SILVER BULLET BRIEFS

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2020

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

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WHY SBB?

As debaters and coaches, we have always hunted for the "silver bullet" that will slay our debate monsters: the perfect meta-analysis, the unbeatable narrative, or the argument that is so inherently true that there is no response. We learned that the elusive silver bullet was as much a myth as the monsters that it was designed to slay, but the aspiration of finding it pushed us to gain a deeper understanding of every topic. Thus, we created Silver Bullet Briefs with two goals in mind:

First, debate provides an invaluable opportunity to learn, and we hope to advance that opportunity. Debate teaches competitors not only to research and prepare, but to think on their feet and consider solutions to real-world problems. It teaches young people the significance of viewpoint diversity and gives them an awareness of real-world issues. Most importantly, it leaves competitors with the power and confidence to advocate for themselves – to argue for the things in which they believe. Silver Bullet is an extension of debate. We believe that true success does not come from the evidence that a debater reads. Instead, it stems from the knowledge that a debater can reap from that evidence, and the story that they can tell using it. SBB is not meant to provide an endless stream of redundant evidence, but to give debaters a deeper understanding of each topic and the real-world issue behind it.

Second, we hope to level the playing field. Debate is an unequal activity. Gender minorities are less likely to win rounds and participate in the activity in the first place. The same is true for black and Hispanic debaters, as racial stereotypes and implicit biases limit their success. The structure of the activity has also made debate increasingly inaccessible. Tournament entry fees, travel and hotel expenses, private coaches, summer camps, and even tournament attire are only available to those with the means to afford them. While the advent of online competition has alleviated some of these problems, it has created others. Competition now requires stable internet connection and access to a personal computer. All of these factors have made debate inaccessible for many.

Doing our part: We created Silver Bullet Briefs as a way to increase accessibility to debate. Therefore, while SBB intends to sell debate briefs to those who can afford them, we will provide our briefs at a reduced cost to those who cannot, **AND** we will donate **100%** of the profits from the sale of these briefs to organizations that increase equity and access within the debate community, such as the National Association of Urban Debate Leagues.

Let's make a difference together.

ABOUT US

Maggie Mills competed in Public Forum debate for Chagrin Falls High School for all four years of high school. Maggie served as President and Vice President of Chagrin Falls High School's Speech and Debate team. Throughout her four-year career, she and her partner, Sasha, qualified for the Ohio state speech and debate tournament four times and for the Tournament of Champions three times. During her senior year, Maggie and Sasha won the Ohio state tournament without dropping a ballot. In June, the team won the 2020 NSDA national championship. Maggie plans to study Economics and Political Science as a member of the University of Chicago's class of 2024.

Sasha Haines competed in Public Forum Debate for Chagrin Falls High School for four years and was a co-captain of the team during her junior and senior year. Sasha often competed nationally, reaching elimination rounds at numerous national tournaments including the Sunvitational, the Season Opener at UK, UPenn, and Stanford. Throughout her career, Sasha qualified three times to the Gold division of the Tournament of Champions, was the Ohio State Champion and won the 2020 NSDA Nationals. Sasha plans to study Public Affairs and Philosophy, Politics, and Economics at The Ohio State University.

Albi Manfredi did Public Forum Debate for five years at Lake Mary Prep in Orlando, Florida. Throughout his time as a competitor, he amassed a total of 17 bids to the Tournament of Champions, semi-finaled at the Yale Invitational and the Tournament of Champions, was the Florida State Runner-Up, and championed the Blue Key Round Robin, the Crestian Tradition, and the Sunvitational. Individually, he achieved top speaker at the Blake Tournament, Emory's Barkley Forum, and Florida States. He finished his career placing 5th at NSDA Nationals. As a first year out, Albi has been a successful coach, most recently helping Sasha and Maggie win the prestigious NSDA national tournament. Albi is a sophomore at the University of Pennsylvania studying Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering and Legal Studies.

Ana Kevorkian competed in Public Forum debate for Chagrin Falls High School for 3 years. During her senior year, she served as Secretary of the school's Speech and Debate team, handling tournament registration and results reporting. She also founded the Ohio chapter of Beyond Resolved and served as the organization's first Director of Research and the Director of the Clothing Drive Initiative. In high school, she was a National Merit Scholar, National AP Scholar, AP Capstone Diploma recipient, and graduated Cum Laude. Ana is currently a field organizer on a Senate race in Wyoming.

Richard Haber has been the Coach of Public Forum Debate at Chagrin Falls High School for 8 seasons. He first became involved as a debate coach when his daughter Victoria began competing as a freshman in High School. Leveraging his 30 years as a trial lawyer, he continued to coach even after Victoria graduated because he believed in the value of the activity. As an accomplished trial lawyer, Richard has been honored as an Ohio Super Lawyer® from 2004 to the present; as one of the top 100 lawyers in the state of Ohio from 2010 to 2017; and has been named from 2010 to the present in The Best Lawyers in America ® published by Best Lawyers in conjunction with U.S. News Media Group. As a debate coach, Richard has coached two teams to state championships in the last 3 years; qualified three teams to NSDA Nationals, coached teams to four Tournament of Championship qualifications in the last three years and along with Albi Manfredi coached Maggie and Sasha to the 2020 National Speech and Debate Association Public Forum Championship. Richard is a devout advocate of traditional public forum debate and helped found Silver Bullet Briefs to promote this style of debate.

Grace Lee competed in Public Forum debate for Chagrin Falls High School for 4 years. She was a National Merit Scholar Finalist, an AP National Scholar, and graduated with the AP Capstone Diploma. She will be a first year at the University of Rochester in the fall, studying Microbiology and Health Policy.

TOPIC ANALYSIS

History and Context

In order to understand the implications of a No First Use nuclear policy, debaters must first understand the history of the U.S. nuclear weapons program. The U.S. was the first nation to develop nuclear weapons and did so during World War II with a program known as the Manhattan Project. On August 6, 1945, the U.S. dropped two bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing hundreds of thousands of people and effectively ending the war. These were the only instances in which a nuclear bomb has actually been utilized in a conflict scenario. On that day, the entire world witnessed the enormous power of the atomic bomb, and the race began. In order to maintain its hegemony and dissuade Soviet expansion after World War II, the U.S. continued to build up its nuclear arsenal. Meanwhile, Russian scientists worked to develop their own atomic bomb and sent spies like Julius and Ethel Rosenburg (later sentenced to death for treason in a widely publicized trial) to gather information about U.S. nuclear technology. In 1949, the Russians tested their first nuclear weapon: the Cold War was in full swing.

Over the course of the next few decades, multiple other states acquired nuclear weapons. In addition to Russia, the UK, France, and China have officially nuclearized. Other countries including Pakistan, India, and North Korea claim to have nuclear weapons, though these claims have not been verified. One final nation, Israel, is believed to possess nuclear weapons but has never publicly stated such. Between 1940 and 1996, it is estimated that the U.S. spent a minimum of five trillion dollars on its nuclear weapons program. In fact, the U.S. and Russia together possess roughly 90% of the world's total nuclear weapons.

This rapid build-up of nuclear weaponry has produced a number of near misses. Namely, the Cuban Missile Crisis in the 1960s almost sparked nuclear war between Russia and the U.S. when the U.S. began to suspect that Russia was housing nuclear warheads in Cuba, an island only 100 miles off the coast of Florida. In 1983, Russian officials nearly launched a nuclear strike against the U.S. after mistakenly identifying five U.S. missiles as nuclear warheads. Luckily, officers realized their mistake and called off the attack.

The No First Use (NFU) doctrine was one of the many policies created in attempts to mitigate the nuclear threat. In essence, a NFU policy states that a country will only use a nuclear weapon in the event of a nuclear attack by an enemy state. China was the first to enact a NFU policy in 1964, right after it officially developed its own nuclear weapons technology. China has reaffirmed its NFU doctrine repeatedly. India also adopted a NFU policy in 1998, and Russia had a NFU policy from 1982 to 1993,

when it altered its policy for fear that its conventional forces alone could no longer deter a U.S. attack. Other nations, including the UK, Pakistan, Israel, North Korea, and the U.S., have never adopted a NFU framework.

Analysis of the Resolution

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

This resolution can be broken down into three key components: the United States, declaratory nuclear policy, and no first use.

First, the United States. This resolution solely addresses the policy of the United States of America. While there is an argument to be made regarding a domino effect of other states adopting NFU, affirming the resolution only guarantees that the United States will adopt a no first use policy. This means that, in order to assess the global implications of affirming, teams will need to effectively prove what other countries' reactions will be, as they are not laid out in the resolution.

The second key component is "declaratory nuclear policy". It is highly unlikely that the United States would ever launch a nuclear first strike, and the implications of doing so would likely be devastating. Both proponents and opponents of No First Use agree upon this. However, the resolution is not asking teams to weigh the benefits or harms of a first strike. Rather, teams must assess whether a formal declaration of this existing de facto policy would be beneficial. These rounds ought to be much more theoretical than simply debating whether a nuclear strike is a good thing (hint: it's not).

Last is No First Use, also referred to as No First Strike. This is a policy declaring that the United States will not launch a nuclear attack unless one is launched by an adversary first. This removes the possibility of a pre-emptive nuclear strike, meaning that we won't launch an attack to preempt another country's nuclear strike on us. Additionally, it removes the option of retaliating against a conventional (or non-nuclear) attack with a nuclear one.

Why are we debating this resolution now?

No First Use is, by no means, a new proposal - China declared their no first use policy in 1964. However, due to increasing tensions and global instability, the idea has received further attention in recent months and years.

President Obama considered adopting such a policy, but ultimately decided against it, preferring to keep nuclear first strike as a foreign policy option. In 2019, the policy was revived in a debate question to then-presidential candidate Senator Elizabeth Warren, who was in favor of its adoption. Montana Governor Steve Bullock opposed the measure, viewing "drawing a line in the sand" a mistake.

Foreign policy under President Trump has been more erratic than in previous administrations. From the killing of General Soleimani to the attempted withdrawal of troops from Syria, both allies and adversaries have expressed concern over the unpredictability of U.S. foreign policy. This has led many opponents of the President to express distrust with his wielding of the power to destroy nations with the push of a button.

Amidst rising global tensions with superpowers like China, these concerns have become even more prevalent. Additionally, with the rise of progressive foreign policy advocates such as Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, the more confrontational frameworks adopted by previous Democratic and Republican administrations have faced greater opposition.

Argument Rundown

Most arguments on this topic boil down to either limiting proliferation or mitigating deterrence, on pro and con respectively. Within these broader narratives, teams will develop their own unique link chains and impact scenarios, and that is where the majority of the debate will occur. Nuclear war games essentially become international relations topics that delve into the foreign policy goals of different actors and the strategic decisions that they would make in the event that the United States declares a NFU policy.

On pro, teams will likely attempt to develop a doomsday scenario of sorts. In the present, the looming threat of nuclear destruction leads to a constant state of instability. Insecure leaders hold the power to destroy nations with the click of a button, with any minor misinterpretation possibly risking millions of lives. This need for restraint and stability can then be applied to different places of international conflict like the Korean Peninsula, the South China Sea, Eastern Europe, or the Middle East.

There are two main warrants around which pro teams can build their case. First is the miscalculation argument. Pro teams will argue that adopting a no first use policy can significantly reduce the chance of miscalculation in high conflict zones because other countries will know for a fact that the U.S. has not instigated a nuclear conflict and therefore know not to retaliate with nuclear weapons of their own. Secondly, teams can argue that taking away the pre-emptive strike helps to deescalate tensions and bolster non-proliferation. If the U.S. abdicates the power to strike first, other large

nuclear states will not have as strong an incentive to proliferate since the threat of a compromising first strike from the United States is significantly reduced, even if they do not have complete trust in the doctrine.

Conversely, on the Con side, teams will probably develop the same doomsday narrative but will argue that relinquishing a portion of the U.S.' nuclear deterrence strategy will only encourage more conflict and increase the threat of a nuclear winter. Much of this argumentation is rooted in the idea that nuclear deterrence and mutually assured destruction is beneficial for global stability. While a U.S. nuclear response would surely destroy an attacking nuclear state, removing the threat of an initial attack could change the decision calculus of international actors to pursue more reckless displays of power. They know a conventional attack or seizure of land will not be met with a full nuclear retaliation, increasing the chance of survival and lowering the barriers of military intervention.

Another prominent Con strategy views the removal of nuclear deterrence through the lens of United States allies. While U.S. adversaries may still be deterred from attacking the U.S. (remember, even with a NFU policy, we still have second-strike capabilities and a strong conventional military), allies who rely on the U.S. security guarantee may feel they have to take drastic measures to preserve their own security. This runs counter to global non-proliferation efforts because if allies lose the protection of the U.S. nuclear umbrella, they may run the risk of creating their own nuclear state.

Overall, Con teams would argue that either of these scenarios would generate more instability and conflict leading to a larger chance of conventional conflict or nuclear war.

PRO ARGUMENTS

NONPROLIFERATION

What's the argument?

Advocates of a no first use policy posit that no first use decreases the influence of nuclear weapons on a global scale, giving credence to nonproliferation efforts worldwide. The key underlying link here is that no first use gives the U.S. leverage in negotiating nonproliferation efforts; countries can feel safe lessening their nuclear development programs as the U.S. no longer poses a nuclear threat (Holdren 20). This also relies on the notion that we would not be giving up a critical piece of security if we pledged not to use nuclear weapons offensively; in other words, in order for the nonproliferation argument to hold true, nuclear weapons' only purpose must be to deter the use of other nuclear weapons, a purpose which is not undermined by no first use (Panofsky 97).

Advocates of no first use further that U.S. adoption of the policy would encourage our primary adversaries, as well as other countries worldwide, to de-escalate and adopt no first use for themselves (Tannenwald 19). Again, this follows the logic that nuclear weapons are designed for deterrence. If North Korea and Russia have proliferated solely as defense, then they have no reason to continue to proliferate if theU.S.no longer poses a nuclear threat. Alternatively, when the U.S. maintains a first use nuclear policy, Russia and North Korea are incentivized to do the same. In fact, in 2010, North Korean leadership released a statement explicitly revealing this incentive: "As long as the U.S. nuclear threat persists, the DPRK will increase and update various type[s] of nuclear weapons as its deterrent in such a manner as it deems necessary in the days ahead" (Gerson 10). Thus, in order to reduce the threat of nuclear attacks from our adversaries, we must give them the political space to de-escalate.

Why does the argument matter?

Nuclear weapons pose an existential threat to global safety and security. By decreasing the number of nuclear weapons worldwide, we would be decreasing the likelihood that tensions escalate to the use of weapons of mass destruction. In fact, de-escalating nuclear tensions and negotiating arms control agreements, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists, reduces the likelihood of nuclear war overall ("Nuclear Weapons Worldwide").

Main Players

Military strategists, hostile leaders, smaller and weaker countries

Strategy Considerations

This will likely be the most common argument made on the affirmative, just as it is the most common argument made by proponents of no first use in the real world. However, teams will likely struggle to prove that the adoption of a no first use policy will actually lead to countries decreasing their investment in nuclear weapons - if anything, negative teams will likely argue, countries will take advantage of decreased U.S. strength by building up their capabilities to unforeseen heights, furthering the constant proliferation that we've seen for decades.

Evidence for Nonproliferation

Decreases nuclear influence while maintaining their purpose

No first use gives the U.S. the moral high ground

Author: Holdren, John. "The overwhelming case for no first use." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.* 13 January 2020.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277

With respect to nonproliferation

When the country with the most capable conventional forces the world has ever seen insists that it nonetheless needs nuclear weapons to deter and respond to 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 U.S. 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

...

The argument that NATO's posture of "first use if necessary" contributed importantly to keeping the peace in the Cold War, so why should we change a winning game, is logically suspect and empirically untestable (NAS 1997). Were the Soviets deterred from a conventional invasion of Western Europe by the threat of NATO nuclear-weapon use? Or did their attempts to neutralize that nuclear threat and our attempts to shore it up – both sides seeking "escalation dominance" – contribute to a destabilizing competition in nuclear armaments and postures that made war more rather than less likely? Did we escape World War III because we were smart, or because we were lucky? We will never know. And we should not wish to rerun the experiment to get more data. Against the argument that, outside the peace movement and countries that don't matter, no one would give the United States any credit for a no-first-use declaration. This argument ignores the transformation a U.S.no first-use declaration, backed up by changes in posture, would bring to the moral standing of the United States in the global discussion about both nonproliferation and reducing the role of nuclear weapons in the policies of countries that have them.

The purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attacks

Author: Panofsky, Wolfgang. "The Remaining Unique Role of Nuclear Weapons in Post-Cold War Deterrence." *The National Academies Press.* 1997.
https://www.nap.edu/read/5464/chapter/9

Although initially acquisition of nuclear weapons was generally justified by a "more bang for the buck" rationale, the core purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons has always been to deter the threatened or actual use of nuclear weapons by foreign powers against the U.S. homeland, U.S. allies, or U.S. interests overseas. During the Cold War, this core purpose usually incorporated the term "mutual" in such descriptions as mutually assured destruction or mutual deterrence. Barring reignition of NATO tensions with Russia, with its still partially intact nuclear weapons, the deterrence aspect of U.S. policy has now lost its bilateral focus and "mutual" no longer applies. However, the core purpose, referring to deterrence of nuclear aggression from whatever quarter it might originate, remains a principal rationale for retention of nuclear weapons.

No first strike would create a domino effect

Russia and North Korea would de-escalate if the U.S. had a no first strike policy

Author: Tannenwald, Nina. "It's Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy." *Texas National Security Review.* 1 August 2019.
https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/

The United States ought to unilaterally adopt an NFU policy, and ask other nuclear-armed states to do the same. This would constitute the formal adoption of what is already essentially de facto U.S. policy.33 A U.S. NFU policy would create political space for Russia to follow suit: For Russia to consider NFU, its concerns about U.S. ballistic missile defenses, imbalances in conventional forces, and issues of NATO enlargement would need to be addressed. The United States would also need to tackle the issue of extended deterrence with its allies and move toward conventional extended deterrence.34 India and Pakistan would need a modus vivendi on Kashmir, while the United States and North Korea would need to sign a non-aggression pact. In fact, the United States could actually negotiate a mutual NFU agreement with North Korea. The United States is extremely unlikely to use nuclear weapons first on North Korea, therefore an agreement that provided a basis for imposing some restraint on the North Korean arsenal would be in America's interest.35

U.S. first-use policy undermines existing nonproliferation efforts and U.S. credibility

Author: Gerson, Michael S. "No First Use: The Next Step for U.S. Nuclear Policy." *International Security,* vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 7–47. 2010.
www.jstor.org/stable/40981242

Fifth, an NFU declaration might also provide an incentive to other nuclear powers to revise their nuclear policies. Although changes in U.S. declaratory policy might not affect North Korean and Iranian nuclear decisions, there is some evidence suggesting that changes in U.S. nuclear policy can influence other nuclear states. India, for example, revised its nuclear policy in January 2003 to include the option to use nuclear weapons in response to CW or BW attacks, apparently in an effort to more closely align its policies with the United States and other nuclear powers.108 Following the U.S. disclosure in May 2010 of the exact size of its nuclear stockpile, the United Kingdom followed suit, explaining, "[T]he time is now right to be more open about the weapons we hold." In addition, the U.K. government stated, "[W]e have decided that the time is right to look again at our [nuclear] policy, as the U.S. has done in their recent Nuclear Posture Review, to ensure that it is fully appropriate for the political and security context in 2010 and beyond."1 Finally, because NFU would be an important departure from the past six de- cades of U.S. nuclear policy, it would provide the United States with important political benefits in its efforts to lead the nonproliferation regime and encourage greater international support for nonproliferation initiatives. Retaining the option to use nuclear weapons first undermines the NPT regime by signaling that even the world's most affluent and powerful nation continues to believe that nuclear weapons are important instruments of national power. This perception contributes to international claims of American nuclear hypocrisy, as the United States seeks to both retain its nuclear weapons and lead the NPT regime to prevent others from acquiring them.110 Although it is unlikely that other nations would make such politically and economically important decisions about whether to build or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons based on what the United States says or does with its nuclear arsenal - if anything, U.S. conventional superiority is more likely to affect states' strategic calculations - recalcitrant countries have nevertheless blamed or at least referred to U.S. nuclear precedents to defend and justify their nuclear decisions.111 North Korea, for example, claimed that the first-use

option in the 2010 NPR "proves that the present U.S. policy toward the DPRK is nothing different from the hostile policy pursued by the Bush administration. ... As long as the U.S. nuclear threat persists, the DPRK will increase and update various type[s] of nuclear weapons as its deterrent in such a manner as it deems necessary in the days ahead/'112 For nonnuclear NPT member states, especially members of the Nonaligned Movement, NFU would satisfy a long-standing desire for the United States to show a tangible commitment to Article 6 of the NPT, which commits the five declared nuclear weapons states under the treaty to "pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament." Several nonnuclear NPT states have said that a reduction in the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. security policy such as NFU, rather than simple reductions in the number of weapons in the U.S. arsenal, would be a clear and convincing demonstration of the U.S. commitment to eventual disarmament.113 These states have often based their lack of support for U.S.-led multilateral nonproliferation initiatives, including support for sanctions against proliférant regimes at the UN Security Council, on the grounds that the United States has not done enough to fulfill its Article 6 obligations. Thus, NFU, by symbolizing an important step toward realizing Article 6, would remove a significant roadblock to greater support for and participation in the NPT regime among nonnuclear NPT member states. NFU would therefore have an important, albeit indirect, effect on nonproliferation by encouraging greater multilateral alignment with U.S.-led nonproliferation efforts. At the very least, an NFU policy would help expose states that use the U.S. commitment to Article 6 as an excuse not to vigorously support nonproliferation.

Nonproliferation decreases likelihood of nuclear war

Past agreements lowered risk of war and increased cooperation

"Nuclear Weapons Worldwide." *Union of Concerned Scientists.* https://www.ucsusa.org/nuclear-weapons/worldwide

During the Cold War, a series of reactions and counter-reactions led the United States and Soviet Union to collectively build more than 60,000 nuclear weapons. Arms control agreements slowed the arms race and reduced this total to roughly 8,000, with each country limited to about 1,800 deployed long-range nuclear weapons. These treaties helped reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the world, but they also eased distrust and laid the political and interpersonal foundations for cooperation—which is especially important during times of tension. The other seven nuclear countries, which have far fewer weapons than the United States and Russia, have not been involved in nuclear arms control at all. Negotiated limits on their forces would reduce the risk of nuclear war and serve as a step toward eliminating nuclear weapons worldwide.

INCREASING STABILITY AND DECREASING THE CHANCE OF MISCALCULATION

What's the argument?

Proponents of no first use often argue that it would decrease the chance of miscalculation, or "the risk that a state will mistakenly understand the intentions of another state and respond by launching a nuclear strike." ("Nuclear Miscalculation"). The chance of miscalculation, despite seeming unlikely, is currently at its highest since the Cuban Missile Crisis (Borger 18). Additionally, the heightened geopolitical tensions in 2020 increase the chances of miscalculation (Braut-Hegghammer 20). Thus, nuclear miscalculation is a major risk.

The heightened chance of nuclear miscalculation poses a major risk factor for nuclear war (Rohrlich 19). Frighteningly, nuclear war, triggered by miscalculation, between Russia and the U.S. could kill as many as 335 million people in just the first few hours (Mizokami 20; Wellerstein 19).

Luckily, a policy of no first use decreases the chance of nuclear miscalculation. Currently, the fear of being the target of a first strike increases the chances that a nuclear country, such as Russia or North Korea, would miscalculate a threat and launch a nuclear attack (Gerson 10; Gower 18). Further, strong nuclear deterrence posturing lowers the threshold for nuclear war, increasing the chances of such a conflict (Tannenwald 19). Overall, adopting a policy of no first use would decrease the chances of a non-nuclear attack being interpreted as nuclear and decrease the chances of miscalculation from our adversaries ("Nuclear Weapons Solutions"; Panda 18).

Why does the argument matter?

Nuclear miscalculation poses a major risk factor for nuclear war, as insecure countries attempt, at all costs, from threats, whether real or imagined. By removing the threat of a nuclear first strike from our adversaries' shoulders, we decrease the chances that they will miscalculate and overcompensate, triggering a nuclear attack.

Main Players

Adversaries, military strategists, civilians

Strategy Considerations

It is difficult to prove that the chances of miscalculation will actually decrease in a world with no first use, as our adversaries are unlikely to treat the pledge with much credibility. An attack which, today, would be perceived as potentially nuclear, will likely be perceived that way regardless of the US' official position on nuclear first strike. Additionally, the risk of miscalculation resulting in a nuclear war is nebulous at best in the status quo, as mutually assured destruction exists and countries are likely to investigate a situation fully before launching a nuclear retaliation. For example, in 1983, Russian officials nearly launched a nuclear strike against the U.S. after mistakenly identifying five U.S. missiles as nuclear warheads. The officers, realizing the gravity of a nuclear war scenario, reexamined the evidence and called off the attack. That being said, miscalculation is a logical and extremely well-documented argument that affirmative teams will likely be successful running.

Evidence for Improving Stability and Decreasing the Chance of Miscalculation

NFU makes conflict stabilization easier

NFU would help crisis stability efforts

Author: Tannenwald, Nina. "It's Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy." *Texas National Security Review.* 1 August 2019. https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/

As Kingston Reif and Daryl Kimball of the Arms Control Association have argued, "a clear U.S. no-first-use policy would reduce the risk of Russian or Chinese nuclear miscalculation during a crisis by alleviating concerns about a devastating U.S. nuclear first-strike."24 This would mean that the United States would rely on nuclear weapons only to deter nuclear attacks. Adopting this approach would involve more than "cheap talk," for it would require meaningful doctrinal and operational changes.25 Specifically, it would allow the United States to adopt a less threatening nuclear posture. It would eliminate first-strike postures, preemptive capabilities, and other types of destabilizing warfighting strategies. It would emphasize restraint in targeting, launch-on-warning, alert levels of deployed systems, procurement, and modernization plans. In other words, it would help shape the physical qualities of nuclear forces in a way that renders them unsuitable for missions other than deterrence of nuclear attacks.26 Implementing these steps would significantly reduce the risk of accidental, unauthorized, mistaken, or preemptive use. The removal of threats of a nuclear first strike would also strengthen strategic and crisis stability.27 Of perhaps equal importance, adopting an NFU policy would help address humanitarian concerns and reduce the salience of nuclear weapons.28 Likewise, it would "be more consistent with the long-term goal of global nuclear disarmament and would better contribute toU.S.nuclear non-proliferation objectives."

NFU increases the credibility of U.S. nuclear deterrence strategy

Author: Gerson, Michael S. "No First Use: The Next Step for U.S. Nuclear Policy." *International Security,* vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 7–47. 2010. www.jstor.org/stable/40981242

For the United States and its allies, NFU has several military and political benefits. First, and most important, NFU would enhance crisis stability. A credible NFU policy will help decrease an opponent's trepidations about a U.S. first strike, thereby decreasing the possibility that nuclear weapons are used accidentally, inadvertently, or deliberately in a severe crisis. Second, by removing the option to use nuclear weapons first, the United States would have a consistent and inherently credible nuclear policy. Al- though some states might question U.S. political resolve to use nuclear weapons first - in which case the NPR's decision to retain the option in many circumstances does not contribute to deterrence - current and potential adversaries cannot dismiss the possibility of a nuclear response after U.S. interests have been attacked with nuclear weapons.105 The threat to use nuclear weap- ons in response to a nuclear attack is highly credible, and it is a threat that U.S. political leaders should want to execute if deterrence fails. In fact, NFU could further strengthen the credibility of nuclear deterrence by signaling that the United States retains nuclear forces only for retaliation to a nuclear attack, which, in the mind of the adversary, could increase the likelihood that nuclear retaliation would indeed come if it crosses the nuclear

threshold.106 An NFU declaration would be a kind of commitment tactic that would increase the credibility of nuclear deterrence by seemingly binding U.S. decisionmakers to use nuclear weapons for the one mission they have been assigned in the event of a nuclear attack.

