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# West Coast Publishing

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## No First Use Main File Public Forum Nov-Dec 2020

Research assistance by Kinny Torre

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## **WEST COAST DEBATE**

### **Public Forum Nov-Dec 2020**

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**Resolved: The United States should adopt a declaratory nuclear policy of no first use**

## **Topic Analysis**

## Topic Essay

### Defining the topic

As any topic discussing nuclear policy, it's important to consider the general context of nuclear weapons in the US. Since the Cold War, America and Russia possess the highest number of nuclear weapons with each having more than 6,000 nuclear bombs. More recently, we've experienced the advent of a nuclear North Korea but Israel, India, Pakistan, the UK, China, and France, all have nuclear weapons. Of these countries, only China and India have pledged a policy of no first use (NFU). In other words, the majority of nuclear powers, including the US, have a nuclear policy of "calculated ambiguity" or deterrence based on an unclear nuclear foreign policy. To be clear, no first use is a policy orientation that states that a nuclear power will not be the first to use nuclear weapons against another countries. There is some debate in the literature about whether such a policy requires a change in nuclear posturing i.e. the strategic placing of nuclear weapons, or if the policy functions as a mere nonforcible pledge. The former could be viewed as a more strategic definition for the pro because it bolsters their links to credibility and an actual change in US foreign policy while the latter could be viewed as a better definition for the con because it still grants the negative perceptual links while gutting the solvency of the pro. It's important to note that neither side has to inherently say that nuclear weapons are bad (though you can certainly discuss proliferation if you so wish); rather, this debate only mandates that we debate under what conditions should nuclear weapons be acceptable.

### Case Arguments

The pro case has a fairly standard approach to critiquing US nuclear policy. The first deals with the possibility of a US-China war. The evidence discusses how China is heavily investing in its military particularly to counter the US sphere of influence. The Chang evidence is rather clear that China's expansion is a direct response to US nuclear ambiguity and how that risks a war with the US. There is also evidence in the extensions section that discuss how China's rapid naval development is meant to counter the US nuclear policy. The second contention pertains to escalating tensions between the US and Russia. Note that there is a strong uniqueness claim about how US-Russian relations are at the lowest point since the Cold War—the Council on Foreign Relations makes the case quite clear in the event that you are looking for additional research; however, be cautious because you need to prove how changing US nuclear posturing changes the US-Russian relations. That being said, nuclear policy can be considered the biggest military issue so the pro should have some fair solvency points. The final contention is about nuclear accidents and miscalculation. Since militarization and arms races entail a fundamentally secretive nature, a policy of no first use could lead to clearly established rules of engagement. As a result, the 3<sup>rd</sup> contention operates off of an invisible threshold which offers some strategic flexibility.

The con case is also a rather traditional approach to a nuclear weapons debate. The case comes from a realist perspective that recognizes that ending US nuclear policy's strategic ambiguity makes America open to a litany of different types of attacks. The first contention argues that with a policy of NFU, would be vulnerable to conventional warfare that, if you look to WWII, is much more deadly than modern warfare today. The second contention discusses biological warfare. The Miller evidence is an open source article that discusses in detail the problems with NFU policy right now which could also be used as a delay CP if your circuit accepts such arguments. The Miller evidence also does a superb job framing the risks of NFU policy in general if you need some more background information. Miller argues that biological warfare is as

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deadly as nuclear warfare so the negative should not have a problem outweighing the affirmative. Finally, in terms of having a fast timeframe that is also ongoing, the third contention on cyber war discusses how the US and its allies are vulnerable to massive cyber-attacks. Due to the increasing integration of society with the internet of things, these attacks can be as catastrophic as a nuclear strike.

## **Rebuttals**

The rebuttals against the conventional war scenario utilize the pro contentions to prove that, absent the passing of the resolution, a conventional war with Russia and China are inevitable. It also has some link defense about how convention wars are unlikely as well as a turn about how NFU increases credible deterrence and stopping proliferation. The contentions about biological and chemical warfare can already be solved through conventional methods which also takes out the impact.

For the con, the rebuttals leverage a realist perspective to contest the uniqueness and the link. The US-China War contention is refuted by explaining how current US-China relations are increasing due to the celebration of the US-China alliance during WWII by president Xi and how credible deterrence can only happen through strategic ambiguity. The US-Russia contention can be refuted by citing the development of NATO and US nuclear policy within the organization as an effective method of deterrence as well as pointing to a potential for improving US-Russia relations. Finally, in refutation of the accidents contention, there is evidence about how NFU encourages accidents due to mass horizontal proliferation.

## **Strategy**

For the pro, the first 2 contentions are meant to provide you short term, existential impacts that you can use to outweigh the cons arguments about alternatives to nuclear war. In addition, the argument about accidents can be used to prevent the con from leveraging their nuclear war claims because accidents and miscalculation confound realist calculations on war.

For the con, the case is meant to provide you multiple impacts that outweigh nuclear war. Conventional war operates as a slow death of society, biological warfare has impacts that are hard to contain, while cyber warfare has impacts that can prevent second strike capabilities. These arguments, in conjunction with arguments about how NFU leads to proliferation and a lack of credible deterrence, should make the con outweigh on timeframe as well as magnitude.

Best of luck!



## Definitions

**NFU is a pledge and a switch to a retaliatory-strike-only nuclear force posture.**

Nina **Tannenwald**, Tannenwald is director of the International Relations Program at Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies and a senior lecturer in political science, August 01, **2019**, "It's Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy", [https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/#:~:text=A%20no%2Dfirst%2Duse%20policy,retaliation%20for%20a%20nuclear%20attack.&text=To%20be%20credible%2C%20this%20declaratory,strike%20only%20nuclear%20force%20posture.\(accessed:10/02/20](https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/#:~:text=A%20no%2Dfirst%2Duse%20policy,retaliation%20for%20a%20nuclear%20attack.&text=To%20be%20credible%2C%20this%20declaratory,strike%20only%20nuclear%20force%20posture.(accessed:10/02/20)

Beginning in the early days of the Cold War, the United States has relied on the threat to use nuclear weapons first as a way to deter both nuclear and non-nuclear attacks. Yet, the world has changed significantly since then. In the contemporary era, the dangers and risks of a first-strike policy outweigh the hoped-for deterrence benefits. The United States should join China and India in adopting a declared no-first-use policy and should encourage the other nuclear-armed states to do likewise. A no-first-use policy means that the United States would pledge to use nuclear weapons only in retaliation for a nuclear attack. The sole purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons would then be to deter — and, if necessary, respond to — the use of nuclear weapons against the United States and its allies and partners. To be credible, this declaratory pledge would need to be reflected in a retaliatory-strike-only nuclear force posture.

**NFU is a non-enforceable declaration to not first strike**

Ankit **Panda**, Panda is an award-winning American writer, analyst, and researcher specializing in international security, defense, geopolitics, and economics. His work has appeared in a range of publications, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, the Diplomat, the Atlantic, the Daily Beast, Politico Magazine, and War on the Rocks, July 17, **2018**, "'No First Use' and Nuclear Weapons", <https://www.cfr.org/background/no-first-use-and-nuclear-weapons> (accessed: 10/03/20)

A so-called NFU pledge, first publicly made by China in 1964, refers to any authoritative statement by a nuclear weapon state to never be the first to use these weapons in a conflict, reserving them strictly to retaliate in the aftermath of a nuclear attack against its territory or military personnel. These pledges are a component of nuclear declaratory policies. As such, there can be no diplomatic arrangement to verify or enforce a declaratory NFU pledge, and such pledges alone do not affect capabilities. States with such pledges would be technically able to still use nuclear weapons first in a conflict, and their adversaries have generally not trusted NFU assurances. Today, China is the only nuclear weapon state to maintain an unconditional NFU pledge.

**PRO**

## **PRO Case**

## **Observation: Resolutational Analysis**

**My partner and I stand resolved: The United States should adopt a declaratory nuclear policy of no first use**

### **Definitions;**

**NFU is a pledge and a switch to a retaliatory-strike-only nuclear force posture.**

Nina **Tannenwald**, Tannenwald is director of the International Relations Program at Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies and a senior lecturer in political science, August 01, **2019**, "It's Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy", <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/#:~:text=A%20no%2Dfirst%2Duse%20policy,retaliation%20for%20a%20nuclear%20attack.&text=To%20be%20credible%2C%20this%20declaratory,strike%2Donly%20nuclear%20force%20posture.> (accessed: 10/02/20)

Beginning in the early days of the Cold War, the United States has relied on the threat to use nuclear weapons first as a way to deter both nuclear and non-nuclear attacks. Yet, the world has changed significantly since then. In the contemporary era, the dangers and risks of a first-strike policy outweigh the hoped-for deterrence benefits. The United States should join China and India in adopting a declared no-first-use policy and should encourage the other nuclear-armed states to do likewise. A no-first-use policy means that the United States would pledge to use nuclear weapons only in retaliation for a nuclear attack. The sole purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons would then be to deter — and, if necessary, respond to — the use of nuclear weapons against the United States and its allies and partners. To be credible, this declaratory pledge would need to be reflected in a retaliatory-strike-only nuclear force posture.

## Contention 1: US-China War

### Chinese expansion is antagonizing the west; US-China war is becoming increasingly likely

Steven Lee **Myers**, Myers is the Beijing bureau chief for The New York Times, **June 06**, 2020, "China's Military Provokes its Neighbours, but the Message is for the United States", <https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/world/chinas-military-provokes-its-neighbours-but-the-message-is-for-the-united-states/ar-BB15ZleG> (accessed: 10/08/20)

In the same week that Chinese and Indian soldiers engaged in a deadly brawl, one of China's submarines cruised through the waters near Japan, prompting a scramble of aircraft and ships to track its furtive movements. Chinese fighter jets and at least one bomber buzzed Taiwan's territorial airspace almost daily. With the world distracted by the coronavirus pandemic, China's military has encroached upon its neighbors' territories on several fronts throughout the spring and now into summer, flexing its military might in ways that have raised alarms across Asia and in Washington. China's military assertiveness reflects a growing sense of confidence and capability, but also one of confrontation, particularly with the United States over the pandemic, the fate of Hong Kong and other issues that China considers central to its sovereignty and national pride. China claims all of its recent operations are defensive, but each increases the risk of a military clash, whether intended or not. That appears to be what happened on the night of June 15, when Chinese and Indian soldiers fought along their disputed border in the Himalayas.

