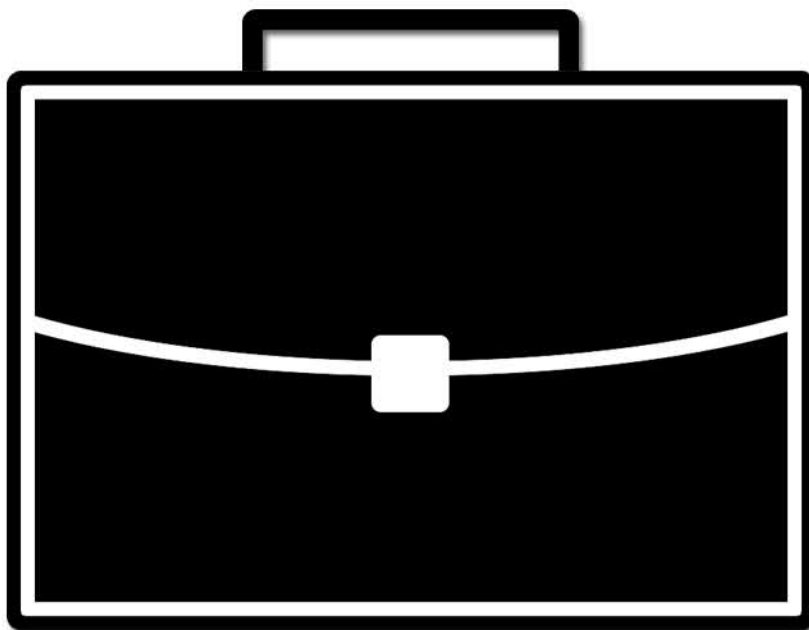


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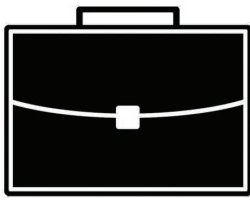
Public Forum Brief



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

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These seven statements, while simple, represent the complex notion of what it means to advance students' understanding of the world around them, as is the purpose of educators.

Letter from the Editor

Hey again faithful readers! I hope you're all excited to debate the next resolution for Public Forum debate: "Resolved: The United States should adopt a declaratory nuclear policy of no first use." This topic is an interesting choice, given that nuclear conflict has not been at the forefront of most American's minds for the past few months. While COVID-19, the corresponding economic downturn, and the upcoming Presidential Election have dominated the news cycle, very little attention has been paid to the nuclear threats around the globe. In large part this is because those threats have largely died down - North Korea isn't actively testing missiles in the North Pacific anymore, the India-Pakistan conflict has quieted down to a limited degree, and Iran has largely complied with recent sanctions. That being said, a no-first-use policy has been on the table for several years, most recently being discussed in mainstream media in 2016 when suggested by then-President Obama. While the world goes mad around us, it may seem weird to debate about nuclear first-strike policy, but remember that these policies are enormously impactful to our military, our soft power, and our country as a whole.

Part of the reason I'm excited to address this topic is the breadth of impacts that are available on any nuclear-related topic. There are always a number of scenarios related to the various nuclear powers around the globe that can be discussed but there are also a wide range of U.S. specific impacts that aren't dependent on a nuclear war breaking out. Too often in nuclear debates, students get caught up in the question of whether a nuclear war could happen in 2020. While that question is undoubtedly an important one, it's simultaneously important to remember that nuclear policy isn't just a means of stopping wars.

As we continue to debate online and adapt to what has been one of the most unique years of speech and debate in my experience, I hope you're all able to find some joy in what should be a fun topic to research and write about. Personally, I'm quite jealous - this is the exact kind of topic my partner and I were waiting to debate while we were in high school. Good luck everyone!

Michael Norton
Editor-in-Chief

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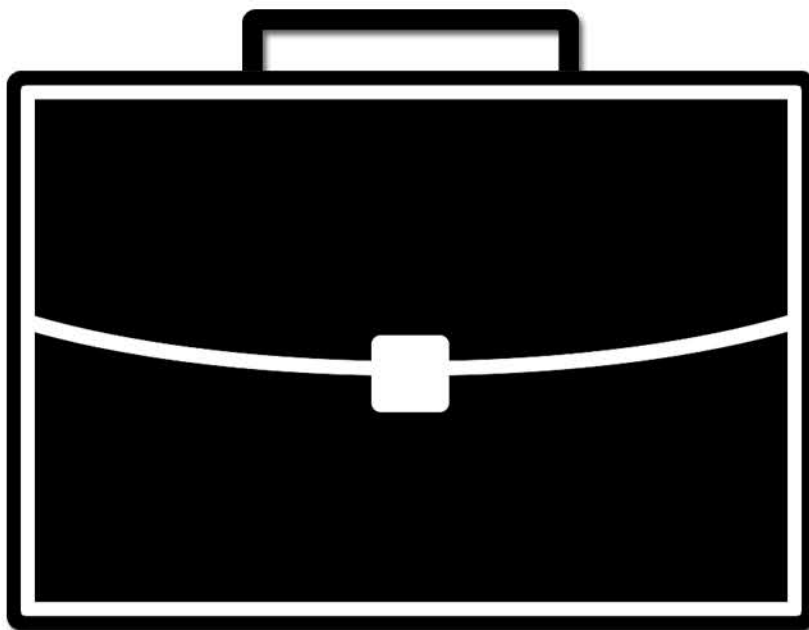
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Topic Analyses

Topic Analysis by Sara Catherine Cook

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

Introduction

The United States has one of the largest nuclear arsenals in the world with over 4,600 nuclear weapons. Many of them are kept on “hair-trigger” alert, meaning that the facilities are staffed 24/7 ready to launch at any moment. Even more daunting is the fact that our President has complete control over the nuclear arsenal, with no one in Congress, the judicial branch, or the military can prevent the use of a nuclear weapon after the President has authorized it. Though the U.S. has caused and participated in multiple conflicts or scares over the past few decades, this is a particularly interesting topic now. The Pentagon has proposed a five-year plan for its nuclear weapons programs to replace aging systems and weapons, costing \$29 billion in 2021 and \$38 billion by 2025. While I will discuss the possible implications a no first use policy could have on spending later, the main point here is that the replacement of our nuclear arsenal has been one of the catalysts for the reemergence of this debate.

Even more interesting is that multiple presidents have considered a no first use policy in the past. Most recently, President Obama conducted a Nuclear Posture Review and ultimately decided against a no first use policy, even though he had the goal of decreasing the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security. Adopting a declaratory no first use policy was actually rejected early in the process because of both its considerable irrelevance and the fear that it would weaken U.S. assurance to our allies. What’s interesting about the idea of first use is that it’s extremely difficult to envision scenarios where we would actually launch a

preemptive or preventive strike. This is likely one reason that President Obama did not adopt the policy; his desire to reduce the role of nuclear weapons likely already indicated that the United States was extremely unlikely to use them first.

Let's discuss the context of U.S. and global nuclear weapons. The United States was both the first country to manufacture nuclear weapons and the only country to ever use them in combat. While France, China, the UK, Pakistan, India, Israel, and North Korea also have nuclear weapons, the U.S. and Russia possess 90% of the world's supply. This is likely a result of the cold war, where the U.S. and Russia competed in a "race to the top" is not only nuclear proliferation but space exploration, espionage, etc. The United States also drafted and signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in the late 60s, signifying its new priority to discourage other states from proliferating nuclear weapons. This also highlights a larger issue surrounding all nuclear policies: how other countries respond.

What is a declaratory policy? Essentially, when the U.S. adopts a no first use policy, we just tell other countries that we will no longer leave preemptive or preventive strike options on the table in times of conflict. While there are significant arguments that stem from just this proclamation itself, there are other possibilities that could follow the declaratory policy that we should discuss. First, does a declaratory no first use policy actually mean that we would never launch a preemptive strike? The answer is not necessarily. The Soviet Union for years claimed to have a no-first-use policy, but documents that emerged following the Cold War indicate that they were prepared to use nuclear weapons first. If a future circumstance arose where the U.S. felt it was necessary to launch a preemptive or preventive strike, it's unlikely that they would let a declaratory policy stop them from doing so. More complicated is whether making such an

argument is fair in terms of the debate round. If the declaration of no first use has no meaning in terms of the United States' action policy, there are limits for what arguments the Pro side can actually make. Second, does a declaratory policy shift our strategies, and if so what does that mean? While the last option limited the scope of the debate to perception-based arguments, this question would expand the debate past the scope of first use. Let's walk through a hypothetical. If we now say we will never use nuclear weapons first, our extended deterrence must come from somewhere else. The most obvious option would be our conventional capabilities. This means that it's likely our spending would mirror that perceptual shift as well. Put simply, a nuclear first use policy could shift our military spending away from nuclear weapons and towards other types of weapons to build other forms of deterrence. Similarly, our conventional capabilities are already incredibly strong, meaning that a shift to relying on those capabilities instead of nuclear weapons could just decrease military spending overall as we would no longer need the 24/7 staffing or level of nuclear weapons we have now. Overall, while this topic seems quite clear cut in terms of what a nuclear first use policy means, more considerations hide behind this declaratory policy.

Affirmative Argumentation

I want to break both this section and the next into a few key areas: actual war and conflict, perceptual arguments, and shifts in domestic policy. Let's begin with the first and most obvious area of this topic which deals with nuclear weapons and the likelihood of conflict. Nuclear weapons are incredibly destructive, so much so that most governments have considered them a policy tool for only the direst circumstances. Even though the use of nuclear

weapons always seems improbable to us, this ignores the very real risk of miscalculation.

Miscalculation happens when two countries are in a sort of limbo where one or both believes that the other poses a credible threat to them. In a hypothetical scenario, if the United States believed that North Korea was about to fire a nuclear weapon towards us, they would likely want to preemptively strike North Korea or conduct a preventive strike on North Korea's nuclear facilities. The issue with this situation is obvious: that neither party knows whether the other is actually planning to launch an attack on the other. Thus, one country can "miscalculate" and accidentally fire on an innocent party, launching both countries into war and causing a massive disaster. A no first use policy could limit miscalculation as it eliminates both the scenario of the U.S. miscalculating and other countries miscalculating intense situations with the U.S.

Let's discuss some of the perceptual effects of a no first use policy. A no first use policy could limit conflict by reducing the amount of great power competition. Because the possibility of first use is on the table, U.S. adversaries feel the need to proliferate their own nuclear weapons or further entrench their power to deter the United States from interfering. With a no first use policy, other countries would no longer fear the type of immediate response that nuclear weapons provide and thus, may not feel the need to develop nuclear capabilities in response to the threat of the United States. This could limit a potential arms race and de-escalate tensions overall as adversaries would view the United States as less of an existential threat if we adopted a no first use policy. Even more so, the argument of the U.S. as a moral leader follows this claim. While the U.S. does not typically show moral leadership in many avenues, moving towards a no first use policy could push our allies and other countries to adopt

similar policies, decreasing proliferation and the risk of conflict. First, the U.S. would likely push a similar policy upon our allies. In many situations, the U.S. sets conditions around our military support. Putting it simply, if we decide that a first use policy is a bad or immoral strategy, we would never support an ally who chose to use it. Either explicitly or implicitly, we would push allies towards a no first use policy. Secondly, it would even be in our adversaries' best interest to adopt a no first use policy because doing so would reduce the likelihood that the U.S. would aggress against them in other ways. For example, acting upon fear of Iran's nuclear weapons, the U.S. launched offensive cyber attacks against its nuclear program. When other countries adopt a nuclear no first use policy in tandem with the U.S., they minimize the overall chances of a conflict. Overall, a nuclear first use policy could have perceptual effects that minimize conflict as well.

Finally, I want to touch on a few more unconventional arguments that regard the effects no first use could have on domestic policy. The most obvious would be in terms of spending. If we adopt a no first use policy, we would no longer need to have the same scale of a nuclear arsenal that we have now. While we will always have a large number of nuclear weapons, we would not need to continue development at the same level if we vow only to use them as a response to other nuclear attacks. As mentioned in the introduction, this comes at an especially interesting time as the government has asked for billions of dollars to fund the repair and replacement of our nuclear arsenal. I hope you are not tired of arguments about the national debt and government budget allocations. On the other hand, we could increase our spending on conventional capabilities or other types of weapons, as we are now relying on them as our main deterrence and safeguard in times of conflict. Posturing away from the reliance on nuclear

weapons for extended deterrence could mean that the government increases spending for other weapons to increase our capabilities and deterrence in those areas. In terms of our relations with other countries, the lack of reliance on nuclear weapons could shift our posture further towards negotiations and soft power. Another reason this could be true is that the human costs of conflict are now perceptually higher - while the U.S. does not risk any lives of soldiers when relying on nuclear weapons, our conventional capabilities involve mobilizing forces and potentially getting approval from Congress to intervene. Overall, the Aff should consider not only the immediate implications of a no first use policy but also the broader considerations of how it could signal a larger shift in U.S. policy.

Negative Argumentation

Let's start again with the most immediate consideration of war. Preemptive and preventive strikes can carry a role in preventing or eliminating conflict. For example, a preventive strike could target a nuclear facility, thereby eliminating the nuclear capabilities of another state. The Neg could also argue that there are situations that would warrant first use. If the U.S. truly believed there was a credible threat from another nation, there is an argument to be made that it's both destructive and immoral for the U.S. to wait it out and see if a nuclear attack is launched against us or one of our allies. But ultimately, as highlighted above, nuclear weapons are rarely ever used in a conflict. This both takes away some of the probability of some of the Aff arguments and gives validity to the Neg approaching the topic from a perceptual perspective.

The first and most common argument against nuclear no first use policy is about deterrence. While it is true that the United States has enough military power to deter an adversary from firing on us or our allies, there are questions regarding how far that deterrence extends. With no fear of miscalculation, what's to stop a potential enemy from launching a preventive strike on the U.S. to eliminate all of our nuclear capabilities. Though debaters will always make the argument that no country wants a war with the United States, in reality, countries like Russia, China, and Iran threaten the United States frequently and vice versa. The United States starts and intervenes in conflicts all over the world. If an adversary viewed the U.S. as an existential security threat, what would stop them from using all means necessary to defeat us, including launching nuclear weapons to eliminate our chances of a response. There are questions as to how effective our deterrence is absent from the nuclear first-use option. While taking first use away does not eliminate our military by any means, it takes an option off the table and thus has the potential to decrease our military deterrence against other nations. Adopting a no first use policy could also eliminate our ability to negotiate. With no credible threat of nuclear attack, countries could be less willing to negotiate in times of conflict because of their belief that they have the upper hand. Even more so, if our allies feel insecure due to the first use option being "taken off the table", they could then turn to proliferate their own nuclear weapons. Even more so, negotiations could break down on their side of the table. For our allies, they might be less willing to negotiate as they view their enemies as an existential security threat that must be eliminated to preserve the sovereignty of their nation. Their enemies might be less likely to negotiate as well, as they now believe they have the upper hand

now that there is no credible threat of nuclear conflict. The lack of negotiations could further drive conflict because of shifts in power in regions where the U.S. intervenes.

Let's discuss what implications this policy could have on domestic policy. First, the shift away from nuclear weapons could mean an increase in other destructive weapons that the government would be more likely to use. Even if conventional warfare is preferable to nuclear warfare in principle, the frequency each is used also factors into the round. If increasing our conventional capabilities means more people die as a result of conflicts around the world, the Neg could make the argument that we should prioritize reducing conventional conflict over other less probable impacts. The use of nuclear weapons could be seen as irrelevant in the round because of how unlikely a nuclear war actually is. Further, the development of larger conventional capabilities or capabilities of other forms including but not limited to biological and chemical weapons, and offensive cyber operations could cause an arms race as other countries would want to increase their capabilities in these areas as well. Arms races seldom end well, as a majority of them throughout history have ended in conflict. There are many options for tradeoff arguments regarding U.S. military strategy and budgetary concerns.

Strategy Considerations

I hate to say this, but many teams will likely read some sort of extinction framing on this topic. Nuclear topics have no limits of high magnitude low probability impacts. You have two main strategy options for this topic. The first is to buy into the topic areas involving nuclear war and conflict and win on the link level. These rounds will involve both teams arguing that war is more likely in either the Aff or Neg world. If you go for this strategy the two most important

components of both your argument and your responses to your opponents are uniqueness and warranting on the link level. If on Aff, you need to prove that there is a credible threat of war in the status quo. Doing so gives you at least a risk of solving for credible conflict while your opponents are only talking about a hypothetical scenario where tensions get slightly worse. If on Neg, proving that no war will happen in the status quo is paramount to your argument. You should be incredibly wary of the way you frame an argument about tensions rising because if there are significant tensions in the status quo, what is to stop a war from happening right now. Both teams need to analyze the fundamental best interests of each actor in the situation. Having better warranting about why X country is going to do Y in your situation is the way you will make the round clear for the judge and win your argument. The second strategy is to ignore every scenario dealing with actual nuclear conflict. This means that you will need to not only prove that nuclear war is incredibly unlikely but also be prepared to deal with the magnitude of extinction framing your opponents use. Put simply, you will need a clear response to the argument that their impact affects more people or that they save more lives. Even more so, your argument could also have considerable uncertainty tied to it because of the sheer amount of steps it takes to get to your impact. You should be prepared to have a very clear analysis of why nuclear no first use policy warrants some domestic or international shift in policy so that your opponents cannot easily dismantle your argument with other factors that could prevent you from reaching your impact.

Overall, though the topics are incredibly different, this topic could be similar to the Medicare-For-All topic in the way that there are likely numerous offensive arguments on either side for each issue in the debate. This makes it incredibly important to have a clear narrative

and better warranting than your opponents to win the round. But further, I would encourage you to look into issues that may not be immediately considered under the scope of the topic. Though this is a topic about U.S. military policy, there are possibilities for it to tie in issues in other fields as well that could divert attention from the low probability war scenarios that can sometimes become tedious to debate.

Finally, it is in every team's best interest to look into past Nuclear Posture Reviews and examine the reasons why past presidents did not decide to adopt this policy. Not only will this yield value evidence for the round but will also help you understand the context of this topic. Understanding past uses, implications, failures, and successes of U.S. nuclear policy will yield the best in-round examples. You should also examine the results of other countries adopting no first use policies. Seeing the effects of similar policies for other countries could provide empirical backing for your arguments or invalidate your opponent's claims. Good luck this month!

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About Sara Catherine Cook

Sara Catherine Cook grew up in Birmingham, Alabama, and competed for The Altamont School for three years in Public Forum Debate. She was one of the first teams from her school to qualify for the Tournament of Champions and NSDA Nationals, being the only team from her state to qualify for the TOC in the 2018-2019 season. She now attends Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH where she plans to study Mathematics and competes with the Dartmouth Parliamentary Debate Team.

Topic Analysis by Jakob Urda

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

Introduction

Nuclear weapons have dominated the American security landscape since their discovery and use in 1945. The Cold War and post-Cold War era are typified by the delicate game of balancing and brinksmanship which are characterized by nuclear power politics. Nuclear weapons are far more impactful than the relatively small number of nuclear standoffs imply. They underpin America's conventional engagements, alliance systems, diplomatic overtures, and credibility across the world. To argue about America's nuclear weapons posture is to argue about the nature of America's foreign policy as a whole.

This is a topic with a rich history that successful debaters must understand to win rounds. Debaters should read extensively on America's history of nuclear standoffs, extended deployments, and alliance architectures. Students need to understand when and why nuclear weapons have been used or threatened in recent history, to get a real sense of what the implication of the resolution would be. It is also crucial to understand the particular array of threats that America faces and how similar countries (especially those without nuclear weapons) have dealt with similar crises in the past.

Strategic Considerations/Framing of the Debate

When thinking about this topic, debaters should consider two master logics – credibility and inherency. Credibility is the perception that a nation will keep its promises. Credibility is the core idea that underpins American alliances and deterrence. Inherency is the question of how a policy would actually be implemented. Inherency means debating the topic as it would actually happen if it were to be affirmed in the real world, that is to say, looking at the most likely implementation of the topic. The resolution is vague and does not cover every aspect of the topic such as allied responses and changes to American force posture. Therefore many crucial aspects of the topic will have to be decided by the debaters in the round itself. The debate over inherency sets the terrain for the rest of the round.

These two logics play themselves out over the entire terrain of arguments on the topic. Nearly every argument will be implicated by credibility and inherency. To see this in action let us examine three of the main arguments which are made about ‘no first use.’ This paper published by War on the Rocks summarizes these three key arguments well:

“There are three major risks in adopting a nuclear declaratory policy of no-first-use. The first risk is to deterrence: Adversaries, absent 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.

The first argument is about emboldening adversaries because they need not fear an American nuclear strike. It is easy to see how credibility plays into this argument. If adversaries believe that America will retaliate with conventional weapons then the impact of emboldening adversaries is muted because we can use conventional forces to reinforce deterrence. Inherency is also crucial for how this argument plays out. How does the US compensate for 'no first use'? If it supplements its alliances with renewed promises and new bases abroad, then that may change the calculus. Inherency determines how the United States compensates for the new nuclear posture, which will inherently affect the adversary's willingness to engage in conflict.

The second argument is about allies losing confidence in American extended deterrence because they might not think we would come to their aid in times of crisis. This argument is also strongly controlled by the logic of credibility and inherency. In terms of credibility, the degree to which our allies lose faith in our alliances is strictly contingent on the perception that the United States will keep its promises, regardless of nuclear weapons posture. Inherency also matters here because it controls what changes America makes to its alliance architecture. Presumably, the United States would take action to supplement the new lack of a primary nuclear deterrent or make renewed guarantees. On the other hand, the US might use the occasion to pull back further from its international commitments or bungle alliance

renegotiation processes. The resolution of this debate over inherency will guide the impact on this argument.

The third argument is about the norms of nonproliferation. This point is basically that America's allies substitute our nuclear force for theirs, and so they feel no need to proliferate in response to regional threats because they understand that American security is enough to offset those risks. Credibility and inherency function on this argument in much the same way as they do for the other arguments which have been covered. Credibility controls our allies' assessments of the increased insecurity that they face as a result of a more constrained nuclear posture. Inherency affects what measures America takes to offset or exacerbate the deleterious effects of the policy.

These three arguments are just examples of how credibility and inherency affect the entire topic. These two logics dominate any policy topic, and this one is no exception. Credibility controls how changes in American force posture are interpreted and therefor how allies and adversaries react to them. Inherency controls the many secondary effects which are not enumerated by the resolution but would likely happen in real-world implementation of the topic. Debaters must understand both ideas to have successful strategy generation processes on this topic.

Affirmative Argumentation

The affirmative should start by thinking about crisis de-escalation. This is the argument that an explicit no-first-use policy reduces the incentive for both parties to escalate during a crisis. The United States is less likely to escalate because it has bound itself to not using nuclear

weapons first. Our adversaries are less likely to escalate because they are no longer under the threat of preemptive nuclear action. This allows calmer heads to prevail and a more rational decision making to take place.

The argument about crisis de-escalation requires debaters to understand how nuclear standoffs work in the first place. When two powers have an irreconcilable difference they may threaten the use of nuclear weapons to resolve the conflict in their favor. These situations, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, can be incredibly unstable because both sides have a lot to lose and are worried about the possibility of a nuclear exchange. The key dynamic here is the pressure to escalate. Nuclear exchange is always bad, but the side which escalates SECOND fares worse. This is because the side which escalates first to nuclear war can wipe out a significant fraction of the opponent's nuclear arsenal, reducing the incoming damage from a second strike. For instance, some experts estimate that the United States could destroy more than half of Russia's nuclear arsenal and nearly all of China's smaller arsenal in a first strike.

This creates a massive incentive to be aggressive first and strike before the opponent does. This phenomenon is called a “use it or lose it” mentality by political scientists. It can create spirals of escalation where neither side benefits from nuclear brinksmanship but both sides feel forced into becoming ever more aggressive.

The affirmative might solve this dynamic of escalation spirals by explicitly taking nuclear weapons off the table. By saying that the US will not resort to nuclear weapons unless fired upon first, adversaries do not have to worry that we will attempt a preemptive first strike. Thus, nuclear standoffs could be resolved more diplomatically.

Negative Argumentation

The negative should focus on making arguments about how no first use would put the United States in a bad position in dealing with conventional standoffs. This point requires debaters to understand the US's offset strategy of using nuclear weapons to compensate for relative definiteness in logistics and manpower in Eurasia. The impact of this point is that the US would lose critical security battles against other great powers in conventional contests.

This argument is based on the idea that the United States balances against rivals in Eurasia who have superior conventional forces in terms of manpower and interior supply lines. It takes the US far more time and money to ready a force that is capable of projecting power in Europe or Asia than one of our peer competitors because of sheer geography. The impact is substantial – a country like China can send hundreds of thousands of troops to its frontiers in days, while a similar logistical effort for the United States would be difficult if possible at all.

To maintain its interests while dealing with this disadvantage, the United States has relied on nuclear weapons to offset the conventional disadvantage. We might not be able to field armies which are as large as our adversaries, but we can use nuclear weapons to level the odds and negate their conventional advantages. For example, the United States has staged several nuclear standoffs over Taiwan. America knows that it is unlikely to be able to defend the island in a conventional contest because the Chinese army is far larger and closer to Taiwan. However, by threatening the use of nuclear force, America has successfully deescalated many standoffs and forced Beijing to back down. Neg teams should think about what types of outcomes America uses nuclear weapons to achieve, and then how changing our force posture would affect those outcomes.

This topic is rich for interesting, provocative rounds. The topic will reward those who diligently research and think creatively. Good luck and have fun!

About Jakob Urda

Jakob grew up in Brooklyn, New York. He attends the University of Chicago, where he will receive a BA in Political Science, and is interested in security studies and political economy. Jakob debate for Stuyvesant High School where he won Blake, GMU, Ridge, Scarsdale, Columbia, the NCFL national championship, and amassed 11 bids. He coached the winners of the NCFL national tournament, Harvard, and Blake.

Topic Analysis by Tucker Wilke

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

Introduction

In continuing with the third year of this relatively new policy, the Public Forum debate season will once again have a singular topic that covers both November and December. For debaters looking to pick and choose which topics to focus on, the double-month topic is an excellent investment. Debaters can frontload a lot of the research and preparation and then have nearly two full months of payoff, which include some of the biggest and most competitive tournaments of the year. Critically, debaters should make sure they do not simply write cases for their first November tournament and rest on their laurels from there. Instead, they must be ready to refine their strategy after every single tournament as they find new arguments and research. Two-month topics often reward those teams always looking for a creative spin on the stock arguments. Luckily, the November-December topic provides plenty of room for interesting dynamics to keep debaters engaged, as it is "Resolved: The United States should adopt a declaratory nuclear policy of no first use." While this may seem at first like a classic US foreign policy resolution, further analysis will reveal the range of different arguments possible on this topic, spanning everything from intricate military strategy in specific regions to broad principles arguments about global policy surrounding nuclear weapons. Teams should make clear and compelling characterizations about the US's role as a global leader and how this policy fits into it. They additionally must make sure not to lose sight of those broader worldviews set up by each team's case when dealing with the intricacies of each argument. With that, let's get

into the frameworks, strategies, and arguments that will dominate the next couple of months of debate!

Background and Strategy

By now, hopefully, most tournaments have gotten used to the online environment, and have been able to work out the technological kinks. That being said, there are a couple of key things for debaters to keep in mind for these tournaments, no matter where in the country or on what circuit they are taking place. First, online tournaments mean that there is no longer a geographic barrier to entry and a much lower financial strain, which means that debaters are likely to have tournaments with a strong diversity of teams, and, crucially, judges, from around the country. Employing a style of debate that works with judges of all backgrounds and experience levels (i.e. cutting out jargon that only certain judges will understand) is critical to finding success. Second, it's easy to underrate the importance of the human connection that is lost in the transition from in-person to online, but it is significant. Even the best judges will miss certain things you say due to technical difficulties, and it's a lot easier to momentarily zone out online. Thus, debaters should make sure they are extra engaging and accessible in their rounds, prioritizing clarity and making sure that any frameworks or theories are explained very thoroughly to make it as easy as possible for judges to follow along. The big picture issues carry extra importance in the online environment.

With that, we can get into some of the top-level considerations for the topic at hand. The first question that debaters may find themselves asking is "What does a declaration of a no first use policy look like," and while it's easy to see that kind of question as to just semantics, teams need to have a concrete vision for this policy, even if it does not explicitly come up in

every round. While the policy could be as simple as declaring that the US will not strike first, other countries that have such a policy have usually backed it up with tangible action. China, for example, has not developed precision-strike nuclear war-fighting capabilities. It also keeps its warheads and missiles and does not keep its forces on "launch-on-warning" alert, all of which are clear signs of a commitment to a no first use policy.¹ The resolution does not make clear the extent to which any of those follow up actions would be taken by the US, but given that the belief other countries will have in a no first use declaration from the US is likely to play a large role in rounds, it's important for a team on both sides to be prepared to talk about it.

Another big picture question for teams to ask before they start prepping is why a country would want to have a no first use policy in general. What explains India and China's decision to have a no first use policy, and why did Russia have one for time? While there are many possible explanations for this, one that is intuitive and compelling – and one that will help debaters think about the strategic purpose of NFU – is the relative strength of a country's conventional and nuclear capabilities compared to its adversaries. Countries that have weaker conventional militaries compared to their foes are unlikely to commit to an NFU, since without it they do not have the upper hand. Conversely, countries that have stronger conventional militaries than their foes are happy to take nukes out of the equation. India, for example, which has a much stronger conventional military than Pakistan, has committed to an NFU policy, but Pakistan relies on a nuclear deterrent due to their weaker conventional military and therefore has rejected calls for an NFU policy.² This analysis is important for debaters to keep in mind, as

¹ <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/>

² *ibid*

it creates surprisingly ambiguous recommendations for the US. After all, while the US does have a massive conventional military, which would seem to eliminate the need for a potential first strike, there are also several regions of the world where adversaries of the US may have a strategic conventional advantage, and an NFU policy could put allies at risk, which we will get into later. Indeed, even if debaters are looking to make more principled arguments concerning this policy, an understanding of the strategic considerations that go into is going to be critical in analyzing arguments.

As mentioned earlier, teams need to make sure that each of their cases operates under a coherent worldview that can be compelling to a judge. One way to do this on foreign policy topics such as this one is to build cases around one of the big schools of thought in international relations and make arguments from the perspective of one of those schools. I highly recommend that debaters familiarize themselves with these schools in more detail, but here is an overview of three and how they may view an NFU policy, as explained by the Texas National Security Review, "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." as even a country with an NFU could at any time decide to launch a nuclear weapon first.³ "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....This perspective thus emphasizes the value of an NFU pledge in

³ Ibid

structuring operational forces to make them smaller and less threatening.” 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.” There is a lot more to be said about each of these, and debaters that have the time to dive into these ideas will find them very useful. After all, even though most teams will not come out and say they are defending a “realist” or “constructivist” worldview, debaters familiar with these ideas will be able to tease out the implicit assumptions that their opponent’s arguments use, and they can therefore more effectively respond to them.

Another way for debaters to create a coherent worldview for this topic has to do with how they see what promises to be a key component of almost every debate: deterrence. Deterrence theory represents the core of many foreign policy topics, and this is no exception, as both sides will look to create a conception of what deterrence is and what is needed to accomplish it. Given the importance of deterrence, it should come as no surprise that experts across disciplines have outlined very different conceptions of it. Teams focusing their case on deterrence should make sure they have a consistent conception of it throughout the round, as debates may very well come down to whose conception wins out. Two possible ways of viewing deterrence are Rational Choice Theory and Psychological deterrence. Rational Choice Theory is the classic model, which argues that states act rationally, and operate under a kind of cost-benefit analysis when making strategic decisions. If the cost of war increases due to an adversary's strong military capabilities, then they are deterred from aggressing. Generally, Rational Deterrence advocates focus on four variables: the balance of military forces, costly signaling and bargaining behavior, reputations, and interests at stake in predicting the extent to

which a state will be deterred.⁴ More recent research, however, has begun to shed doubt on Rational Deterrence theory, as more evidence has been found that humans do not act rationally. Under this framework, perceptions rule all else. In other words, deterrence succeeds not by rationally convincing another state to not act but "by creating a subjective perception in the minds of the leaders of the target state."⁵ While this may seem like a subtle distinction, it has profound implications for what constitutes credible and effective deterrence, and teams looking to make arguments about deterrence should be ready to defend not just their warrants, but their underlying theory about how deterrence works.

With all of that said, let's now look at some of the possible arguments for each side, keeping in mind everything above.

Affirmative Argumentation

For affirmative teams, nuclear weapons pose an absolute existential risk to all of humanity. One miscalculation made by a country, one poor decision, could destroy entire cities, countries, and possibly even the planet. They can point to a litany of close calls over the past few decades, most notably the Cuban Missile Crisis when humanity was on the doorstep of nuclear war. It's easy to think that because those close calls were avoided, the same will be true in the future, but that is simply another manifestation of The Gambler's Fallacy, the idea that because something has happened in the past it will continue to happen in the future. Affirmative teams should do really strong worldbuilding about the risks of nuclear conflict, and present an NFU policy as a concrete way to reduce such risks.