First-use posture creates a cycle of "action and reaction" that could escalate to serious conflict

Author: Holdren, John P. "The overwhelming case for no first use." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.* 13 January 2020.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277

With respect to the benefits of not seeking to makeU.S.first use credible

When the United States deploys nuclear weapons of types and in postures intended to make first-use credible, it not only incentivizes non-nuclear-armed potential adversaries to get their own nuclear weapons; it also incentivizes this country's nuclear-armed potential foes to upgrade their nuclear forces to deny the United States any first-use advantage (or to gain such an advantage for themselves). As the Cold War demonstrated, this syndrome drives a potentially endless cycle of action and reaction, compounded by worst-case assessment on both sides. This arms racing is not only endlessly costly; it can actually increase the danger that a crisis will escalate to nuclear war when one side or the other perceives it would be better off going first.

Nuclear miscalculation is a major risk

Definition of miscalculation

"Nuclear Miscalculation." *William J Perry Project.* https://www.wjperryproject.org/nuclear-miscalculation

What is nuclear miscalculation? Nuclear miscalculation refers to the risk that a state will mistakenly understand the intentions of another state and respond by launching a nuclear strike. The false belief that an attack is imminent causes a country to "miscalculate" the risk of full-scale war and escalate a conflict to the nuclear level. Miscalculation is more likely to occur in times of heightened tension between nations. What makes nuclear miscalculation more likely? The less time allowed between the time a nation detects a suspected launch or act of aggression from another state and launches its own nuclear strike, the higher the risk of nuclear miscalculation. Nuclear ICBMs in the United States and Russia remain on "hair trigger alert", a policy whereby launch procedures are started as soon as a nuclear attack is detected. Unfortunately, that process is prone to errors, faulty systems, and false alarms. The extremely short decision period mandated by the hair trigger alert policy and tension inherent to launching a nuclear strike make miscalculation more likely. Communication failures also contribute to the risk of miscalculation. Closed communication channels between major nuclear powers make it exceedingly difficult to determine the intent of a launch or even to confirm that a launch has occurred. This makes it more likely a false alarm will result in a launch.

The chance of miscalculation is at its highest since Cuban missile crisis

Author: Borger, Julian. “Nuclear risk at its highest since Cuban missile crisis, says ex-energy secretary.” *The Guardian.* 16 February 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/15/nuclear-weapons-ernest-moniz-accident-risk

The world has been lucky so far to escape the launch of nuclear weapons through miscalculation, but the odds of such a catastrophic accident are increasing, according to the former U.S. energy secretary Ernest Moniz. Moniz, a nuclear physicist who played a central role in securing a landmark non-proliferation agreement with Iran in 2015, said the margin for error in avoiding disaster was getting thinner because of the introduction of new, smaller weapons, the broadening of circumstances in which their use is being contemplated, and a lack of high-level communications between major nuclear weapons powers. As a result, Moniz told the Guardian, the chance of nuclear use “is higher than it’s been since the Cuban missile crisis”. Moniz, who is now CEO and co-chairman of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, pointed to a recent false alarm by Hawaii’s public alert system as the sort of technological glitch that could lead to fatal miscalculation. The alert sent islanders running for cover, and it took nearly 40 minutes for the mistake to be rectified. “Thirty-eight minutes is substantially longer than the decision time that President Trump or President Putin or other leaders with nuclear weapon states would have for a response to a warning about significant incoming missiles,” Moniz said.

2020 presents many chances of nuclear conflict occurring

Author: Braut-Hegghammer, Malfrid. “2020 is the year to worry about nuclear weapons.” *The Washington Post.* 6 January 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/01/06/is-year-worry-about-nuclear-weapons/

2020 brings us more to worry about than the U.S. airstrike that killed Iranian general Qasem Soleimani in Baghdad early Friday. With North Korean leader Kim Jong Un promising a new strategic weapon and abandoning the moratorium on nuclear and missile tests; Iran dropping its commitment to the 2015 nuclear deal and preparing to ramp up its nuclear program within days; and continuing tensions between nuclear weapons holders India and Pakistan, 2020 could be an unusually dangerous year. What’s more, governments face decisions that could undermine multilateral agreements that have curbed the risks of nuclear proliferation and arms races and prevented conflict. Below, I will examine three areas where the world could face greater challenges in 2020.

Miscalculation is a main risk factor in whether war will break out

Author: Ayed, Nahlah. “What could start the next war? 'Accident, miscalculation, blunder'.” *CBC News.* 18 February 2018. https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/war-risk-blunder-1.4540790

Take the risk of nuclear war. It has "never been higher since the Cuban missile crisis," Ernest Moniz, former U.S. secretary of energy and now head of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, said during this weekend's Munich Security Conference. But "the principal risk right now as we see it is not some planned-out, intentional initiation of nuclear use, but rather accident, miscalculation, blunder and that's why the probability is higher." While not exactly predicting imminent nuclear war, Moniz says fraying relations and waning communication between Russia

and the U.S. are prime reasons why these are risky times on the nuclear front. In its list of top risks for 2018, the Eurasia Group rates accidents as second only to China's growing international influence. In its report, it said there are "too many places where a misstep or misjudgment could provoke serious international conflict." One of those places, of course, North Korea, in a region where military exercises on both sides of the Korean divide are the norm, as are missile and nuclear tests. This past fall, at the height of a war of words between Washington and Pyongyang, two American Air force B-1B bombers flew over the peninsula.

Nuclear miscalculation would cause war and death

Miscalculation could lead to war

Author: Rohrlich, Justin. "A former U.S. missile-launch officer says Trump's nuclear policy could get us all killed." *Quartz.* 6 March 2019. https://qz.com/1566325/bruce-blair-says-trumps-nuclear-policy-could-get-us-all-killed/#:~:text=A%20former%20US%20missile%2Dlaunch,could%20get%20us%20all%20killed&text=Drastically%20reducing%20America's%20nuclear%20arsenal,Congress%20today%20(March%206).

Drastically reducing America's nuclear arsenal will strengthen U.S. national security, nonproliferation expert Bruce Blair, a former U.S. Air Force nuclear launch officer, told Congress today (March 6). The MacArthur "genius grant" recipient said Donald Trump's plan to expand U.S. nuclear capabilities (pdf) will make the world a more dangerous place—and leave America more vulnerable to attack. Appearing before the House Armed Services Committee, Blair called for the U.S. to "return to the original, and generally accepted, basic premise of nuclear weapons"—using them solely for deterrence. Fighting war should be left to conventional forces, Blair insisted, according to prepared testimony he shared with Quartz. "Our hair-trigger launch posture, which the Russians matched, continues to run the risk that fear, misperception, miscalculation, accident or false warning could trigger a nuclear exchange," Blair said. "This risk of blundering into a nuclear war, rather than a cold-blooded sudden attack, presents what is by far the greatest immediate physical threat to the United States today." Trump's proposed overhaul of nuclear forces would cost at least $1.7 trillion, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Blair lays out plans for a dramatically scaled-down version of current U.S. capabilities, which he described in a phone interview as "massive overkill."

Nuclear war between U.S. and Russia would kill 335 million people in first few hours of conflict

Author: Mizokami, Kyle. "335,000,000 Dead: If America Launched a Nuclear War on China and Russia." *The National Interest.* 15 July 2020. https://nationalinterest.org/blog/reboot/335000000-dead-if-america-launched-nuclear-war-china-and-russia-164859

An all-out Full Force attack would be much worse. A Full Force attack would devastate 295 cities, leaving only five cities with populations of fifty thousand or more unscathed. 72 percent of the urban population and 54 percent of the overall population would become casualties—as the National Security Archive points out, that amounts to 108 million likely killed out of a total population of 217 million. In China, seventy-eight cities would be struck, affecting 53 percent of the urban population and 16 percent of the overall population. Casualties in eastern Europe would more than double, to 4,004,000. Overall, an all-out U.S. attack on the Soviet Union, China and satellite countries in 1962 would have killed 335 million people within the first seventy-two hours. The SIOP-62 report does not attempt to estimate U.S. casualties in a nuclear war. However, a 1978 report prepared for the Pentagon's Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), "The Effects of Nuclear War," spelled out in grim detail what would happen if the Soviet Union unleashed its arsenal on the United States.

Nuclear war between U.S. and Russia would kill 90 million people in first few hours of conflict

Author: Wellerstein, Alex et al. "Plan A." *Science and Global Security Lab at Princeton University.* 2019. https://sgs.princeton.edu/the-lab/plan-a

SGS developed a new simulation for a plausible escalating war between the United States and Russia using realistic nuclear force postures, targets and fatality estimates. It is estimated that there would be more than 90 million people dead and injured within the first few hours of the conflict. This project is motivated by the need to highlight the potentially catastrophic consequences of currentU.S.and Russian nuclear war plans. The risk of nuclear war has increased dramatically in the past two years as the United States and Russia have abandoned long-standing nuclear arms control treaties, started to develop new kinds of nuclear weapons and expanded the circumstances in which they might use nuclear weapons.

NFU decreases the chance of miscalculation

Fear of suffering a first strike increases the chance of miscalculation

Author: Gower, John. "The Dangerous Illogic of Twenty-First-Century Deterrence Through Planning for Nuclear Warfighting." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.* 6 March 2018. https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/03/06/dangerous-illogic-of-twenty-first-century-deterrence-through-planning-for-nuclear-warfighting-pub-75717

One of the greatest risks to strategic stability is miscalculation in the nuclear weapons domain. Calculated acts can be deterred directly. Miscalculation, however, cannot be deterred; its likelihood can only be reduced. The risk of miscalculation increases proportionally with the complexity and range of nuclear capabilities and associated declaratory policies and postures. A nuclear posture and capability derived from the assumption that there is a need to conduct limited nuclear war at some stage during a major conflict, and the philosophy that there is an unbroken spectrum of conflict between low-end conventional and high-end nuclear warfighting, requires the most ambiguous declaratory policies and security assurances. While ambiguity brings some deterrence benefits, it also feeds the risk of miscalculation. In the twenty-first century, the fog of crisis (or of conflict) will likely be made more impenetrable by misinformation and cyber activities. Inflammatory rhetoric and the multiplicity of potentially confusing messages emanating from one of the nations involved will exacerbate the situation. This is a perfect setting for miscalculation. The fear of suffering a first decapitating or disabling nuclear strike is pervasive in a crisis. It is likely that elements of less than strategic nuclear capabilities will be delivered by dual-use platforms or missiles. The possession of systems and mindsets capable of limited, less-than-strategic battlefield nuclear employment multiplies this fear through mirroring of one's own options. The chance that a conventional attack by a dual-capable system is perceived to be a nuclear first strike increases significantly during a conflict between nuclear-capable states. Indeed, retaining dual-capable aircraft or air- or ground-launched nuclear cruise missiles, while also possessing a conventional equivalent, raises the likelihood of miscalculation in such circumstances from quite possible to near probable. If dual-capable weapons systems become stealthier, the certainty of their detection and classification would be reduced further. Doubt further increases the risk of miscalculation. Thus, of all the current and potential nuclear capabilities, the introduction of stealthy nuclear cruise missiles that can be launched from dual-capable platforms offer the greatest risk of miscalculation.

Fear of nuclear strike could cause adversaries to overcompensate and trigger an actual attack

Author: Gerson, Michael S. “No First Use: The Next Step for U.S. Nuclear Policy.” *International Security,* vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 7–47. 2010. www.jstor.org/stable/40981242

Second, in the midst of an intense crisis, an adversary's trepidations about a U.S. first strike could create incentives for signaling and brinksman increase the chances of miscommunication and nuclear escalation. For example, in a crisis an adversary's concerns about a U.S. disarming nuclear strike could prompt it to take measures to decrease the vulnerability of its forces, such as mating warheads to delivery vehicles, fueling missiles, dispersing forces, raising alert levels, or erecting mobile ballistic missile launchers. While the opponent might intend these measures to signal resolve and to deter a U.S. counterforce first strike by increasing the survivability of its forces, U.S. political and military leaders might misperceive these actions as a sign of the opponent's impending nuclear attack and decide to preempt.100 In this situation, an opponent's fear of a U.S. first strike encourages actions that, through miscommunication and miscalculation, might inadvertently trigger a U.S. preemptive attack. If the opponent has any remaining weapons after a U.S. strike, at least some of them might be used in retaliation against the United States or its allies. This dynamic may be especially pernicious in a future crisis if U.S. leaders believe that the opponent is willing to take substantial risks, because then decisionmakers may be more inclined to interpret the adversary's actions as preparations for a nuclear attack rather than as defensive signals intended for deterrence.

Nuclear deterrence strategies lower the threshold for nuclear war

Author: Tannenwald, Nina. “It’s Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy.” *Texas National Security Review.* 1 August 2019. https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/

In addition, skeptics believe that an NFU promise would be especially costly for the United States, given its wide-ranging extended deterrence commitments.14 These arguments are not compelling for four reasons. First, a policy of calculated ambiguity is unnecessary. Today, there are very few missions that the United States could not accomplish with conventional weapons. Indeed, U.S. conventional capabilities are more than sufficient to deter and respond to anything but a nuclear attack. None of the United States’ most likely adversaries – Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran – can hope to defeat the United States and its allies in a protracted non-nuclear conflict. Second, threats of first use are dangerous. As Michael Gerson has argued, they undermine crisis stability in multiple ways.15 The large, highly accurate U.S. nuclear arsenal, along with missile defenses and new dual-use precision-strike weapons, may lead leaders in Russia and China to believe that the United States is capable of conducting a disarming first strike against them. Furthermore, the entanglement of nuclear and conventional weapons in deterrence strategies could inadvertently increase the chance of nuclear war, while new, smaller nuclear warheads, along with doctrines of “escalate to de-escalate” appear to be lowering the threshold for nuclear use.16 In a crisis, Russian or Chinese leaders might come to believe that the United States might attempt a disarming strike, forcing them, in turn, to contemplate acting preemptively.17 Third, although supporters of calculated ambiguity fervently believe it maximizes deterrence, the evidence for such a claim is hardly definitive. Nuclear weapons did not deter the 9/11 attacks; the rise of the Islamic State; Russian interventions in Georgia, Ukraine, or Syria; or North Korean nuclear and ballistic missile tests. Nor have Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons deterred risky conventional crises between the two countries over Kashmir, most recently in February 2019. The calculated ambiguity argument gained some support from the perception that during the 1991 Gulf War a U.S. nuclear threat had helped deter Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein from using chemical weapons against U.S. and coalition forces or Israel.18 As Scott Sagan has persuasively argued, however, it is highly unlikely that a nuclear threat in fact deterred Saddam from using chemical weapons.19 Indeed, recent research suggests that the threat to use nuclear weapons first against non-nuclear states has little credible coercive power.20 Fourth, even in the very small number of scenarios where nuclear weapons might seem to be necessary – for example, knocking out North Korean mobile missiles or

underground command centers – opening the Pandora's box of nuclear use would likely lead to uncontrolled escalation. There is no scenario in which using nuclear weapons first can make a bad situation better. As James Doyle, a former staffer at Los Alamos National Laboratory, has argued, "It is folly to believe that the use of nuclear weapons could de-escalate a conflict."21 As for threatening to use nuclear weapons first in support of extended deterrence commitments, such a policy lacks credibility because the costs of starting a nuclear war would vastly outweigh the benefits. As Henry Kissinger once said, "Great powers don't commit suicide for their allies."22 Thus, as a number of analysts have persuasively argued, extended deterrence based on a conventional military response to a conventional threat is much more credible. Moreover, constantly arguing that nuclear weapons are necessary reduces the credibility of the United States' more usable conventional deterrent.23

NFU policy would increase U.S. deterrence and credibility

Author: Fetter, Steve and Jon Wolfsthal. "No First Use and Credible Deterrence." *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament.* 2018.

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257

Most analysts consider "sole purpose" to be essentially equivalent to no-first-use, because if the only purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter the use of nuclear weapons by others, then there is no reason to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons first.10 Deterrence is no longer the core mission, but the only mission. With a policy of no-first-use or sole-purpose, the United States would use or threaten to use nuclear weapons only in retaliation to a nuclear attack on the United States or its allies, such as Japan. If the threat to use nuclear weapons first is not necessary, it is less than fully credible. As such, making incredible threats weakens the credibility of other commitments. Abandoning incredible threats should make the remaining nuclear use scenarios, and therefore deterrence, more credible. Deeply related to this discussion are the concepts of "extended deterrence" and "nuclear umbrella." In both cases, the idea is that United States can extend the protection of its nuclear arsenal to allies, such as Japan, South Korea, and NATO: that the United States can deter attacks on its allies by threating to retaliate with nuclear weapons. But there are two kinds of extended deterrence or nuclear umbrellas, and much of the confusion about no-first-use arises because of a failure to clearly distinguish between the two. The first type of extended deterrence is deterrence of nuclear attack. In this case, the United States deters nuclear attack on Japan and other allies by threatening to use its own nuclear weapons in retaliation. In essence, America declares that an attack on Japan is no different than an attack on America itself. This commitment would not be undermined in any way by no-first-use because the United States would use nuclear weapons only after an adversary had already used nuclear against an ally. The U.S. nuclear umbrella would continue to protect Japan against nuclear attack by North Korea, China, or Russia. The second type of extended deterrence seeks to use nuclear capabilities to deter nonnuclear or conventional attacks. This was the version of extended deterrence practiced by the United States during the Cold War, in which the United States attempted to deter Soviet invasion of western Europe (or a North Korean invasion of South Korea) by threatening to respond with nuclear weapons. This form of extended deterrence is much less credible, particularly with regard to Russia or China, because the United States would be threatening to start a nuclear war with a country that had the capacity to retaliate with nuclear weapons and destroy U.S. cities. To convince itself that its threat was seen by the other side as credible, NATO and the United States had to go to enormous lengths in the face of a nuclear-armed Warsaw Pact, including steps like the deployment of ground-based intermediate-range cruise and ballistic missiles in the 1980s that severely tested alliance cohesion and stability. There have been serious concerns about how the potential use by an adversary of either chemical or advanced biological weapons would enter into this equation. To be sure, the future threat of biological weapons was such a concern that the 2010 NPR made clear that the negative security assurances offered could be modified in the future if nonnuclear states were to develop and use biological weapons that could approximate the impact of nuclear weapons. But it is far from clear that threatening to use nuclear weapons in response to a biological attack would be credible or have military utility (Sagan, 2000). In the case of states currently pursuing advanced biological weapons, there appears to be a similar calculation as with nuclear weapons – a conventional or security imbalance leads states to seek some way to counter America's conventional capabilities. Threatening nuclear weapons use appear uncertain to alter this calculation because it does not address the underlying driver for proliferation. While the use of an extremely virulent and deadly

biological weapon agent might hypothetically lead to casualties as large or even larger than nuclear use, a nuclear response is not likely to be effective or necessary, and thus is unlikely to be effective as a deterrent.

NFU would decrease the chance of a non-nuclear attack being misinterpreted as nuclear

"Nuclear Weapons Solutions." *Union of Concerned Scientists.* https://www.ucsusa.org/nuclear-weapons/solutions

Roughly 9,000 nuclear weapons are hidden away in bunkers and missile siloes, stored in warehouses, at airfields and naval bases, and carried by dozens of submarines across the world. A single warhead can demolish a city center. A full-fledged nuclear war would threaten life as we know it. But the risk of nuclear war isn't fixed; with the right policies and safeguards, we can help protect against mistakes, accidents, and poor decision-making—and we can work toward a world free from the nuclear threat. Nuclear weapons are meant to deter nuclear attacks from other countries. However, current policy allows the United States to begin a nuclear war by being the first to use nuclear weapons in a conflict—in response to a non-nuclear attack by North Korea, Russia, or China. A "no-first-use" policy would take this option off the table. The United States could pledge that it will never be the first to use a nuclear weapon, regardless of the circumstances. Doing so would reduce the risk of miscalculation during a crisis, and limit the possibility of a smaller, non-nuclear conflict escalating into a nuclear one. Without no-first-use, the U.S. public is at risk of a devastating retaliatory attack, should the United States ever cross the threshold and start a nuclear war.

NFU would decrease the risk of Russian or Chinese miscalc

Author: Panda, Ankit. "'No First Use' and Nuclear Weapons." *Council on Foreign Relations.* 17 July 2018. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/no-first-use-and-nuclear-weapons#:~:text=A%20so%2Dcalled%20NFU%20pledge,its%20territory%20or%20military%20personnel.

What is the debate in the United States on NFU? Though the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review did not include an NFU pledge, the Obama administration considered the idea during its second term. It ultimately left U.S. nuclear declaratory policy unchanged from its 2010 iteration, which stated that the United States reserved the right to use nuclear weapons to deter nonnuclear attacks while strengthening conventional capabilities to gradually reduce the role of nuclear weapons to that of solely deterring nuclear attacks. Nevertheless, the Obama administration's final year in office saw animated debate among proponents and opponents of an NFU declaration. Arguments in favor of a U.S. NFU pledge. Proponents of a U.S. NFU declaration have argued that not only does the United States already maintain a de facto NFU policy but that U.S. superiority in conventional weapons is sufficient to deter significant nuclear, biological, chemical, and conventional threats. Additionally, as Kingston Reif of the Arms Control Association has argued, "a clear U.S. no-first-use policy would reduce the risk of Russian or Chinese nuclear miscalculation during a crisis by alleviating concerns about a devastating U.S. nuclear first-strike." In nuclear strategy, a first strike refers to a nuclear attack that seeks to disarm a nuclear-armed enemy before it can employ its weapons. Other proponents pointed to an NFU policy declaration being a necessary step on the road to global nuclear disarmament, an aspirational goal of the Obama administration and a requirement for all recognized nuclear weapon states under Article VI of the NPT. Proponents also argue that U.S. resistance to an NFU declaration has harmed U.S. nonproliferation efforts.

CONCENTRATION OF POWER

What's the argument?

Proponents of no first use, and limits on nuclear capabilities more broadly, often argue that the ability of one person to "push a button" and destroy entire cities (or worse) is problematic and dangerous. Under the Trump-administration, this argument has become even more prevalent as many argue that President Trump is unfit to wield nuclear power. Secretary Clinton made this a central point of her campaign, and during the Trump era we have seen the resurgence of advocacy for policies such as the Markey-Lieu bill, which would prohibit a President from launching a first strike without the declaration of war by Congress - a hurdle that would likely be very difficult to surmount, given Congress has not declared war since 1942.

The fact that presidents have sole authority over nuclear weapons, while not technically codified, is well documented (Blair 17; "Whose finger... other nations"). This means that presidents have no obligation to consult or even notify their advisors before launching a first strike, giving them the power to kill millions of people in just minutes (Blair 18).

No first strike limits this authority, as a President would only have the power to launch a nuclear strike if in response to an incoming strike. This fulfills the purpose of the President's nearly unfettered power -- to respond quickly to an imminent threat -- while limiting the ability of one individual to inflict mass destruction ("Limiting the President's... Nuclear War"). While some view this as "tying the president's hands," pro teams can argue that on the whole, a NFU policy would limit the probability of rash decision-making and irreversible catastrophe (Stowe-Thurston 19).

Why does the argument matter?

Nuclear weapons have devastating capabilities, with experts estimating the death toll of a nuclear war at upwards of 400 million individuals (Martin 82). To trust this power in the hands of one individual, without any checks on their ability to inflict mass destruction, puts everyone at risk, regardless of who that individual is.

Main Players

Presidents, intelligence officials, military advisors, members of Congress

Strategy Considerations

As is often the case in arguments discussing the actions of the government, it is very likely that rounds will spiral into a discussion of who is likely to win the election and, as we progress through the topic period, the results of the election. Thus, it will be critical for teams to be perfectly clear that this problem is not exclusive to the current administration and is dangerous regardless of the identity of the executive wielding this nearly unlimited power.

Evidence for Concentration of Power

Control over nuclear weapons is centered solely with the President

Presidents have unchecked control over nuclear weapons

Author: Blair, Bruce. "Presidents have too much power overU.S.nukes. Especially President Trump." *The Washington Post.* 18 August 2017.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/presidents-have-too-much-power-over-us-nukes-especially-president-trump/2017/08/18/abd0041e-8363-11e7-ab27-1a21a8e006ab_story.html

I am a former nuclear missile launch officer. And to me, a preventive nuclear strike would represent a breach of contract with our nuclear armed forces, who would carry it out. That concern is worse under Trump and his brinkmanship, but it goes beyond him: **The protocol for ordering the use of nuclear weapons endows every president with civilization-ending power. The crisis with North Korea shows just how urgent it is that we change the way the United States handles its nuclear arsenal.** Every American nuclear commander makes a pact with the devil by agreeing to obey orders to fire weapons that may kill millions of people in retaliation for a nuclear attack upon the United States or our allies. During my training in 1971 to become a nuclear missileer responsible for launching up to 50 Minuteman intercontinental missiles, it was instilled in me and my crewmates that the central purpose of nuclear weapons is deterrence. Our job was to prevent our adversaries from nuking us first by convincing them that we would not hesitate to turn our firing keys and obliterate them in a second strike. There is, of course, far more to the story, and we knew it. Deterrence could fail by design or accident. Who could be certain that a reckless leader would not intentionally launch a nuclear strike? (We kept this concern to ourselves to avoid censure or court-martial — or discharge, the fate of one brave questioner, Maj. Harold Hering .) Or that nuclear war might not erupt as a result of unauthorized actions, accidental detonations or a false warning of an incoming attack? We were on board for hitting back in retribution not only at the enemy's economy (mostly located in cities) and its leadership, but also at its nuclear forces to diminish its ability to cause further destruction. This mission went beyond deterrence and into the realm of nuclear warfighting. The vast bulk of our targets were (and still are) opposing nuclear forces, and we would have willingly tried to destroy them along with Soviet, Chinese or North Korean leadership in wartime if deterrence failed and the enemy struck first. We knew we might try to launch first if an enemy nuclear strike appeared to be imminent — minutes or hours away, not months or years. **Some of our nuclear war plans had "preemptive" strike designators, which meant we would try to beat the adversary to the punch when intelligence and surveillance clearly indicated an imminent and irrevocable strike against the United States.** We even accepted that we might be pawns in a game of crisis brinkmanship, in which U.S. nuclear forces would be put on higher alert, mobilized and dispersed to make an adversary fear an imminent attack and back down from taking or even entertaining further aggressive action. I once participated in such "risk manipulation" during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, when the White House ordered us to prepare to fire our rockets at the Soviet Union, whose leader threatened to send troops to help the Arab nations. As U.S. strategic bombers taxied to runways and submarines moved to launch depth, I and other missileers retrieved our launch keys and codes from the safes in our underground bunkers and strapped into our chairs to brace for an imminent nuclear exchange. This turned out to be Kissingerian theater (President Richard Nixon was out of pocket, in an inebriated state , during the nuclear alert) meant to warn Soviet leaders that they had better back down before events spun out of control. Preventive war is altogether different. Starting one against Iraq in 2003 was perhaps the biggest foreign policy blunder of the past century, a point Trump himself has repeated often, and initiating one against North Korea would be the height of folly, especially because it could easily entail nuclear strikes or quickly lead to a nuclear exchange. Nobody in the U.S. military's nuclear ranks signed up for this. Our implied "contract" was to deter an enemy attack, and if deterrence failed, to destroy the enemy's warfighting ability. Nuking another country just because it seeks to acquire nuclear weapons enjoys virtually zero support from U.S. nuclear troops. I know the culture well, and I stay in touch with many dozens of former missileers. Preventive war represents the antithesis of everything they stand for. (Preventive strikes against North Korea would be carried out by submarine and bomber crews, because land-based Minuteman missiles would have to fly over Russia and China, possibly triggering mistaken retaliation by these countries.) It would also be disastrous. Intelligence on an adversary's capabilities and intentions may be dead wrong, as it was before the Iraq invasion. Threatening preventive war would accelerate the other side's effort to get the bomb to bolster its security and deter Trump, which means it encourages proliferation among insecure nations. A willingness to launch first in a simmering confrontation also works to destabilize crises. And such a provocation would violate the United Nations charter, which allows for the threat or use of force only in self-defense when there is no other recourse. The first-strike execution of any of the current U.S. nuclear war plans,

even smaller options such as the plan for North Korea (with about 80 nuclear aim points), would also violate the laws of war and international humanitarian law. As a matter of policy, the Defense Department subscribes to these legal strictures. Nuclear commanders could be hauled into court at The Hague on charges of war crimes. Yet Trump indulges in issuing such threats, and he has unchecked authority to order a preventive nuclear strike against any nation he wants with a single verbal direction to the Pentagon war room. Under the current nuclear strike protocol, he can consult any and all — or none — of his national security advisers, and no one can legally countermand his order. If he gave the green light using his nuclear codes, a launch order the length of a tweet would be transmitted and carried out within a few minutes . I could fire my missiles 60 seconds after receiving an order. There would be no recalling missiles fired from silos and submarines. I believe the nuclear commanders at all levels would obey such an order, despite deep misgivings about its wisdom and legality. The military's thorough subordination to civilian control and deeply ingrained attitude of deference to presidential direction; its well-greased and practiced protocols from top to bottom of the nuclear chain of command, geared to carry out his orders quickly (and to pressure a hesitant president to give the order) — as well as widespread ignorance among the rank and file about the dubious legality of striking first — leave little doubt in my mind that a presidential decision to strike a preventive blow, however misguided and reckless, would not be thwarted. It might be opposed strenuously by his advisers if they had a chance to weigh in, but in the end, they would acquiesce. Which means there is a silver lining in having a president who is unfit to wield absolute power over the fate of the world: It has engendered serious and urgent proposals to strengthen checks and balances on nuclear decision-making. One prominent idea circulating in Congress, spearheaded by Democrats Ted Lieu and Edward Markey, is to require a congressional declaration of war with specific authorization for the deployment of nuclear weapons before a president could order their first use. Other proposals would require a consensus among additional top leaders for either first or second use. To reinforce these steps, the United States should officially adopt a policy of no first use (and educate missileers about the illegality of preventive first use), eliminate "use or lose" weapons such as the vulnerable silo-based missile force, and make big improvements in nuclear command-and-control to increase warning and decision time. That, not the weapons, should be the centerpiece of our trillion-dollar program of nuclear modernization.