### FU nuclear policy antagonizes china and risks nuclear strikes; only NFU solves

Parris H. **Chang**, Chang is professor emeritus of political science at Pennsylvania State University and president of the Taiwan Institute for Political, Economic, and Strategic Studies, September 21, **2016**, "No-first use would only embolden China", [https://thebulletin.org/roundtable\\_entry/no-first-use-would-only-embolden-china/](https://thebulletin.org/roundtable_entry/no-first-use-would-only-embolden-china/) (accessed: 10/02/20)

To be sure, China has declared a no-first-use policy, and has demanded that other nuclear powers make the same commitment. But Beijing's own no-first-use policy may be under reconsideration. In 2005, General Zhu Chenghu of China's National Defense University made worldwide headlines when he warned that if the United States intervened in a military conflict over Taiwan, China would launch nuclear attacks on US cities. "We are ready to sacrifice all cities east of Xian," Gen. Zhu claimed. "Of course, the Americans must be prepared for hundreds of their cities to be destroyed." When a reporter raised the issue of China's no-first-use policy, Zhu said "the policy may change"—and asserted that it applies in any case only to conflicts between China and non-nuclear states. US officials were incensed over the general's brazen threat to use nuclear weapons first against US cities. China is by no means a status quo power. Rather, it seeks to change the international order. It is contesting US political and military supremacy in the Asia-Pacific and challenging the post-World War II Pax Americana. For years China has been substantially modernizing and expanding its conventional and nuclear military forces, and has used its overwhelming capabilities to compel smaller neighbors to settle disputes on Beijing's terms. Moreover, China has built up its anti-access and area-denial capabilities—hoping to deter, delay, and defeat US intervention. **It would be extremely unwise for President Obama to proclaim a nuclear no-first-use policy. Chinese leader Xi Jinping would construe it as a sign of US military decline, and he would only be emboldened to pursue China's dream of supplanting the United States as the world's superpower.**

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## Contention 2: US-Russia War

### US-Russian war is on the brink—skirmishes are happening across the globe

Erich **Schmitt**, Schmitt is a senior writer covering terrorism and national security for The New York Times, **September 25**, 2020, “U.S.-Russia Military Tensions Intensify in the Air and on the Ground Worldwide”, [https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/01/us/politics/us-russia-military-tensions.html#:~:text=U.S.-Russia%20Military%20Tensions%20Intensify%20in%20the%20Air%20and,the%20Syrian%20town%20of%20Jisr%20al-Shughour%20in%20July.\(accessed:10/08/20\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/01/us/politics/us-russia-military-tensions.html#:~:text=U.S.-Russia%20Military%20Tensions%20Intensify%20in%20the%20Air%20and,the%20Syrian%20town%20of%20Jisr%20al-Shughour%20in%20July.(accessed:10/08/20))

Russian fighter jets repeatedly veered 100 feet in front of a U.S. Air Force B-52 bomber over the Black Sea. Six Russian warplanes flew close enough to Alaska that Air Force F-22s scrambled to intercept them. And seven U.S. soldiers were injured when a Russian armored vehicle deliberately rammed an American patrol in northeast Syria. Within a few days last week, smoldering tensions between the United States and Russian militaries flared around the world. Already fraught with fresh evidence of election interference, the relationship between Washington and Moscow has grown even more tense after the recent military encounters. Joseph R. Biden Jr., in a speech in Pennsylvania on Monday, rebuked President Trump for failing to publicly address the altercation in Syria: “Did you hear the president say a single word? Did he lift one finger?” Mr. Biden, the Democratic Party’s nominee for president, also criticized Mr. Trump for failing to raise the issue of suspected Russian bounties on U.S. troops in Afghanistan during multiple phone calls with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia in recent months.

### NFU policy is key to stopping nuclear war

Nina **Tannenwald**, Tannenwald is director of the International Relations Program at Brown University’s Watson Institute for International Studies and a senior lecturer in political science, August 01, **2019**, “It’s Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy”, [https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/#:~:text=A%20no%2Dfirst%2Duse%20policy,retaliation%20for%20a%20nuclear%20attack.&text=To%20be%20credible%2C%20this%20declaratory,strike%20only%20nuclear%20force%20posture.\(accessed:10/02/20\)](https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/#:~:text=A%20no%2Dfirst%2Duse%20policy,retaliation%20for%20a%20nuclear%20attack.&text=To%20be%20credible%2C%20this%20declaratory,strike%20only%20nuclear%20force%20posture.(accessed:10/02/20))

The most important goal for the United States today should be to prevent the use of nuclear weapons. Since the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 — the only use of nuclear weapons in warfare — it has established a nearly 74-year tradition of not using nuclear weapons. This tradition is the single most important fact of the nuclear age. Today, the risks of nuclear war are increasing. Heightened geopolitical tensions, a more complex calculus of deterrence in a multipolar nuclear world, renewed reliance on nuclear weapons, technological arms races in nuclear and non-nuclear systems, the collapse of arms control, and the return of nuclear brinkmanship have all resulted in highly dangerous deterrence policies that, through miscalculation or accident, could plunge the United States into a nuclear war with North Korea, Russia, or China. The nuclear-armed states urgently need to step back from this dangerous situation by adopting a no-first-use policy that would significantly reduce the risk of nuclear war.

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### Contention 3: Accidents

#### NFU is key to credible deterrence; nuclear ambiguity undermines nuclear deterrence

Steve **Fetter** and Jon **Wolfsthal**, Fetter is a professor in the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland and Wolfsthal is director of the Nuclear Crisis Group, a Global Zero initiative to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, and a nonresident fellow at the Belfer Center at Harvard University, April 09, **2018**, “No First Use and Credible Deterrence”,  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257?needAccess=true>

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.<sup>10</sup> 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

#### Nuclear ambiguity risks accidental or miscalculated first use against North Korea

Steve **Fetter** and Jon **Wolfsthal**, Fetter is a professor in the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland and Wolfsthal is director of the Nuclear Crisis Group, a Global Zero initiative to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, and a nonresident fellow at the Belfer Center at Harvard University, April 09, **2018**, “No First Use and Credible Deterrence”,  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257?needAccess=true> (accessed: 10/02/20)

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 increasing 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.

## **US nuclear posturing antagonizes nuclear powers and leads to miscalculation and nuclear accidents**

Darby G. **Kimball**, Kimball has studied and written about nuclear weapons policy issues for 26 years as an analyst with Physicians for Social Responsibility, July 14, **2016**, “TAKING FIRST-USE OF NUKES OFF THE TABLE: GOOD FOR THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD”, <https://warontherocks.com/2016/07/taking-first-use-of-nukes-off-the-table-good-for-the-united-states-and-the-world/> (accessed: 10/03/20)

The current U.S. policy of not ruling out the first-use of nuclear weapons is tied to maintaining a significant portion of its nuclear force in “launch-under-attack” posture, also referred to as “prompt launch.” As then Candidate Obama correctly said in 2008, prompt launch is “a dangerous relic of the Cold War. **Such policies increase the risk of catastrophic accidents or miscalculation.**” Based on my research and interactions with specialists from both Russia and China, it is clear that maintaining the option of first-use and keeping U.S. weapons on prompt launch plays a large role in compelling Moscow—and may soon help to lead Beijing—to field a sizable portion of their nuclear forces in a launch-under-attack mode in order to avoid a disarming nuclear strike. This, in turn, increases the chances that nuclear weapons might be used early — by accident or design — by U.S. adversaries in a crisis.



## **PRO Extensions**

## China Expansion Uniqueness

### China's military is expanding rapidly which is causing a sharp decline in US-China relations

David **Lague**, Lague is a reporter at *Reuters*, **July 20, 2020**, "China expands its amphibious forces in challenge to U.S. supremacy beyond Asia", <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/china-military-amphibious/#:~:text=As%20shipyards%20churn%20out%20amphibious,U.S.%20and%20Japanese%20military%20estimates.> (accessed: 10/08/20)

China launched its military build-up in the mid-1990s with a top priority: keep the United States at bay in any conflict by making the waters off the Chinese coast a death trap. **Now, China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) is preparing to challenge American power further afield.** The 40,000-tonne Type 075 ships are a kind of small aircraft carrier with accommodation for up to 900 troops and space for heavy equipment and landing craft, according to Western military experts who have studied satellite images and photographs of the new vessels. They will carry up to 30 helicopters at first; later they could carry fighter jets, if China can build short take off and vertical landing aircraft like the U.S. F-35B. The first Type 075 was launched last September and the second in April, according to reports in China's official military media. A third is under construction, according to the May edition of a Congressional Research Service report. Eventually, the PLA Navy could have seven or more of these ships, according to reports in China's official military press. **Chinese military commentators quoted in official media say China's shipyards are now building and launching amphibious ships so rapidly it is like "dropping dumplings" into water. The military rivalry between China and the United States is only growing sharper.** Last week, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared most of Beijing's claims of sovereignty in the South China Sea illegal, throwing Washington's weight behind the rival claims of Southeast Asian nations over territory and resources in the strategic waterway that were supported by international law. China said the U.S. position raised tensions in the region and undermined stability.

