer James Baldwin put it best on April 1, 1961, when he addressed a large group of peace activists at Judiciary Square in Washington. Baldwin was one of the headlining speakers for the rally, titled “Security Through World Disarmament.”

When asked why he chose to speak at such an event, Baldwin responded, “What am I doing here? Only those who would fail to see the relationship between the fight for civil rights and the struggle for world peace would be surprised to see me. Both fights are the same. It is just as difficult for the white American to think of peace as it is of no color.… Confrontation of both dilemmas demands inner courage.” Baldwin considered both problems in the same breath because “racial hatred and the atom bomb both threaten the destruction of man as created free by God.”

#### Debate is key. New forums should talk about nuclear disarm.

Intondi 20, Professor of History @ Montgomery College (Vincent, “Reflections on Injustice, Racism, and the Bomb,” *Arms Control Today*, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2020-07/features/reflections-injustice-racism-bomb>, Accessed: 4/27/23)—js

The power of diversity in the nuclear disarmament movement was perhaps most evident in the 1980s. With Reagan’s rhetoric of a “winnable nuclear war” and massive budget increases for nuclear weapons while cutting social programs that hurt the most vulnerable, the anti-nuclear movement grew exponentially. The nuclear freeze movement emerged.

New groups such as the Women’s Actions for Nuclear Disarmament, Feminists Insist on a Safe Tomorrow, Performers and Artists for Nuclear Disarmament, Dancers for Disarmament, and Athletes United for Peace formed. Established organizations such as Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, the Union for Concerned Scientists, and Physicians for Social Responsibility all saw their membership skyrocket.2

For some, ending the nuclear arms race was and still is linked to their religious faith. Others saw a direct link between the amount of money being spent on nuclear weapons and eliminating badly needed social programs that benefited the poor. Many viewed and still view nuclear weapons as part of the overall military industrial complex, which included U.S. intervention in Central America and the Middle East, while for others, there was a genuine fear that the United States and Soviet Union would start a nuclear war.

This new sense of awareness, fear, and action culminated in the June 12, 1982, demonstration in New York’s Central Park, in which 1 million people of different races, genders, class, and religions marched and rallied for nuclear disarmament. As Randall Forsberg, one of the principal authors of the proposal for a nuclear weapons freeze, said in her speech to the throngs that day, “Until the arms race stops, until we have a world with peace and justice, we will not go home and be quiet. We will go home and organize.”

The rally, combined with other actions of the 1980s, contributed to the Reagan administration changing course on nuclear weapons, effectively showed the power of grassroots organizing, challenged the idea that the movement was not diverse, and paved the way for a new generation of activists committed to saving the world from nuclear annihilation.

The questions that we must ask ourselves today are how have we avoided nuclear war for the last 75 years and how can we sustain the popular support and awareness that is necessary to move policymakers to take the steps necessary to reduce and eliminate nuclear dangers. The answers: good luck and good organizing. There is nothing we can do about luck, except hope it is on our side. But by learning from the past, it is clear that there is much we can do as organizers, advocates, lobbyists, artists, writers, teachers, and just concerned citizens.

We need to make connections. Our power is in our diversity. The anti-nuclear movement needs to continue to reach out to marginalized communities and show the links between that amount of money spent on nuclear weapons and how those funds could be used for food, health care, jobs, housing, and education. Whether it is connecting with the religious, immigrant, LGBTQ, or Black communities, half the battle is showing up.

We need education. Far too many students go through their entire education, including college, without ever learning about the history of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki or the greater nuclear threat that has persisted since 1945. We must demand that curriculums across the country dedicate more time to the nuclear arms race and the movement to stop nuclear war. This means being involved on school boards and curriculum committees and creating the materials that we can distribute and incorporate into the various school systems.

We need artists. Part of the reason the nuclear issue resonated in the 1980s was because performers such as Jackson Browne, Rita Marley, James Taylor, Bruce Springsteen, Gil Scott-Heron, Harry Belafonte, and Linda Ronstadt, as well as various Hollywood and Broadway stars, performed, raised money, and lent their voices to the cause. We saw the power of this action when President Barack Obama was pushing the Iran nuclear deal.

We need filmmakers. One of the most successful strategies of the anti-nuclear movement in the 1980s was to create “The Day After.” Viewed by millions, this film, along with Helen Caldicott’s relentless pursuit of making sure the world knew the human effects of nuclear weapons, shook ordinary citizens to their core. We can and must replicate these actions to drive home the uncomfortable fact that nuclear weapons are a threat to everyone, everywhere.

We need to hold politicians accountable. Currently, we have a president who has threatened repeatedly to use nuclear weapons, has no problem spending billions on the nuclear arsenal, and may even want to resume nuclear testing. Moreover, we have local, state, and federal politicians who support the president’s decisions and are complicit in the march to nuclear competition and the perpetuation of the oppression imposed by the threat of nuclear weapons use. Whenever we have an opportunity to back a politician who fights for nuclear disarmament, we need to do so. We need to demand from our elected officials that they work toward the goal of nuclear abolition and indeed have some of our organizers within the movement run for office themselves. Of course, we need to vote.

We need to support the anti-nuclear movement and help it evolve. Much like new organizations that emerged in the 1980s, over the last decade we have seen groups such as Global Zero, Beyond the Bomb, and Don’t Bank on the Bomb and global disarmament networks such as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons emerge. From the start, these groups have promoted intersectionality and made the connections among race, climate, feminism, and poverty in the fight to abolish nuclear weapons, not just in the United States but worldwide. In many cases, dynamic women have led this new movement. They are younger, with fresh ideas; savvy; and motivated. Whether one is in favor of working toward a no-first-use policy or a formal ban on nuclear weapons through negotiations at the United Nations, these organizers need our support, money, time, and respect.

## Neg---Psychoanalysis K

### Link---Arms Control

#### Attempting to control the bomb is a fantasy of destruction whereby the nature of their speech act is actually a ruse of desire towards an unattainable world, culminating in violent repetition compulsion

Matheson 15 (Calum L. Matheson - assistant professor of public deliberation and civic life at the University of Pittsburgh, “Desired Ground Zeroes: Nuclear Imagination and the Death Drive”, University of North Carolina Press, 2015, <https://www.academia.edu/15562229/Desired_Ground_Zeroes_Nuclear_Imagination_and_the_Death_Drive>, MG)

**Excess**, whether approached through the language of the Real, the sublime, continuity, or Heidegger’s “gigantic,” **shapes the field of language around it like the gravity well of a black hole observable by its distortions. These distortions guide our investments in some tropes over others and shape the economy of affects1 that animate meaning and create the durable constructs through which we attempt to connect with one another. We cannot respond to the Bomb by exposing its “reality” in** writing, **speeches**, films, **or any other media without implicitly playing its game by insisting that language can accurately convey the excess of the Real because the question is not one of greater precision in language but whether any medium is capable of assimilating the Real, a task which is impossible by definition. In acting as if this was not the case, we participate in the desire for unmediated access to reality that maintains the Bomb’s power in the first place. Too much debate over nuclear policy sidelines this sense of the Bomb as infinite, focusing on the techniques of organization and persuasion to the detriment of the ultimate questions that make the Bomb so powerful and creating a linguistic framework in which these questions are written off**, or at best appended as “useful embellishment,” only “received into mainstream discourse when presented as appendages to currently debated political options” (Chernus, Nuclear Madness 59).

**The Real of the Bomb reveals the incompleteness of this world and motivates attempts to find what we imagine is concealed beneath it. Nuclear obliteration is to its devotees perhaps even a promise of divine Truth that offers transcendence of the fallen world of mediation in which reality is never complete. With such a contradictory set of attachments, it is hard to imagine that efforts to think about the Bomb can achieve their goals**—while they might demonstrate their own consistent logic, the rationality of **nuclear politics is warped by the intrusion of the Real and the desire to commune with it directly**. Communication studies is full of cogent analyses of instances where language or other media worked very well indeed to organize political responses, persuade audiences, bind people together around texts, and change attitudes, but these accounts are incomplete without attention to the Real.

The subject of nuclear war challenges how we think about communication itself and demands new thinking on the limits of mediation. The central question of this dissertation is not how should we talk about nuclear war, but what can nuclear war show us about how we attempt to mediate that which we understand to exceed the limits of mediation itself? For attempt we do. **The vertiginous hole in the whole of reality is only the first part of the Bomb’s relationship to desire. Nature abhors a vacuum, and so does the symbolic order through which the human world is built. The Symbolic**, as Jacques Lacan styles it, **cannot tolerate the revelation of its inadequacy in the Real, the tears left in our map by the inhuman world. We endlessly attempt to heal the rifts of the Real, to feign unicity where it has failed** (Lundberg 2-3). **The response to chaos is control; order is imposed against contingency in an effort to re-impose coherence**. This dynamic of automaton (order) scripted over tuché (contingency) is developed in Chapter 2. **When these attempts fail—and because the Real by its nature cannot be assimilated, they must—we simply try again. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, this dynamic is the repetition compulsion, in which the subject tries again and again to control the conditions for presence and absence, enjoying not the outcome but the exercise of subjectivity itself in the capacity to act and to choose. Subjectivity requires the sacrifice of continuity** through the formation of the alienating identity of the mirror phase, a process explained more in Chapters 1 and 2. Discontinuous subjects are organized in part around the lack—something that would make them whole again, represented in an object that is never more than a partial stand-in for this missing completion.

**Frustrated in the quest for something outside, we enjoy our own subjectivity.2 In the context of nuclear war, this meant ever more sophisticated simulations of a phenomenon about which we remained basically uncertain. This is the second movement of desire in (or for) the Bomb. The enjoyment of our reasserted control over the Bomb manifested in the repeated attempts to simulate its use and predict its aftermath**. The fort-da game described by Freud and explained here in the first two chapters is an important tool for unpacking this dynamic because it posits a sense of control over presence and absence as the condition for a subject’s enjoyment. Fort-da refers to the game in which a child makes an object disappear and reappear in succession, simulating her or his mother’s coming and going and the possibility of her eventual disappearance. Enjoyment comes from the subject’s control over these states of presence and absence, a small example of imposing order in a world of seeming chaos (Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle 13-17). Understanding this is necessary to draw the common threads between the cold-blooded excesses of Pentagon nuclear plans, the compulsion that leads survivalists to stockpile rooms full of MREs, and the appeal that apocalyptic videogames hold for millions of players. **In all of these pursuits, the world is made absent in the fantasy of destruction and present again in the myth of reconstruction, survival, and rebirth.**

**Nuclear weapons scholarship evinces its own compulsion to repeat: myriad investigations of nuclear texts are done, but each leaves something unanswered. The movements of desire are incompletely by scholarship on nuclear weapons concerned only with exposing the truths of nuclear danger, analyzing specific instantiations of nuclear rhetoric, or developing a vocabulary for democratic political resistance**. While the instrumental and political aspects of language are important, to focus too narrowly on specific discourses threatens to neglect the forest for the trees. The political movements that attracted great attention in the 1980s—opposition to the Strategic Defense Initiative, the Nuclear Freeze Movement, and the radical disarmament movement—were at best partial successes. This is not to say that these movements or their scholarly treatments are unimportant—they are certainly helpful for those concerned with nuclear activism and decisionmaking. Still, even if we slowly trace an asymptotic relation to the zero of nuclear desire, part of the process is recognizing the pull this unattainable zero has on our efforts to track it and how those investments sustain the larger discourse of nuclear warfare. That larger system persists almost unchanged, with thousands of weapons prepared for launch on short notice, an endless profusion of war plans, an official policy to secure peace through the threat of genocide, and almost complete public ignorance that the sword of Damocles still hangs from its slender thread. The primary difference between nuclear awareness in 1985 and 2015 as it relates to their own weapons is that ever fewer citizens of the nuclear states even bother to check how much the rope is fraying. In other words, **the material artifice of nuclear warfighting persists despite repeated attempts to understand its persuasive elements. Existing attempts to study nuclear weapons could benefit from the concept of the death drive as a problematic for communication studies.**

## Neg---Queerness K

### Links

#### Criticizing the nuclear condition invokes reproductive logics of “a world safe for our children” which ignores the fundamental apocalypse that temporally plagues queerness

Saint-Amour 13 (Paul K. Saint-Amour - Associate Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, “QUEER TEMPORALITIES OF THE NUCLEAR CONDITION”, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013, <https://www.english.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/articles/Silence%20of%20Fallout--Queer%20Temporallities.pdf>, MG)

Owing to its semi-dormancy since the early 1990s, **Nuclear Criticism has largely missed the chance to think through queer theory, a field whose principal interventions have happened in the interim. You occasionally see comparisons between queer coming-out narratives and a nation’s coming out as a nuclear power or a military person’s coming out as an anti-nuclear activist.** But **the more suggestive commonalities between Nuclear Criticism and queer theoretical writing—most of them under the sign of temporality—remain unexplored. These include an intimate acquaintance with and even an embrace of the death drive; a related acquaintance with portraits of the future as negated or foreclosed; a commitment not to reopen the future under repressive terms; and the alternative, in the face of a seemingly barred future, of soliciting the queer touch of the dead whom for various reasons we suddenly apprehend as our contemporaries**. Exploring these commonalities seems the more urgent, given that **queer temporalities scholarship could provoke debate about what nuclear abolitionists and their opponents have most in common: a practically automated recourse to reproductive futurism in arguing for their respective positions**. Schell’s equation of low marital indices with a general sense of species futurelessness is an extreme but not an exceptional case of **antinuclear rhetoric, which continues today to invoke “a world safe for our children” in terms nearly indistinguishable from the pro-nuclear side of the aisle.12 The radical negativity exhibited by some queer temporalities scholars might also expose the limits of a politics of (procreative) optimism on both sides of the nuclear debate—the limits of acting as if the world could be made safe for “our children” or anyone else by either retaining or abolishing our nuclear deterrents.**