Sole authority is dangerous

"Whose finger is on the button?: Nuclear Launch Authority in the United States and Other Nations." *Union of Concerned Scientists.* 22 September 2017.
https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/whose-finger-button

The choice to use nuclear weapons is one of the most significant, impactful decisions that a leader or country could ever make. A single warhead or bomb could kill hundreds of thousands of people; the use of even a small number of weapons could cause dramatic and disastrous impacts. In the United States, a single person is authorized to make the decision to use a nuclear weapon—the president. They are not required to consult with any advisors before issuing a launch order. No one in the Defense Department, Congress, or the judicial branch can lawfully prevent the use of nuclear weapons once the president's order is given. This system of control (known as "sole authority") is not the only way to handle launch decisions. In fact, other nuclear states have adopted chains of command that are distinctly less risky than sole authority, and which may provide safer models for the United States to learn from. Britain: Although the prime minister would be the one to issue a launch order, the monarch is the formal commander-in-chief. If officials in the Ministry of Defence receive a launch order that they judge wrongful, they can lawfully appeal to the queen to overturn it. Parliament could also call for a vote of no confidence, which would require the prime minister's immediate resignation. India and Pakistan have both established councils to authorize the use of nuclear weapons. In Pakistan, orders to launch require consensus among the council's members, which was designed to imitate a board of directors. Israel: Although information on Israel's nuclear policies is scarce, multiple experts have suggested that Israeli nuclear weapons aren't controlled by a single person, but "subject[ed] to a system of tight civilian control." China: Little is publicly known about China's nuclear launch protocol. However, a 2004 Chinese military text, translated by the Union of Concerned Scientists, suggests that the Central Military Commission—or perhaps its chair alone—holds the authority to launch. The Commission's 11 members are senior generals and senior party officials and its chair is China's president. It's also possible that recent reforms have changed this process. Russia: The president, defense minister, and chief of general staff all have access to the nuclear codes. It's unclear whether all three are required to order a launch, but the system is designed to prevent a single person from issuing the launch command. Some experts also suggest that "there are additional hurdles (i.e., more

people involved)" if Russia decides to use weapons first. France: As in the United States, the president alone can order a nuclear launch, though the chief of the presidential military staff and the chief of defence staff may also be involved. In the United States, legislation proposed in 2017 would require a declaration of war by Congress before the president could order the first use of nuclear weapons. However, the president would still wield sole authority for retaliatory strikes, i.e., those made in response to a nuclear attack—a problem that must also be addressed. Adopting either this or another system of checks and balances could help reduce the riskiness inherent in granting a sole person authority over the world's most destructive weapons.

Trump has too much power over nuclear weapons

Author: Blair, Bruce. "Trump can launch nuclear weapons whenever he wants, with or without Mattis." *The Washington Post.* 23 December 2018.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2018/12/23/trump-can-launch-nuclear-weapons-whenever-he-wants-with-or-without-mattis/

The reaction to Mattis's resignation, however, could open the door for the new Congress to create long-overdue legal barriers preventing the president from initiating a nuclear strike. Such a step could be implemented without any negative impact on U.S. security or that of our allies. Every day, the U.S. nuclear early warning system is triggered by some event or another, mostly civilian and military rocket launches by one or more of a dozen countries with ballistic missiles. When such launches appear to threaten North America, the head of U.S. Strategic Command is alerted, and sometimes these alerts warrant the urgent notification of the president. That alert comes by way of a direct call from the Strategic Command or via the White House Situation Room, the emergency-operations bunker beneath the East Wing, or the national security adviser. Partly a remnant of the Cold War, this system remains in place today to ensure the president can be notified quickly of any direct threat to the United States' nuclear arsenal and the facilities that control it. That way, he can launch nuclear missiles before they are destroyed or the U.S. government is incapacitated by incoming weapons. In normal times, this system is precarious, and it can pressure even experienced leaders to consider nuclear weapons in a crisis sooner than warranted. Alerts stemming from ambiguous ballistic nuclear missile threats occurred multiple times during the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama, and some alerts went directly to those presidents. Yet, this system seems especially ill-suited to a president who has demonstrated time and again that he can be provoked into taking rash action, and who, as a candidate, openly questioned why the United States could not use the nuclear weapons it possesses. This is a dangerous set of instincts for a commander in chief with sole and unchecked authority over almost 4,000 nuclear weapons, nearly 1,000 of which could be fired within a few minutes. For over a year, Mattis has been trying to reassure congressional leaders that he could help check some of Trump's impulses, in part by intervening in the nuclear chain of command. In a break with normal procedures, Mattis reportedly told the commander of the Strategic Command to keep him directly informed of any event that might lead to a nuclear alert being sent to the president. He even told the Strategic Command "not to put on a pot of coffee without letting him know."

No first strike would limit presidential power

NFS takes away power of one individual to start nuclear war

"Limiting the President's Ability to Start a Nuclear War." *Union of Concerned Scientists*. 28 March 2017.
https://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/attach/2017/03/Markey-Lieu-First-Strike-Fact-Sheet.pdf

Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) and Representative Ted Lieu (DCA) have introduced the Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2017, which would prohibit the president from launching a first nuclear strike without a declaration of war by Congress. This is an eminently

sensible step that would prevent the president, who is the sole individual with the authority to launch nuclear weapons, from unilaterally beginning a nuclear war. While the question of the president's sole authority to order the use of nuclear weapons gained public attention during the 2016 campaign, the underlying problem is independent of who is in office. No single individual should have the authority to start a nuclear war without extensive discussion, debate, and consideration of all the possible implications. As former Secretary of Defense William Perry has said, "a decision that momentous for all of civilization should have the kinds of checks and balances on Executive powers called for by our Constitution" (Markey-Lieu Press Release). Currently, there is no check on the president's authority to order the use of nuclear weapons, either as a first strike or in response to an adversary's attack. Former Vice President Dick Cheney in a 2008 interview said the president "could launch the kind of devastating attack the world has never seen. He doesn't have to check with anybody, he doesn't have to call Congress, he doesn't have to check with the courts" (Fox News, 2008). If the president decided to launch a nuclear strike tomorrow, he would simply notify the military of this decision. He would likely consult with military and other advisers first, but there is no requirement for him to do so. Using a card, often called the "biscuit," that he or an aide carries at all times, the president would read a code to authenticate his identity to the senior officer on duty in the Pentagon's "war room." The war room would then prepare the order to send to launch crews on submarines or at command centers for land-based missiles. The time from when the president gives the launch order to when the crews receive it would be only minutes. Land-based missiles would be launched within about five minutes of the president's order, while it might take about fifteen minutes for submarine-based missiles to launch. Once launched, these missiles cannot be recalled (Merrill 2017). In 1974, President Richard Nixon noted, "I can go back into my office and pick up the telephone and in 25 minutes 70 million people will be dead" (Scarry 2014, p. 39). Later that year in the thick of the Watergate scandal Nixon was emotionally unstable and drinking heavily, leading Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger to instruct the Joint Chiefs of Staff that "any emergency order coming from the president"– such as a nuclear launch order–should go through him or Secretary of State Henry Kissinger first (McFadden, 2014). Schlesinger had no real authority to do so, however, and it is not clear what might have happened if such an order had actually come. The same would be true today–there is no military or civilian official or group with the authority to countermand a presidential order to launch nuclear weapons. The Markey-Lieu bill states that "Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President may not use the Armed Forces of the United States to conduct a first-use nuclear strike unless such strike is conducted pursuant to a declaration of war by Congress that expressly authorizes such strike." The bill defines a first-use nuclear strike as "an attack using nuclear weapons against an enemy that is conducted without the President determining that the enemy has first launched a nuclear strike against the United States or an ally of the United States." The main reason the president has had sole authority to launch a nuclear strike is the perceived need to ensure a swift response to an incoming nuclear attack. During the Cold War, U.S. leaders feared a "bolt from the blue" attack by the Soviet Union, which might require a decision about whether to launch a retaliatory strike in the ten minutes or so between the time the attack was detected, analyzed and conveyed to the president, and when it landed. The nuclear command system was therefore designed for speed rather than deliberation. Its main purpose was to allow the president to launch U.S. nuclear weapons quickly, before they could be destroyed on the ground. The Markey-Lieu bill intentionally and specifically does not restrict the president's ability to immediately order the use of U.S. nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack. The situation the bill addresses is the decision to launch a first strike–when the United States is the first to use nuclear weapons against an adversary. In this case time constraints on decision making do not apply, so the streamlined decision process used in a retaliatory strike is not required. Regardless of whether the decision is to unleash a nuclear first strike as the first move in a conflict, or to use nuclear weapons first in escalating an ongoing conflict, the president would have time to consult with advisers and Congress before making such a potentially world-altering decision. Nuclear weapons have unparalleled destructive power. As the bill states, "By any definition of war, a first-use nuclear strike from the United States would constitute a major act of war." The Constitution clearly establishes that the power to declare war belongs to the Congress alone. Therefore, this bill simply makes explicit an existing Constitutional requirement on the president. Moreover, bringing Congress into the process would lessen the chance that such a decision could be made irrationally or impulsively. The decision to use nuclear weapons is potentially the most important decision this nation could make, with grave consequences for every citizen of the United States and the world. It should be undertaken only with the utmost caution and–especially in a democracy– should not be left up to any single individual.

Restricting executive power makes the world safer

Author: Stowe-Thurston, Abigail. "No First Use and the Myth of 'Tying the President's Hands'." *Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation.* 16 August 2019. https://armscontrolcenter.org/no-first-use-and-the-myth-of-tying-the-presidents-hands/

In a recent interaction at a campaign event (which you can watch in full below), 2020 Democratic presidential candidate and former Maryland Congressman John Delaney discussed his position on adopting a nuclear No First Use policy. "I can't imagine when you would ever use a nuclear weapon as a first strike," he said. He then ruminated about a possible alien war and other poorly sketched-out scenarios,

before ultimately saying that he would not want to "tie the president's hands." "Tying the president's hands" sounds like a bad thing, but moderating executive power is neither new nor inherently negative. In addition to the checks and balances fundamental to the U.S. Constitution, additional restrictions have been placed on the executive branch over time by the legislature and by Presidents themselves. Executive and legislative efforts to prohibit the use of torture after President Obama took office are instructive when thinking about nuclear weapons policy. On his second day in office in 2009, Obama signed an executive order to reverse Bush-era allowances for so-called "enhanced interrogation," requiring interrogations to follow the methods specified in the Army Field Manual. While Congress limited the effects of President Obama's executive orders intended to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility, it did solidify the President's ban on torture in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act. One could say that banning certain methods of interrogation ties the president's hands, but it serves U.S. national security interests. It also gives the United States the moral high ground when dealing with broader human rights issues around the world. John Delaney and other 2020 candidates should consider the issue of adopting a nuclear No First Use policy (NFU) through a similar lens. While removing the nuclear first use option could be viewed as "tying the President's hands," the explicit policy to prevent them from starting a nuclear war can actually make America safer. Delaney was right when he said that it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which being the first to use a nuclear weapon would be necessary. The probability that the United States finds itself in a position where it has no choice but to use nuclear weapons first is far lower than the probability that ambiguity about U.S. intentions leads to an accident or miscalculation. Even if no country on earth wants to wage a nuclear war, an accident or miscalculation could cause one anyway. Maintaining a declaratory policy that is ambiguous about when the United States would use nuclear weapons could dangerously exacerbate crises. The United States does not need to start a nuclear war, so its policies should reflect this fact.

Death toll of nuclear war

Nuclear war could kill between 400 and 500 million people

Author: Martin, Brian. "The Global Health Effects of Nuclear War." *Current Affairs Bulletin.* 7 December 1982.

https://documents.uow.edu.au/~bmartin/pubs/82cab/

A major global nuclear war could kill up to 400-500 million people from these effects, mainly in the United States, Soviet Union and Europe, and to a lesser extent China and Japan.[4] The death toll would depend on a range of factors, such as the areas actually hit by weapons and the extent of evacuation and fallout protection. This death toll would be made up mainly of the people in the immediate vicinity or downwind of nuclear explosions, and would total about ten percent of the world's population. This figure would be much higher if most of the largest population centres in countries all around the world were bombed,[5] but there are no known plans for systematically bombing the largest population centres in areas such as India, Southeast Asia and China.[6] On the other hand, if a nuclear war were limited in any sense - for example, restricted to Europe or to military targets - the immediate death toll would be less. If agricultural or economic breakdown or epidemics occurred in the aftermath of nuclear war, many more people could die, perhaps as many as a few hundred million in the worst case.[7] These would be primarily in the most heavily bombed areas, namely the United States, Soviet Union and Europe.

BENEFITING SOFT POWER

What's the argument?

This argument is based on the premise that adopting a No First Use policy would increase U.S. credibility and soft power abroad. As explained by political scientist Joseph F. Nye Jr., soft power is "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies." Hard power, on the other hand, is the use of coercive tactics like military might or economic sanctions in order to elicit a desired response. U.S. soft power has plummeted in recent years. Currently, there is a "sustained international distaste for Trump's 'America First' agenda" (Bach). The Trump administration has shifted away from multilateralism by withdrawing from international agreements like the Paris Accords, decreasing international aid, and increasing military presence (Honingberd).

A NFU policy could improve perceptions of the U.S. by putting the country on a "stronger moral footing" (Doyle). A NFU policy is significant not only because it would change longstanding U.S. nuclear policy, but because it would signal to the rest of the world that the U.S. is a nation dedicated to long-term peace and stability. Specifically, Tannenwald writes that NFU signals "that a state is a responsible nuclear power." Countries that have adopted NFU policies have, in part, done so to appear more committed to peace themselves. For example, China's NFU policy was meant to convey the country's commitment to "peaceful coexistence" (Tannenwald). Similarly, India adopted NFU in part to paint Pakistan, its regional rival, as irresponsible (Tannenwald).

Why does the argument matter?

U.S. soft power is critical in many arenas. In most situations of diplomacy, U.S. legitimacy is crucial to producing productive dialogue. If other countries don't trust the U.S., it makes it less likely that countries will cooperate with the U.S. in the first place. In fact, America's dwindling "global prestige" has produced "an increasingly positive perception of authoritarian states," and "American allies and partners are growing less willing to cooperate with the United States on diplomatic, economic and security issues" (Honingberd). This makes it harder for us to communicate with other states and prevent conflict, and also leaves us more vulnerable when conflict inevitably arises. While the concept of U.S. soft power can be applied to nearly any foreign-policy scenario, nuclear-related soft power might be most handy in dealing with Russia, as adopting a NFU policy would "open up a new avenue for controlling the dangerous and

accelerating nuclear competition" between Russia and the U.S. (Blair). Holistically speaking, teams can argue that U.S. global influence is important to the protection of things like democracy and human rights. Whether or not the U.S. should continue to act as "the world's policeman" is a debate for another day, but the U.S. does use its diplomacy to protect allies from predatory states, to encourage the spread of democracy, and to enforce, when possible, the basic tenets of human rights.

Main Players

The U.S., U.S. allies, adversaries with which the U.S. negotiates

Strategy Considerations

This argument is strategic in that it can be impacted out to countless scenarios. If teams can prove that NFU gives the U.S. more international credibility, they can impact the argument to potentially any foreign policy scenario in which the U.S. utilizes soft power and diplomacy. This argument is especially timely as countries have begun to turn away from the U.S. on global matters, as the U.S. has continuously isolated itself. In recent years, President Trump has pulled out of the Paris Accords, criticized other NATO nations for not contributing money to the organization, and condemned the World Health Organization's for its handling of COVID-19, just to name a few. Teams may be able to persuasively make the argument that as countries become increasingly frustrated with U.S. foreign policy, they become more likely to ally themselves with other countries vying for U.S. superpower status, like Russia and China. Thus, a NFU policy must be enacted now to prevent the collapse of U.S. global influence. Another nice thing about this argument is that, unlike many pro and con arguments on this topic, its impacts do not rely on proving that nuclear war is likely. By impacting out to something more tangible (for example, U.S. relations with a certain nation being critical to protecting human rights in that country), teams can outweigh many higher-impact cases by focusing on the immediacy of the issue at hand. However, there is one thing that teams should keep in mind. Throughout his campaign, Joe Biden has emphasized that should he win the presidency, he will attempt to undo many of Trump's "America first" policies, meaning that should he win on November 3rd, the urgency of the argument may change. If Biden wins and has made it clear that he wishes to expand U.S. diplomacy, adopting a NFU policy to help diplomacy may be unnecessary.

Evidence for Benefiting Soft Power

U.S. soft power is declining in the status quo

Author: Bach, Natasha. "Under President Trump, the U.S.'s 'Soft Power' Is Waning." *Fortune*. 13 July 2018. https://fortune.com/2018/07/13/us-soft-power-ranking-fourth-place/

Global American influence is dropping—significantly. And it's not just due to President Donald Trump upending the international order with threats to withdraw from NATO, the WTO, the UN Human Rights Council, and starting trade wars with China and the EU. According to an annual global ranking of nations' soft power by London-based Portland Communications and USC's Center on Public Diplomacy, the U.S. has dropped three places since Trump became president. In 2016, the U.S. ranked No. 1. It dropped to third last year, and fourth this year. The study draws on the concept of soft power first outlined by political scientist Joseph Nye, which has three pillars: political values, culture, and foreign policy. Essentially, soft power is the ability to attract and influence via means other than hard power, which is typically defined as military might and economic incentives or sanctions. Particularly noteworthy are the areas in which the U.S. did not perform well. While improving from the two previous years, the U.S. came in 5th in the enterprise ranking, trailing Singapore, Switzerland, Sweden, and Denmark. The U.S. ranked 15th in polling, showing a sustained international distaste for Trump's "America First" agenda. The U.S. came in 16th in polling last year, a nearly 10% drop from the year prior. Looking specifically at polling data that determined favorability toward a country, the U.S. now ranks 21st, putting it in the bottom third of the list. Most significantly, however, is the government ranking. The U.S. came in 16th this year, dropping four places from 12th place last year, demonstrating how objective metrics are beginning to register a decline in American soft power. A shift away from multilateralism toward zero-sum unilateralism under the banner of "America First" has significantly undermined American diplomatic capabilities and shaped the U.S.'s poor government ranking this year, according to the report.

Recommitting the U.S. to soft power strategies is vital if the U.S. wishes to remain a superpower

Author: Honingberd, Brad. "Recommitting the United States to Soft Power Strategies." *The McCain Institute.* 2 August 2018. https://www.mccaininstitute.org/blog/recommitting-the-united-states-to-soft-power-strategies/

In the late 1980s, political scientist Joseph Nye Jr. first described the concept of soft power. Whereas hard power relies on inducements (carrots) and threats (sticks), soft power gets others to want the outcomes you want without the threat of coercion. Soft power is determined by the attractiveness of a country's culture, domestic values, and the substance of its foreign policy. Historically, the United States used its soft power to strengthen its cultural and moral appeal abroad. During the Cold War, America used the power of attraction to bolster its image as the leader of the free world and a superior alternative to Soviet authoritarianism. In recent years, America's soft power has waned. In 2017, President Trump's Budget Director Mick Mulvaney announced a "hard power budget," cutting 30% of the State Department and USAID budgets. Funding for public health, food security, women's rights and other aspects of America's non-military influence overseas, has been critically weakened. In a Pew Research poll, 50% of individuals surveyed across 33 nations held a positive view of the United States, trailed by China (48%) and Russia (35%). America's prestige declined most significantly in Asia. Another Pew poll found that South Korea and Japan, America's most reliable Asian allies, experienced a 71% and 54%

drop, respectively, regarding trust in the American president's judgement. These statistics depict a blow to America's global prestige and an increasingly positive perception of authoritarian states. Over the last few years, China has made great strides to strengthen its soft power capabilities, or "wenhua ruan shili." Beijing's efforts are best exemplified by their aggressive economic investment in the developing world. China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative will span 0ver 60 countries and allow it to project influence across Eurasia. Beijing's use of economic coercion makes countries and companies wary to confront Chinese illiberalism and revisionism. As a result, American allies and partners are growing less willing to cooperate with the United States on diplomatic, economic and security issues. President Trump's "America First" foreign policy is straining America's global alliance structure and enabling bad behavior from authoritarian leaders. His strategy risks forfeiting America's moral authority and post-war commitment as the chief promoter of human rights and democracy. Perceiving America to be opportunistic and unreliable, economist Adam Posen argues that countries will increasingly bypass the United States to construct a "post-American world economy." Sustainable soft power comes from character-driven leadership and a system of government and values worth emulating.Eurasian strongmen offer a facade of toughness and order, but their soft power lacks what America's promises: Freedom, human rights, democracy, and equality. If the United States wishes to remain the bedrock of the liberal international order – albeit ensure the sustained existence of this order – it must recommit itself to strengthening its soft power capabilities.

A NFU pledge would both increase U.S. legitimacy and encourage other countries to adopt similar NFU agreements

Author: Doyle, James. "Nuclear No-First-Use (NFU) is Right for America." *Real Clear Defense*. 12 July 2016 https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2016/07/13/nuclear_no-first-use_nfu_is_right_for_america_109556.html

America's current first-use policy may in fact increase the chances that adversaries will consider nuclear escalation in a non-nuclear conflict. Because they face the possibility of U.S. nuclear first use against their nuclear forces and the risk that nuclear forces surviving such an attack will be too weak to overcome U.S. missile defenses, potential adversaries are put in a position where they are tempted to use their nuclear weapons first or risk losing them. Everything possible should be done to reduce such incentives in a crisis. A nuclear NFU pledge would strengthen strategic and crisis stability while reducing incentives for the prompt use of nuclear weapons during periods of tension without sacrificing U.S. security or that of its allies.

Adopting a nuclear NFU pledge has additional political and strategic benefits. It puts the U.S. on a stronger moral footing in world affairs and is more consistent with our cultural and historical traditions. A NFU pledge would increase U.S. standing among members of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and pressure other nations, like Russia and Pakistan, to adopt similar policies. It would also bring the world a step closer to a potential universal nuclear NFU agreement, with all states possessing nuclear weapons promising never to use them first. Such an agreement would lower the chances of nuclear war for everyone.

NFU doctrines are a first step towards global cooperation and disarmament

Author: Zhang, Hui. "China's No-First-Use Policy Promotes Nuclear Disarmament." *The Diplomat*. 22 May 2013.

https://thediplomat.com/2013/05/chinas-no-first-use-policy-promotes-nuclear-disarmament/

In fact, there is no evidence that China will change its long-standing no-first-use nuclear doctrine. Since its first nuclear explosion in 1964, China has consistently adhered to a nuclear policy that features a minimum deterrent and a no-first-use pledge, both aimed at avoiding a

costly nuclear arms race. This policy has been based on Chinese leaders' perception of the nature and role of nuclear weapons and has been continuously embraced by top Chinese leaders, from Mao Zedong until today. As Mao stated a few months after China's first nuclear test: "We don't wish to have too many atomic bombs ourselves. What would we do with so many? To have a few is just fine." China's nuclear policy has proven to be effective and smart, providing savings that can be used on economic development. As its conventional capabilities grow, Beijing should have more confidence to pursue firmly and unshakably its nuclear policy rather than follow the road of U.S. and Russia's nuclear development. It is unthinkable that China would change its policy to pursue extremely expensive weapons parity with the superpowers. In fact, to make substantial progress towards President Obama's goal of a nuclear-free world, each nuclear weapon state must change its strategic doctrine from one based on preemption to a purely defensive one based on a no-first-use policy. This will provide a solid base to promote further reductions of nuclear weapons. A no-first-use policy could also be an important measure to strengthen the nonproliferation regime, as no-first-use pledges would discourage other states from seeking nuclear weapons by removing a basic proliferation incentive while deemphasizing the role of such weapons. If the nuclear weapons states truly intend to take steps toward a nuclear-free world, it is time for them to adopt a global agreement on no-first-use of nuclear weapons.

NFU strengthens nonproliferation norms and acts as a "diplomatic tool" to demonstrate that a country is responsible; countries like China and India have successfully used NFU to increase their credibility

Author: Tannenwald, Nina. "It's Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy." Texas National Security Review, Volume 2, Issue 3. May 2019. https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/

Several theoretical approaches in international relations help to illuminate why states choose to adopt a first-use versus a no-first-use (NFU) policy. A realist approach, which emphasizes the central role of material capabilities, would generally be skeptical of no-first-use pledges, which it would view as "cheap talk" and unenforceable. States that have made such pledges could still launch a nuclear weapon first in a conflict. Thus, NATO leaders and other observers expressed considerable skepticism during the final years of the Cold War that Russia's declaration of an NFU policy in 1982 had any real substance behind it.1 Today, while India has made an NFU pledge, analysts debate how constraining it really is. In turn, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is sometimes dismissive of China's NFU policy.2 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.3 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.4 China's NFU policy, on the other hand, while consistent with its small nuclear force, is less well explained by asymmetries in conventional forces. China adopted an NFU policy at the time of its first atomic bomb test in 1964, when its peasant army was still transitioning to a modern military force. Part of the explanation

for this decision has to do with Mao's thinking about the nuclear bomb as a "paper tiger," but Chinese leaders have primarily seen an NFU policy as an effective way to signal the purely defensive nature of the small Chinese nuclear arsenal and to avoid a U.S.-Sovietstyle arms race.5 An NFU policy also conveys the spirit of "peaceful coexistence" to which China is committed. The theory that adopting an NFU policy is based on asymmetries in conventional forces is further complicated by the existence of other weapons of mass destruction. During the George W. Bush and Barack Obama years, the strongest argument for the United States to retain the first-use option was that nuclear weapons are necessary to help deter and possibly retaliate against attacks with chemical and especially biological weapons.6 The Trump administration's 2018 Nuclear Posture Review has expanded the category of non-nuclear attacks that it will seek to deter with nuclear threats to include cyber attacks, a move that previous presidents had ruled out and that most observers view skeptically, given its dangerous escalatory potential. A second theoretical perspective, "liberal institutionalism," emphasizes the role of rules and institutions, both domestic and international, in stabilizing expectations and behavior. According to this theory, even if no-first-use pledges are unenforceable, they are not necessarily meaningless. To be meaningful, an NFU pledge must be built into domestic institutions, that is, the structure of operational military capabilities.7 A genuine NFU policy would require that nuclear forces be consistent with an "assured retaliation" posture that eschews counterforce objectives — the ability to destroy an adversary's nuclear arsenal before it is launched. This perspective thus emphasizes the value of an NFU pledge in structuring operational forces to make them smaller and less threatening. When Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, soon after entering office in 1961, sent a directive to the Joint Chiefs of Staff about strategic force requirements, he stated that the first assumption shaping requirements was that "we will not strike first with such weapons."8 McNamara's directive was undoubtedly partly an effort to stem Air Force demands for a first-strike capability and the vast procurement of weaponry it would require. This directive, in effect, repudiated the extended deterrent doctrine that the United States would respond to a Soviet conventional attack in Europe with nuclear weapons. At the international level, liberal institutionalists emphasize the value of rules and institutions to prevent nuclear war. They argue that NFU has become a de facto norm anyway and therefore should be declared publically and multilaterally. As Morton Halperin, who later became deputy assistant secretary of defense for arms control, wrote as early as 1961, "There now exists a powerful informal rule against the use of nuclear weapons," and it would be advantageous to the United States to transform this tacit understanding into a formal agreement.9 Indeed, the "negative security assurances" first issued by the United States and the other P5 countries in 1978 and renewed periodically — commitments to non-nuclear states that are members of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them — already constitute a partial NFU regime. Liberal institutionalists would also point out that constantly touting the value of a nuclear threat for security sends signals that nuclear weapons are useful and undermines nonproliferation goals.10 Finally, constructivists, who focus on the role of norms, identity, and discourse, emphasize that a declared NFU policy is an important way to strengthen norms of nuclear restraint and the nearly 74-year tradition of non-use. Strong statements from leaders about the need to avoid using nuclear weapons can help reduce tensions, just as irresponsible tweets can increase them. In the constructivist view, an NFU policy is also a diplomatic tool that can be used to signal that a state is a responsible nuclear power. As Modi recently put it, "India is a very responsible state. We are the only country to have a declared NFU [sic]. It's not because of world pressure, but because of our own ethos. We will not move away from this, whichever government comes to power."11 Indeed, India's NFU pledge has proved useful for portraying Pakistan as a relatively irresponsible custodian of its nuclear arsenal. Likewise, Indian leaders use their NFU pledge as a way to resist pressures to sign any treaties that would restrict India's nuclear arsenal.