## Russian Expansion Uniqueness

### Russia is militarizing and expanding in the squo

Brian **Katz and** Joseph S. **Bermudez** Jr., Katz is a fellow in the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and Bermudez is Senior Fellow for Imagery Analysis (Non-resident), iDeas Lab and Korea Chair, **June 17**, 2020, "Moscow's Next Front: Russia's Expanding Military Footprint in Libya", <https://www.csis.org/analysis/moscows-next-front-russias-expanding-military-footprint-libya>, (accessed: 10/08/20)

New imagery analysis from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) of Russian operations in Libya indicates the breadth and depth of Russian involvement, as well as its limits in altering the conflict's trajectory, as seen in recent setbacks for Moscow's primary partner, General Khalifa Haftar and the Libyan National Army (LNA). Imagery released in late May by U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) displayed Russia's deployment of at least 14 combat aircraft, including Su-24 attack, MiG-29 fighter, and Su-35 interceptor escort aircraft, from bases in Russia and Syria to Libya's Al Khadim and Al Jufra air bases. A closer examination of Russia's deployment at Al Jufra Air Base reveals not only an expansion of Russian air activity but also of its ground forces, namely the Russian private military company (PMC) Wagner Group, the core component of Russia's intervention in Libya.

### Russian is expanding with the sole purpose of curbing American influence

Sirwan **Kaijo**, Kiajo is a multimedia journalist a VOA, **June 03**, 2020, "Russia Eyes Military Expansion in Northeast Syria", <https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/russia-eyes-military-expansion-northeast-syria> (accessed: 10/08/20)

In recent months, Russia, a staunch backer of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime, has increased its foothold the country's northeast, which is largely controlled by local Kurdish forces. After Turkish military and its allied Syrian militias launched an offensive against the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in October 2019, Russian troops stepped into the region, following a partial U.S. troop withdrawal from the border area between Syria and Turkey. The SDF, which is dominated by Kurdish fighters, says the U.S. drawdown and the subsequent Turkish invasion have created a vacuum in parts of the region, which has been filled by Russian forces and its allied Syrian government troops. "The Russians have been roaming almost freely in our region," a senior SDF official told VOA on the condition of anonymity. "Their ultimate goal is to push the Americans out of northeast Syria."

## **NFU Solves Nuclear War**

### **NFU is key to preventing nuclear war**

Daryl G. **Kimball**, Kimball has studied and written about nuclear weapons policy issues for 26 years as an analyst with Physicians for Social Responsibility, July 14, **2016**, "TAKING FIRST-USE OF NUKES OFF THE TABLE: GOOD FOR THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD", <https://warontherocks.com/2016/07/taking-first-use-of-nukes-off-the-table-good-for-the-united-states-and-the-world/> (accessed: 10/03/20)

The United States first used nuclear weapons more than 70 years ago on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Fearing the threat from massive Soviet conventional forces and possible large-scale use of chemical and biological weapons, U.S. military and political leaders decided to keep the option to use nuclear weapons first in a conflict. Today, the United States is the world's dominant global military power and the Soviet Union is long gone. The Cold War-era policy of not ruling out nuclear first-use poses a grave risk to the security of the United States and is not suitable for today's global security and political environment. **The greatest threat to the United States and to any nation is from the enormous and indiscriminate destructive effects of nuclear weapons. It is in the interest of the United States that, as long as these weapons exist, all nuclear-armed states agree that the sole purpose of nuclear weapons is to respond to a nuclear attack by other nuclear-armed states and only when the survival of the state or one of its allies is at stake.** It is time for the United States to adopt this policy.

### **NFU is key to preventing nuclear wars with Russia and China as well as maintaining credible deterrence**

Kingston **Reif** and Daryl G. **Kimball**, Reif is the director for disarmament and threat reduction policy at the Arms Control Association and Kimball has studied and written about nuclear weapons policy issues for 26 years as an analyst with Physicians for Social Responsibility, August 29, **2016**, "Rethink oldthink on no first use", <https://thebulletin.org/2016/08/rethink-oldthink-on-no-first-use/> (accessed: 10/02/20)

It is time to adjust US nuclear declaratory policy. The circumstances that led US leaders to reserve the option to use nuclear weapons first in a conflict are long gone. Today, the United States and its allies have the means to counter any realistic nonnuclear military threat with superior conventional military, economic, and alliance capabilities. **The threat of first use also lacks credibility, since the costs of such use would greatly outweigh the benefits.** Among other advantages, a clear US no-first-use policy would reduce the risk of Russian or Chinese nuclear miscalculation during a crisis by alleviating concerns about a devastating US nuclear first-strike. Such risks could grow in the future as Washington develops cyber offensive capabilities that can confuse nuclear command and control systems, as well as new strike capabilities and strategic ballistic missile interceptors that Russia and China believe may degrade their nuclear retaliatory potential.

**First strikes are unnecessary and risk nuclear annihilation**

James E. **Cartwright and** Bruce G. **Blair**, Cartwright is the chairman of the Global Zero Commission on Nuclear Risk Reduction, is a former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former commander of the United States Strategic Command and Blair is a research scholar at Princeton, a founder of Global Zero and a former Minuteman launch officer, August 15, **2016**, “End the First-Use Policy for Nuclear Weapons”, [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/15/opinion/end-the-first-use-policy-for-nuclear-weapons.html?\\_r=4](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/15/opinion/end-the-first-use-policy-for-nuclear-weapons.html?_r=4) (accessed: 10/02/20)

After the end of the Cold War, which coincided with revolutionary advances in our nonnuclear military capacities, the range of these missions steadily narrowed to the point where nuclear weapons today no longer serve any purpose beyond deterring the first use of such weapons by our adversaries. Our nonnuclear strength, including economic and diplomatic power, our alliances, our conventional and cyber weaponry and our technological advantages, constitute a global military juggernaut unmatched in history. The United States simply does not need nuclear weapons to defend its own and its allies’ vital interests, as long as our adversaries refrain from their use. **Using nuclear weapons first against Russia and China would endanger our and our allies’ very survival by encouraging full-scale retaliation.** Any first use against lesser threats, such as countries or terrorist groups with chemical and biological weapons, would be gratuitous; there are alternative means of countering those threats. Such use against North Korea would be likely to result in the blanketing of Japan and possibly South Korea with deadly radioactive fallout.

## **NFU Solves Credible Deterrence**

### **NFU is critical for ally relations as well as maintaining the US nuclear arsenal**

Steve **Fetter** and Jon **Wolfsthal**, Fetter is a professor in the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland and Wolfsthal is director of the Nuclear Crisis Group, a Global Zero initiative to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, and a nonresident fellow at the Belfer Center at Harvard University, April 09, **2018**, “No First Use and Credible Deterrence”,  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257?needAccess=true> (accessed: 10/02/20)

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.

**NFU is key to softpower and diplomacy**

Nina **Tannenwald**, Tannenwald is director of the International Relations Program at Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies and a senior lecturer in political science, August 01, **2019**, "It's Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy", <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/#:~:text=A%20no%2Dfirst%2Duse%20policy,retaliation%20for%20a%20nuclear%20attack.&text=To%20be%20credible%2C%20this%20declaratory,strike%2Donly%20nuclear%20force%20posture>. (accessed: 10/02/20)

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."<sup>11</sup> 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 Miscalculation and Accidents**

### **NFU would save \$100 billion and prevent nuclear accidents**

James E. **Cartwright and** Bruce G. **Blair**, Cartwright is the chairman of the Global Zero Commission on Nuclear Risk Reduction, is a former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former commander of the United States Strategic Command and Blair is a research scholar at Princeton, a founder of Global Zero and a former Minuteman launch officer, August 15, **2016**, “End the First-Use Policy for Nuclear Weapons”, [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/15/opinion/end-the-first-use-policy-for-nuclear-weapons.html?\\_r=4](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/15/opinion/end-the-first-use-policy-for-nuclear-weapons.html?_r=4) (accessed: 10/02/20)

Phasing out land-based missiles and shifting to a reliance on submarines and bombers would save about \$100 billion over the next three decades. The elimination of smaller, tactical nuclear weapons would save billions more. President Obama could begin the phaseout of land-based missiles before he left office by instructing the Department of Defense to remove 550 weapons from the operationally deployed category and transfer them to long-term storage, thereby reducing the operationally deployed inventory to about 1,000 strategic warheads. These missiles are surplus weapons no longer needed for deterrence. A no-first-use policy would also reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. By scrapping the vulnerable land-based missile force, any need for launching on warning disappears. Strategic bombers can be sent aloft on warning of an apparent incoming attack, which may or may not be a false alarm, and stay up until the situation clarifies. Strategic submarines are extremely survivable and exert no pressure on decision-makers to fire them quickly. They can patrol for months waiting for instructions. Both bombers and submarines are also less vulnerable to cyberwarfare than the strategic missiles on land.



## **Proliferation**

### **Current US nuclear policy incentivizes global nuclear proliferation; NFU is key to preventing deterrence**

John P. **Holdren**, DR. JOHN P. HOLDREN is the Teresa and John Heinz Professor of Environmental Policy at the Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Co-Director of the School's Science, Technology, and Public Policy program, Professor of Environmental Science and Policy in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, and Faculty Affiliate in the Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Science, **January 13, 2020**, "The overwhelming case for no first use", <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277> (accessed: 10/06/20)

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 non-nuclear 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.

### **NFU doesn't lead to proliferation: allies are still protected by US nuclear guarantees**

Kingston **Reif** and Daryl G. **Kimball**, Reif is the director for disarmament and threat reduction policy at the Arms Control Association and Kimball has studied and written about nuclear weapons policy issues for 26 years as an analyst with Physicians for Social Responsibility, August 29, **2016**, "Rethink oldthink on no first use", <https://thebulletin.org/2016/08/rethink-oldthink-on-no-first-use/> (accessed: 10/02/20)

Declaratory policy and the "nuclear umbrella." There is no reason why the adoption of a no-first-use policy should reduce the confidence of US allies in extended deterrence against nuclear attack. A no-first-use policy would still protect US allies from the threat of nuclear coercion or attacks, since given the size, accuracy, and diversity of US nuclear forces, the United States would be able to deliver a devastating retaliatory blow to any would-be nuclear aggressor, even after suffering a massive first-strike nuclear attack. While some US allies, such as Japan and South Korea, might initially have concerns about the transition to a US no first use policy, they are highly likely to accept such a decision, since no first use will in no way weaken US military preparedness to confront non-nuclear threats to their security. Some other countries, including nuclear-armed France and Britain, may also initially oppose a US no first use declaration, but only because it would put a greater spotlight on their very vague nuclear declaratory policies. Many US allies, including NATO members Germany and the Netherlands, support the adoption of no-first-use policies by all nuclear-armed states. The claim that some US allies might acquire their own nuclear weapons if Washington abandons the first-use option is pure hyperbole.