⁴ <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.25>

⁵ https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE200/PE295/RAND_PE295.pdf

One way that an NFU reduces the risk of nuclear conflict is by decreasing the chances of miscalculation. In a crisis with another great power such as Russia or China, an NFU from the US would reduce the chances of miscalculation by eliminating the possibility of a US first nuclear strike. Our nuclear weapons would only exist to deter others from using nuclear weapons. As such, the best of both worlds is achieved, as Mutually Assured Destruction is maintained since States know that if they strike the US the US will retaliate, but the States also no longer need to consider launching a preemptive first strike against the US, so the chance of miscalculation leading to nuclear war significantly decreases. This is a place for teams to apply some of the psychological deterrence theory here, as even if States in the status quo can rationally be very confident that the US would not launch a preemptive first strike, that subjective fear of annihilation always leaves the door open for miscalculation. Committing to an NFU policy eliminates that fear. Thus, this argument is very simple and intuitive, and yet it has a massive impact. Pro teams should remember that the efficacy of this argument and the NFU policy itself likely depends on what actions the US takes to assure its commitment to the policy. I've already discussed what that might look like above, and while pro teams obviously cannot have a "plant" for implementation, I don't think they need to limit themselves to just defending a simple statement of NFU policy from the US government.

A second argument for pro teams to consider is the idea that an NFU would decrease nuclear proliferation. This could happen for a couple of reasons. First, more generally, a Liberal Institutionalist school of thought might point out that "constantly touting the value of a nuclear threat for security sends signals that nuclear weapons are useful and undermines

nonproliferation goals.”⁶ Conversely, making clear that the US only has its nuclear weapons for deterrence makes them seem a lot more legitimate when trying to convince other countries not to proliferate. A second, more calculated, way of thinking about this is that countries respond to incentives. Developing nuclear weapons is incredibly risky, expensive, and difficult, as it takes years upon years of doing, tons of money, and often bring the scorn of the international community. Thus, countries are only going to undertake all of that if they feel they need to. If countries fear that the US may use a nuclear weapon offensively or preemptively, they are more likely to feel that they need a nuclear weapon to deter the US from doing that and assure their survival. If the US commits to an NFU policy, its adversaries no longer need to fear any nuclear strike and thus are less likely to view proliferation as necessary for their survival.

The potential impacts on nuclear proliferation are manyfold. First, there is the worry of nuclear terrorism, as due to increasing nuclear capabilities in the Middle East, terrorists' capabilities to steal nuclear weapons are increasing as well, finding that the risk for nuclear terrorism is increasing. One study by Bunn of Harvard quantified that over the next 10 years the probability of a nuclear terrorist attack is 29%. The more countries that proliferate, the more this risk increases. The risk will likely increase exponentially, as the countries that have not yet proliferate are ones that probably do not have all of the requisite resources to do so, which means that they are more likely to be vulnerable to security breaches as they try to import materials, since they probably have less security infrastructure, to begin with.

⁶ <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/>

Nuclear proliferation also unsurprisingly increases the chances of miscalculation leading to conflict. As countries see their adversaries developing nuclear weapons, they begin to fear what they are going to do with those weapons and worry that they need to strike first to prevent anything from happening. Furthermore, the more countries that have nuclear weapons and don't have an NFU policy can use their nuclear weapons to strong-arm their adversaries, which often causes conflict and instability, which further increases the chances of miscalculation and conflict.

Both of these arguments end up in similar places concerning impacts of miscalculation, but what's nice is that they cover different actors, as the former focuses more on great powers that have nuclear weapons and how this would impact their relations with the United States, and the latter discusses states they may be developing nuclear weapons now, the risks that would post, and how an NFU policy from the US could disincentivize that. Pro teams that employ these arguments have a nice narrative about how an NFU policy creates a safer world on many different levels. One thing for pro teams to keep in mind when running arguments about miscalculation, however, is that the Gambler's Fallacy/brain's tendency to underestimate the chances of bad things happening does indeed affect judges. In other words, the fact that we have avoided nuclear conflict before in very close situations primes people to think that nuclear war is always very far fetched, and may initially make judges less receptive to arguments that treat miscalculation and nuclear conflict as a real possibility. Teams should still certainly run these arguments, but also make sure to warrant heavily why miscalculation is such a real threat, and maybe even mention why people tend to underestimate it. After all, the fact that

people tend not to see miscalculation as a problem makes it all the more dangerous, and perhaps further shows the need for an NFU policy.

Negative Argumentation

While affirmative teams likely to focus on arguments relating to miscalculation, I strongly recommend that teams consider running arguments about deterrence on the con. Right now, the United States uses the tool of "calculated ambiguity" in deterrence. Rather than explicitly threatening the use of nuclear weapons, politicians will say that "all options or on the table," when trying to deter an attack, a phrase that theoretically could include a nuclear first strike. Calculated ambiguity is useful because it prevents countries from doing the cost-benefit analysis that Rational Choice Theory predicts that they will do. Instead, the risk that the US would retaliate to an attack with a nuclear strike, however small that risk is, must be part of any risk-assessment by a state planning an attack, and that risk is enough to deter almost any large scale attack. If the nuclear strike is explicitly off of the table, risk calculations can be adjusted, and enemies may be more likely to brave the costs of an effective attack if they no there is no chance of nuclear retaliation. Looking more specifically, there are a couple of specific categories that the loss of calculated ambiguity and the nuclear threat could undermine the ability for the US to deter.

First, non-nuclear Weapons of Mass Destruction. These include biological and chemical weapons, which are capable of causing unfathomable amounts of harm if used. For these weapons, a conventional military threat of retaliation, even a very strong one, may not be enough to deter their use. The US has used this tactic before, as in 1991, Secretary of State James Baker, under the first Bush administration, threatened the use of tactical nuclear

weapons against Iraq if Saddam Hussein used chemical or biological weapons against US troops.

⁷ With a committed NFU policy, the US may find themselves unable to confidently deter the use of such weapons, and American Citizens could suddenly see their lives be put at risk.

Second, deterrence commitments to US allies. As mentioned earlier, countries are more likely to commit to an NFU policy if they know that they have a strong conventional military advantage over their opponents and thus do not need to rely on the nuclear threat to deter. At first, one may think that the US, given its military might, would always hold a conventional advantage, but when one considers all of its allies and their situation, that is not necessarily the case. One such example is the Korean Peninsula, where the US has used its security guarantee and nuclear threat to deter North Korea from invading South Korea for decades. If the US commits to an NFU policy and therefore removes the nuclear threat facing North Korea, the North Korean decision calculus to change such that invading South Korea once again seems feasible. A North Korean invasion of South Korea may initially seem hard to imagine, but there is reason to fear it happening. When *New York Times* reporter Nicholas Kristoff visited North Korea just a couple years ago, his third visit over a few decades, he noted that things felt different this time, as military propaganda seemed to be at an all-time high, and Kim seemed to be galvanizing his people for the prospect of conflict.⁸ Furthermore, in an interview with *New Yorker* reporter Evan Osnos about a potential nuclear conflict, a North Korean diplomat remarked that "We've been through it twice before. The Korean War and the [mid-1990s

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VmVUgVhZqk>

⁸ <https://www.businessinsider.com/north-korean-anti-american-propaganda-2017-10>

famine]. We can do it a third time".⁹ Given that North Korea has openly considered reigniting conflict even *with* a nuclear threat on the table, there is no doubt that they would strongly consider an attempt to retake the Korean Peninsula if that nuclear threat were to be removed, a conflict that could cost an estimated eight million lives even without a nuclear strike. All of this is just one example, from one region, that illustrates how an NFU could disrupt the ability of the US to deter against aggressors. While any scenario may be improbable, when one looks at all of the risks facing the US and its allies today, the loss of the strike first option could cause major concerns. Thus, I would encourage con teams to use examples such as the one explained above as just that – examples to illustrate an argument, rather than basing their entire case around a singular region.

Overall, this topic promises to have excellent clash about the merits of miscalculation, non-proliferation, and effective deterrence, and there is a lot of ground on both sides to give way to clear, nuanced, and compelling rounds. Good luck!

About Tucker Wilke

Tucker is from Westchester, New York, where he attended the Hackley School. He is now attending Brown University, where he debates for the Brown Debating Union and studies English and Economics. Over the course of his career, Tucker amassed 8 bids to the Tournament of Champions. In addition, he reached the Quarterfinals at Bronx, Glenbrooks, UK, Ridge and

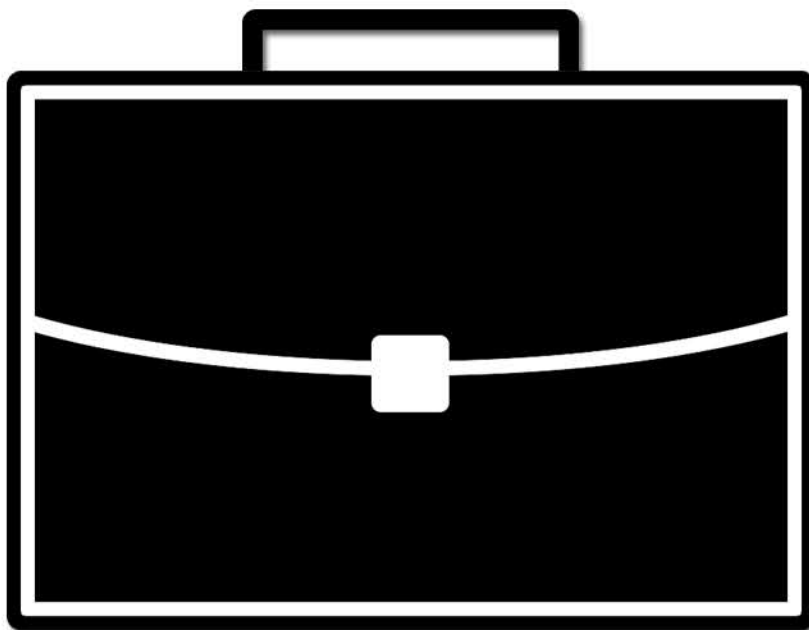
⁹ <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/09/18/the-risk-of-nuclear-war-with-north-korea>

Princeton, Semifinals at Penn and Columbia, and championed the Scarsdale Invitational. He was ranked as high as 7th in the country in his senior year. As a coach for Hackley, his students have reached semifinals at Blake and Quarters at Penn.

Champion Briefs

Nov/Dec 2020

Public Forum Brief



General
Information

General Information

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

Foreword: We, at Champion Briefs, feel that having deep knowledge about a topic is just as valuable as formulating the right arguments. Having general background knowledge about the topic area helps debaters form more coherent arguments from their breadth of knowledge. As such, we have compiled general information on the key concepts and general areas that we feel will best suit you for in- and out-of-round use. Any strong strategy or argument must be built from a strong foundation of information; we hope that you will utilize this section to help build that foundation.

The History of First Use

According to Steve Fetter of the Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, Debate about first-use began soon after the end of World War II. Europe was divided between East and West, and the number of soldiers, tanks, and artillery deployed by the East was far greater than the number deployed by the West. Western European countries, which were still rebuilding after the war, did not have capacity or the will to match the perceived strength of the Soviet army.

The 1948 Berlin Crisis made clear that Soviet Union was aggressive and the United States would be unable to stop it through conventional means alone. After the Crisis, the United States adopted a policy of using nuclear weapons to deter or respond to a Soviet invasion of Europe.

The Soviet acquisition of nuclear weapons in 1949 did not cause the United States to abandon this policy. Rather, it caused the US to greatly accelerate the production of nuclear weapons and long-range bombers and begin the development of thermonuclear weapons in order to maintain nuclear superiority and the credibility of US threats to initiate the use of nuclear weapons.

Recent Proposals of No First Use

According to Defense News,

“Two key Democratic lawmakers introduced legislation Wednesday that would ensure the U.S. does not fire nuclear weapons first in a potential future war.

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Adam Smith and Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a 2020 presidential hopeful and Senate Armed Services Committee member, offered a bill — “The No First Use Act” — to establish in law that it is the policy of the United States not to use nuclear weapons first in a conflict.

Though previous administrations have resisted such moves, and the GOP-controlled Senate is unlikely to take up the legislation, the players are notable. As chairman, Smith may elevate the issue by inserting the language into the annual defense policy bill, and Warren’s potential candidacy means the issue could reach the wider public on a future presidential debate stage.”

What is the stance of the defense department?

According to the Texas National Security Review,

“A first-use policy is based primarily on the belief that the threat of nuclear escalation continues to serve as a deterrent to large-scale conventional war or the use of chemical and biological weapons.¹² Critics of NFU argue that the United States should not make any promise that might make it easier for an opponent to plan an effective military action, a strategy known as “calculated ambiguity.” As the Defense Department recently explained,

“Retaining a degree of ambiguity and refraining from a no first use policy creates uncertainty in the mind of potential adversaries and reinforces deterrence of aggression by ensuring adversaries cannot predict what specific actions will lead to a U.S. nuclear response. Implementing a no first use policy could undermine the U.S. ability to deter Russian, Chinese,

and North Korean aggression, especially with respect to their growing capability to carry out nonnuclear strategic attacks.””

Difference between No First Use, Sole Authority, and Sole Purpose

According to the CACNP, “A “No First Use” (NFU) policy is a commitment to not use nuclear weapons first. An NFU policy would restrict when a president could consider using nuclear weapons, and would help signal that the United States believes that nuclear weapons are for deterrence—not warfighting.

Sole authority refers to the current U.S. nuclear posture in which the President alone can order the launch of nuclear weapons at any time for any reason without checks from the other branches of government. While a president may (and most likely would) consult with their national security team before ordering a nuclear attack, s/he is not required to seek advice or agreement from anyone. Proposals to eliminate sole authority address the question of who would authorize a nuclear strike. Eliminating sole authority would require changing launch procedures to require consent from other individuals in government to conduct a nuclear attack in any scenario, not only a nuclear first strike.

“Sole purpose” refers to a commitment only to use nuclear weapons to deter nuclear attacks. This means that U.S. nuclear forces would not be used to deter conventional, chemical, biological, or cyber attacks. Current policy as set out in this Administration’s Nuclear Posture Review would allow the United States to use nuclear weapons in “...extreme circumstances to defend the United States, its allies, and partners.” Declaring sole purpose would clarify what nuclear weapons are for.”

How prepared is the US to stop nuclear escalation?

According to Steve Fetter of the Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament,

That brings us to today. It is clear that Japan is rightly concerned about its security in the face of an aggressive North Korea with increasingly advanced nuclear and missile capabilities. Japan also has reason to be concerned about the possibility, however remote, of nuclear attack by China or Russia. However, the US strategic nuclear arsenal is a highly effective deterrent against such an attack. America has over 4000 nuclear weapons in its active stockpile, and the entire US strategic nuclear force is undergoing modernization. This aspect of the nuclear umbrella would not be diminished in any way if the United States adopted a policy of no first use. US threats to use nuclear weapons in retaliation for nuclear attacks on Japan are highly credible, because Japan is a very close ally and the US has military bases and over 100,000 troops and dependents based in Japan.

When might we use nuclear weapons first?

According to Steve Fetter of the Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament,

The most plausible scenario today is an attack by North Korea. As we have already noted, a US nuclear response to a nuclear attack by North Korea on Japan would not be affected by a policy of no first use, and the likelihood of nuclear retaliation by the United States should deter a nuclear attack by North Korea, because it is a highly credible threat. But North Korea might launch other attacks – attacks with conventionally armed missiles or special

operations forces against air bases or ports necessary for the defense of South Korea, or cyberattacks that cripple Japan's economy. How does Japan imagine that the United States could use nuclear weapons in such a scenario?

What is the US's nuclear umbrella?

According to the Defense Department,

"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."

What are the US's biggest nuclear threats at the moment?

According to Eric Gomez of War on the Rocks:

Despite stringent international sanctions, North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs have developed at breakneck speed and show no sign of slowing down. The Trump administration's "maximum pressure" approach to the problem has little to show besides growing fear of a U.S. preemptive strike and a war of words between two colorful leaders. Yet North Korea's ability to hold the United States homeland at risk with a nuclear weapon raises important questions about the future of extended deterrence commitments and especially the U.S. nuclear umbrella over South Korea and Japan.

China's growing military power also presents a serious, albeit less urgent, challenge to extended deterrence. Improvements in weapons technology, extensive organizational reforms, and assertive moves in disputed areas like the South China Sea stoke regional fears that China's rise may not be peaceful. As Beijing narrows the local balance of power gap with the United States, security commitments made by Washington decades ago could become harder to maintain. A relatively calm U.S.-China relationship suggests a very low probability of a serious crisis for the foreseeable future, but U.S. policymakers must keep this long-term challenge in the back of their mind as they contend with the immediate crisis on the Korean Peninsula.

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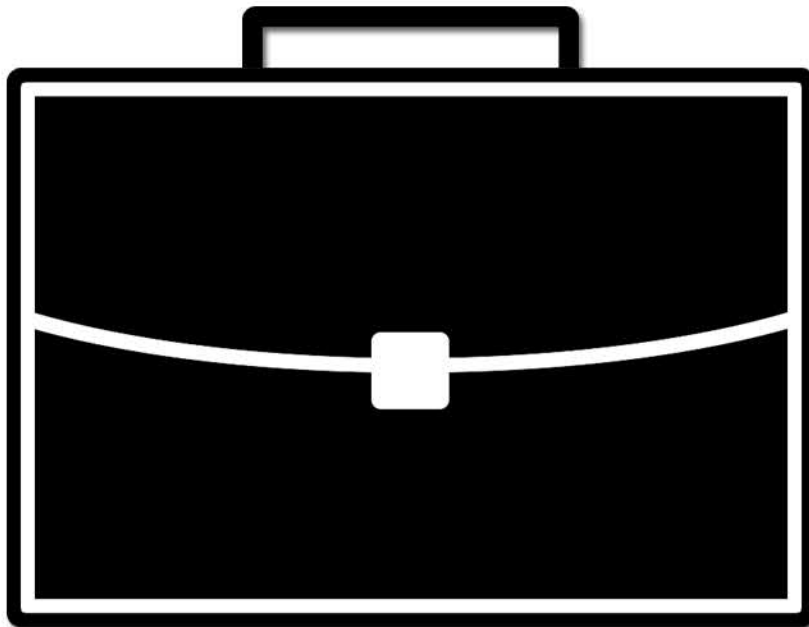
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Champion Briefs

Nov/Dec 2020

Public Forum Brief



Pro Arguments

PRO: Harms Soft Power

Argument: A policy of nuclear first use is incredibly aggressive and unilateral, because it takes place without the consent or informed judgement of US peers. This decreases our diplomatic credibility.

Warrant: Unilateral actions are unpopular

Unilateral action has led to more than dozen treaties being rejected, reductions in foreign aid, and undermining of State Department and Information Agency- Joseph Nye. Harvard University.

http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/jnye/reviews/greenway_globe_cover.pdf

"Unilateralism, arrogance, and parochialism" tend to undermine a nation's soft power - and this matters for a wide variety of foreign policy objectives. This is a central thesis of Nye's book. He finds such arrogance, unilateralism, and parochialism in Congressional policies that have resulted in sanctions against Iran and Cuba, rejection of more than a dozen treaties and conventions in the last decade, reductions in foreign aid, the withholding of dues for the United Nations and other international agencies, reduction of funds for the State Department, and the abolition of the U.S. Information Agency.

Warrant: Support for the United States in the UN General Assembly has decreased by 50% over time due to the United States' tendency to take unilateral action

Peter Katzstein. The American Political Science Association. Long Report of the Task Force on US Standing in World Affairs. September 2009.

http://www.apsanet.org/media/pdfs/apsa_tf_usstanding_long_report.pdf

The United States was instrumental in the UN's creation. Yet, as Figure 5 illustrates, support for U.S. positions within UNGA has declined considerably over time—a **trend that began as early as the 1960s, accelerated during the Reagan years, and, despite an uptick following the USSR's collapse, resumed its downward slide in the mid-1990s.** The drop in support for the United States is especially pronounced during the George W. Bush administration, with agreement between the United States and Latin American, African, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries plummeting by around 50 percent in the last decade alone. Astonishingly, the absolute level of agreement today between the United States and the typical country in each region is below the level of agreement between America and its existential rival, the Soviet Union, at the height of the Cold War. But two additional factors have come into play over which America has some control: first, a sense that Washington is no longer a dependable “team player,” and second, a belief that Americans are less committed to providing international public goods today than they were during the Cold War.

Warrant: Historical examples show unilateralism is unpopular

Peter Katzstein. The American Political Science Association. Long Report of the Task Force on US Standing in World Affairs. September 2009.
http://www.apsanet.org/media/pdfs/apsa_tf_usstanding_long_report.pdf

“Perceived evidence in the late 1990s of the United States behaving as what then French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine memorably termed a “hyperpower”—declining to sign the Ottawa Convention on the Banning of Land Mines, refusing to pay its UN dues, failing to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, not waiting for UN Security Council approval before the 1998 bombing of Iraq, not seeking UN approval in the bombing campaign against Serbia in the spring of 1999—coincided with a drop in agreement with U.S. positions in the UN General Assembly.”

Impact: Increased hostility to the United States and fear of nuclear weapons increases proliferation

Steve Fetter. "The Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: An Essential Element of Nonproliferation Policy". Maryland School of Public Policy. 6 April 2006.
http://www.cissm.umd.edu/papers/files/fetter_nuclear_prohibition.pdf

"A thorough critique of the Bush nuclear doctrine would take most of the afternoon. Just a few points: Many of the countries mentioned by name in the NPR—North Korea, Iran, Syria, and formerly Iraq and Libya—have been trying to acquire WMD in order to deter the United States from invading or otherwise attacking their vital interests. **It's absurd to suggest that U.S. nuclear threats will deter these countries from acquiring WMD. Quite the opposite—such threats will spur them on.**

Impact: Rivalries and militarized disputes increase chance of proliferation by 52%

Sonali Singh and Christopher Way. "The Correlates of Nuclear Proliferation: A Quantitative Test". Journal of Conflict Resolution. December 2004.
http://people.reed.edu/~ahm/Courses/Reed-POL-422-2012-S1_NP/Syllabus/EReadings/04.2/04.2.SinghWay2004The-Correlates.pdf

Although many of the variables attain statistical significance, how significant are they substantively in shaping the likelihood that a country explores and acquires nuclear weapons capability? Drawing on relative risk ratios, Table3 interprets the sub-stantive role played by each variable for decisions to explore and acquire nuclear weapons. The entries represent the percentage change in the baseline hazard rate for a given change in the explanatory variable. For example, a country with a great-power military alliance has a hazard rate for exploring the nuclear option that is 49% lower than a similar country without an alliance, as well as a risk of acquiring weapons that is 54% lower.³ **Even more striking, participation in an enduring rivalry**

increases the hazard rate nearly fourfold (382%) compared to a country not so engaged, and the effect for the actual acquisition of weapons is even greater (at 743%). Frequency of militarized dispute involvement also produces a powerful effect: increasing the 5-year moving average of the number of disputes per year by two yields a 52% increase in the likelihood that a country will go nuclear.

Analysis: This argument is strong because it acts as a turn on common neg contentions. By showing that nuclear first use policies actually hurt our credibility with other nations we trigger the very impacts which deterrence seeks to avoid.

PRO: Alternatives Don't Work - Sanctions

Argument: The United States often attempts to use alternatives to military coercion for conflict resolution. One such typical alternative, sanctions, is notably counterproductive.

Warrant: Sanctions fail 95% of the time

Robert Pape. Stanford University. Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work. 2003.

[http://www.stanford.edu/class/ips216/Readings/pape_97%20\(jstor\).pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/class/ips216/Readings/pape_97%20(jstor).pdf)

"115 identified cases in all. They reported sanctions success in 40 cases or 34 percent of the total. Practically none of the claimed 40 successes of economic sanctions stands up to examination. Eighteen were actually settled by direct or indirect use of force; in 8 cases there is no evidence that the target made the demanded concessions; 6 do not qualify as instances of economic sanctions; and 3 are indeterminate. **Of HSE's 115 cases, only 5 are appropriately considered successes.**"

Warrant: Sanctions have at best short-term effects, example Iran

Vasudevan Sridharan. "Iran 'Suspends' Nuclear Programme as Sanctions Hit Country Hard". International Business Times. 4 November 2012.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/articles/401225/20121104/iran-nuclear-tehran-sanctions-ahmadinejad-israel-netanyahu.htm>

"However, an informed source was quoted by Iran's Fars News Agency that the programme has not been suspended. "20 percent uranium enrichment activities continue as before and no change has happened. News about Iran's nuclear issues is only announced by the secretariat of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC)," said the unidentified source. **The move is said to be aimed at lifting of the crippling**

sanctions imposed by the western world; Tehran is likely to resume its enrichment programme if the sanctions continue.”

Warrant: By contrast, fear of nuclear strikes is a powerful motivator

Kenneth Waltz, “The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Better,” Adelphi Papers, Number 171 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981)
<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/waltz1.htm>

“The other way to inhibit a country's intended aggressive moves is to scare that country out of making them by threatening to visit unacceptable punishment upon it. 'To deter' literally means to stop someone from doing something by frightening him. In contrast to dissuasion by defence, dissuasion by deterrence operates by frightening a state out of attacking, not because of the difficulty of launching an attack and carrying it home, but because the expected reaction of the attacked will result in one's own severe punishment.”

Impact: An aggressive US posture actually deters nuclear acquisition far better than the threat of sanctions can

Austin Long (Columbia University). The Wilson Center. “Weighing Benefits and Costs of Military Action Against Iran.” 2012

http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/IranReport_091112_FINAL.pdf

“U.S. military action against Iran’s nuclear program may also reduce the odds that other countries in the region will seek nuclear weapons. First, it might provide assurance to regional allies, who would see that the United States will act to protect their security and that Washington’s promises to its friends are credible. **Moreover, if Iran’s nuclear**

program were set back, key regional players such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt would feel less pressure to pursue their own nuclear programs. Second, a U.S. military action might also deter others—inside and outside the region—from pursuing their nuclear ambitions, fearing that if they do, it might invite a similar U.S. response”

Impact: Strong flexing of US military power actually makes multilateral efforts like sanctions MORE effective

Giulio M. Gallarotti. Social Sciences Journal at Wesleyan University. Soft Power: What it is, Why it's Important, and the Conditions Under Which it Can Be Effectively Used. 2011.
http://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1056&context=div2_facpubs

Hence soft power resources can enhance hard power, and vice versa. Certainly, a strong positive image can garner many more allies, which in turn can bolster a nation's defenses. And of course, committing troops to defend a nation against invasion will certainly garner a better image for the protector state. Gilpin (2002) underscores the extent to which the global economic primacy enjoyed by America in the post-war period has been founded on the Pax Americana, which American military primacy has sustained. Furthermore, the possession of hard power itself can make a nation a role model in a variety of way. For example, Realists such as Waltz (1979) underscores the image generated by large military arsenals and successful military strategies. As a symbol of national success, this extensive hard power generates significant soft power by enhancing respect and admiration. But these hard power resources cannot be used in ways that undermine that respect and admiration. In other words, they cannot be used in ways that deviate from the politically liberal principles under girding soft power (see Table 1). So even the employment of force can generate soft power if it is used in

the service of goals widely perceived as consistent with such principles: e.g., for protecting nations against aggression, peacekeeping, or liberation against tyranny.

Analysis: This argument is strong because it dispels the myth that an enemy can be compelled to actions using “light” forms of pressure like sanctions. Force your opponents to admit that the only path to victory lies through military force.

PRO: Moral Leadership

Argument: Nuclear first use violates central tenets of just war theory

Warrant: US nuclear doctrine is unpopular and reckless

Matthew Lytwyn. Nuclear Weapons and the Just War Tradition. CSIS. March 2006.

<https://nuclearnetwork.csis.org/nuclear-weapons-just-war-tradition/>

“The Just War tradition, which underpins the modern law of armed conflict, breaks the moral analysis of war into two segments: jus ad bellum considerations (when is recourse to war morally justified?) and jus in bello considerations (how can a war be fought in accordance with moral principles?). This article focuses on the criteria for prosecution of a nuclear war in accord with the jus in bello principles of discrimination and proportionality. The principle of discrimination dictates that non-combatants may not be intentionally targeted during a war. **Countries are obliged to conduct their war planning to minimize collateral damage to the extent feasible. The quantitatively higher capacity of nuclear weapons to inflict collateral damage makes critical analysis of nuclear targets even more important than those targets to be attacked by conventional arms.** According to the most recent report to Congress on U.S. nuclear employment strategy, U.S. forces must retain “significant counterforce capabilities against potential adversaries.” U.S. strategy “does not rely on “counter-value [i.e. targeting population centers] or “minimum deterrence” strategy.”

Warrant: The US already recognizes that just war prevents the wanton use of nuclear weapons

Matthew Lytwyn. Nuclear Weapons and the Just War Tradition. CSIS. March 2006.

<https://nuclearnetwork.csis.org/nuclear-weapons-just-war-tradition/>

“The jus in bello principle of proportionality obliges a nation to employ only the amount of force necessary to achieve its military objectives. **Assuming that the principle of discrimination is satisfied, proportionality requires the damage likely to be created by an attack to be weighed against the legitimate military objectives to be achieved. This principle goes to the heart of nuclear weapons use, due to the potential destructive power of nuclear weapons and their lingering aftereffects. It is the United States’ sensitivity to the principle of proportionality that has led to a consistent position, included in its most recent Nuclear Posture Review, that the “United States would only consider the employment of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States, its allies, and partners.”** As Elbridge Colby has pointed out, “If the destruction of a target is critically important, it may be permitted under classical law-of-war doctrine if the ancillary damage is not intended and its costs do not outweigh the legitimate object achieved.”

Warrant: Nuclear weapons can only be ethically pursued when paired with a robust limitation on their intended use

Matthew Lytwyn. Nuclear Weapons and the Just War Tradition. CSIS. March 2006.

<https://nuclearnetwork.csis.org/nuclear-weapons-just-war-tradition/>

“Nuclear weapons pose a moral paradox. Despite their role in preserving peace, the ability of nuclear weapons to wreak widespread destruction has raised concerns over their morality since the Cold War. Early weapon systems lacked accuracy and carried high-yield warheads, raising the prospect of civilian deaths on a large scale. Questions of whether such systems could be employed under the Just War tradition were vigorously debated, and various moral frameworks were applied to explain the apparent contradictions of deterrence. Utilitarianism, for example, emphasized the peace that nuclear deterrence enabled, therefore justifying threats against civilians. One of the most high-profile moral pronouncements on nuclear deterrence, the U.S. Catholic

Bishops' 1983 pastoral letter, gave grudging approval to nuclear deterrence but urged the world to quickly move beyond the status quo, noting that **deterrence is "a transitional strategy justifiable only in conjunction with resolute determination to pursue arms control and disarmament."**

Example: A preemptive strike against North Korea would be unjust

Zachary Morris. "Just War Theory: North Korea and Preemptive War" The Simon Center. 2018. <https://thesimonscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Special-Report-pg101-111.pdf>

"While these are all positive signs for diplomacy, some analysts are concerned that "if negotiations fail, the administration might conclude that a military strike is the only way forward, greatly increasing the chance of war." However, based on Just War Theory, a preemptive attack against North Korea is currently unjustified. **Of the three required conditions for a justified preemptive attack, within the exception to just cause called "anticipation," the North Korean case meets only one. The three conditions necessary for a preemptive attack are: 1) an adversary that displays a manifest intent to injure; 2) a degree of active preparation that makes the intent and danger actual, and; 3) a situation in which waiting is no longer an option."**

Analysis: This argument circumvents the standard cost benefit analysis framework used by debaters. By arguing that moral considerations precede practical ones you can successfully avoid dealing with your opponents arguments.

PRO: Cost Savings

Argument: A no first use doctrine would simplify America's nuclear arsenal by reducing the capabilities required for deterrence and brinksmanship. The use cases being more limited, NFU enables America to reduce and rightsize our bloated nuclear arsenal.

Warrant: NFU would reduce the sprawl of our nuclear forces

Nina Tannenwald. "It's Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy". U.T. Austin. March 2012. <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/>

"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.."**

Warrant: These changes would reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in the American force structure

Nina Tannenwald. "It's Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy". U.T. Austin. March 2012. <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/>

"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. Likewise, it would “be more consistent with the long-term goal of global nuclear disarmament and would better contribute to US nuclear non-proliferation objectives. A multilateral NFU pledge would have even more benefits. It would move Russia and Pakistan away from their high-risk doctrines and reduce a source of Russia-NATO tensions.”

Warrant: Nuclear weapons are incredibly expensive

“Nuclear Reductions Save Money.” Arms Control Association. March 2006.