A NFU policy would help with stabilization efforts and could improve dialogue between Russia and the U.S.

Author: Blair, Bruce and Jon Wolfsthal. "We Still Can't 'win' a Nuclear War. Pretending we could is dangerous fantasy." Washington Post. 1 August 2019.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/08/01/we-still-cant-win-nuclear-war-pretending-we-could-is-dangerous-fantasy/

A small but influential sect of true believers in nuclear warfighting often dismiss "no first use" as an agenda promoted by arms control or disarmament advocates. While a pledge not to use nuclear weapons first would open up new avenues for constructive arms control, the

idea is not driven by peacenik impulses, but by a clear-eyed expert assessment of the risks incurred by first use and the benefits of maintaining a deterrent posture that eschews it. Forswearing first use would not only enhance stability but also could enable smarter investments in nuclear weapons, stabilize nuclear crises, raise the threshold of nuclear use, reduce the risk of initiating a nuclear strike on the basis of faulty intelligence, and open up a new avenue for controlling the dangerous and accelerating nuclear competition between Washington and Moscow. If the next president adopts this policy, they could then push the leaders of every other nuclear-armed state to do so (India and China already have). Anything less threatens to undermine the fragile logic of deterrence and could result in a nuclear catastrophe the world had hoped was left behind in the history books.

CON ARGUMENTS

SIGNALING WEAKNESS AND EMBOLDENING ENEMIES

What's the argument?

This argument is in some ways similar to the con argument of decreasing deterrence, but it is a bit more nuanced. The idea of nuclear deterrence focuses on hard power, which is the coercive force that a country gains through by utilizing military might, sanctions, or similar tactics. This argument is less about actual physical strength and more about perceptual strength. Currently, the U.S. is viewed as a global superpower, perhaps the global superpower. We have the largest military and the largest economy. We also have a long history of engaging in global conflicts, a position which has earned us the nickname of being "the world's police force." However, a No First Use policy may undermine the United States' perceptual strength. If the U.S. were to adopt a NFU policy, it may lead other countries to believe that the U.S. is becoming less aggressive, less assertive, and more likely to bow to the demands of other nations. This in turn may increase the likelihood that states act aggressively toward the U.S.

Many sources agree that decreased military strength creates problems. Peabody predicts that a NFU policy would increase the likelihood that countries engage in conflict with the U.S. because such a policy would increase the chance of a successful attack (Peabody). When it comes to soft power, a NFU policy would "call into question [the U.S.'s] extended deterrence guarantees and other security commitments," meaning that the U.S. military overall seems weaker and less likely to intervene in conflicts (King). Jensen corroborates this idea, stating that when a nation grows closer in power to an adversary, that nation is more likely to start a conflict. If other nations view a U.S. NFU policy as an abdication of power, those nations may feel more confident when it comes to competing with the U.S.

For example, if the U.S. has committed to defend small island states in the South China Sea from Chinese expansion, but then enacts a NFU policy, China may view this action as a sign that the U.S. is no longer interested in aggressive foreign policy. This could then lead to more conflict, as China, no longer fearing U.S. intervention, begins to expand in earnest.

This is not merely a theoretical scenario. Already, it is estimated that China would beat the U.S. in a conventional war, meaning that nuclear weaponry may be the only way for the U.S. to prevent or win a war with China (Gilsinan). Moreover, China is modernizing its nuclear arsenal in efforts to match U.S. dominance (Talmadge). Unfortunately, a U.S. NFU policy would limit Washington's strategic options, and China

would view such a policy "as a sign of U.S. military decline" (Chang). In fact, Chang continues that a NFU policy would embolden Chinese president Xi Jinping to pursue his goal of "supplanting the United States as the world's superpower."

The same argument applies to Russia. Recently, New START, an arms control agreement between Russia and the U.S. that aimed to decrease the size of both countries' nuclear arsenals, has largely fallen through (Ward). This failure has led to "'The end of arms control as we know it,'" a bleak forewarning for the future of nuclear relations with Russia (Ward). While tension between Russia and the U.S. has persisted since the Cold War, military tensions between the two countries have "flared" over the course of the last year, and diplomatic relations are already "deteriorating" (Schmitt, Ward). This increasing animosity was exemplified by Russian President Vladimir Putin in June, when he announced that in the event of a major, non-nuclear attack, Russia would use atomic weapons in response; thus, the threshold for nuclear warfare was lowered (Isachenkov). This new aggressive stance threatens global stability but increasing U.S. first-strike capabilities (the opposite of NFU) could actually increase the U.S.'s "coercive leverage" over Russia (Colby). This means that once again, nuclear weapons and their symbolic strength have the ability to increase U.S. influence. If this influence is wielded well, it could help to create a more peaceful world.

Why does the argument matter?

Currently, U.S. nuclear might is one of the many things that we use to coerce other countries. The U.S.'s nuclear power provides the country with a strong bargaining chip and a seat at the global table. Nuclear weapons, and the freedom to wield them as desired, gives us leverage over enemy states. Without the ability to use nuclear weapons first, the U.S. loses some of its leverage. We put this leverage to use over many things. For example, our military prevents rapid Chinese expansion in the South China Sea and protects allies such as Taiwan from Chinese expansion. It allows us to maintain some stability when it comes to unpredictable actors like North Korea and Iran. Without the nuclear bomb in its toolbelt, the U.S. may lose enough coercive power to negatively impact foreign policy. This could lead to increased aggression toward the U.S. on the part of enemy states, but it could also lead to aggression against U.S. allies. Increased animosity could spark escalating conflicts that eventually lead to war, or at least casualties.

Main Players

Adversaries, U.S. military leaders, U.S. government

Strategy Considerations

This is an argument that could work well in tandem with a traditional deterrence argument. For example, teams could effectively run a one-contention con case with two subpoints: deterrence and signaling weakness. The deterrence subpoint could focus on the hard power that is lost when the U.S. enacts a NFU policy (see "deterrence" for more details). The signaling weakness subpoint could then magnify the deterrence argument by focusing on soft power and perceptual dominance. This would be a strategic choice, as teams would then cover both soft and hard power in one cohesive case. This would also allow for good weighing, as teams could explain that in all avenues of foreign policy, a NFU agreement would undermine U.S. strength.

If teams wish to run this argument on its own, they should focus on explaining the importance of U.S. soft power. Why is it important that the U.S. remain perceptually dominant? In this situation, teams may want to consider including specific examples of where U.S. dominance matters, for example, in regions affected by Chinese or Russian expansion. This argument is overall quite strong, because if teams can tie this argument into existing conflicts and foreign policy issues, they can then impact their cases to real, tangible events, rather than to the nebulous -- and probably unlikely-- nuclear war scenarios that will be discussed by most teams.

Evidence for Signaling Weakness and Emboldening Enemies

NFU would encourage enemies to make more "brazen" attacks and erode our second-strike capabilities

Author: Peabody, Brent. "How to Make the U.S. Military Weak Again." *The National Interest.* 21 September 2019. https://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-make-us-military-weak-again-81891

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 could embolden adversaries by increasing their chance of initial wartime success

Author: King, Iain. "A commitment to never use nuclear weapons first will not make us safer." *The Hill.* 26 December 2019. https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/475965-a-commitment-to-never-use-nuclear-weapons-first-will-not-make-us-safer

However, upon closer examination, these benefits are illusory. "No First Use" is almost impossible to verify in peacetime. In a crisis situation, few would trust any adversarial nuclear powers to keep their "No First Use" pledge. Instead, they would expect them to qualify their commitments to gain leverage because interests, not stated commitments, will remain a much more trustworthy guide to their behavior. Finally, how could a "No First Use" policy deter the use of other weapons of mass destruction? It may embolden adversaries to attack by increasing the odds of success. The last point here is most notable, particularly for the United Kingdom and France, which are democracies with limited conventional forces and nuclear arsenals kept at a "strict sufficiency" level. If massed forces were threatening the vital interests of the United Kingdom or France, then they might have to consider signaling a possible nuclear response. For both countries, "No First Use" is neither practical nor credible. Moreover, even if the United States adopted the posture, the United Kingdom and France would have to demur, creating a possibly damaging split in the alliance. Further, for the United States to adopt a "No First Use" stance would call into question their extended deterrence guarantees and other security commitments. This could tempt some adversaries to attack United States allies without

fearing an escalation, therefore transforming a tactical win against some of those same allies into a strategic victory against Western democracies. It could even invite doubt in the minds of our adversaries whether the "one for all, all for one" Article Five commitment at the heart of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was still valid. To offset such a risk, significant conventional reinforcements would be required, which would have a large impact on resources and could also be destabilizing. In extremes, allies may feel it necessary to develop nuclear programs of their own. Far from limiting nuclear dangers, "No First Use" could actually spur proliferation. Because of these real dangers, when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization considered "No First Use" in 1999, it had rejected the policy decisively. President Obama, who had won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2009, offered a credible path toward a world free from nuclear weapons, declaring his firm conclusion that "No First Use" was not the way to go.

War becomes likelier when one nation, like China or Russia, grows closer in power to other nations.

Author: Jensen, Lloyd. "Global Security and International Political Economy." *Journal of International Conflict*. September 2010.
https://books.google.com/books?id=TffhDAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=During%20the%20period%20when%20the%20dominant%20power%20feels%20that%20it%20may%20be%20surpassed%2C%20it%20has%20an%20incentive%20to%20strike%20a%20challenger%20preemptively%2C%20hoping%20to%20forestall%20the%20inevitable.%20It%20is%20also%20when%20the%20two%20are%20moving%20toward%20equality%20that%20the%20challenger%2C%20perhaps%20due%20to%20the%20overconfidence%20stemming%20from%20its%20rapid%20growth%20or%20the%20desire%20to%20speed%20up%20the%20process%2C%20attacks%20in%20an%20effort%20to%20achieve%20victory.%20In%20fact%2C%20the%20faster%20the%20rate%20of%20the%20power%20transition%2C%20the%20greater%20the%20probability%20of%20war%2C%20according%20to%20the%20authors&f=false

Rather than looking at the power balance in a static way, A. F. K Organski and Jacek Kugler in the War Ledger developed what they referred to as a power transition model showing major wars to be most likely when power transitions are underway. During the period when the dominant power feels that it may be surpassed, it has an incentive to strike a challenger preemptively, hoping to forestall the inevitable. It is also when the two are moving toward equality that the challenger, perhaps due to the overconfidence stemming from its rapid growth or the desire to speed up the process, attacks in an effort to achieve victory. In fact, the faster the rate of the power transition, the greater the probability of war, according to the authors. The empirical results from studies looking at the effect of polarity on war have been inconclusive, both because scholars have covered different periods and have used different methods of analysis. Other factors, such as whether or not systemic power is concentrated among the satisfied or the dissatisfied states, may affect the findings. Thus, when power was concentrated among dissatisfied states, war was found to be more likely. Charles W. Kegley Jr. and Gregory A Raymond in A Multipolar Peace? Found that in relating patterns of alignment to polarization, "Alliances can weaken the prospects for a multipolar peace if they combine capabilities in a highly polarized manner, or if they become so diffuse that it is difficult to ascertain who is in league with whom from one issue to the next. On the other hand, alliances can contribute to the chances of achieving peace in a multipolar world if they retain a modest amount of flexibility.

Emboldening China

China would likely beat the U.S. in a conventional war

Author: Gilsinan, Kathy. "How the U.S. Could Lose a War With China." *The Atlantic.* 25 July 2019. https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/07/china-us-war/594793/

If a war broke out between the United States and China, the clash between two of the world's most powerful militaries would be horrific. And the United States could very well lose. That's a concern among current and former defense officials and military analysts, one of whom told Breaking Defense earlier this year that in war games simulating great-power conflict in which the United States fights Russia and China, the United States "gets its ass handed to it." Speaking at the Aspen Security Forum last week, Admiral Philip Davidson, who oversees U.S. military forces in Asia, called China "the greatest long-term strategic threat to the United States and the rules-based international order." He described China's rapid military buildup in nearly every domain—air, sea, land, space, and cyber—and said that while China's capabilities don't outnumber America's in the region for now, it's possible they could overtake the United States' within the next five years. But the sheer number of ships, missiles, planes, and people doesn't tell the whole story. What already gives the Chinese the advantage is geography. The Obama administration's ill-fated Asia pivot did not prevent the growth of China's military and economic power in the region, as it built artificial islands, embedded itself in key infrastructure projects, and invested in its military. Meanwhile, President Donald Trump has called into question whether the United States would defend its treaty allies in the Pacific, such as Japan, with complaints about the expense. (Davidson said at Aspen that "there is no more important American ally in the world than Japan.")

China is currently modernizing its nuclear arsenal

Author: Talmadge, Caitlin. "The US-China Nuclear Relationship: Why Competition is Likely to Intensify." *The Brookings Institution.* September 2019. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FP_20190930_china_nuclear_weapons_talmadge-2.pdf

Like the United States and Russia, China is currently engaged in a major long-term effort to modernize its nuclear forces. The overall result of these changes is a force that is gradually growing larger and becoming more capable of penetrating missile defenses, better able to hold at risk U.S. cities, quicker to fire, and more easily concealed from U.S. intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets. In short, it is a force that is raising the bar for any U.S. attempt to meaningfully limit damage, although where exactly that bar lies depends on the subjective perceptions of both Chinese and U.S. decisionmakers. Propelled by both strategic imperatives and bureaucratic preferences, China has made the most significant strides with respect to the land-based missile force that has traditionally formed the backbone of its arsenal. The best open-source estimates suggest that China now possesses roughly 290 warheads that can be delivered by 180-190 land-based missiles, 48 sea-based ballistic missiles, and bombers.17 This compares with a U.S. force of about 4,000 warheads. In recent years China is believed to have fielded a roadmobile, medium-range ballistic missile, the DF-21; an intermediate-range ballistic missile, the DF-26, which, like the DF-21, also has a conventional variant; and an ICBM, the DF-31AG, with an improved transportererector launcher (TEL). The latter is a variant of China's DF-31A, the primary ICBM it has deployed over the past decade and the one that can hold at risk targets in the continental United States.18 For the past two decades China also has been developing the DF-41, a new roadmobile ICBM capable of carrying multiple independent re-entry vehicles (MIRVs). In addition, China appears to be in the process of MIRV-ing its legacy, silo-based ICBMs. Finally, China is modernizing its command and control (C2) systems in order to operate its nuclear forces more effectively in a crisis or war.

A NFU policy would embolden China by signaling a decline of U.S. military strength

Author: Chang, Paris H. "No-first use would only embolden China." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.* 21 September 2016. https://thebulletin.org/roundtable_entry/no-first-use-would-only-embolden-china/

These are examples of the United States showing determination to use its overwhelming military power, perhaps including nuclear arms, to defend its interests and allies. A U.S. nuclear no-first-use pledge, however, would squander an important piece of Washington's power. It would limit strategic options, undermine the credibility of Washington's promises to defend allies (South Korea in particular would be worried), and reduce U.S. ability to deter aggression. All in all, it would be a gross strategic mistake. 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 U.S. 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. U.S. officials were incensed over the general's brazen threat to use nuclear weapons first against U.S. cities. China is by no means a status quo power. Rather, it seeks to change the international order. It is contesting U.S. 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 U.S. 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 U.S. military decline, and he would only be emboldened to pursue China's dream of supplanting the United States as the world's superpower.

China is greatly expanding its supply of nuclear weapons

Author: Hennigan, W.J. and John Wallcott. "The U.S. Expects China Will Quickly Double Its Nuclear Stockpile." *Time*. 29 May 2019. https://time.com/5597955/china-nuclear-weapons-intelligence/

China is expected to increase its nuclear weapons stockpile by twofold in the coming decade, according to a new U.S. military intelligence assessment, part of a sweeping build-up of Beijing's strategic arsenal. "Over the next decade, China is likely to at least double the size of its nuclear stockpile in the course of implementing the most rapid expansion and diversification of its nuclear arsenal in China's history," Lt. Gen. Robert Ashley, the director of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency said during a speech on Wednesday. Speaking at the Hudson Institute in Washington, Ashley also accused both China and Russia of covertly testing low-yield nuclear weapons in violation of a 23-year old international treaty. The allegation came less than three months before the expected end of the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces agreement with Russia; and two years from the expiration of the landmark New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or New START.

Emboldening Russia

A recent U.S.-Russia nuclear treaty has largely fallen-through

Author: Ward, Alex. "The end of arms control as we know it." *Vox*. 3 August 2020. https://www.vox.com/world/21131449/trump-putin-nuclear-usa-russia-arms-control-new-start

"We went right into the nuclear issue," said a conference member, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak openly about the event. "There was a belief we were in serious danger because it's the end of arms control as we know it." "It was dramatic and sobering," the member added. The U.S. and Russia were then barely over a year away from losing the last major arms control agreement between them: New START, short for the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. That agreement limits the size of the two countries' nuclear arsenals, which together account for 93 percent of all nuclear warheads on earth. The deal expires on February 5, 2021, and those sitting around the table feared its demise. The trepidation inspired the group's four co-chairs to do something the Dartmouth Conference hadn't done in its 60-year existence: release a statement. "Given the deep concerns we share about the security of our peoples, for the first time in our history we are compelled by the urgency of the situation to issue this public appeal to our governments," they wrote, calling for theU.S.and Russia to invoke the treaty's five-year extension. Today, roughly half a year before New START stops, the group's members continue to stress the consequences. "We're at a decisive point," said retired U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Peter Zwack, who was at the December meetings. "The entire arms control regime of the past 50 years is about to pass."

Military tensions between the U.S. and Russia are intensifying

Author: Schmitt, Eric. "U.S.-Russia Military Tensions Intensify in the Air and on the Ground Worldwide." *The New York Times*. 1 September 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/01/us/politics/us-russia-military-tensions.html

WASHINGTON — 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. These altercations and close calls in midair, at sea and on the ground have occurred periodically over the past two years as part of an expanding rivalry and military buildup, with echoes of the Cold War, between Washington and Moscow. But American officials note a recent surge of near-simultaneous episodes, each increasing the chances for accident and miscalculation. "Russia's aggressive action appears to have picked up in recent months," said Curtis M. Scaparrotti, a retired Army general and former top NATO military commander. "I suspect they see an opportunity during Covid focus to be more aggressive. They are also aware of the U.S. reduction in Germany and other tensions in the alliance. A good time to add a little stress?" When asked about the episode in northeastern Syria last week, Mr. Pompeo said, "These are the kinds of things that we work closely with the Russians to say this is unacceptable behavior, that America will respond."

Russia-U.S. relations are deteriorating

Author: Ward, Alex. "The U.S. and Russia may be getting closer to a military confrontation." *Vox.* 20 June 2017. https://www.vox.com/world/2017/6/20/15840744/trump-russia-syria-usa-drone-baltic-sea

One of President Donald Trump's stated goals during the presidential campaign was to bring the U.S. and Russia closer together. Based on the events of the past few days, the two nations seem further apart than ever — and potentially at real risk of coming to blows. Take the events of the past 72 hours alone. Yesterday over the Baltic Sea, a Russian fighter jet flying too fast and erratically came very close to a U.S. plane, perhaps to within 5 feet. This past Sunday, the U.S. shot down a Syrian warplane, the first time America had done that during Syria's civil war. That angered the Russians — allies of the Syrian government — to the point that its Ministry of Defense threatened to target U.S. or allied aircraft flying over Syria west of the Euphrates River. The U.S. ignored Moscow's harsh words and shot down a Syrian drone Tuesday, something certain not to go unnoticed in the Kremlin. Taken together, the incidents highlight the deteriorating relationship between the United States and Russia, the world's top two nuclear powers. And it's not looking like they're going to become friends anytime soon, especially in Syria. There, both countries have a contact channel open to ensure they don't get into a military altercation. But Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesperson, today seemed to indicate that the communications channel is not working like it did before last

Sunday's skirmish in Syria. "We prefer to keep this channel of communication open," Davis told reporters today. "We still maintain our end of it. I'll leave it to the Russians to state what they're doing." That bodes poorly for the Trump administration as it tries to keep the already tense situation in the active war zone from getting worse. In effect, the risk of a military skirmish between the two countries is growing — and fast. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is already aware that the relationship with Russia isn't going well. "Our relationship's at an all-time low, and it's been deteriorating further," he told members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week. "Our objective is to stabilize that." But it doesn't help that the countries are on different sides of the Syria conflict.

Russian policy allows use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear threats

Author: Isachenkov, Vladimir. "New Russian policy allows use of atomic weapons against non-nuclear strike." *Defense News.* 2 June 2020.
https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2020/06/02/new-russian-policy-allows-use-of-atomic-weapons-against-non-nuclear-strike/

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday endorsed Russia's nuclear deterrent policy, which allows him to use atomic weapons in response to a conventional strike targeting the nation's critical government and military infrastructure. By including a non-nuclear attack as a possible trigger for Russian nuclear retaliation, the document appears to send a warning signal to the U.S. The new expanded wording reflects Russian concerns about the development of prospective weapons that could give Washington the capability to knock out key military assets and government facilities without resorting to atomic weapons. In line with Russian military doctrine, the new document reaffirms that the country could use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack or an aggression involving conventional weapons that "threatens the very existence of the state." But the policy document now also offers a detailed description of situations that could trigger the use of nuclear weapons. They include the use of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction against Russia or its allies and an enemy attack with conventional weapons that threatens the country's existence. In addition to that, the document now states that Russia could use its nuclear arsenals if it gets "reliable information" about the launch of ballistic missiles targeting its territory or its allies and also in the case of "enemy impact on critically important government or military facilities of the Russian Federation, the incapacitation of which could result in the failure of retaliatory action of nuclear forces."

U.S. first-strike capabilities give the U.S. "coercive leverage" over Russia

Author: Colby, Elbridge. "The Role of Nuclear Weapons in the U.S.-Russian Relationship." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.* 26 February 2016.
https://carnegieendowment.org/2016/02/26/role-of-nuclear-weapons-in-u.s.-russian-relationship-pub-62901

Nonetheless, Moscow evinces serious concern about the survivability of its forces in the face of a determined U.S. attack—one that Russians fear could involve not only nuclear strikes but also conventional and non-kinetic (such as cyber) attacks backstopped by missile defenses designed to "mop up" residual forces that survived such an assault. As evidence of this, Moscow points to Washington's missile defense architecture (including its advanced sensors on earth and in space), its conventional strike capabilities, and its dauntingly capable and far-reaching command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, or C4ISR, networks.
America's military prowess as well as some scholarship and discussion in the United States have fueled Russian fears by signifying that the United States might be seeking and could attain a disarming first strike capability.2 Such a capability, if achieved, could obviate the relationship of mutual vulnerability and thereby give the United States substantially greater coercive leverage over Russia. Moscow's concerns appear to be, at least in part, substantially genuine, although overwrought for the near to medium term. Some of Moscow's publicly expressed anxieties are, however, likely a form of strategic bargaining, since the Kremlin has a vested interest in—and long history of—seeking to restrain American and NATO

military developments by loudly lamenting their destabilizing quality and has been decidedly unreceptive to what appear to be reasonable efforts to allay those concerns. Nonetheless, the fears appear sufficiently real to have acted as one of the primary drivers, if not the primary one, of Russia's comprehensive modernization of its strategic deterrent over the past fifteen years.

UNDERMINING DETERRENCE

What's the argument?

Opponents of no first use often argue that nuclear deterrence is a powerful tool that the U.S. uses to prevent conventional attacks on ourselves and our allies. Historically, this is a valid argument; no nuclear power has ever been invaded, and we haven't seen a major power conflict in over 70 years. Even more specifically, within the last few decades, the U.S. has invaded Grenada, Panama, and Iraq, but not Cuba, a country protected by nuclear deterrence. Further, the Soviet Union invaded Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan, but no U.S. allies (Tertrais 11). While, by its nature, deterrence is impossible to prove empirically, this historical evidence, coupled with the logic that nuclear weapons have the potential to threaten the entire existence of a country, indicates that nuclear deterrence works (Keck 14; Waltz 81).

This deterrence, scholars argue, cannot be matched by conventional weapons alone (Zimmerman 17). Conventional weapons simply do not pose the same devastating threat as nuclear ones. Thus, conventional weapons don't have the same impact on "decision calculus" of leaders (Grossman 12). Additionally, the threat posed by conventional weapons is somewhat unpredictable and relies on the exact circumstances, as opposed to the guaranteed devastation posed by nuclear weapons, meaning conventional weapons do not have the same deterrent capability (Wirtz 18).

In addition to deterring conventional attacks, nuclear first-strike capabilities also deter nuclear attacks because we maintain military dominance (Younger 00). Coupled with the fact that North Korea and Russia, our primary nuclear adversaries, have shown no indication that they would adopt no first use, the policy would put us in a vulnerable position against our adversaries (Owens & Drozdenko; Tannenwald). In the absence of nuclear first-strike capabilities, scholars argue that we could see a conventional arms race, significantly increasing the likelihood of war (Arbatov 20; Glaser 00).

Ultimately, opponents of no first use argue that in a world with the policy, we would see a surge in conventional attacks against theU.S.and our allies, as our adversaries are emboldened by the lack of a nuclear threat. This could lead to conventional war, costing millions of lives (Gillespie 18; Zimmerman 17). If the conflict results in a nuclear war, death toll estimates range between 13 and 34 million, with casualties extending to nearly 92 million (Daugherty, Levi, & Von Hippel; "New study… first few hours").

Why does the argument matter?

The conventional wisdom surrounding nuclear weapons indicates that the threat that they pose deters our adversaries from launching devastating conventional attacks against theU.S.as they may face nuclear retaliation. This deterrence would disappear with no first use, as conventional attacks would never warrant a nuclear response, potentially triggering devastating attacks and costing millions of lives (Gillespie 18; Zimmerman 17).

Main Players

Military strategists, hostile leaders, American civilians, vulnerable allies

Strategy Considerations

Deterrence is an extremely common argument made in opposition to no first use. There has been a plethora of writings on it, and both sides of a round should be prepared to discuss whether or not nuclear deterrence (1) works and (2) can be replaced by conventional deterrence.

While it is a common argument, deterrence is difficult to argue in the context of a debate round as, by its nature, there is no way to empirically prove that deterrence occurred. We can point to historical patterns and expert opinions, but there is no way to prove what would have happened if nuclear weapons had or had not been involved. Thus, teams must clearly develop their narrative going into the round and be willing and able to adapt it as the round progresses in order to effectively paint a “doomsday” picture for the judge.