**Opposition to NFU prevents nonproliferation efforts**

Steve **Fetter** and Jon **Wolfsthal**, Fetter is a professor in the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland and Wolfsthal is director of the Nuclear Crisis Group, a Global Zero initiative to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, and a nonresident fellow at the Belfer Center at Harvard University, April 09, **2018**, “No First Use and Credible Deterrence”,  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257?needAccess=true> (accessed: 10/02/20)

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**

## **BLOCKS**

## **AT: Conventional War**

**Impact is inevitable: Russia and china are militarizing against the west. It's try or die for the pro**

### **US nuclear policy provides marginal benefits to conventional forces and leads to instability**

John P. **Holdren**, DR. JOHN P. HOLDREN is the Teresa and John Heinz Professor of Environmental Policy at the Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Co-Director of the School's Science, Technology, and Public Policy program, Professor of Environmental Science and Policy in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, and Faculty Affiliate in the Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Science, **January 13, 2020**, "The overwhelming case for no first use", <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277> (accessed: 10/06/20)

Of course, it will likely always be true that the United States (or NATO) cannot be immediately superior on the ground, in the air, or at sea at every location where need for conventional force projection might arise. The real question is whether the explicit threat to use nuclear weapons first in such a circumstance is a sensible way to deal with that reality. I believe that making this threat brings a very small benefit at a very large cost to our nonproliferation goals, as well as to arms-race stability and crisis stability in cases where the prospective adversary is a nuclear-weapon state. The benefit is small because – whatever an adversary's estimate of the probability that the United States, under our current declaratory policy and posture, would actually use nuclear weapons against a conventional attack – the propensity to worst-case assessment means that the adversary's estimate of that probability won't be a whole lot smaller under a US no-first-use stance. That is, the mere existence of US nuclear weapons induces a non-negligible degree of caution on the part of adversaries contemplating aggression, irrespective of US declaratory policy and the details of posture. Besides, there are better remedies for the problem: Some are already in hand (such as conventional precision strike), and some are attainable at a more favorable ratio of benefit to cost and risk than that of our first-use stance (such as increasing our capacity to deploy troops, weapons, and supply chains rapidly to wherever they are needed).

**Declaring a policy of NFU is key to credible deterrence, preventing miscalculation and accidents, and stopping proliferation**

John P. **Holdren**, DR. JOHN P. HOLDREN is the Teresa and John Heinz Professor of Environmental Policy at the Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Co-Director of the School's Science, Technology, and Public Policy program, Professor of Environmental Science and Policy in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, and Faculty Affiliate in the Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Science, **January 13, 2020**, "The overwhelming case for no first use", <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277> (accessed: 10/06/20)

Declaring a policy and posture of no first use of nuclear weapons offers the most conspicuous opportunity not yet taken for the United States to devalue the currency of nuclear weapons in world affairs. Importantly, this step could be accomplished by a US president on his or her own authority, without need for authorization or agreement by the Congress. Doing so would bring multiple benefits. Notably, it would immediately raise the global credibility of the US stance against nuclear proliferation. It would reduce the incentives of potential adversaries that don't have nuclear weapons to acquire them. And it would reduce the risks of nuclear use through accident or miscalculation. It would also render unnecessary the continuous striving to develop and deploy nuclear capabilities that would make US nuclear first use against a nuclear-armed adversary advantageous and therefore credible. No longer striving for such advantage – which is very probably unattainable in any case – would reduce incentives for nuclear armed adversaries to seek to improve their own nuclear forces as a hedge against US gaining a first-use advantage.

## AT: Chemical and Biological War

### Nuclear policy is irrelevant in deterring chemical and biological warfare

John P. **Holdren**, DR. JOHN P. HOLDREN is the Teresa and John Heinz Professor of Environmental Policy at the Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Co-Director of the School's Science, Technology, and Public Policy program, Professor of Environmental Science and Policy in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, and Faculty Affiliate in the Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Science, **January 13, 2020**, "The overwhelming case for no first use", <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277> (accessed: 10/06/20)

The deterrence component has the same weaknesses as for deterring conventional attacks with nuclear weapons – most notably, the low salience of declaratory policy in the worse-case calculus of potential state adversaries – on top of a low likelihood that potential state adversaries of the United States would see benefit in attacking this country or its allies with chemical or biological weapons unless they saw a way to do so without the United States being able to determine the source. In the case of non-state adversaries that may not even be under the control of the state(s) where they're based, deterrence by threat of nuclear response is even less germane. **As for defeating such attacks, it's hard to envision circumstances where nuclear weapons would be of any use**, except for pre-emptive strikes against deeply buried chemical and biological weapons storage or manufacturing sites. In the case of deeply buried sites, the world would almost surely see using nuclear weapons to attack them pre-emptively as disproportionate, leading to universal condemnation. Retaliating with nuclear weapons against chemical or biological weapons use (in the subset of cases where the source was clear) would likewise almost certainly be seen as disproportionate. Indeed, the disproportionality aspect makes it so unlikely that any US president would order either a pre-emptive or retaliatory nuclear attack in the chemical and biological weapons context that including the option in declaratory policy seems perverse, given the downsides of doing so.

**Impact is inevitable: the case proves how Russia and China are already gearing up for war and the accidents contention means that warfare becomes inevitable regardless of intent.**

### Conventional military solves chemical and biological war

Kingston **Reif** and Daryl G. **Kimball**, Reif is the director for disarmament and threat reduction policy at the Arms Control Association and Kimball has studied and written about nuclear weapons policy issues for 26 years as an analyst with Physicians for Social Responsibility, August 29, **2016**, "Rethink oldthink on no first use", <https://thebulletin.org/2016/08/rethink-oldthink-on-no-first-use/> (accessed: 10/02/20)

Nuclear weapons aren't needed to counter nonnuclear threats. Today, given its overwhelming conventional military, economic, and alliance advantages, the United States does not need to threaten to use nuclear weapons to deter or defeat a major conventional attack against the homeland or US allies. None of the United States' most likely military adversaries—not Russia, or China, or, certainly, North Korea—can hope to defeat the United States and its allies in a protracted non-nuclear conflict, and that US superiority will continue as long as Washington makes prudent investments in sustaining US and allied conventional military forces.

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## AT: Cyber Attacks

### Non-Unique: The US is already vulnerable to cyber attacks

Joseph **Marks**, Marks is a reporter for the Cybersecurity 202 newsletter, **March 19, 2020**, “The Cybersecurity 202: Coronavirus pandemic makes U.S. more vulnerable to serious cyberattack, lawmakers warn”, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/paloma/the-cybersecurity-202/2020/03/19/the-cybersecurity-202-coronavirus-pandemic-makes-u-s-more-vulnerable-to-serious-cyberattack-lawmakers-warn/5e72c66e602ff10d49acf5bc/> (accessed: 10/08/20)

The pandemic has heightened concerns among cyber hawks that the United States hasn't done enough to deter digital attacks from adversaries such as Russia and China. And they worry a lack of serious consequences now could embolden adversaries to target vital services such as medical care or food supplies and cost people's lives. The warning also comes as huge portions of the nation's workers are suddenly working from home on unfamiliar or even un-vetted equipment, raising the likelihood of digital vulnerabilities that hackers could exploit. Sen. Angus King (I-Maine), the commission's other co-chair, warned that the virus “underlines our overall vulnerabilities [to cyberattacks] and the absolute unscrupulousness of our adversaries.” Attorney General William Barr has already warned there will be “severe” consequences if the HHS attack or disinformation campaign are traced to an adversary government. He has also urged the Justice Department to prioritize prosecuting any cyber criminals who seek to profit from the pandemic. But he hasn't described any specific responses yet.

**Turn: changing US policy is critical for solving for relations against America's enemies**

**FU is outdated and unnecessary for deterrence**

Nina **Tannenwald**, Tannenwald is director of the International Relations Program at Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies and a senior lecturer in political science, August 01, **2019**, "It's Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy", <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/#:~:text=A%20no%2Dfirst%2Duse%20policy,retaliation%20for%20a%20nuclear%20attack.&text=To%20be%20credible%2C%20this%20declaratory,strike%20only%20nuclear%20force%20posture.> (accessed: 10/02/20)

But some states — India, China, and the Soviet Union for a period — have nevertheless pledged no-first-use and, in the cases of India and China, have attempted to make those pledges credible. What explains these choices? The empirical record suggests that a state's choice regarding a nuclear first-use policy tends to be strongly influenced by asymmetries in the conventional military balance between nuclear-armed adversaries. Nuclear-armed states that face a conventionally superior military adversary will threaten to use nuclear weapons first because they depend more heavily on nuclear threats to defend themselves. In contrast, nuclear-armed states that possess overwhelming conventional superiority are more likely to declare an NFU policy because it privileges their conventional advantage on the battlefield and might help to keep the conflict non-nuclear. Thus India, which possesses a much larger conventional military than Pakistan, declared an NFU policy in 1999, following its nuclear test in 1998. Pakistan, which relies heavily on its nuclear deterrent for its defense against India, has rejected Indian calls to adopt a no-first-use pledge.<sup>3</sup> This logic also helps explain why, in 1993, Russia dropped its NFU pledge first made in 1982. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, as Russian conventional military forces deteriorated and the United States declined to reciprocate the NFU pledge, Russian leaders felt they had to rely more heavily on nuclear weapons. Consistent with this logic, during the Cold War, the United States relied on a first-use threat to offset and counter the overwhelming conventional superiority of the Soviet conventional military threat in Europe. Today, the situation is reversed. The United States possesses overwhelming conventional superiority while Russia's conventional military has declined. Because U.S. conventional military power now vastly exceeds that of its largest adversaries, Russia and China, many argue that America's first-use policy is now unnecessary to deter conventional threats.<sup>4</sup>



## **AT: Allied Freakout**

**Non-Unique: Allies are worried about an unstable US nuclear foreign policy. NFU provides consistent standards for predictions while assuring allied commitment**

**No-link: NFU still provides US nuclear security guarantees**

John P. **Holdren**, DR. JOHN P. HOLDREN is the Teresa and John Heinz Professor of Environmental Policy at the Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Co-Director of the School's Science, Technology, and Public Policy program, Professor of Environmental Science and Policy in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, and Faculty Affiliate in the Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Science, **January 13, 2020**, "The overwhelming case for no first use", <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277> (accessed: 10/06/20)

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.