Queer theorists, for their part, have turned occasionally during the last twenty years to Nuclear Criticism, although usually to jump-start an argument headed away from the nuclear referent. Peter Coviello’s essay “Apocalypse from Now On” (2000) nods in its title to both Jacques Derrida’s inaugural work of Nuclear Criticism, “No Apocalypse, Not Now (full speed ahead, seven missiles, seven missives)” (1984) and Susan Sontag’s 1989 AIDS and Its Metaphors (Sontag: “**Apocalypse is now a long-running serial: not ‘Apocalypse Now’ but ‘Apocalypse from Now On’”).**13 But Coviello’s essay invokes the nuclear condition principally in order to set up what he sees as its succession, after 1989, by AIDS as the apocalypse du jour. “Du jour” in the way a daily special marks the everyday’s domestication of the exceptional: for Coviello, **AIDS differs from the nuclear condition in quotidienizing apocalypse, making it a condition rather than a threatened event and thus particularly useful to the day-to-day biopolitical operations of the state.** Coviello, in other words, sets sail from Port Derrida for Port Sontag—from Nuclear Criticism to a critique of AIDS and governmentality—without, understandably enough, booking return passage. Before leaving the nuclear behind, however, he notes “**how intimately bonded the nuclear and the sexual actually were, before the advent of AIDS gave to such bonding a ghastly quality of inevitability.”14 Coviello’s emphasis is not on the usual string of references to the heteronormative sexualization of nuclear weapons (e.g., “Little Boy,” Bikini atoll, the population bomb, and the nuclear family, although he mentions these in passing). Instead, he reads nuclear discourse as having limned, before AIDS, a “gay death drive” that figured queerness as incarnating (and more rarely as rebuking) the extravagant sovereignty of nuclear weapons**. Glossing Martin Amis’s characterization of the nuclear arsenal as a cocked gun in the mouths of the procreative, Coviello writes that **“power in the nuclear age is horrifying and unlivable because it makes me—or wants to make me—thoroughly, irremediably queer.” 15 Thus the homophobia of certain anti-nuclear discourses anticipated homophobic responses to AIDS as an apocalyptic threat emanating from queer subjects**. What’s more, Coviello hazards, **the apocalypticism that pervaded debates around both nuclear weapons and AIDS made for strong continuities between Nuclear Criticism and queer theory, both bodies of work responding to high concentrations of state power in the management of populations, bilateral depictions of the biological family as under siege, and the pervasive rhetoric of the death wish.16**

**We have already seen how hospitable both pro- and anti-nuclear writing could be, and for that matter remains, to reproductive futurism and a range of homophobic rhetorics. One of the signal features of Nuclear Criticism (as opposed to anti-nuclear discourse writ large) has been to read nuclear discourses of all kinds with skepticism and thus to hesitate on the threshold of a reflexive apocalypticism**. One result of this circumspection, I suggest, is that **Nuclear Criticism is a repository of alternatives to heteronormative portraits of the future.** Derrida’s “No Apocalypse, Not Now” serves as my cardinal example. I do not revisit it for the warrant of professional competence it gives humanists writing on the nuclear debate or for its bold claim that literature has always belonged to the nuclear epoch, both of which I have discussed elsewhere.17 My interest is in two other of the essay’s features: its unconventional portrait of the futurity imperiled by nuclear war and its critique of the use of the name as chief rationale for both making and avoiding war. Two years after The Fate of the Earth, “No Apocalypse, Not Now” refers to the extinction hypothesis advanced by Schell and others—“**that in nuclear war ‘humanity’ runs the risk of its self-destruction, with nothing left over, no remainder”—as a “rumor,” adding that in the speed race of the nuclear condition, a few seconds “may decide, irreversibly, the fate of what is still now and then called humanity—plus the fate of a few other species.”18 The sardonic end to that sentence registers an impatience with anti-nuclear rhetoric’s shrill anthropocentrism** and anticipates the critique of the human/animal binary that emerges in Derrida’s work of the 1990s. What’s more, although the essay goes on to reclaim rumor as the discursive ground of the nuclear condition (“one can no longer oppose belief and science, doxa and episteme, once one has reached the decisive place of the nuclear age”),19 it absolutely declines to join Schell et al. in **invoking humanity, human progeny, or human biological survival as the thing in whose name Nuclear Criticism ought to proceed. In the course of responding to its other, more assertively phrased provocations, commentators on the essay have largely missed its stunning refusal to take up this most ready-to-hand rhetoric of the anti-nuclear movement.**

#### The 1AC is a lie that pretends that once nukes are dismantled, the nuclear condition will be too, creating false hope militating towards antiqueerness as the nuclear condition continues its onslaught unabated

Saint-Amour 13 (Paul K. Saint-Amour - Associate Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, “QUEER TEMPORALITIES OF THE NUCLEAR CONDITION”, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013, <https://www.english.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/articles/Silence%20of%20Fallout--Queer%20Temporallities.pdf>, MG)

A Canticle for Leibowitz attributes a death drive not only to church and state but also to the archive itself, an ineliminable tendency in writing to stockpile and disseminate the prospective conditions of its effacement: it is thanks in part to the Memorabilia—not just the particular holdings of the abbey but the techno-scientific archive generally—that the Memorabilia are imperiled and must be conveyed off the planet. In this respect, as in so much else, Miller’s mise-en-scène anticipates Derrida, who would theorize what he variously names “archive fever,” the “death drive of the archive,” the “archiviolithic force,” and “the violence of the archive itself, as archive, as archival violence.” “It is at work,” he writes in Archive Fever (1995), “but since it always operates in silence, it never leaves any archives of its own. It destroys in advance its own archive, as if that were in truth the very motivation of its most proper movement. It works to destroy the archive: on the condition of effacing but also with a view to effacing its own ‘proper’ traces.”47 **A decade after “No Apocalypse, Not Now,” Derrida’s master-figure for the immanent violence of the archive remains the nuclear.** He refers repeatedly to **the archive as “a series of cleavages [that] will incessantly divide every atom of our lexicon”; as “haunted from its origin” by “the possibility of its fission”; as haunted, too, by secrets that are “the very ash of the archive.”**48 For Derrida, **the fission of the word is inherent in its inscription, the effaceability of writing its indispensable precondition. This fissibility of the word inheres at every possible scale: in the cleft etym, divided against itself by its lexically unstable components and its capacity for resignification; in the catastrophes, both slow and split-second, that destroy writing’s material and digital traces; in the linguistic drift that can efface the intelligibility of writing even when it survives; in writing’s way of making my death and absence present to me. But if indeed the archiviolithic destroys in advance its own archive, we cannot point to it, cannot even point to its remains. We can only speculate about it as we speculate about death**: hence the strange compatibility of the archiviolithic, the archival death drive, **with speculative fictions of the nuclear, the event that has so far occurred, at its fullest blown, only in discourse, as a purely theoretical event.**

Neither Miller’s speculative fiction nor Derrida’s work on the archive addresses queer sex head-on, although celibacy, a major element in Canticle, is currently being rethought as a queer sexuality—rather than, say, as the absence of sexuality, or as closeted homosexuality—in its relation to reproductive time.49 **Bringing queer temporalities frameworks into conversation with Nuclear Criticism will certainly give us new ways to think about nuclear conditions both pre- and post-1989 in conjunction with queer sex and sexuality specifically.** What Patrick R. Mullen calls **the “vehicular mobility” of the term queer “as a capacious index for a series of non-normative desires, sexualities, people, politics, and cultural expressions” will also allow us to consider forms of dissidence that maintain, say, a temporal connection to queer sexuality even when the latter does not figure, or figures obliquely, in a work’s diegesis or propositional content.50** This second kind of work, which I have tried to undertake here, can crucially spoil the non-stick surface of “history,” which presents itself as the only authorized finish for frying the egg of time. **Resisting even the notion of a queer theoretical “turn toward time” as conceding too much to “the motionless ‘movement’ of historical procession obedient to origins, intentions, and ends whose authority rules over all,”** Lee Edelman would pose against it the life-in-death—or we might say, echoing Miller, the crucifixion that is always now—of the drive’s cussedness and recursivity, which the queer subject is made to figure.

**Whether polyphonous or univocal, history, thus ontologized, displaces the epistemological impasse, the aporia of relationality, the nonidentity of things, by offering the promise of sequence as the royal road to consequence. Meaning thus hangs in the balance—a meaning that time, as the medium of its advent, defers while affirming its constant approach, but a meaning utterly undone by the queer who figures its refusal. This is the truth-event**, as Badiou might say, **that makes all subjects queer: that we aren’t, in fact, subjects of history constrained by the death-in-life of futurism and its illusion of productivity. We’re subjects, instead, of the real, of the drive, of the encounter with futurism’s emptiness, with negativity’s life-in-death. The universality proclaimed by queerness lies in identifying the subject with just this repetitive performance of a death drive, with** what’s, quite literally, unbecoming, and so in exploding the subject of knowledge immured in stone by the “turn toward time.”51

**The subject**, Edelman insists, **is not who overcomes the death drive but who is identified with it, and whose universal queerness inheres in this identification with repetition and the traumatic real. Such a subject stands in a queer and unassimilable relation to historical narratives grounded in procession, continuity, and reproductive futurism. A Nuclear Criticism that** heeded an insistence like Edelman’s **would write against time’s collapse into history; against the script that says our children are safe now that nuclear weapons are no longer such a threat; and against the heternormative logic that exceptionalizes queer subjects as nonreproductive bearers of the death drive. And it would wrest from history’s chronologizing authority the dissident temporalities that get subjected to it: cyclical, uncanny, and preposterous ways of being in time; discontinuous and transtemporal ones; births without conception and second comings that are at once awaited and unprecedented; and those evidently barred futurities in whose face we make some of our severest refusals to unbar the future on deplorable terms. Such a criticism would think the nuclear condition not only in numbers of warheads, ages of missiles, degrees of alert, or locations of fissile material but also as metonymizing and materializing the death drives of church, state, archive, and subject**. It would recognize that **we might dismantle every nuclear weapon on the planet—as we should—without coming close to dismantling the nuclear condition. To a history that placed the nuclear condition firmly in the past, back then, such a criticism would respond: the nuclear condition, like crucifixion, is always now.**

#### Antinuclearism cannot be separated from its legacy of reproductive futurism

Saint-Amour 15 (Paul K. Saint-Amour - Associate Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, “Tense Future: Modernism, Total War, Encyclopedic Form”, Oxford University Press, Pages 28-32, 2015, MG)

Derrida’s essay differs in one other important way from most nuclear criticism and, for that matter, **most late-twentieth-century nuclear disarmament discourse**. Both kinds of writing **had frequent recourse to reproductivist arguments in favor of purging nuclear weapons from the world**. As I note in chapter 3, Jonathan Schell’s pro-disarmament classic, The Fate of the Earth (1982), **argued that nuclear arms posed such a threat to humanity’s future that people were losing interest in progenerative sex and consequently in marriage. “No Apocalypse,” contrastingly, places survivance—a vital persistence or afterlife through the symbolic order—“at the very heart of life,” equating it not with biological reproduction but with “the entire archive and all symbolic capacity**” (28). Derrida’s essay in archival, as opposed to reproductive, futurism ends not by calling for the future to be made safe again for heteronormativity, but in a vision of God and the sons of Shem suspending their war with one another in Babel because “they preferred to spend a little more time together, the time of a long colloquy with warriors in love with life, busy writing in all languages in order to make the conversation last, even if they didn’t understand each other too well” (31). In attributing survivance to archives and declining to advocate disarmament “in the name of our children” or “for the sake of the unborn,” “No Apocalypse” anticipates a body of more recent work dedicated to tracing temporally normative conceptions of gender and sexuality—and, at the same time, to theorizing the relations between temporal and sexual dissidence.

**“Queer temporalities” as a theoretical rubric covers a broad array of scholarship by theorists and activists working, at least to date, predominantly in the United States.39 More specific than a turn toward time as theme, this scholarship considers how heteronormative cultures perceive queer subjects in relation to history and futurity, how queer subjects experience and enact particular relations to history and futurity, and how queerness itself might be rethought as having less (or less exclusively) to do with sex and sexual typology than with dissident ways of being in relation to time**. I have already referred to one of the chief temporalities from which queer subjects are variously excluded and dissenting:  **the “reproductive futurism” that conscripts the child as mascot for a heteronormative politics of hope—that is, for a future that can only be imagined in terms of biological reproduction and the modes of kinship, inheritance, and political succession it undergirds.40 Such a conception of futurity and history militates against certain transgenerational ties**, not least against the notion that the living could invest affectively in or form communities with the dead. In response, some scholars working on queer temporalities advocate just such a queer desire for history or “touch of the queer,” the kind of unpunctual, affective approach that could permit one to ask, as Carolyn Dinshaw does, “How does it feel to be an anachronism?”41 While acknowledging that the feeling of being out of step with one’s contemporaries can be exploited to repressive ends, Dinshaw remains optimistic that transtemporal communities—living anachronisms in league with the dead— might produce politically salutary effects in a present whose dense multiplicity they help to restore.42 Others, contrastingly, refuse a politics of hope they see as irreducibly heteronormative, urging queer subjects to embrace the negative position assigned them by reproductivism. **Such an embrace can take many forms: an insistence on the destructive, anti-communitarian, at once selfish and self-shattering dimensions of sex and particularly homo-sex; an identification of the queer subject with the Freudian death drive, with its relentless opposition to a procreative understanding of libido; or a refusal of queer triumphalism and a reclamation of the shame-laced backward look.43** Still others look to fuse the negativity of these antisocial, arguably apolitical positions to a radical antiracist and anticapitalist stance, calling for a “punk negativity” whose oppositional politics declines the language of hope, redemption, and futurity and turns instead to vandalism, masochism, pessimism, and despair.44 Real differences inhere among these approaches. But **they share a root conviction: that temporality cannot be thought apart from the sexual norms through which it is figured, licensed, and imbued with or emptied of affect.**

Owing to its semidormancy since the early 1990s, **nuclear criticism has largely missed the chance to think through queer theory, whose formation as a field and main interventions have happened in the interim.45 One occasionally sees comparisons between queer coming-out narratives and a nation’s coming out as a nuclear power or a military person’s coming out as an antinuclear activist.** But **the more suggestive commonalities between nuclear criticism and queer theoretical writing—most of them under the sign of temporality— remain unexplored. These include an intimate acquaintance with and even an embrace of the death drive and a related acquaintance with portraits of the future as negated or foreclosed**. Tense Future takes up some of the questions that form at the conjuncture of the two approaches. Where **nuclear criticism laments the way a seemingly foreclosed future projects trauma into the foretime of the disaster, a queer temporalities approach responds by asking what happens when the very terms in which the future is imagined as open foreclose a particular kind of subject or desire or being-toward-the-future. It also asks what gets created or fostered by the dissident temporality of the nuclear condition—what new forms of resistance, community, affiliation, or expression might be produced, like mineral allotropes, in the high pressures of the pre-traumatic**. Are there situations, it asks, in which an evidently closed, apocalyptic futurity, far from draining our acts of responsibility or critical purchase, might be the only condition under which a certain kind of critique may be tendered, or a certain kind of kinship imagined; might be the catalyst for attending to negative affects instead of dismissing them as fatalism or quietism? Finally, **confronted with the sexually normative arguments of much nuclear criticism, the analytic of queer temporality refuses to advocate for a future kept open on those narrow terms, demanding alternative lines along which the future’s openness might be argued.**