Evidence for Undermining Deterrence

Nuclear weapons deter conventional attacks

Nuclear deterrence is historically proven

Author: Tertrais, Bruno. "In Defense of Deterrence: The Relevance, Morality, and Cost-Effectiveness of Nuclear Weapons." *Proliferation Papers.* Fall 2011. https://www.nonproliferation.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/brunotertrais4ebbda42d7115.pdf

It is by definition impossible to prove that deterrence has worked, and correlation is not causality. But History gives us solid arguments in support of the positive role played by nuclear weapons, especially since our "database" now covers nearly 70 years. *No major power conflict has taken place in nearly 70 years --* The role of nuclear deterrence to explain this historical anomaly has been highlighted by leading historians and authors such as John Lewis Gaddis, Kenneth Waltz, and Michael Quinlan. No comparable period of time has ever existed in the history of States. There were two dozen conflicts among major powers in the equivalent amount of time following the Treaties of Westphalia (1648), and several after the Vienna Congress (1815). *There has never been a direct military conflict between two nuclear States* -- Beyond this mere observation, two recent quantitative studies have shown that the possession of nuclear weapons by two countries significantly reduced - all things equal - the likelihood of war between them. Events in Asia since 1949 provide an interesting test case. China and India fought a war in 1962, but have refrained from resorting to arms against each other ever since. There were three India-Pakistan wars (1962, 1965 and 1971) before both countries became nuclear; but since the late 1980s (when the two countries acquired a minimum nuclear capability), none of the two has launched any significant air or land operations against the other. *No nuclear-armed country has ever been invaded* - This proposition too can be tested by the evolution of regional crises. Israel had been invaded in 1948, on the day of its independence. But in 1973, Arab States deliberately limited their operations to disputed territories (the Sinai and the Golan Heights). It is thus incorrect to take the example of the Yom Kippur war as a "proof" of the failure of nuclear deterrence. Likewise, India refrained from penetrating Pakistani territory at the occasion of the crises of 1990, 1999, 2002 and 2008, whereas it had done so in 1965 and 1971. Another example is sometimes mistakenly counted as a failure of nuclear deterrence: the Falklands War (1982). But this was a British Dependent Territory for which nothing indicated that it was covered by nuclear deterrence. Furthermore, it would be erroneous to take these two events as evidence that extended deterrence does not make sense, as some authors have done ("if nuclear weapons cannot protect part of the national territory, how could they protect a foreign country?"). Extended deterrence is meant to cover interests that are much more important to the protector than non-essential territories; for instance, during the Cold War Germany was much more "vital" to the United States than, say, Puerto Rico. *No country covered by a nuclear guarantee has ever been the target of a major State attack* - Here again evidence is hard to give, but can be found a *contrario*. The United States refrained from invading Cuba in 1962, for instance, but did not hesitate in invading Grenada, Panama or Iraq. The Soviet Union invaded Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan, but not a single U.S. ally. China has refrained from invading Taiwan, which benefits from a U.S. defense commitment. North Korea invaded its southern neighbor in 1950 after Washington had excluded it from its "defensive perimeter", but has refrained from doing so since Seoul has been covered with a nuclear guarantee. Neither South Vietnam nor Kuwait were under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. Russia could afford to invade Georgia because its country was not a NATO member. A parietal exception is the shelling of Yeongpyeong island (2011); but the limited character of the attack and its location (in a maritime area not recognized by Pyongyang as being part of South Korean territory) make it hard to count it as a major failure of extended deterrence.

Nuclear deterrence works

Author: Keck, Zachary. "Why Nuclear Weapons Work." *The Diplomat.* 13 September 2014.
https://thediplomat.com/2014/09/why-nuclear-weapons-work/

That being said, just because deterrence is easier than coercion doesn't mean deterrence is easy. History is replete with examples of conventional deterrence failing. Why should we think nuclear weapons are any different? Fortunately, Thomas Schelling answered this question a long time ago. Specifically, he argued that what makes nuclear weapons revolutionary is not their massive destructive power per se. Since before people were food producers, it had always been possible for the victorious side in a war to exterminate their enemy's now-defenseless population. Still, this wasn't always effective at deterring states from going to war. The main reason for this was that a state had to defeat its adversary's military before it could destroy its population. Even if one state is much stronger than the other, they couldn't be certain of successfully destroying the other side's army. War contains a great deal of certainty. In the same vein, however, the uncertainty of war also allows leaders of weaker states to attack stronger ones if they are desperate enough. Probably the best example of this, of course, is Imperial Japan's decision to attack Pearl Harbor. Most Japanese leaders understood that they were taking a huge gamble by attacking the United States, and that losing that gamble would lead to their ruin. However, they were in a desperate situation without any good options, and by definition gambles sometimes pay off. What makes nuclear weapons so effective for deterrence purposes is that they eliminate the uncertainty in war. With nuclear weapons, states no longer have to defeat an adversary's military to destroy its cities and citizens. Furthermore, there are no real defenses against nuclear missiles, and those missiles travel quickly. Thus, leaders know that if they use nuclear weapons against or threaten the existence of a nuclear weapon state, it is virtually certain their major cities will be destroyed within hours. A metaphor may here be useful. And this being football season, we might as well use a football metaphor. Attacking a much more powerful non-nuclear state (like the U.S. in 1941) is akin to betting on the Buffalo Bills to win the Super Bowl. The Buffalo Bills have never won a Super Bowl, and their starting quarterback would be the third stringer on most teams. Thus, anyone who bets on the Bills to win the Super Bowl this year shouldn't anticipate getting their money back. Nonetheless, it's not beyond the realm of possibility that the Bills somehow become a Super Bowl contender. By contrast, threatening the existence of a state with a secure nuclear arsenal is akin to betting on the New York Yankees to win the Super Bowl this year. The New York Yankees aren't a football team, and so they have zero chance of winning the Super Bowl. Betting on them to win the Super Bowl isn't a gamble; it's a donation. The same is true with threatening the existence of a nuclear-armed state. You aren't taking a large risk that could end in the destruction of your cities. You are virtually guaranteeing the destruction of your cities. This is a bad bet no matter the expected pay off – which is why nuclear deterrence works.

Nuclear weapons make cost of war extremely high

Author: Waltz, Kenneth. "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better." *Adelphi Papers*. 1981.
https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/waltz1.htm

Nuclear weapons have been the second force working for peace in the post-war world. They make the cost of war seem frighteningly high and thus discourage states from starting any wars that might lead to the use of such weapons. Nuclear weapons have helped maintain peace between the great powers and have not led their few other possessors into military adventures.5 Their further spread, however, causes widespread fear. Much of the writing about the spread of nuclear weapons has this unusual trait: It tells us that what did no, happen in the past is likely to happen in the future, that tomorrow's nuclear states are likely to do to one another what today's nuclear states have not done. A happy nuclear past leads many to expect an unhappy nuclear future. This is odd, and the oddity leads me to believe that we should reconsider how weapons affect the situation of their possessors.

Nuclear weapons are the only effective form of deterrence

Author: Zimmerman, Peter. "Nuclear weapons deter conventional wars." *Gulf News.* 16 September 2017.
https://gulfnews.com/opinion/op-eds/nuclear-weapons-deter-conventional-wars-1.2091053#:~:text=This%20month%2C%20the%20Treaty%20on,signature%20at%20the%20United%20Nations.&text=Nuclear%20weapons%20also%20deter%20conventional,come%20into%20direct%20armed%20conflict.

"Conventional weapons have never been enough to deter war. Two world wars showed us that. They also showed us how terrible a war fought even with conventional weapons can be. Yet, nuclear weapons have deterred not only nuclear war but conventional war in Europe as well. A world without nuclear weapons may be a dream, but you cannot base a sure defence on dreams. Without far greater trust and confidence between East and West than exists at present, a world without nuclear weapons would be less stable and more dangerous for all of us." The planet would be safer with far fewer nuclear weapons, but more dangerous with none; and would be a way to prove all such weapons have been eliminated.

Nuclear weapons provide military dominance

Nuclear weapons provide a threat of retaliation

Author: Younger, Stephen. "Nuclear Weapons in the Twenty-First Century." *Federation of American Scientists.* 27 June 2000.
https://fas.org/nuke/guide/usa/doctrine/doe/younger.htm

Even with the dramatic changes that have occurred in the world during the past decade, nuclear warplanning today is similar in many respects to what it was during the Cold War. The Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) is focused on a massive counterattack strategy that aims to eliminate the ability of an adversary to inflict further damage to American interests. Nuclear weapons provide an assured retaliatory capability to convince any adversary that aggression or coercion would be met with a response that would be certain, overwhelming, and devastating. It is often, but not universally, thought that nuclear weapons would be used only in extremis, when the nation is in the gravest danger. While there has been some discussion of "single weapon" strikes against isolated targets, such as sites of weapons of mass destruction, most of the attention in nuclear strategy has been and is directed toward large-scale engagements. This may not be true in the future. The advance of conventional weapons technology may result in the ability of conventional weapons to perform some of the missions currently assigned to nuclear weapons. For example, take the case of a road mobile ballistic missile. If one knows the location of such a target and if one can place a conventional weapon on that target with meter-scale accuracy, then it can be destroyed without a nuclear weapon. On the other hand, if one does not know the location of the target to within many kilometers then even a nuclear weapon may not destroy it. The key parameters required for target destruction are intelligence and precision delivery, not the explosive force of the weapon. However, even if a weapon is precisely delivered to the correct target point, countermeasures as simple as steel netting, boulder fields, or decoys complicate reliance on conventional weapons with limited radii of destruction.

Conventional weapons cannot replace nuclear weapons

Conventional weapons do not deter attacks

Author: Grossman, Elaine. "Conventional Arms No Substitute for Nuclear: Strategic Command Official." *NTI.* 29 February 2012.
https://www.nti.org/gsn/article/conventional-arms-no-substitute-nuclear-strategic-command-official/

WASHINGTON -- A U.S. Strategic Command official said recently that **conventional weapons cannot substitute in any "meaningful" way for nuclear weapons**, a view that appears to diverge somewhat from an Obama administration focus on reducing the role of atomic arms in ensuring national security (see GSN, Feb. 16). "**You can't replace nuclear weapons today with conventional capability**," Greg Weaver, the combatant command's deputy director for plans and policy, said on Feb. 16 at a symposium just outside of Washington. "They don't have the same effects on targets, but as a result **they don't have the same effects on people's decision calculus**." President Obama in April 2009 called for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide and pledged "concrete steps" toward that end, even while promising to keep remaining U.S. atomic arms "safe, secure and effective." Achieving the goal of zero nuclear arms might not be possible within his lifetime, he acknowledged.

Conventional deterrence is unpredictable compared to nuclear

Author: Wirtz, James. "How does nuclear deterrence differ from conventional deterrence?" *Strategic Studies Quarterly.* Winter 2018.
https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/SSQ/documents/Volume-12_Issue-4/Wirtz.pdf

Nuclear and conventional deterrence are in fact quite different in terms of theory, practice, and impact. The differences play out in various ways depending on whether strategies of denial, punishment, or retaliation constitute the basis of the deterrent threat. The fact that battle outcomes with conventional weapons are so difficult to predict highlights the observation that **conventional deterrent threats are "contestable."** The contestability of conventional threats can raise doubts in the minds of those targeted by conventional deterrence concerning the capability of the side issuing deterrent threats to actually succeed. **Contestability is the Achilles' heel of conventional deterrence.** By contrast, **deterrent threats based on nuclear weapons are largely uncontestable. They offer an ideal deterrent capability because they tend to eliminate optimism about a positive war outcome.** The fact that nuclear threats are uncontestable does not guarantee that they will be viewed as credible, while the contestable nature of conventional threats does not preclude their credibility.

Our adversaries would never adopt NFS

It is unlikely that Russia would adopt a no first strike policy

Author: Tannenwald, Nina, James M. Acton, and Jane Vaynman. "The Great Unraveling: The Future of the Nuclear Normative Order." *American Academy of Arts and Sciences.* https://www.amacad.org/publication/emerging-risks-declining-norms/section/3

Analysts debate whether Russia plans to rely on a so-called "escalate to de-escalate" strategy—a limited nuclear strike involving a few low-yield nuclear weapons in response to large-scale aggression with conventional weapons by NATO. On the positive side, it is likely Russia's threshold for nuclear use will rise as its long-range conventional precision-strike capabilities improve.50 However, Russia, Pakistan, and likely North Korea believe nuclear weapons are a legitimate means to deter and counter a conventional threat, a retreat from the view that nuclear weapons should be used only to deter other nuclear weapons.

It is unlikely that North Korea would adopt a no first strike policy

Author: Owens, Jasmine and Tara Drozdenko. "Q & A: No First Use of Nuclear Weapons." *Outrider Post*.
https://outrider.org/nuclear-weapons/articles/qa-no-first-use-nuclear-weapons/

North Korea has not adopted an NFU policy. North Korea would consider launching a preemptive nuclear first strike on the U.S. and its allies if it thought an attack was imminent.

Conventional arms race

Without nuclear weapons, we'd see a conventional arms race

Author: Arbatov, Alexey and Igor Ivanov. "Untangling the Knot of Strategic Arms Control." *NTI*. 7 May 2020.
https://www.nti.org/analysis/opinions/untangling-knot-strategic-arms-control/

Following the abrogation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in 2019, no steps are being considered for prevention of a new arms race with medium-range missiles. Discussions about extending the 2011 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) between the United States and Russia, beyond its February 2021 expiration date, have stagnated. As a direct effect of the pandemic, on-site inspections, which are a key element of the New START verification regime, have been interrupted. The 50th Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), scheduled for April/May 2020 in New York, has been postponed until next year. COVID-19, however, has not visibly affected the main weapons programs of the United States, Russia, China, and other leading military powers. A new cycle of the nuclear and advanced conventional arms race is gaining momentum. Against the background of the collapse of nuclear arms control regimes, this arms race inevitably will exacerbate controversies among the great powers, creating a high probability of armed conflict and the ensuing risk of nuclear escalation. If, God forbid, this were to happen, the current crisis caused by the pandemic would look like a minor inconvenience.

Arms races increase probability of war

Author: Glaser, Charles. "The Causes and Consequences of Arms Races." *Annual Review of Political Science*. June 2000.
https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev.polisci.3.1.251#_i6

Much of the empirical work on whether arms races lead to war has analyzed large data sets built on data from the Correlates of War project (see Sample 1997, Siverson & Diehl 1989 for reviews). Wallace (1979) launched this line of research with a study of whether serious disputes between nations engaged in an arms race have a significantly greater probability of resulting in war than those between states engaged in more normal military competition. Wallace chose to focus on states that were involved in serious disputes to insure that their arms buildups were directed at each other and not coincidental. He analyzed 99 militarized international disputes and found a strong statistical association between arms races and the escalation of crises to war. Wallace cautioned that "it is conceivable that the result is a spurious effect of ongoing hostility and tension between the powers" but concludes nevertheless that it is difficult to argue that "arms races play no role in the process of leading to the outset of war."

Nuclear weapons prevent war, saving lives

Nuclear weapons have deterred conventional war

Author: Zimmerman, Peter. "Nuclear weapons deter conventional wars." *Gulf News.* 16 September 2017.
https://gulfnews.com/opinion/op-eds/nuclear-weapons-deter-conventional-wars-1.2091053#:~:text=This%20month%2C%20the%20Treaty%20on,signature%20at%20the%20United%20Nations.&text=Nuclear%20weapons%20also%20deter%20conventional,come%20into%20direct%20armed%20conflict.

"Conventional weapons have never been enough to deter war. Two world wars showed us that. They also showed us how terrible a war fought even with conventional weapons can be. Yet, nuclear weapons have deterred not only nuclear war but conventional war in Europe as well. A world without nuclear weapons may be a dream, but you cannot base a sure defence on dreams. Without far greater trust and confidence between East and West than exists at present, a world without nuclear weapons would be less stable and more dangerous for all of us." The planet would be safer with far fewer nuclear weapons, but more dangerous with none; and would be a way to prove all such weapons have been eliminated.

Conventional war costs millions of lives

Author: Gillespie, Alexander. "War doesn't have to be nuclear to kill indiscriminately." *Al Jazeera.* 9 February 2018.
https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/war-doesn-nuclear-kill-indiscriminately-180206083929549.html

Over the past year, the escalation of tensions between the United States and North Korea has caused much anxiety about the possibility of a nuclear war. Since the creation of the first nuclear bomb and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, international diplomacy has focused its non-proliferation efforts on nuclear weapons. In doing so, it has overlooked the proliferation of conventional weapons, which have killed millions since World War II and which continue to kill on a massive scale today. As Amnesty International noted in a report released in late 2015, "reckless arms trading" encouraged atrocities committed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other armed groups in Iraq. In 2016, more than 100,000 people were killed in conflicts in which conventional weapons were used. And while the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has limited the new production of nuclear weapons, the world has experienced an uncurbed proliferation of conventional weapons with no effective international legal tools to control it. Since 1960 - the early days of the Cold War nuclear arms race - international military spending has increased twenty-fold from $82bn to $1.69 trillion; and year on year, it continues to grow. While some of it goes to infrastructure maintenance and salaries for personnel, a significant part is spent on the acquisition of conventional weapons. In 2015, the US, the country with the biggest defence budget in the world, spent $90bn of its $600bn defence spending on the procurement of conventional arms; it spent around $20bn on maintaining its nuclear arsenal.

Russian nuclear attack would cause 91.5 million casualties

"New study on US-Russia nuclear war: 91.5 million casualties in first few hours." *International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.* 18 September 2019.
https://www.icanw.org/new_study_on_us_russia_nuclear_war

34.1 million people could die, and another 57.4 million could be injured, within the first few hours of the start of a nuclear war between Russia and the United States triggered by one low-yield nuclear weapon, according to a new simulation by researcher's at Princeton's Science and Global Security programme.

Nuclear war could cost 13-34 million lives

Author: Daugherty, William, Barbara Levi, and Frank Von Hippel. "Casualties due to the Blast, Heat, and Radioactive Fallout from Various Hypothetical Nuclear Attacks on the United States." *Institute of Medicine (US) Steering Committee for the Symposium on the Medical Implications of Nuclear War.* 1986.
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK219165/

Overall, taking into account the different estimates associated with the two blast-bum casualty models, we find that there would be 13-34 million deaths and 25-64 million total casualties from this "counterforce" attack. Figure 10 shows how these estimates vary with low and high assumptions about casualty rates and with different months of the year. How do we explain the fact that the lower end of our range of estimated deaths is approximately equal to the upper end of the range of 3.2-16.3 million deaths calculated by the DOD in 1975 for a major counterforce attack on the United States (U.S. Congress, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 1975; pp. 12-24)? The low end of the DOD's range of deaths is apparently associated with the optimistic sheltering posture that was criticized by the Office of Technology Assessment review panel. Using a less optimistic sheltering posture, somewhat like that used in this paper, and assuming a 550-kiloton airburst and groundburst over each silo, the DOD analysts estimated 5.6 'million deaths resulting from an attack on U.S. missile silos alone (assuming March winds). This is quite close to the 4.9 million deaths that we find for February winds if we, like the DOD analysts, assume an LD50 of 450 rads and neglect cancer deaths. The upper end of the DOD range of estimated deaths is associated with a sheltering posture similar to that we have used. However, the DOD analysts made a number of other assumptions that correspond roughly to those that characterize the lower end of our uncertainty range: The overpressure model was used to calculate blast and burn casualties. An LD50 of 450 rads was used for calculating the number of deaths from radiation sickness. Cancer deaths were ignored. The DOD analysts did assume March winds for their calculations—an assumption that would tend to maximize the fallout casualties from the attacks on the missile silos. This assumption was offset, however, by their omission of most of the targets in three of the five subsets of targets considered in our attack: strategic command, communication, and early-warning facilities; nuclear storage sites; and the ports for naval ships that have recently been assigned a strategic role with the deployment of long-range, sea-launched cruise missiles. As may be seen from Table 5, these target sets account for a large fraction of the total number of deaths calculated for our counterforce attack. As has already been noted, our own range of 13-34 million deaths and 25-64 million total casualties would be higher if we included other likely targets, such as potential bomber dispersal bases. Our casualty numbers would climb higher still if we added estimates of the numbers of deaths and illnesses from the economic and social collapse that could be expected following such an attack.

MAKING OUR ALLIES VULNERABLE

What's the argument?

A NFU policy is one that centers around the U.S. and its military policy. For that reason, when a NFU policy is considered, most arguments for and against center on the impact a NFU policy would have on U.S. safety and security. However, this US-centric view only includes half of the NFU equation.

Currently, the U.S. uses its nuclear weapons to protect its allies with a similar strategy of deterrence. The U.S. "nuclear umbrella" is a guarantee by theU.S.to protect its non-nuclear allies. Because we'd come to our allies' aid during conflicts, arguments in favor of a first-use policy including providing deterrence and preventing conflicts also apply to our allies. Thus, any adjustment to U.S. nuclear policy may have a large effect not only on the standing of the US, but on the US' allies.

Many of our allies do not support a U.S. NFU policy for fear that deterrence would be harmed and leave them susceptible to attack. According to Roberts, countries seek a "deeper assurance" that theU.S.is willing "to use all means available when their vital interests are at risk." Roberts concludes that "NFU thus sends a message of restraint to dangerous neighbours, encouraging conventional provocations and risk-taking." The current U.S. security guarantee forces enemies to "calculate the potential costs of the United States intervening," which acts as a strong deterrent to attack (Anderson). Anderson concludes that U.S. security guarantees "serve as a bulwark against geopolitical instability and armed conflict." Nuclear first use may specifically prevent biological, chemical, and cyberattacks, or other non-nuclear, but extremely dangerous, attacks (Panda).

Leaving allies more vulnerable -- or even making allies think that they're more vulnerable, even if they're really not -- could have serious ramifications. For instance, leadership may feel compelled to seek security guarantees elsewhere. This could come in the form of new allegiances with rival nations like China that are seeking to expand geopolitical influence.

Another possibility is that allies would be more likely to nuclearize. (See more details on this argument in the "Causing Proliferation" section of the brief.) Experts predict that if we were to adopt a NFU policy and weaken our nuclear umbrella, allies would be driven to nuclearize (Roberts; Brown).

Why does the argument matter?

This argument has similar impacts to any US-centric argument about the consequences of weakened deterrence or hard power. If adversaries feel emboldened, they may be more likely to attack U.S. allies and a NFU would weaken the U.S. assurances of allegiance (Brad). The probability of this increases in hotly contested regions currently protected by the US. For example, when Georgia applied for protection under the U.S. nuclear umbrella, the Russian military attacked them (Trachtenberg), demonstrating that U.S. allies are open to attacks from our adversaries in the absence of our physical and immediate support. This most notably puts countries and the lives of their citizens at risk. On a deeper level, the countries that currently threaten those we protect often do so in attempts of expansion. If successful, this could lead to the spread of undemocratic values, suppression of human rights, or other implications that the U.S. works to protect our allies from. Overall, the stability of the world as we know it will be significantly hindered by the loss of U.S. oversight and protection.

Main Players

The United States, Russia, China, Countries under the U.S. Nuclear umbrella like South Korea & Germany

Strategy Considerations

Since the implications of U.S. nuclear weapons exceeds far past its own sovereignty and breaches into that of others, this argument is rather feasible. The US' position as the most hegemonic country means their choices greatly impact conflict of all shapes and sizes. So long as teams adequately explain why the NFU with either provide a given country with security or fear, the resulting conflict and/or nuclearization fits well into the narrative. It would be rather strategic to run multiple impacts to this argument, for example increased conventional conflict and nuclear war. Thus, teams can attempt to win and weigh the argument in a multitude of ways, providing them with an advantage over their opponents.

The link of instability could be used in the context of specific conflicts, such as the India-Pakistan conflict, or general global issues, such as increased fights for hegemony or attacks on countries no longer under our nuclear umbrella. This argument is rather strong and logical and can be taken in numerous different directions. A lack of specificity, however, might make quantifying or terminalizing impacts difficult. Running impacts to allies offers teams to explore how NFU will increase conflict outside of improbable nuclear war scenarios.

Evidence for Making Our Allies Vulnerable

NFU would weaken assurances of allegiance by the U.S.

Author: Roberts, Brad. "Debating Nuclear No-first-use, Again." *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*. 21 May 2019. https://cgsr.llnl.gov/content/assets/docs/Debating-Nuclear-No-first-use-Again.pdf

On the impact of NFU adoption on the assurance of allies, the positive case is that NFU assures allies that the United States remains committed to reducing nuclear dangers and to restraining its own nuclear policies and posture. But for many allies, this argument misses the point. Yes, they seek assurance that a cavalier and sometimes reckless president will not generate new nuclear dangers for them. But for a significant number of allies, the deeper assurance they seek is that the United States will be prepared to use all means available when their vital interests are at risk. They want to be convinced that a neighbour who might contemplate putting those interests at risk understands that there would be a terrible price to be paid. They also want to rest easy that the United States understands this requirement and is proceeding, in partnership with them, to strengthen the means of their common defence.21 For these anxious allies, NFU is troublesome in every way. It signals clearly that the U.S. will not be prepared to use all means available to it when their vital interests are at risk, declining to do so unless the enemy is foolish enough to cross the nuclear red line. NFU thus sends a message of restraint to dangerous neighbours, encouraging conventional provocations and risk-taking. It signals that the United States doesn't understand the unique value for their defence of the U.S. threat of the first use of its nuclear weapons. The preference of some Americans to deter by non-nuclear means reinforces their anxiety that they will be left to die in large numbers while the U.S. masses, dispatches and assembles its conventional forces rather than issuing threats of nuclear first use. For some allied experts, the U.S. flirtation with NFU is one more sign that the United States no longer has the will to do what is necessary for their security, which could portend significant shifts in the political allegiance of U.S. allies.

US nuclear umbrella provides security to our allies

Author: Vergun, David. "US Nuclear Umbrella Extends to Allies, Partners, Defense Official Says."U.S.*Department of Defense*. 24 August 2019. https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/1822953/us-nuclear-umbrella-extends-to-allies-partners-defense-official-says/

Allies and partners around the world should and do take comfort in the fact that the U.S. has both the will and the means to use its nuclear weapons, if necessary, to protect them from aggression, the deputy undersecretary of defense for policy said here today. In a speech at the Brookings Institution, David J. Trachtenberg said nuclear deterrence underwrites all diplomacy and dissuades adversaries from even the thought of employing nuclear weapons — including tactical nuclear weapons — as a means to coerce, he added. "We continue to engage with allies and partners so they understand our commitment to extend deterrence to them," he said. Trachtenberg added that it was therefore no surprise to allies and partners that an emphasis of that commitment was reflected in the language of the fiscal year 2020 defense budget request, the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy, the Nuclear Posture Review and the Missile Defense Review. An important aspect of this strategy, he said, is keeping adversaries such as Russia and China guessing whether the U.S. would ever employ its nuclear weapons. That's why this and previous administrations have refused to countenance the promise to not use nuclear weapons as a first-strike option, Trachtenberg noted. The Defense Department has taken action to assure allies and partners through demonstration of its commitment to strengthening nuclear deterrence, he said. As examples, Trachtenberg cited the $25 billion request in the 2020 defense budget to modernize the nuclear triad, sharing nuclear strategy and nuclear deployment capability with NATO partners and forward-deploying U.S. nuclear weapons to Europe. He noted that the U.S. coordinates nuclear deployments with France and the United Kingdom, which also have nuclear weapons. And finally, Trachtenberg said, throughout the Indo-Pacific region, the U.S. works closely with allies and partners who feel threatened by an increasingly belligerent China. Over the last 10

years, much more robust discussions with them have been taking place regarding U.S. commitments, he said, including extending the nuclear umbrella.