**Turn: Nuclear ambiguity is bad for allied security, credible deterrence through conventional military is key to ally confidence**

John P. **Holdren**, DR. JOHN P. HOLDREN is the Teresa and John Heinz Professor of Environmental Policy at the Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Co-Director of the School's Science, Technology, and Public Policy program, Professor of Environmental Science and Policy in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, and Faculty Affiliate in the Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Science, **January 13, 2020**, "The overwhelming case for no first use", <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277> (accessed: 10/06/20)

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 non-nuclear 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.

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**CON**

## **CON Case**

## **Observation: Resolutional Analysis**

**My partner and I stand in negation of the resolution: The United States should adopt a declaratory nuclear policy of no first use**

### **Definitions: NFU is a non-enforceable declaration to not first strike**

Ankit **Panda**, Panda is an award-winning American writer, analyst, and researcher specializing in international security, defense, geopolitics, and economics. His work has appeared in a range of publications, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, the Diplomat, the Atlantic, the Daily Beast, Politico Magazine, and War on the Rocks, July 17, **2018**, “‘No First Use’ and Nuclear Weapons”, <https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/no-first-use-and-nuclear-weapons> (accessed: 10/03/20)

A so-called NFU pledge, first publicly made by China in 1964, refers to any authoritative statement by a nuclear weapon state to never be the first to use these weapons in a conflict, reserving them strictly to retaliate in the aftermath of a nuclear attack against its territory or military personnel. These pledges are a component of nuclear declaratory policies. **As such, there can be no diplomatic arrangement to verify or enforce a declaratory NFU pledge, and such pledges alone do not affect capabilities.** States with such pledges would be technically able to still use nuclear weapons first in a conflict, and their adversaries have generally not trusted NFU assurances. Today, China is the only nuclear weapon state to maintain an unconditional NFU pledge.

## Contention 1: Conventional War

### NFU enables US enemies to build up their forces and engage in conventional warfare without significant consequences

Franklin C. **Miller and** Keith B. **Payne**, Miller is a principal of The Scowcroft Group. He is a retired civil servant, having served 22 years in senior positions in the Department of Defense and Payne is president and co-founder of the National Institute for Public Policy, and professor and department head at the Graduate School of Defense and Strategic Studies at Missouri State University (Washington campus), and chair of the US Strategic Command Senior Advisory Group, Strategy and Policy Panel, August 22, **2016**, “The dangers of no-first-use”, <https://thebulletin.org/2016/08/the-dangers-of-no-first-use/> (accessed: 10/07/20)

In fact, however, US adoption of a no-first-use policy would create serious risks without offering any plausible benefit. Why so? There is no doubt that the US nuclear deterrent has prevented war and the escalation of war in the past. For example, there is considerable evidence from the 1991 First Gulf War that the US nuclear deterrent helped to prevent Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein from escalating to the use of Iraqi chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction—possibly saving tens of thousands of US and allied lives. A US pledge of no-first-use now would encourage current and future opponents to believe that they need not fear the US nuclear deterrent in response to their potential massive use of military force against us or our allies—including the use of advanced conventional weapons, and chemical and biological weapons.

### Nuclear ambiguity is key to deterring enemies and has led to a historically dramatic decrease in deaths

Keith B. **Payne**, Payne is president and co-founder of the National Institute for Public Policy, and professor and department head at the Graduate School of Defense and Strategic Studies at Missouri State University, July 06, **2016**, “Once Again: Why a “No-First-Use” Policy is a Bad, Very Bad Idea”, [https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2016/07/06/once\\_again\\_why\\_a\\_no-first-use\\_policy\\_is\\_a\\_bad\\_very\\_bad\\_idea\\_109520.html](https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2016/07/06/once_again_why_a_no-first-use_policy_is_a_bad_very_bad_idea_109520.html) (accessed: 10/08/20)

How so? Under the existing policy of ambiguity, potential aggressors such as Russia, China, North Korea or Iran must contemplate the reality that if they attack us or our allies, they risk possible US nuclear retaliation. There is no doubt whatsoever that this risk of possible US nuclear retaliation has deterred war and the escalation of conflicts. In fact, the percentage of the world population lost to war has fallen dramatically since US nuclear deterrence was established after World War II.[2] That is an historic accomplishment. The fatal flaw of the warm and progressive-sounding NFU proposal is that it tells would-be aggressors that they do not have to fear US nuclear retaliation even if they attack us or our allies with advanced conventional, chemical, and/or biological weapons. They would risk US nuclear retaliation only if they attack with nuclear weapons. As long as they use non-nuclear forces, a US NFU policy would provide aggressors with a free pass to avoid the risk now posed by the US nuclear deterrent.

**NFU will lead to conventional wars which are the deadliest wars in modern history**

Michaela **Dodge**, Dodge is a Former Research Fellow, Missile Defense & Nuclear Deterrence at Heritage, August 16, **2017**, “Some Bad Ideas, Like Zombies, Never Die. A ‘No First Use’ Nuclear Policy Is One of Them”, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/some-bad-ideas-zombies-never-die-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-one-them> , (accessed: 10/08/20)

Some argue that the United States should declare a “no first use” nuclear weapons policy. This would mean that the United States would only use a nuclear weapon in response to another country’s nuclear attack. Proponents of this idea generally argue that an adoption of this policy would get the world closer to a world without nuclear weapons. Such optimism couldn’t be further away from the truth. A no first use nuclear weapons policy would make the United States and allies less safe from devastating attacks. To assume that the only utility of nuclear weapons is to retaliate after a nuclear attack is to ignore historical experience. The United States used nuclear weapons in 1945 to bring an end to the most devastating conflict in the modern history of mankind. That conflict, the Second World War, was fought predominantly with conventional weapons. Comfortably assuming that such devastation could never happen again is foolish and imprudent. Aside from the fact that other countries are unlikely to trust any potential U.S. no first use declarations, a world without nuclear weapons is not a better world than the one we currently have, which involves a large degree of nuclear ambiguity.

## Contention 2: Biological War

### First use is key to deter terrorism and chemical warfare

Michael S. **Gerson**, Gerson is a research analyst at the Center for Naval Analyses, September 17, **2010**, “No First Use: The Next Step for U.S. Nuclear Policy”, [https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00018](https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1162/ISEC_a_00018) (accessed: 10/02/20)

New evidence contained in captured Iraqi documents demonstrates that Saddam was determined to have CW and BW weapons prepared to launch. In a January 1991 meeting with senior Iraqi officials, Saddam said, “I want to make sure that . . . the germ and chemical warheads, as well as the chemical and germ bombs, are available to [those concerned], so that in case we ordered an attack, they can do it without missing any of their targets.” Saddam said that if the order to launch is given, “you should launch them all against their targets.” He concluded the meeting by stating, “We will never lower our heads as long as we are alive, even if we have to destroy everybody.”<sup>43</sup> In the aftermath of the Gulf War, several observers argued that **the ambiguous threat of a nuclear reprisal effectively deterred Saddam from using his unconventional weapons.**<sup>44</sup> This view is based largely on postwar interviews with former high-level Iraqi officials, some of whom contended that Saddam did not order chemical or biological attacks because he believed that the United States would respond with nuclear weapons. For example, Gen. Wafic al-Samarrai, the former head of Iraqi Military Intelligence, said in an interview after the war, “I do not think that Saddam was capable of taking a decision to use chemical weapons or biological weapons, or any other type of weapons against the allied troops, because the warning was quite severe, and quite effective. The allied troops were certain to use nuclear arms and the price will be too dear and too high.”<sup>45</sup>

### Biological weapons are as deadly as nuclear warfare

James N. **Miller**, Miller served as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the Obama Administration. He is a senior fellow at Johns Hopkins University’s Applied Physics Laboratory and a member of the Defense Science Board, **January 12**, 2020, “No to no first use—for now”, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701278> (accessed: 10/08/20)

North Korea has at least a latent capability to produce biological weapons and may even have an active biological weapons program. Assessments differ (Parachini 2018, 4; Bennett 2013, 15).<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the extreme difficulty of verifying whether a nation does or does not have an active biological weapons program is a key part of the problem. The extent of the Soviet biological weapons program discovered after the end of the Cold War, as well as the extent of the Iraqi biological weapons program uncovered after the 1991 Gulf War, were surprises to the United States. **The potential for biological weapons to kill on a massive scale comparable to nuclear weapons,** concerns that some potential adversaries may have or acquire biological weapons, the rapid advancement of biotechnology that makes a covert program even more feasible, and the reality that the United States has foresworn biological weapons all led the Obama administration in its 2010 Nuclear Posture Review to reserve the right for the United States to re-visit its negative security assurance if necessary (Department of Defense 2010). Since 2010, the rationale behind the Obama administration’s reservation has not been reversed either by reductions in the biological weapons threat or by significant advances in US defensive capabilities.