As I have indicated, one of these alternative lines is the archival conception of survivance we find in both Derrida’s nuclear criticism essay and recent queer theory. Read by these dual lights, the archive can no longer be imagined exclusively as a repository of state, institutional, or corporate records, or as the historical basis of such entities’ authority. It is also a repository for dissident temporalities, playing host to clashing portraits of the archivist as historiographic celibate and as ardent lover of the noncontemporary; of the past as variously benighted, authoritative, fragile, and desirable; and of the future as foreknown, or subject to probabilistic forecast, or radically unknowable.46 This last stockpile—of what Reinhart Koselleck calls “futures past” or “superseded futures”—contains some of the archive’s strangest, most important holdings, the traces of a past moment’s orientation “to the not-yet, to the nonexperienced, to that which is to be revealed.”47 Concrete histories depend, says Koselleck, on the relationship in a given period between experience and expectation. **Historical change will be legible not only in the shifting geometry between the two but also**, writes David Scott in a gloss on Koselleck, **in “the reorganization of the relation between their ideological contents,” as happens, for example, in the shift “from a moment . . . when the future appears guaranteed by the present to one in which it seems undermined by it.”**48 For Scott, our **capacity to imagine more habitable political futures relies on how we narrate not just the past generally but futures-past specifically. The living, he argues, need to be able to renarrate futures-past so as not to be constrained by now-obsolete emplotments of those futures by earlier generations. Thus if an anticolonial program** (his example is Frantz Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth) **imagines its future in the terms of revolutionary, emancipatory romance, those living in the wake of what they see as that program’s failure** (Scott himself, for instance, growing up in postcolonial Jamaica) **must be able to reemplot their antecedents’ future as tragedy.49 Such a renarration of the past superficially resembles the working-through modeled by trauma studies, but it differs in its etiology of historical blockage. What haunts, impedes, or overshadows the present in this instance is not an unassimilated past trauma but a past expectation, subsequently displaced but not yet reemplotted to take account of supervening events**. Scott gives us three reminders to be going on with. First, thwarted expectations can become encysted in our histories to the detriment of self-understanding and commitment in the present. Second, past narratives about the future are crucial historical artifacts. And third, those artifacts need not be permitted to dictate the conditions of their reception and interpretation.

## Neg---Race/Blackness K

### Framework/K of IR Studies

#### FW

Sidra Hamidi 19, Assistant Professor in the Political Science department at Stetson University and was previously a Stanton Nuclear Security Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University. PhD in Political Science from Northwestern University in 2018, 9-25-2019, "Law as discursive resource: the politics of the nuclear/non-nuclear distinction in the Non-Proliferation Treaty", SAGE Journals, Volume 26, Issue 2, https://doi.org/10.1177/135406611987599

Conclusion: categorization and international law A turn toward language and rhetoric is key to understand the operation of nuclear weapons and technology in global politics. Nuclear weapons and the many technical concepts surrounding them (deterrence, proliferation, mutually assured destructive, strategic stability) are definitive of the way that language mediates material reality. Paul Chilton et al. (1985) coined the term “nukespeak” to refer to the jargon of nuclear politics, which was and continues to be “mystificatory in aim and power-building in effect” (3). Language determines how both political analysts and the broader public understand nuclear politics. As Benoit Pelopidas (2011) has argued, the dominance of the “proliferation paradigm” not only distorts nuclear history but also limits political innovation when it comes to the threat of nuclear weapons. ENDC negotiations illuminate the politics of building a discursive order around nuclear technology. Like the “proliferation paradigm,” the distinction between nuclear and non-nuclear states remains a state-centric way to organize nuclear politics, limiting the kinds of institutional structures that can govern nuclear weapons. Conflicts surrounding legality in nuclear politics are often based on contestation over legal language and categories—the language is itself a site of contestation rather than simply being a guise to accomplish narrow self-interest. And this contestation creates a context for states to identify with certain beliefs or discourses that they would not identify with otherwise (Koskenniemi, 1990). International law is “political” in that it is a part of the ongoing negotiation over the “who” of states—over how we identify certain states and the rights and obligations that follow from those identifications. This particular use of international law is largely ignored by theories that examine the legality of nonproliferation in nuclear politics. Law, specifically the NPT, attempts to reinforce and manage the unique hold of nuclear technology and materials in the modern state imaginary. The NPT legitimates the nuclear weapons of the NWS by quite literally constituting them as the only permissible NWS—which demonstrates that the category does not only exist because it describes an objective material reality but because it defines and delimits what is and is not acceptable in the nuclear world. But, as was seen in ENDC negotiations, the NNWS also sought legitimacy and meaning through the mechanism of the NPT. The NPT does not simply endure because the powerful have sanctioned it, but because it created a space for the seemingly disempowered to expand their influence from below. The ENDC was explicitly a forum in which to debate nonproliferation and disarmament but it also provided a forum for states to perform a burgeoning non-nuclear identity based on different understandings of their place in the nuclear regime but also more broadly in international society. In turning to what the NPT does, rather than what the treaty regulates and limits, the article illuminates the constitution of nuclear and non-nuclear states in global politics. Ensuring that the study of law in political science is politically grounded and empirically minded requires an understanding of the constitution of legal categories. Exploring the origins of these categories illuminates the ordering power of international law. Order, as John Keeley (1990) has argued, is not only a means of lessening conflict, but also a “loci of struggle” in which “resistance can persist in the face of ordering efforts or even be created by them” (93). Other legal distinctions such as the one between civilian and combatants (Kinsella, 2011), and between public and private (Romany, 1993) also have a reifying effect on the way that states practice international politics. The politics of defining and categorizing states, actors, or spheres of international life is often bolstered by international law. Investigating this process of categorizing in contexts beyond nuclear politics provides a fruitful way to think about legal institutions as sites of contestation.

#### Epistemology K of IR

Somdeep Sen 22, Associate Professor in International Development Studies at Roskilde University, Denmark, 1-28-2022, "Race, Racism, and the Teaching of International Relations", Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies, https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.666

Summary

Discussions of race and racism are often missing in the curriculum of international relations courses or, when present, categorized as a “critical approach” and placed outside the mainstream. But this absence or marginalization from the mainstream of the discipline does not mean that such discussions are beyond the scope of its primary agenda—that is, theorize interstate relations. On the contrary, questions of race and racism have been foundational to the historical development of international relations. In its formative years, the discipline’s understanding of the global order was shaped by the Darwinist conceptions of racial hierarchies adopted by some its core theorists. They viewed the imperial domination of the “White races” over the “darker peoples of the world” to be justified, considering the immeasurable racial superiority of the former. Revisionist international relations scholars, also active during the formative years of the discipline, worked to upend these racialized hierarchies and underlined the need to account for the struggles and national aspirations of the dominated in international politics. Yet, international relations’ racist disciplinary precepts have persisted, and a color line—both globally and within the discipline—continues to divide the world into racialized, binary categories (e.g., civilized/uncivilized, modern/backward, and developed/undeveloped) that legitimize Western authority in international politics. However, the introduction of race and racism in the teaching of the discipline equally unsettles the assumption that international relations embodies a value-free scientific endeavor. Instead, the role of racist precepts in the making and workings of the field demonstrates that the discipline’s mainstream is deeply positioned in its view of the world and, as a consequence, fails to account for the multiplicity of ways in which international politics is encountered and experienced.

Introduction

It is often the case that a discussion of race is either entirely missing in the curriculum of introductory courses in international relations or, when present, dismissed as belonging to the category of “critical approaches” and having little mainstream relevance. This absence is a reflection of certain historically established and ritually performed disciplinary practices and norms that have determined the types of (theoretical and methodological) approaches that belong in the mainstream of international relations. In a way, as Agathangelou and Ling (2004) elaborate, the discipline is stratified like a house in which mainstream approaches or the “heads of the house” (e.g., realism and liberalism) occupy the “upstairs” of the dwelling (p. 23). “[N]ative informant servants” (e.g., area studies) live downstairs, do the “dirty work” (i.e., collect ethnographic data), and provide “sustenance and services” to the residents upstairs so that they can “theorize grandly about the world” (p. 29). In this visualization of the field, discussions of race (along with gender, sexuality, and class) are part of approaches that live outside the house and challenge its very foundations (p. 32). In the same vein, Weber (2015) refashions this house into a gentrified neighborhood. Here, disciplinary approaches living upstairs occupy “prime real estate” and live in “gated communities” where entry is determined by a code of conduct regarding what counts as having mainstream relevance for international relations. As expected, here too, scholars of race, along with “Marxists, poststructuralists, feminists . . . postcolonial scholars, critical studies scholars, and queer studies scholars,” are marginalized and relegated to poor neighborhoods by “publishing, funding, hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions” that protect the occupants of the gated communities (Weber, 2015, pp. 29, 42–43).

It is therefore not mere happenstance that a focus on race is often absent in international relations curricula. Some have even argued that “the discipline of international relations was and is predicated on a systematic politics of forgetting, a willful amnesia, on the question of race” (Krishna, 2001, p. 401; see also Henderson, 2007; Vitalis, 2000). But while the “dominant knowledge structure” of the discipline has indeed internalized this amnesiac approach to race (Mittelman, 2009, pp. 99–101), this does not mean that it is unimportant to the teaching of the discipline. On the contrary, race and racism have been foundational to the “very making of the modern world system” (Persaud & Walker, 2001, p. 374). So, the discipline’s “racist precepts” (Henderson, 2013, p. 90) are an instructive tool in the classroom for understanding the hierarchies and positioned epistemologies that animate its primary agenda—that is, theorize interstate relations (Cox, 1981; Wight, 1960). At the outset, it is then important to begin by discussing how the question of race and racism informed the development of the discipline, before elaborating its role in elucidating the positioned nature of knowledge production in international relations.

### Link---Arms Control

#### Their hypocritical attempts at nuclear reduction create a violent nuclear apartheid informed by racialized international relations.

Sen, '22 – Associate Professor of International Development Studies at Roskilde University in Denmark (Somdeep Sen; "Race, Racism, and the Teaching of International Relations"; Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies; https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.666)

Here, one could look to a wide range of works that have sought to critique and rethink some of the foundational norms and assumptions of the discipline. These critical approaches to international relations have highlighted its Eurocentrism (Acharya, 2014; Hobson, 2012; Sabaratnam, 2013; Shilliam, 2010), argued for the need to incorporate non-Western perspectives in the discipline (Acharya & Buzan, 2009; Bilgin, 2008; Shani, 2008; A. Tickner, 2003; A. Tickner & Smith, 2020), as well as underlined the gendered nature of the field (Ahmed, 1998; Butler, 2004; Cohn, 1987; Enloe, 1989; Tickner, 1992; Weber, 2016). Still others have sought to upend the foundational epistemological orientation of the discipline and have argued that what international relations is is evident not just in a macro and abstract perspective on politics, security, and relations between states. It is equally evident in the micro level and in the individual experiences of and perspectives on international relations. Herein, discussions of emancipation, ethics, and inequality have immense relevance (Booth, 1991, 2005), especially in terms of the way they relate to notions of identity and the politics of identity formation (Barkawi & Laffey, 2006; L. Hansen, 2000; Walker, 1997).

Similarly, those who have sought to recover “the critique of race and racism” (Shilliam, 2020a, p. 153), once pioneered by the revisionist founders of the discipline, have underlined the importance of accounting for the global color line in a critical appraisal of international relations. Doty (1993), for instance, argues for the continued relevance of the color line in view of the multiplicity of ways in which questions of race and racism affect domestic politics in Western and non-Western societies. Accordingly, she adds, to explore race and its role in shaping the global political order is to deliberate issues of “identity and difference”—that is, issues that underlie some of the most critical concerns in international relations (pp. 443– 444). Here, the urge is not to treat “race as a foundational” category in itself. Instead, Doty argues, race should be seen as a means “to locate the play of power and politics” in the discursive manners in which identities are formed (p. 460). Persaud and Walker (2001) similarly acknowledge the importance of the color line for understanding the complex ways in which hierarchical power structures operate in international politics. In the introduction to their influential special issue titled “Apetura: Race and International Relations,” they posit that by adopting an amnesiac approach to questions of race and racism, international relations has failed to account for the “interrelated set of [racialized] material, ideological, and epistemological practices” that together keep up the color line in an “[ever-]changing international or global order” (pp. 373–374). Subsequently, they echo the critique of racism in international relations once put forth by the Howard School, as they argue that binary and hierarchical categories of difference such as “civilized/uncivilized; modern/backward; rational/ superstitious, developed/undeveloped” continue to inform interstate relations. These, the authors add, have led to “the spatial and demographic configuration of the world” (not least as a consequence of imperial conquests), a deeply racialized global “labour supply,” and processes of othering that have altered notions of social belonging and citizenship in societies throughout the world (pp. 374–375).

At the systemic level, these binaries were, for instance, very much in play in the widespread, global condemnation that followed India’s decision to test a nuclear weapon in 1998. Herein, Biswas (2001) notes, race played an important role in keeping India out of the “elite club of nuclear ‘haves’” who have the “exclusive rights” to both harbor a nuclear arsenal and deny others the right to do the same. Unsurprisingly, the club of “haves” is populated by countries in the Global North, whereas the “have-nots” are located in the Global South. Accordingly, Biswas deploys the notion of “nuclear apartheid” as a signifier of the “taken-for-granted [racialized] terrain” of international relations that informs its hierarchical norms and practices (p. 486). Of course, a pioneering contribution of incorporating race and racism in the study of international relations is its ability to bridge “the international” and “individual” (Persaud & Walker, 2001, p. 373). Undoubtedly, it was a concern for the material and everyday impact of Darwinist conception of racial hierarchies in international relations that informed the revisionist approach in the discipline’s formative years, as the likes of Tate argued for the need to account for the perspectives and aspirations of the darker races. Similarly, later works have sought to highlight the individual and everyday impact of racism and its relevance for international relations theory. To this end, Rutazibwa (2016) has proposed that the patterns of “daily [and] structural racism” (p. 192) that inform the everyday lives of people of color should be conceived as a direct consequence of global patterns of racialized binaries and hierarchies. Doing so, she argues, would do away with the presumption of a “division between the everyday and scholarship when it comes to understanding the sustained hierarchization of peoples.” On the contrary, the deployment of the scope of racism and the “revalorization of the everyday” would encourage a reflexivity in our theoretical and analytical choices and ensure a continued recognition of the varied ways in which racism in society mirrors itself in scholarship and vice versa (p. 199).