<https://www.armscontrol.org/projects-reports/2014-10/section-1-nuclear-reductions-save-money>

“The United States plans to spend at least \$355 billion to maintain and rebuild its nuclear arsenal over the next decade, according to a Dec. 2013 report by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO). Over the next 30 years, the bill could add up to \$1 trillion, according to another independent estimate. The largest share of the projected costs for nuclear delivery systems would go to strategic submarines. The Navy wants to buy 12 new ballistic missile submarines with a total production cost of about \$100 billion. The Air Force is seeking up to 100 new, nuclear-armed strategic bombers that would cost about \$80 billion, as well as new intercontinental ballistic missiles and air-launched cruise missiles. The Energy Department’s National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) is also pursuing a \$60 billion plan to upgrade five nuclear warhead types, including the B61 gravity bomb.”

Example: Cutting nuclear submarines would save billions

“Nuclear Reductions Save Money.” Arms Control Association. March 2006.

<https://www.armscontrol.org/projects-reports/2014-10/section-1-nuclear-reductions-save-money>

“The United States Navy currently operates 336 Trident II D-5 SLBMs on 14 Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) based out of Bangor, Washington (eight boats) and Kings Bay, Georgia (six boats). The Ohio-class submarines have a service life of 42 years, including a four-year, mid-life nuclear reactor refueling. Due to the refueling process and other maintenance, only 10-11 SSBNs are typically available for deployment at any given time. The Ohio-class SSBNs were launched between 1983 and 1996 and will be retired at a rate of approximately one boat per year between 2027 and 2040. The Navy plans to replace the retiring boats, starting in 2031, with a new class of 12 ballistic missile submarines, referred to as the SSBN(X) or the Ohio Replacement (OR). The Navy is seeking 12 rather than 14 because the new submarine will not need a four-year mid-life refueling, but only a two-year overhaul. This shorter overhaul means that only two SSBN(X)s (rather than three or four Ohio class subs) would be out of service at any given time during the middle years of the sub’s life span. The Navy and NNSA will spend \$82 billion on strategic submarines from 2014 to 2023, according to CBO, including \$38 billion to operate the current fleet and \$44 billion for the Ohio Replacement.”

Analysis: This argument is strong because it is simple – a force which is less reliant on nuclear weapons would save the United States a substantial amount of money. Weigh this argument for the judge by articulating the massive tradeoff in welfare and other important programs which tens of billions of dollars could pay for.

PRO: Collateral Damage

Argument: No First Use reduces possibility of Collateral Damages.

Warrant: First Use Policy is potentially indiscriminate and violates International Humanitarian Law

DeRosa, Mary B.; Nicolas, Ashley. "The President and Nuclear

Weapons: Authorities, Limits,

and Process." Nuclear Threat Initiative. Dec 2019.

https://media.nti.org/documents/The_President_and_Nuclear_Weapons_Authorities_Limits_and_Process.pdf

"The proportionality principle is likely to be a challenge for any first use of nuclear weapons in self-defense because of the enormous destructive power of those weapons.

International humanitarian law (IHL) regulates the means and methods used in conflict and balances the two fundamental principles of humanity and military necessity. The principle of humanity includes three key requirements: distinction, proportionality, and avoidance of unnecessary suffering. Parties are not permitted to target civilian populations. A related principle prohibits the use of weapons that are, by their nature, indiscriminate—that is, those “of a nature to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction.”

Warrant: Civilian collateral casualties in Military operations happen all the time in the status quo.

DOD. "Annual Report on Civilian Casualties in Connection With

United States Military Operations" Department of Defense.

2018.<https://media.defense.gov/2019/May/02/2002126767/-1/-1/1/ANNUAL->

REPORT-CIVILIAN-CASUALTIES-IN-CONNECTION-WITH-US-MILITARY-
OPERATIONS.PDF

“DoD assesses that there are credible reports of approximately 120 civilians killed and approximately 65 civilians injured during 2018 as a result of U.S. military operations in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and Somalia. DoD has no credible reports of civilian casualties from U.S. military operations in Yemen or Libya in 2018. Sub-sections A through E below provide additional information. As stated above, this report also contains updates to information submitted to Congress in last year’s Section 1057 report. Last year’s report noted that, as of February 26, 2018, more than 450 reports of civilian casualties from 2017 remained to be assessed due to the number of such reports received during 2017 and the resources required to review each report. Since that time, many more reports of civilian casualties from U.S. military operations in 2017 have been assessed. More reports of civilian casualties from 2017 have also been received, and DoD continues to assess new reports after they are received and updates previous assessments if DoD receives additional information on any previous report of civilian casualties.”

Warrant: Projected Nuclear military operation fatalities are in the millions.

Knox, Jennifer; Sleight, Jessica. “Estimated U.S. Fatalities from a Russian Nuclear Retaliation “. Global Zero.org. January 23, 2017. <https://www.globalzero.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/estimatedfatalitiesfromrussiannuclearretaliation.pdf>

Using data from NUKEMAP1 , **Global Zero charted the estimated number of U.S. fatalities from a Russian nuclear retaliatory attack using mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles**, the Topol-25 and Topol-M, and multiple independently-targeted reentry vehicle-equipped RS-24 missiles. The retaliation scenario consisted of 145 total nuclear warheads – 37 warheads fitted to either the Topol-25 or Topol-M, each with a 550-kiloton yield, and 108 warheads fitted to RS-24 missiles, each with a 250-kiloton

yield. **In this scenario, 30% of the total population of the top 145 most populated U.S. cities would perish.** Detonation heights were selected at the optimal burst altitude to maximize fatalities: 1,803 meters for a 550- kiloton nuclear missile yield and 1,386 meters for a 250-kiloton nuclear missile yield. NUKEMAP's casualty model, which differentiates **fatalities from injuries, is drawn from an ambient population database that estimates the average number of people in an area within 24 hours, capturing not just where populations live but where they work or spend time.**

Impact: Lack of NFU policies endangers millions.

Warrant: Hypothetical Collateral Damage in accidental and deliberate nuclear military operations are astronomical.

Duagherty, William; Levi, Barbara, PHD, Hippel, Frank, PHD.

"Casualties Due to the Blast, Heat, and Radioactive Fallout from Various Hypothetical Nuclear Attacks on the United States". Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. 1986.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK219165/>

The calculated ranges of fatalities and casualties (deaths plus severe injuries and illnesses) from blast, burns, and radioactive fallout for these "100-Megaton" attacks are shown in Table 1. This table indicates that more than 10 million deaths could result from these "limited" attacks, even if the targets were industrial or military and not population per se. The results also indicate that even a strategic defense system that was 99 percent effective might not protect the United States against potential catastrophe in a nuclear war with the USSR.

Next, we **calculated the consequences from a major "counterforce" attack on U.S. strategic-nuclear forces. The estimated number of deaths ranged from 13 to 34 million people. The corresponding final estimates made by the Department of Defense (DOD)**

in 1975 for a similar attack ranged from 3 million to 16 million deaths (U.S. Congress, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 1975; pp. 12-24).

Warrant: Nuclear impacts on lives includes death and life long detrimental physical impacts for survivors.

National Research Council. "Effects of Nuclear Earth-Penetrator

and Other :**Chapter:** 6 Human and Environmental Effects" The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, Medicine. 2005.

<https://www.nap.edu/read/11282/chapter/8>

"The health effects of nuclear explosions are due primarily to air blast, thermal radiation, initial nuclear radiation, and residual nuclear radiation or fallout. Blast. Nuclear explosions produce air-blast effects similar to those produced by conventional explosives. The shock wave can directly injure humans by rupturing eardrums or lungs or by hurling people at high speed, but most casualties occur because of collapsing structures and flying debris. Radiation has both acute and latent health effects. Acute effects include radiation sickness or death resulting from high doses of radiation (greater than 1 sievert [Sv], or 100 rems) delivered over a few days. The principal latent effect is cancer. Estimates of latent cancer fatalities are based largely on results of the long-term follow-up of the survivors of the atomic bombings in Japan. Finally, there has been a recently confirmed finding that the Japanese survivors are experiencing a statistically significant increase in the occurrence of a number of noncancer diseases,⁶ including hypertension, myocardial infarction, thyroid disease, cataracts, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, and, in females, uterine myoma. There has been a negative response in the occurrence of glaucoma.

Warrant: First Use policies long term impacts on civilians and the environment will be unprecedented.

Mills, Michal J; Toon, Owen, et all. "Multidecadal global cooling and unprecedented ozone loss following a regional nuclear conflict". AGU: Advancing Earth and Space Science. 07 February 2014
<https://doi.org/10.1002/2013EF000205>

"A limited, regional nuclear war between India and Pakistan in which each side detonates 50 15 kt weapons could produce about 5 Tg of black carbon (BC).. Our calculations show that global ozone losses of 20%–50% over populated areas, levels unprecedented in human history, would accompany the coldest average surface temperatures in the last 1000 years. We calculate summer enhancements in UV indices of 30%–80% over midlatitudes, suggesting widespread damage to human health, agriculture, and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Killing frosts would reduce growing seasons by 10–40 days per year for 5 years. Surface temperatures would be reduced for more than 25 years due to thermal inertia and albedo effects in the ocean and expanded sea ice. The combined cooling and enhanced UV would put significant pressures on global food supplies and could trigger a global nuclear famine. "

Warrant: NFU policy is the only way for the US to truly avoid the humanitarian dangers posed.

Gerson, Michael. "No First Use : The Next Step for U.S. Nuclear Policy" International Security Vol. 35, No. 2 . pp. 7-47 (41 pages). The MIT Press . 2010.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40981242>

"By not adopting NFU, the NPR missed an important opportunity to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in U. S. strategy. The traditional case for NFU hinges on the argument that the threat of nuclear first use is unnecessary for deterrence. Yet the continued U. S. option to use nuclear weapons first is not only unnecessary but dangerous. Given the size and accuracy of the current U. S. nuclear arsenal, and given

the variation in the nuclear capabilities of current and potential adversaries, the first-use option risks creating instabilities in a severe crisis that increase the chances of accidental, unauthorized, or deliberate nuclear use. In a future crisis with a nuclear-armed state, the fear-whether real or imagined-that the United States might attempt a disarming nuclear first-strike increases the possibility of nuclear escalation.”

Analysis: The potential loss of life, long term health impacts, and environmental damage that a nuclear explosion would have is unsurmountable. A No First Use Policy would mitigate and limit the likelihood of nuclear usage and collateral casualties.

PRO: Sole Authority

Argument: Sole Authority of Nuclear First Use Dangerous

Warrant: Sole Authority of nuclear weapons lacks a checks and chain of command.

Congressional Research Services “Defense Primer: Command and Control of Nuclear Forces”. In Focus. 10 Jan 2020.
<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/IF10521.pdf>

The U.S. President has sole authority to authorize the use of U.S. nuclear weapons. This authority is inherent in his constitutional role as Commander in Chief. **The President can seek counsel from his military advisors; those advisors are then required to transmit and implement the orders authorizing nuclear use.** But, as General John Hyten, then the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), noted during his September 2016 confirmation hearing, his job is to give advice, while the authority to order a launch lies with the president. **The President does not need the concurrence of either his military advisors or the U.S. Congress to order the launch of nuclear weapons.** In addition, **neither the military nor Congress can overrule these orders.**

Warrant: Sole Authority in First Use policies lack safe guards and may violate International Humanitarian laws.

DeRosa, Mary B; Nicolas, Ashley. “The President and Nuclear Weapons: Authorities, Limits, and Process.” Nuclear Threat Initiative. 2019.
https://media.nti.org/documents/The_President_and_Nuclear_Weapons_Authorities_Limits_and_Process.pdf

“Because a president’s order to launch nuclear weapons could violate U.S. or international law, an important question is whether there are sufficient opportunities to guard against an illegal order. The process provides some opportunities, but there are no guarantees. As noted, there is legal review of the predeveloped or preplanned options presented to the president for decision. This review focuses on IHL issues and can eliminate options that are illegal under any circumstance, **but it does not address fully the constitutional, ad bellum, or other legal issues that rely on an understanding of the specific context and circumstances of a potential strike. A president may seek additional legal advice before a decision to launch; this would often happen as part of the traditional National Security Council process. A president may choose to truncate that process, however, or even dispense with it altogether. “**

Warrant: Sole Authority over Nuclear attack decisions without checks can lead to world war nuclear suicide.

Kimball, Daryl G. “The Case for a U.S. No-First-Use Policy”.Arms

Control Association.October 2018. <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2018-10/focus/case-us-first-use-policy>

U.S. and Russian leaders also still reserve the option to use nuclear weapons first. No other military or civilian official must approve the order. Congress currently has no say in the matter.Continuing to vest such destructive power in the hands of one person is undemocratic, irresponsible, unnecessary and increasingly untenable. The reality is that **a launch-under-attack policy is unnecessary** because U.S. nuclear forces and command-and-control systems could withstand even a massive attack. In addition, keeping strategic forces on launch-under-attack mode increases the risk of miscalculation and misjudgment. **Throughout the history of the nuclear age, there have been several incidents in which false signals of an attack have prompted U.S. and Russian officials to consider, in the dead of the night and under the pressure of time,**

launching nuclear weapons in retaliation. No U.S. leader should be put in a situation that could lead to the use of nuclear weapons based on false information. Retaining the option to use nuclear weapons first is fraught with unnecessary peril. Given the overwhelming conventional military edge of the United States and its allies, there is no plausible circumstance that could justify legally, morally, or militarily the use of nuclear weapons to deal with a non-nuclear threat. Even in the event of a conventional military conflict with Russia, China, or North Korea, the first use of nuclear weapons would be counterproductive because it likely would trigger an uncontrollable, potentially suicidal all-out nuclear exchange.

Impact: NFU would reduce sole authority concerns

Warrant: A declaration of NFU will reduce concerns about sole authority and minimize potential nuclear enemies.

Grego, Laura; et al. "No-First-Use Policy Explained: What is a "No-First-Use" nuclear policy?". Union of Concerned Scientists. 7 May 2020.

<https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/no-first-use-explained>

An NFU policy would also reduce concerns about the US president's sole authority to order a nuclear attack, since these concerns have focused primarily on a possible order to initiate the use of nuclear weapons in a crisis. **An NFU policy would remove the option for the president to order the use of nuclear weapons except in retaliation for a nuclear attack.**

It's also worth keeping in mind that the **United States already has a no-first-use policy that applies to the vast majority of the world's countries**. The rationale for that pledge is to **reassure countries without nuclear weapons that they do not need nuclear weapons to deter a nuclear attack against them**. This benefits US security by minimizing the number of nuclear-armed potential adversaries it has to deal with.

Warrant: Eliminating Sole Authority in a NFU Declaration will reduce risks of accidental and unauthorized use of nuclear weapons.

McIntyre, Jamie. "Biden advocated 'no first use' policy as VP.

Would he change nuclear doctrine as president?". Washington Examiner. 13 Aug 2020.

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/biden-advocated-no-first-use-policy-as-vp-would-he-change-nuclear-doctrine-as-president>

But **Marine Gen. James Cartwright**, who served as STRATCOM commander under President George W. Bush, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs under Obama, and went on to become a member of the arms control group Global Zero, **came to view “no first use” as the only rational doctrine.**

“A no-first-use policy would ... reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons,” he wrote along with fellow arms control advocate Bruce Blair in a New York Times [op-ed](#) in 2016.

“Although a no-first-use policy would limit the president’s discretion by imposing procedural and physical constraints on his or her ability to initiate the use of nuclear weapons, we believe such checks on the commander in chief would serve the national interest,” they wrote. **“Nuclear weapons today no longer serve any purpose beyond deterring the first use of such weapons by our adversaries.”**

Analysis: Sole Authority to launch nuclear weapons in a first use scenario is fraught with issues of checks and balances, possible misuse and even International Humanitarian Law violations. Concerns addressed by top military officials make it clear that a legal Declaration of NFU is the only way to address it under Constitutional Restraints.

PRO: Foreign Relations and Global Stability

Argument: A Declaration of NFU will improve Foreign Relations and Global Stability

Warrant: Current First Use Policy maintains foreign tension among major nuclear armed countries.

Corwin, Robert. "No-First-Use Policy Explained: What is a "No-First-Use" nuclear policy?" Union of Concerned Scientists. 7 May 2020. <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/no-first-use-explained>

"Longstanding US policy, re-affirmed in the Trump administration's **2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR)**, says that the United States "will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states that are party to the NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty] and in compliance with their nuclear nonproliferation obligations"; this promise covers more than 180 countries (OSD 2018). This policy is known as a "negative security assurance." **However, China, Russia, and North Korea do not fall under the US negative security assurance.** China and Russia are nuclear weapon states under the NPT, and North Korea withdrew from the treaty in 2003 and conducted its first nuclear test in 2006. **This means that they could be targets for US nuclear weapons, including the United States launching weapons at them first.** Taking nuclear use off the table except as a retaliatory measure could reduce this pressure, which would help to slow the timeline in a crisis, allowing decision-makers more time to explore other solutions rather than quickly escalating the conflict.

Warrant: First Use policies increase tensions and risk escalation, while a NFU declaration will Enhance International Respect for International Humanitarian Law.

Perkovich, George. "Do Unto Others: Toward a Defensible Nuclear Doctrine". Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

2013. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/do_onto_others.pdf

Threat assessment: **The first use of nuclear weapons is unnecessary or irrelevant to defeat threats to the territory of the United States today. However, some U.S. allies face potential threats that they rely on the United States to deter, including via possible first use of nuclear weapons. An effective nuclear policy for the United States would serve the following imperatives:**

- **Contribute to overall military deterrence of threats to the survival of the United States and its allies--Minimize the probability that the United States and any other state will initiate use of nuclear weapons**
- **Minimize the risks of escalation if first use occurs**
- **Reduce incentives for other states to seek or expand nuclear arsenals**
- **Enhance international respect for the laws of war, just war, and international humanitarian law. And in a world with a moral-political taboo against using nuclear weapons to attack non-nuclear-weapon states, the consequences of such use would, over time, also be self-defeating. Such policies should follow the principle the United States has recently suggested for the use of drones: "if we want others to adhere to high and rigorous standards for their use, then we must do so as well. We cannot expect of others what we will not do ourselves."**

Warrant: A declaration of NFU does not reduce nuclear arms but will increase global security.

Mattis, Jim. "NFU declaration does not mean lessening nuclear arsenal, just how we use it." Nuclear Posture Review: Office of Secretary of Defense. 2018. <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872886/-1/-1/1/2018-NUCLEAR-POSTURE-REVIEW-FINAL-REPORT.PDF>

“While we will be relentless in ensuring our nuclear capabilities are effective, the United States is not turning away from its long-held arms control, non-proliferation, and nuclear security objectives. Our commitment to the goals of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains strong. Yet we must recognize that the current environment makes further progress toward nuclear arms reductions in the near term extremely challenging. Ensuring our nuclear deterrent remains strong will provide the best opportunity for convincing other nuclear powers to engage in meaningful arms control initiatives. This review rests on a bedrock truth: nuclear weapons have and will continue to play a critical role in deterring nuclear attack and in preventing large-scale conventional warfare between nuclear-armed states for the foreseeable future. U.S. nuclear weapons not only defend our allies against conventional and nuclear threats, they also help them avoid the need to develop their own nuclear arsenals. This, in turn, furthers global security. “

Impact: Declaration of NFU will better foreign relations

Warrant: Establishing NFU policy will reduce tensions and reassure of the intentions towards non nuclear states.

Tierney, John, Bell; Alexander; et all. “No First Use: Myths vs.

Realities “Centers for Arms Control and Non Proliferation. 2020.

<https://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/no-first-use/no-first-use-myths-vs-realities/>

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.**

Adopting an NFU policy would be welcomed by non-nuclear weapon states, including U.S. allies, that are increasingly frustrated that nuclear weapon states have not made significant progress on their disarmament obligations as outlined in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Warrant: NFU will improve stability with China and Russia and surrounding regions.

Thakur, Ramesh. "Why Obama should declare a no-first-use policy for nuclear weapons". The Bulletin. 19 Aug. 2016.
<https://thebulletin.org/2016/08/why-obama-should-declare-a-no-first-use-policy-for-nuclear-weapons/>

The US influence can be felt in Beijing as well, where the world's only other official no-first-use policy has come under strain. **For various reasons, including growing US conventional capability, America's continuing interest in ballistic missile defense systems, and Washington's refusal to adopt a no-first-use policy, Chinese leaders worry that the United States harbors doubts about China's second-strike capability. This is hardly a recipe for safety and stability,** and it doesn't help that the United States has refused to acknowledge mutual nuclear vulnerability vis-à-vis China. According to Gregory Kulacki of the Union of Concerned Scientists, in "a significant—and dangerous—change in Chinese policy," **China's military planners have for the first time begun to discuss putting the country's nuclear missiles on high alert, believing that this "would be a step toward assured retaliation."** It is hard to see China's no-first-use policy surviving such a change. And if Beijing follows the Russian and US lead by adopting a high-alert posture, how long before the trend proliferates to India and Pakistan? **If the United States adopted a no-first-use policy, it might at least counteract some of these dangerous trends. It may also lead to a coalition of nuclear-armed states adopting no-first-use policies, which could also have a reinforcing effect,** with more states wanting to follow the American lead.

Impact: NFU policy will also deter terrorism

Warrant: Declaratory policy will signal to allies and those who would support terrorists that nuclear weapons are immoral.

Sagan, Scott. "The Case for No First Use." Survival vol. 51 no. 3.

June-July 2009. [https://www.almendron.com/tribuna/wp-](https://www.almendron.com/tribuna/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/the-case-for-no-first-use-sagan.pdf)

content/uploads/2015/04/the-case-for-no-first-use-sagan.pdf

Nuclear declaratory policy is meant to enhance deterrence of potential adversaries by providing a signal of intentions, options and proclivities of the US government in different crisis and war-time scenarios. Such signals are similarly meant to enhance reassurance of allies. Declaratory policy can indirectly influence the likelihood of nuclear terrorism by dissuading governments or individuals from providing nuclear weapons or materials to terrorist organizations and by making terrorist use of a nuclear weapon appear immoral and illegitimate to some individuals who might otherwise support the terrorists' goals.

Analysis: First use policy maintains as well as is currently increasing tensions and instability between our allies and other nuclear armed states. By declaring a No First Use policy, we could dramatically decrease the tensions, as well increase stability globally. In light of continuing tensions and concerns, an NFU would go a long way in improving our Foreign Relations and decreasing support of terrorist groups.

PRO: Improved de-escalation

Argument: Declaration of No First Use policies is best option for De-escalation efforts.

Warrant: Concerns exist about nuclear escalations between the US and China.

Talmadge, Caitlin. "Would China Go Nuclear?: Assessing the Risk of Chinese Nuclear Escalation in a Conventional War with the United States International Security, Volume 41, Number 4. Spring 2017.
<https://cpbuse1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.gwu.edu/dist/b/1590/files/2018/07/Talmadge-IS-2017-y16c9h.pdf>

"This article examines both these military-technical and perceptual factors in order to assess the risk of Chinese nuclear escalation. It finds that the pressures emphasized by pessimists are plausible, though not inevitable. **Notably, the danger stems less from the purely military-technical threat that a U.S. conventional campaign would pose to China's nuclear arsenal, which pessimists may at times overestimate, than from what China is likely to believe these militarytechnical developments signal about broader U.S. intentions once a conventional war is under way, which optimists too often overlook.**"

Warrant: Russia maintains an 'escalate to de-escalate" posture.

Schneider, Mark. "Escalate to De-escalate." US Naval Institute: Proceedings. Vol 142/2/1. February 2017.
<https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2017/february/escalate-de-escalate>

In June 2015, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work and then-Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral James Winnefeld observed, **“Russian military doctrine includes what some have called an ‘escalate to de-escalate’ strategy—a strategy that purportedly seeks to de-escalate a conventional conflict through coercive threats, including limited nuclear use.”** Work and Winnefeld categorized this strategy as **“playing with fire.”**⁶ In October 2016, President Putin declared that “brandishing nuclear weapons is the last thing to do.” Good advice, but he does not take it. **Ukrainian Minister of Defense Colonel General Valeriy Heletey stated in September 2014, “The Russian side has threatened on several occasions across unofficial channels that, in the case of continued resistance, they are ready to use a tactical nuclear weapon against us.”** In November 2016, Putin made a classic nuclear threat: **“We have to take countermeasures, targeting the facilities that we perceive as a threat with our missile systems.”**⁹ The Russian Defense Ministry threatened turning Romania into “smoking ruins.” ICBM force commander **Colonel General Sergei Karakayev threatened “an intense attack carried out by Russian strategic units” in December 2015 against missile defense sites in Romania and Poland.** NATO’s January 2016 annual report revealed that **“recent Russian exercises include simulated nuclear attacks on NATO Allies and on partners.”**¹⁰

Warrant: Current policies increase the likelihood of nuclear escalation in case of a crisis.

Acton, James. “Technology, Doctrine, and the Risk of Nuclear War.” American Academy of Arts and Sciences. 2020.

<https://www.amacad.org/publication/emerging-risks-declining-norms/section/4>

Second, **in the event that a crisis or conflict occurs, developments in military doctrine for both nuclear and conventional warfighting are increasing the likelihood of escalation, whether deliberate or inadvertent, to nuclear use.** Technological changes are having a similar effect. Some drivers of this growing danger—such as the

development of potentially vulnerable nuclear forces in China, Russia, and Pakistan— are well known from the Cold War. Others are less familiar but include the development, by the United States in particular, of **nonnuclear technologies that can threaten—or are perceived as being able to threaten—an opponent’s nuclear forces and their enabling capabilities.**

Warrant: The only way to de escalate tension and avoid crisis’ is through reducing and eliminating reliance on nuclear weapons, including NFU.

Nuclear Crisis Group. “Urgent Steps to De-Escalate Nuclear Flashpoints.” Global Zero. June 2017.

https://www.globalzero.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/10/NCG_Urgent-Steps_June-2017.pdf

“The only way to eliminate fully the risks of nuclear weapons use is through their abolition. To achieve this, states with nuclear capabilities need, at a minimum, to reduce their reliance on nuclear weapons in their national defense plans, cease expansion of their nuclear arsenals, and reduce the number of weapons. All states must also take pragmatic steps to avoid any use of nuclear weapons — intentional, accidental or otherwise — and avoid conventional conflicts that could escalate to nuclear use. States with nuclear capabilities must also pursue policies and dialogues that enable them to adopt no- frst-use postures. Enhanced nuclear risk reduction also requires increasing the means to communicate in a crisis and adopting defense postures that increase warning time.”

Impact: NFU policies will de-escalate conflicts.

Warrant: No First Use will reduce escalation risks and also help with nonproliferation.

Fetter, Steve; Wolfsthal, Jon. "No First Use and Credible

Deterrence." Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament. Vol 1 Issue 1. 2018.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257#:~:text=The%20benefits%20of%20adopting%20a,supporting%20nonproliferation%20and%20disarmament%20efforts.>

=The%20benefits%20of%20adopting%20a,supporting%20nonproliferation%20and%20disarmament%20efforts.

"The benefits of adopting a policy of no first use include reducing the risks of accidental nuclear escalation or nuclear use from miscalculation, as well as supporting nonproliferation and disarmament efforts."

Warrant: A No First Use Policy would set a different tone that would prevent wars.

Allison, Graham; et all. "The Utility of Nuclear Weapons and the

Strategy of No First Use." Harvard Kennedy School: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

<https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/utility-nuclear-weapons-and-strategy-no-first-use>

Eradicating the idea that nuclear first use is an option would have enormous implications. It would alter the expectations of politicians and commanders. **It would (or should) influence military investment decisions** - more conventional capability may be necessary, for example: It could affect public articulations of defense policy and military doctrine. In the Soviet period, Moscow's NFU pledge was undermined by a profusion of military writings that emphasized nuclear preemption and warfighting and otherwise were in tension with NFU. But **a genuine NFU strategy would need to harmonize doctrinal expositions and political explanations of defense policy with the constraints of the NFU commitment.** Changes in public rhetoric alone will not be sufficient to convince the world that a NFU strategy is firmly in place. But they could help send the message that NFU was being taken seriously. NATO presently proclaims at

every occasion that nuclear weapons are essential and that nuclear first-use is an integral component of alliance military strategy. **If NATO instead were to proclaim that nuclear weapons are irrelevant to most of the alliance's security needs and that it could not envision circumstances in which it would use nuclear weapons first, this would certainly set a very different tone.**

Warrant: An NFU policy will ensure a safer nuclear weapons arsenal.

Rajagopalan, Rajesh. "The strategic logic of the No First Use nuclear doctrine." Observer Research Foundation. 30 Aug 2019.
<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/strategic-logic-no-first-use-nuclear-doctrine-54911/>

"The threat of retaliation is of course the essence of deterrence: preventing someone from taking an action by threatening to punish them if they did. Retaliation, by definition, could only be for an action that was already taken, in this case, a nuclear attack that has already happened. **Deterrence and retaliation automatically meant that there was no logic to using nuclear weapons first: hence, no first use. Additional benefits also accrue from NFU: tighter political command over nuclear weapons, a much more relaxed command and control regime and a much safer nuclear arsenal."**

Analysis: Current tensions and escalation efforts by nuclear weapon states could easily be escalated by continued United States first use policies. A No First Use declaration would alleviate the need for escalation tactics and create an atmosphere for more temperate approaches to conflict. This in turn would prevent wars, save lives, and establish the ability to move forward to deal with crisis' in a more peaceful manner.

PRO: International Leadership

Argument: A Declaration of No First Use Demonstrates Leadership

Warrant: US Leadership in No First Use is Lacking

Yu, Rong, and Peng, Guangaian. "Nuclear No-First-Use Revisited." China Security, A Journal of China's Strategic Development, Issue 13.2008. <https://web.archive.org/web/20120219173946>

"The year 1950 witnessed the first popular outcry against the use of nuclear weapons with the meeting of the World Council of Peace in Stockholm. **The famous Stockholm Appeal proclaimed that any government which was the first to use atomic weapons against any other country would be committing a crime against humanity and should be regarded as a war criminal.**¹ Over 500 million signatures were eventually gathered in support of the appeal.² Since then, demand for criminalization of the use of nuclear weapons has been repeatedly voiced in various forms by world peace movements and anti-nuclear campaigns alike. A declaratory no-first-use (NFU) of nuclear weapons policy has been considered to be an important first step towards a comprehensive ban and complete elimination of nuclear weapons.³

To date, China alone of the five declared nuclear powers holds to an unconditional NFU policy. The former Soviet Union declared such a policy in 1982, but its successor, the Russian Federation, rescinded it in 1995. India has also committed to NFU. After almost 60 years since the first call for NFU, little progress has been made. A universal international regime remains elusive.

Warrant: No NFU Policy shows weakness and lack of moral authority.

Holdren, John P. "The overwhelming case for no first use."

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists Volume 76, 2020 - Issue 1: Special issue: Nuclear weapons policy and the US presidential election.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277>

“When the country with the most capable conventional forces the world has ever seen insists that it nonetheless needs nuclear weapons to deter and respond to non-nuclear attacks, it is logically conceding, to any country that fears or professes to fear attack by another, the right to acquire its own nuclear weapons to deter or respond to such attacks. The US stance of “first use if we think we need to” undermines, in the eyes of most of the world, any moral authority the United States might wish to assert against the acquisition of nuclear weapons by others. And if potential adversaries that don’t possess nuclear weapons think the United States would use nuclear weapons against their conventional forces or in retaliation for an actual (or suspected!) chemical or biological attack, that can only increase their incentive to acquire nuclear weapons of their own.”

Warrant: US Leadership is Key in non proliferation

Bunn, Matthew; Tobey, William, et all. “Preventing Nuclear Terrorism: Continuous Improvement or Dangerous Decline?” Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, March 2016.

“The United States remains committed to assisting other nations in securing and repatriating weapon-grade plutonium and HEU in their civilian nuclear programs. U.S. cooperation with Russia, begun in the 1990s to secure Moscow’s stockpile of materials and weapons, resulted in a drop in the number of smuggling cases. Although. Russia ended this cooperation during the Obama era, the United States remains open to resuming it, as well as to intelligence sharing that may have a nuclear-terrorism

dimension. The thinking behind the nuclear security summits initiated by 90 the end of nuclear warfighting: moving to a deterrence-only posture President Obama to raise the priority of securing civilian fissile materials around the world has enduring merit. **The United States should continue to lead this global effort and extend it to some military materials where practical and consistent with national security regulations.** This effort should include conversion of naval propulsion reactors to burn LEU instead of HEU fuel.”

Warrant: The United States has an obligation to lead politically and morally to create treaties uniting countries on common goals.

“Do Unto Others: Towards a Defensible Nuclear Doctrine.” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2013.

https://carnegieendowment.org/files/do_onto_others.pdf

“The multilateral goals of the Prague agenda remain unfulfilled, too. There is little prospect that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will enter into force anytime soon. The United States, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, North Korea, Iran, and Egypt are among the states that have not ratified the treaty and are required to do so in order for it to enter into force. Negotiations of a treaty to end the production of fissile materials for military purposes still have not started. A much-vaunted conference on creating a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which was to be held in 2012, was instead postponed indefinitely. “

Much can still be done, though. While the stalemate persists over whether and how to lower the number of nuclear weapons, the underlying goal of preventing these weapons from being detonated can be pursued in other ways. **Nuclear-armed states cannot be forced to relinquish their weapons, but they can be deterred by the military, political, economic, and moral costs of being the first to use them.** Military deterrence will operate as long as nuclear weapons and the knowledge to make them exist. **What is needed now is the added deterrent power of international political, moral, and**

economic pressure on any actor that would break the established taboo against the first use of nuclear weapons.