Countries without U.S. nuclear umbrella are subject to aggressive military action on the part of our adversaries

Author: Trachtenberg, David. "US Extended Deterrence: How Much Strategic Force is Too Little?" *Strategic Studies Quarterly.* Summer 2012.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26270524.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Aa2be442722ac974c62fc7dc83437468d

Obviously, allied views of extended deterrence will be shaped not only by what the United States does with respect to its nuclear forces but also by the evolving global strategic situation. Although the Cold War division of Europe ended more than two decades ago, some allies in Europe grow increasingly concerned over what they perceive as a renewed aggressiveness in Russia's foreign and defense policies. The Russian military action in the summer of 2008 against Georgia—a country seeking NATO membership—suggested that extending U.S. nuclear guarantees to countries on Russia's periphery might be risky business. It also raised additional uncertainties on the part of Russia's other neighbors regarding the credibility of U.S. security guarantees. On top of this, Russia has revised its military doctrine to place increased reliance on its nuclear forces, continued to pursue an aggressive nuclear weapons modernization program, resumed Cold War–style exercises of its strategic nuclear forces, threatened some of its former satellite states with nuclear attack, and publicly proposed developing new "offensive weapons systems" to counter the United States.19 In the wake of Russian statements and actions, the concerns of Russia's neighbors and their desire to be integrated into the security perimeter of the United States are understandable. So, too, is concern that Washington's desire to "reset" its relationship with Moscow in the wake of Russia's increasing assertiveness may actually lead others to question the attractiveness of, and confidence in, American security guarantees. Ukraine, a former Soviet state, has been wary of Russia and, until recently, sought the security guarantees that would accrue to it from NATO membership. Yet, after 2010, the new Ukrainian government changed course from its predecessor, declaring Kiev's preference for neutrality and nonalignment, rejecting the previous government's push for NATO membership, and seeking greater accommodation with Russia.20 As more countries pursue the path to NATO membership, the United States will likely find itself extending its nuclear umbrella to additional states in what was formerly viewed as Russia's "sphere of influence."

US Nuclear Umbrella prevents states from nuclearizing:

Author: Utgoff, Victor. "On Strengthening and Expanding theU.S.Nuclear Umbrella to Dissuade Nuclear Proliferation." *Institute for Defense Analyses.* July 2008.
https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a537931.pdf

This study explores this topic first by defining the nuclear umbrella – more formally U.S. extended nuclear deterrence (END) guarantees. Under these guarantees, the U.S. agrees to use nuclear weapons to defend other states against conventional or nuclear aggression - if no alternative ways of defending them were to prove adequately effective. This assessment suggests that some states that decide they need the protection of a nuclear deterrent would not see U.S. END guarantees as clearly preferable to having their own deterrent. Thus, absent some major change in world circumstances, the U.S. might have to work hard to gain the acceptance by some states of improved or expanded U.S. END guarantees. The study then explores the general pros and cons for the U.S. of providing END guarantees to states that otherwise seem likely to build their own nuclear deterrent forces. The more important potential pros include that the recipients would presumably not proliferate, that with the exception of NATO, the U.S. would control and coordinate all of the nuclear forces of the alliances receiving its guarantees, and that by offering END guarantees the U.S. can share the risks and burdens of nuclear deterrence and possible nuclear use. Further, U.S. END would be a safer means of

satisfying allies' security concerns and would eliminate their need to test nuclear weapons. Finally, the paper provides two more general conclusions. First, no state should want to bear single-handedly the risks and responsibilities of nuclear deterrence and of nuclear use, should deterrence fail – if there is an alternative. U.S. END guarantees can provide a good one, at least to states that are or can be made strong allies. For example, such guarantees can be implemented quickly should the need arise, thus allowing allies to avoid getting committed to long and expensive programs to build nuclear weapons. They can allow a smaller and better coordinated nuclear capability for the alliances that need them. They can be dialed up or down far more readily as the U.S. and its allies see their needs changing than can a collection of independent nuclear deterrents. Second, allies and potential allies will inevitably be concerned that the U.S. cannot be relied upon to implement its END promises and guarantees. While no one can be absolutely sure, we think that allies can be sure enough. Specifically, the entire system of alliances upon which U.S. security depends risks breaking up if the U.S. were to ever renege on its promises of nuclear protection to any ally. In that event further nuclear-backed aggression would seem assured, as would a cascade of nuclear proliferation. The US' reputation at home and abroad would be shattered.

Fear of losing U.S. Security Guarantee pushes countries to nuclearize, example of 1970s South Korea

Author: Brown, J. "Indispensable Nation: U.S. Security Guarantees and Nuclear Proliferation." *Air University.* June 2017.
https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=813351

This essay explores the connection between security guarantees and nuclear proliferation by allies of great powers. I propose a model to explain why U.S. allies pursue nuclear proliferation. I assert that this movement toward nuclear weapons occurs when an ally perceives that the U.S. defense commitment has become insufficient for the threat environment. I test this model using a case study of South Korea's exploration of nuclear weapons in the 1970s. South Korea was facing a severe threat environment when U.S. President Richard Nixon announced that U.S. allies would need to take greater responsibility for their own security. In response, South Korea began to explore a nuclear weapons program. In this context, South Korea's leaders interpreted the United States' attempt at alliance burden-shifting as a sign of abandonment. This perception tilted the threat-commitment balance out of alignment and led to forward movement toward nuclear proliferation. From this case and model, I conclude that U.S. allies take steps advancing nuclear weapons activity when their perception of their threat environment outweighs their perception of U.S. security commitment. From this conclusion, I draw implications about the role of presidential rhetoric and military force posture in assure U.S. allies and discouraging nuclear proliferation.

Foreign Policy under Trump encouraging allies to nuclearize

Author: McKenzie, Pete. "America's Allies are Becoming a Nuclear-Proliferation Threat" *Defense One.* 25 March 2020.
https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2020/03/americas-allies-are-becoming-nuclear-proliferation-threat/164057/

As the Trump administration scrambles traditional foreign-policy practice, experts warn that some of America's longest allies are increasingly considering what would previously have been unthinkable: the pursuit of nuclear weapons. Days after the 2016 American election, Reuters published an interview with Roderich Kiesewetter, foreign policy spokesperson for German Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative bloc. Reacting to President Trump's victory, Kiesewetter declared, "Europe

needs to think about developing its own nuclear deterrent." It was shocking. Germany is not unique. Of all the Trump administration's global impacts, one of the most worrying is a sudden increase in the risk of nuclear proliferation among American allies, many of whom are considering a nuclear path which America may be unable to control. This debate has been most intense in South Korea, which began pursuing a nuclear weapons program in the 1970s only to abandon it under intense pressure. The idea remained popular; upwards of 60 percent of South Koreans favor pursuing nuclear weapons. The most significant steps by an American partner are being taken by Saudi Arabia. It is pursuing civil nuclear capabilities and, according to Carnegie's Volpe, "have been quite reluctant to foreswear the option to enrich uranium down the road. They've been very coy around it. Well, working-level officials in Saudi Arabia have been very coy." That reticence does not extend to Saudi leaders. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman warned in 2018 that if Iran "developed a nuclear bomb, we will follow suit as soon as possible." These shifts are partly the product of long-term trends. Never since the Cold War has America's global position seemed more fragile, making its commitments seem questionable. And North Korea's success in acquiring long-range nuclear capabilities was guaranteed to spook nearby American allies. As Mira Rapp-Hooper, Senior Fellow for Asia Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, has observed, "The trouble is, the United States has far less incentive to intervene on behalf of South Korea or Japan if North Korea can respond with a nuclear strike against the U.S. homeland." Iran's interest in nuclear weapons has similarly terrified regional rivals. But Trump's behavior has accelerated those trends. Santoro noted that the nuclear discussion in South Korea is "taking off now because there's a lot of discussions in Washington about whether or not the Trump administration is considering withdrawing troops." Vipin Narang, associate professor of political science at MIT, said, "You can really boil this down to Trump's instincts and style. For the first time in a long time, the allies have had to fundamentally question the credibility of the U.S. [nuclear protection] guarantee." This uncertainty is fed by moves like Trump's demand, since rescinded, that South Korea quintuple its contribution to the cost of maintaining American troops there. "The concern is that it's not a genuine negotiating position, that it's demanded as an excuse to eventually pull out of South Korea," Narang said. "There's a deep enough thread in Trump's thinking and rhetoric to suggest that he genuinely believes that American [nuclear] assurance and conventional deployments to these allies are a waste of money."

US security guarantee wards off enemies and changes allies strategic decision-making calculus, reducing weapon development

Author: Anderson, Justin. "Extended Deterrence and Allied Assurance: Key Concepts and Current Challenges for U.S. Policy" *Institute for National Security Studies.* September 2013. https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/OCP69.pdf

The United States provides extended deterrence and assurance guarantees in vital strategic regions across the globe to protect U.S. allies and friends from intimidation, coercion, or attack. These guarantees currently play a central role in maintaining regional stability and strongly influence the national security strategies of both allies and adversaries. From the Asia-Pacific to Europe, however, these guarantees – and the military strategies and capabilities that support them – are showing signs of strain. Decisions and actions in the near-term are critically important to determining whether these commitments remain firm or begin to crack under the pressure of adversary capabilities, allied anxieties, and resource constraints. This paper provides a conceptual framework for the strategic concepts of extended deterrence and allied assurance and an overview of the key issues and current challenges faced by the U.S. strategists and planners responsible for developing and implementing these concepts across the globe. A U.S. extended deterrence guarantee to a foreign ally or partner is likely to significantly impact the plans and strategies of that ally's enemies, who are forced to calculate the potential costs of the United States intervening if they precipitate a crisis or conflict. The

corollary to the U.S. extension of deterrence against these adversaries is the assurance such a commitment brings to the ally. In addition to strengthening ties between the United States and the ally in question, an extended deterrence guarantee can also have the ancillary effect of contributing to U.S. nonproliferation goals by convincing an allied government it does not need to develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to counter an adversary equipped with nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons. By simultaneously implementing assurance strategies focused on allies and extended deterrence strategies focused on potential adversaries, the United States acts as the key security provider and central power broker in important regions around the world, ensuring its policies serve as a bulwark against geopolitical instability and armed conflict.

No First Use removes deterrent against cyber bio and conventional attacks for allies

Author: Panda, Ankit. "'No First Use' and Nuclear Weapons" *Council on Foreign Relations.* 17 July 2019.

https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/no-first-use-and-nuclear-weapons

Most states with nuclear weapons maintain policies that would permit their first use in a conflict. Pledges to only use these weapons in retaliation for a nuclear attack—or a no-first-use (NFU) policy—are rare. Where these pledges have been made by nuclear states, their adversaries generally consider them not credible. Strategic planners for nuclear weapons powers see the credible threat of the first use of nuclear weapons as a powerful deterrent against a range of significant nonnuclear threats, including major conventional, chemical, and biological attacks, as well as cyberattacks. Even states with significant conventional military forces, such as the United States, consider it necessary to retain nuclear first use as an option. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, under the administration of President Donald J. Trump, retains the option of nuclear first use. Arguments against a U.S. NFU pledge. Critics, meanwhile, have suggested that U.S. allies in East Asia and Europe alike would not accept a unilateral U.S. NFU declaration, because it could encourage adversaries to attack with conventional weapons or to use chemical, biological, or cyber weapons. Russian conventional military advantages over U.S. allies in Europe have amplified these concerns. Critics argue that such a declaration could undercut allied commitments and encourage U.S. allies to develop their own nuclear weapons. Within the Obama administration in 2016, Secretary of State John Kerry, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, and Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz opposed an NFU declaration, primarily along these lines. These officials shared the view of NFU skeptics that a U.S. declaration would embolden adversaries, weaken allied commitments, and invite brinkmanship.

CAUSING PROLIFERATION

What's the argument?

In the status quo, U.S. nuclear capabilities protect our allies as well through extended deterrence. Without this extended deterrence, opponents of no first use argue, our allies would be placed in jeopardy and, in order to compensate, would proliferate to provide their own security (Roberts 19). This is why the nuclear umbrella currently stifles proliferation globally (Anderson 13; Utgoff 08).

If our allies are no longer confident in their security guarantee by the United States, they would seek to build their own nuclear weapons (Harvey 19). Rather than the U.S. having a strong nuclear policy that covers countries all across the world, then, we would see each individual country proliferating, increasing the number of nuclear states dramatically. Specifically, our Asian allies would likely proliferate in order to defend themselves from major threats like Russia and China ("America should... nuclear weapons first"). Already, we've seen President Trump's volatile foreign policy actions influence European powers such as Germany to seek nuclear capabilities of their own (McKenzie 20).

This is bad for safety, as nuclear proliferation globally increases the potential for conflict by dramatically increasing the chance of miscalculation (Gower 18; Hellman 01). Ultimately, miscalculation puts global stability in jeopardy, as, at any moment, nuclear war could break out simply due to a misinterpretation of another country's actions (Rohrlich 19).

Why does the argument matter?

Policymakers advocate for no first use because, in their view, it decreases the propensity for nuclear proliferation and makes nuclear war less likely. However, if in fact no first use would increase proliferation and decrease stability, it is difficult to advocate for the no first use policy, as the absence of it better achieves its goals.

Main Players

Non-nuclear U.S. allies, adversaries to U.S. and their allies

Strategy Considerations

In order for this argument to be true, teams must be able to prove that our allies could proliferate if they wanted to, and the only thing holding them back is the

extended deterrence that they benefit from through their alliance with the United States. This is difficult to prove, as it is unlikely that countries currently under the U.S. nuclear umbrella would choose to rely on the U.S. when they could have their own autonomous nuclear program. However, if teams are able to prove that proliferation would occur, this will be a very strong argument - nearly every affirmative team will be arguing, in some form, that no first use makes the world safer and more stable by limiting proliferation. If teams can prove that proliferation increases under no first use, this will take out the most common pro argument.

Evidence for Causing Proliferation

Allies proliferate

Allies would be placed in jeopardy by NFS

Author: Roberts, Brad. "Debating Nuclear No-first-use, Again." *Survival*. 21 May 2019. https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2019.1614788

On the impact of NFU adoption on the assurance of allies, the positive case is that NFU assures allies that the United States remains committed to reducing nuclear dangers and to restraining its own nuclear policies and posture. But for many allies, this argument misses the point. Yes, they seek assurance that a cavalier and sometimes reckless president will not generate new nuclear dangers for them. But for a significant number of allies, the deeper assurance they seek is that the United States will be prepared to use all means available when their vital interests are at risk. They want to be convinced that a neighbour who might contemplate putting those interests at risk understands that there would be a terrible price to be paid. They also want to rest easy that the United States understands this requirement and is proceeding, in partnership with them, to strengthen the means of their common defence.21 For these anxious allies, NFU is troublesome in every way. It signals clearly that the U.S. will not be prepared to use all means available to it when their vital interests are at risk, declining to do so unless the enemy is foolish enough to cross the nuclear red line. NFU thus sends a message of restraint to dangerous neighbours, encouraging conventional provocations and risk-taking. It signals that the United States doesn't understand the unique value for their defence of the U.S. threat of the first use of its nuclear weapons. The preference of some Americans to deter by non-nuclear means reinforces their anxiety that they will be left to die in large numbers while the U.S. masses, dispatches and assembles its conventional forces rather than issuing threats of nuclear first use. For some allied experts, the U.S. flirtation with NFU is one more sign that the United States no longer has the will to do what is necessary for their security, which could portend significant shifts in the political allegiance of U.S. allies. The impact of NFU on the assurance of allies ought to be especially salient for the 116th Congress. That session began with abundant indications of bipartisan efforts to reassure allies at a time of unhelpful presidential statements about the value to the United States of its alliances. Perhaps the best example was the 'reassurance tour' to the February 2019 Munich Security Conference by a bipartisan congressional delegation. In the words of one of its members, 'We can go a long way to satisfying our allies that support for the relationship is not only strong but it is bipartisan, even if it is not always reflected in the Oval Office.'22 Adoption of NFU would thwart this effort by signaling that Congress puts a unilateral assessment of the requirements of stability and reactions to presidential unpredictability above the near-term requirements of those whom the United States has pledged to defend. Congress cannot have it both ways.

Allies would proliferate without American deterrence

Author: Harvey, John. "Assessing the risks of a nuclear 'no first use' policy." *War on the Rocks*. 5 July 2019. https://warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/

There are three major risks in adopting a nuclear declaratory policy of no-first-use. The first risk is to deterrence: Adversaries, absent a fear of reprisal, could be emboldened to act against U.S. interests. The second risk is to U.S. assurances to its allies: If America adopts no-first-use, then allies could lose confidence in America's extended deterrence commitments. The third risk is to the goal of non-proliferation: Such lost confidence among America's allies could spur them to

develop and field their own nuclear weapons. The purported benefits of adopting a no-first-use policy, which I discuss below, are insufficient to offset these inherent risks.

Asian allies will pursue nuclear weapons

"America should not rule out using nuclear weapons first." *The Economist.* 15 April 2019. https://www.economist.com/leaders/2019/08/15/america-should-not-rule-out-using-nuclear-weapons-first

Elizabeth Warren, a Democratic contender for the presidency, is one of many who want to remedy this by committing America, by law, to a policy of No First Use (NFU) (see article). India and China have already declared NFU, or something close, despite having smaller, more vulnerable arsenals. Ms. Warren's impulse to constrain nuclear policy is right. However, her proposal could well have perverse effects that make the world less stable. Many of America's allies, such as South Korea and the Baltic states, face large and intimidating rivals at a time when they worry about the global balance of power. They think uncertainty about America's first use helps deter conventional attacks that might threaten their very existence, such as a Russian assault on Estonia or a Chinese invasion of Taiwan. Were America to rule out first use, some of its Asian allies might pursue nuclear weapons of their own. Any such proliferation risks being destabilising and dangerous, multiplying the risks of nuclear war.

Proliferation increases chance of conflict

Proliferation increases likelihood of nuclear war

Author: Hellman, Martin et al. *Breakthrough*. 2001. https://ee.stanford.edu/~hellman/Breakthrough/book/contents.html

Nuclear proliferation is greatly enhancing the likelihood of nuclear war. It dramatically increases the number of scenarios for small-scale nuclear wars or nuclear terrorism, that could escalate to nuclear war between the superpowers. Deterrence, the cornerstone of national security in present strategies, fails against nuclear terrorism simply because there are no well defined targets against which to retaliate.

Proliferation increases chance of miscalculation

Author: Gower, John. "The Dangerous Illogic of Twenty-First Century Deterrence Through Planning for Nuclear Warfighting." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. 6 March 2018. https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/03/06/dangerous-illogic-of-twenty-first-century-deterrence-through-planning-for-nuclear-warfighting-pub-75717

The risk of miscalculation increases proportionally with the complexity and range of nuclear capabilities and associated declaratory policies and postures. A nuclear posture and capability derived from the assumption that there is a need to conduct limited nuclear war at some stage during a major conflict, and the philosophy that there is an unbroken spectrum of conflict between low-end conventional and high-end nuclear warfighting, requires the most ambiguous declaratory policies and security assurances. While ambiguity brings some deterrence benefits, it also feeds the risk of miscalculation.

Miscalculation could lead to war

Author: Rohrlich, Justin. "A former U.S. missile-launch officer says Trump's nuclear policy could get us all killed." *Quartz.* 6 March 2019. https://qz.com/1566325/bruce-blair-says-trumps-nuclear-policy-could-get-us-all-killed/#:~:text=A%20former%20US%20missile%2Dlaunch,could%20get%20us%20all%20killed&text=Drastically%20reducing%20America's%20nuclear%20arsenal,Congress%20today%20(March%206).

Drastically reducing America's nuclear arsenal will strengthen U.S. national security, nonproliferation expert Bruce Blair, a former U.S. Air Force nuclear launch officer, told Congress today (March 6). The MacArthur "genius grant" recipient said Donald Trump's plan to expand U.S. nuclear capabilities (pdf) will make the world a more dangerous place—and leave America more vulnerable to attack. Appearing before the House Armed Services Committee, Blair called for theU.S.to "return to the original, and generally accepted, basic premise of nuclear weapons"—using them solely for deterrence. Fighting war should be left to conventional forces, Blair insisted, according to prepared testimony he shared with Quartz. "Our hair-trigger launch posture, which the Russians matched, continues to run the risk that fear, misperception, miscalculation, accident or false warning could trigger a nuclear exchange," Blair said. "This risk of blundering into a nuclear war, rather than a cold-blooded sudden attack, presents what is by far the greatest immediate physical threat to the United States today." Trump's proposed overhaul of nuclear forces would cost at least $1.7 trillion, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Blair lays out plans for a dramatically scaled-down version of current U.S. capabilities, which he described in a phone interview as "massive overkill."

A2 PRO

A2 NONPROLIFERATION

A No-First-Use Doctrine would incentivize even more proliferation because allies feel like they have to take matters into their own hands whereas enemies see a window of opportunity

Author: Panda, Ankit. "'No First Use' and Nuclear Weapons". *Council on Foreign Relations*. 17 July 2019.
https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/no-first-use-and-nuclear-weapons

Most states with nuclear weapons maintain policies that would permit their first use in a conflict. Pledges to only use these weapons in retaliation for a nuclear attack—or a no-first-use (NFU) policy—are rare. Where these pledges have been made by nuclear states, their adversaries generally consider them not credible. Strategic planners for nuclear weapons powers see the credible threat of the first use of nuclear weapons as a powerful deterrent against a range of significant nonnuclear threats, including major conventional, chemical, and biological attacks, as well as cyberattacks. Even states with significant conventional military forces, such as the United States, consider it necessary to retain nuclear first use as an option. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, under the administration of President Donald J. Trump, retains the option of nuclear first use. Arguments against a U.S. NFU pledge. Critics, meanwhile, have suggested that U.S. allies in East Asia and Europe alike would not accept a unilateral U.S. NFU declaration, because it could encourage adversaries to attack with conventional weapons or to use chemical, biological, or cyber weapons. Russian conventional military advantages over U.S. allies in Europe have amplified these concerns. Critics argue that such a declaration could undercut allied commitments and encourage U.S. allies to develop their own nuclear weapons. Within the Obama administration in 2016, Secretary of State John Kerry, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, and Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz opposed an NFU declaration, primarily along these lines. These officials shared the view of NFU skeptics that a U.S. declaration would embolden adversaries, weaken allied commitments, and invite brinkmanship.

A no-first use doctrine does not prevent retaliatory action or conventional forces under warranted circumstances. This means the U.S. can still proliferate.

Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. "No First Use." Last updated August 2019.
https://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/no-first-use/

An NFU policy is also the logical extension of the powers given to Congress in the Constitution. Only Congress can declare war, and the unprovoked first use of a nuclear weapon would most certainly be a declaration of war. What an NFU policy would not do: An NFU policy would not limit the United States from taking retaliatory action against someone who launches a nuclear strike against it or its allies. An NFU policy would not change the President's ability to use conventional forces first under warranted circumstances. An NFU policy is not about one particular President; it is about the United States taking steps to reduce global nuclear risks. What is happening with NFU Policy? Members of Congress have introduced multiple bills that would directly or effectively implement an NFU policy. Even if these bills garner widespread support in Congress, the current White House is unlikely to support this policy change. But this is not an issue that is confined to Washington. In fact, cities and states across the country have passed resolutions encouraging the federal government to support an NFU policy. Public support and action can help make an NFU policy a reality.

Trump is already trying to proliferate

Author: Reif, Kingston. "Trump Budget Boosts Nuclear Efforts." *Arms Control Association*. April 2019. https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-04/news/trump-budget-boosts-nuclear-efforts

Consistent with the recommendations of the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the Trump administration's fiscal year 2020 budget request would continue plans to expand U.S. nuclear weapon capabilities. The Ohio-class USS Nebraska submarine returns to port in Washington in 2018. The Trump administration is seeking funds to complete development of low-yield nuclear warheads for submarine-launched ballistic missiles (Photo: Michael Smith/U.S. Navy) The Ohio-class USS Nebraska submarine returns to port in Washington in 2018. The Trump administration is seeking funds to complete development of low-yield nuclear warheads for submarine-launched ballistic missiles (Photo: Michael Smith/U.S. Navy)The ultimate fate of the request, submitted to Congress March 11, remains uncertain as Democrats, particularly in the House, have signaled strong opposition to several controversial funding proposals. Their concerns include administration plans to develop two additional low-yield nuclear weapons and two conventionally armed, ground-launched missiles currently prohibited by the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. The budget submission illustrates the rising cost of the nuclear mission and the challenge those expenses may pose to the administration's other national security priorities. A Congressional Budget Office report in February estimates that the United States will spend $494 billion on nuclear weapons from fiscal years 2019 through 2028. That is an increase of $94 billion, or 23 percent, from the CBO's previous 10-year estimate of $400 billion, which was published in January 2017. (See ACT, March 2019.)

Global nonproliferation has slowed in order for nation-states to defend against other states with large arsenals. This is most likely because increasing global tension slows the rate of non-proliferation, just how like during the cold war we saw the most rapid stockpile of nuclear weapons.

Author: Kristensen, Hans and Matt Korda. "Status of World Nuclear Forces." *Federal of American Scientists.* September 2020. https://fas.org/issues/nuclear-weapons/status-world-nuclear-forces/

[Current update: September 2020] The number of nuclear weapons in the world has declined significantly since the Cold War: down from a peak of approximately 70,300 in 1986 to an estimated 13,410 in early-2020. Government officials often portray that accomplishment as a result of current or recent arms control agreements, but the overwhelming portion of the reduction happened in the 1990s. Some also compare today's numbers with that of the 1950s, but that is like comparing apples and oranges; today's forces are vastly more capable. The pace of reduction has slowed significantly compared with the 1990s. Instead of planning for nuclear disarmament, the nuclear-armed states appear to plan to retain large arsenals for the indefinite future, are adding new nuclear weapons, and are increasing the role that such weapons play in their national strategies. All the nuclear weapon states continue to modernize their remaining nuclear forces, adding new types, increasing the role they serve, and appear committed to retaining nuclear weapons for the indefinite future. For an overview of global modernization programs, see our contribution to the SIPRI Yearbook. Individual country profiles are available from the FAS Nuclear Notebook. The exact number of nuclear weapons in each country's possession is a closely held national secret. Yet the degree of secrecy varies considerably from country to count. Between 2010 and 2018, the United disclosed its total stockpile size, but in 2019 the Trump administration stopped that practice. Despite such limitations, however, publicly available information, careful analysis of historical records, and occasional leaks make it possible to make best estimates about the size and composition of the national nuclear weapon stockpiles: Despite progress in reducing Cold War nuclear arsenals, the world's combined inventory of nuclear warheads remains at a very high level: roughly 13,410 warheads as of early-2020. Of these, nearly 9,320 are in the military stockpiles

(the rest are awaiting dismantlement), of which some 3,720 warheads are deployed with operational forces, of which about 1,800 US, Russian, British and French warheads are on high alert, ready for use on short notice.

A2 INCREASING STABILITY AND DECREASING CHANCE OF MISCALCULATION

The U.S. breaks treaties and international agreements all the time and has no credibility so other countries could still blame the United States and create a miscalculation

Author: Merelli, Annalisa. "It's not just Trump. TheU.S.has always broken its treaties, pacts and promises" *Quartz Magazine*. 12 May 2018. https://qz.com/1273510/all-the-international-agreements-the-us-has-broken-before-the-iran-deal/

One of the dangerous consequences of violating the Iran deal is a loss of credibility for the US, say critics of Donald Trump's decision including former president Barack Obama. Iran and all other parties have respected the deal's terms, they point out, making the U.S. look like an unreliable international partner. Well, theU.S.is an unreliable international partner—and it has long been one, even before the current administration pulled out from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Paris agreement on climate change, and threatened to end NAFTA. History is dotted with treaties that the U.S. has signed but not ratified, signed and then unsigned, and even refused to sign after pushing everyone else to sign. Capriciousness about international treaties is an old U.S. tradition. It starts with the country's very creation: hundreds of treaties signed with Native American tribes that were either broken, or not ratified. Today, the U.S. is one of the countries to have ratified the fewest number of international human rights treaties—of the 18 agreements passed by the UN, America has only ratified five.

Missile Defense systems already help to significantly reduce the chance of miscalculation and in the case that it does, prevent disastrous consequences

Author: Dowd, Alan. "Missile Defense: Insurance Against Mistakes, Miscalculation, and Madmen" *Providence Magazine.* 7 December 2017. https://providencemag.com/2017/12/missile-defense-insurance-mistakes-miscalculation-madmen/

Given that missile defense, by definition, is a tool of self-defense, it should not raise the moral quandaries that other weapons systems raise for some people of faith. After all, this is not a weapon of destruction; it is not used against people; it is not even used against places people live. Rather, it is designed to protect people and where they live—their homes and places of worship and schools and businesses—from weapons designed to kill and destroy. Chances President John Kennedy warned that "Every man, woman and child lives under a nuclear sword of Damocles…capable of being cut at any moment by accident or miscalculation or by madness." As the number of missile-wielding states grows and as the nuclear club expands, the likelihood of a missile being unleashed against the American people or their allies—whether by mistake, miscalculation, or a madman—also grows. Missile defense doesn't eliminate the danger, but it does give us a fighting chance to confront it. The question critics of missile defense must answer is this: If—when—an American or allied city is in the path of an Iranian, North Korean,

terrorist-acquired, or accidentally-launched missile, would they prefer an 80-percent chance or even a 50-50 chance of intercepting the killer rocket, or a zero-percent chance—something guaranteed by not fully funding, not testing, and not deploying a missile shield?