#### Attempts at arms control are self-fulfilling prophecy that sustain rather than decrease militarism.

Just the abstract.

Anna Stavrianakis 19, Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Sussex, 2019, "Controlling weapons circulation in a postcolonial militarised world", Review of International Studies, 45 (1). pp. 57-76, http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0260210518000190

What are the politics of, and prospects for, contemporary weapons control? Human rights and humanitarian activists and scholars celebrate the gains made in the UN Arms Trade Treaty as a step towards greater human security. Critics counter that the treaty represents an accommodation with global militarism. Taking the tensions between arms transfer control and militarism as my starting point, I argue that the negotiating process and eventual treaty text demonstrate competing modes of militarism. Expressed in terms of sovereignty, political economy, or human security, all three modes are underpinned by ongoing imperial relations: racial, gendered and classed relations of asymmetry and hierarchy that persist despite formal sovereign equality. This means human security is a form of militarism rather than the antithesis of it. Drawing on primary sources from negotiations and participant observation with actors involved in the campaign for the ATT, the argument challenges the idea that human security has scored a victory over militarism. It also complicates our understanding of the nature of the accommodation with it, demonstrating the transformation as well as entrenchment of contemporary militarism. The argument reframes the challenges for controlling weapons circulation, placing the necessity for feminist, postcolonial anti-militarist critique front and centre.

### Link---Denuclearization

#### Blackness K of De-securitization: Disarmament is a false promise for marginalized groups and an appeal white nostalgia for a “time before nukes,” a reality that has never existed for people of color. The AFF reifies Western, white frameworks and villainize black diaspora.

Just the abstract.

Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit 19, Associate Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University, Senior Lecturer in International Security, 8-7-2019, "Is securitization theory racist? Civilizationism, methodological whiteness, and antiblack thought in the Copenhagen School", SAGE Journals, Volume 51, Issue 1, https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010619862921

This article provides the first excavation of the foundational role of racist thought in securitization theory. We demonstrate that Copenhagen School securitization theory is structured not only by Eurocentrism but also by civilizationism, methodological whiteness, and antiblack racism. Classic securitization theory advances a conceptualization of ‘normal politics’ as reasoned, civilized dialogue, and securitization as a potential regression into a racially coded uncivilized ‘state of nature’. It justifies this through a civilizationist history of the world that privileges Europe as the apex of civilized ‘desecuritization’, sanitizing its violent (settler-) colonial projects and the racial violence of normal liberal politics. It then constructs a methodologically and normatively white framework that uses speech act theory to locate ‘progress’ towards normal politics and desecuritization in Europe, making becoming like Europe a moral imperative. Using ostensibly neutral terms, securitization theory prioritizes order over justice, positioning the securitization theorist as the defender of (white) ‘civilized politics’ against (racialized) ‘primal anarchy’. Antiblackness is a crucial building-block in this conceptual edifice: securitization theory finds ‘primal anarchy’ especially in ‘Africa’, casting it as an irrationally oversecuritized foil to ‘civilized politics’. We conclude by discussing whether the theory, or even just the concept of securitization, can be recuperated from these racist foundations.

#### Denuclearizing accepts a binary between nuclear and non-nuclear states that privilege Western nations and disadvantages the Global South. US demilitarization post-plan appropriates and defangs decolonial resistance and masks US imperialism.

Sidra Hamidi 19, Assistant Professor in the Political Science department at Stetson University and was previously a Stanton Nuclear Security Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University. PhD in Political Science from Northwestern University in 2018, 9-25-2019, "Law as discursive resource: the politics of the nuclear/non-nuclear distinction in the Non-Proliferation Treaty", SAGE Journals, Volume 26, Issue 2, https://doi.org/10.1177/135406611987599

Being “non-nuclear” Why did the non-nuclear states accept the seemingly lesser status of being non-nuclear? An entirely realist explanation of the hierarchical structure of the NPT might point to the way in which the materially powerful states were able to legitimate their possession of nuclear weapons at the expense of those less powerful. While there is certainly an element of this great power hierarchy at the center of the NPT, the negotiations behind the treaty were nonetheless much more contingent than the realist view can account for. As Mallard argues, “the ambiguities of the legal rules embedded in new treaties and agreements are not only a resource for the powerful” (28). The non-nuclear states perpetuated a legal and normative distinction between themselves and the nuclear states to bring meaning to a collective non-nuclear identity but this process had the unintended effect of reifying the hierarchy of the NPT. In my exploration of ENDC meeting transcripts, I paid particular attention to instances where states used the distinction through the context of identity, signifying an “us v. them” mentality. More often than not, this sort of perspective is advanced by the nonnuclear states as they attempt to define a non-nuclear identity. Instances of this “identity talk” are replete in the negotiations but prominent examples include the mention of a “non-nuclear club” by both Sweden and Poland (ENDC Meeting 19: 10; ENDC Meeting 22: 38; ENDC Meeting 176: 10-12), the mention of “non-nuclear” people by Romania (ENDC Meeting 135: 30), and the consistent linking of non-nuclear status with “nonaligned” status by India, Brazil, and the United Arab Republic (UAR)3 (ENDC Meeting 15: 27; ENDC Meeting 137: 42; ENDC Meeting 245: 4). I discuss each instance of “identity talk” briefly later and its implications for the role of international law. The discussions conducted throughout the ENDC were indicative of broader discourses in nuclear politics at the time. In fact, the legal distinction between nuclear and non-nuclear states did not originate in the ENDC. The distinction has its origins in a series of UN resolutions from 1958 put forward by Ireland’s Minister of External Affairs, Frank Aiken (O’Driscoll and Walsh, 2014). And even though Ireland did not participate in ENDC negotiations,4 its earlier diplomacy exerted an influence on the ENDC. The “non-nuclear” participants referenced Irish diplomacy during their deliberations, especially as they tried to bring meaning to their non-nuclearity. For example, while discussing the many proposals presented at the ENDC, the representative from Poland stated that, “Some suggestions have referred to the closing of the ‘nuclear club’. Others have related to the creation of a ‘non-nuclear club’” (ENDC Meeting 176: 10). The “nuclear club” might be based on the possession of nuclear weapons, but a “non-nuclear club” would have to be based on nonmaterial elements to be meaningful. Non-nuclear status implied the absence of material capabilities and thus solidarity around this identity had to move beyond material power to be meaningful. The same representative also noted that “we do not think that a non-nuclear status should be considered discriminatory” (ENDC Meeting 176: 11). The non-nuclear states used the ENDC to assert that being non-nuclear did not signal a lesser status. Though these states knew that there were obvious differences in capabilities between the great power and themselves, they nonetheless used international law to change what being non-nuclear meant in the global nuclear regime. Similarly, states like Brazil and Sweden made a deliberate effort to refer to themselves as “non-nuclear powers,” as a way to assert that power comes from remaining nonnuclear (ENDC Meeting 157: 36; ENDC Meeting 160: 22; ENDC Meeting 196: 5). For these countries, even more than in the example of Poland stated earlier, it was necessary to assert the power that came from being non-nuclear. As Mohamed Shaker (1980) notes in his history of the NPT, Brazil and Sweden were among eight nonaligned countries added to what was previously the Ten Nation Disarmament Committee (72).5 The ENDC presented a particularly important forum for these eight states that undermined the global hierarchy created by the United States and Soviet Union. For these states, non-nuclear status was as much about rejecting this hierarchy than it was a marker of material difference. Much of this type of diplomacy fits with recent scholarship on the important place of “small powers” in international politics (Renshon, 2017). But power politics as practiced by materially weaker states is characteristically different from the power politics of “great” powers. This is evidenced in Sweden’s use of the term “non-great” to refer to the non-nuclear states (ENDC Meeting 222: 12–14). Diplomatic forums like the ENDC are particularly important for sustaining a vision of power that is certainly related to the materially powerful but at once attempts to subvert the idea that power comes from military hardware. The non-nuclear states also advocated for the “inalienable right” to nuclear energy and linked this right with the self-determination of people. For example, during an ENDC session, the representative of Romania stated that any restriction on peaceful uses of nuclear energy would “infringe on the inalienable right of every people to benefit fully from the great achievements of modern civilization” (ENDC Meeting 344: 16). As Daniel Joyner (2011) has noted, the term “inalienable” right is very rare in international law—with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights as the other prominent example of its use. And while the NPT establishes the inalienable right of states to pursue peaceful nuclear energy, this right gets conflated with the rights of people, as made clear by the Romanian representative to the ENDC. Conflating the right of “people” to develop nuclear energy had the effect of turning nuclear energy into a symbolic cause for independence and self-sufficiency. These narratives around non-nuclear statehood rendered the category an identity, particularly for the seemingly disadvantaged non-nuclear states. Romania’s linking of nuclear rights with the inalienable rights of people is particularly puzzling given that Romania was a Soviet satellite and ally during this period. But for others, the ENDC provided a forum to perform their identity as both “non-nuclear” and “nonaligned.” ENDC meetings coincided with the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961 and thus constituted a space in which to perform and perhaps even test out the unifying force of the nonaligned identity. The NAM had its origins in the Bandung Conference, which took place in Indonesia in 1955 and shaped the way that the decolonized world thought of their identity as independent nation-states in international society. India, Brazil, and the UAR all attempted to consolidate non-nuclear identity around their nonaligned status. During the earlier meetings of the ENDC, the Indian representative condemned the continuing arms race between the United States and Soviet Union and asserted the importance of a “third side” in resolving these tensions: “There are not just two sides to this question, namely, the Western side and the other side: there is the third side, represented by the unaligned countries. And there is a wider side than the unaligned countries: there is the world itself” (ENDC Meeting 15: 27). The “other side” of course was represented by the Soviet Union and the “third side” represented an alternative global identity to the Cold War politics of the time. Non-alignment signified a political position but also an economic one. For example, the Brazilian representative noted that “we are a non-aligned, non-nuclear country in process of development, but we all have a deep sense of international responsibility [. . .]” (ENDC Meeting 137: 42).6 Developmental concerns drove these states to both revile nuclear weapons while remaining open to the economic potential brought by nuclear technology, which entangled strategic concerns with normative ones. The nonaligned states diverged on many different issues throughout Bandung. As Itty Abraham (2008) notes, “mutual disagreements were rife, dislike of particular individuals strong, and the possibility of a breakdown in consensus always present” (208). But despite constant disagreement, nuclear disarmament represented one of the few consensus issues and was, thus, key to sustain the image that the nonaligned states had a set of commensurate interests. Still, while non-nuclearity provided a framework to bind states in an effort to create a global force against the United States and Soviet Union and their many allies, it also reified that idea that there was indeed an inherent hierarchy between nuclear and non-nuclear states. There was much at stake in articulating a unified identity around non-nuclear status, particularly because nuclear disarmament presented one of the few topics on which the diverse NAM agreed on. But the effect was a primarily statist approach of both perceiving and governing the global nuclear regime—an approach that was taken for granted by both the nuclear and non-nuclear states. Moreover, from a legal perspective, the NPT’s separation between NWS and NNWS conflicts with the idea that states are juridically equal in the eyes of international law. How could NPT member states be seen as juridically equal and yet still separated by legal hierarchy? The legal categories that structure the NPT reflected the way that states themselves talked about their place in the global nuclear regime—even those that are seemingly disempowered by the NPT’s discriminatory structure. Instead of disavowing the hierarchy, non-nuclear states instead strengthened it. What does identity-building around the category of “non-nuclear state” say about the role of international law in the context of nonproliferation? First, it undermines the simplistic view that the NPT is a weapon of the powerful states who wanted to shape the nuclear order to benefit their material interests. The ENDC provided a forum for many other states to perform their identity on the world stage. For many states, though not all that were purportedly non-nuclear, this performance accompanied the founding of the NAM and bolstered a post-colonial identity. Second, the diplomatic role of the “nonnuclear” states undermines an entirely materialist understanding of what marks the difference between nuclear and non-nuclear states. Nuclear status constitutes a separate phenomenon than nuclear capability—in practice, “non-nuclear” states had a variety of capabilities but one identity around which they chose to rally around. Non-nuclearity might connote nonaligned status, a post-colonial identity, or a commitment to nuclear energy, among many other meanings.

#### Disarmament is cruel optimism. Restricts colonial subjects and expands bad norms that perpetuate liberal militarism and racism.

This is just the abstract, the rest of the article is much more detailed for link purposes.

Neil Cooper 18, Ph.D., University of Bradford, 8-1-2018, "Race, Sovereignty, and Free Trade: Arms Trade Regulation and Humanitarian Arms Control in the Age of Empire", Journal of Global Security Studies, Volume 3, Issue 4, October 2018, Pages 444–462, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogy013>

Abstract

This paper contributes to the literature on norms, arms regulation, humanitarian arms control, and arms control as governmentality by examining the different “Matryoshka dolls” of arms trade governance as they operated in the late nineteenth century. I suggest that analysis of practices in this era has relevance for debates about contemporary arms governance. The innermost doll is represented by a specific regulatory initiative, in this case, the 1890 Brussels Act, which represented an attempt to graft a regulatory arms trade norm onto an established and constitutive anti-slavery norm. The Act was also located within the second matryoshka doll, the broader approach to arms trade prohibition adopted in an era. Despite representations of the period as one of free trade in arms, I highlight extensive efforts to restrict the transfer of firearms to colonial subjects. Finally, I examine the third matryoshka doll, the way in which mechanisms of prohibition and permission constitute the practices of arms control as governmentality—the effort to define and manage which gradations of people can legitimately own, trade, and use which gradations of weapons in what contexts. Overall, the paper challenges the optimistic literature regarding humanitarian arms control and arms trade norms with three concluding implications: the merging of humanitarianism and arms control can reflect both good and bad norms; such a confluence is not necessarily incompatible with colonialism, racism, or imperial violence; and, such a merger is consonant with the maintenance of liberal militarism.