Warrant: First Use policies are no longer necessary.

“The Utility of Nuclear Weapons and the Strategy of No-First-

Use”. Harvard Kennedy School: Belfer Center for Science and

International Affairs. 14 Nov 2017

<https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/utility-nuclear-weapons-and-strategy-no-first-use>

“A genuine strategy of no-first-use implies - indeed, requires - that nuclear-armed states relinquish any desire to utilize first-use threats and options for the attainment of these purposes. This might become possible because the purpose no longer seems worthy. There appears to be little interest anymore, for example, in symbolic first use for signaling purposes. This might become possible because the purpose is no longer relevant. It explains why advocates of NFU insist that nuclear weapons should serve no other purpose than nuclear deterrence. Thus the articulate and influential nuclear weapons study of the US National Academy of Sciences recommended that "the United States should announce that the only purpose of US nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attacks on the United States and its allies" and embrace an official policy of NFU.

Impact: US Declaration of NFU would reduce risks as well as show leadership in the nonproliferation efforts world wide.

Warrant: US NFU would reduce miscalculations and correct damage of a first use non commitment on non-proliferation.

Panda, Ankit. "No First Use and Nuclear Weapons" Center on

Foreign Relations 17 July 2018. <https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/no-first-use-and-nuclear-weapons>

"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."

Warrant: NFU Policy would reduce nuclear weapons and provide security.

O'Hanlon, Michael E. "In Support of Nuclear No First Use."

Brookings. 19 Aug. 2016.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-fromchaos/2016/08/19/in-support-of-nuclear-no-first-use/>

"A no first use pledge would still be meaningful, because it would be understood to focus on plausible scenarios. It would usefully reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in near-term U.S. defense policy. And jittery allies, once they saw that it had no

substantial bearing on U.S. military preparedness, would almost surely adjust. All at home and abroad could rest secure in the knowledge that, for the truly heinous and almost unimaginable scenarios like those that could result from advanced, contagious, highly lethal biological attacks, America's well-maintained nuclear arsenal was not just there for show—and would provide significant residual deterrence whatever the formal doctrine said."

Warrant: Reducing Risks and miscalculations will avoid accidental war.

Schlosser, Eric. "ACCIDENTAL NUCLEAR WAR: A Timeline of Close Calls" The New Yorker. 23 Dec 2016.

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/world-war-three-by-mistake>

"The most devastating military threat arguably comes from a nuclear war started not intentionally but *by accident or miscalculation*. Accidental nuclear war has almost happened many times already, and with 15,000 nuclear weapons worldwide — thousands on hair-trigger alert and ready to launch at a moment's notice — an accident is bound to occur eventually.

The harsh rhetoric on both sides increases the danger of miscalculations and mistakes, as do other factors. Close encounters between the military aircraft of the United States and Russia have become routine, creating the potential for an unintended conflict.

McNamara insisted that the control system be redesigned, at great expense. The destruction of fifty Soviet cities because of a mechanical glitch, a classified history of the Minuteman program later noted, would be "an accident for which a later apology might be inadequate."

Analysis: Over the last several presidencies, a lack of No First Use policies have detracted from our leadership in the Non-Proliferation efforts. This has led to other countries taking the lead

on the morality as well as political grounds. It has also led to a decrease in nuclear non-proliferation efforts, halted treaties and summits that could ban Nuclear testing, address terrorism, and provide security and stability world wide. US leadership is still looked to by Allies around the world, and a No First Use declaration would be a welcome step to United State global Leadership on the nuclear non proliferation landscape.

PRO: Our military is powerful enough without nuclear first use

Argument: There is no instance in which we would need to use a nuclear weapon first, or even feign the ability to do so, given how strong our military is even without nuclear weapons.

Warrant: The US spends more on its military than the next 10 countries combined

Peterson, Peter. The United States Spends More on Defense than the Next 10 Countries Combined. 15 May 2020, <https://www.pgpf.org/blog/2020/05/the-united-states-spends-more-on-defense-than-the-next-10-countries-combined>.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) recently released an update to its military expenditure database, which shows that the United States spends considerably more on defense than any other country in the world. The database reported that in 2019, the United States spent \$732 billion on national defense, which was more than the next 10 countries combined. U.S. defense spending increased substantially from 2018 to 2019 relative to other countries. In 2018, the United States spent more than the next eight countries combined. In 2019, that number increased to 10 mainly because U.S. spending increased by \$49 billion and spending by Saudi Arabia decreased by \$13 billion. Those two changes combined to create enough room for two new countries — South Korea and Brazil — to enter the comparison. SIPRI's definition of defense spending is broader than the definitions that are most frequently used in fiscal policy discussions in the United States. **SIPRI includes discretionary and mandatory outlays by the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, Department of State, and the National Intelligence Program.** By contrast, the typical budget category of defense discretionary spending (\$676 billion in 2019) excludes outlays by the Department of State and all mandatory spending. Nonetheless,

the SIPRI comparison provides useful insights on the sheer scale of U.S. defense spending relative to other nations.

Warrant: We have no need to strike first with nukes given our current capabilities

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

Adoption of an NFU policy will require close consultation with allies, but the U.S. administration should begin this task. As an initial step on the way to NFU, U.S. leaders should consider the recent proposal by Jeffrey Lewis and Scott Sagan that the United States should declare it will not use nuclear weapons "against any target that could be reliably destroyed by conventional means."⁴³ This policy would not solve the problem posed by highly asymmetric crises, as noted above. **Nevertheless, it would represent an initial important declaratory statement of nuclear restraint. The most important goal of the United States today is to prevent the use of nuclear weapons. The policy of relying on the threat to use nuclear weapons first is an outdated legacy of the Cold War. As even card-carrying realists such as the "four horsemen" recognized, given U.S. conventional capabilities, there are no circumstances in which the United States ought to start a nuclear war.**⁴⁴ Relying on the pretense that it might do so in order to deter a conventional threat unacceptably increases the chances of nuclear escalation. Moving toward declared NFU policies is the best way to reduce the risks of nuclear war.

Warrant: Nuclear threat does not even deter conventional attacks

Fetter, Steve, and Jon Wolfsthal. "No First Use and Credible Deterrence." Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, vol. 1, no. 1, Routledge, Jan. 2018, pp. 102–14. Taylor and Francis+NEJM, doi:10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257.

The fact that nuclear threats cannot deter most conventional attacks, and that there is no sensible use for nuclear weapons in response for such attacks, does not mean that conventional attacks cannot be deterred or prevented, or that the United States is not committed to do so. The United States and Japan must plan on deterring and defeating conventional aggression through conventional means. They cannot and should not rely on the magic of a nuclear umbrella, because the umbrella will not be effective under these circumstances. A pledge of no-first-use by the United States would not signal any reduction in the commitment of the United States to the security of Japan. **Instead, by recognizing that nuclear weapons cannot deter most nonnuclear attacks, and by taking steps to acquire the conventional capabilities required to deter and respond to them, the security of both countries would be enhanced.**

Impact: Using nuclear weapons first would only risk harm

Ward, Alex. "This Is Exactly How a Nuclear War Would Kill You." Vox, 19 Oct. 2018, <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2018/10/19/17873822/nuclear-war-weapons-bombs-how-kill>.

But that may not be too comforting, says Alexandra Bell, a nuclear expert at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. "The chance is not zero because nuclear weapons exist," she says. And the damage would be incalculable; all it takes is just one strike to conceivably kill hundreds of thousands of people within minutes and perhaps millions more in the following days, weeks, and years. What's more, that first strike could trigger a series of events, leading to a widespread famine caused by a

rapidly cooling climate that could potentially end civilization as we know it. Below, then, is a guide to who has nuclear weapons, how they might be used, where they could drop in the future, what happens if they do — and if humanity could survive it.

Analysis: This is a good argument because it makes it seem far less important to invest in nuclear weaponry and rely on its usage to protect us. This means that at its best, this arguments can essentially make all arguments on the con non unique. At worst, it acts as significant mitigation to the con's impacts.

PRO: NFU decreases the odds of miscalculation

Argument: If the US is allowed to strike with nukes before anyone else, this would mean there are greater instances in which the US might miscalculate and launch a nuclear weapon unnecessarily.

Warrant: Right now we have the highest risk of miscalculation since the Cuban Crisis

Borger, Julian. "Nuclear Risk at Its Highest since Cuban Missile Crisis, Says Ex-Energy Secretary." The Guardian, 16 Feb. 2018. [www.theguardian.com, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/15/nuclear-weapons-ernest-moniz-accident-risk](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 US 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.

Warrant: Current tensions make miscalculation likely

Fetter, Steve, and Jon Wolfsthal. "No First Use and Credible Deterrence." Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, vol. 1, no. 1, Routledge, Jan. 2018, pp. 102–14. Taylor and Francis+NEJM, doi:10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257.

We are witnessing in real time how statements and veiled threats of nuclear use – “fire and fury such as the world has never seen” (Baker and Choe 2017) – can have lasting consequences. Statements by President Trump suggesting a willingness to use nuclear weapons first in a crisis with North Korea has exacerbated the risks of accidental nuclear escalation. But in even calmer times, such vague threats are ill advised. For example, US officials apparently believe that repeatedly stating or demonstrating America’s willingness and ability to use nuclear weapons in response to many kinds of nonnuclear threats can be reassuring. Japan might imagine that references to nuclear weapons use, such as an American president announcing that “all options are on the table” in response to nonnuclear options might deter China or North Korea from initiating a conventional attack and make war less likely. **But China and North Korea are well aware that the US has nuclear weapons; there is no need to make explicit threats.**

Warrant: First use would make it less likely to miscalculate

Gould, Joe. “Warren, Smith Introduce Bill to Bar US from Using Nuclear Weapons First.” Defense News, 30 Jan. 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/congress/2019/01/30/warren-smith-introduce-bill-to-bar-us-from-using-nuclear-weapons-first/>.

Because the Trump administration’s Nuclear Posture Review states the U.S. reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in “significant non-nuclear strategic attacks,” such as attacks on the U.S., its allies and its nuclear infrastructure, some lawmakers have criticized that policy as over-broad. **“Our current nuclear strategy is not just outdated—**

it is dangerous,” Smith and Warren said in a joint statement. **“By making clear that deterrence is the sole purpose of our arsenal, this bill would reduce the chances of a nuclear miscalculation and help us maintain our moral and diplomatic leadership in the world.”**

Impact: An accidental attack could kill millions in a day

Doyle, James E. “Why Eliminate Nuclear Weapons?” *Survival*, vol. 55, no. 1, Routledge, Mar. 2013, pp. 7–34. Taylor and Francis+NEJM, doi:10.1080/00396338.2013.767402.

It appears that the war scare that culminated with Able Archer 83 was a case of mutual intelligence failure and leadership misperception, shortcomings that remain all too frequent in the post-Cold War era. The fact that it happened 33 years after the beginning of a nuclear deterrent relationship between the United States and Soviet Union and brought the chance of nuclear war closer than at any time since the Cuban Missile Crisis is evidence against the so-called benefits of nuclear deterrence on national decision-making. What if there are no such benefits? **What if nuclear-armed nations are just as prone to stumbling into war or choosing to use military force as they were prior to the acquisition of nuclear weapons? The fundamental difference then would be the magnitude of risk carried by states that choose to rely on nuclear deterrence. If deterrence fails, millions, or even hundreds of millions of civilians can be killed in less than a day. Without nuclear weapons the consequences of military conflict, even between great powers, would not be nearly as severe.** Sustained use of conventional weapons can be devastating, and nuclear weapons could eventually be reconstituted and used, but the time needed for either to happen at least presents an opportunity to end hostilities before cities are destroyed.

Analysis: This is a good argument because the impact is gigantic. Just by reducing the number of instances we know we are allowed to use a nuclear weapon, we can reduce the risk that one is used accidentally. This is a simple link chain which is hard to rebut with an impact that has a very high magnitude and scope.

PRO: First use would kill innocent civilians

Argument: Using a nuclear weapon would kill millions of innocent civilians in its blast radius, making it morally unacceptable to ever use a nuclear weapon, first or in retaliation.

Warrant: Nuclear war is probable in the status quo

Seibold, James. "Escalating Chances for Nuclear Conflict as Geopolitical Instability Grows." AdVantageNEWS.Com, 17 Sept. 2020, https://www.advantagenews.com/opinion/escalating-chances-for-nuclear-conflict-as-geopolitical-instability-grows/article_53bb849c-a5fc-5800-836f-23bdb8d076b0.html.

As the years pass, the potential for nuclear confrontation increases. India, Pakistan, and China are developing more powerful weapons and have failed to develop measures to create even a limited amount of cooperation that will keep their geopolitical conflicts from developing into nuclear war. Both the United States and Russia have undermined the framework developed in the Cold War era to move conflict out of the sphere of nuclear weapons. In 2016, now-President Donald Trump tweeted the United States "must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability" and that we should "outmatch" and "outlast" other potential competitors in a nuclear arms race. To be fair, the trillion-dollar modernization of our nuclear weapons systems began under President Barack Obama. President Trump's top arms control negotiator, Marshall Billingsley, described the administration's approach: "we know how to win these (arms) races, and we know how to spend the adversary into oblivion ... If we have to, we will, but we sure would like to avoid it."

Warrant: Current standards for using nuclear weapons offer many opportunities

Fetter, Steve, and Jon Wolfsthal. "No First Use and Credible Deterrence." Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, vol. 1, no. 1, Routledge, Jan. 2018, pp. 102–14. Taylor and Francis+NEJM, doi:10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257.

The 2018 NPR, completed by the Trump Administration, made major changes to US declaratory nuclear policy, including steps that would increase the circumstances in which the United States would consider using nuclear weapons first (US Department of Defense, 2018). The new NPR reserves the right to use nuclear weapons first not only against nuclear weapon states in response to nonnuclear strategic attacks, but would also reserve the right to use nuclear weapons against nonnuclear weapon states.

Somewhat ironically, the new NPR also notes that potential adversaries must "not miscalculate regarding the consequences of nuclear first use, either regionally or against the United States itself. They must understand that there are no possible benefits from...limited nuclear escalation. Correcting any such misperceptions is now critical to maintaining strategic stability in Europe and Asia"

Warrant: The last time nuclear weapons were used, hundreds of thousands died

Biswas, Soutik. "Bells Toll to Mark 75 Years since Hiroshima Bomb." BBC News, 6 Aug. 2020. www.bbc.com, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53660059>.

But memorial events were scaled back this year because of the pandemic. **On 6 August 1945, a US bomber dropped the uranium bomb above the city, killing around 140,000 people.** Three days later a second nuclear weapon was dropped on Nagasaki. Two weeks later Japan surrendered, ending World War Two. Early on Thursday, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the mayor of Hiroshima joined bomb survivors and descendants in the city's Peace Park. The park is usually packed with thousands of

people for the anniversary, But attendance was significantly reduced this year, with chairs spaced apart and most attendees wearing masks.

Impact: A nuclear attack could kill hundreds of millions of people

Mizokami, Kyle. "Hundreds Of Millions Would Die In A Nuclear War. Could It Happen?"

The National Interest, The Center for the National Interest, 7 Feb. 2020,
<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/hundreds-millions-would-die-nuclear-war-could-it-happen-121006>.

While the threat of nuclear war between the United States and Soviet Union has ended, the United States now faces the prospect of a similar war with Russia or China. It is no exaggeration to say that for those who grew up during the Cold War, all-out nuclear war was "the ultimate nightmare." The prospect of an ordinary day interrupted by air-raid sirens, klaxons and the searing heat of a thermonuclear explosion was a very real, albeit remote, possibility. Television shows such as *The Day After* and *Threads* realistically portrayed both a nuclear attack and the gradual disintegration of society in the aftermath. **In an all-out nuclear attack, most of the industrialized world would have been bombed back to the Stone Age, with hundreds of millions killed outright and perhaps as many as a billion or more dying of radiation, disease and famine in the postwar period.**

Analysis: This is a good argument because it has a very simple link chain, which makes it very hard to respond to. The link chain is simply, that if we ever actually implement the policy being debated, it would be catastrophic. The impact is also enormous and easy to weigh, as it involves the lives of millions of innocent people.

PRO: First use would provoke nuclear war

Argument: Launching a nuclear weapon first would surely cause the attacked nation to respond with nuclear attacks of its own, possibly bringing the whole world into a nuclear war.

Warrant: 2020 is unusually high risk for nuclear war

Braut-Hegghammer, Målfrid. "Analysis | 2020 Is the Year to Worry about Nuclear Weapons." Washington Post, 6 Jan. 2020. [www.washingtonpost.com, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/01/06/is-year-worry-about-nuclear-weapons/](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. Technological advances will require adaptations in arms control frameworks. This year could show us the importance of multilateral approaches to curbing proliferation risks and nuclear arms races and illuminate why more should be done to preserve them. **The world will be more dangerous without the imperfect treaties we have to curb nuclear proliferation and arms races, increasing the risks that miscalculations lead to war and conflict.**

Warrant: Lack of NFU has lead the president to be more bold about attacking first

Fetter, Steve, and Jon Wolfsthal. "No First Use and Credible Deterrence." *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, vol. 1, no. 1, Routledge, Jan. 2018, pp. 102–14. Taylor and Francis+NEJM, doi:10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257.

One need look no further than today's headlines to see **how the lack of a no first use policy has increased the prospects for nuclear conflict. As with so many other things, President Donald Trump's rejection of accepted norms and codes of conduct is likely to significantly undermine America's historical position as a nonproliferation champion and already increasing the risks that nuclear weapons will be used.** The situation on the Korean peninsula in particular risks accidental or miscalculated first-use of nuclear weapons by North Korea and the United States, due to a lack of restraint and overreliance on nuclear ambiguity. As a candidate Donald Trump refused to rule out the first use of nuclear weapons by the United States (Sanger, 2016) and implied his willingness to initiate nuclear weapons' use against North Korea (Fifield and Wagner, 2017). Russia's stated willingness to initiate nuclear use in Europe (Tucker, 2017), combined with their military adventurism, remains a serious concern. The poor relations between the United States and Russia and the disparity in conventional and nuclear forces and doctrine fuel these dangers.

Warrant: NFU could reduce the odds of nuclear war

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

The most important goal for the United States today should be to prevent the use of nuclear weapons. Since the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 — the only use of nuclear weapons in warfare — it has established a nearly 74-year tradition of not using nuclear weapons. This tradition is the single most

important fact of the nuclear age. Today, the risks of nuclear war are increasing.

Heightened geopolitical tensions, a more complex calculus of deterrence in a multipolar nuclear world, renewed reliance on nuclear weapons, technological arms races in nuclear and non-nuclear systems, the collapse of arms control, and the return of nuclear brinkmanship have all resulted in highly dangerous deterrence policies that, through miscalculation or accident, could plunge the United States into a nuclear war with North Korea, Russia, or China. The nuclear-armed states urgently need to step back from this dangerous situation by adopting a no-first-use policy that would significantly reduce the risk of nuclear war.

Impact: Nuclear war could plunge the planet into nuclear winter

Ward, Alex. "This Is Exactly How a Nuclear War Would Kill You." Vox, 19 Oct. 2018, <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2018/10/19/17873822/nuclear-war-weapons-bombs-how-kill>.

In a nuclear war, cities and industrial areas would be targeted, thereby producing tons of smoke as they burn. Some of that smoke would make it into the stratosphere — above the weather — where it would stay for years because there's no rain to wash it out. That smoke would expand around the world as it heats up, blocking out sunlight over much of Earth. As a result, the world would experience colder temperatures and less precipitation, depleting much of the globe's agricultural output. That, potentially, would lead to widespread famine in a matter of years. The impact on the world, however, depends on the amount of rising smoke. While scientists' models and estimates vary, it's believed that around 5 million to 50 millions tons of black smoke could lead to a so-called "nuclear autumn," while 50 million to 150 millions tons of black smoke might plunge the world into a "nuclear winter." If the latter scenario came to pass, Robock told me, "almost everybody on the planet would die."

Analysis: This is a good argument because the impact is probably the biggest impact humanly imaginable. Nothing comes close to mattering as much as the destruction of all of the human race. This means that in a round when you run this argument, your opponents will have no choice but to make this argument the focus of the round.

PRO: First use would isolate the US from allies

Argument: If the US were to attack first, it would lose the support of many of our closest allies.

Warrant: First use would isolate us from our allies

Tierny, John. "No First Use: Frequently Asked Questions." Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, <https://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/no-first-use/no-first-use-frequently-asked-questions/>. Accessed 2 Oct. 2020.

"Sole purpose" refers to a commitment only to use nuclear weapons to deter nuclear attacks. This means that U.S. nuclear forces would not be used to deter conventional, chemical, biological, or cyber attacks. Current policy as set out in this Administration's Nuclear Posture Review would allow the United States to use nuclear weapons in "...extreme circumstances to defend the United States, its allies, and partners."

Declaring sole purpose would clarify what nuclear weapons are for. **The United States' conventional force is robust and capable, and Washington does not need to resort to using nuclear weapons first.** In fact, being the first to use a nuclear weapon would be exceptionally risky. **The chance that a nuclear first strike by the United States would escalate to an all-out nuclear war is unacceptably high. A nuclear exchange could threaten the security of U.S. allies, and being the first to use such a destructive weapon could leave the United States politically isolated.**

Warrant: Trump's nuclear policies have already isolated the US

Greenberg, Leah. "Donald Trump Is a National Security Risk. Here's the Current #TrumpThreatLevel." Indivisible, 12 Oct. 2018,

<https://indivisible.org/resource/donald-trump-national-security-risk-here%E2%80%99s-current-trumphreatlevel>.

Trump announced this week that the United States would recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. This was a reckless move that isolates the United States from allies, threatens chances for successful peace talks, and raises the risk of tension and violence in the region. **The Trump administration took two other steps that further isolated us from our allies and eroded international norms. The Pentagon changed its policy and decided to embrace cluster munitions, a weapons system that has been banned by the global community.** The administration also pulled the United States out of a United Nations project to create more humane conditions for immigrants and refugees.

Warrant: Historically, US strikes have isolated us from allies

Bienkov, Adam. "The United States' Main Allies Are Abandoning Trump over His 'dangerous Escalation' with Iran." Business Insider, 4 Jan. 2020, <https://www.businessinsider.com/us-allies-response-trump-iran-qasem-soleimani-attack-alone-world-2020-1>.

US allies on Friday warned against any further escalation of the conflict with Iran following President Donald Trump's decision to authorize the assassination of Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani late Thursday. The airstrike, which was reportedly launched without consulting US allies, led to warnings from several European nations, with only Israel speaking out strongly in favor of Trump's decision. The global reaction to the attack has revealed the US as increasingly isolated on the world stage. Among the first to react was the United Kingdom, historically the closest ally of the United States. The foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, said in a statement on Friday that conflict with Iran "is in none of our interests" and urged "all parties to de-escalate." Raab's predecessor Jeremy Hunt told the BBC on Saturday that Trump was engaging in an

"increasingly dangerous game of chicken" with Iran, with both sides doing "increasingly extreme things." The attack risks damaging relations between the two countries. Tom Tugendhat, Raab's Conservative Party colleague and the chair of Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, told the BBC that "the purpose of having allies is that we can surprise our enemies and not each other."

Impact: Our alliances are key for global security

Terry, Bruce Klingner, Jung H. Pak, and Sue Mi. "Trump Shakedowns Are Threatening Two Key US Alliances in Asia." Brookings, 18 Dec. 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/12/18/trump-shakedowns-are-threatening-two-key-u-s-alliances-in-asia/>.

Alliances are not valued in dollars and cents, and American service members are not mercenaries. Excessive U.S. monetary demands degrade alliances based on shared principles and goals into mere transactional relationships. Trump's actions are at odds with his administration's strong advocacy of alliances, as detailed in the National Security and National Defense Strategies. Those documents stress how alliances magnify U.S. power, extend American influence and form the "backbone of global security." Trump's demands also run counter to the strong congressional and public support for these Asian alliances. Cost-sharing negotiations are always contentious, but the current circumstances are especially fraught. The administration has made excessive demands in a combative manner, needlessly straining relations with Seoul just as North Korea is growing more bellicose. This is a time when allies should be standing shoulder to shoulder, not bickering over money.

Analysis: This is a good argument because the impact can basically be as big and diverse as you want it to be. US alliances provide us the capacity to do so much on the international scene

that saves countless lives. To make this argument more dynamic, try to focus in on a few of these advantages of our alliances in particular.

PRO: First-use is undemocratic

Argument: The United States' refusal to reject first use is undemocratic

Warrant: Nuclear first use grants unilateral control to the president.

Drozdenko, Tara. "U.S. nuclear policy is undemocratic." The Baltimore Sun. 3/26/19.

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/op-ed/bs-ed-op-0327-first-use-20190320-story.html>

The president can order a nuclear attack at any time. He doesn't have to give a reason to anybody. He doesn't have to consult with anybody. He doesn't need anyone else's consent. He just needs to make a phone call and read off some authorization codes. It's very simple, really. These specific procedures were developed during the Kennedy administration, though Harry Truman was the first one to assert presidential control over nuclear weapons.

For nearly 75 years, Americans have lived with this arrangement. One person has the authority to end the world. There are no checks and balances on this particular presidential power. This has caused more angst lately because the current president sometimes uses Twitter to taunt other foreign leaders and brags about the size of his nuclear button. But the truth is, it has always been a scary situation. And, it has always been fundamentally undemocratic.

So, why do we do things this way? And, can we change it?

Example: Lack of checks and balances give President Trump the green light to launch at will.

Moore, Colleen. "The Case for a No-First-Use Policy." The Geopolitics. 12/5/18.

<https://thegeopolitics.com/the-case-for-a-no-first-use-policy/>

In fact, having the option to launch a nuclear first strike actually increases the likelihood of worsening conflicts, while a no-first-use policy is in U.S. national security interests. Further, this shift would not reduce the U.S. ability to deter a nuclear attack; the U.S. would not only be able to endure a massive nuclear attack but would have remaining nuclear forces capable of fighting back against an aggressor.

Keeping a nuclear first strike as an option increases the chance of miscalculation or misjudgment. **No leader should have to be in a position to make the decision to launch a first strike based on false information. In the United States, the process to launch a nuclear weapon is anti-democratic and there are currently no checks and balances on this power. Especially with someone like Donald Trump at the helm of the United States' nuclear arsenal and the future leadership of the country unclear, a no-first-use policy is needed.**

Uniqueness: First Use circumvents the will of the people, making it particularly pernicious.

Drozdenko, Tara. "U.S. nuclear policy is undemocratic." The Baltimore Sun. 3/26/19.

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/op-ed/bs-ed-op-0327-first-use-20190320-story.html>

Critics will argue that no first-use policies are just words. A country could still choose to use nuclear weapons first even if it says it won't. And, policies change with new administrations. A more substantial reassurance for other countries would be to codify into law that Congress must give approval for any first-use of nuclear weapons.

We can and should change the system. **Presidents have asserted authority over nuclear weapons from the beginning, and the infrastructure is set up to support their control. But it's dangerous and undemocratic. And in a first-use scenario, it's unconstitutional. The American people deserve a full display of their representative form of**

government, complete with checks and balances, even — and especially — when it comes to nuclear weapons.

Impact: Rogue presidents do not need to consider the will of the people and can trigger nuclear war at the drop of a hat.

Blair, Bruce and Wolfsthal, Jon. “Trump can launch nuclear weapons whenever he wants, with or without Mattis.” The Washington Post. 12/23/18.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2018/12/23/trump-can-launch-nuclear-weapons-whenever-he-wants-with-or-without-mattis/>

Even informed observers are surprised to learn the president can order the use of nuclear weapons without the input — or consent — of the secretaries of Defense or State, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the vice president. They only have a role in the presidential launch protocol if the president has given prior approval for them to be notified and solicits their advice. Otherwise, none of these people would need to be involved or informed that the president has decided to use a nuclear weapon.

Under standard procedure, an attempt would be made to contact key national security officials, but in some real-world and exercise scenarios, it has proven impossible to tie them into a quickly convened emergency teleconference. Should he wish, the president could exclude all of them, and even bypass the primary designated adviser — the four-star general in charge of U.S. strategic forces — by ordering a low-ranking on-duty emergency operations officer at the Pentagon or elsewhere to transmit a launch order directly to the executing commanders of strategic U.S. submarines, silo-based missiles and bombers.

Trump could have learned all this in a briefing about nuclear weapons shortly after he took office, and his military aide, ever at his side, could explain and assist in issuing a direct order to a lower-level officer at any time.

Even if Mattis had been with Trump at a time of nuclear crisis, his resignation letter drives home the fact that Trump might very well have simply ignored his counsel.

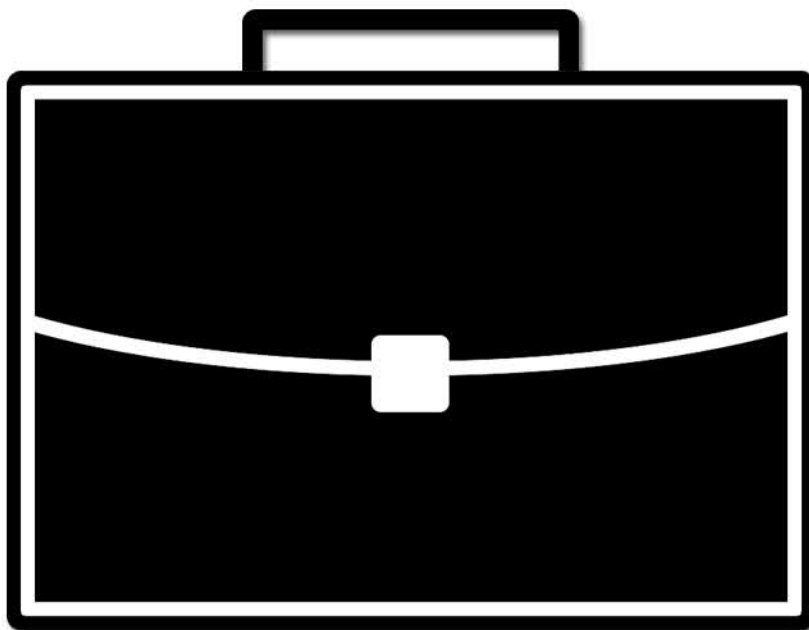
Trump, as he is proving in stark terms, listens only to himself. And any attempt by another person to physically block the president from issuing a launch order would probably result in his or her removal by the Secret Service. It is delusional and fundamentally undemocratic to think that our strongest check on a president bent on initiating nuclear war without justifiable cause might be a defense secretary trying to keep the president from communicating his launch authority using the so-called Gold Codes

Analysis: At the point where the U.S. president can circumvent the normal procedures for war, by unilaterally starting a nuclear war, first-use clearly does not follow the typical democratic conventions with regards to warfare. With a full nuclear arsenal at his hands, President Trump does not need to consider the will of the people before striking – he is able to launch at will, which ignores the right of the American people to be heard when the country decides whether to go to war.

Champion Briefs

Nov/Dec 2020

Public Forum Brief



Pro Responses to
Con Arguments

A/2: No First Use increases chance of unconventional warfare

Delink: No First Use doesn't eliminate U.S. deterrence.

Warrant: The U.S. is the top military power in the world.

Norman, Greg. "The 5 Most Powerful Armies in the World." Military.Com, 24 Feb. 2020, www.military.com/daily-news/2020/02/24/5-most-powerful-armies-world.html.

In what shouldn't be a surprise, **the U.S. "retains its top spot as the undisputed military power in the world,"** Global Firepower says. **America has more air units than any other country on Earth**, with 2,085 fighters, 967 attack helicopters, 945 transports and 742 special mission aircraft. The U.S. also leads the world with 39,253 armored vehicles, 91 Navy destroyers, and 20 aircraft carriers. It has an estimated 1,400,000 active personnel. Washington has allocated \$750 billion to the U.S. military budget in 2020.

Warrant: The U.S. navy is the best in the world.

Mizokami, Kyle. "These 5 Nations Have The World's Most Powerful Armies, Navies, And Air Forces." The National Interest, 1 Jan. 2020, nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/these-5-nations-have-worlds-most-powerful-armies-navies-and-air-forces-110101.

First place on the list is no surprise: the United States Navy. **The U.S. Navy has the most ships by far of any navy worldwide. It also has the greatest diversity of missions and the largest area of responsibility. No other navy has the global reach of the U.S. Navy**, which regularly operates in the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans, as well as the

Mediterranean, Persian Gulf and the Horn of Africa. The U.S. Navy also forward deploys ships to Japan, Europe and the Persian Gulf.

Analysis: This response severely mitigates the magnitude of con's impact. As the most powerful military in the world, the U.S. will always have incredible deterrence — especially when it comes to conventional warfare.