Under a no-first use, there is an Increased chance of nuclear miscalculation because of increased regional tension between nuclear and non-nuclear states like North Korea and South Korea.

Author: Rogin, Josh. "U.S. allies unite to block Obama's nuclear 'legacy'." *The Washington Post*. 14 August 2016 https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/allies-unite-to-block-an-obama-legacy/2016/08/14/cdb8d8e4-60b9-11e6-8e45-477372e89d78_story.html

The governments of Japan, South Korea, France and Britain have all privately communicated their concerns about a potential declaration by President Obama of a "no first use" nuclear-weapons policy for the United States. U.S. allies have various reasons for objecting to what would be a landmark change in America's nuclear posture, but they are all against it, according to U.S. officials, foreign diplomats, and nuclear experts. Japan, in particular, believes that if Obama declares a "no first use" policy, deterrence against countries such as North Korea will suffer and the risks of conflict will rise. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe personally conveyed that message recently to Adm. Harry Harris Jr., the head of U.S. Pacific Command, according to two government officials. (Update: After this column was published, a spokesman for Pacific Command said that Abe and Harris did not discuss U.S. nuclear policy in their July meeting.) U.S. allies in Europe have a separate, additional concern. They don't want any daylight between their nuclear policies and those of the United States, especially since Britain, France, and the United States all are permanent members of the UN Security Council. In the case of an emergency, those differences could cause real coordination problems. "It's my understanding that the defense ministries of many of our allied nations have lobbied the White House against changing this doctrine, and there's been particularly strong opposition from the UK, France, Japan, and South Korea," said Joe Cirincione, president of the Ploughshares Fund, an anti-proliferation advocacy group that supports the policy change. "We have an interest in creating an international norm that no one should use nuclear weapons first. The allies lobbying against it are nervous nellies."

If the U.S. adopts a NFU policy, the U.S. and other countries are more likely to increase conventional military war-fighting and overstretch to combat its readiness crisis. This would increase tension on a regional and global scale.

Author: Dodge, Michaela. "A No-First-Use Policy would make the United States less secure." *E-International Relations.* 4 October 2016. https://www.e-ir.info/2016/10/04/a-no-first-use-policy-would-make-the-united-states-less-secure/

If the United States were to adopt a no-first-use policy, the perceived threat of nuclear conflict admittedly would decline. While a decline in the perceived threat of nuclear weapons use may seem like a good thing, however, it is actually dangerous because it is that very perceived threat that gives leaders who may be contemplating the use of force the chance for second thoughts that can prevent great-power war. This is an important point. Opening the door to great-power conflict, even if ever so slightly, is obviously a step in the wrong direction. Nor are great-power conflicts the only dangerous challenge that nuclear weapons deter. Biological, chemical, and even well-organized and targeted cyber-attacks can be as devastating as nuclear attacks. Some proponents may claim that the combination of a no-first-use policy and American conventional superiority plays to America's strength, but recent history suggests that simply using our

conventional forces rarely achieves our political objectives. It is also worth noting that the U.S. military is overstretched and on the verge of a readiness crisis. In the European theater, for example, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces are judged by many to be insufficient to counter a Russian military advance into the Baltics. Most important, the point of deterrence is to prevent a war from happening, which is frequently preferable to becoming engaged in a war even if one wins at the end of the day. In the context of the no-first-use policy, we must keep in mind that President Harry Truman made the decision to use nuclear weapons against Japan to prevent an estimated 500,000 or more American casualties in a planned invasion of Japan. We cannot know that future Presidents will not find the nation in a similar situation in which using nuclear weapons could end a war and save thousands or even millions of American lives. Such a decision ought never to be taken lightly, but considering how many times we have been wrong about the future, changing a policy that has served the United States and its allies so well since the end of the Cold War would be at best naïve and at worst dangerous, particularly since security trends for the United States point in a negative direction.

Adopting a NFU makes a conventional attack more likely from adversaries since it changes their decision calculus allowing them to take more risks.

Author: Miller, Franklin. "Why not no-first-use." *European Leadership Network.* 22 September 2016. https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/why-not-no-first-use/

Much has been written in recent months, including in these pages, about the purported benefits of the United States adopting a policy of nuclear no-first-use (NFU). Let us be clear at the outset: U.S. adoption of NFU would produce no tangible benefits, while likely undercutting deterrence of attack against NATO, weakening allies' confidence in the U.S. and spurring nuclear proliferation. Based on evidence from the past seven decades, the U.S. nuclear deterrent helps deter war and safeguard stability by compelling potential aggressors to consider the U.S. nuclear deterrent in any of their prospective plans to attack us or our allies. A U.S. NFU pledge now would instead encourage aggressors to calculate that they need not fear the U.S. nuclear deterrent in response to their potential massive first-use of conventional forces, or chemical and biological weapons. NFU, therefore, would threaten the credibility of U.S. deterrence and stability. Taking a step that would degrade the credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrent might have been acceptable to some in the benign post-Cold War period; but we no longer live in benign times. Russia and China have expressed the goal of overturning the existing international order. They are rapidly expanding their military capabilities, including nuclear, pursuing aggressive, expansionist policies in Europe and Asia respectively, and issuing explicit nuclear threats to U.S. allies in the process. Given these contemporary realities and the stakes involved, our goal should be to maintain the most effective deterrent possible, not to adopt policies that threaten to ease aggressors' calculations of risk regarding their possible massive first-use of force.

North Korea would escalate conflict

Author: Rogin, Josh. "US allies unite to block Obama's nuclear 'legacy'." *Washington Post*. 14 August 2016. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/allies-unite-to-block-an-obama-legacy/2016/08/14/cdb8d8e4-60b9-11e6-8e45-477372e89d78_story.html

The governments of Japan, South Korea, France and Britain have all privately communicated their concerns about a potential declaration by President Obama of a "no first use" nuclear-weapons policy for the United States. U.S. allies have various reasons for objecting to what would be a landmark change in America's nuclear posture, but they are all against it, according to U.S. officials, foreign diplomats, and nuclear experts. Japan, in particular, believes that if Obama declares a "no first use" policy, deterrence against countries such as North Korea will suffer and the risks of conflict will rise. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe personally conveyed that message recently to Adm. Harry Harris Jr., the head of U.S. Pacific Command,

according to two government officials. (Update: After this column was published, a spokesman for Pacific Command said that Abe and Harris did not discuss U.S. nuclear policy in their July meeting.)U.S. allies in Europe have a separate, additional concern. They don't want any daylight between their nuclear policies and those of the United States, especially since Britain, France, and the United States all are permanent members of the UN Security Council. In the case of an emergency, those differences could cause real coordination problems. "It's my understanding that the defense ministries of many of our allied nations have lobbied the White House against changing this doctrine, and there's been particularly strong opposition from the UK, France, Japan, and South Korea," said Joe Cirincione, president of the Ploughshares Fund, an anti-proliferation advocacy group that supports the policy change. "We have an interest in creating an international norm that no one should use nuclear weapons first. The allies lobbying against it are nervous nellies."

A2 CONCENTRATION OF POWER

Concentrating nuclear decisions in the hands of the president is incredibly important because war decisions are time-sensitive and need to be made in sufficient timeliness for decisions to matter. Lives can be saved in a matter of minutes.

Author: Bernes, Louis Rene. "Nuclear Decision-Making And Nuclear War: An Urgent American Problem." *United States Army War College*. 8 November 2018. https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/nuclear-decision-making/

Where should American nuclear policy go from here? To begin, a coherent and comprehensive answer will need to be prepared for the following very basic question: If faced with any presidential order to use nuclear weapons, and not offered sufficiently appropriate corroborative evidence of any actually impending existential threat, would the National Command Authority: (1) be willing to disobey? and (2) be capable of enforcing such seemingly well-founded expressions of authoritative disobedience? In the event of a nuclear attack, all relevant decisions have to be made in minutes. Needless to say, such tight chronological constraints could quickly become overriding. In summary, we need a nuclear command and control system that can restrain a rogue President, but we also need a system that sufficiently empowers the President to act in sufficient time for his or her decisions to matter. The only time for Americans to prepare for such vital national security questions is now. This is the case whether or not President Donald Trump proves himself to be a capable crisis decision-maker. Though we will all draw a huge sigh of relief if the ongoing North Korean nuclear crisis were to subside, there will assuredly arise other atomic emergencies. To be adequately prepared for these perilous events, we need a better system. There is one last but still vital observation, at least for Americans. Whether in reference to a proposed military intervention or to another considered military action, the American president is bound not only by U.S. law, but also by international law. The latter has long been an integral part of American law. Such incorporation is most prominently expressed at Article VI of the U.S. Constitution (the Supremacy Clause), and also at various majorU.S.Supreme Court decisions.

There is already a check on concentrated power because the joint chiefs and generals must approve of the president's order.

BBC News. "Can U.S. generals say 'no' to Trump if he orders a nuclear strike?" 28 November 2017. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-42065714

The claim: U.S. military personnel could resist President Trump if he ordered an illegal nuclear strike. Reality Check verdict: Although normally nobody is allowed to refuse the president's order, in practice, generals would expect a good explanation for the strike – and would be obliged to say "no" to an illegal order. In recent months, with tensions rising between the U.S. and North Korea, people have been asking what's to stop President Trump launching nuclear weapons. A retired general told Congress that the military may be able to say "no" to the President, under certain circumstances. Now, Gen. John Hyten, who leads U.S. Strategic Command, has told the Halifax International Security Forum that he would advise against a strike if he considered it was illegal.

A2 DECREASE CHANCE OF ARMS RACE

Regardless of whether or not the U.S. pursues a NFS, militarization will continue because of other global conflicts. Take the Asia Pacific region for example.

Author: Low, Michelle. "US upped military spending, Asian militarization accelerated in 2016: Report." *CNBC.* 23 June 2017. http://www.cnbc.com/2017/04/21/us-upped-military-spending-asian-militarization-accelerated-in-2016-report.html

While the U.S. is the world's biggest military spender, making up a solid third of the world's expenditure on that front, the Asia Pacific is by far the fastest growing region. Countries there collectively spent $450 billion on defense in 2016 — a 4.6 percent increase from the previous year. Five of the world's top 15 military spenders come from the Asia-Pacific, and regional defense spending has increased by 64 percent in the past decade, a stark reflection of the growing geopolitical tension in the Korean peninsula, East and South China Sea and between India and Pakistan. China is the Asia Pacific's largest spender, accounting for 48 percent — or close to half — of the region's military expenditure. The rising superpower spent $215 billion on defense alone, which was almost four times that of its nearest rival, India. Those two nations collectively made up 60 percent of regional spend.

Without nuclear deterrence, nations would shift to a conventional arms race which can be comparatively worse since there is a higher likelihood they do small conventional attacks than nuclear ones.

Author: Miller, Franklin and Keith Payne. "The dangers of no-first-use." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.* 22 August 2016. https://thebulletin.org/2016/08/the-dangers-of-no-first-use/#:~:text=Such%20a%20declaratory%20policy%20would,to%20an%20opponent's%20nuclear%20attack.&text=In%20fact%2C%20however%2C%20US%20adoption,without%20offering%20any%20plausible%20benefit.

In fact, however, U.S. adoption of a no-first-use policy would create serious risks without offering any plausible benefit. Why so? There is no doubt that the U.S. 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 U.S. 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 U.S. and allied lives. A U.S. pledge of no-first-use now would encourage current and future opponents to believe that they need not fear the U.S. 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. Consequently, declaring a no-first-use policy would degrade the prospective credibility of the U.S. 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 U.S. 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 U.S. 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.

Trump's actions already provoke global arms races regardless of NFU

Author: Ingram, Matthew. "Donald Drumpf Just Started a Nuclear Arms Race with a Tweet." *Fortune Magazine*. 23 December 2016. http://fortune.com/2016/12/23/trump-arms-race/

Donald Drumpf's tendency to shoot first on Twitter and ask questions later may have made for an amusing distraction during the early months of his election campaign. But it has become something significantly more serious now that he is about to become president. In just the past few weeks, Drumpf has caused a diplomatic incident with China over his recognition of Taiwan as an independent state, and has triggered multi-billion-dollar slides in the market value of companies like Lockheed Martin and Boeing by criticizing their products on Twitter. On Thursday, this loose-cannon approach to Twitter appeared to hit a new low, when the president-elect committed the U.S. to a nuclear arms race.

A2 BENEFITING SOFT POWER

US soft power is dependent on our military hard power. Removing the potency of the U.S. nuclear umbrella would severely undercut the ability to create treaties and foster negotiations. Coercive diplomacy is much more effective.

Author: Rubin, Michael. "Why was John Kerry such a bad Secretary of State?" 29 December 2016. http://www.aei.org/publication/john-kerry-such-a-bad-secretary-of- state/

Michael Rubin is a former Pentagon official whose major research areas are the Middle East, Turkey, Iran and diplomacy. Rubin instructs senior military officers deploying to the Middle East and Afghanistan on regional politics, and teaches classes regarding Iran, terrorism, and Arab politics on board deploying U.S. aircraft carriers. Rubin has lived in post-revolution Iran, Yemen, both pre- and post-war Iraq, and spent time with the Taliban before 9/11. His newest book, Dancing with the Devil: The Perils of Engaging Rogue Regimes (https://www.aei.org/publication/dancing-with-the-devil-the-perils-of-engaging-rogue- regimes/) examines a half century of U.S. diplomacy with rogue regimes and terrorist groups.

Rather than exploit Iran's desperation, Kerry worked to alleviate it: The Obama administration offered Iran billions of dollars just to come to the table. Nor did Kerry (or Obama) once enunciate what the best alternative to a negotiated agreement was, leading his Iranian counterparts to conclude correctly that they had the upper hand in talks. After all, if Obama and Kerry castigated their critics as warmongers, then how likely were they to join their critics if they believed war the only alternate? Can Kerry alone be blamed? No: U.S. strategy has been incoherent across administrations. Secretaries of State might opine but if there is no unity of effort to ensure that their diplomacy is set up to succeed, then it won't be successful. The State Department cannot alone build leverage – that is the job of the Pentagon and perhaps Central Intelligence Agency and should be coordinated by the National Security Council. Kerry's problem was ego: Perhaps it was his decades immersed in the culture of the Senate, but he seems to have come to believe that his own good faith and rhetoric could substitute for the hard work of crafting coherent strategy. Essentially, his tenure was one giant short-cut. He worked hard, but not effectively. Staff and close advisors who might have offered him a reality check instead recognized that their path to recognition and promotion was to affirm whatever Kerry thought, no matter how destructive or, in some case, factually challenged it could be. Kerry, himself, has always been handicapped by his credulity: He believes what he is told. His adversaries understand that personal charm can lead Kerry to dismiss the accumulated wisdom of those more experienced or knowledgeable than he. Diplomacy that diverges from reality is seldom successful. Kerry did not live in the real world. Nor does diplomacy absent leverage ever work with adversaries or rogue regimes. It is a lesson Kerry never learned, and history will condemn him for it. He has left the United States and its allies in a far-worse position than had he done nothing.

Look at Libya for example.

"The Scope and Limits of Coercive Diplomacy", *Stanley Foundation*. 2 February 2014. http://stanleyfoundation.org/publications/pab/pab06CoerDip.pdf

Libya's end to its WMD programs and terrorism shows that it is possible to gain cooperation even from "rogue" states through coercive diplomacy. While no two cases are the same, the Libya case has important lessons for the scope and limits of coercive diplomacy as a general strategy and with regard to Iran and North Korea.

US allies are the central point toU.S.soft power. NFU jeopardizes the safety and relationship with our allies which can destroy any soft power gained from signing on.

Author: Roberts, Brad. "Debating Nuclear No-First-Use, again." *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy.* 21 May 2019. https://cgsr.llnl.gov/content/assets/docs/Debating-Nuclear-No-first-use-Again.pdf

On the impact of NFU adoption on the assurance of allies, the positive case is that NFU assures allies that the United States remains committed to reducing nuclear dangers and to restraining its own nuclear policies and posture. But for many allies, this argument misses the point. Yes, they seek assurance that a cavalier and sometimes reckless president will not generate new nuclear dangers for them. But for a significant number of allies, the deeper assurance they seek is that the United States will be prepared to use all means available when their vital interests are at risk. They want to be convinced that a neighbour who might contemplate putting those interests at risk understands that there would be a terrible price to be paid. They also want to rest easy that the United States understands this requirement and is proceeding, in partnership with them, to strengthen the means of their common defence.21 For these anxious allies, NFU is troublesome in every way. It signals clearly that theU.S.will not be prepared to use all means available to it when their vital interests are at risk, declining to do so unless the enemy is foolish enough to cross the nuclear red line. NFU thus sends a message of restraint to dangerous neighbours, encouraging conventional provocations and risk-taking. It signals that the United States doesn't understand the unique value for their defence of theU.S.threat of the first use of its nuclear weapons. The preference of some Americans to deter by non-nuclear means reinforces their anxiety that they will be left to die in large numbers while theU.S.masses, dispatches and assembles its conventional forces rather than issuing threats of nuclear first use. For some allied experts, theU.S.flirtation with NFU is one more sign that the United States no longer has the will to do what is necessary for their security, which could portend significant shifts in the political allegiance ofU.S.allies.

US soft power is so bad nothing can really save it because of all the international treaties and global controversy the Trump administration has created.

Author: Nye, Joseph S. "American Soft Power in the Age of Trump." *USC Center on Public Diplomacy.* 20 May 2019. https://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/american-soft-power-age-trump

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has shown little interest in public diplomacy. And yet public diplomacy—a government's efforts to communicate directly with other countries' publics—is one of the key instruments policymakers use to generate soft power, and the current information revolution makes such instruments more important than ever. Opinion polls and the Portland Soft Power 30 index show that American soft power has declined since the beginning of Trump's term. Tweets can help to set the global agenda, but they do not produce soft power if they are not attractive to others. Trump's defenders reply that soft power—what happens in the minds of others—is irrelevant; only hard power, with its military and economic instruments, matters. In March 2017, Trump's budget director, Mick Mulvaney, proclaimed a "hard power budget" that would have slashed funding for the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development by nearly 30 percent. Fortunately, military leaders know better. In 2013, General James Mattis (later Trump's first Secretary of Defense) warned Congress, "If you don't fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition ultimately." As Henry Kissinger once pointed out, international order depends not only on the balance of hard power, but also on perceptions of legitimacy, which depends crucially on soft power. Domestic or foreign policies that appear hypocritical, arrogant, indifferent to others' views, or based on a narrow conception of national interest can undermine soft power. For example, there was a steep decline in the attractiveness of the U.S. in opinion polls conducted after the invasion of Iraq in 2003. In the 1970s, many people around the world objected to the U.S. war in Vietnam, and America's global standing reflected the unpopularity of that policy. Skeptics argue that such cycles show that soft power does not matter much; countries cooperate out of self-interest. But this argument misses a crucial point: cooperation is a matter of degree, and the degree is affected by attraction or repulsion.

A2 CON

A2 SIGNALING WEAKNESS / EMBOLDENING ENEMIES

Most nations oppose the United States policy of first use. Adopting one could substantially boost U.S. soft power signaling strength not weakness.

Author: Ellsberg, Daniel. "Ending Nuclear Terrorism: By America and Others." *Senior Fellow of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation*. 6 August 2009. https://www.ellsberg.net/upcoming-nuclear-crisis/

Few Americans in or out of government are aware of the extent to which the United States and NATO first-use doctrine has always isolated the United States and its Western allies morally and politically from world opinion. Nor are they familiar with the sharpness of the language used by majorities in the UN General Assembly in resolutions condemning the policies on which NATO has long based its planning. UN Resolution 36/100, the Declaration on the Prevention of Nuclear Catastrophe, was adopted on December 9, 1981. It declares in its Preamble: "Any doctrine allowing the first use of nuclear weapons and any actions pushing the world toward a catastrophe are incompatible with human moral standards and the lofty ideals of the UN." The body of the UN Resolution 36/100 declares: "States and statesmen that resort first to nuclear weapons will be committing the gravest crime against humanity. There will never be any justification or pardon for statesmen who take the decision to be the first to use nuclear weapons." Eighty two nations voted in favor of this declaration. Forty-one (under heavy pressure from the U.S.) abstained; nineteen opposed it, including the United States and most NATO member nations. That the dissenters were allies of the United States is no coincidence. The first-use doctrine denounced here in such stark terms underlies the basic strategic concept of NATO, devised and promoted by the United States from the early fifties to the present. (Most Americans, polls show, have been unaware of this). NATO plans and preparations not only "allow" first use of nuclear weapons, if necessary to defeat an overwhelming attack; they promise it. They always have, and they still do. This remains true despite the fact that the possibility of an overwhelming conventional attack against NATO no longer exists. Eighteen years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, hundreds ofU.S.tactical nuclear weapons remain in Europe to carry out first-use nuclear attacks as a "last resort," although the Warsaw Pact is no more and all its former members, including Russia, have indicated desire for membership in NATO. In 1997, a serious effort to promote consideration of a no-first-use doctrine by Germany—West Germany was the strongest European supporter of the first-use policy during the Cold War– was shelved after intense opposition by the United States.

Economic threat of sanctions is enough tools in the toolbox

Author: Rogers, Elizabeth S. "Using Economic Sanctions to Prevent Deadly Conflict." *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School*. May 1996. https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/using-economic-sanctions-prevent-deadly-conflict

Increasingly, the use of force does not offer a practical remedy for these conflicts. U.S. support is important to the success of international military operations because the U.S. is the world's greatest power. However, since the Vietnam War, the U.S. public has grown increasingly unwilling to support overseas military deployments that might injure or kill its soldiers .4 In the future this public feeling will probably preclude most uses of U.S. forces to dampen regional conflicts. Hence alternatives to force must be explored, and economic sanctions are the most plausible alternative because next to force they are the strongest available policy instrument. The historical record contains more than 125 uses of economic sanctions by states and international organizations since 1914. Most of the literature analyzing these economic sanctions focuses on the general question of

sanctions' effectiveness. There is no writing that specifically evaluates economic sanctions as a tool for preventing deadly conflict. Hence, I survey the general literature on economic sanctions and assess its conclusions. I then evaluate the extent to which these general conclusions can be applied to the specific case of using economic sanctions to prevent conflict in the post-cold war era. I also identify gaps in the literature where further research is needed. In this paper, I make one general argcument about the effectiveness of sanctions for preventing deadly conflict and two specific arguments about using financial sanctions (freezing assets and multilateral political aid conditionality) for that purpose. The general argument is that economic sanctions will enjoy some success at preventing deadly conflict and should be used for that purpose. This argument rests on conclusions drawn from the sanctions literature, an assessment of the post-cold war environment, an evaluation of the costs associated with imposing economic sanctions, and the nature of the task. I also assess two factors that work against successfully using sanctions to prevent deadly conflict: the problem of identifying and isolating targets of sanctions and the difficult nature of the conflict prevention task.

The U.S. has the strongest and most deadly conventional military

Army Technology. "US Army Size: Is America still the most powerful country in the world?" 21 January 2018. https://www.army-technology.com/features/us-army-size-most-powerful-country/

The U.S. Army size dwarfs that of most other nations and together with the country's high expenditure on defence makes it a formidable force. U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis recently suggested that theU.S.is falling behind. At John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies on 19 January, Mattis stated: "Our competitive edge has eroded in every domain of warfare, air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace, and it is continuing to erode." However numerous indicators suggest the U.S. Army is still the most powerful in the world.

U.S. Army size: India and China left behind. On active-duty troops alone, the United States has more than 1.34 million and it holds over 850,000 in reserve. Not only is the U.S. recognised as the third largest army in the world – only China and India are superior with over 2.18 million and over 1.39 million, respectively – it is considered by many to be the most powerful. Military budget: Who has the most? While China and India may have larger armies, theU.S.is by far the biggest spender when it comes to the military. With a mammoth budget of $610bn, not even the duo of China and India are able to compete. China, with $228bn, is the only other country to have a budget over the $100bn mark.

A2 UNDERMINING DETERRENCE

There is always the argument that no country will launch nuclear weapons because of mutually assured destruction. There are more country-specific answers later in this document to offer additional support for this idea.

Nuclear deterrence is awful because it threatens regime survival, making miscalculation and conventional conflict more likely.

Author: Talmadge, Caitlin. "Would China go Nuclear?" *International Security Magazine.* Spring 2017. https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.gwu.edu/dist/b/1590/files/2018/07/Talmadge-IS-2017-y16c9h.pdf

Two pathways could lead to inadvertent nuclear escalation.23 First, a state could believe that its opponent was using conventional attack as a prelude to nuclear attack—that conventional operations were being used to "soften up" the target for a subsequent nuclear counterforce campaign, in a manner that would make that campaign more successful than if it occurred as a bolt from the blue. Or, even if such conventional operations did not objectively increase the likely effectiveness of a subsequent nuclear counterforce campaign, the target state might believe that operations of this sort strongly signaled that such a campaign was imminent, much more so than would have been credible in peacetime. Second, the target state might fear that the opponent was seeking to attrite the target's nuclear force through conventional counterforce—counterforce attacks below the nuclear threshold—and that it might soon be successful.24 In both of these scenarios, the key question would not be whether the target state expected to suffer complete nuclear disarmament at the hands of a nu- clear or conventional counterforce attack. Rather, the issue would be whether the target state feared the erosion of its nuclear capabilities past some threshold considered vital to its security. That threshold most obviously would encompass retention of the state's ability to inflict unacceptable damage in a retaliatory second strike, but it also could include the ability to perform other tasks, such as providing a nuclear umbrella for allies or deterring third parties.25 Under such circumstances, the target state might decide that it was better off escalating to nuclear use before it suffered nuclear disarmament or degradation past that key threshold. Admittedly, these escalatory logics might seem counterintuitive to those who associate nuclear weapons with stability. Nuclear weapons are said to mitigate the security dilemma because they are not very useful for conquering others' territory, but they are very effective in deterring attacks on one's own, assuming a state has a secure second-strike capability. Hence the presence of nuclear weapons can induce a situation of defensive advantage that should be conducive to peace.29 Precisely because of the importance that states attach to their nuclear arsenals, however, states are likely to treat threats to those arsenals with the highest possible concern. Put another way, although the threat of nuclear weapons may inhibit escalation from peace to war, threats to nuclear weapons may provide reasons for intra-war escalation.

Nuclear weapons are no longer strategically important

Author: Gard, Robert. "5 Myths about America's Nuclear Weapons Debunked." *National Interest.* January 2015. http://nationalinterest.org/feature/5-myths-about-americas-nuclear-weapons-debunked-12136

Nuclear weapons do not address the threat of ISIL in Syria and Iraq, the Ebola epidemic, the continued insurgency in Afghanistan or Russian expansion into Crimea and Ukraine. Conventional forces, medical assistance and diplomacy are essential in addressing those issues and deserve to be prioritized for current and foreseeable threats to the United States and its allies. Nuclear weapons have lost much of their value since the end of the Cold War. In fact, a 2012 study conducted by a group of experienced former national-security officials and political leaders chaired by former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General James Cartwright, and including the aforementioned Hagel, declared that "No sensible argument has been put forward for using nuclear weapons to solve any of the major 21st century problems we face [including] threats posed by rogue states, failed states, proliferation, regional conflicts, terrorism, cyber warfare, organized crime, drug trafficking, conflict –driven mass migration of refugees, epidemics, or climate change …. In fact, nuclear weapons have on balance arguably become more a part of the problem than any solution."

A2 Russia

Russia's military is incredibly weak in comparison to the United States in addition to its economy being in freefall as a result of international sanctions – it does not need to be further deterred.