### Link---Nuclear Apartheid

#### Reject nuclear apartheid as an appeal to racial signification that justifies white saviorism.

Sidra Hamidi 19, Assistant Professor in the Political Science department at Stetson University and was previously a Stanton Nuclear Security Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University. PhD in Political Science from Northwestern University in 2018, 9-25-2019, "Law as discursive resource: the politics of the nuclear/non-nuclear distinction in the Non-Proliferation Treaty", SAGE Journals, Volume 26, Issue 2, https://doi.org/10.1177/135406611987599

Of course, only shortly after the NPT was open for signature, India tested a “peaceful” nuclear device. Whether this act was the consequence of a perceived “atomic apartheid” is a difficult historical and causal question. However, the ENDC did ultimately leave an impact on how India thought about the nuclear world. George Perkovich (1999) notes that particularly toward the end of ENDC negotiations in 1967–1968, “the question shifted from whether India should actually produce nuclear weapons to whether India should sign a treaty relinquishing the right to produce weapons. The focus was less on what India should do technologically and militarily than on what the rest of the world should do morally and equitably” (134). India’s competing interests between developing an indigenous nuclear program and also retaining its identity as a peaceful, nonaligned state appear to be incompatible. But the NPT helped with this incompatibility by providing a language by which it could at once retain its self-understanding as a “peaceful” nuclear power and still continue the development of its nuclear program. Since the particular negotiating context of the ENDC, the discourse of nuclear apartheid has become a part of the repertoire of resistance7 to the hierarchy of the global nuclear regime and, as such, is often a convenient discursive resource for states. When India conducted nuclear tests in 1998, it justified the decision by invoking nuclear apartheid. Shortly after the tests, Indian foreign minister, Jaswant Singh (1998), wrote a piece for Foreign Affairs titled “Against Nuclear Apartheid.” The language of apartheid allowed India to combine strategic interest with normative justification. The legal text of the NPT sustains a hierarchy between NWS and NNWS, which legitimates India’s dissent. And one need not look any further than the long history of civilizational discourses that render non-Western states unfit for nuclear weapons possession (Maddock, 2010) for proof that nuclear apartheid is a very real force in the history of the global nuclear regime. But what makes nuclear apartheid an effective discourse for states like India? How exactly have the disempowered wielded this discursive resource? Nuclear apartheid is effective precisely because it invokes the way that the law justifies racial difference. Indian representatives to the ENDC were very strategic about the use of the term “apartheid” to refer to the distinction between nuclear and non-nuclear states. The Final Communique of the Bandung Conference, which sought to create a nonaligned world order, championed the prohibition of nuclear weapons along with the end of racial discrimination with specific allusions to apartheid South Africa (Hecht, 2012: 26). Referring to a “nuclear apartheid” allowed for a rhetorical linking between two core issues of nonalignment—racial discrimination and disarmament—which perfected the nonaligned message. Nuclear apartheid is an effective discourse not just because it invokes global inequalities but because it invokes the very specific injustices of apartheid South Africa. But as Shampa Biswas (2001) notes, nuclear apartheid is a racial signifier but a problematic one—the language of nuclear apartheid attempts to draw out certain “democratic entitlements” of sovereign states but fails to address the “fundamentally undemocratic character of nuclear weapons” (487). Turning the discourse toward racial inequalities and the rights of sovereign states has the (perhaps intended?) effect of detracting from the destructive potential of nuclear weapons. Nuclear apartheid serves as an effective discursive resource for dissenting against the global nuclear regime while still maintaining the state-centric nature of these debates. While the term “apartheid” implicates the broader people of these countries, the way in which nuclear apartheid is used reveals that it is confined to hierarchy across states rather than within them. Complaints of the unequal nature of the global nuclear regime are justified. But the discourse of nuclear apartheid is not attempting to bring light to the kinds of economic and labor inequities sustained by the nuclear regime and is rather calling attention to the inequality between those states that are legally legitimate in theirpossession of nuclear weapons and those states that are not. Elsewhere Biswas (2014) notes that “for countries such as India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Iran, nuclear weapons have done little to alleviate the poverty of large numbers of the population,” which is of course another way to think about inequality in the global nuclear regime. The conceit of nuclear apartheid is that it is not ultimately about justice but about status and legitimacy, and this is in part what makes it an effective normative discourse to deploy in developing a foundation for dissent. Nuclear apartheid, rather than offering an alternative to the NPT’s structure, reifies its hierarchy because the discourse is itself a resource for states in legitimating their nuclear policies. As Runa Das (2010) notes, Pakistan also cites nuclear apartheid as its reason for remaining outside of the NPT’s structure but because it wants to be recognized as an NWS (149). Similarly, India sought recognition as an NWS by the United States as a part of the United States–India Civil Nuclear Agreement of 2005 but ultimately settled with being recognized as a “responsible” nuclear state (Saran, 2017). Given the strategic politics around recognition of nuclear status, it is difficult to conceive of nuclear apartheid as an emancipatory discourse. Nuclear apartheid is very real in that both legal and diplomatic history points to efforts by the great powers to consolidate their status through nuclear weapons possession and, even more, to conceive of their nuclear weapons as necessary in maintaining international security. And yet, it is also the case that nuclear apartheid is a discursive resource for states outside this realm of legitimate actors. Taken together, the role of non-nuclear states and the development and use of nuclear apartheid complicates both realist and institutionalist perspectives on the NPT. An inordinate focus on compliance or material power differences obscures not just what the NPT does in global politics but what international law does in global politics. The NPT is sustained not because of its compliance pull or because it is a tool for strong states but because it provides a forum for non-nuclear states to perform that identity and because it provides a foundation for contesting the global nuclear regime through the discourse of nuclear apartheid.

### AT: Perm

#### AT: Perm. You should be more cautious of the Perm than the plan alone in reproducing antiblackness.

Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit 19, Associate Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University, Senior Lecturer in International Security, 8-7-2019, "Is securitization theory racist? Civilizationism, methodological whiteness, and antiblack thought in the Copenhagen School", SAGE Journals, Volume 51, Issue 1, https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010619862921

Conclusion

This article has illustrated that classic securitization theory is structured not only by Eurocentrism, but also by civilizationism, methodological whiteness, and antiblack racism. This is evident in its conception of politics, borrowed from Arendt, which it defines as a sphere of (white) civilized dialogue where reason triumphs over irrational securitizations. This perspective is only made possible by ignoring colonial history, ongoing (settler-)colonial relations, and the racial violence of normal liberal politics. Securitization theory’s racism is also evident in its methodology, which examines securitizing speech acts in order to defend this (European, civilized) ‘normal politics’. Under cover of ostensibly neutral terms, securitization normatively prioritizes the defense of order over justice, positioning the securitization theorist as the defender of (white) civilized politics against (racialized) ‘primal anarchy’. We have further demonstrated the role of antiblack thought in securitization theory: its racist imaginaries of Africa serve as an indispensable foil, setting up a contrast between normal politics and securitization.

One question beyond the scope of this article is whether this is similarly true of ‘second-generation’ and more empirical applications of securitization theory – or, indeed, the mere use of the word ‘securitization’. Postcolonial literature has long deliberated whether it is possible to rework theories built on racist precepts. For example, vigorous debate has surrounded whether the works of Marx (Coulthard, 2014; Rao, 2017; Robinson, 1983) or Foucault (Mbembe, 2003; Stoler, 1995; Thobani, 2007) can be adapted and made to work for anti-racist/anti-colonial purposes. Are there ‘reparative possibilities’ (Sedgwick, 1997; in relation to international relations, see Rao, 2017) for classic securitization theory? Can it excise or surmount its racist foundations? Our analysis suggests that securitization theory’s racism is not an incidental feature, nor ‘merely’ a matter of (empirical) application. Rather, it is baked into securitization theory’s conceptual apparatus and, in particular, its core concepts of politics and security. These problems cannot be remedied by applying classic securitization theory to non-Western spaces (as typically suggested by critics of its Eurocentrism), or by simply adding race or colonialism to its accounts. The retention of securitization theory’s concepts and methods leads to a primary focus on instances of overtly racist speech acts. Global racism is then treated as a matter of mere language. This elides the constitutive role of racist and colonial relations of force and expropriation in the making of the modern order, including ongoing security projects (see Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2019).

Once classic securitization theory is stripped of its racist conceptual and methodological apparatus, including its concepts of ‘normal politics’, its conservative deployment of speech act theory, its view of excessive securitization as threatening a racially encoded lower level of civilization, its faith in the social contract, and so on, there is very little left. Perhaps what remains is simply the word ‘securitization’. But even this word is potentially problematic, because inherent in it is a temporal move from normal politics towards the (exceptional) violence of security. Authors attempting to recuperate the term ‘securitization’ must take care not to indulge in white nostalgia for a better, more innocent time: a time that does not exist for those who have been subject to colonialism or the racial contract on scales from the local to the global – that is to say, the majority of the world’s people. Such a recuperative intellectual project, if at all possible, has yet to be articulated.

### Misc.

#### The literature on post-colonial security studies is deep and historical.

Post-colonial theories The roots of postcolonial security studies can be traced back to Edward Said’s Orientalism. It is important to acknowledge this link, because postcolonial security criticises not only material issues rooted in colonial practices, but also how knowledge and ideas are presented and constructed – a key element of Said’s critique of Western thought. As such, postcolonial security is very much a post-positivist theory, although to describe it solely in such terms would also unfairly pigeon-hole it. The primary concern of postcolonial security is evidently the consequences of colonialism. This takes many forms, but one key idea is that “the focus for post-colonial scholars is not on the state per se but rather on the enduring structures of oppression and coloniality that continue to hinder the development of countries of the global south” (Zaamout 2020, 2). This is yet another approach that moves the focus of security away from the state, and onto different issues, in this case, structures. These structures include international financial institutions like the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, or “the United Nations and the nuclear non-proliferation regime” (Barkawi, Laffey 2006, 331). This is not to say the state cannot be a source of insecurity, and indeed, critiques of concepts like humanitarian intervention as a ‘civilising mission’ demonstrate the fact that Western states often seek to legitimise the use of force premised on a sense of moral superiority (Barkawi, Laffey 2006, 351). These missions often exacerbate insecurity rather than alleviate it. The production of knowledge and the assumptions of dominant theoretical paradigms underline these critiques of the material aspects of other theories of security. For example, Fiona B. Adamson argues that there has been an ‘erasure of race’, within International Relations and security scholarship (Adamson 2020, 131). This negatively impacts racialised and marginalised groups not just in the global south, but across the globe. The other side to this issue is the fact that ‘dominant (in)security discourses constitute situations and particular actors as transnational security risk, with important repercussions for individual security’ (Hönke, Müller 2012, 391). Postcolonial security then sees both Western material and ideological power as dangerous and damaging to much of the world.

### Stolen from previous topic papers

#### Treaties require a mutual capacity for sovereign recognition that’s predicated on anti-blackness. Prefer a politics of abolition that refuses any move toward cartographic coherence

Sexton 16, Associate Professor of African American Studies and Film and Media Studies at the University of California, Irvine. (Jared, “The Vel of Slavery: Tracking the Figure of the Unsovereign”, *Critical Sociology*, Vol. 42(4-5), pg. 591-593, DOI: 10.1177/0896920514552535)

Abolishing Sovereignty

There is by now a literature on the historical relations between black and native peoples in the Americas, including, in the US context, the award-winning work of Tiya Miles (2006, 2010) and the signal contributions of Barbara Krauthamer (2013).18 But Frank B. Wilderson, III’s Red, White and Black may be the first sustained attempt to theorize, at the highest level of abstraction, the structural positions of European colonists, Indigenous peoples, and African slaves in the ‘New World’ encounter and to think about how the conflicts and antagonisms that give rise to those positions in the historic instance establish the contemporary parameters of our political ontology. At this writing, Wilderson’s text has not been taken up in the field of Native Studies, despite dedicating fully 100 pages to addressing directly the machinations of settler colonialism and the history of genocide and to critically reading a range of indigenous thinking on politics, cosmology, and sovereignty. This is not a brief in favor of Wilderson’s project as resolution or answer. The upshot of Red, White and Black is a provocation to new critical discourse and just such an invitation is offered midway, even as it acknowledges the grand impediment: ‘What, we might ask, inhibits this analytic and political dream of a “Savage”/Slave encounter? Is it a matter of the Native theorist’s need to preserve the constituent elements of sovereignty, or is there such a thing as “Savage” Negrophobia? Are the two related’ (Wilderson, 2010: 182)?

We might understand something else about the historical relations between black and native peoples if we bear in mind that the dynamics of Negrophobia are animated, in part, by a preoccupation with sovereignty. We have learned already that settler colonialism is governed by a genocidal commandment and that, as a direct result, survival becomes central to indigenous movements for settler decolonization. We have also learned that sovereignty, even disarticulated from the state-form, is the heading for thinking about this survival as a matter of politics.19 Yet, in its struggle against settler colonialism, the claim of native sovereignty – emerging in contradiction to the imposition of the imperial sovereignty of Euro-American polities20 – ‘fortifies and extends the interlocutory life of America [or Canada or …] as a coherent (albeit genocidal) idea, because treaties are forms of articulation, discussions brokered between two groups presumed to possess the same kind of historical currency: sovereignty’ (Wilderson, 2003: 236).

This point is not mitigated by the fact that native sovereignty is qualitatively different from, not simply rival to, the sovereignty of nation-states. What links these statements discursively is an ‘ethico-onto-epistemological’ (Barad, 2007) point of contact: ‘At every scale – the soul, the body, the group, the land, and the universe – they can both practice cartography, and although at every scale their maps are radically incompatible, their respective “mapness” is never in question’ (Wilderson, 2010: 181).21 Capacity for coherence makes more than likely a commitment ‘to preserve the constituent elements of sovereignty’ (2010: 182) and a pursuit of the concept of ‘freedom as self-determination’.22 The political de-escalation of antagonism to the level of conflict is mirrored by a conceptual domestication at work in the field of Native Studies, namely, that settler colonialism is something already known and understood by its practitioners. The political-intellectual challenge on this count is to refine this knowledge and to impart it. The intervention of Native Studies involves bringing into general awareness a critical knowledge of settler colonialism.

We might contrast the unsuspecting theoretical status of the concept of settler colonialism in Native Studies with its counterpart in Black Studies: racial slavery. I remarked above that any politics of resurgence or recovery is bound to regard the slave as the position of the unthought. This does not suggest, however, that Black Studies is the field in which slavery is, finally, thought in an adequate way. The field of Black Studies is as susceptible to a politics of resurgence or recovery as any other mode of critical inquiry. Which is to say that the figure of the slave and the history of the emergence of the relational field called racial slavery remains the unthought ground of thought within Black Studies as well. The difference, provisionally, between these enterprises is that whereas Native Studies sets out to be the alternative to a history of settler colonialism and to pronounce the decolonial intervention, Black Studies dwells within an un-inheritable, in-escapable history and muses upon how that history intervenes upon its own field, providing a sort of untranscendable horizon for its discourse and imagination. The latter is an endeavor that teaches less through pedagogical instruction than through exemplary transmission: rather than initiation into a form of living, emulation of a process of learning through the posing of a question, a procedure for study, for black study, or black studies, wherever they may lead.