Answer: No First Use would reduce the chance of miscalculation.

Warrant: No First Use would reduce the chance of miscalculation by alleviating concerns about a US nuclear first-strike.

Reif, Kingston. "Rethink Oldthink on No First Use." Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 29 Aug. 2016, thebulletin.org/2016/08/rethink-oldthink-on-no-first-use/. Accessed 10 Oct. 2020.

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

Warrant: No First Use reduces the risk of accidental nuclear escalation.

Fetter, Steve, and Jon Wolfsthal. "No First Use and Credible Deterrence." *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2 Jan. 2018, pp. 102–114, 10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257.
<https://cisssm.umd.edu/sites/default/files/2019-08/2018-jpnd-nfu.pdf>

Nuclear weapons are not an effective deterrent against nonnuclear attack because there are few if any scenarios in which a US threat to use nuclear weapons first in response to non-nuclear aggression against the United States or its allies would be credible. **The benefits of adopting a policy of no first use include reducing the risks of accidental nuclear escalation or nuclear use from miscalculation,** as well as supporting nonproliferation and disarmament efforts.

Analysis: This response can be weighed on timeframe as a prerequisite. If there's less miscalculation in a world with No First Use, there is less likely to be a conflict in the first place that leads to conventional war.

A/2: No First Use would embolden North Korea

Delink: North Korea would never attack the U.S.

Warrant: Attacking the U.S. would result in North Korea's obliteration.

Schwarz, Jon. "We Can Stop North Korea From Attacking Us. All We Have to Do Is Not Attack Them." The Intercept, 14 Aug. 2017, theintercept.com/2017/08/14/we-can-stop-north-korea-from-attacking-us-all-we-have-to-do-is-not-attack-them/.

NORTH KOREA IS not going to launch a first strike on America or its allies with nuclear weapons. To understand this, you don't need to know anything about the history of U.S.-North Korea relations, or the throw weight of intercontinental ballistic missiles, or even where North Korea is. All you need to know is human history. And history says that **small, poor, weak countries tend not to start wars with gigantic, wealthy, powerful countries — especially when doing so will obviously result in their obliteration.** So what exactly is the "crisis" involving North Korea?

Warrant: Un would not voluntarily give up his weapons unless attacked first.

Bandow, Doug. "Why North Korea Needs Its Nukes." Foreign Policy, 26 June 2020, foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/26/north-korea-nuclear-weapons-korean-war-deterrence/.

From Pyongyang's perspective, its arsenal allows several forms of protection. First, it removes any possibility of Washington launching a preventive war to eliminate the North's nuclear program. Some war advocates contend that North Korea could be prevented from retaliating or persuaded not to do so, but trusting hope over experience in this way is far too risky. Second, even conventional U.S. intervention in any Korean

conflict would become problematic. **If Washington threatened Pyongyang with defeat, the North Korean leadership would have little reason not to threaten nuclear attacks on the American homeland. The threat to incinerate American cities almost certainly would be sufficient to force Washington to back away from the peninsula.**

Why, then, would Kim yield his weapons voluntarily? U.S. policymakers talk of making North Korea believe it is less secure with nukes than without them. But none of the arguments advanced seems vaguely plausible. The United States' ruthless approach to regimes on Washington's naughty list—most notably Libya's Muammar

Analysis: This response can be weighed on probability. The likelihood that Un would attack the U.S. first — almost certainly leading to North Korea's obliteration — is very small. It is more likely that the risk of miscalculation would go down if the U.S. adopted a No First Use policy.

Nonunique: Trump has already emboldened North Korea.

Warrant: Trump's reelection battle and impeachment have emboldened Un.

Smith, Josh. "North Korea, Emboldened by Trump Peril and Chinese Allies, Tries Harder Line." U.S., Reuters, Nov. 2019, www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa-analysis/north-korea-emboldened-by-trump-peril-and-chinese-allies-tries-harder-line-idUSKBN1XB3FC.

'NOT SO PROMISING' Trump's reelection battle and the impeachment inquiry against him may have led Kim to overestimate North Korea's leverage, said one diplomat in Seoul, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the negotiations. "It looks like Kim has a serious delusion that he is capable of helping or ruining Trump's reelection, but no one in Pyongyang can stand up to the unerring leader and say he's mistaken — you don't want to be dead," the diplomat told Reuters. "And

Trump is all Kim has. In order to denuclearize, Kim needs confidence that Trump will be reelected.”

Warrant: Trump’s ambiguity has increased the risk of miscalculation.

Fetter, Steve, and Jon Wolfsthal. “No First Use and Credible Deterrence.” *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2 Jan. 2018, pp. 102–114, 10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257>

As with so many other things, President Donald Trump’s rejection of accepted norms and codes of conduct is likely to significantly undermine America’s historical position as a nonproliferation champion and already increasing the risks that nuclear weapons will be used. **The situation on the Korean peninsula in particular risks accidental or miscalculated first-use of nuclear weapons by North Korea and the United States, due to a lack of restraint and overreliance on nuclear ambiguity.** As a candidate Donald Trump refused to rule out the first use of nuclear weapons by the United States (Sanger, 2016) and implied his willingness to initiate nuclear weapons’ use against North Korea (Fifield and Wagner, 2017).

Analysis: This response can be weighed on magnitude. Trump’s unpredictable nature and fiery rhetoric will have more of an impact on Un’s decision calculus than a No First Use policy that most would not even see as credible. The damage has already been done.

A/2: Would weaken the U.S. in face of chemical, biological, & cyberattacks

Turn: Retaliating with nuclear weapons would only escalate the situation.

Warrant: No attack would be worth the cost of nuclear war.

O'Hanlon, Michael E. "In Support of Nuclear No First Use." Brookings, 19 Aug. 2016, www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2016/08/19/in-support-of-nuclear-no-first-use/.

First, a word is in order on conventional military scenarios. Aren't there cases in which the United States might need to use nuclear weapons against an enemy's conventional attack—just as we feared during the Cold War, if the Soviet Union attacked a European ally, for example. **In today's world, though, and in foreseeable cases, any such attack—by, say, Russia or China on, say, Poland or Japan—would be either defeatable by American and allied conventional response or not worth the costs of a nuclear war, or both.** In a number of hypothetical conflicts near Chinese or Russian borders, should the United States and allies lose a battle, they would be better advised to strengthen their defenses in order to prevent further losses while also patiently preparing a military countermove (and applying strong economic sanctions in the meantime). Of course, more can be said on this but I believe that is the correct bottom line.

Warrant: Retaliating with nuclear weapons would be seen as disproportionate.

Holdren, John P. "The Overwhelming Case for No First Use." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 76, no. 1, 2 Jan. 2020, pp. 3–7, 10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277>

As for defeating such attacks, it's hard to envision circumstances where nuclear weapons would be of any use, except for pre-emptive strikes against deeply buried chemical and biological weapons storage or manufacturing sites. In the case of deeply buried sites, the world would almost surely see using nuclear weapons to attack them pre-emptively as disproportionate, leading to universal condemnation. **Retaliating with nuclear weapons against chemical or biological weapons use (in the subset of cases where the source was clear) would likewise almost certainly be seen as disproportionate.** Indeed, the disproportionality aspect makes it so unlikely that any US president would order either a pre-emptive or retaliatory nuclear attack in the chemical and biological weapons context that including the option in declaratory policy seems perverse, given the downsides of doing so.

Analysis: This turn can be weighed on magnitude. If the U.S. was tempted to respond to a biological, chemical, or cyber attack with nuclear weapons, it would almost certainly prompt further retaliation and lead to nuclear war — having catastrophic effects and leading to the most loss of life.

Delink: A No First Use policy doesn't change U.S. deterrence.

Warrant: There are few scenarios where a nuclear response to non-nuclear aggression would be credible

Fetter, Steve, and Jon Wolfsthal. "No First Use and Credible Deterrence." *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2 Jan. 2018, pp. 102–114, 10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257>

We review the evolution of US nuclear strategy and assesses the prospects for establishing a policy of no first use. A no first use policy would in no way reduce

deterrence of nuclear attack against the United States or its allies. **Nuclear weapons are not an effective deterrent against non-nuclear attack because there are few if any scenarios in which a US threat to use nuclear weapons first in response to non-nuclear aggression against the United States or its allies would be credible.** The benefits of adopting a policy of no first use include reducing the risks of accidental nuclear escalation or nuclear use from miscalculation, as well as supporting nonproliferation and disarmament efforts.

Warrant: There is little evidence to suggest nuclear weapons are effective in deterring non-nuclear attacks.

Global Zero. “No First Use FAQs.” Global Zero, 2019, www.globalzero.org/no-first-use-faqs/.

There exists no plausible circumstance in which the use of a nuclear weapon would be in the national security interests of the United States, American people, or US allies. A nuclear counterattack following a US first strike would be catastrophic, resulting in the deaths of millions of Americans and the total devastation of economic and social infrastructure. **Any first use against lesser threats, such as countries or terrorist groups with chemical and biological weapons, would be gratuitous; there are very effective alternative means of countering those threats. There is little evidence to suggest nuclear weapons are effective in deterring non-nuclear attacks, including biological and chemical use.** If the United States suffered a non-nuclear attack, it is difficult to imagine any president considering using nuclear weapons — destroying entire cities and killing hundreds of thousands of people, damaging the environment for generations, spreading deadly radiation possibly to uninvolved countries — in retaliation.

Analysis: This argument can be used as a delink and weighed on probability. If a cyber, biological, or chemical attack is not any more likely in the con world, it seems impractical to

choose policy based on the most extreme possible scenario. Instead, we should look to the benefits of No First Use in reducing the likelihood of conflict in the first place.

A/2: Other countries would develop their own nuclear weapons

Turn: No First Use is a step toward global nuclear disarmament.

Warrant: No First Use is an aspirational goal for all nuclear weapons states.

Panda, Ankit. “‘No First Use’ and Nuclear Weapons.” Council on Foreign Relations, July 17 2018, www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/no-first-use-and-nuclear-weapons.

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.

Warrant: No First Use would better contribute to U.S. non-proliferation policy objectives.

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

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 to US nuclear non-proliferation objectives.”**²⁹ A multilateral NFU pledge would have even more benefits. It would move Russia and Pakistan away from their high-risk doctrines and reduce a source of Russia-NATO tensions. A common NFU policy would help anchor the existing NFU policies of China and India and implicitly acknowledge their leadership in this area, a virtue when middle-power states are feeling disenfranchised from the global nuclear order.

Analysis: This argument can be weighed on timeframe. In the long-term, the only way to move toward a nuclear free world is to take policy positions like No First Use. Otherwise, a nuclear arms race will continue indefinitely.

Turn: No First Use prevents U.S. adversaries from building nuclear weapons programs.

Warrant: The potential for first use leads U.S. adversaries to upgrade their nuclear forces.

Holdren, John P. “The Overwhelming Case for No First Use.” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 76, no. 1, 2 Jan. 2020, pp. 3–7, 10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277

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.

Warrant: No First Use would reduce the incentives for adversaries to improve their nuclear forces.

Holdren, John P. "The Overwhelming Case for No First Use." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 76, no. 1, 2 Jan. 2020, pp. 3–7, 10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277

It would also render unnecessary the continuous striving to develop and deploy nuclear capabilities that would make US nuclear first use against a nuclear-armed adversary advantageous and therefore credible. **No longer striving for such advantage – which is very probably unattainable in any case – would reduce incentives for nuclear armed adversaries to seek to improve their own nuclear forces as a hedge against US gaining a first-use advantage.** As recently argued in a powerful analysis by Steve Fetter and Jon Wolfsthal (2018), moreover, A no first use policy would in no way reduce deterrence of nuclear attack against the United States or its allies. [And] nuclear weapons are not an effective deterrent against non-nuclear attack because there are few if any scenarios in which a US threat to use nuclear weapons first in response to non-nuclear aggression against the United States or its allies would be credible.

Analysis: This turn can be weighed on magnitude. It's a bigger impact for adversaries like Russia and China to be building nuclear weapons programs than for allies, who will probably never utilize nuclear weapons, to be building similar programs.

A/2: Allies would lose confidence in the U.S. security umbrella

Turn: A No First Use policy would make allies safer by decreasing the likelihood of nuclear conflict.

Warrant: No First Use would decrease the chance of miscalculation.

Saradzhyan, Simon. "The Future of U.S. Nuclear Policy: The Case for No First Use." Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Feb. 2011, www.belfercenter.org/publication/future-us-nuclear-policy-case-no-first-use.

For the United States and its allies, NFU has several military and political benefits. First, **it would enhance crisis stability. A credible NFU policy would help decrease an opponent's trepidations about a U.S. first strike, thereby reducing the possibility that nuclear weapons are used accidentally, inadvertently, or deliberately in a severe crisis.** Second, NFU would give the United States a consistent and inherently credible nuclear policy. Although some states might question U.S. political resolve to use nuclear weapons first, adversaries cannot dismiss the possibility of a nuclear response after U.S. interests have been attacked with nuclear weapons. The threat to use nuclear weapons 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.

Warrant: Adversaries use "use-it-or-lose-it thinking" when there's no first use.

Union of Concerned Scientists. "No First Use Explained | Union of Concerned Scientists." www.Ucsusa.Org, 7 May 2020, www.ucsusa.org/resources/no-first-use-explained.

There are many reasons why retaining the option of using nuclear weapons first is dangerous for the United States. If the president decided to cross the threshold and use nuclear weapons first against a nuclear-armed adversary (Russia, China, or North Korea), those countries would almost certainly retaliate with nuclear weapons, either directly against the US or against its allies. Maintaining a first-use option therefore increases the chance of a catastrophic attack against the US public. In addition, **if a nuclear-armed adversary is concerned that the United States might use nuclear weapons first in a crisis, that could increase the adversary's incentive to go nuclear first because of "use-it-or-lose-it" thinking—that is, the fear that if the US attacked first it might wipe out the adversary's nuclear arsenal.** This kind of thinking creates pressure to use these weapons before they are lost.

Analysis: This argument can be weighed on timeframe as a prerequisite. If No First Use decreases the chance of conflict ever happening in the first place, there's not as much need for a U.S. security umbrella.

Mitigation: The U.S. nuclear umbrella would still exist and provide a deterrent effect, even under No First Use.

Warrant: The U.S. nuclear umbrella would not be withdrawn under No First Use.

Holdren, John P. "The Overwhelming Case for No First Use." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 76, no. 1, 2 Jan. 2020, pp. 3–7, 10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277>

The argument that Germany, Japan, and South Korea would necessarily resist and resent a US shift to a no-first-use policy and posture – and indeed might be propelled into acquiring their own nuclear deterrent – is questionable. **First of all, nobody is**

proposing that the US nuclear umbrella deterring nuclear threats or attacks against US allies would be withdrawn under no first use. To misunderstand this reality is to conflate the two forms of extension in the term “extended deterrence”: extension of the nuclear umbrella to protect allies, as opposed to extension to cover nonnuclear threats. It’s the latter form of extended deterrence, extension to non-nuclear threats, that would be renounced under no first use. The United States should be crystal clear in reassuring its allies – and reminding potential adversaries – on this point.

Warrant: Allies should see No First Use as an expression of confidence in the military.

Holdren, John P. “The Overwhelming Case for No First Use.” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 76, no. 1, 2 Jan. 2020, pp. 3–7, 10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277>

(The Cold War saying that “the towns in Germany are two kilotons apart” is relevant here.) And Japan’s leaders would do well to consider the direction the fallout would travel if the United States attacked North Korea with nuclear weapons. Third, **US allies should see a declaration of no first use as an expression of this country’s confidence in the capabilities of its conventional forces to deter or defeat any non-nuclear threat from a state adversary.** (Non-state adversaries, of course, may not be deterrable.) And, if US allies are thinking clearly, they will conclude that the US pledge to come to their defense if they are attacked is actually more believable by all concerned if it based on defending them with conventional rather than nuclear forces.

Analysis: This response can be used to severely mitigate the argument. The U.S. promise to back up allies still exists even without the possibility of dropping a nuclear bomb first. As the strongest military in the world, the U.S. would still be more than capable of providing a strong security umbrella for its allies around the world.

A/2: Alternatives Don't Work – Sanctions

Answer: Sanctions DO work

Warrant: Sanctions worked in Libya

Masters, Jonathan. "What Are Economic Sanctions?" Council on Foreign Relations.

Council on Foreign Relations, 08 Apr. 2015. Web. 07 Dec. 2015.

<<http://www.cfr.org/sanctions/economic-sanctions/p36259>>.

“Meanwhile, experts cite several best practices in developing sanctions policy: Develop a well-rounded approach. An effective strategy often links punitive measures, like sanctions and the threat of military action, with positive inducements, like financial aid.

Some point to the Libya strategy adopted by the United States and its allies in the late 1990s and early 2000s that balanced diplomatic carrots and sticks to persuade then-Libyan President Muammar al-Qaddafi to forswear WMDs and stop supporting terrorism.”

Warrant: Sanctions impose serious economic costs, example Russia

Rankin, Jennifer. "As Tensions in Ukraine Mount, Could Tougher Sanctions against Russia

Work?" Theguardian.com. Guardian News and Media, 05 May 2014. Web.

<<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/04/tensions-ukraine-mount-sanctions-russia-work>>.

The effects [of sanctions] would cascade down the economy, as banks and firms struggled to raise funds to roll over debts worth \$193bn that need to be refinanced this year. "If they can't refinance then it means higher interest rates, it means less investment, it means less and less growth, and more capital flight and pressure on the

rouble," said Timothy Ash of Standard Bank. This scenario spells deeper pain for an economy already hurting. Despite Putin's drive to stop wealthy Russians squirrelling away their riches in foreign countries, the country has been hemorrhaging capital. Almost \$64bn was moved out in the first three months of 2014, as much as in the whole of 2013. Since the start of the year, stock markets have lost 14% of their value and the rouble is down 8% against the dollar. Russia's credit rating has been downgraded to one notch above junk and growth is expected to stall completely this year. This for a population used to average annual growth as high as 7% in Putin's first two terms.

Analysis: This block shows tangible examples of when sanctions have been used for concrete policy objectives, weakening the case for nuclear strength.

Answer: There are other non-nuclear options such as naming and shaming

Warrant: Naming and shaming has been shown to increase human rights outcomes

Amanda Murdie, Kansas State University. "Shaming and Blaming: Using Event Data to Assess the Impact of Human Rights INGOs". International Studies Quarterly. 2012.

<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.mutex.gmu.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=8ce1663b-cd42-47bb-82fc-170405d0a457%40sessionmgr112&vid=1&hid=106>

It is important to note the importance of Indirect Targeting on increasing the impact of HRO shaming. However, HRO Presence (ln), as expected, does amplify this effect. As mentioned, this is as expected by Risse and Sikkink (1999) when they highlight the necessity of continued international attention. One way of illustrating this is by considering the impact of various values of Indirect Targeting and HRO Presence (ln) on changing the probability of Improvements in CIRI Physical Integrity Rights as HRO Shaming moves from its minimum to its maximum value in the sample. **As HRO Shaming**

changes from its minimum to its maximum value in the sample, with Indirect Targeting at its maximum value but HRO Presence (ln) at its minimum, there is an increase in the probability of improvement in the state's physical integrity rights by 86.4% (95% confidence interval (CI) from 39.0% to 99.9%). However, when both Indirect Targeting and HRO Presence (ln) are at their maximum values in the data set, a similar increase in HRO Shaming will increase the probability of improvement in the state's physical integrity rights by 94.2% (95% CI 62.7% to 99.9%).

Quantification: Naming and shaming has a quantifiable increase in coercive power

DeMeritt (University of North Texas). "International Organizations and Government Killing: Does Naming and Shaming Save Lives?" 10.1080/03050629.2012.726180. Accessed 12-17-15. Published 2012.
<http://lu4ld3lr5v.scholar.serialssolutions.com/?sid=google&auinit=JHR&aualast=DeMeritt&atitle=International+Organizations+and+Government+Killing:+Does+Naming+and+Shaming+Save+Lives%3F&id=doi:10.1080/03050629.2012.726180&title=International+interactions&volume=38&issue=5&date=2012&spage=597&issn=0305-0629>

Figure 1 shows the relationship between HRO shaming and the probability of killing in the top panel, and the relationship between HRO shaming and the predicted natural log of civilian death tolls on the bottom. In both graphs, the solid black line captures the mean probability of killing, while the dashed lines represent a 95% confidence interval. In the top panel, the negative trend suggests that as HROs increasingly publicize atrocities, the targeted state is decreasingly likely to experience government killing. **In this sample, the likelihood of killing in the absence of HRO shaming is 14%, with a 95% confidence interval of (0.13, 0.15). Introducing an average level of shaming drops that likelihood to 12% (0.115, 0.125). From there, the decline in the likelihood of killing is**

exponential. Ultimately, a three-standard deviation increase above average HRO shaming corresponds to a 0.04% likelihood of killing (0.039, 0.049). In this sample, five HRO shaming events reduce the probability that civilians lose their lives to less than one half of 1%.

Analysis: This argument circumvents the pro's point by saying there are other nonviolent alternatives to sanctions. As long as there are any alternatives to nuclear first use, including naming and shaming, we should prioritize those.

A/2: NFU Harms Deterrence

Warrant : Deterrence is not agreed upon to be effective

Peter Rudolf, 11-10-2018, "US Nuclear Deterrence Policy and Its Problems," German Institute for International and Security Affairs. 10 Nov. 2018. Web. 6 Oct 2020. <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/us-nuclear-deterrence-policy-and-its-problems/>

Nuclear deterrence is a construct in which as-sumptions play a fundamental role – hypotheses that lack an empirical basis.¹⁰¹ Thus, a central ques-tion, namely that of credibility, has been answered differ-ently for decades: Some believe that deterrent threats against a nuclear-armed opponent such as Russia can only be credible if the United States has the widest possible range of graduated options and escalation dominance. Others believe that, in a situa-tion of mutual vulnerability, it is sufficiently dis-suasive that a military confrontation entails incalculable escalatory risks that are hard to control.¹⁰² From the first viewpoint, which has shaped US nuclear doctrine, a variety of options are needed. In this sense, nuclear weapons are weapons of war-fighting – and not, as occasionally heard in Euro-pean debates, “political weapons of deterrence”. **Those who tend towards the second perspective conceive of deterrence foremost as a “competition in risk-taking”.** It is particularly important to use conventional forces to prevent a potential adversary from rapidly changing the military status quo and to confront him with the risk of entering a process with a potentially catastrophic outcome. In this sense, the credibility of extended deterrence rests not on the diversity of nuclear options, but on the political determination to take risks for the defence of allies. **As these competing perspectives show, nuclear deterrence remains a highly speculative endeavour.**

Warrant: Nuclear Deterrence is a myth- historical present (USSR)

David P, 1-14-2018, "Nuclear deterrence is a myth. And a lethal one at that," Guardian.
1/14/2018. Web. 10/4/2020.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/14/nuclear-deterrence-myth-lethal-david-barash>

Advocates of nuclear deterrence insist that we should thank it for the fact that a third world war has been avoided, even when tensions between the two superpowers – the US and the USSR – ran high. Some supporters even maintain that deterrence set the stage for the fall of the Soviet Union and the defeat of Communism. In this telling, the West's nuclear deterrent prevented the USSR from invading western Europe, and delivered the world from the threat of Communist tyranny. **There are, however, compelling arguments suggesting that the US and the former Soviet Union avoided world war for several possible reasons, most notably because neither side wanted to go to war.** Indeed, the US and Russia never fought a war prior to the nuclear age. **Singling out nuclear weapons as the reason why the Cold War never became hot is somewhat like saying that a junkyard car, without an engine or wheels, never sped off the lot only because no one turned the key. Logically speaking, there is no way to demonstrate that nuclear weapons kept the peace during the Cold War, or that they do so now.**

Warrant: Deterrence is a myth- broad historical analysis proves this untrue

David Baras, 1-17-2018, "The Deterrence Myth," Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. 17 Jan. 2018. Web. 6 Oct. 2020. <https://www.wagingpeace.org/the-deterrence-myth/>

Even when possessed by just one side, nuclear weapons have not deterred other forms of war. The Chinese, Cuban, Iranian and Nicaraguan revolutions all took place even though a nuclear-armed US backed the overthrown governments. Similarly, the US lost the Vietnam War, just as the Soviet Union lost in Afghanistan, despite both countries not only possessing nuclear weapons, but also more and better conventional arms than their adversaries. Nor did nuclear weapons aid Russia in its unsuccessful war against Chechen rebels in 1994-96, or in 1999-2000, when Russia's conventional weapons devastated the suffering Chechen Republic. Nuclear weapons did not help the US achieve its goals in Iraq or Afghanistan, which have become expensive catastrophic failures for the country with the world's most advanced nuclear weapons. Moreover, despite its nuclear arsenal, the US remains fearful of domestic terrorist attacks, which are more likely to be made with nuclear weapons than be deterred by them. **In short, it is not legitimate to argue that nuclear weapons have deterred any sort of war, or that they will do so in the future.** During the Cold War, each side engaged in conventional warfare: the Soviets, for example, in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Afghanistan (1979-89); the Russians in Chechnya (1994-96; 1999-2009), Georgia (2008), Ukraine (2014-present), as well as Syria (2015-present); and the US in Korea (1950-53), Vietnam (1955-75), Lebanon (1982), Grenada (1983), Panama (1989-90), the Persian Gulf (1990-91), the former Yugoslavia (1991-99), Afghanistan (2001-present), and Iraq (2003-present), to mention just a few cases. Nor have their weapons deterred attacks upon nuclear armed states by non-nuclear opponents. In 1950, China stood 14 years from developing and deploying its own nuclear weapons, whereas the US had a well-developed atomic arsenal. Nonetheless, as the Korean War's tide was shifting dramatically against the North, that US nuclear arsenal did not inhibit China from sending more than 300,000 soldiers across the Yalu River, resulting in the stalemate on the Korean peninsula that divides it to this day, and has resulted in one of the world's most dangerous unresolved stand-offs.

Turn: Deterrence has the ability to lead to accidental violence

David Baras, 1-17-2018, "The Deterrence Myth," Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. 17 Jan. 2018. Web. 6 Oct. 2020. <https://www.wagingpeace.org/the-deterrence-myth/>

Perhaps the most frightening thing about nuclear deterrence is its many paths to failure. Contrary to what is widely assumed, the least likely is a ‘bolt out of the blue’ (BOOB) attack. **Meanwhile, there are substantial risks associated with escalated conventional war, accidental or unauthorised use, irrational use** (although it can be argued that any use of nuclear weapons would be irrational) or false alarms, which have happened with frightening regularity, and could lead to ‘retaliation’ against an attack that hadn’t happened. **There have also been numerous ‘broken arrow’ accidents – accidental launching, firing, theft or loss of a nuclear weapon – as well as circumstances in which such events as a flock of geese, a ruptured gas pipeline or faulty computer codes have been interpreted as a hostile missile launch. The above describes only some of the inadequacies and outright dangers posed by deterrence,** the doctrinal fulcrum that manipulates nuclear hardware, software, deployments, accumulation and escalation. Undoing the ideology – verging on theology – of deterrence won’t be easy, but neither is living under the threat of worldwide annihilation. As the poet T S Eliot once wrote, unless you are in over your head, how do you know how tall you are? And **when it comes to nuclear deterrence, we’re all in over our heads.**

Delink: NFU would not decrease deterrence capabilities

Steve, Fetter. 12-19-2017. “No First Use and Credible Deterrence,” Taylor and Francis. 19 Dec. 2017. Web. 6 Oct. 2020. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257>

Despite progress in reducing the number of nuclear weapons in the largest arsenals, a number of states are now looking to increase their reliance on nuclear weapons not only for deterrence, but also for coercion or war fighting. There is scant evidence that nuclear weapons are effective or well suited for these roles, and the risks of relying on nuclear weapons for more than deterrence of nuclear attack are under appreciated. We review the evolution of US nuclear strategy and assesses the prospects for establishing a policy of no first use. **A no first use policy would in no way reduce deterrence of nuclear attack against the United States or its allies. Nuclear weapons are not an effective deterrent against non-nuclear attack because there are few if any scenarios in which a US threat to use nuclear weapons first in response to non-nuclear aggression against the United States or its allies would be credible. The benefits of adopting a policy of no first use include reducing the risks of accidental nuclear escalation or nuclear use from miscalculation, as well as supporting nonproliferation and disarmament efforts.**

Analysis: Aff teams should try to beat this argument first with the assumption that nuclear deterrence is a true idea. There are many authors who dispute the idea that deterrence is a credible phenomenon. From there, Aff teams should look to turn case: look for authors who say that the possession of nuclear weapons increases the chances of war, therefore actively working against deterrence.

A/2: NFU would harm American ability to check Russia and China

Warrant: If there was a confirmed threat from an adversary, the NFU agreement would not be adhered to.

Tannenwald, Nina. 8-1-2019, "It's Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy," Texas National Security Review. 1 Aug. 2019. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.
<https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/>

A no-first-use nuclear policy means that the United States would commit to never use nuclear weapons first, either as a first strike (that is, an unprompted surprise attack), as an escalatory move in a conventional conflict, or in response to a non-nuclear attack.

The only situation in which the US would use nuclear weapons would be in response to a confirmed nuclear attack on itself or its allies.

Warrant: China has a NFU policy

Gregory Kulacki,, 7-24-2019, "China Holds Firm on No First Use of Nuclear Weapons," All Things Nuclear. 24 July, 2019. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.
<https://allthingsnuclear.org/gkulacki/china-holds-firm-on-no-first-use-of-nuclear-weapons>

China is always committed to a nuclear policy of no first use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, and not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones unconditionally. China advocates the ultimate complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. China does not engage in any nuclear arms race with any other country and keeps its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for

national security. China pursues a nuclear strategy of self-defense, the goal of which is to maintain national strategic security by deterring other countries from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against China. It would be difficult to compose a more emphatic rejection of claims that China's no first use policy is changing. The statement also indicates it is not Chinese policy to use nuclear weapons first to forestall defeat in a conventional military conflict with the United States. China does not have an "escalate to de-escalate" nuclear strategy. **China is not preparing to fight a nuclear war with United States. It does not have "battlefield" or "tactical" or "non-strategic" nuclear weapons. Chinese nuclear strategists don't think a nuclear war with the United States is likely to happen.** And they seem sure it won't happen as long as the US president believes China can retaliate if the United States strikes first. That's not a high bar to meet, which is why China's nuclear arsenal remains small and, for the time being, off alert.

Warrant: America's refusal to a NFU policy forces China to develop their nuclear arsenal

Gregory Kulacki,, 7-24-2019, "China Holds Firm on No First Use of Nuclear Weapons," All Things Nuclear. 24 July, 2019. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.
<https://allthingsnuclear.org/gkulacki/china-holds-firm-on-no-first-use-of-nuclear-weapons>

In the absence of a no first use commitment from the United States, Chinese nuclear strategists believe continued improvements to their nuclear arsenal are needed to assure China's leaders their U.S. counterparts won't take the risk of attacking China with nuclear weapons. Chinese experts know US efforts to develop a working ballistic missile defense system are not going well, but they still feel the need to hedge against continued US investment in the system with incremental improvements in the quality and quantity of China's small nuclear force. Given the impassioned attack on constructive US-China relations currently sweeping US elites off their feet, along with

the continued proliferation of misinformation about Chinese nuclear capabilities and intentions, many US commentators are likely to brush aside the new white paper's reiteration of China's longstanding nuclear no first use policy. It doesn't fit in the emerging US story about a new Cold War. **That's unfortunate, especially as the US Congress threatens to ramp up a new nuclear arms race its supposed adversary has no intention to run.**

Turn: America signing a NFU agreement could significantly reduce the risks of nuclear war with Russia/ China

Tannenwald, Nina. 8-1-2019, "It's Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy,"Texas National Security Review. 1 Aug. 2019. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.
<https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/>

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

Warrant: China would never go to nuclear war with America

Sam Ratner, 12-12-2019, "Analysis: Is a US-China nuclear conflict likely?," World from PRX. 12 Dec. 2019. Web. 6 Oct. 2020. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-12-12/analysis-us-china-nuclear-conflict-likely>

The message from Chinese experts was clear: They don't think it's very likely at all.

Their confidence comes from their belief that limited nuclear war is basically impossible. Once one country uses one nuclear weapon, no matter the circumstance, the mainline Chinese view is that both countries will have strong incentives to escalate quickly, to avoid being caught in a position where their strategic nuclear arsenals would be destroyed. That quick escalation would mean mass destruction on both sides, making any nuclear use unlikely. Buttressing that belief is a confidence in both China and America's ability to manage escalation of conventional conflicts, to ensure they don't produce a move to nuclear strikes. Even in instances where nuclear powers have lost conventional wars, Chinese General Pan Zhenqiang wrote, "they still do not dare to use nuclear weapons to reverse a [losing] war situation." **If both sides believe that any nuclear escalation would be extremely dangerous, the mainline Chinese view is that both sides have every reason to seek deescalation in even the most dire conventional conflict situations.**

Analysis: The most efficient response to the argument about China getting more powerful is to utilize crossfire to really press neg teams on the logic of their argument. What exactly happens if China becomes "more powerful" than America? What does that look like? What changes? Aff teams responding to this argument should also make sure to question neg on their impacts. If the impact is a nuclear war, there is lots of evidence saying that nuclear wars are unlikely and also proving that China has an incentive to go to nuclear war seems like it would be hard to prove.