### Contention 3: Cyber War

#### **NFU leaves America vulnerable to devastating cyber-attacks that cause massive economic damage and significant loss of life**

James N. **Miller**, Miller served as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the Obama Administration. He is a senior fellow at Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory and a member of the Defense Science Board, **January 12**, 2020, "No to no first use—for now", <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701278> (accessed: 10/08/20)

A major cyberattack on the United States could result in massive economic damage, substantial social disruption, and potentially even significant loss of life. The cyber vulnerabilities of US critical infrastructure are significant and growing as the United States moves increasingly toward an economy and a society based on the so-called internet of things. Despite increased attention to cybersecurity and significant private sector and governmental research efforts intended to shift the cyber balance from offense-dominant to defense-dominant, the advantage of the attacker will remain intact at least for the near-term. **As a recent Defense Science Board task force report co-chaired by this author concluded: "The unfortunate reality is that for at least the coming five to ten years, the offensive cyber capabilities of our most capable potential adversaries are likely to far exceed the United States' ability to defend and adequately strengthen the resilience of its critical infrastructures"** (Miller and Gosler 2017, 4). It is debatable whether a cyberattack on the United States or its allies could cause damage nearing the scale of a nuclear attack or a biological weapons attack. However, attempting to answer this unanswerable question is barking up the wrong tree. A much better question is: In the face of massive uncertainty over the degree of damage that cyberattacks against the United States and its allies could impose today and in the future, should the United States forswear a nuclear response to such attacks by nations outside the US negative security assurance – who happen also to be the most capable cyber adversaries identified by the US intelligence community? A direct analogue to the conclusion reached above in the context of biological weapons applies: If it is plausible that a reasonable president could rationally decide that a highly impactful cyberattack by (say) Russia or China deserved a nuclear response, then it would be far better to make this clear in advance, so as to buttress deterrence of such an attack.



**Cyber-attacks are as deadly as a nuclear strike that threatens global survival**

Jeremy **Straub**, Straub is an assistant professor of computer science at North Dakota State University, August 16, **2019**, “A cyberattack could wreak destruction comparable to a nuclear weapon”, <https://theconversation.com/a-cyberattack-could-wreak-destruction-comparable-to-a-nuclear-weapon-112173> (accessed: 10/08/20)

**There are three basic scenarios for how a nuclear grade cyberattack might develop.** It could start modestly, with one country's intelligence service stealing, deleting or compromising another nation's military data. Successive rounds of retaliation could expand the scope of the attacks and the severity of the damage to civilian life. In another situation, a nation or a terrorist organization could unleash a massively destructive cyberattack – targeting several electricity utilities, water treatment facilities or industrial plants at once, or in combination with each other to compound the damage. Perhaps the most concerning possibility, though, is that it might happen by mistake. **On several occasions, human and mechanical errors very nearly destroyed the world during the Cold War; something analogous could happen in the software and hardware of the digital realm.**

## **CON Extensions**

## **US-China Relations High**

### **Chinese and Russian ambassadors are praising US military efforts and are hoping for increased relations in the future**

Anatoly **Antonov** and Cui **Tiankai**, Antonov is the Russian ambassador to the United States and Tiankai is the Chinese ambassador to the United States, **September 02**, 2020, "Honor World War II with a Better, Shared Future", <https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2020/09/honor-world-war-ii-better-shared-future/168191/> (accessed: 10/08/20)

On September 3, Russia commemorates the end of World War II, and the Chinese people celebrate the great victory in what is known as the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. On that day in 1945, the sun of peace once again shone on the earth. On this year's 75th anniversary of the Allies' victory in World War II, we are remembering the historic contribution of the earlier generations of our two countries, and we want to congratulate the United States, our ally at the time, and thank its "Greatest Generation" for their sacrifice. World War II was an unprecedented calamity in human history. The Soviet Union, China, the United States and other countries supported each other and fought side-by-side. In the end, justice prevailed over evil, light over darkness, and the progressive over the reactionary. In the main theaters in Europe and Asia, the Soviet Union suffered more than 27 million deaths and China suffered over 35 million casualties, making indelible contributions to the victory of the War and the future of mankind.

## **Ally Freakout**

### **NFU without ally consultation guarantees freakout and proliferation**

James N. **Miller**, Miller served as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the Obama Administration. He is a senior fellow at Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory and a member of the Defense Science Board, **January 12**, 2020, "No to no first use—for now", <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701278> (accessed: 10/08/20)

The US nuclear umbrella has been a vital pillar of security in Europe and Asia for decades. There have been significant adjustments in the US nuclear force posture over the years, including President George H.W. Bush's removal of most tactical nuclear weapons from Europe in 1991, and the US termination of the nuclear-tipped sea-launched cruise missile in 2010. However, US policy has remained relatively constant: Nuclear weapons have remained "on the table" not only in response to nuclear attack, but also in response to non-nuclear attacks should they produce "extreme circumstances" that threaten the vital interests of the United States or its allies. The fact that the US nuclear umbrella has covered more than nuclear attacks in the past does not mean that it must do so in the future. But it does mean that US leaders must consider carefully the likely reactions of allies in Europe and Asia to any major change in policy. They must also consider the reactions of potential adversaries and the possibility of an interacting and cascading set of reactions. In a worst-case scenario, some US allies may hedge by acceding more to Russian, Chinese, or North Korean demands, while others may go in the other direction by pursuing a nuclear option for themselves. Moreover, our adversaries could feel emboldened to take military action. In such a case the alliance structures that have prevented major power war since the end of World War II could come under intense pressure. This concern does not mean that US allies should get a veto over US nuclear policy, but it does mean that their perspectives should be heard and considered closely before any major changes in US nuclear (or other alliance) policy. No US political leaders should conclude that a no-first-use policy is in the best interests of the United States without closely considering the interests, views, and potential reactions of US allies in Europe and Asia.

### **NFU undermines US credibility with its allies**

Michaela **Dodge**, Dodge is a Former Research Fellow, Missile Defense & Nuclear Deterrence at Heritage, August 16, **2017**, "Some Bad Ideas, Like Zombies, Never Die. A 'No First Use' Nuclear Policy Is One of Them", <https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/some-bad-ideas-zombies-never-die-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-one-them> , (accessed: 10/08/20)

A no first use nuclear weapons policy would undermine America's allies, particularly those that live in volatile regions. South Korea, Japan, and NATO member states in Europe rely on U.S. extended deterrence. They wish to not be obliterated by conventional weapons as much as they wish to not be obliterated by nuclear ones. If we accept that nuclear weapons help to deter large-scale conventional attacks—as experience since the dawn of the nuclear age indicates so far—undermining that notion does not serve any useful purpose and could incentivize allies to find other options to provide for their own security. A development of nuclear weapon capabilities could be one such option with negative consequences for U.S. nonproliferation goals.

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## **Allies are on the brink of nuclearizing; NFU destroys credibility, leads to mass proliferation and nuclear instability**

Franklin C. **Miller and** Keith B. **Payne**, Miller is a principal of The Scowcroft Group. He is a retired civil servant, having served 22 years in senior positions in the Department of Defense and Payne is president and co-founder of the National Institute for Public Policy, and professor and department head at the Graduate School of Defense and Strategic Studies at Missouri State University (Washington campus), and chair of the US Strategic Command Senior Advisory Group, Strategy and Policy Panel, August 22, **2016**, "The dangers of no-first-use", <https://thebulletin.org/2016/08/the-dangers-of-no-first-use/> (accessed: 10/07/20)

US adoption of no-first-use would also severely shake allied confidence in our security guarantees to them. In fact, **US allies Japan, South Korea, Great Britain, and France reportedly have recently informed the Obama administration that a no-first-use policy would be detrimental to their security.** The vast majority of our treaty allies depend, at least in part, on a credible US nuclear deterrence "umbrella" for their security. US adoption of a no-first-use policy would compel some to take steps to mitigate the degradation of the US nuclear deterrent which has heretofore protected them. One such avenue would be the possible acquisition or creation of their own independent nuclear weapons. **There already appears to be considerable popular support today for the development of nuclear weapons in South Korea; US adoption of no-first-use would only increase that motivation.** A policy of no-first-use now would likely increase the prospect for new nuclear powers in Asia and Europe, which would severely undercut the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and be extremely destabilizing, given the likely severe Chinese and Russian responses.

## **NFU leaves allied countries vulnerable to the deaths of 100s of millions**

Keith B. **Payne**, Payne is president and co-founder of the National Institute for Public Policy, and professor and department head at the Graduate School of Defense and Strategic Studies at Missouri State University, July 06, **2016**, "Once Again: Why a "No-First-Use" Policy is a Bad, Very Bad Idea", [https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2016/07/06/once\\_again\\_why\\_a\\_no-first-use\\_policy\\_is\\_a\\_bad\\_very\\_bad\\_idea\\_109520.html](https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2016/07/06/once_again_why_a_no-first-use_policy_is_a_bad_very_bad_idea_109520.html) (accessed: 10/08/20)

A US NFU policy would be particularly dangerous at a time when both Russia and China may be armed with chemical and biological weapons and are pursuing expansionist policies in Europe and Asia, respectively, to overturn the status quo.[3] Russia is by far the strongest military power in Europe. It has moved repeatedly against neighboring states since 2008, forcibly changing established borders in Europe for the first time since World War II and issuing explicit nuclear first-use threats in the process. Only several months ago, Russia reportedly rehearsed the invasion of Norway, Finland, Sweden and Denmark in a military exercise involving 33,000 troops.[3] In Asia, China is the strongest military power and is expanding its reach against US allies, including by building and militarizing islands in the South China Sea. **At a time when key US allies face unprecedented threats from powerful neighbors, the US should not reduce the calculation of risks Russia and China must confront in their respective expansionist drives by adopting a US NFU policy.** Indeed, saying so should be considered a breathtaking understatement in a world in which aggressors still exist, as do advanced conventional, chemical and biological weapons, and another world war using "only" such modern non-nuclear weapons could cause death levels far beyond the 80-100 million souls lost in World Wars I and II.

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## **Conventional War**

### **NFU incentivizes conventional, cyber, and chemical warfare**

Brent **Peabody**, Peabody is a researcher at the Center for New American Security and a recent graduate from Georgetown University, September 21, **2019**, “How to Make the U.S. Military Weak Again”, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-make-us-military-weak-again-81891> (accessed: 10/08/20)

And far from reducing the probability of nonconventional warfare, America’s adoption of a no-first-use policy would make nonconventional warfare likelier. Adversaries, emboldened by the knowledge that even the most brazen attacks on the United States no longer carry the risk of an American nuclear strike, would feel more confident in testing the upper boundaries of what they could get away with. In short, a no-first-use policy would leave the United States less able to respond to exactly the kind of biological, chemical, and cyber brinksmanship it would invite. **If a no-first-use policy weakens our hand in the face of such attacks, then it outright hobbles us in the event of actual nuclear warfare.** In any scenario with an American no-first-use policy in place, adversaries would understand the first strike is theirs and thus use it as an opportunity to erode our second-strike capabilities, something that could give them a decisive advantage in the conflict ahead. This threat is underscored by Russia’s tactical nuclear advantage over the United States, which they could leverage to destroy nuclear bunkers, siloes, and submarines before we ever have the chance to use them. A no-first-use policy would thus weaken our nuclear posture even in the only situation where nuclear weapons are permitted—after we’ve already been attacked.