Native Studies scholars are right to insist upon a synthetic gesture that attempts to shift the terms of engagement. The problem lies at the level of thought at which the gesture is presented. The settler colonial studies critique of colonial studies must be repeated, this time with respect to settler colonialism itself, in a move that returns us to the body in relation to land, labor, language, lineage – and the capture and commodification of each – in order to ask the most pertinent questions about capacity, commitment, and concept. This might help not only to break down false dichotomies, and perhaps pose a truer one, but also to reveal the ways that the study of slavery is already and of necessity the study of capitalism, colonialism and settler colonialism, among other things; and that the struggle for abolition is already and of necessity the struggle for the promise of communism, decolonization, and settler decolonization, among other things. Slavery is the threshold of the political world, abolition the interminable radicalization of every radical movement. Slavery, as it were, precedes and prepares the way for colonialism, its forebear or fundament or support. Colonialism, as it were, the issue or heir of slavery, its outgrowth or edifice or monument. This is as true of the historic colonization of the Third World as it is the prior and ongoing settler colonization of the Fourth.23

‘The modern world owes its very existence to slavery’ (Grandin, 2014a).24 What could this impossible debt possibly entail? Not only the infrastructure of its global economy but also the architecture of its theological and philosophical discourses, its legal and political institutions, its scientific and technological practices, indeed, the whole of its semantic field (Wilderson, 2010: 58). A politics of abolition could never finally be a politics of resurgence, recovery, or recuperation. It could only ever begin with degeneration, decline, or dissolution. Abolition is the interminable radicalization of every radical movement, but a radicalization through the perverse affirmation of deracination, an uprooting of the natal, the nation, and the notion, preventing any order of determination from taking root, a politics without claim, without demand even, or a politics whose demand is ‘too radical to be formulated in advance of its deeds’ (Trouillot, 2012: 88).25

The field of Black Studies consists in ‘tracking the figure of the unsovereign’ (Chandler, 2013: 163) in order to meditate upon the paramount question: ‘What if the problem is sovereignty as such’ (Moten, 2013)? Abolition, the political dream of Black Studies, its unconscious thinking, consists in the affirmation of the unsovereign slave – the affectable, the derelict, the monstrous, the wretched26 – figures of an order altogether different from (even when they coincide or cohabit with) the colonized native – the occupied, the undocumented, the unprotected, the oppressed. Abolition is beyond (the restoration of) sovereignty. Beyond the restoration of a lost commons through radical redistribution (everything for everyone), there is the unimaginable loss of that all too imaginable loss itself (nothing for no one).27 If the indigenous relation to land precedes and exceeds any regime of property, then the slave’s inhabitation of the earth precedes and exceeds any prior relation to land – landlessness. And selflessness is the correlate. No ground for identity, no ground to stand (on). Everyone has a claim to everything until no one has a claim to anything. No claim. This is not a politics of despair brought about by a failure to lament a loss, because it is not rooted in hope of winning. The flesh of the earth demands it: the landless inhabitation of selfless existence.

#### Structural anti-blackness is the foundation that makes nuclear war possible – concern with accidents, miscalculations and terrorist acquisition is an epistemological move that SILENCES a focus upon racist foundations of nuclear planning that allows attack in the first place- only by forefronting domestic American racial injustice can we ever prevent nuclear War

Elaine Scarry, Walter M. Cabot Professor of Aesthetics and the General Theory of Value at Harvard University, is author most recently of Thinking in an Emergency, August 5 2020, "The Racist Foundation of Nuclear Architecture," Boston Review, http://bostonreview.net/war-security-global-justice/elaine-scarry-racist-foundation-nuclear-architecture

This past Memorial Day, a Minneapolis police officer knelt on the throat of a Black man, George Floyd, for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. Seventy-five years ago, an American pilot dropped an atomic bomb on the civilian population of Hiroshima. Worlds apart in time, space, and scale, the two events share three key features. Each was an act of state violence. Each was an act carried out against a defenseless opponent. Each was an act of naked racism. Each was an act of state violence. Each was an act carried out against a defenseless opponent. Each was an act of naked racism. The first two features—the role of the state and the impossibility of self-defense—probably require little elaboration. Each was an act of state cruelty: in one case, the agents of the state acted on home ground and in the other, on foreign ground. Each was carried out against a defenseless opponent: George Floyd’s hands were handcuffed behind him; he was not resisting arrest or putting the police officers at risk or even verbally challenging them; he used his voice merely to plead that he be permitted to breathe, then called out to his dead mother, whom he soon joined. Nor could the long line of executed Black Americans who preceded George Floyd defend themselves: Breonna Taylor’s work as an emergency medical technician entailed, on a daily basis, protecting both herself and her patients, but she could not, fast asleep in bed, carry out any self-defense when Louisville police, without warrant, burst through her doors after midnight and shot her eight times. The now widely shared recognition that police racism within the United States is not just the practice of individual officers but is instead systemic entails the recognition that Black Americans, in their interactions with the police, have ceased to have the right of self-defense, the right that arguably underlies every other right. Persons of color in the United States—including Native Americans, whose rate of death at the hands of police is the highest of any racial group1—cannot defend themselves. Seeing that one is about to be slain, one may try to resist (to run, to refuse handcuffing, to flail out with arms or weapon), but that resistance will then be retroactively used to justify the slaying that was already underway. One’s only choice is to comply or to resist—in other words, to be slain or to be slain. section separator The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki initiated an era in which—for the first time on Earth and now continuing for seven and a half decades—humankind collectively and summarily lost the right self-defense. Self-defense was not an option for any one of the 300,000 civilian inhabitants of the city of Hiroshima, nor for any one of the 250,000 civilians in Nagasaki three days later. We know from John Hersey’s classic Hiroshima that as day dawned on that August morning, the city was full of courageous undertakings meant to increase the town’s collective capacity for self-defense against conventional warfare, such as the clearing of fire lanes by hundreds of young school girls, many of whom would instantly vanish in the 6,000° C temperature of the initial flash, and others of whom, more distant from the center, would retain their lives but lose their faces.2 The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki initiated an era in which—for the first time on Earth and now continuing for seven and a half decades—humankind collectively and summarily lost the right self-defense. No one on Earth—or almost no one on Earth3—has the means to outlive a blast that is four times the heat of the sun or withstand the hurricane winds and raging fires that follow. Detail from the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. Photo courtesy of the author. Detail from the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. Photo courtesy of the author. Is it accurate to designate self-defense the right underlying every other right? Freedom of speech matters for thousands of reasons, but at its most elementary, it matters because it increases one’s chance of defending oneself and by this act, surviving. The same is true of the right of free press, the right of free assembly, the right to a fair trial, the right not to be subject to warrantless search and seizure: each has a vast array of benefits, but the bottom line is that each amplifies the right of self-defense, the right to protect and thereby perpetuate one’s own life. Centuries of political philosophers have asked “what kind of political arrangements will create a noble and generous people?” Surely such arrangements cannot be ones where a handful of men control the means for destroying at will everyone on Earth from whom the means of self-defense have been eliminated. The third link between Memorial Day 2020 and August 6 and 9, 1945, is the racism that made each event possible. Racism is a perceptual deformation that results in the judgement that people of a given skin color or ethnic derivation are not simply less deserving (of jobs, education, money, medical care, trust, responsibility, forgiveness, sympathy) but are, in a word, expendable. Lynch them, choke them, burn their faces off; we can do a follow-up study later. When Americans first learned that the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been collectively vaporized in less time than it takes for the heart to beat, many cheered. But not all. Black poet Langston Hughes at once recognized the moral depravity of executing 100,000 people and discerned racism as the phenomenon that had licensed the depravity: “How come we did not try them [atomic bombs] on Germany...They just did not want to use them on white folks.”4 Although the building of the weapon was completed only after Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945, Japan had been designated the target on September 18, 1944, and training for the mission had already been initiated in that same month.5 Black journalist George Schuyler wrote: “The atom bomb puts the Anglo-Saxons definitely on top where they will remain for decades”; the country, in its “racial arrogance,” has “achieved the supreme triumph of being able to slaughter whole cities at a time.”6 Still within the first year (and still before John Hersey had begun to awaken Americans to the horrible aversiveness of the injuries), novelist and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston denounced the U.S. president as a “butcher” and scorned the public’s silent compliance, asking, “Is it that we are so devoted to a ‘good Massa’ that we feel we ought not to even protest such crimes?”7 Silence—whether practiced by whites or people of color—was, she saw, a cowardly act of moral enslavement to a white supremacist. Each of these three passages, and scores of others, are documented in Vincent Intondi’s brilliant history, African-Americans Against the Bomb (2015), which chronicles the repudiation by the Black community of nuclear arms from the 1940s up through President Obama’s April 5, 2009, Prague speech: jazz saxophonist Charlie Parker, composer and pianist Duke Ellington, civil rights and gay activist Bayard Rustin, poet-novelist James Baldwin, playwright Lorraine Hansberry, civil rights leader Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and sociologist and pan-Africanist W. E. B. Du Bois are among those who spoke out decisively and often. During these same decades, many white people also spoke out against the moral depravity of nuclear weapons, some even suffering terrible costs similar to those suffered by, for example, Du Bois, who because of his ardent denunciation of the American nuclear arsenal was at various points arrested, accused of being an unregistered foreign agent, denied a passport, and eventually prompted to expatriate to Ghana.8 But Black Americans, in addition to educating all who would hear about the moral depravity of the inflicted injuries, have also sought tirelessly to educate the country about the racial scaffolding that provides the gantry on which the missiles are launched. Some readers will recognize as self-evident the U.S. addiction to white racial supremacy that was at work in the flattening of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and that today supports the country’s prodigious nuclear arsenal. Some readers will recognize as self-evident the U.S. addiction to white racial supremacy that was at work in the flattening of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and that today supports the country’s prodigious nuclear arsenal, currently undergoing a 1.2 trillion dollar renewal.9 But other readers—even some who perceive the moral turpitude of nuclear weapons and who work tirelessly for their dismantlement—may be reluctant to recognize that racism. After all, we know nuclear weapons stand to eliminate all humans on Earth, not those of one or another race. Americans and Russians, who together possess more than 93 percent of the world’s nuclear arsenal, have long been designated as one another’s major opponent, and Russians are often loosely described as racially white (even though they, like the American people, are made up of many different ethnic groups). That nuclear war stands a high chance of being instigated by accident or by appropriation of the weapons by a hacker or nonstate actor may seem to make the conscious and unconscious racial biases of a U.S. president or nuclear command chain irrelevant. But three lists—the list of geographies where U.S. presidents have contemplated launching a first strike, the list of geographies where the United States has tested its bombs, and the list of countries that the United States condemns for their aspiration to acquire nuclear weapons—may, like avenues of insight radiating outward from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, help to make the racial underpinnings of the nuclear architecture unmistakable. Detail from the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. Photo courtesy of the author. section separator First, then, the geographies where we know U.S. presidents have contemplated first strikes. Eisenhower considered using an atomic weapon in the Taiwan Straits in 1954. The record of his statements in private meetings shows the presence of race, whether he was at any given moment explaining why he might use the weapon or instead why he might abstain from its use: “The President said that we must recognize the Quemoy is not our ship. Letters to him constantly say what do we care what happens to those yellow people out there.”10 Nixon tells us he contemplated ordering a first strike four times during his presidency. Although he did not name all four targets, we know one in 1969 was North Korea.11 He contemplated striking North Vietnam in 1972.12 Lyndon Johnson contemplated the launch of a nuclear weapon against China to prevent China from acquiring a nuclear weapon.13 To this list may be added the times when U.S. presidents have threatened a first strike, as when the George H.W. Bush administration during the first Gulf War informed Saddam Hussein that if he used chemical weapons, nuclear missiles were positioned to strike his country.14 The U.S. selection of nuclear testing sites indicates a belief that people of color are expendable. Like the countries U.S. presidents have chosen for a first strike, the U.S. selection of nuclear testing sites indicates a belief that people of color are expendable. The painful instance of the Marshall Islands is succinctly summarized by the Washington Post’s Dan Zak: “The United States tested 67 high-yield nuclear bombs between 1946 and 1958, resettling whole islands of Marshallese people, exposing many to radioactive fallout and bequeathing exile and ill health to ensuing generations.”15 One of the bombs was 15 megatons. Describing the total impact of the 67 tests, Zak reckons, “If their combined explosive power was parceled evenly over that 12-year period, it would equal 1.6 Hiroshima-size explosions per day.”16 The picture is not more heartening when one turns to tests carried out on U.S. soil. On the arrival this summer of the 75th anniversary of the July 16, 1945 Trinity test in New Mexico, observers noted the racial distribution: “It should come as no surprise that the downwinders of Trinity were largely impoverished agricultural families, mostly Hispanic and Native.”17 As in New Mexico, so in Nevada. A study published in the medical journal Risk Analysis concludes, “Native Americans residing in a broad region downwind from the Nevada Test Site during the 1950s and 1960s received significant radiation exposures from nuclear weapons testing.”18 The third list is the sequence of countries we have condemned because their leaders and scientists have aspired to develop a nuclear weapon. The United States has treated these aspirants, in each case, people of color—Iranians, Iraqis, Libyans, North Koreans—as immoral, despite our own vast nuclear architecture and despite our 1995 statement at the International Court of Justice that our having a nuclear arsenal, threatening to use it, using it, and using it first do not violate international covenants such as the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.19 The United States sometimes bases its indignation toward nuclear aspirants on the fact that the acquisition of a nuclear weapon by yet another country will violate the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); it righteously announces this violation while relentlessly overlooking the fact that it has for 50 years been in violation of that treaty, which requires, as one of its major pillars, that existing nuclear states dismantle their own arsenals. A recent article in The Atlantic reports new neuroscience research suggesting that people holding positions of power may suffer brain damage, the incapacitation of mirror neurons that ordinarily enable one to comprehend the position of another person or people.20 A country that has 6,000 nuclear weapons while savaging North Korea for having fewer than 30; a country that has 12 Ohio-class submarines each carrying the equivalent of 4,000 Hiroshima blasts while going to war against Iraq on false evidence that it might have material that could lead to a single nuclear weapon; a country that can’t be bothered to commemorate August 6 and August 9 and the hundreds of thousands incinerated on those days, yet clucks and scolds about Iranian nuclear projects, imposes sanctions, and unleashes a Stuxnet digital worm that subverts Iran’s uranium enrichment plant;21 a country that persuades Libya to dispose of its nuclear materials and after it does so, swoops in to help assassinate the country’s leader, might well appear to be a country whose governors—and perhaps, too, some in its population—no longer have functioning mirror neurons. When this soul-destroying asymmetry is pointed out, the United States says, “Yes, but they (i.e., those people of color) may use them, while we (i.e., we white people in charge of the United States) will not use them,” a manifestly incoherent statement since it is only the United States who has used them, and used them twice.22 Extreme alarm incited by picturing nuclear weapons in the hands of yet-one-more country rarely kicks in when the United States distributes its own weapons to NATO allies, currently Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy (Turkey, too, has U.S. nuclear weapons, but many were removed after 2000 and those that remain have since 2016 become a source of mounting worry23). Since these four countries are traditionally viewed as white-majority peoples, the danger of reckless use is apparently non-existent; the proliferation of the weapons to these countries does not, in the U.S. view, violate the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In a feat of double think that might have startled even George Orwell, they calmly acknowledge that in the event of war (when the NATO sharing countries will be called upon to participate in the delivery of those weapons), the Non-Proliferation Treaty will cease to be in effect.24 So we return to the question: What kind of political arrangements will create a noble and generous people? What kind of arrangements will restrain a country from egregious mass killings in the future? Will enable that country to face responsibility for injuries it has in the past inflicted on home ground (on Native Americans and African Americans), and on foreign ground (the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki)? Will help them to dedicate themselves to dismantling mis-trained and militarized police teams roving their cities and dismantling the nation’s nuclear architecture? These accomplishments are momentous and difficult but surely also minimal if we aspire to one day become a great and good people. The cruelty daily inflicted on people of color in our own city streets acts as a mental rehearsal for carrying out large-scale slayings abroad. It keeps our capacity for cruelty limber; it dulls the mind and gives us practice in pronouncing the word “expendable.” Langston Hughes voiced the opinion that until racial injustice on home ground in the United States ceases, “it is going to be very hard for some Americans not to think the easiest way to settle the problems of Asia is simply dropping an atom bomb on colored heads there.”25 While his statement was made in 1953, near the eighth anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, it remains equally relevant today, as we approach the 75th anniversary: then, as now, the safety of the Korean people (among other peoples) was at issue. The cruelty daily inflicted on people of color in our own city streets acts as a mental rehearsal for carrying out large-scale slayings abroad. It keeps our capacity for cruelty limber; it dulls the mind and gives us practice in pronouncing the word “expendable.” Langston Hughes might have with equal accuracy noted the reverse. Our cruelty abroad hardens our hearts, enabling us to tolerate the spectacle of everyday racial injustice at home. Americans, seeing our country boast a vast nuclear architecture that has no other purpose than the instant elimination from Earth of large civilian populations—the launch codes day and night casually tucked in our president’s pocket—consciously or unconsciously absorb the power lesson, suffer the same brain deterioration, and now become dull-witted about whether Native American and Black lives any longer even matter.