A/2: US NFU use decision would harm NATO and lead to NATO nuclear collapse

Non-Unique: Trump will remove America from NATO

Michael Crowley, 9-3-2020, "Allies and Former U.S. Officials Fear Trump Could Seek NATO Exit in a Second Term," The New York Times. 3 Sep. 2020. Web. 6 Oct. 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/03/us/politics/trump-nato-withdraw.html>

For nearly four years, President Trump has publicly railed against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, angrily demanding that its members pay more for Europe's collective defense. **In private, Mr. Trump has gone further — speaking repeatedly about withdrawing altogether from the 71-year-old military alliance, according to those familiar with the conversations. In a second term, he may get his chance.** Recent accounts by former senior national security officials in the Trump administration have contributed to growing unease on Capitol Hill and across Europe. They lend credence to a scenario in which Mr. Trump, emboldened by re-election and potentially surrounded by an inexperienced second-term national security team, could finally move to undermine — or even end — the United States' NATO membership. These former officials warn that such a move would be one of the biggest global strategic shifts in generations. These former officials warn that such a move would be one of the biggest global strategic shifts in generations and a major victory for President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. Although Mr. Trump has been known to have expressed interest in withdrawing the United States from the Atlantic alliance since 2018, new evidence of his thinking has emerged in the run-up to the November election.

Warrant: It is important for NATO to begin to develop NFU in order to decrease nuclear risk

Carlo Trezza, 9-7-2016, "Now is the right time for U.S. to adopt No First Use," European Leadership Network. 7 Aug. 2016. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.

<https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/now-is-the-right-time-for-u-s-to-adopt-no-first-use/>

Based this time on the perception of its conventional inferiority, Moscow did not wish to exclude a nuclear response even if attacked by conventional weapons or with chemical/biological weapons. At present, of the five NPT nuclear weapons states only China has adopted the NFU principle. **So far, NATO as a whole, with the exception of the UK, has been reluctant to adopt the lighter security assurances contained in the 2010 US Nuclear posture Review (see article ‘NATO Must Change Declaratory Policy in Chicago’). Of the four non-NPT nuclear capable countries (India, Pakistan, Israel, DPRK) only India has declared to abide by the NFU doctrine. One cannot overestimate the value of NFU because of its unilaterality, its declaratory nature, its reversibility (it would not be legally binding) and the fact that it is not verifiable. However, should the nine previously mentioned nuclear armed countries adopt NFU, this would be a major breakthrough in the present confrontational strategic environment in which the risks of a nuclear war have increased considerably. Even if only adopted unilaterally by the US, it would be all the more significant coming from a major recognized nuclear player. “As the first country to have used such weapons” – these were the President’s words in Prague – “it (the US) has a moral responsibility to act and to lead”. Such a measure would not mark the end of the nuclear nightmare: countries would still keep their weapons. Moreover the US would remain protected by the most advanced missile defense network and would still retain the capability of responding to a nuclear attack with a devastating nuclear response. But an NFU policy adopted by all nuclear capable countries would logically lead to the prohibition of any use of such weapons and to a severe reduction of their strategic relevance. This would be a major step forward on**

the path to a world free of nuclear weapons, an objective unanimously shared by the NPT countries.

Warrant: NATO does not actually have deterring capabilities

Paul Taylor, 1-31-2019, "Judy Asks: Is NATO Deterrence a Paper Tiger?," Carnegie Europe. 31 Jan. 2019. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.
<https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/78254>

It increasingly seems so. Let's leave the militarily weak Europeans aside for a moment. **For NATO's deterrence to be credible, only one question really matters: Is the United States fully behind its commitments?** This depends on two factors. First, how much of a military footprint does the United States have in the countries it has vowed to defend? Only troops on the ground give real-life meaning to the stipulation that "an attack on one is an attack on all." Second, how much confidence do the allies have in the U.S. president's strategic reliability? The commander in chief matters because only he (or she) can commit troops to combat or trigger America's nuclear arsenal. **The first metric is the smaller problem. America's footprint in Europe is much smaller than it was twenty years ago. But Washington has recently reinvested in Europe; troop numbers are slightly up. It is the second factor that causes the headache. The current U.S. president has publicly questioned NATO's usefulness and has had to be talked out of leaving the alliance altogether. Few people are convinced that he would go to war for Europe if need be. This lack of trust in Donald Trump is hugely corrosive for NATO's credibility. It makes the allies nervous, and it emboldens the adversaries. Should Trump's unreliability become a full certainty, NATO's deterrent could soon look like a paper tiger indeed.**

Warrant: NATO is much stronger than you would think

Dan Runde. 3-29-2019, "The state of NATO is better than you think," TheHill. 29 Mar. 2019. Web. 6 Oct. 2020. <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/436422-the-state-of-nato-is-better-than-you-think>

One must ask: has NATO been successful? **The answer can be measured by what has not happened. There has been no great power war since World War II. No NATO member states have developed nuclear weapons (other than the United States, the United Kingdom, and France). NATO is also active on the ground, leading operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and the Mediterranean and supporting the African Union and a training mission in Iraq. Moreover, a large number of countries still seek NATO membership, with the last country to join being Montenegro in 2017.** Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia currently participate in the Membership Action Plan, an assistance program for countries who wish to join. Georgia and Ukraine also aspire to join. These actions signal that NATO is still strong and relevant. Trump's tough and persistent stance on increased burden-sharing is consistent with past administrations. This administration's criticisms have been heard by NATO members, who are actively seeking to increase their defense spending even if they do not reach the 2 percent benchmark. Major wars have been avoided thanks to NATO, and the United States remains committed to the alliance. **NATO is strong and growing.**

Analysis: Teams responding to the NATO argument should strongly question the assumptions of the argument . First, question how important America is to NATO and if there would actually be a consequence if America did something against the general consensus of NATO. Another method of attack is to question the idea of deterrence working in the first place. If deterrence isn't effective than there are no benefits from the US continuing to have the possibility of first use of nuclear weapons.

A/2: US conventional military capacity is not capable of an efficient response

Warrant: America would not lose a war against China/Russia

Franz-Stefan Gady, 12-18-2020. "Would the US Really Lose a War With China and Russia?,"The Diplomat. 18 Dec 2020. Web. 7 Oct. 2020.
<https://thediplomat.com/2018/12/would-the-us-really-lose-a-war-with-china-and-russia/>

The two criteria for predicting American defeat indicated above are based on the U.S. losing air superiority on the one hand and the difficulty of assembling its forces in theater on the other. Again, there is no evidence why this would be the case in the event of a conflict given prevailing U.S. military superiority in the air and in logistics. Even if that were the case, such difficulties would likely be temporary and not constitute a devastating setback. Indeed, there also appears to be confusion over what a decisive military defeat entails: the destruction of U.S. military forces in the region, or just temporary setbacks, including the loss of air superiority and mass casualties. Remarkably also the report does not include even a superficial treatment of Chinese and Russian defense budgets and military capabilities, save some generalities. Indeed, one is left with the false impression that U.S. military has already lost its technological edge over both adversaries. In sum, the study reveals a distinctly American mindset, influenced by the unipolar moment of the 1990s and the insurgency wars of the 2000s, where the United States was able to fight relatively bloodless campaigns against technological inferior opponents. **The rest of the world, meanwhile, given U.S. military superiority, always had to plan military campaigns with the assumption that a military conflict would be fought against a technological superior enemy and cause mass casualties. In that sense the study is a prime example of what I once called the “U.S. War Gap” paradox.** In the cited paragraph the authors utterly fail to connect their facts

to the report's threat inflated conclusions. **Conspicuously, the report also fails to provide an analytical framework for assessing U.S. program and defense priorities.** Given that the general recommendations consist of allocating more funding for defense, punctuated by bureaucracy and acquisition processes reforms, and adding more capabilities in virtual every category of the armed forces, this is unsurprising. Notably, one of the contributors to the report, Andrew Krepinevich, offered his personal criticism of this in an appendix section, using a discussion of the future requirements of U.S. forces in the Indo-Pacific region as an example: "Other than stating the obvious — it's better to have more military capability than less — no analytic support is presented as to why these particular forces and capabilities are more deserving of priority than others." Lastly, the report also does not offer an analysis why conventional deterrence in the case of China and Russia would not hold and what precisely their strategic rationale for seizing the Baltics and closing the South China Sea to international shipping traffic (for example) would entail. As John Mearsheimer wrote in the 1980s, if one side thinks it has the capacity to launch a Blitzkrieg-style military operation and achieve a quick military victory without having to fear massive retaliation, conventional deterrence is likely to fail. **Yet, there is virtually no indication in Chinese or Russian strategic thinking that would suggest that policymakers in either country think their militaries would be able to achieve a quick military victory over the United States. As such it unclear how the two countries could trigger a national tragedy of "unforeseeable" and "tremendous magnitude" unless the conflict turns nuclear, in which case, winning or losing would become abstract terms devoid of meaning.**

Warrant: American military spending is higher than any other country

Collins, Patrick. 01-26-2020. "Why Does the US Spend So Much on Defense" Defense One. 26 Jan. 2020. Web 7 Oct. 2020.
<https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2020/01/why-does-us-spend-so-much-defense/162657/>

To put U.S. military spending in context, it is useful to compare what it spends to that of others. **In fiscal 2018, the Defense Department's budget of \$649 billion — not even counting the contingency fund — was larger than the combined spending of the next seven largest militaries: \$609 billion (China, Saudi Arabia, India, France, Russia, UK, Germany).** As large as the DOD budget is, the total amount spent by the United States on national security is actually much higher. The largest chunk outside DOD is spent by the Department of Veterans Affairs, which cares for former troops injured in past conflicts and funds the pensions of military retirees. The VA spent \$201 billion in 2019, topping \$200 million for the first time but not the last; the 2020 request was \$220.2 billion. Adding the VA's budget brings total national-security spending to \$887 billion.

Warrant: Nuclear Weapons do not deter any sort of war

John Mueller, 10-15-2018, "Nuclear Weapons Don't Matter," Cato Institute. 15 Oct. 2018. Web. 7 Oct. 2020.

<https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/nuclear-weapons-dont-matter>

Since the 1940s, nuclear weapons have greatly affected defense budgets, political and military posturing, and academic theory. Beyond that, however, their practical significance has been vastly exaggerated by both critics and supporters. Nuclear weapons were not necessary to deter a third world war. They have proved useless militarily; in fact, their primary use has been to stoke the national ego or to posture against real or imagined threats. Few states have or want them, and they seem to be out of reach for terrorists. Their impact on international affairs has been minor compared with the sums and words expended on them. The costs resulting from the nuclear weapons obsession have been huge. To hold its own in a snarling contest with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, the United States spent \$5–\$10 trillion maintaining a vast nuclear arsenal — resources that could have been used more

productively on almost anything else. To head off the imagined dangers that would result from nuclear proliferation, Washington and its allies have imposed devastating economic sanctions on countries such as Iraq and North Korea, and even launched a war of aggression — sorry, “preemption” — that killed more people than did the nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For nearly three-quarters of century, the world has been told it is perched precariously on Rube Goldberg’s precipice, perennially at risk of plunging into apocalyptic devastation. But oddly enough, both we and the weapons are still here. **The time has long since come to acknowledge that the thinkers of the early nuclear age were mistaken in believing that the world had been made anew. In retrospect, they overestimated the importance of the nuclear revolution and the delicacy of the balance of terror.** This spurred generations of officials to worry more about nuclear matters than they should have and to distort foreign and security policies in unfortunate ways. Today’s policymakers don’t have to repeat the same mistakes, and everybody would be better off if they didn’t.

Warrant: Historically it is reductionist to say that nuclear weapons

David P, 1-14-2018, "Nuclear deterrence is a myth. And a lethal one at that," Guardian.
14 Jan. 2018. Web. 7 Oct. 2020.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/14/nuclear-deterrence-myth-lethal-david-barash>

There are, however, compelling arguments suggesting that the US and the former Soviet Union avoided world war for several possible reasons, most notably because neither side wanted to go to war. Indeed, the US and Russia never fought a war prior to the nuclear age. Singling out nuclear weapons as the reason why the Cold War never became hot is somewhat like saying that a junkyard car, without an engine or wheels, never sped off the lot only because no one turned the key. Logically speaking, there is no way to demonstrate that nuclear weapons kept the peace during the Cold War, or

that they do so now. **Perhaps peace prevailed between the two superpowers simply because they had no quarrel that justified fighting a terribly destructive war, even a conventional one.** There is no evidence, for example, that the Soviet leadership ever contemplated trying to conquer western Europe, much less that it was restrained by the West's nuclear arsenal. Post facto arguments – especially negative ones – might be the currency of pundits, but are impossible to prove, and offer no solid ground for evaluating a counterfactual claim, conjecturing why something has not happened. In colloquial terms, if a dog does not bark in the night, can we say with certainty that no one walked by the house? **Deterrence enthusiasts are like the woman who sprayed perfume on her lawn every morning. When a perplexed neighbour asked about this strange behaviour, she replied: 'I do it to keep the elephants away.'** The neighbour protested: **'But there aren't any elephants within 10,000 miles of here,'** whereupon the perfume-sprayer replied: **'You see, it works!'**

Analysis: Again, a great place for aff to start on responses to this argument is by questioning the premise of deterrence working. If deterrence does not work, then America's nuclear weapons are not even currently preventing a conventional war. Another thing to question neg on is who conventional war would be against, and if it is true that we wouldn't be able to win. America has a very dominant military and it is worth really pressing neg to choose who they are afraid of conventional war from.

A/2: NFU leads to increased political polarization

Non-Unique : America is already incredibly polarized, NFU would not make it worse.

Pew Research Center. 06-12-2014 'Political Polarization in the American Public' Pew Research Center. 12 Jun. 2014. Web. 7 Oct. 2020.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/>

Republicans and Democrats are more divided along ideological lines – and partisan antipathy is deeper and more extensive – than at any point in the last two decades.

These trends manifest themselves in myriad ways, both in politics and in everyday life.

And a new survey of 10,000 adults nationwide finds that these divisions are greatest among those who are the most engaged and active in the political process. The overall share of Americans who express consistently conservative or consistently liberal opinions has doubled over the past two decades from 10% to 21%. **And ideological thinking is now much more closely aligned with partisanship than in the past. As a result, ideological overlap between the two parties has diminished: Today, 92% of Republicans are to the right of the median Democrat, and 94% of Democrats are to the left of the median Republican.** Partisan animosity has increased substantially over the same period. In each party, the share with a highly negative view of the opposing party has more than doubled since 1994. Most of these intense partisans believe the opposing party's policies "are so misguided that they threaten the nation's well-being."

Turn: Political Polarization is a good thing; economic benefits

Gallup, Inc., 12-5-2019, "The Impact of Increased Political Polarization," Gallup. 5 Dec. 2019. Web. 7 Oct. 2020. <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/268982/impact-increased-political-polarization.aspx>

Is this increasingly pervasive influence of party as a key and defining aspect of the way Americans look at the world around them good or bad? As is true with almost all such questions, the answer is complex. There are some benefits to individuals and society from political polarization and conflict between opposing viewpoints. As we know, the Founding Fathers anticipated there would be conflict between factions in our society and set up the three branches of our federal government to deal with them. If handled correctly, optimal solutions are more likely to emerge when everything is subject to skeptical analysis. (Along these same lines, billionaire Ray Dalio defines this process of constant questioning as the search for "radical truth" and contends it is a secret to his business success.) Plus, a strong emotional allegiance to one's political and ideological reference group can have significantly positive effects for individuals, who gain meaning and purpose in life from social solidarity with an in-group while railing against threatening enemies. Partisan "us versus them" perspectives are easier for many individuals to handle cognitively than are complex approaches to issues and situations that attempt to take into account multiple pluses and minuses. **And importantly, there are real economic benefits for businesses that can take advantage of and monetize the behaviors of emotionally driven partisans seeking reinforcement for their views. Among these beneficiaries: cable news networks, talk show hosts, book publishers, bloggers and podcast producers. And, of course, politicians gain support and maximize turnout when their constituents can be emotionally activated on the basis of perceived threats.** As political consultants advise clients, negative campaigning is most often much more effective than efforts to remain positive.

Turn: Political Polarization good; voter activity

Isabel Cholbi, 04-13-2019, "The Positives of Political Polarization – Berkeley Political Review," Berkeley Political Review. 13 Apr. 2019. Web. 7 Oct. 2020.
[7https://bpr.berkeley.edu/2019/04/13/the-positives-of-political-polarization/](https://bpr.berkeley.edu/2019/04/13/the-positives-of-political-polarization/)

However, these fears are misplaced. **In reality, divisions have made political stances more important, so voters are encouraged to think about where they stand on these issues and express these views to combat a perceived lack of government action.** More people are engaging in politics in some form: according to one survey, almost one quarter of Americans have contacted an elected official in the last year alone. This uptick in strong, opposing opinions may seem frustrating in the short term. Yet, we must remember that **pluralism is fundamentally good for democracy.** By drawing more people into the political fold, polarization has vastly increased Americans' investment in election results, and thus increased the engagement that is so crucial to democracy. Clearly defined party ideologies have made the stakes more palpable than any time in recent memory. Polarization does bring its set of issues – issues like gridlock, that can only last for so long until one side gains more power – but it is also extremely effective at combating one of problems plaguing American democracy: apathy. Americans may now disagree (and disagree strongly), but it would no longer be accurate to say that a majority of us don't care about the political sphere.

Warrant: Arms Control is a Non-Partisan Issue

Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Hearing. 05-25-2010 "Henry Kissinger: "Arms control is not a bi-partisan issue, it is a non-partisan issue" Center for Arms Control and Non-proliferation. 25 May 2010. Web. 7 Oct. 2020.
<https://armscontrolcenter.org/henry-kissinger-arms-control-is-not-a-bi-partisan-issue-it-is-a-non-partisan-issue/>

Lastly he added that our goals should include: the elimination of the use of nuclear weapons by choice, the removal of any incentive to initiate nuclear war, and the elimination of the risk of war by miscalculation. In response to Senate Committee member's questions, substantive comments from Secretary Kissinger included:. •Agrees

with Secretary Baker that we should not limit the flexibility of future Presidents in regard to missile defense, but in regards to the treaty this is “not important.” •Agrees with Secretary Gates that the goal of our missile defense program is NOT to create an invulnerable defense, but to defend ourselves against rogue states and terrorist groups. •In today’s international system, the U.S. would not gain by building more missiles than the Russians. •In regards to Iran, the control of Iran’s behavior will be more important to Russian security than to American security, and Russia knows this. •The argument for this treaty is not to placate Russia, but to improve American national security. It is in the American interest. •The language in the NPR concerning the use of chemical and biological weapons by non-nuclear states is dangerous, and “incentivizes” states to pursue biological or chemical weapons programs. •**Arms control is not a bi-partisan issue, it is a non-partisan issue. Secretary Kissinger concluded: “I recommend the ratification of this treaty.”**

Analysis: Aff teams responding to this argument should press neg for a definite bright line on where political polarization gets worse and what happens with incremental increases. The weakness of this argument is the likely inability to prove a clear cut impact coming directly from neg’s claims. Aff teams should also attempt to turn the argument and mention various ways in which polarization may help

A/2: No first use is a hollow, easily reversed promise

Answer: Even if no-first-use is hollow in times of conflict, it can still have positive impacts during peacetime.

Warrant: Establishing NFU policy will reduce tensions and reassure of the intentions towards non nuclear states.

Tierney, John, Bell; Alexander; et all. "No First Use: Myths vs.

Realities "Centers for Arms Control and Non Proliferation.

2020. <https://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/no-first-use/no-first-use-myths-vs-realities/>

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. Adopting an NFU policy would be welcomed by non-nuclear weapon states, including U.S. allies, that are increasingly frustrated that nuclear weapon states have not made significant progress on their disarmament obligations as outlined in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).**

Warrant: NFU will improve stability with China and Russia and surrounding regions.

Thakur, Ramesh. "Why Obama should declare a no-first-use policy for nuclear weapons". The Bulletin. 19 Aug. 2016.

<https://thebulletin.org/2016/08/why-obama-should-declare-a-no-first-use-policy-for-nuclear-weapons/>

The US influence can be felt in Beijing as well, where the world's only other official no-first-use policy has come under strain. **For various reasons, including growing US conventional capability, America's continuing interest in ballistic missile defense systems, and Washington's refusal to adopt a no-first-use policy, Chinese leaders worry that the United States harbors doubts about China's second-strike capability. This is hardly a recipe for safety and stability,** and it doesn't help that the United States has refused to acknowledge mutual nuclear vulnerability vis-à-vis China. According to Gregory Kulacki of the Union of Concerned Scientists, in "a significant—and dangerous—change in Chinese policy," **China's military planners have for the first time begun to discuss putting the country's nuclear missiles on high alert, believing that this "would be a step toward assured retaliation."** It is hard to see China's no-first-use policy surviving such a change. And if Beijing follows the Russian and US lead by adopting a high-alert posture, how long before the trend proliferates to India and Pakistan? **If the United States adopted a no-first-use policy, it might at least counteract some of these dangerous trends. It may also lead to a coalition of nuclear-armed states adopting no-first-use policies, which could also have a reinforcing effect,** with more states wanting to follow the American lead.

Impact: NFU policy will also deter terrorism

Warrant: Declaratory policy will signal to allies and those who would support terrorists that nuclear weapons are immoral.

Sagan, Scott. "The Case for No First Use." *Survival* vol. 51 no. 3.

June-July 2009. <https://www.almendron.com/tribuna/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/the-case-for-no-first-use-sagan.pdf>

Nuclear declaratory policy is meant to enhance deterrence of potential adversaries by providing a signal of intentions, options and proclivities of the US government in

different crisis and war-time scenarios. Such signals are similarly meant to enhance reassurance of allies. Declaratory policy can indirectly influence the likelihood of nuclear terrorism by dissuading governments or individuals from providing nuclear weapons or materials to terrorist organizations and by making terrorist use of a nuclear weapon appear immoral and illegitimate to some individuals who might otherwise support the terrorists' goals.

Analysis: While it's true that countries can always back down on their promises, the very act of making such a promise is a big step. Other countries may follow suit, and it can help usher in a new age of nuclear security and deescalation.

A/2: No-first-use emboldens Iran

Argument: First use policies are part of the problem.

Warrant: Current First Use Policy maintains foreign tension among major nuclear armed countries.

Corwin, Robert. "No-First-Use Policy Explained: What is a "No-First-Use" nuclear policy?" Union of Concerned Scientists. 7 May 2020.<https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/no-first-use-explained>

"Longstanding US policy, re-affirmed in the Trump administration's **2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR)**, says that the United States "will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states that are party to the NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty] and in compliance with their nuclear nonproliferation obligations"; this promise covers more than 180 countries (OSD 2018). This policy is known as a "negative security assurance."**However, China, Russia, and North Korea do not fall under the US negative security assurance.** China and Russia are nuclear weapon states under the NPT, and North Korea withdrew from the treaty in 2003 and conducted its first nuclear test in 2006.**This means that they could be targets for US nuclear weapons, including the United States launching weapons at them first.**Taking nuclear use off the table except as a retaliatory measure could reduce this pressure, which would help to slow the timeline in a crisis, allowing decision-makers more time to explore other solutions rather than quickly escalating the conflict.

Warrant: First Use policies increase tensions and risk escalation, while a NFU declaration will Enhance International Respect for International Humanitarian Law.

Perkovich, George. "Do Unto Others: Toward a Defensible Nuclear Doctrine". Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 2013. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/do_onto_others.pdf

Threat assessment: **The first use of nuclear weapons is unnecessary or irrelevant to defeat threats to the territory of the United States today. However, some U.S. allies face potential threats that they rely on the United States to deter, including via possible first use of nuclear weapons. An effective nuclear policy for the United States would serve the following imperatives:**

- **Contribute to overall military deterrence of threats to the survival of the United States and its allies--Minimize the probability that the United States and any other state will initiate use of nuclear weapons**
- **Minimize the risks of escalation if first use occurs**
- **Reduce incentives for other states to seek or expand nuclear arsenals**
- **Enhance international respect for the laws of war, just war, and international humanitarian law. And in a world with a moral-political taboo against using nuclear weapons to attack non-nuclear-weapon states, the consequences of such use would, over time, also be self-defeating. Such policies should follow the principle the United States has recently suggested for the use of drones: "if we want others to adhere to high and rigorous standards for their use, then we must do so as well. We cannot expect of others what we will not do ourselves."**

Analysis: Realistically, part of the reason that countries like Iran feel the need to build nuclear weapons is to deter nations like the United States who threaten to strike preemptively. Were the United States to promise not to strike first with nuclear weapons, that could go a long way to ending the conflict with Iran.

A/2: No first use will drive US allies to China

Argument: No-first-use policy shows leadership in denuclearization

Warrant: No NFU Policy shows weakness and lack of moral authority.

Holdren, John P. "The overwhelming case for no first use."

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists Volume 76, 2020 - Issue 1: Special issue: Nuclear weapons policy and the US presidential

election. [https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.17012](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701277)

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"When the country with the most capable conventional forces the world has ever seen insists that it nonetheless needs nuclear weapons to deter and respond to non-nuclear attacks, it is logically conceding, to any country that fears or professes to fear attack by another, the right to acquire its own nuclear weapons to deter or respond to such attacks. The US stance of "first use if we think we need to" undermines, in the eyes of most of the world, any moral authority the United States might wish to assert against the acquisition of nuclear weapons by others. And if potential adversaries that don't possess nuclear weapons think the United States would use nuclear weapons against their conventional forces or in retaliation for an actual (or suspected!) chemical or biological attack, that can only increase their incentive to acquire nuclear weapons of their own."

Warrant: US Leadership is Key in non proliferation

Bunn, Matthew; Tobey, William, et al. "Preventing Nuclear

Terrorism: Continuous Improvement or Dangerous Decline?" Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, March 2016.

"The United States remains committed to assisting other nations in securing and repatriating weapon-grade plutonium and HEU in their civilian nuclear programs. U.S. cooperation with Russia, begun in the 1990s to secure Moscow's stockpile of materials and weapons, resulted in a drop in the number of smuggling cases. Although. Russia ended this cooperation during the Obama era, the United States remains open to resuming it, as well as to intelligence sharing that may have a nuclear-terrorism dimension. The thinking behind the nuclear security summits initiated by 90 the end of nuclear warfighting: moving to a deterrence-only posture President Obama to raise the priority of securing civilian fissile materials around the world has enduring merit. **The United States should continue to lead this global effort and extend it to some military materials where practical and consistent with national security regulations.** This effort should include conversion of naval propulsion reactors to burn LEU instead of HEU fuel."

Analysis: While some allies may reject the idea, ultimately no-first-use policies are a good first step towards denuclearization. The United States has lagged behind significantly in this regard, and allies would undoubtedly follow suit were the U.S. to pursue such a policy.

A/2: Increases the odds of conventional war.

Argument: Current policies increase the likelihood of nuclear escalation in case of a crisis.

Warrant: The policy of first use makes conflict more likely

Acton, James. "Technology, Doctrine, and the Risk of Nuclear War." American Academy of Arts and Sciences. 2020.
<https://www.amacad.org/publication/emerging-risks-declining-norms/section/4>

Second, **in the event that a crisis or conflict occurs, developments in military doctrine for both nuclear and conventional warfighting are increasing the likelihood of escalation, whether deliberate or inadvertent, to nuclear use. Technological changes are having a similar effect. Some drivers of this growing danger—such as the development of potentially vulnerable nuclear forces in China, Russia, and Pakistan—** are well known from the Cold War. Others are less familiar but include the development, by the United States in particular, of **nonnuclear technologies that can threaten—or are perceived as being able to threaten—an opponent’s nuclear forces and their enabling capabilities.**

Warrant: The only way to de escalate tension and avoid crisis’ is through reducing and eliminating reliance on nuclear weapons, including NFU.

Nuclear Crisis Group. "Urgent Steps to De-Escalate Nuclear Flashpoints." Global Zero. June 2017.
https://www.globalzero.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/10/NCG_Urgent-Steps_June-2017.pdf

“The only way to eliminate fully the risks of nuclear weapons use is through their abolition. To achieve this, states with nuclear capabilities need, at a minimum, to reduce their reliance on nuclear weapons in their national defense plans, cease expansion of their nuclear arsenals, and reduce the number of weapons. All states must also take pragmatic steps to avoid any use of nuclear weapons — intentional, accidental or otherwise — and avoid conventional conflicts that could escalate to nuclear use.

States with nuclear capabilities must also pursue policies and dialogues that enable them to adopt no- first-use postures. Enhanced nuclear risk reduction also requires increasing the means to communicate in a crisis and adopting defense postures that increase warning time.”

Impact: NFU policies will de-escalate conflicts.

Fetter, Steve; Wolfsthal, Jon. “No First Use and Credible

Deterrence.” Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament. Vol 1 Issue 1. 2018.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257#:~:text=The%20benefits%20of%20adopting%20a,supporting%20nonproliferation%20and%20disarmament%20efforts.>

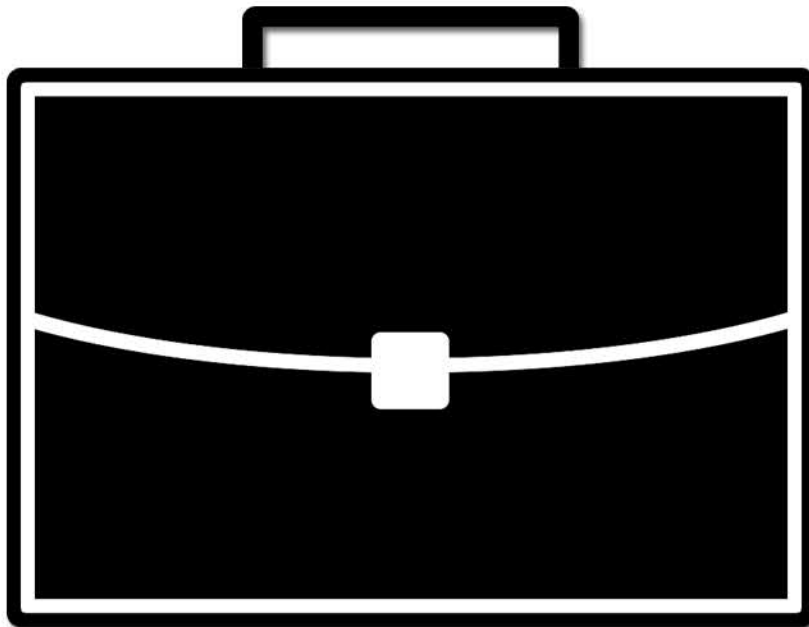
“The benefits of adopting a policy of no first use include reducing the risks of accidental nuclear escalation or nuclear use from miscalculation, as well as supporting nonproliferation and disarmament efforts.”

Analysis: Conflict stems from insecurity, and the threat of nuclear attack is one of the greatest sources of global insecurity. Were the United States to adopt a policy of no-first-use, it would make many of our enemies trust us more, and would discourage the use of conventional war as a means of conflict resolution.

Champion Briefs

Nov/Dec 2020

Public Forum Brief



Con Arguments

CON: No First Use increases chance of conventional warfare

Argument: No First Use decreases fear of nuclear retaliation from non-nuclear attacks, making them more likely. This leads to conventional conflicts, which can be quite deadly.

Uniqueness: Nuclear weapons currently act as a deterrent.

Brown, Gerald. "Conflict and Competition: Limited Nuclear Warfare and the New Face of Deterrence." Global Security Review, 16 Dec. 2019, globalsecurityreview.com/conflict-competition-limited-nuclear-warfare-new-face-deterrence/.

This has been the backbone of nuclear weapons policy since World War II. **The idea is that nuclear weapons ultimately mitigate conflict and escalate the cost of nuclear war to one that is far too high to pay, "war becomes less likely as the cost of war rises in relation to possible gains." The fear of a retaliatory response deters the aggressor from initiating nuclear conflict in the first place.** Wars occurring between nuclear states are likely to be limited in scale for fear of pushing one past the nuclear brink—if they occur at all. The cost of a miscalculation that leads to nuclear conflict is a far greater risk than the same miscalculation with a conventional army.

Warrant: No First Use would change adversaries' risk calculus.

Rogin, Josh. "U.S. Allies Unite to Block Obama's Nuclear 'Legacy.'" The Washington Post, 14 Aug. 2016, www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/allies-unite-to-block-an-obama-legacy/2016/08/14/cdb8d8e4-60b9-11e6-8e45-477372e89d78_story.html?utm_campaign=Defense%20EBB%2008-15-16&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_term=.98a2100e9a00.