Author: Perry, Mark. "The U.S. Army's War over Russia." *Politico*. 12 May 2016. http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/05/army-internal-fight-russia-defense-budget-213885

The fight over the Army panel's testimony is the latest example of a deepening feud in the military community over how to respond to shrinking budget numbers. At issue is the military's strategic future: Facing cuts, will the Army opt to modernize its weapons' arsenal, or defer modernization in favor of increased numbers of soldiers? On April 5, the Army's top brass made its choice clear: It wants to do both, and Russia's the reason. But a growing chorus of military voices says that demand is both backward and dangerously close-minded—that those same senior military officers have not only failed to understand the lessons of Afghanistan and Iraq and embrace service reform, they are inflating foreign threats to win a bigger slice of the defense budget. Indeed, the numbers seem to be on the sign of the reformers. Recent estimates show the Russian military is overmatched. The United States spends seven times the amount of money on defense as Russia ($598 billion vs. $84 billion), has nearly twice the number of active duty personnel (1.4 million vs. 766,000), just under six times as many helicopters (approximately 6,000 vs. 1,200), three times the number of fighters (2,300 vs. 751) and four times the total number of aircraft. We have 10 aircraft carriers, the Russians have one. And while it's true that the Russians field nearly twice the number of tanks as the U.S. (15,000 vs. 8,800), their most recent version, the T-14 Armata, broke down during the 2015 Moscow May Day Parade. America's M1A1 Tank, on the other hand, has never been defeated in battle. Ever. The idea that you can look at these numbers and think

that the U.S. military is in serious trouble is ridiculous, the reformers say. ADVERTISING inRead invented by Teads The most outspoken critic of the Army panel's testimony has been retired Air Force Lt. Gen. David Deptula, head of the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies. "It's time to stop waving the bloody red shirt," he wrote to me. "Calling for more resources because you're taking casualties is a wake-up call for a new approach—not for throwing more folks into the meat grinder. We really need to think in a deliberate goal-oriented way to secure national interests, not just parochial Army interests."

A2 China

China does not have the capacity to compete with the United States on a nuclear level because they are very late to proliferation. Thus, their primary goal is missile defense, not offense.

Author: Buyon, Noah. "China's Happy to Sit Out the Nuclear Arms Race." *Foreign Policy.* 30 January 2017. https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/30/chinas-happy-to-sit-out-the-nuclear-arms-race/

While the number of nuclear weapons in the United States and the Soviet Union swelled to over 50,000 in the mid-1980s, and they produced warheads and delivery devices far deadlier than those used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, China was content to stick with dozens, not thousands, of warheads. Even today, the United States and Russia believe nuclear deterrence requires thousands of warheads each, and at least three ways to deliver them. But the truth of the matter is that you can annihilate your adversary (or the planet) only so many times. In fact, some in the U.S. Air Force have argued that 311 warheads would provide nine-and-a-half times the destructive power needed to incapacitate the Soviet Union by former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's count. For China, it's not the size of the arsenal that counts, it's how you use it. About 200 nuclear warheads are "enough." China's primary goal has always been to prevent the use of nuclear weapons against them. Beijing figured out that you don't need 30,000 nuclear warheads to achieve that end — you only need enough that the risk of losing a major city in retaliation holds your opponents back. They have enough for escalation control, they have enough for deterrence, and they only need to mate their warheads to delivery vehicles to signal. So they keep their strategic forces small and agile. With about 200 weapons, you already have increased the cost of nuclear war enough that nobody wants to start one with you. You don't even have to spend a fortune to keep those weapons ready to go at a moment's notice, as Russia and the United States do with their arsenals. Instead, China can invest in its conventional and not-so- conventional weapons, including a growing naval force, hyper-glide vehicles, and systems for both cyberspace and outerspace. . Last, China is happy to sit back and wait until escalation is called for, so it keeps its warheads separated from the missiles it predominantly relies on as delivery systems.

China would never risk trade flows in the South China Sea and may be more inclined to take steps to preserve the free flow of trade than it is to disrupt regional trade flows.

"How much trade transits the South China Sea?" *China Power Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies.* Last updated 2016. https://chinapower.csis.org/much-trade-transits-south-china-sea/

The frequent citing of the $5.3 trillion figure in various publications implies an overwhelming concern among the media, scholars, and governments that a disruption of South China Sea trade would precipitate a global economic crisis. Concerns surrounding the $5.3 trillion figure are often tied to suspicions that China's growing regional influence may embolden Beijing to disrupt commercial shipping. While certain contingencies may prompt China's leaders to take coercive action, this possibility is less likely during peacetime. China's

reliance on the South China Sea leaves it vulnerable to maritime trade disruptions. In 2003, then-President Hu Jintao drew attention to the potential threat posed by "certain major powers" aiming to control the Strait of Malacca, and highlighted the need for China to adopt new strategies to address this concern. Thereafter, the Chinese media drew significant attention to the potential risk outlined by Hu Jintao and Chinese scholars stressed the need to solve this "Malacca Dilemma" by exploring alternative shipping routes.2 Given the significance of the South China Sea for Chinese trade, Beijing may be more inclined to take steps to preserve the free flow of trade than it is to disrupt regional trade flows. Even under extreme hypothetical conditions where Chinese capabilities expanded to the point where it was capable of letting its own commerce pass while stopping that of other countries, such a move would be risky. Long-term interference with shipping traffic would increase insurance premiums on commercial vessels and force shippers to consider more expensive trade route alternatives. This is not to say that such a scenario is impossible. Dire circumstances may compel China to take disruptive action, but this would come at a considerable financial cost to China, greatly degrade China's standing among other countries, and could precipitate an assertive response by outside powers.

A2 North Korea

North Korea's primary goal is regime survival, completely avoiding huge risks that put its survival at stake. They are already sufficiently deterred by a retaliatory response.

Author: Jackson, Van. "The Biggest Myth about North Korea." *The National Interest.* 9 July 2015. http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-biggest-myth-about-north-korea-13290?page=2

Widespread fear of a North Korean total war is a pathology based on an imaginary North Korea. No matter one's political leanings, right and left alike agree that North Korea's primary goal is regime survival, meaning that North Korea will not only take actions to safeguard its regime, but also avoid taking actions that put its survival at risk. This bears out in sixty years of observing North Korean behavior—even during the so-called "second Korean war" of the late 1960s, North Korea never escalated beyond isolated military attacks. Today, North Korea threatens South Korean NGOs that send propaganda balloons into its territory yet fires at the balloons and not the people launching them. In repeated naval clashes with South Korea in the Yellow Sea, North Korea strikes some blows and suffers others, but it never escalates beyond the local clash. North Korea has had countless opportunities to escalate or broaden conflicts in a crisis, yet has consistently chosen restraint. Whatever North Korea's rhetoric and motivations for violence, its track record shows a preference for not taking actions that would jeopardize the regime, and the North Korean escalation that everyone fears would do precisely that. Even if North Korea responded with violence when attacked or retaliated against, there is a massive difference between responding with limited or tit-for-tat violence (its historical modus operandi) and responding with the most devastatingly lethal response it can come up with, like a nuclear first-strike or artillery barrages against Seoul. The latter are regime-ending actions, while the former may demonstrate resolve against the alliance and allow both sides a chance to sue for peace.

A2 Iran

Iran's economy is in shambles – they lack the capacity to pose a nuclear threat in the first place.

Author: Vaziri, Babak et al. "Iran's Economy is on the Verge of Collapse." *The American Thinker Magazine.* 6 October 2018.

https://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2018/10/irans_economy_is_on_the_verge_of_collapse.html

Many economics experts believe that Iran is entrenched in a financial death spiral. Officials within the regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) claim that the gravity of economic crisis there is overstated. Furthermore, Islamist regime-sponsored lobby factions in the United States, such as the National Iranian American Council (NIAC), argue that fiscal predicaments the country is facing are consequences of malign U.S. policies toward the Iranian regime, including the enforcement of crippling economic sanctions. The truth is, precarious economic circumstances in Iran have been primarily – if not exclusively – triggered by a plethora of iniquitous economic policies adopted by the regime. This is evident by various indicators. The conversion rate of Iranian rial (IRR) to foreign currencies is one of the most important tools by which the country's economic well being can be gauged. The [currency] IRR has lost its value by nearly 70% since April 2018, a month before U.S. president Donald J. Trump reimposed sanctions on the Iranian regime over its rogue nuclear activities. Interest rates behave parallel to inflation rates. This means that the higher the profit rates, the higher the national currency value is. A prerequisite for a positive correlation is if a country can attract foreign capital. At present, large companies and enterprises are reluctant to invest in Iran because of the regime's hostile policies and militant activities. Subsequently, Iranian banks and financial institutions that have not been able to absorb foreign investments are compelled to raise their capital by lending with high interest rates and brokerage. This is turn creates a vicious cycle in which high interest rates also increase the rate of inflation – what we are seeing now. According to Hanke's analysis, from July 26 to July 29, 2018, the inflation rate increased from 151% to 203% – a 52% increase in the inflation rate in just three days.

Iran would not lash out further because they know it would provoke European countries who are still a part of the nuclear deal to back out and sanction them like the United States.

Author: Hannah, John. “Here’s How Trump Should Prepare for Iranian Escalation.” *Foreign Policy*. 26 October 2018. https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/26/heres-how-trump-should-prepare-for-iranian-escalation/

Despite the EU’s best efforts to foil U.S. sanctions, it has become increasingly clear over the past five months that it won’t succeed.Despite the EU’s best efforts to foil U.S. sanctions, it has become increasingly clear over the past five months that it won’t succeed. From an enhanced blocking statute to discussion of a special payments vehicle for maintaining Iranian trade, none of it appears likely to do much to blunt the force of the blow that is about to hit the Iranian economy. European companies have already abandoned the Iranian market in droves. And Iranian oil exports have recently begun to plummet—according to reports, by at least several hundred thousand barrels per day—even before U.S. sanctions have gone back into effect. It’s still possible, of course, that despite the EU’s failure to satisfy Tehran, the Iranians will nevertheless decide that the better part of wisdom is to hold their fire. Lashing out certainly carries risks. It could alienate European governments and push them closer to Trump’s anti-Iran position. Even more dangerously, it could invite a painful, disproportionate military response from a highly unpredictable and volatile U.S. president. Under strong counsel from the Europeans, it’s possible that the Iranians could calculate that their best course is simply to sit tight, endure the sanctions while exploiting whatever loopholes exist, and wait out Trump’s presidency in hopes that he’ll be impeached by a Democratic Congress in 2019 or voted out of office come 2020.

A2 IMPACT ON U.S. ALLIES / CAUSING PROLIFERATION

Note: The blocks to these two arguments are merged because the underlying link, which is that our allies are more vulnerable in a pro world, is the same with a differing impact in each argument. Thus, they can be responded to on the whole.

The United States nuclear umbrella over our allies actually provokes more conflict in the long run. Statistically, when allies are perceived by adversaries as offensive, the probability of conflict increases 47%, whereas neutral allies see a 28% lower chance of disputes.

Author: Leeds, Brett Ashlet. "Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes." *American Journal of Political Science.* July 2003. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3186107?seq=1

In the third column of Table 1, I list the absolute change in the predicted probability of dispute initiation associated with a change in each independent variable while all other independent variables are held constant their means.19 In the case of the continuous variables, I report the difference in the predicted probability of dispute initiation with a value that is one standard deviation above the mean versus a value that is one standard deviation below the mean. In the case of the dichotomous variables, I report the difference in the predicted probability of dispute initiation with a value of one on this independent variable versus a value of zero. Thus, when a potential conflict initiator has an offensive ally, the probability of dispute initiation increases by 0.40%. This sounds like a low percentage, until one recognizes that the probability of dispute initiation in the sample as a whole is only 1.17%. For such a rare event, even the small percentage changes that we find in this analysis make a difference. This is easiest to see by examining the bar graph pictured in Figure 1. This figure shows the percentage change in the probability of dispute initiation that can be attributed to outside allies when all other variables are held at their mean values. The first bar shows that when a target state has an ally committed to its defense, the probability of dispute initiation is 28% lower than the probability of dispute initiation in a dyad with the mean characteristics in the dataset but no outside allies. The second bar represents the case in which the challenger has an offensive ally; in this instance, the probability of dispute initiation is 47% higher than it is in the case in which neither the challenger nor the target has any allies committed to intervene

The nuclear non-proliferation treaty means proliferation would lead to severe diplomatic isolation and sanctions. Thus, the vast majority of our allies on this treaty will not nuclearize and risk the

full force of the international community and that's why it has been largely effective as a norm to this day.

Author: O'Hanlon, Michael. "Experts Assess the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, 50 Years after it went into Effect." *The Brookings Institute.* 3 March 2020.
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/03/03/experts-assess-the-nuclear-non-proliferation-treaty-50-years-after-it-went-into-effect/

As we mark the 50th anniversary of the NPT's entry into force, there is much to celebrate. Without the treaty, the powerful norm against proliferation it created, its associated controls on exports of sensitive technologies, the rigorous International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitoring system, and the threat of sanctions for violating nonproliferation obligations, we would be living in the world of many nuclear-armed states that President John F. Kennedy predicted. As Mike points out, today there are only nine countries with nuclear weapons, the same number as 25 years ago – a remarkable indication of the NPT's durability and its contribution to international stability. Without the treaty, and the confidence provided by its IAEA verification system that nuclear equipment and materials would not be diverted to the production of nuclear weapons, the widespread use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes would not have been possible – not just for electricity generation, but also for the production of isotopes for use in medicine, agriculture, and industry.

For U.S. allies, the harms of proliferation vastly outweigh the benefits.

Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. "No First Use: Myths vs. Realities."
https://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/no-first-use/no-first-use-myths-vs-realities/

Myth: Allies will acquire their own nuclear weapons if they lose faith in the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence. Reality: The financial, political, and security consequences of acquiring nuclear weapons are strong deterrents against nuclear proliferation among U.S. allies, as are their own legal obligations. U.S. allies understand that developing nuclear weapons in contravention of their Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations would severely disrupt alliance relationships and would certainly have a greater negative impact than a shift in U.S. declaratory policy. U.S. allies have no need to pursue nuclear weapons, as there is no reason to question the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence. An NFU policy will have no effect on the ability of the United States to deter threats to its allies' security with its robust conventional forces and the threat of nuclear retaliation in response to a nuclear attack. Myth: A U.S. NFU policy will not change policy in other nuclear weapon states. Reality: The goal of an NFU policy is not to influence other nuclear weapons states. The goal of an NFU policy is to make it clear when and how the United States would consider using nuclear weapons. This clarity will help reduce the risk of miscalculation or inadvertent escalation in a crisis with a nuclear-armed adversary.

US allies feel vulnerable when the U.S. credibility is in jeopardy – it's about soft power not about first use of nuclear weapons

Author: Utgoff, Victor. "On Strengthening and Expanding the U.S. Nuclear Umbrella to Dissuade Nuclear Proliferation." *Institute for Defense Analyses.* July 2008.
https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a537931.pdf

The more important potential cons are that despite the US' best efforts the allies will always have some doubts about the credibility of U.S. END guarantees, that maximizing the credibility of U.S. END guarantees would likely require long-term deployments of U.S. forces on the ally's territory, and that in the event deterrence fails, U.S. END guarantees could lead to a substantial amount of conventional battle on the ally's territory before nuclear escalation would be considered. This assessment suggests that some states that decide they need the protection of a nuclear deterrent would not see U.S. END guarantees as clearly preferable to having their own deterrent. Thus, absent some major change in world circumstances, the U.S. might have to work hard to gain the acceptance by some states of improved or expanded U.S. END guarantees.

US allies would not be more vulnerable because they would be protected by the United States equally as compelling conventional, biological, and chemical deterrents.

Author: Panda, Ankit. "'No First Use' and Nuclear Weapons." *Council on Foreign Relations.* 17 July 2018. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/no-first-use-and-nuclear-weapons

Though the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review did not include an NFU pledge, the Obama administration considered the idea during its second term. It ultimately left U.S. nuclear declaratory policy unchanged from its 2010 iteration, which stated that the United States reserved the right to use nuclear weapons to deter nonnuclear attacks while strengthening conventional capabilities to gradually reduce the role of nuclear weapons to that of solely deterring nuclear attacks. Nevertheless, the Obama administration's final year in office saw animated debate among proponents and opponents of an NFU declaration. Arguments in favor of a U.S. NFU pledge. Proponents of a U.S. NFU declaration have argued that not only does the United States already maintain a de facto NFU policy but that U.S. superiority in conventional weapons is sufficient to deter significant nuclear, biological, chemical, and conventional threats. Additionally, as Kingston Reif of the Arms Control Association has argued, "a clear U.S. no-first-use policy would reduce the risk of Russian or Chinese nuclear miscalculation during a crisis by alleviating concerns about a devastating U.S. nuclear first-strike." In nuclear strategy, a first strike refers to a nuclear attack that seeks to disarm a nuclear-armed enemy before it can employ its weapons.

US allies have missile defense systems in place to protect from nuclear threats

Author: Reif, Kingston. "Current U.S. Missile Defense Programs at a Glance." *Arms Control Association.* August 2019. https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/usmissiledefense

For nearly two decades, U.S. ballistic missile defense (BMD) policy has sought to protect the homeland against limited long-range missile strikes from states such as Iran and North Korea, but not major nuclear powers like Russia and China as that mission would pose significant technical, financial, and geopolitical challenges. The United States has also pursued programs to defend U.S. troops and facilities abroad, as well as some close allies, from attacks by ballistic missiles—and to a much lesser extent cruise missiles. The overall U.S. missile defense effort enjoys strong bipartisan support in Congress. Additionally, many U.S. allies place a high value on missile defense cooperation with the United States. The U.S. and South Korea decided in July 2016 to deploy a THAAD battery in South Korea to counter North Korean threats despite strong objections from China. The battery began operating in April 2017. A THAAD battery was deployed to Guam in 2013 to counter potential North Korea IRBM threats to the island and U.S. military assets there. The first test of the THAAD system against an IRBM target occurred in July 2017. PAC-3 is now considered operational and has been deployed to several countries including Bahrain, Egypt, Germany, Greece, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, and the UAE. Under the fiscal year 2020 budget submission, by the end of fiscal year 2018, there are scheduled to be 39 Aegis BMD ships, and by the end of fiscal year 2024, there are scheduled to be 59 Aegis BMD ships. As of October 2017, thirty-three ships are currently deployed. Of these, 17 are assigned to the Pacific

Fleet and 16 to the Atlantic Fleet. A land-based SM-3 block IB deployment occurred in Romania in 2016, and that same year, ground was broken in Poland on a site to house land-based SM-3 IIAs. The Polish site was originally scheduled to become operational in 2018 but has been delayed until 2020.

In the case of NATO, NFU would strengthen deterrence because the competing nuclear policies create ambiguity that confuses adversaries like Russia in addition to reducing the chances of miscalculation

Author: Downman, Maxwell. "Where would Europe stand on aU.S.No First Use Policy?" *Outrider Post*. 2019. https://outrider.org/nuclear-weapons/articles/where-would-europe-stand-us-no-first-use-policy/

Right now both Russia and NATO nuclear countries are purposefully ambiguous about their nuclear doctrines. This is driving a security spiral. And, both sides are shaping their military doctrines with the worst-case scenarios in mind. The ongoing disagreements about whether Russia holds an 'escalate to de-escalate policy'—and, in consequence, how the United States should respond—are a perfect example. Declaring NFU could be one way to significantly reduce ambiguity. A U.S. President could take that step without European approval. But, this would force the other nuclear countries in NATO—France and the United Kingdom—to choose whether to follow suit. Would they keep NATO's de facto declaratory policy internally consistent and declare NFU as well? Or would they keep the option of first use, complicating the strategic picture for Russia further and increasing the risks of misperception? If NFU is a step too far for Europeans in the current context, Europe and the United States could develop a comprehensive risk reduction agenda together. This doesn't mean giving up on NFU. But there are intermediate steps that could add clarity to NATO signaling. To this end, NATO could adopt its own Alliance declaratory policy. Currently, the Alliance relies on the independent declaratory policies of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Some believe that the differences between these three nuclear doctrines strengthen deterrence by causing confusion in the minds of adversaries.

INDICTS TO PRO EVIDENCE

A2 WILSON

Nonproliferation Review, nuclear deterrence doesn't work[1]

This paper provides the ideological backbone of many non-proliferation supporters. Unfortunately, some of Wilson's concepts fell apart after being scrutinized by other scholars who wrote in defense of nuclear deterrence. Most importantly, Wilson conflated nuclear coercion with nuclear deterrence. In reality, coercion requires a positive action, like threatening a country with a nuclear strike, whereas deterrence is based on passiveness and inaction. The underlying logic behind this is better explained in the excerpt from the article below. For more information about this academic discussion, we implore debaters to read both Wilson's original paper and all of Zachary Keck's responses.

Author: Keck, Zachary. "Why Nuclear Weapons Work." *The Diplomat.* 13 December 2014. https://thediplomat.com/2014/09/why-nuclear-weapons-work/

The issue with Wilson's argument is that he conflates two separate concepts. On the one hand, Wilson makes the case that nuclear coercion isn't as ironclad as is believed. That is, using nuclear weapons against major population centers would not necessarily make the target state surrender. Enjoying this article? Click here to subscribe for full access. Just $5 a month. On the other hand, Wilson concludes from this that nuclear deterrence is a myth. But even if he is correct in arguing that nuclear coercion is a myth, he has done nothing to disprove nuclear deterrence. Indeed, not only has the security studies field long differentiated between coercion and deterrence, but it is widely accepted that coercion is much more difficult than deterrence. That's because for coercion to be successful, the target state must take a positive action. This usually entails giving up something it already possesses – whether that be territory or a nuclear weapons problem or something else entirely – and most likely values. By contrast, successful deterrence simply requires that the target state remains passive – that is, the target state doesn't take a certain action or acquire something it doesn't already possess. This is much easier to convince states to do because states, like people, value maintaining what they already have more than they value acquiring new things. For example, although coin tosses give each side a 50 percent chance of winning, few people would bet their life savings on a coin toss. That's because they value their current savings more than they value acquiring twice as much money. As helpful as metaphors can sometimes be, they are hardly needed for discussing concepts like coercion or deterrence. Indeed, international politics offers a nearly unlimited amount of actual cases that demonstrate that coercion is more difficult than deterrence. For example, the U.S. deterred the Soviet Union from invading Western Europe, but it couldn't coerce it into surrendering Eastern Europe. Similarly, while the threat of mutually assured destruction deterred the Soviet Union and the United States (and more recently, India and Pakistan) from going to war, Richard Betts found that nuclear blackmail – that is, threatening to use nuclear weapons against a state unless they made a concession – has rarely worked. Since the end of the Korean War, the U.S. and South Korea have been hugely successful at deterring North Korea from invading the South again. They have been much less successful in getting North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons program or start holding free and fair elections. The North Korean regime simply values its grip on power more than it values extending its power over South Korea. What makes nuclear weapons so effective for deterrence purposes is that they

[1] Author: Wilson, Ward. "The Myth of Nuclear Deterrence." *Nonproliferation Review.* November 2008. https://www.nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/npr/153_wilson.pdf

eliminate the uncertainty in war. With nuclear weapons, states no longer have to defeat an adversary's military to destroy its cities and citizens.

A2 RIDER

Texas Tech, 300% chance of war with arms races[2]

This piece of evidence is infamous in public forum debate for sounding like a tremendously large impact but instead turning out to be incredibly meaningless. Rider states that arms races increase the chance of war by 300%, which sounds like an incredibly drastic impact. Statistically speaking, though, percentages lack value unless they are contextualized with some kind of baseline. Normally debaters skip over this baseline because they prefer the dramatic final statistic, but these baseline values are critical to understanding the actual magnitude of a piece of evidence. In his study, Rider uses a baseline of 0.001 to represent the chance of war, meaning that a 300% increase would amount to 0.003. This can be found within Rider's paper under the 13th footnote. This means that during an arms race, the chance of war increases from 0.001 to 0.003% a number that is still incredibly minute. Providing this contextualization reduces the likelihood that any arms race impact will manifest and thus makes it significantly easier for opposing teams to outweigh the impact.

[2] Author: Rider, Toby. "Just part of the game? Arms races, rivalry, and war." *Journal of Peace Research.* 2011. http://www.michael-findley.com/uploads/2/0/4/5/20455799/jpr_2011_ar-rivalry.pdf

INDICTS TO CON EVIDENCE

A2 LEXINGTON INSTITUTE AND ATLANTIC COUNCIL SOURCES

(Indict of the sources themselves)

When it comes to nuclear weapons and the U.S. military, think-tanks and journals tend to be very politically polarized. Because so much profit stems from the military as a capitalist enterprise, some pieces of evidence can be indicted on the fact they are in part funded by private military contractors like Lockheed Martin that have a vested interest in making conflict seem likelier than it may be. The Lexington Institute and the Atlantic Council are two such sources. Therefore, they have a profit incentive to publish results that would encourage investment in the military, like building nuclear weapons. The fact that they are funded by weapons manufacturers casts doubt on the efficacy of their opinions and results. Because of this, teams reading a counter piece of evidence can argue that their evidence should be preferred because it is unbiased, unlike pieces of evidence that are funded by military contractors.

Author: Fang, Li. "US Defense Contractors Tell Investors Russian Threat is Great for Business." *The Intercept.* 19 August 2016. https://theintercept.com/2016/08/19/nato-weapons-industry/

And yet, the Aerospace Industries Association, a lobby group for Lockheed Martin, Textron, Raytheon, and other defense contractors, argued in February that the Pentagon is not spending enough to counter "Russian aggression on NATO's doorstep." **Think tanks with major funding from defense contractors, including the Lexington Institute and the Atlantic Council, have similarly demanded higher defense spending to counter Russia.**

Stephen Hadley, the former National Security Advisor to President George W. Bush now serving on the board of Raytheon, a firm competing for major NATO military contracts, has argued forcefully for hiking defense budgets and providing lethal aid to Ukraine. Hadley said in a speech last summer that the U.S. must "raise the cost for what Russia is doing in Ukraine," adding that "even President Putin is sensitive to body bags."

A2 WOOLSEY AND PRY

The Hill, North Korea could kill 90% of Americans[3]

Some Con teams will try to argue that the absence of a nuclear deterrent will provoke more conventional or cyber attacks. This card is a popular quantification that debaters use to impact such an attack to the extinction of 90% of all life in the United States. The authors, however, actually got their 90% statistic from Congressman Roscoe Bartlett, and Bartlett did not get his numbers from experts or an empirical analysis. In fact, the number comes from a science fiction novel he read called *One Second After*. There is absolutely zero methodology behind that number; it is literally fiction. Bartlett's source was uncovered when he testified in front of Congress, and he has since resigned and taken up a survivalist lifestyle in the woods of North Carolina.

Author: Mizokami, Kyle. "No, North Korea Can't Kill 90 Percent of Americans." *Popular Mechanics.* 31 March 2017.
https://www.popularmechanics.com/military/weapons/a25883/north-korea-cant-kill-ninety-percent-of-americans/

Back to The Hill article, which claims an EMP attack by North Korea would kill "9 of 10 Americans by starvation and societal collapse." The first clue that something is amiss with this claim is that, if you trace the link provided in the article, it cites the words of Congressman Roscoe Bartlett, who describes a novel he had read called One Second After. Bartlett says: "I read a prepublication copy of a book called One Second After. I hope it does get published; I think the American people need to read it. It was the story of a ballistic missile EMP attack on our country. The weapon was launched from a ship off our shore, and then the ship was sunk so that there were no fingerprints. The weapon was launched about 300 miles high over Nebraska, and it shut down our infrastructure countrywide. The story runs for a year. It is set in the hills of North Carolina. At the end of the year, 90 percent of our population is dead; there are 25,000 people only still alive in New York City. The communities in the hills of North Carolina are more lucky: only 80 percent of their population is dead at the end of a year." Bartlett was so spooked by this novel that after he left Congress he moved into the woods and became a survivalist, where he spends his days "cutting logs, tending gardens and painting walls." And just to be clear, the claim that North Korea could kill 90 percent of the American people was directly pulled from a science fiction novel.

[3] Woolsey, R. James and Vincent Pry. "How North Korea could kill 90 percent of Americans." *The Hill*. 29 March 2017. https://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/defense/326094-how-north-korea-could-kill-up-to-90-percent-of-americans-at-any