#### Logic of the bomb is the logic of the slave trade – an ability to anhialate an OTHER in an attempt to preserve a white world – the criticism addresses the REASON the bomb would be used in the first place

Williams 8 (Source: Journal of Transatlantic Studies (Routledge)Date: August 1, 2008, Journal of Transatlantic Studies Vol. 6, No. 2, August 2008, 131141, Physics made Simple: the image of nuclear weapons in the writing of Langston Hughes, accessed via ebsco host, accessed 8/16/18, jmg)

The white man’s weapon The idea that atomic and nuclear weapons are ‘white’ used in the defence of societies dominated by white social and economic interests, and deployed in accordance with hierarchies of race that attribute a lesser value of life to non-whites was raised shortly after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.7 Hughes ‘was one of the first to voice the widely shared attitude of blacks and some whites that it was no coincidence the Bomb was first used against yellow-skinned Japanese, not white Germans’. Published on 18 August 1945, ‘Simple and the Atomic Bomb’ countered the euphoric mood of Allied populations, which were celebrating the atomic bombing of two Japanese cities as a triumphant conclusion to war in the Pacific.8 Rather, this may be another example of the barbarity non-whites have been subjected to throughout the course of modernity. Hughes places the atomic bomb decisively in white hands: Simple says whites ‘don’t want no Negroes nowhere near no bomb.’9 The story ‘Bones, Bombs, Chicken Necks’ (1961) connects domestic racism to the assumptions of white superiority underpinning America’s 1954 hydrogen bomb tests at the Marshall Islands in the Pacific. Referring to the radioactive effects of the nuclear explosion’s fallout, Simple believes the Marshall Islanders ‘will never have no more hair on their heads, and them atomized Japanese fishermens will have no more children.’10 Simple’s last remark refers to the crew of the Japanese fishing vessel Lucky Dragon, also caught within the irradiated area of the Pacific. This act of white American racial chauvinism is linked to the African American experience of subordination: ‘American white folks ... gotten so accustomed to mistreating Negroes at home in the past that it is hard for them to care about what colored folks in Asia think.’ Nuclear tests endangering non-white lives in the Pacific are viable in light of the assumption of white American superiority ‘at home’.11 This is also evident in ‘Not Colored’ (1965), where Simple recalls being the victim of white violence as a child recovering a lost ball from a neighbour’s lawn: that grown man hauled off and kicked me in my shins, not just one time, but twice, once on each of my leg. Wow! You know how bad it hurts to get kicked on your shins? It hurted me so bad I could not cry and I could not run ... He said, ‘I guess that will teach you little black bastards to get on my grass.’12 Simple ends his recollection with: ‘Which is one reason why them Japanese do not want no parts of Americans in their hearts. They remember Hiroshima.’13 Simple sees the localised brutality done to his person as existing on a continuum with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Both can be attributed to an attitude of white American superiority that demands an image of non-whites as less human and, therefore, justifies their physical repression, be it white violence in the South or the use of atomic bombs in Japan. Simple Journal of Transatlantic Studies 133 asks, ‘Don’t you see no connection between atom-bomb-dropping in Japan and shinkicking in Virginia?’ The narrator replies he cannot. Simple retorts: ‘Then you are not colored.’14 From a racially subordinate position, it is apparently impossible not to be able to perceive how America’s actions domestically and abroad are united by the refusal to value non-whites’ lives equally with whites’. That white America adopts attitudes and policies of racial superiority, propriety and maturity, while developing nuclear weapons which jeopardise the existence of the society that uses them, suggests profound tensions. Indeed, the stance of technological advancement is undercut by the development of such self-destructive weapons as nuclear bombs, just as pride in whites’ greater moral capabilities can hardly be sustained by a nation prepared to doom the species to extinction to preserve its national interests. This is Simple’s argument to Joyce when she chastises him for gnawing on a pork-chop bone in view of the street outside: ‘Eating bones in the window just isn’t done in high society.’ Simple defends his supposedly inelegant eating habits by mocking the white manners Joyce aspires to: Simple refuses white ‘high society’ and has no wish to emulate a set of values that include atomic tests which are damaging to non-white peoples. He sees nothing desirable in the behaviour of affluent whites: White folks blows off atom bombs and burns up people ... It looks to me it would be better to gnaw a bone than singe them Marshall Islanders all up, like them pictures that they showed after that big bomb test they had out in the Pacific ... I think white folks would do better to set in their front windows and gnaw bones myself, even if they were not so high-tone. Bonegnawing, to my mind, is better than bomb-bursting. Atom bombs is low-rating the tone of the whole world. When I gnaw my bone ... I am not hurting a human soul.15 Nuclear weapons point to the hypocrisy of white America’s moral proclamations. When the white folks move in with their atom bombs, there goes the neighbourhood. Following the Cuban Missile crisis, James Baldwin agreed: ‘internationally, for many millions of people, we [the West] are an unmitigated disaster.’16 The white posture of racial superiority through self-pronounced technological, moral and ethical ‘advances’ (that is to say, the means by which white Europeans and Americans advanced and secured their power internationally), assumed that the features of white modernity represent a benchmark that non-white races aspire to and would benefit from emulating.17 Nuclear extinction is a stubborn, contradictory example this ideology struggles to accommodate. Henrikson observes that the atomic bomb could represent both white racial violence and the explosive repercussions of the oppression suffered by non-whites: ... if the bomb sometimes symbolised a genocidal threat against blacks in the cold war years, it was also sometimes a rather powerful metaphor for the explosiveness welling up in the black community.18 Henrikson points to Hughes’s poem ‘Harlem’ (1951), which uses the imagery of an explosion to symbolise the destructive diversion of African American energies denied full access to the upward mobility promised by the American Dream. Its oft-quoted opening line, ‘What happens to a dream deferred’, asks a question that may be answered by the italicised final line, ‘does it explode?’19 In Hughes’s ‘Lunch in a Jim Crow Car’ (1959), that atomic era context has become apparent: Get out the lunch-box of your dreams. Bite into the sandwich of your heart, And ride the Jim Crow car until it screams Then like an atom bomb it bursts apart.20 134 P. Williams As in ‘Harlem’, one is confronted by an immense anger at the racial oppression which is leaving African Americans unable to realise their ‘dreams’. Biting into ‘the sandwich of your heart’ suggests desires consuming themselves without an outlet for attainment. Placing this within the Jim Crow car stresses it is the racism institutionalised in 1950s America, symbolised by segregated railroad carriages, that forces African Americans to cannibalise their hopes and goals. But the intensity of the repression of desire will not endure indefinitely, and the tension and precariousness of this process is signified by the screaming of the Jim Crow car under the pressure of so many dreams deferred. ‘Then like an atom bomb it bursts apart.’ The violent repercussions of the USA’s policy of racial oppression find a symbolic corollary in the detonation of an atomic weapon. This is reproduced in the Simple story ‘Radioactive Red Caps’ (1961); as in ‘Lunch in a Jim Crow Car’, the explosive vengeance of African Americans is linked with the image of nuclear war to argue that white America will bring destruction upon itself. Simple imagines an atomic bomb in African American hands: ‘Just think what would happen to Mississippi. Wow!’21 Jim Crow shelters The atomic bomb shelter and who has access to it is a significant component of the nuclear imagination in the Simple stories; those discussed here were written alongside the ‘frenzy’ of narratives about ‘family nuclear preparedness’ in the 1950s and early 1960s that followed the Soviet Union’s development of an atomic bomb in 1949.22 The Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) was established in 1950 to educate the public through films, pamphlets, and community preparedness programs about survival during a nuclear war. Sharp notes, ‘civil defense officials did not account for the problems or fears that nuclear war presented for those who did not live in white middle-class suburbs’.23 The atomic bomb shelter acts as a microcosm of what is desirable in US society since it claims to preserve life in the event of an atomic attack and, thus, represents the future direction of the USA. Hughes repeatedly suggests that the racial recipe within shelters will be policed, with the injustice characterising American life affecting who will be permitted to survive World War Three. Simple is certain ‘If I was in Mississippi, I would be Jim Crowed out of bomb shelters’. The narrator naively protests there will be equal access to the Civil Defense measures: ‘Bomb shelters will be for everybody.’ For Simple, access to shelters in the South would be colour-coded by the institutional racism that masks itself in the rhetoric of impartiality: ‘Down there they will have some kind of voting test, else loyalty test, in which they will find some way of flunking Negroes out.’ As Simple says, why would Southern whites allow their hegemony to be eroded in a time of nuclear war, when the social order is already threatened by the Civil Rights movement? ‘You can’t tell me them Dixiecrats are going to give Negroes free rein of bomb shelters.’24 Simple goes further in ‘Atomic Dream’ (1965): ‘the South would probably have no shelters for Negroes in the next war’.25 Hughes comments upon the inhumanity of segregation by stretching it to a grotesque extreme: Do you mean to tell me the white South would be so inhuman as to build public bomb shelters with signs up WHITE ONLY, and none for Negroes? What kind of people live in Dixie?26 Readers are invited to consider how this representation might be uncomfortably close to the systematic destruction of black lives occurring in the South. Simple hypothesises that if African Americans in the South were to have access to bomb shelters, it would be to serve whites: ‘Just suppose all the Negroes down South got atomized ... who would serve the white folks’ tables, nurse their children, Red Cap their bags, and make up their Pullman Journal of Transatlantic Studies 135 berths?’27 The servants of the post-apocalyptic future will only be permitted inside ‘a little old Jim Crow shelter in Uncle Tommy’s back yard meant just for handkerchief heads’. The African Americans fighting for the Civil Rights movement against segregation would confront a similar struggle to get into the shelters: ‘The Freedom Riders would have to ride awhile to get in out of the fallout.’28 It seems a bomb shelter ‘full of Negroes’ could only be possible in Simple’s atomic dream. This shelter acts as a microcosm of African American society (‘just as if they was on Lenox Avenue’), and can be seen to reinforce the associations between nuclear fear and racial terror discussed above. In Simple’s vision, Lena Horne sings the blues down in the shelter: ‘In the wee small hours when the one you love is gone.’29 The development of the blues in the twentieth century, as an articulation of African American deprivation and the attendant loss and longing for separated or dead family members and loved ones in post-Civil War America, seems applicable to a fallout shelter of survivors negotiating the memory of those dead and dying outside.30 Hughes thus gestures toward how the experience of nuclear fear is related to the racial terror inflicted upon black Atlantic populations, emphasising that the mechanisms for African American physical and mental survival might be translated and revaluated in a world where atomic extinction is possible and felt across the colour line. Since plantation slavery, African Americans have been constantly exposed to the terror of imminent and painful death; for Hughes, this has established within them the sort of courage which is readily adaptable to the extended overhanging threat of nuclear war.

# Supplement—AT: “Does adding the phrase ‘declaratory policy’ break debates?”

### Answer:

#### No!

### Aff---Public Key---Credibility

#### Declaratory policy is necessary to set credible redlines to adversaries and assure allies

Costlow 21 – senior analyst at the National Institute for Public Policy

Matthew Costlow, “Believe It Or Not: U.S. Nuclear Declaratory Policy And Calculated Ambiguity,” War on the Rocks, 8-9-21, https://warontherocks.com/2021/08/believe-it-or-not-u-s-nuclear-declaratory-policy-and-calculated-ambiguity/

Nuclear weapons are typically seen as the state’s bluntest instruments available, seemingly indiscriminate in their power. Yet nuclear declaratory policy is precision-crafted with each word carefully chosen for its effects on opponents and allies alike. Though he governed in the pre-nuclear age, former U.K. Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour, to whom these words above are credited, understood the power and complexity of policy. But senior government officials cannot simply craft national policy with “fine distinctions” and let it be. They should express it in both words and deeds so that adversaries and allies will not only receive the message, but understand it and hopefully find it credible.