“While the goal of a ‘no first use’ policy is correct — to never be the first country to launch a cataclysmic nuclear strike — doing so unilaterally could run the risk of weakening our allies’ confidence in our security guarantees. This would not be in our interest,” said Joel Rubin, a former Obama administration State Department official.

Diplomats from allied countries argued that if the United States takes a nuclear first strike off the table, the risk of a conventional conflict with countries such as North Korea, China and Russia could increase. Regimes that might refrain from a conventional attack in fear of nuclear retaliation would calculate the risks of such an attack differently. Moreover, allied governments don’t believe that a unilateral “no first use” declaration would necessarily help to establish an international norm, because there’s no guarantee that other countries would follow suit. They also believe that nuclear weapons play a role in deterring chemical and biological attacks.

Warrant: No First Use would make the world “safe” for conventional war.

Colby, Elbridge. “Nuclear vs. Conventional Warfare.” Arkansas Online, 21 Aug. 2016, www.arkansasonline.com/news/2016/aug/21/nuclear-vs-conventional-warfare-2016082/.

A no-first-use pledge would undermine this pacifying logic. **If the policy were believed, then it would make the world safe for conventional war. Since potential aggressors would write the risk of nuclear use down to zero, they would feel they could safely start and wage fierce conventional wars.** Conventional wars can be small, quick, and decisive, which is why they can also be appealing; just ask Napoleon, James Polk, Otto von Bismarck, or Moshe Dayan. But they can also escalate dramatically and unpredictably, especially when major powers are involved. Thus, the most likely route to nuclear use is via a nasty conventional war, as happened in World War II. In such circumstances, high-minded pledges made in peacetime may well seem foolish or too burdensome.

Warrant: No First Use would undermine deterrence.

Department of Defense. Dangers of a Nuclear No First Use Policy. 1 Apr. 2019.

<https://media.defense.gov/2019/Apr/01/2002108002/-1/-1/1/DANGERS-OF-A-NO-FIRST-USE-POLICY.PDF>

Retaining a degree of ambiguity and refraining from a no first use policy creates uncertainty in the mind of potential adversaries and reinforces deterrence of aggression by ensuring adversaries cannot predict what specific actions will lead to a U.S. nuclear response. **Implementing a no first use policy could undermine the U.S. ability to deter Russian, Chinese, and North Korean aggression, especially with respect to their growing capability to carry out nonnuclear strategic attack.** From their inception, U.S. alliances with NATO, Japan, and South Korea have depended upon U.S. extended nuclear deterrence. A U.S. no first use policy would be deeply concerning to many of our allies and partners.

Impact: Conventional warfare leads to nuclear warfare.

Colby, Elbridge. "Nuclear vs. Conventional Warfare." Arkansas Online, 21 Aug. 2016, www.arkansasonline.com/news/2016/aug/21/nuclear-vs-conventional-warfare-2016082/.

Conventional wars can be small, quick, and decisive, which is why they can also be appealing; just ask Napoleon, James Polk, Otto von Bismarck, or Moshe Dayan. But they can also escalate dramatically and unpredictably, especially when major powers are involved. **Thus, the most likely route to nuclear use is via a nasty conventional war, as happened in World War II.** In such circumstances, high-minded pledges made in peacetime may well seem foolish or too burdensome. A believable no-first-use pledge

would likely raise, rather than diminish, the likelihood of nuclear weapons being used by lightening the shadow of nuclear weapons over the decision-making of potential combatants. Better for everyone to think as carefully and clearly as possible about nuclear weapons before a war is underway.

Impact: War between the U.S. and China would be “long and nasty.”

Colby, Elbridge. “Nuclear vs. Conventional Warfare.” Arkansas Online, 21 Aug. 2016, www.arkansasonline.com/news/2016/aug/21/nuclear-vs-conventional-warfare-2016082/.

The days are therefore passing when the United States could easily swipe away any effort by the People's Liberation Army at power projection in the Western Pacific. Instead, **any future fight in the region between the United States and its allies on the one hand and China on the other would be hard and nasty.** And the trend lines are not moving in a good direction. Indeed, within a decade, China might be in a position where it could reasonably expect to confront a U.S. ally or partner in the Western Pacific and hope to prevail if the conflict remained relatively limited.

Analysis: This argument can be weighed on magnitude. Conventional war between the U.S. and an adversary would likely last a long time and lead to massive loss of life. Teams should also do comparative linke weighing about why countries may be more or less likely to attack the U.S. under No First Use.

CON: No First Use would embolden North Korea

Argument: North Korea represents one of the most pressing threats to the U.S. If the U.S. adopted a No First Use policy, they might be emboldened to attack without fear of nuclear retaliation.

Uniqueness: North Korea has not ruled out nuclear first use.

Panda, Ankit. “‘No First Use’ and Nuclear Weapons.” Council on Foreign Relations, 2018, www.cfr.org/background/no-first-use-and-nuclear-weapons.

North Korea. **North Korea has not ruled out nuclear first use to deter a preemptive strike or invasion by the United States and its allies. If the country were to detect an imminent U.S. or allied attack, it would use nuclear weapons on military installations in East Asia and in Guam.** North Korea’s intercontinental-range ballistic missiles would not be used first but would deter retaliatory nuclear use or an invasion by the United States against its territory. The exception to this might be a scenario in which North Korea fears a first strike by the United States to eliminate the country’s leadership.

Uniqueness: No First Use would be imprudent when North Korea repeatedly issues threats against the U.S.

Miller, Franklin. “The Dangers of No-First-Use.” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 22 Aug. 2016, thebulletin.org/2016/08/the-dangers-of-no-first-use/.

Consequently, declaring a no-first-use policy would degrade the prospective credibility of the US nuclear deterrent—a **particularly imprudent step at a time when Russia and China are rapidly expanding their military capabilities, pursuing aggressive policies in Europe and Asia respectively, and issuing explicit threats to US allies in the process.**

The same applies to North Korea, which repeatedly issues extreme threats against us and our Asian allies while maintaining the world's fourth largest army and reportedly advanced chemical and biological capabilities. Given these contemporary realities and the stakes involved, degrading the credibility of the US nuclear deterrent by adopting a policy of no-first-use is no small matter. Our goal instead should be to maintain the most effective deterrent possible to such lethal threats.

Warrant: No First Use could tempt adversaries to attack U.S. allies without fearing escalation

Tan, Anjelica. "A Commitment to Never Use Nuclear Weapons First Will Not Make Us Safer." TheHill, 26 Dec. 2019, thehill.com/opinion/national-security/475965-a-commitment-to-never-use-nuclear-weapons-first-will-not-make-us-safer.

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

Warrant: North Korea might be more willing to attack if immune to a U.S. nuclear response.

Harvey, John. "Assessing the Risks of a Nuclear 'No First Use' Policy." War on the Rocks, 5 July 2019, warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/.

Consider, for example, a North Korean biological attack on an American city that kills hundreds of thousands, or an artillery bombardment of Seoul with chemical weapons, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of Korean and U.S. forces and citizens.

Would North Korea be more willing to contemplate such attacks if it thought it was immune to a U.S. nuclear response? Recent presidents have been unwilling to accept the risk to deterrence that would accompany a pledge of no-first-use. Two factors might mitigate such risks to deterrence were a no-first-use policy adopted. First, a no-first-use pledge is unlikely to appear credible to an adversary contemplating major aggression.

Impact: Nuclear weapon detonations could cause 400,000 to 2 million deaths.

Sofia Lotto Persio. "North Korea Nuclear Missiles: How Many People Will Die If Kim Jong-Un Fires?" *Newsweek*, Newsweek, 5 Oct. 2017, www.newsweek.com/north-korea-nuclear-strike-would-kill-millions-seoul-and-tokyo-report-678392.

According to the report, the number of casualties caused would depend on the detonation reliability of the North Korean missile warhead. **"Multiple nuclear weapon detonations on both Seoul and Tokyo based on the current North Korea yield estimates could result in anywhere from 400,000 to 2 million deaths,"** Zagurek wrote, adding, "With possible thermonuclear yields with the same number of weapons, the number of deaths could range between 1.3 and 3.8 million."

Impact: North Korea could kill more than 300,000 South Koreans in the opening days of conflict.

Yochi Dreazen. "North Korea: What War with the US Would Look Like." Vox, Vox, 8 Feb. 2018, www.vox.com/world/2018/2/7/16974772/north-korea-war-trump-kim-nuclear-weapon.

The experts I spoke to all stressed that Kim could devastate Seoul without even needing to use his weapons of mass destruction. The North Korean military has an enormous number of rocket launchers and artillery pieces within range of Seoul. The nonpartisan Congressional Research Service estimates that **Kim could hammer the South Korean capital with an astonishing 10,000 rockets per minute — and that such a barrage could kill more than 300,000 South Koreans in the opening days of the conflict.** That's all without using a single nuclear, chemical, or biological weapon.

Analysis: This argument can be weighed on magnitude. A nuclear war with North Korea would lead to incredible loss of life in the millions, most likely both in the U.S. and in South Korea.

CON: Would weaken the U.S. in face of chemical, biological, & cyber warfare

Argument: In the scenario that a country uses chemical, biological, or cyber attacks against the U.S., depending on how severe, it may be proportionate for the U.S. to respond with nuclear weapons. If a first strike is no longer on the table, the U.S. may be short on options.

Uniqueness: Current ambiguity provides the president with options in a crisis.

Woolf, Amy. "No First Use of Nuclear Weapons: An Option for U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy?" E-International Relations, 28 Sept. 2016, www.e-ir.info/2016/09/28/no-first-use-of-nuclear-weapons-an-option-for-u-s-nuclear-weapons-policy/.

In July 2016, reports in U.S. newspapers indicated the Obama Administration considered adopting a declaratory policy stating that the United States would not be the first to use nuclear weapons in conflict. Subsequent reports, however, indicated that the United States was unlikely to adopt this particular change in U.S. declaratory policy before the end of the Obama Administration because both military and civilian officials in the Administration oppose the declaration of a "no first use" policy. The press reported that, during deliberations on the policy change, **Pentagon officials argued that current ambiguity provides the President with options in a crisis. For example, Admiral Haney, the Commander in Chief of Strategic Command, noted that the shift could undermine deterrence and stability in an uncertain security environment.** The reports stated that Secretary of State Kerry and Secretary of Defense Carter also raised concerns about the possibility that a "no first use" policy could undermine the confidence and security of U.S. allies.

Uniqueness: A severe, non-nuclear attack from an adversary is possible.

Geraghty, Jim. “No First Use: A Solution in Search of a Problem.” National Review, 19 Aug. 2019, www.nationalreview.com/corner/no-first-use-a-solution-in-search-of-a-problem/.

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

Warrant: It’s wise to leave the nuclear option on the table.

Miller, James. “No to No First Use—for Now.” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, vol. 76, no. 1, 2 Jan. 2020, pp. 8–13, 10.1080/00963402.2019.1701278.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701278>

Yet, at the present, there are stronger reasons to retain current US nuclear declaratory policy, with its negative security assurance and commitment to consider nuclear

employment only in extreme circumstances threatening the vital interests of the United States or its allies and partners. And with some ambiguity regarding what might constitute “extreme circumstances.” The stakes in such scenarios are as high as they get: national survival. **There are plausible scenarios, particularly involving biological weapons attacks, that are so extreme that a reasonable US president could rationally conclude that nuclear threats or the use of nuclear weapons are necessary to ensure US security. So it makes eminent sense to leave the nuclear option on the table, so as to contribute to deterrence of such an attack, however unlikely it may be.** A final key point: Any US administration – Republican or Democratic – should pursue major changes in US nuclear declaratory policy, including a shift to no first use, only if there is a sustainable bipartisan consensus behind such a shift. Based on both the Obama administration’s 2010 NPR and the Trump administration’s 2018 NPR, quite the opposite appears to be the case.

Solvency: A No First Use policy would eliminate deterrence.

Heinrichs, Rebecca. “Reject ‘no First Use’ Nuclear Policy | Opinion.” Newsweek, 24 Aug. 2020, www.newsweek.com/reject-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-opinion-1527037.

First, adopting an NFU policy invites a strategic non-nuclear attack against the American people, our allies and our interests. **An NFU declaration broadcasts to America's enemies that they can proceed with a chemical weapons attack on U.S. forces and their families, can proceed with a biological attack on an American city and can proceed with an overwhelming conventional attack against critical U.S. assets, all without fear of nuclear retaliation. Any would-be enemy could carry out an infinite number of attacks short of a nuclear attack,** while the NFU-endorsing U.S. president assures their safety from our nuclear weapon arsenal.

Impact: Biological and cyber attacks could cost millions of American’s lives.

Miller, James. "No to No First Use—for Now." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 76, no. 1, 2 Jan. 2020, pp. 8–13, 10.1080/00963402.2019.1701278. Accessed 7 Oct. 2020. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1701278>

A biological weapons attack by a nuclear-capable country (such as North Korea) that kills hundreds of thousands or even millions of Americans, while seemingly unlikely, is unfortunately a plausible threat in the coming years or decades. In this scenario, a responsible president could reasonably determine that a conventional attack was inadequate, and that it was appropriate to employ nuclear weapons in response. Given this reality, it certainly makes eminent sense to leave the nuclear option on the table in US declaratory policy so as to contribute to deterrence of such an attack. **A major cyberattack on the United States could result in massive economic damage, substantial social disruption, and potentially even significant loss of life.** The cyber vulnerabilities of US critical infrastructure are significant and growing as the United States moves increasingly toward an economy and a society based on the so-called internet of things.

Impact: The US nuclear deterrent stopped war from escalating in Iraq.

Miller, Franklin. "The Dangers of No-First-Use." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 22 Aug. 2016, thebulletin.org/2016/08/the-dangers-of-no-first-use/.

Why so? There is no doubt that the US nuclear deterrent has prevented war and the escalation of war in the past. For example, **there is considerable evidence from the 1991 First Gulf War that the US nuclear deterrent helped to prevent Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein from escalating to the use of Iraqi chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction—possibly saving tens of thousands of US and allied lives.** A US pledge of no-first-use now would encourage current and future opponents to believe

that they need not fear the US nuclear deterrent in response to their potential massive use of military force against us or our allies—including the use of advanced conventional weapons, and chemical and biological weapons.

Analysis: This argument can be weighed on magnitude. If there was a severe threat to the U.S. and our hands were tied policy-wise, it could lead to millions of Americans' lives lost. It can also be weighed on timeframe, since in the long-term No First Use would be an unsustainable policy to uphold.

CON: Other countries would develop their own nuclear weapons

Argument: If the U.S. commits to never dropping a nuclear bomb first, other nations that rely on the U.S. for defense would become wary of escalating situations and develop domestic nuclear programs for reassurance.

Uniqueness: A state may want nuclear weapons if they don't trust their great-power ally.

Waltz, Kenneth. "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Better." Adelphi Papers, Number 171 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981)
www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/waltz1.htm.

Nations want nuclear weapons for one or more of seven reasons. First, great powers always counter the weapons of other great powers, usually by imitating those who have introduced new weapons. It was not surprising that the Soviet Union developed atomic and hydro-gen bombs, but rather that we thought the Baruch-Lilienthal plan might persuade her not to. Second, **a state may want nuclear weapons for fear that its great-power ally will not retaliate if the other great power attacks.** Although Britain when she became a nuclear power thought of herself as being a great one, her reasons for deciding later to maintain a nuclear force arose from doubts that the United States could be counted on to retaliate in response to an attack by the Soviet Union on Europe and from Britain's consequent desire to place a finger on our nuclear trigger.

Warrant: No First Use would cause allies to doubt the security of the U.S. nuclear umbrella.

Heinrichs, Rebecca. "Reject 'no First Use' Nuclear Policy | Opinion." Newsweek, 24 Aug. 2020, www.newsweek.com/reject-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-opinion-1527037.

Worse, the CCP's dubious claims to disputed Chinese territory raises concerns about how, and where, Beijing may employ nuclear weapons. Moreover, the CCP is engaged in a robust disinformation campaign across all areas of its government and society: America should not presume anything but deceit from our number one geopolitical threat.

Finally, adopting an NFU policy would cause allied nations, who have rightly forsworn nuclear weapons and who rely on the American nuclear umbrella, to doubt our assurances. And if allies and partners can no longer rely on our nuclear umbrella, they will develop their own. The result of the nuclear idealists' efforts, zealous as their mission is to take the world down to zero nuclear weapons, could ironically result in precipitous nuclear proliferation.

Solvency: Allies might find it necessary to develop nuclear programs to offset doubts about the U.S.

Tan, Anjelica. "A Commitment to Never Use Nuclear Weapons First Will Not Make Us Safer." TheHill, 26 Dec. 2019, thehill.com/opinion/national-security/475965-a-commitment-to-never-use-nuclear-weapons-first-will-not-make-us-safer.

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

Solvency: Perceived wavering of U.S. security commitments could cause allies to develop and their own nuclear weapons.

Harvey, John. “Assessing the Risks of a Nuclear ‘No First Use’ Policy.” War on the Rocks, 5 July 2019, warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/.

Loss of confidence in U.S. security commitments could cause some allies to seek accommodation with regional adversaries in ways that run counter to U.S. interests. Moreover, **both South Korea and Japan, similar to many NATO allies, have latent nuclear weapons capabilities characteristic of advanced industrial economies with commercial nuclear power. Any perceived wavering of U.S. security commitments could cause allies to develop and field their own nuclear weapons.** Further, America’s allies have made their feelings about America adopting a no-first-use policy known. U.S. officials consulted America’s allies extensively in the lead up to the 2010 and 2018 nuclear posture reviews.

Impact: Nuclearization would cause a dangerous arms race.

Terry, Sue. “An American Nuclear Umbrella Means a Lot to Northeast Asia.” www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2016/10/26/a-nuclear-arsenal-upgrade/an-american-nuclear-umbrella-means-a-lot-to-northeast-asia, 26 Oct. 2016.

Why haven’t South Korea and Japan gone ahead and nuclearized already? A big part of the explanation is the faith they have placed in the American nuclear umbrella. But that

faith is starting to erode. There are growing calls from South Korean lawmakers in the conservative, ruling Saenuri Party to develop nuclear weapons — an option that was endorsed by 54 percent of those surveyed by Gallup Korea in January 2016. **What would happen if South Korea were to go nuclear? Japan would follow suit. And then we would be in the midst of a dangerous and destabilizing nuclear-arms race involving Japan, South Korea, North Korea and China, similar to the nuclear competition that already exists between India and Pakistan.** The chances of a catastrophic conflict would greatly increase. That would not be in the interests of Northeast Asia or in the interests of America.

Impact: Arms races create instability and lead to increased military spending.

Erlanger, Steven. “Are We Headed for Another Expensive Nuclear Arms Race? Could Be.” The New York Times, 8 Aug. 2019,
www.nytimes.com/2019/08/08/world/europe/arms-race-russia-china.html.

The dismantling of “arms control,” a Cold War mantra, is now heightening the risks of a new era when nuclear powers like India and Pakistan are clashing over Kashmir, and when nuclear Israel feels threatened by Iran, North Korea is testing new missiles, and other countries like Saudi Arabia are thought to have access to nuclear weapons or to be capable of building them. **The consequence, experts say, is likely to be a more dangerous and unstable environment, even in the near term, that could precipitate unwanted conflicts and demand vast new military spending among the world’s biggest powers, including the United States.** “If there’s not nuclear disarmament, there will be proliferation,” said Joseph Cirincione, a nuclear analyst and president of the Ploughshares Fund, a global security foundation. “If big powers race to build up their arsenals, smaller powers will follow.”

Analysis: This argument can be weighed on scope and magnitude. Global nuclearization doesn't just affect U.S. security, but security around the world. Arms races are also a particularly big impact because they're cyclical in nature; as one country builds their arms, another responds by building up theirs, and the cycle continues.

CON: Allies would lose confidence in the U.S. security umbrella

Argument: Many countries rely on the U.S. nuclear arsenal as deterrence, and as a result, don't invest much domestically in their militaries. If the U.S. adopted a No First Use policy, this deterrence would be eliminated. Allies may have to allocate resources to building up their own militaries.

Uniqueness: Japan regularly seeks assurance that America will protect it with its nuclear presence.

Harvey, John. "Assessing the Risks of a Nuclear 'No First Use' Policy." War on the Rocks, 5 July 2019, warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/.

In response to Chinese provocations in the western Pacific and North Korea's nuclear tests and missile launches, **Japan regularly seeks, both in official consultations and ongoing military cooperation, assurances that America will continue to fulfill its security commitments to protect the island nation. Some in South Korea have already pressed to explore an increased U.S. nuclear presence in their country to further deter regional threats. Loss of confidence in U.S. security commitments could cause some allies to seek accommodation with regional adversaries in ways that run counter to U.S. interests.** Moreover, both South Korea and Japan, similar to many NATO allies, have latent nuclear weapons capabilities characteristic of advanced industrial economies with commercial nuclear power. Any perceived wavering of U.S. security commitments could cause allies to develop and field their own nuclear weapons.

Warrant: America's allies oppose a No First Use policy.

Harvey, John. "Assessing the Risks of a Nuclear 'No First Use' Policy." War on the Rocks, 5 July 2019, warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/.

Further, **America's allies have made their feelings about America adopting a no-first-use policy known. U.S. officials consulted America's allies extensively in the lead up to the 2010 and 2018 nuclear posture reviews.** This dialogue has been rich and productive and, in some ways, surprising in its candor. For example, in 2009, Japanese officials briefed the Perry-Schlesinger Commission, established by Congress to seek a bipartisan approach to the U.S. nuclear posture, on specific features and capabilities of the U.S. nuclear deterrent that Japan viewed as critical to its security. **In related dialogue, many foreign counterparts to U.S. officials, including those of Japan, have urged the United States not to adopt a no-first-use policy.**

Warrant: Allies opposed a No First Use policy under Obama.

Rogin, Josh. "U.S. Allies Unite to Block Obama's Nuclear 'Legacy'." The Washington Post, WP Company, 14 Aug. 2016, www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/allies-unite-to-block-an-obama-legacy/2016/08/14/cdb8d8e4-60b9-11e6-8e45-477372e89d78_story.html?utm_campaign=Defense+EBB+08-15-16.

President Obama's last-minute drive for a foreign-policy legacy is making U.S. allies nervous about their own security. **Several allied governments have lobbied the administration not to change U.S. nuclear-weapons policy by promising never to be the first to use them in a conflict. 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.

Solvency: Possibility of a US nuclear response assures allies of their security.

Miller, Franklin. "The Dangers of No-First-Use." Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 22 Aug. 2016, thebulletin.org/2016/08/the-dangers-of-no-first-use/.

In short, based on evidence from the past seven decades, the US nuclear deterrent helps deter war and preserve global stability by compelling potential aggressors to consider the possibility of a US nuclear response in any of their prospective plans to attack us or our allies. **It also provides enormous support for nuclear non-proliferation by helping to assure over 30 US allies of their security. US adoption of a no-first-use policy would threaten to degrade this critical deterrence of enemies and assurance of allies.** Proponents of no-first-use often assert that US high-tech conventional forces could ultimately defeat an opponent's massive use of military force, including advanced conventional weapons, and chemical and biological weapons, without the US needing to resort to nuclear weapons—and thereby claim that the US nuclear deterrent threat is unnecessary for this purpose.

Impact: Alliances help prevent war.

Murphy, Martin. "The Importance of Alliances for U.S. Security." The Heritage Foundation, 7 Oct. 2016, www.heritage.org/military-strength-topical-essays/2017-essays/the-importance-alliances-us-security.

Since 1941, "alliances have proven to be a crucial and enduring source of advantage for the United States." How so? **Alliances prevent war. Not every war, of course, but by driving up the cost of aggression, defensive alliances have an effective record of**

detering revanchist states from using violence as a means of settling disputes or gambling on a quick military thrust to achieve relatively risk-free advantage. History suggests strongly that states with allies are less at risk of attack than those without them, an observation borne out by the success of U.S. alliances during the Cold War.

Impact: The U.S. security umbrella allows other nations to reduce their own defense expenditures and spend that money more productively.

Jones, Garrett, and Tim J. Kane. "U.S. Troops and Economic Growth." SSRN Electronic Journal, 2007, 10.2139/ssrn.1148403.
<http://mason.gmu.edu/~gjonesb/USTroopsGrowthJonesKane.pdf>

Further, the security guarantee of U.S. troops is a powerful signal to foreign investors, perhaps even a deciding factor for multinational firms deciding where to install new capital equipment and where to bring their technology-diffusing organizational capital. American-guaranteed security would tend to spur higher levels of both domestic and foreign direct investment and would lower the risk premium in interest rates. Finally,
the presence of American security forces allows a host nation to lower its own defense expenditures, which can be a sizeable savings. This tends to reduce government consumption, which allows the country to use more of its own resources for physical and human capital accumulation. The security umbrella effect therefore encompasses multiple channels, all of which imply a rise in investment in both physical and human capital.

Analysis: This argument can be weighed on scope. No First Use Policy doesn't only affect U.S. national security, but also the security of our allies around the world. It can also be weighed on probability since allies explicitly said they opposed No First Use under Obama.

CON – Alternatives Don't Work - Sanctions

Argument: The United States often attempts to use alternatives to military coercion for conflict resolution. One such typical alternative, sanctions, is notably counterproductive.

Warrant: Sanctions fail 95% of the time

Robert Pape. Stanford University. Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work. 2003.

[http://www.stanford.edu/class/ips216/Readings/pape_97%20\(jstor\).pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/class/ips216/Readings/pape_97%20(jstor).pdf)

“115 identified cases in all. They reported sanctions success in 40 cases or 34 percent of the total. Practically none of the claimed 40 successes of economic sanctions stands up to examination. Eighteen were actually settled by direct or indirect use of force; in 8 cases there is no evidence that the target made the demanded concessions; 6 do not qualify as instances of economic sanctions; and 3 are indeterminate. **Of HSE's 115 cases, only 5 are appropriately considered successes.**”

Warrant: Sanctions have at best short-term effects, example Iran

Vasudevan Sridharan. “Iran ‘Suspends’ Nuclear Programme as Sanctions Hit Country Hard”. International Business Times. 4 November 2012.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/articles/401225/20121104/iran-nuclear-tehran-sanctions-ahmadinejad-israel-netanyahu.htm>

“However, an informed source was quoted by Iran's Fars News Agency that the programme has not been suspended. “20 percent uranium enrichment activities continue as before and no change has happened. News about Iran's nuclear issues is only announced by the secretariat of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC),” said the unidentified source. **The move is said to be aimed at lifting of the crippling**

sanctions imposed by the western world; Tehran is likely to resume its enrichment programme if the sanctions continue.”

Warrant: By contrast, fear of nuclear strikes is a powerful motivator

Kenneth Waltz, “The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Better,” Adelphi Papers, Number 171 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981)
<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/waltz1.htm>

“The other way to inhibit a country's intended aggressive moves is to scare that country out of making them by threatening to visit unacceptable punishment upon it. 'To deter' literally means to stop someone from doing something by frightening him. In contrast to dissuasion by defence, dissuasion by deterrence operates by frightening a state out of attacking, not because of the difficulty of launching an attack and carrying it home, but because the expected reaction of the attacked will result in one's own severe punishment.”

Impact: An aggressive US posture actually deters nuclear acquisition far better than the threat of sanctions can

Austin Long (Columbia University). The Wilson Center. “Weighing Benefits and Costs of Military Action Against Iran.” 2012

http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/IranReport_091112_FINAL.pdf

“U.S. military action against Iran’s nuclear program may also reduce the odds that other countries in the region will seek nuclear weapons. First, it might provide assurance to regional allies, who would see that the United States will act to protect their security and that Washington’s promises to its friends are credible. **Moreover, if Iran’s nuclear**

program were set back, key regional players such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt would feel less pressure to pursue their own nuclear programs. Second, a U.S. military action might also deter others—inside and outside the region—from pursuing their nuclear ambitions, fearing that if they do, it might invite a similar U.S. response”

Impact: Strong flexing of US military power actually makes multilateral efforts like sanctions MORE effective

Giulio M. Gallarotti. Social Sciences Journal at Wesleyan University. Soft Power: What it is, Why it's Important, and the Conditions Under Which it Can Be Effectively Used. 2011.
http://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1056&context=div2_facpubs

Hence soft power resources can enhance hard power, and vice versa. Certainly, a strong positive image can garner many more allies, which in turn can bolster a nation's defenses. And of course, committing troops to defend a nation against invasion will certainly garner a better image for the protector state. Gilpin (2002) underscores the extent to which the global economic primacy enjoyed by America in the post-war period has been founded on the Pax Americana, which American military primacy has sustained. Furthermore, the possession of hard power itself can make a nation a role model in a variety of way. For example, Realists such as Waltz (1979) underscores the image generated by large military arsenals and successful military strategies. As a symbol of national success, this extensive hard power generates significant soft power by enhancing respect and admiration. But these hard power resources cannot be used in ways that undermine that respect and admiration. In other words, they cannot be used in ways that deviate from the politically liberal principles under girding soft power (see Table 1). So even the employment of force can generate soft power if it is used in

the service of goals widely perceived as consistent with such principles: e.g., for protecting nations against aggression, peacekeeping, or liberation against tyranny.

Analysis: This argument is strong because it dispels the myth that an enemy can be compelled to actions using “light” forms of pressure like sanctions. Force your opponents to admit that the only path to victory lies through military force.

CON: NFU harms deterrence capability

Argument: Nuclear Deterrence is an extremely important defense strategy that is critical to global peace efforts. America signing a No First Use commitment would take away from the strength of deterrence.

Uniqueness: A pillar of America's defense relies upon nuclear weapons

C. Todd, 4-1-2019, "4 Things to Know About the U.S. Nuclear Deterrence Strategy," U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE. 1 April, 2019. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.
<https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/1801797/4-things-to-know-about-the-us-nuclear-deterrence-strategy/>

Nuclear deterrence is a top priority within the U.S. military. "It's our singular, most important mission," Dunford told lawmakers. "Nuclear deterrence is the bedrock of U.S. national security," Trachtenberg said. "Our nuclear deterrent underwrites all U.S. military operations and diplomacy across the globe. It is the backstop and foundation of our national defense. A strong nuclear deterrent also contributes to U.S. non-proliferation goals by limiting the incentive for allies to have their own nuclear weapons." Nuclear deterrence means that when the U.S. has nuclear weapons, it tempers in some fashion the activities of potential adversaries around the globe — helping to ensure those adversaries don't make dangerous miscalculations about what they can get away with based on what they think the U.S. is capable of or willing to do in response.

Warrant: Deterrence is critical for global peace- historical precedent shows

Miller, Franklin C. 08-22-2016. "The Dangers of No First Use" Bulletin of the Atomic

Scientists. 22 Aug. 2016. Web. 6 Oct. 2020. <https://thebulletin.org/2016/08/the-dangers-of-no-first-use/>

There is no doubt that the US nuclear deterrent has prevented war and the escalation of war in the past. For example, there is considerable evidence from the 1991 First Gulf War that the US nuclear deterrent helped to prevent Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein from escalating to the use of Iraqi chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction—possibly saving tens of thousands of US and allied lives. A US pledge of no-first-use now would encourage current and future opponents to believe that they need not fear the US nuclear deterrent in response to their potential massive use of military force against us or our allies—including the use of advanced conventional weapons, and chemical and biological weapons.

Warrant: Deterrence matters (two reasons)

Hoehn, Andrew R., 04-26-2017, "How Trump Can Deter Russia and All of America's Other Enemies," The Rand Corporation. 26 Apr. 2017. Web. 6 Oct. 2020. <https://www.rand.org/blog/2017/04/how-trump-can-deter-russia-and-all-of-americas-other.html>

Why does deterrence matter? **First, because the American power to deter is critical to maintaining U.S. alliances, the Trump administration's problem isn't deterring other countries from attacking the U.S. with nuclear weapons.** Few would doubt the U.S. willingness or ability to obliterate any nation that launched a nuclear strike against it. But, as the Obama administration rediscovered when Russia annexed Crimea and invaded Ukraine, the U.S. does have a growing problem in deterring adversaries from using conventional weapons or even “little green men” to attack weak regional states. That's destabilizing. **The second reason why deterrence matters is that security threats to the U.S. and its allies are increasing.** The wars of the last quarter century, especially

since 9/11, have come at great cost to the U.S. The U.S. has wrestled with protracted wars in the Balkans, the collapse of Somalia, the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria, and a growing crisis over Iran's nuclear ambitions, but none of these threats were existential. Not yet. None threatened the survival of the American people, or large-scale destruction on U.S. territory. And, for the most part, none directly threatened key U.S. allies.

Warrant: NFU would harm US deterrence capacity

Miller, Franklin C. 08-22-2016. "The Dangers of No First Use" Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. 22 Aug. 2016. Web. 6 Oct. 2020. <https://thebulletin.org/2016/08/the-dangers-of-no-first-use/>

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

Impact: NFU policy could increase the chances of a devastating nuclear war

Department of Defense. 1-4-2019. "Dangers of a Nuclear No Use First

Policy” Department of Defense. 1 April 2019. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.