**NFU would lead to conventional wars with an unprecedented amount of death; every administration over the last 7 decades recognized that nuclear ambiguity as critical to deterrence**

Franklin C. **Miller and** Keith B. **Payne**, Miller is a principal of The Scowcroft Group. He is a retired civil servant, having served 22 years in senior positions in the Department of Defense and Payne is president and co-founder of the National Institute for Public Policy, and professor and department head at the Graduate School of Defense and Strategic Studies at Missouri State University (Washington campus), and chair of the US Strategic Command Senior Advisory Group, Strategy and Policy Panel, August 22, **2016**, “The dangers of no-first-use”, <https://thebulletin.org/2016/08/the-dangers-of-no-first-use/> (accessed: 10/07/20)

Proponents of no-first-use often assert that US high-tech conventional forces could ultimately defeat an opponent’s massive use of military force, including advanced conventional weapons, and chemical and biological weapons, without the US needing to resort to nuclear weapons—and thereby claim that the US nuclear deterrent threat is unnecessary for this purpose. This presumption of US military dominance is questionable in some key geographic areas. But more importantly, this claim fundamentally confuses the distinction between deterrence and war-fighting. We and our allies want to deter an opponent’s massive use of force from ever taking place; we do not want to be compelled to wage war, even winning a non-nuclear war, in order to recover lost allies. Fighting such a war would cause unprecedented levels of death and destruction wherever it is fought. That is why US policy for over seven decades has sought to deter war via the US nuclear deterrent, and why every Democratic and Republican administration for over seven decades has rejected a no-first-use policy. Retaining ambiguity regarding the US nuclear deterrent threat appears to be central to the success of that deterrence policy; we do not want a no-first-use policy that essentially assures opponents that they may safely ignore a US nuclear response if they themselves launch anything short of a nuclear attack. That is why key US allies also strongly oppose a no-first-use policy.

## Biological Warfare

### Biological warfare would kill millions

James N. **Miller**, Miller served as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the Obama Administration. He is a senior fellow at Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory and a member of the Defense Science Board, **January 12**, 2020, "No to no first use—for now", <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701278> (accessed: 10/08/20)

The US military has more than sufficient firepower to inflict proportionate damage (and if desired, more than proportionate damage) in response to any plausible chemical weapons use. Moreover, chemical weapons have been used multiple times in recent years, in most instances without consequences (Office of the Director of National Intelligence 2019, 8). After this history, nuclear threats would likely – and not unreasonably – be seen as disproportionate and so not credible as a deterrent threat. Put differently, if chemical weapons were the only non-nuclear threat facing the United States, a move to no first use could be undertaken with minimal risk. However, this is most certainly not the case. The threat of biological attacks is another matter entirely. To get a sense of the potential scale of biological weapons, the 9/11 attacks on the United States killed nearly 3,000 people. In terms of lives lost, the fatalities on 9/11 equate to less than 1 percent of annual deaths from flu, which in recent years have ranged from an estimated 291,000 to 646,000 globally, according to the Centers for Disease Control (Iuliano et al. 2018). History provides further insights. Some 50 million people, or 60 percent of Europe's population, are estimated to have died from bubonic plague from 1346 to 1353. And smallpox, now believed to be eradicated but with the potential to be re-created, is estimated to have killed 300 million people in the 20th century. With today's ever-advancing biotechnology, it is possible that attacks using genetically engineered pathogens could kill millions of people.

### NFU embolden enemies to launch devastating conventional attacks including the use of chemical weapons

John R. **Harvey**, Harvey is a physicist who has spent his career working to advance U.S. nuclear weapons programs and policies including in senior posts in the Departments of Energy and Defense. He retired from government service in 2013 as principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical, and biological defense programs, July 05, **2019**, "ASSESSING THE RISKS OF A NUCLEAR 'NO FIRST USE' POLICY", <https://warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/> (accessed: 10/02/20)

Every president since Dwight Eisenhower has viewed nuclear weapons not just as another weapon of war augmenting conventional arms, but as a special kind of weapon to be used only in the direst circumstances when vital U.S. security interests are at stake. The main concern in adopting a policy of no-first-use is that it could lead an enemy to believe that it could launch a catastrophic, non-nuclear strike against the United States, its allies, or U.S. overseas forces without fear of nuclear reprisal. Consider, for example, a North Korean biological attack on an American city that kills hundreds of thousands, or an artillery bombardment of Seoul with chemical weapons, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of Korean and U.S. forces and citizens. Would North Korea be more willing to contemplate such attacks if it thought it was immune to a U.S. nuclear response? Recent presidents have been unwilling to accept the risk to deterrence that would accompany a pledge of no-first-use.

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## **Cyberwar**

### **NFU leaves America vulnerable to belligerent cyber-attacks from any of its enemies**

Jim **Geraghty**, Geraghty is the senior political correspondent of National Review, August 19, **2019**, “No First Use: A Solution in Search of a Problem”, <https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/no-first-use-a-solution-in-search-of-a-problem/>, (accessed: 10/08/20)

Imagine it's mid 2021 and Elizabeth Warren has been elected President of the United States. Shortly after taking office, President Warren announces a policy of “No First Use,” declaring that no matter what, the United States will never be the first to use nuclear weapons in war. **Unfortunately, a short time later, some sinister foreign power — take your pick, Russia, China, Iran or North Korea — unleashes every cyber-war weapon in their arsenal, hitting power grids, air traffic control, Internet access, the stock markets, banks, water and sewage system controls, the works. Or picture an electromagnetic-pulse weapon going off in the middle of Manhattan or just outside O'Hare International Airport, or chemical or biological weapons being released in Los Angeles or Miami.** A significant swathe of the country is crippled, and recovery will take months or years. America's intelligence agencies and allies find incontrovertible evidence leading back to Moscow, or Beijing, Tehran or Pyongyang. In other words, picture some really bad scenario of death and destruction on American soil directed by a foreign power that does not involve nuclear weapons

### **NFU leaves America vulnerable to cyber and chemical attacks that would cause proliferation and threatens US power projection**

Brent **Peabody**, Peabody is a researcher at the Center for New American Security and a recent graduate from Georgetown University, September 21, **2019**, “How to Make the U.S. Military Weak Again”, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-make-us-military-weak-again-81891> (accessed: 10/08/20)

No-first-use, or the idea that the United States should not use nuclear weapons unless first attacked with them, has gained traction everywhere from the House Armed Services Committee to the Democratic presidential debates. Proponents of a no-first-use policy present it as a common-sense solution that would reduce the likelihood of nuclear war and signal U.S. leadership on nuclear proliferation. The reality, however, is that a no-first-use policy would upend decades of bipartisan consensus at precisely the moment when continuity in nuclear policy is needed most. America's adoption of a no-first-use policy would be bad for the United States, worse for our allies, and terrible for the cause of nuclear nonproliferation in an era of strategic competition with China. First, a no-first-use policy would weaken our military posture in the face of a wide array of chemical, biological, and cyberattacks. Under the rules of engagement outlined by the no-first-use policy, the United States could suffer a biological attack killing thousands of troops stationed abroad, a chemical attack killing hundreds of thousands of civilians in San Francisco, and a crippling cyberattack on America's nuclear infrastructure and still be unable to respond with nuclear force. A no-first-use policy would place a needless restriction on the country even when nuclear force would be the best option to deter further aggression.

## Deterrence

### Now is the brink: Russia, China, and North Korea are all militarizing—NFU destroys any chance of credible deterrence

Franklin C. **Miller and** Keith B. **Payne**, Miller is a principal of The Scowcroft Group. He is a retired civil servant, having served 22 years in senior positions in the Department of Defense and Payne is president and co-founder of the National Institute for Public Policy, and professor and department head at the Graduate School of Defense and Strategic Studies at Missouri State University (Washington campus), and chair of the US Strategic Command Senior Advisory Group, Strategy and Policy Panel, August 22, **2016**, “The dangers of no-first-use”, <https://thebulletin.org/2016/08/the-dangers-of-no-first-use/> (accessed: 10/07/20)

Consequently, declaring a no-first-use policy would degrade the prospective credibility of the US nuclear deterrent—a particularly imprudent step at a time when Russia and China are rapidly expanding their military capabilities, pursuing aggressive policies in Europe and Asia respectively, and issuing explicit threats to US allies in the process. The same applies to North Korea, which repeatedly issues extreme threats against us and our Asian allies while maintaining the world’s fourth largest army and reportedly advanced chemical and biological capabilities. **Given these contemporary realities and the stakes involved, degrading the credibility of the US nuclear deterrent by adopting a policy of no-first-use is no small matter.** Our goal instead should be to maintain the most effective deterrent possible to such lethal threats.