### Aff---Public Key---Non-Prolif Credibility

#### Public declarations are key to international non-prolif support

Moniz and Nunn 21 – co-chair and chief executive officer of NTI and former U.S. Secretary of Energy; co-Founder, co-chair, and strategic advisor at NTI and former U.S. Senator

Ernest J. Moniz and Sam Nunn, “Ch 1: Strengthening the Foundation for Nuclear Stability,” in Special Report, U.S. Nuclear Policies for a Safer World, Nuclear Threat Initiative, 6-10-21, https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/us-nuclear-policies-safer-world/

Lastly, the Biden administration should restore U.S. leadership of multilateral efforts to reduce nuclear risks. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, and the United States should work with all parties—and in particular through the P5 process—to strengthen the treaty and advance multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. The United States should work with the rest of the P5 to affirm their commitment to preventing the use of nuclear weapons; expand and deepen dialogue on nuclear issues, including doctrine, risk reduction, and strategic stability; increase transparency on total warheads stockpiles; reaffirm and uphold moratoria on nuclear testing; and declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

### Aff---Public Key---Engagement

#### Declaratory policy is key to engagement with Russia and China, and renews U.S. leadership

Andreasen 21 – national security consultant to the Nuclear Threat Initiative and its Nuclear Security Project in Washington, D.C., and teaches courses on National Security Policy and Crisis Management in Foreign Affairs at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

Steve Andreasen, “Ch 3: Declaratory Policy: Advancing Sole Purpose,” in Special Report, U.S. Nuclear Policies for a Safer World, Nuclear Threat Initiative, 6-10-21, https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/us-nuclear-policies-safer-world/

A new policy narrative—A change in declaratory policy, alone or along with other steps, would need to make clear that reducing the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategy is an urgent priority for the United States and would set a solid foundation for a new direction in U.S. nuclear policy. Importantly, it also would provide a basis for a new process of engagement with Russia and China, with the goal of encouraging and adopting safer policies on nuclear use. Announcing that the sole purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attacks on the United States and its allies and partners—combined with restoring the Obama-era negative security assurance (i.e., the United States “will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear non- proliferation obligations”)—would clearly signal a policy course change and renewed U.S. global leadership toward reduced reliance on nuclear weapons.

### Aff---Public Key---China

#### Change in declaratory policy is key to relation-building

McKeon and Melamed 21 – senior program officer with NTI’s Global Nuclear Policy Program; deputy vice president of NTI’s Global Nuclear Policy Program

James McKeon and Mark Melamed, “Ch 7: Engaging China to Reduce Nuclear Risks,” in Special Report, U.S. Nuclear Policies for a Safer World, Nuclear Threat Initiative, 6-10-21, https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/us-nuclear-policies-safer-world/

Declaratory Policy

Beijing and Washington each are concerned about the other’s declaratory policy. Since 1964, China has routinely reiterated that the goal of its nuclear deterrent is purely defensive and has sought to demonstrate this by maintaining a “no first use” policy and a so-called “minimum deterrent,” while also keeping its warheads in storage (e.g., not “deployed” by the standards of previous and existing U.S.-Russia arms control treaties, and not on so-called “high-alert”).

A 2019 white paper released by China’s State Council Information Office reiterated China’s declared view of the purpose of its nuclear stockpile:53

*“China is always committed to a nuclear policy of no first use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, and not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones unconditionally […] China does not engage in any nuclear arms race with any other country and keeps its nuclear capabilities atthe minimum level required for national security. China pursues a nuclear strategy of self-defense, the goal of which is to maintain national strategic security by deterring other countries from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against China.”*

However, Trump administration officials routinely argued that China’s stated “no first use” policy is not credible given the expansion of its nuclear capabilities. Other experts also have questioned whether China’s “no first use” policy is as firm as it once was, and whether China’s new ICBM capabilities may push far beyond a “minimum deterrent” posture. The new capabilities also could push Beijing to a “launch-on-warning posture” with some warheads always deployed on their designated missile and the system reliant on early warning radars (similar to the United States and Russia), which would be a significant expansion of its “minimum deterrent” posture. According to Tong Zhao, there is interest within some corners of the Chinese military to make such a change.54 Even if Chinese officials remain committed to “no first use” in principle, an increased reliance on early warning systems and silo-based ICBMs could introduce greater pressure to launch in response to warning of an incoming attack—with the attendant risk of a launch in response to a false alarm.55

For Beijing, U.S. declaratory policy offers no reassurance. The United States has never declared a “no first use” policy and has always left its options at least partially ambiguous. Compared to the 2010 NPR, the 2018 version expanded the scenarios where the United States would consider the employment of nuclear weapons. Various Chinese officials, newspaper articles, and experts criticized the NPR for this language and the document’s harsh tone toward China in general. For example, Ren Guoqiang, a spokesman for China’s National Defense Ministry, was quoted responding to the NPR, “We hope the U.S. side will discard its ‘cold- war mentality.’”56

### Neg---Link---UQ

#### Current declaratory policy re-affirms long-standing policy about the “role” of nukes, including that they can be used against the “full spectrum of threats”

**Kristensen and Korda 22** – Director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists; Senior Research Associate and Project Manager for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists and Associate Researcher with the Weapons of Mass Destruction Programme at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

Hans Kristensen and Matt Korda, “The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review: Arms Control Subdued By Military Rivalry,” Federation of American Scientists, 10-27-22, <https://fas.org/blogs/security/2022/10/2022-nuclear-posture-review/>

Nuclear Declaratory Policy

The NPR reaffirms long-standing U.S. policy about the role of nuclear weapons but with slightly modified language. The role is: 1) Deter strategic attacks, 2) Assure allies and partners, and 3) Achieve U.S. objectives if deterrence fails.

The NPR reiterates the language from the 2010 NPR that the “fundamental role” of U.S. nuclear weapons “is to deter nuclear attacks” and only in “extreme circumstances.” The strategy seeks to “maintain a very high bar for nuclear employment” and, if employment of nuclear weapons is necessary, “seek to end conflict at the lowest level of damage possible on the best achievable terms for the United States and its Allies and partners.”

Deterring “strategic” attacks is a different formulation than the “deterrence of nuclear and non-nuclear attack” language in the 2018 NPR, but the new NPR makes it clear that “strategic” also accounts for existing and emerging non-nuclear attacks: “nuclear weapons are required to deter not only nuclear attack, but also a narrow range of other high consequence, strategic-level attacks.”

Indeed, the NPR makes clear that U.S. nuclear weapons can be used against the full spectrum of threats: “While the United States maintains a very high bar for the employment of nuclear weapons, our nuclear posture is intended to complicate an adversary’s entire decision calculus, including whether to instigate a crisis, initiate armed conflict, conduct strategic attacks using non-nuclear capabilities, or escalate to the use of nuclear weapons on any scale.”

#### Biden continued the status quo role of nukes due to strategic competition and domestic opposition

**Kristensen and Korda 22** – Director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists; Senior Research Associate and Project Manager for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists and Associate Researcher with the Weapons of Mass Destruction Programme at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

Hans Kristensen and Matt Korda, “The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review: Arms Control Subdued By Military Rivalry,” Federation of American Scientists, 10-27-22, <https://fas.org/blogs/security/2022/10/2022-nuclear-posture-review/>

On 27 October 2022, the Biden administration finally released an unclassified version of its long-delayed Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The classified NPR was released to Congress in March 2022, but its publication was substantially delayed––likely due to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Compared with previous NPRs, the tone and content come closest to the Obama administration’s NPR from 2010. However, it contains significant adjustments because of the developments in Russia and China. (See also our global overview of nuclear arsenals)

Despite the challenges presented by Russia and China, the NPR correctly resists efforts by defense hawks and nuclear lobbyists to add nuclear weapons to the U.S. arsenal and delay the retirement of older types. Instead, the NPR seeks to respond with adjustments in the existing force posture and increase integration of conventional and nuclear planning.

Although Joe Biden during his presidential election campaign spoke strongly in favor of adopting no-first-use and sole-purpose policies, the NPR explicitly rejects both for now.

From an arms control and risk reduction perspective, the NPR is a disappointment. Previous efforts to reduce nuclear arsenals and the role that nuclear weapons play have been subdued by renewed strategic competition abroad and opposition from defense hawks at home.

### Neg---Link---Allies DA

#### Alliances DA link to changing declaratory policy

Andreasen 21 – national security consultant to the Nuclear Threat Initiative and its Nuclear Security Project in Washington, D.C., and teaches courses on National Security Policy and Crisis Management in Foreign Affairs at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

Steve Andreasen, “Ch 3: Declaratory Policy: Advancing Sole Purpose,” in Special Report, U.S. Nuclear Policies for a Safer World, Nuclear Threat Initiative, 6-10-21, https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/us-nuclear-policies-safer-world/

Although President Biden has clearly and publicly stated his position, moving U.S. nuclear allies Britain and France to follow and other U.S. allies in NATO and the Asia-Pacific to support a change in U.S. declaratory policy will be challenging. Although U.S. and NATO defense budgets are unlikely to escape the COVID-19 pandemic without significant programmatic adjustments—including in missile defense and nuclear capabilities—the issue of declaratory policy may be insulated from a NATO defense review. The absence of substantial progress on Ukraine and other political and security issues relating to Russia may create resistance to changing declaratory policy, despite the slightly improved atmosphere for progress on nuclear threat reduction following the extension of New START. Such resistance to a fundamental change of NATO nuclear policy likely will come from many NATO member states.19 Given the worsening political and security dynamic with China, there may be similar reservations among Asian allies to changes in U.S. declaratory policy. According to news accounts, both Japan and South Korea expressed concern about reports that the Obama administration was considering adopting a “no first use” policy in 2016, and the Biden administration is likely to encounter similar resistance to the somewhat different idea of a sole purpose declaration.

### Neg---Link---Arsenal Change DA

#### Even if the aff only changes declaratory policy without changing the composition of the nuclear arsenal, the neg could still argue that the end effect would be material limitations

Costlow 21 – senior analyst at the National Institute for Public Policy

Matthew Costlow, “Believe It Or Not: U.S. Nuclear Declaratory Policy And Calculated Ambiguity,” War on the Rocks, 8-9-21, https://warontherocks.com/2021/08/believe-it-or-not-u-s-nuclear-declaratory-policy-and-calculated-ambiguity/

America’s current policy of “calculated ambiguity” is worth keeping because it contributes to deterring a growing range of strategic non-nuclear threats (chemical, biological, and conventional), provides U.S. leadership freedom of action in a crisis or conflict, and assures allies and partners. However, influential politicians such as House Armed Services Committee Chairman Adam Smith and Sen. Elizabeth Warren, plus a host of non-government analysts, are proposing changes to U.S. nuclear declaratory policy now because the Biden administration is in the early stages of formulating U.S. nuclear policy. As nuclear modernization programs advance through Congress, the likelihood of restricting or outright eliminating them falls. They hope that if the Biden administration adopts new declaratory policy, that may provide enough impetus to achieve their visions of a reduced U.S. nuclear arsenal. These alternative policies — including nuclear “no first use,” “sole purpose,” and an “existential threat policy” — miss the mark because they seek to restrict U.S. deterrence options through declarations that opponents are unlikely to believe, and allies and partners believe are to their detriment. Instead, U.S. officials should articulate a strong defense of the current nuclear declaratory policy of calculated ambiguity because its flexibility is its strength, and a true necessity in a dynamic security environment.

### Neg---CP---Increase Dialogue

#### Dialogue/arms control propositions is far preferable for signaling intent

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Calculated ambiguity is best positioned among all the other alternative policies to provide U.S. and allied leaders the freedom of action necessary to respond to a growing range of threats. This freedom of action reinforces deterrence against America’s adversaries. Nuclear declaratory policy is far too consequential to become a vehicle for merely signaling U.S. good intentions on nonproliferation and disarmament — a job far more appropriate for U.S. arms control proposals and dialogue. Instead, U.S. officials should clearly articulate why U.S. nuclear declaratory policy is important not only for its deterrence and assurance effects, but also for the range of policy options it can provide that have the best chance of achieving U.S. political and military goals. The tension between when to clarify and when to be ambiguous about U.S. intentions will remain, but preemptively removing the ability to make particular deterrent threats continues to be unwise. The policy of calculated ambiguity may remove the “fine distinctions” that Lord Balfour treasured, but for the purposes of deterring nuclear and non-nuclear threats, it is a “high policy” worth keeping.

### Neg---CP---Secret Doctrine

American Views on Russian Nuclear Policy

American strategists need to understand how the contents of Principles of State Policy fit into the larger body of evidence about Russia’s nuclear decision calculus. As a start, the new document indirectly addresses Western concerns that Russian strategy embraces limited nuclear employment in future regional conflicts to signal its resolve and “compel an end to a conventional conflict” that Russia starts. In other words, Moscow would seek to “escalate to de-escalate” “a conflict on terms favorable to Russia.”

U.S. policymakers mistakenly consider this de-escalation concept in primarily coercive terms by which Russia lowers the nuclear threshold to consolidate battlefield success. Then, they elevate this interpretation into an ominous component of Russian military doctrine that must be countered, as reflected in the 2018 U.S. Nuclear Posture Review and other official statements. In fact, “escalate to de-escalate” and other concepts for controlling escalation have been discussed for decades in Russian military journals. However, the phrase appears nowhere in official Russian doctrine. Though Principles is consistent with the Russian preference to leverage the risk and uncertainty of potential nuclear escalation to enhance its deterrence of adversaries, it avoids language that would reinforce U.S. misconceptions.

Experts have speculated about a classified document with almost the exact same title, “Principles of State Policy in the Sphere of Nuclear Deterrence Until 2020,” that was approved by then President Dmitry Medvedev in Feb. 2010 on the same day the military doctrine was issued. That document, unlike either the 2020 Principles or official Russian government doctrine from both 2010 and 2014, reportedly contained references to nuclear preemption. The latest version of official Russian military doctrine, which was released in 2014, states that

The Russian Federation reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction against it and/or its allies, as well as in the event of aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is threatened.

One reason for speculation that the secret doctrine was different from the published text was the 2010 debate on the subject within the Russian leadership. Preemption advocates like Nikolai Patrushev, secretary of the Russian security council, and Gen. Yuri Baluevsky, a former chief of the general staff, saw preemption as a way to counter the threat of America’s conventional prompt global strike capabilities. Detractors, including Col. Gen. Viktor Esin, a former chief of staff of the Strategic Rocket Forces, didn’t see preemption as credible in that role. A decade ago, Russian opponents of preemption apparently won the battle over the 2010 official doctrine. Nevertheless, it remains unclear what was in the secret variant and whether there is a secret version of the new Principles document.