### NFU aren’t credible commitments which prevents its use for deterrence

John R. **Harvey**, Harvey is a physicist who has spent his career working to advance U.S. nuclear weapons programs and policies including in senior posts in the Departments of Energy and Defense. He retired from government service in 2013 as principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical, and biological defense programs, July 05, **2019**, “ASSESSING THE RISKS OF A NUCLEAR ‘NO FIRST USE’ POLICY”, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/> (accessed: 10/02/20)

Two factors might mitigate such risks to deterrence were a no-first-use policy adopted. First, a no-first-use pledge is unlikely to appear credible to an adversary contemplating major aggression. For example, North Korea is unlikely to base any military planning to reunify the Korean Peninsula by force, or plans for its regime survival after an unsuccessful effort to achieve that objective, on a U.S. promise of no-first-use. Consider China’s existing no-first-use pledge, which has not caused the United States to moderate its own nuclear posture one iota. Few states will risk their national security based on a declaratory policy that can be reversed overnight. Dominic Tierney, an academic who supports a no-first-use policy, eloquently addresses this point: **Viewed through a strategic — and perhaps more cynical — lens, the no-first-use doctrine also has a huge credibility problem.** For the U.S. pledge to truly matter, a president who otherwise favors a nuclear first strike would have to decide not to press the button because of this policy. But in an extreme national crisis — one involving, say, North Korean nuclear missiles — a president is unlikely to feel bound by America’s former assurance. After all, if a country is willing to use nuclear weapons, it’s also willing to break a promise.

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## **BLOCKS**

## AT: US-China War

### US-China relations are improving: Xi is openly commending US efforts

Aries **Li**, Li is a Ph.D. candidate in history at Rutgers University, specializing in the history of U.S.-China relations and memory study, **September 25**, 2020, "China Is Signaling Its Desire to Improve Relations With the US. Is Anyone Listening?", <https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/china-is-signaling-its-desire-to-improve-relations-with-the-us-is-anyone-listening/> (accessed: 10/08/20)

A few hours after Trump's and Esper's speeches in the United States, Chinese top officials sent friendly signals to Washington by praising the anti-fascist alliance that won the war. The statements to celebrate the victory of World War II from Chinese President Xi Jinping, as well as Cui Tiankai, the Chinese ambassador to the United States, indicate that the Chinese government desires to improve relations and cooperate on shared challenges with the United States, although China shows a strong determination to not cede on other issues deemed vital to its national security and interests. In Xi's commemoration speech in the afternoon of September 3 (the early morning in Washington), he recalled the Chinese patriotism, leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, and the united front among the Chinese people that led to victory in World War II (known in China as the "World Anti-Facist War"). But Xi also credited cooperation with the Allies and other opponents of fascism. The Chinese people would forever appreciate and never forget, Xi explained, partners like the "Flying Tigers," a term the Chinese commonly use to refer to the mercenary American Volunteer Group and the U.S. Army pilots stationed in China during the war. By praising cooperation of the past, the Chinese president seemed to signal a willingness to reduce modern-day tensions between the United States and China.

**Cross-apply our case: the pro leads America vulnerable to 3 different types of war that are all just as, if not more deadly, than nuclear war**

### Nuclear ambiguity is key to deterrence; the benefits are an idealist illusion

John R. **Harvey**, Harvey is a physicist who has spent his career working to advance U.S. nuclear weapons programs and policies including in senior posts in the Departments of Energy and Defense. He retired from government service in 2013 as principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical, and biological defense programs, July 05, **2019**, "ASSESSING THE RISKS OF A NUCLEAR 'NO FIRST USE' POLICY", <https://warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/> (accessed: 10/02/20)

It has been a precept of U.S. policy for decades that deterrence is strengthened when an adversary is unsure of the precise conditions under which the United States would employ nuclear weapons — essentially, that uncertainty breeds caution. America has made exceptions, however, in certain cases to advance concrete security interests — for example, in regard to nuclear negative security assurances provided to non-nuclear weapons states that are parties in good standing with the Nonproliferation Treaty. If the United States were to adopt a policy of no-first-use, it would present clear risks for deterrence, for regional security more broadly, and to the non-proliferation regime, while the supposed benefits of such a policy that could offset such risks are largely illusory. It is thus no surprise that since the dawn of the nuclear age presidents across party lines have rejected no-first-use. The United States should continue to do so.

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## AT: US-Russia War

### US-Russian relations are fragile but improving due to increased economic integration

Holly **Ellyatt**, Ellyatt is a correspondent on CNBC, **January 22, 2020**, "Russian business is pinning 'a lot of hopes' on a reset with the US this year", <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/01/22/russia-pinning-a-lot-of-hopes-on-relationship-reset-with-the-us.html> (accessed: 10/08/20)

Despite the awkwardness of President Donald Trump's impeachment trial and a dispute over Russia's mega gas pipeline to Europe that could shut out U.S. natural gas imports, chief executives in the country are hopeful that Moscow and Washington could reset relations this year. That hope stems from an apparent rapprochement between Russia and its immediate neighbors in Ukraine and Europe, coupled with an increasing weariness among most western nations regarding the continuation of sanctions on Russia for its 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine. President Vladimir Putin's announcement of constitutional reforms last week, which many hope will revamp Russia's economy, have also added to optimism regarding political and economic change in the country. Russian CEOs told CNBC at the World Economic Forum in Davos that they hoped Putin's reforms, that hand more power to Russia's parliament and led to the installation of a new technocrat Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, can lead to improvements not only to Russia but to its relations with other global powers, especially the U.S.

### NATO proves; First Use is key to deterring Russia

Michael S. **Gerson**, Gerson is a research analyst at the Center for Naval Analyses, September 17, **2010**, "No First Use: The Next Step for U.S. Nuclear Policy", [https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00018](https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1162/ISEC_a_00018) (accessed: 10/02/20)

When a state is faced with a conventionally superior opponent, the threat of first use can provide a useful asymmetric deterrent. In this context, the defender seeks to deter conventional aggression by introducing the possibility of nuclear escalation into an adversary's cost-benefit calculations. This strategy has historical precedent in NATO's concept of flexible response. Despite U.S. and NATO conventional deployments throughout Western Europe during the Cold War, the Warsaw Pact's military manpower vastly outnumbered that of the West.<sup>21</sup> With NATO forces outgunned (or at least perceived to be outgunned) at the conventional level, NATO relied on the threat to escalate a conventional conflict to the nuclear level to deter Soviet conventional adventurism. Under flexible response, NATO would first respond to aggression with proportionate force, seeking to "defeat the aggression on the level at which the enemy chooses to fight."<sup>22</sup> But if "direct defense" failed, flexible response called for "deliberate escalation" of the scope and intensity of the conflict. The implication was that if NATO conventional forces could not adequately defend against a Warsaw Pact conventional assault, NATO would escalate the conflict by crossing the nuclear threshold.<sup>23</sup> The objective of first use was to influence the Soviet Union's political and military calculations by sending a strong signal that NATO deeply valued the issue at stake and was willing to run the risk of nuclear war to defend it. By raising the shared risk of all-out nuclear war, NATO's nuclear escalation was intended to prompt both sides to seek ways to end the conflict.<sup>24</sup>

**Prefer our historical analysis: since the advent of the nuclear bomb, US nuclear policy has led to an unprecedented decrease in death and war**

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## **AT: Accidents**

### **NFU doesn't solve accidents, incentivizes proliferation—squid is the best method to prevent both**

John R. **Harvey**, Harvey is a physicist who has spent his career working to advance U.S. nuclear weapons programs and policies including in senior posts in the Departments of Energy and Defense. He retired from government service in 2013 as principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical, and biological defense programs, July 05, **2019**, "ASSESSING THE RISKS OF A NUCLEAR 'NO FIRST USE' POLICY", <https://warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/> (accessed: 10/02/20)

In light of these risks, what are the benefits of a U.S. no-first-use pledge that could offset them? Would it, as Sen. Warren claims, "[reduce] the risk of a nuclear miscalculation by an adversary in a crisis ..."? If an adversary launches a nuclear weapon because it has misinterpreted America's actions or intentions, or even if it launches a nuclear weapon by accident, the consequences would, of course, be tragic. Such actions must be assiduously avoided with clear crisis communications, transparency, and strong negative control of nuclear weapons. But, a U.S. no-first-use pledge, by itself, is unlikely to have any effect at all in preventing such a situation from arising in the first place. Some argue that adopting such a policy would set an example and cause nuclear adversaries to follow America's lead. If promises were kept, this would allow the U.S. conventional juggernaut to win wars absent the threat of nuclear use. But this outcome is unlikely. Indeed, several nuclear adversaries have acquired, or are currently seeking, nuclear weapons precisely to offset superior U.S. conventional capabilities. Again, quoting Tierney: "If [a President] made a dramatic announcement of no-first-use, it would probably have less impact than people think because other countries wouldn't follow suit, especially if they're weak." Would U.S. adoption of no-first-use cause other countries to be more inclined to cooperate with the United States to work toward a strengthened nonproliferation regime and less likely to acquire nuclear weapons of their own? **No evidence exists to support such a contention and, as noted above, allied perceptions of weakened extended deterrence could actually spur proliferation.**

**Proliferation magnifies the PROs impacts because nuclear accidents can happen in any country in the world**

**NFU leads to unregulated horizontal proliferation**

John R. **Harvey**, Harvey is a physicist who has spent his career working to advance U.S. nuclear weapons programs and policies including in senior posts in the Departments of Energy and Defense. He retired from government service in 2013 as principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical, and biological defense programs, July 05, **2019**, "ASSESSING THE RISKS OF A NUCLEAR 'NO FIRST USE' POLICY", <https://warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/> (accessed: 10/02/20)

Building and maintaining strong alliances has been a centerpiece of America's effort to produce and sustain a more peaceful world. Critical to this is assuring U.S. allies of America's commitment to their defense by extending to them the full range of U.S. military power. Many countries, including those that share a border with an adversary that presents a threat to their very existence, see no-first-use as a weakening, symbolic or otherwise, of U.S. extended deterrence. In response to Chinese provocations in the western Pacific and North Korea's nuclear tests and missile launches, Japan regularly seeks, both in official consultations and ongoing military cooperation, assurances that America will continue to fulfill its security commitments to protect the island nation. Some in South Korea have already pressed to explore an increased U.S. nuclear presence in their country to further deter regional threats. **Loss of confidence in U.S. security commitments could cause some allies to seek accommodation with regional adversaries in ways that run counter to U.S. interests.** Moreover, both South Korea and Japan, similar to many NATO allies, have latent nuclear weapons capabilities characteristic of advanced industrial economies with commercial nuclear power. **Any perceived wavering of U.S. security commitments could cause allies to develop and field their own nuclear weapons.**