<https://media.defense.gov/2019/Apr/01/2002108002/-1/-1/1/DANGERS-OF-A-NO-FIRST-USE-POLICY.PDF>

Advocates argue that a U.S. no first use policy would reduce the risk of nuclear war. However, **adoption of such a policy could increase the likelihood of devastating conflict, including one that escalates to nuclear war, by incentivizing non-nuclear strategic attack on, and coercion of, the U.S. or our allies and partners.** Such a policy may change how adversaries and allies view the credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrent and our resolve to use it when our vital interests are threatened. Operational scenarios exist in which the U.S. would consider first use. Retaining a degree of ambiguity and refraining from a no first use policy creates uncertainty in the mind of potential adversaries and reinforces deterrence of aggression by ensuring adversaries cannot predict what specific actions will lead to a U.S. nuclear response. Implementing a no first use policy could undermine the U.S. ability to deter Russian, Chinese, and North Korean aggression, especially with respect to their growing capability to carry out nonnuclear strategic attacks

Analysis: This argument is probably one of the most stock arguments on the topic. The idea of deterrence as an important part of US military strategy is the main reason that nuclear arsenals are viewed as highly important for national security. Neg teams running this argument have the advantage of judges most likely being already familiar with the logic behind this argument and the commonly accepted validity of deterrence as a phenomenon. However, Neg teams must be prepared to prove the validity of deterrence because many scholars believe deterrence to be less effective than commonly believed.

CON: NFU would harm American ability to check China

Argument: If America signed a NFU agreement, it would not mean that other governments would follow suit which could put America in a more subordinate position globally. The most concerning countries that may gain power in this situation are Russia and China.

Uniqueness: China and Russia building up nuclear arsenals

Grady, John. 7-30-2020, "STRATCOM CO: Chinese, Russian Build Up of Nuclear Weapons Will 'Test' U.S. Strategic Deterrence," USNI News. 7/30/2020, Web. 10/4/2020.
<https://news.usni.org/2020/07/30/stratcom-co-chinese-russian-build-up-of-nuclear-weapons-will-test-u-s-strategic-deterrence>

The U.S. is facing a more complex strategic deterrence problem as both China and Russia continue to modernize their nuclear and conventional weapons, the head of U.S. Strategic Command said on Thursday. **"This is the first time we're going to face two-nuclear capable adversaries,"** Adm. Charles Richard said during remarks at the Mitchell Institute. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union the U.S. has "not had to consider a near-peer adversary in close to 30 years," he said. The Kremlin has reached 70 percent of its across-the-board modernization objectives that it set 15 years ago. This build-up "includes several thousand, non-treaty nuclear weapons," Richard said, referring to short-range cruise and ballistic missiles that are not covered by existing strategic arms control treaties. **He noted later that Moscow expanded its nuclear forces unilaterally as the United States reduced its own nuclear weapons stockpile.**

Uniqueness: We are at a critical point right now in terms of deterrence

Grady, John. 7-30-2020, "STRATCOM CO: Chinese, Russian Build Up of Nuclear Weapons Will 'Test' U.S. Strategic Deterrence," USNI News. 7/30/2020, Web. 10/4/2020.
<https://news.usni.org/2020/07/30/stratcom-co-chinese-russian-build-up-of-nuclear-weapons-will-test-u-s-strategic-deterrence>

Richard does not expect to see a drop-off in congressional support for the current Pentagon modernization drive because of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the federal budget. **"Russia did not give up a single nuclear weapon" because of the pandemic. He said the same was true for China.** In a conference call with reporters also on Thursday, James Geurts, the Navy's acquisition chief, reaffirmed the Columbia ballistic missile program was still the service's top priority. **Strategic deterrence is "not an issue that we can afford to take risk on. [Columbia] will be prioritized above all others as we go forward,"** Geurts said. Richard said to maintain force survivability the U.S. needs at least 12 Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines. **Asked whether he advocated the United States adopt a "no-first-use" policy when it comes to nuclear weapons, Richard said, "we have to be very humble when it comes to policies like that... We're going to be tested in ways we were never tested before."**

Warrant: Nuclear action may be needed to prevent conventional warfare with Russia or China

Miller, James N., 1-13-2020, "No to no first use—for now," Taylor & Francis. 13 Jan. 2020. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.170127>

Before reaching a conclusion on this issue, **it is worth pondering what a non-nuclear war between the United States and China or Russia might entail. It could entail early and extensive attacks on space-based assets, including those critical for nuclear command and control; early and extensive cyberattacks on both military assets and**

civilian critical infrastructure; and hundreds or thousands of kinetic strikes from missiles and aircraft. Of course, it may also involve a combined air, land, and sea invasion of US allies or partners. If so, because of the attacker's advantage of proximity and more secure supply and lines of communication, it is possible that the invasion will initially succeed. In other words, it may be possible that the United States may suffer grievous damage to its economy, society, and military, and that its allies or partners may be facing occupation. Even in this dire scenario, it is by no means clear that an American president would, or should, employ nuclear weapons. US forces were nearly pushed off of the peninsula by Chinese forces in the Korean War, and yet the United States did not use nuclear weapons despite its nuclear superiority. **But if it is plausible that a reasonable future president could make a rational decision to threaten or use nuclear weapons to attempt to end a major power war on acceptable terms, then it certainly would be wise to leave that threat on the table in order to bolster deterrence of armed aggression in the first place.**

Warrant: China is currently becoming more aggressive in their nuclear posturing- change would be bad now.

Kulacki, George. 01-2016. "China's Military Calls for Putting Its Nuclear Forces on Alert," Union of Concerned Scientists. Jan 2016. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.
<https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/chinas-military-calls-putting-its-nuclear-forces-alert>

But this relatively low-risk policy may change. **Recent excerpts and quotes from Chinese military sources suggest pressure is building to change China's nuclear posture away from a focus on survivability, and toward a policy of launch-on-warning and hair-trigger alert. Such a change would dramatically increase the risk of a nuclear exchange or accident—a dangerous shift that the United States could help avert.** Evidence that China's policies are changing Following a 2012 speech on nuclear policy by Chinese

President Xi Jinping, the commander of China's land-based nuclear missile forces told his troops to "maintain a high alert level... assuring that if something happens we're ready to go." In 2013, an updated edition of a standard text on Chinese military strategy, partially translated by the Union of Concerned Scientists, said China's nuclear forces will move towards a "launch-on-warning" posture, where "...under conditions confirming the enemy has launched nuclear missiles against us, before the enemy nuclear warheads have reached us... [we can] quickly launch a nuclear missile retaliatory strike." These and other statements suggest that a domestic conversation about raising the alert level of China's nuclear forces is taking place. The debate is driven in part by concerns about accurate U.S. nuclear weapons, high-precision conventional weapons, and missile defense—all of which are perceived as compromising China's current posture.

Impact: American Allies rely on America for nuclear deterrent against enemies. If America signs a NFU agreement, it could lead allies to proliferate.

Brent Peabody, 9-21-2019, "How to Make the U.S. Military Weak Again," National Interest. 21 Sep. 2019. Web. 6 Oct. 2020,
<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-make-us-military-weak-again-81891>

The Cold War is over, but the dynamic is much the same. **Allies from South Korea to Saudi Arabia depend on America's right to use nuclear weapons first as a credible deterrent to keep regional rivals like North Korea, China, and Iran in check.** This was made explicit in the run-up to the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, when President Barack Obama flirted with the idea of a no-first-use policy but backed off after hearing firsthand from allies how the policy would leave them more exposed to attack from emboldened regional adversaries. **Indeed, it is conceivable that many of our allies would develop nuclear weapons of their own if they no longer felt covered by America's nuclear-security umbrella.** South Korea, for example, is the world's fourth largest generator of

nuclear energy, and the transition from producing the low-enrichment uranium needed for nuclear energy to the weapon-grade uranium needed for a warhead is not insurmountable. Japan and Taiwan, with latent nuclear capabilities of their own, could also nuclearize if they no longer deem America's nuclear deterrent strong enough.

Impact: China could beat America in a conventional war, deterring them is crucial

Gilisan, Kathy. 07-25-2019. "How the US Could Lose a War with China" The Atlantic. 25 Jul. 2019. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/07/china-us-war/594793/>

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.")

Analysis: Teams who run this argument are tapping into a very common fear of the growing power of China. Rhetorically, this argument seems to make sense in terms of current national dialogues regarding threats to the US, but neg teams who run this argument need to be fully

prepared to engage in the “does deterrence work” debate. Strategic neg teams should definitely look more into the idea of whether risking a conventional war is worth signing a NFU agreement.

CON: US NFU use decision would harm NATO and lead to NATO nuclear collapse

Argument: US provides deterrence for their Allies in NATO, by signing a NFU agreement then there may be complications within NATO.

Warrant: NATO has always used nuclear deterrence as one of their strategies

NATO. 04-16-2020. "NATO's nuclear deterrence policy and forces," NATO. 16 Apr. 2020. Web. 6 Oct. 2020. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50068.htm

Nuclear weapons are a core component of NATO's overall capabilities for deterrence and defence, alongside conventional and missile defence forces. NATO is committed to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, but as long as nuclear weapons exist, it will remain a nuclear alliance. **The fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression. NATO's current nuclear policy is based on two public documents agreed by all 30 Allies:** The 2010 Strategic Concept. The 2012 Deterrence and Defence Posture Review. The 2010 Strategic Concept, adopted by Allied Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in Lisbon in November 2010, sets out the Alliance's core tasks and principles, including deterrence. The Strategic Concept commits NATO to the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, but reconfirms that, as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. It also seeks to ensure the broadest possible participation of Allies in collective defence planning on nuclear roles, in peacetime basing of nuclear forces, and in command, control and consultation arrangements.

Warrant: America's nuclear capabilities are the backbone to all of NATO's deterrence capability

Anderson, Justin V. 09-2013. "Extended Deterrence and Allied Assurance: Key Concepts and Current Challenges for US Policy." USAF Institute for National Security Studies. Sep. 2013. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.
<https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/OCP69.pdf>

Finally, in Europe the traditional security commitments to NATO members remain in place. The 2012 NATO Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR) confirmed that NATO remains a nuclear alliance. The DDPR did not address, however, looming challenges to the alliance's current nuclear strategy and nuclear sharing arrangements. Most allied dualcapable aircraft are slated for retirement within the next decade, and there are no plans in place for their replacement. NATO's current embrace of missile defenses has provided an avenue for close cooperation on one aspect of extended deterrence/assurance strategies, but also represents an irritant to Russia. Ongoing European military force reductions and general uncertainty about **NATO's future strategic direction raise broader questions about the future of extending deterrence in this region when the alliance has no clear enemy. U.S. extended deterrence and assurance guarantees remain vital to U.S. and allied national security, and play a critical role in ensuring stability in strategically vital regions across the globe. They face pressure, however, not only from geopolitical developments but also from changing requirements reflecting evolving adversary capabilities and shifting allied requests. Washington's present role as chief national security partner of critical allies, its influence in key regions, and, ultimately, U.S. security and prosperity within an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, will all depend on how successfully the United States tailors policies and strategies to assure its friends – and deter their enemies – in a dynamic international security environment.**

Warrant: NATO is opposed to the shift to a NFU policy

Downman, Maxwell. "Where Would Europe Stand on a US No First Use Policy." Outride Post. Web. 6 Oct. 2020. <https://outrider.org/nuclear-weapons/articles/where-would-europe-stand-us-no-first-use-policy/>

In 2016, President Obama considered a U.S. pledge to never use nuclear weapons first. U.S. allies in Europe and East Asia reportedly opposed this move and sent high-level delegations to lobby in Washington. Allies feared that without the threat of nuclear first use countries like Russia and North Korea—maybe even China—would push the boundary of acceptable behavior. There was also opposition to the policy change inside the U.S. government. In the end, the United States' first use policy remained unchanged. Still, support for a No First Use (NFU) policy has grown steadily in Democratic circles since President Obama left office. NFU has featured in campaign pledges from nine Democratic candidates, including Joe Biden, Elizabeth Warren, and Bernie Sanders. It's possible that the United States could have a NFU pledge after the 2020 election. In private conversations, European officials remain firm in opposing a NFU policy. The security situation in Europe has deteriorated since 2016. **There is a high level of distrust between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Russia. And, many governments see the threat of nuclear first use as important for deterrence. They also see no reason to reassure Russia when they are convinced of its bad intentions.**

Warrant: The US needs NATO and shouldn't risk going against their wishes- two reasons

David Wemer, 6-19-2017, "Here's why the United States needs NATO," Atlantic Council.
19 Jun. 2017. Web. 6 Oct. 2020. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/here-s-why-the-united-states-needs-nato/>

NATO promotes peace within Europe and deters major US adversaries from launching large-scale conventional wars. World War II cost the United States more than 400,000 lives and an estimated \$4.1 trillion (in 2011 dollars). **NATO has been key to preserving peace within the European continent and preventing other adversaries from launching a major conventional war. According to credible sources, a major conventional war today could cost the United States upwards of \$2.5 trillion per year. NATO also promotes the American values of democracy and rule of law.** Twenty-six of the twenty-nine NATO member states were labelled as “free” by Freedom House in 2018. By comparison, just 39 percent of the world’s population lives in “free” countries. **NATO supports and protects the economies of Europe, which are critical to the health of the US economy.** US trade with the European Union reached \$699 billion in 2015, only made possible because of the security and stability provided by NATO. US exports to the former Communist NATO member states (not including East Germany) grew from \$0.9 billion in 1989 to \$9.4 billion in 2016. Non-US NATO members rely heavily on the US defense industry to supply their forces. Currently, European members are planning to purchase as many as 500 new F-35s from the United States.

Impact: A NFU policy could have negative effects on the actions of their allies in Europe.

“U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy: Considering ‘No-First Use’” 03-01-2019. Congressional Research Service. 1 Mar. 2019. Web 6 Oct. 2020.
<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/IN10553.pdf>

Although the United States does not rule out the first use of nuclear weapons, the absence of a “no first use” pledge is less about the perceived need to employ these

weapons first in a conflict than it is about the view that the threat of nuclear escalation continues to serve as a deterrent to large-scale conventional war or the use of chemical and biological weapons. Supporters of the current policy argue that removing the threat of nuclear escalation could embolden countries like North Korea, China, or Russia, who might believe that they could overwhelm U.S. allies in their regions and take advantage of local or regional conventional advantages before the United States or its allies could respond. In such a scenario, some argue, the “no first use” pledge would not only undermine deterrence, but could also increase the risk that a conventional war could escalate and involve nuclear weapons use. **Moreover, because the United States has pledged to use all means necessary, including nuclear weapons, to defend allies in Europe and Asia, this change in U.S. declaratory policy could undermine allies’ confidence in the U.S. commitment to their defense and possibly spur them to acquire their own nuclear weapons.** As a result, in this view, a “no first use” policy could undermine U.S. nuclear nonproliferation goals. Some analysts outside government dispute these conclusions. Some

Analysis: This argument is a more specific look at what the allies of America may have to lose with the adoption of a NFU agreement, so teams wanting to run a harm to international relations case should consider this as a potential link or subpoint. Neg teams should pay particularly close attention to establishing a clear link between a NFU agreement and retaliation from NATO. Teams should further research what US non adherence to the wishes of NATO may mean for international relations.

CON: US conventional military capacity is not capable of an efficient response

Argument: Nuclear Weapons are crucial to deterring conventional war. If conventional war happened it could be devastating to America.

Uniqueness: Nuclear Weapons deter convention war

Zimmerman, Paul. 09-16-2017. "Nuclear Weapons Deter Conventional War" Gulf News. 16 Sep. 2017. Web. 6 Oct. 2020. <https://gulfnews.com/opinion/op-eds/nuclear-weapons-deter-conventional-wars-1.2091053>

Though "trust but verify", as former US president Ronald Reagan often put it, remains the core of any international arms-control agreement, the UN treaty presents a nebulous mention that weapons states shall cooperate with a "competent international authority or authorities to negotiate and verify the irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons programmes". A "State Party that owns, possesses or controls nuclear weapons ... shall immediately remove them from operational status" and later "submit to the secretary-general of the United Nations a declaration that it has fulfilled its obligations". The mechanics by which nuclear possessor states rid themselves of their weapons are undefined. For now, the agreement relies on the honour system, rather than enforceable penalties for noncompliance — critical details kicked down the road to a document that doesn't yet exist. Even if the document had been perfectly drafted, and had the leaders of the effort gained a measure of buy-in from nuclear states about their interests, total nuclear abolition remains a bad idea. As former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher had said, 30 years ago, in a speech delivered in Russia: "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. Some hydrogen bombs are small enough to hide in a coat closet — verification of their destruction, in the absence of a yet-to-be-determined mechanism, and in the absence of a strong international consensus, is impossible. **And the loss of the barrier to conventional escalation would be ruinous. Nuclear weapons cannot be un-invented. If the treaty’s proponents had their way, the world would eventually regret it.**

Warrant: There is fear that NFU could increase the chance of conventional war

Steve Fetter, 12-19-2017, "No First Use and Credible Deterrence," Taylor & Francis. 19 Dec. 2017. Web. 6 Dec. 2020.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257>

Former defense officials with full knowledge of America’s conventional and nuclear capabilities and the threats America faces, including former Defense Secretary William Perry² and former Strategic Command commander and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. James Cartwright (Cartwright and Blair, 2016), have spoken in favor of no first use. According to General Cartwright, “nuclear weapons today no longer serve any purpose beyond deterring the first use of such weapons by our adversaries” (Cartwright and Blair, 2016). According to the Times and Post reports, the main reason President Obama did not adopt a policy of no first use was concern about the reaction of allies — particularly Japan. In fact, the Washington Post reported that **Prime Minister Abe personally conveyed his opposition to NFU, because he believed it could increase the likelihood of conventional conflict with North Korea or China** (Rogin, 2016b).

Reports indicated, however, that the Japanese concern stemmed from a belief that adopting no first use would weaken the perceived American commitment to Japan's defense. While untrue and not even directly related, this perception made rapid adoption of a no-first-use statement impossible. President Obama left office without adopting a policy of NFU or making any additional major changes to US nuclear policy.

Warrant: NFU would force America to respond to threats with conventional warfare

The Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. Updated 2020. "No First Use: Frequently Asked Questions." Updated 2020. Web. 7 Oct. 2020.

<https://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/no-first-use/no-first-use-frequently-asked-questions/>

A "No First Use" (NFU) policy is a commitment to not use nuclear weapons first. An NFU policy would restrict when a president could consider using nuclear weapons, and would help signal that the United States believes that nuclear weapons are for deterrence—not warfighting.

Sole authority refers to the current U.S. nuclear posture in which the President alone can order the launch of nuclear weapons at any time for any reason without checks from the other branches of government. While a president may (and most likely would) consult with their national security team before ordering a nuclear attack, s/he is not required to seek advice or agreement from anyone. Proposals to eliminate sole authority address the question of who would authorize a nuclear strike. Eliminating sole authority would require changing launch procedures to require consent from other individuals in government to conduct a nuclear attack in any scenario, not only a nuclear first strike.

“Sole purpose” refers to a commitment only to use nuclear weapons to deter nuclear attacks. This means that U.S. nuclear forces would not be used to deter conventional, chemical, biological, or cyber attacks. Current policy as set out in this Administration’s Nuclear Posture Review would allow the United States to use nuclear weapons in “...extreme circumstances to defend the United States, its allies, and partners.” Declaring sole purpose would clarify what nuclear weapons are for.

Warrant: America’s conventional military would not be able to win in a war

Jared Keller, 11-16-2018, "Despite Record Spending, the U.S. Military Would Be at 'Grave Risk' in a War With Russia or China," Pacific Standard. 16 Nov. 2018. Web. 7 Oct. 2020. <https://psmag.com/economics/war-experts-are-skeptical-the-american-military-could-defeat-russia-or-china>

The United States may spend more on defense than the next seven highest-spending nations on the planet combined, but it seems to be ill-prepared for war against its most dangerous adversaries: A new analysis suggests the Pentagon would almost certainly endure a "decisive military defeat" if faced with war against Russia or China. The comprehensive report, released this week by the National Defense Strategy Commission—a bipartisan panel of experts selected by Congress to review and assess the National Defense Strategy put forward by the Trump administration—**concludes that America's armed forces would be woefully unprepared in the event of a conflict with its two most daunting rivals**, Russia and China, over disputes related to the Baltic region of Northern Europe and the sovereignty of Taiwan, respectively. **"The security and wellbeing of the United States are at greater risk than at any time in decades,"** the report reads. "Put bluntly, the U.S. military could lose the next state-versus-state war it fights."The credibility of American alliances—the bedrock of geopolitical stability in key areas—will be weakened as allies question whether the United States can defend them; American rivals and adversaries will be emboldened to push harder," the report authors

write. "Attrition of U.S. capital assets—ships, planes, tanks—could be enormous. ... The prolonged, deliberate buildup of overwhelming force in theater that has traditionally been the hallmark of American expeditionary warfare would be vastly more difficult and costly, if it were possible at all." **How can a country that spends so much on its military be at such a disadvantage? The mention in the report of "capital assets" points to one fundamental problem: readiness**, a term that measures the health of a military, as calculated by variables such as the availability of functional training equipment, special capabilities long-range precision strikes, and cyberwarfare technologies—basically anything that aids in its capacity to go to war at a moment's notice. The report's grim conclusion on this front is no surprise to the Pentagon: In March of 2017, Pentagon spokesman Navy Captain Jeff Davis tipped the Department of Defense's hand when cautioning to avoid the topic of readiness when speaking to reporters. "While it can be tempting during budget season to publicly highlight readiness problems, we have to remember that our adversaries watch the news too," he wrote in an email obtained by Task & Purpose's Jeff Schogol. "Communicating that we are broken or not ready to fight invites miscalculation

Impact: Conventional War kills many

Chris Hedges, 7-6-2003, "'What Every Person Should Know About War' (Published 2003)," New York Times. 6 Jul. 2003. Web. 7 Oct. 2020.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/06/books/chapters/what-every-person-should-know-about-war.html>

How dangerous is war for civilians?

Very dangerous. Between 1900 and 1990, 43 million soldiers died in wars. During the same period, 62 million civilians were killed. More than 34 million civilians died in World War II. One million died in North Korea. Hundreds of thousands were killed in South Korea, and 200,000 to 400,000 in Vietnam. In the wars of the 1990s, civilian

deaths constituted between 75 and 90 percent of all war deaths. What is the civilian experience in war? They are shot, bombed, raped, starved, and driven from their homes. During **World War II, 135,000 civilians died in two days in the firebombing of Dresden. A week later, in Pforzheim, Germany, 17,800 people were killed in 22 minutes.** In Russia, after the three-year battle of Leningrad, only 600,000 civilians remained in a city that had held a population of 2.5 million. One million were evacuated, 100,000 were conscripted into the Red Army, and 800,000 died. In April 2003, during the Iraqi War, half of the 1.3 million civilians in Basra, Iraq, were trapped for days without food and water in temperatures in excess of 100 degrees.

Analysis: Teams that run this argument must first spend their time proving that nuclear weapons have been strong deterrents of conventional warfare. If neg teams can do this, they have massive amounts of offense to work with. There are huge impacts associated with this argument: conventional warfare is incredibly deadly, and the idea that America may not be able to perform successfully in one suggests that the fatalities could be massive.

CON: NFU Causes Political Polarization

Argument: Nuclear Weapons are a deeply political issue. By signing a NFU agreement there may be political ramifications.

Warrant: NFU is a political issue

Rebecca Kheel, 7-30-2019, "Warren, Bullock spar over 'no first use' nuclear policy," TheHill. 30 Jul. 2019. Web. 7 Oct. 2020.
<https://thehill.com/policy/defense/455472-warren-bullock-spar-over-no-first-use-nuclear-policy>

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Montana Gov. Steve Bullock (D) sparred Tuesday night over her proposed “no first use” policy on nuclear weapons during the Democratic debate. In defending the proposed policy, Warren argued for diplomatic and economic solutions to conflict, saying “we should not be asking our military to take on jobs that do not have a military solution.” But Bullock opposed that proposal, saying, “I don’t want to turn around and say, ‘Well, Detroit has to be gone before we would ever use that.’” Warren is the lead sponsor of the Senate version of a bill that would make it U.S. policy not to use nuclear weapons first. It has long been the policy of the United States that the country reserves the right to launch a preemptive nuclear strike. Former President Obama reportedly weighed changing the policy before leaving office, but ultimately did not after advisers argued doing so could embolden adversaries.

Warrant: Public Opinion favors keeping the option of first use

Brown, Carl. 02-18-2020. “Public Opinion About Using Nuclear Weapons.” Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. 18 Feb. 2020. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.

<https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/blog/public-opinion-about-using-nuclear-weapons>

The rise of concern over non-nuclear WMDs made the subject a bit more complex, and a 1991 NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll found 53% in favor of using tactical nuclear weapons in response to any Iraqi use of chemical or biological weapons in the first Gulf War, with 37% opposed. Post-9/11, a 2002 Zogby survey revealed 21% favoring the use of “strategic nuclear weapons” in the war on terrorism, while 71% opposed it. Five years later a Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll found 27% were willing to use nuclear weapons against terrorist facilities, while 72% were not. Much as Pearl Harbor hardened US attitudes about attacking Japan, the September 11th attacks not surprisingly swung the pendulum in the direction of vengeance – and also made nuclear conflict seem more plausible. While many believe that the specter of large-scale nuclear war is now behind us, not all Americans agree. A 2010 CNN/Opinion Research Corporation survey found that 12% think a nuclear war is very likely in the next decade, 26% somewhat likely, 29% not too likely, and only 32% said it was not likely at all. And as recently as last November, a 60 Minutes/Vanity Fair Poll found that 35% most fear a nuclear war putting an end to humanity, compared to 23% who worry about a deadly virus, 15% the Rapture, 15% global warming, and 8% an asteroid hitting the Earth. **And to round out the subject, in a 2010 Pew survey 64% approved of Barack’s Obama’s declaration that the US would never use nuclear weapons against a nation that did not have them, but 30% did not want to take that option off the table.**

Warrant: Nuclear Deterrence is a political issue

Rebecca Heinrichs,, 6-11-2019, "Democrats should join Republicans when it comes to nuclear deterrent," TheHill. 11 Jun. 2019. Web. 7 Oct. 2020.
<https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/448017-democrats-should-join-republicans-when-it-comes-to-nuclear>

Democrats should join Republicans in supporting efforts by the Trump administration to adapt the nuclear deterrent, especially at a time when there is a new focus on the importance of deterring Russia and China. Although committed to further reducing the number of nuclear weapons in the United States arsenal, President Obama chose during his second term to eschew unilateral nuclear reductions and limitations. Instead, the Obama administration stayed the course with a strategy to modernize the nuclear triad to ensure it is flexible and offers a wide range of response options if deterrence fails. This was wise because to move forward with the global disarmament agenda, considering the nuclear modernization efforts and increasingly provocative efforts of nuclear adversaries such as Russia and China, would have been highly irresponsible of our leaders. The Trump administration seeks to build on the commitments made by previous Democratic and Republican administrations to maintain and adapt the nuclear triad. Specifically, **the Trump administration is pursuing enhancements to the United States nuclear deterrent to add flexibility in response to concerning developments and trends from Russia and China**

Impact: Political Polarization leads to voting from anger

Gallup, Inc., 12-5-2019, "The Impact of Increased Political Polarization," Gallup. 5 Dec. 2019. Web. 7 Oct. 2020. <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/268982/impact-increased-political-polarization.aspx>

The impact of political partisanship appears to be increasing. As my colleague Jeff Jones has documented, the difference between Republicans' and Democrats' job approval ratings of President Donald Trump is the largest Gallup has ever measured for a president, eclipsing the already high polarization measured in approval of President Barack Obama. Pew Research recently reported on Americans' views of the opposite

political party, concluding that "the level of division and animosity -- including negative sentiments among partisans toward the members of the opposing party -- has only deepened." An important review of academic research by journalist Thomas Edsall last year highlighted the degree to which the political polarization has increasingly taken on an emotionally negative tone. As Edsall notes: **"Hostility to the opposition party and its candidates has now reached a level where loathing motivates voters more than loyalty,"** and **"The building strength of partisan antipathy -- 'negative partisanship' -- has radically altered politics. Anger has become the primary tool for motivating voters."**

Impact: Political Polarization has led to harms such as government shut downs

Gallup, Inc., 12-5-2019, "The Impact of Increased Political Polarization," Gallup. 5 Dec. 2019. Web. 7 Oct. 2020. <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/268982/impact-increased-political-polarization.aspx>

But today's increase in partisanship in the U.S. also has significant harmful effects. Most importantly, polarization and partisan conflict lead to inaction, as "my way or the highway," ideologically rigid mentalities lower the probability of achieving the compromise that should be at the heart of legislative functioning. (We saw this "destroy the village in order to save it" mentality shut down the U.S. government in 2013.) As I've reviewed previously, the American public as a whole rues this approach to politics, giving Congress and its ability to deal with domestic and international problems very low evaluations (even if the American public itself in some ways causes this political inaction by virtue of its own polarized attitudes). We also have the sociological impact of polarization and increasing disapprobation of one's political opposites. Any functioning society needs to develop and maintain its social institutions -- the widely agreed-upon ways in which society handles the core functions necessary for survival. But that agreement appears to be waning. Partisans on both sides increasingly see institutions in

the U.S. not as beneficial and necessary, but as part of an effort by the other side to gain advantage and to perpetuate its power and philosophical positions. Liberals and Democrats today, for example, have lower trust in traditional family institutions, traditional religious institutions and the economic system. Republicans have lower trust in the scientific process, higher education, the mass media, and the role of the state (government).

Analysis: In order to run this argument, neg teams must firmly prove two things. a) that a NFU treaty would increase polarization and b) that polarization is a bad thing. Another barrier to this argument is on the impact level, as it is not totally clear what materialized impacts of political polarization are. Neg teams running this argument should look further into whether or not an immediate passage of a NFU policy could make a change in future elections or on party platforms.

CON: No first use is a hollow, easily reversed promise

Argument: No first use is easily reversed, leading to inevitable escalation

Warrant: India is backing down from its no first use pledge

Dalton, Toby. "Much Ado About India's No-first-use Nuclear Policy." Carnegie endowment for international peace. 09/26/19.
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/09/26/much-ado-about-india-s-no-first-use-nuke-policy-pub-79952>

Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh made headlines in August when he appeared to nullify India's nuclear weapons no first use (NFU) policy. "Till today, our nuclear policy is 'no first use'. What happens in future depends on the circumstances," he said. In the context of Prime Minister Modi's effort to project a more muscular image, Singh's comments played well among Indian hawks. Internationally, however, a more aggressive Indian nuclear policy is raising concerns anew about nuclear conflict in South Asia.

An NFU policy essentially constitutes a promise, backed by a survivable nuclear arsenal, to only use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack. The logic is simple and effective: you don't nuke me, and I won't nuke you. India and China both have declared no-first-use policies, whereas Pakistan and the United States, among others, do not rule out the first use of nuclear weapons in a conflict.

Since it was announced in 2003, India's NFU policy has taken regular fire from Indian strategists and retired military officers. This debate bubbled along among experts until 2014, when the election manifesto of the ruling BJP party called for the policy to be revised and updated. Though Modi himself called NFU part of India's "cultural heritage," his defence ministers cast doubt on its shelf-life. In 2016, Manohar Parrikar, Singh's predecessor as defence minister, wondered publicly why he should be bound by it.

Contemporary rumours from New Delhi suggest the government's forthcoming National Security Strategy will put the final nail in the coffin of the NFU policy.

Warrant: No-first-use is largely cosmetic, pre-emptive strikes still possible

Dalton, Toby. "Much Ado About India's No-first-use Nuclear Policy." Carnegie endowment for international peace. 09/26/19.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/09/26/much-ado-about-india-s-no-first-use-nuke-policy-pub-79952>

These ideas sound very 1983, evoking a period of deepest danger between the United States and the Soviet Union. Pervasive fear of pre-emption among military planners created an imperative to use nuclear weapons before the adversary. American and Soviet leaders from the 1950s on fell prey to this fear and built ludicrously large nuclear arsenals as a result. They also placed nuclear weapons on a hair-trigger alert – a so-called launch-on-warning posture – in order to avoid losing their nuclear arsenals in a first strike. Fears of pre-emption also placed enormous time pressure on decision making during a crisis.

To make a nuclear pre-emption policy credible, India's nuclear forces would require significant modification, including in military preparations to use them. Until now, based on available data, India has yet to seriously grow its nuclear arsenal or place it on alert. Indeed, previous Indian governments, including the Vajpayee-led administration that ordered the 1998 nuclear tests, tended to downplay the military utility of nuclear weapons. Building up the nuclear arsenal and upgrading its readiness would be costly and complicated endeavours at a time when India already faces significant budgetary pressures amidst forecasts of anaemic economic growth.

If Indian decision-makers skirt the hard choices and military investments necessary to carry out nuclear pre-emption, then doing away with NFU looks more like a cosmetic change to India's nuclear policy. Soundbites like Singh's thus feed a suspicion, in the

words of noted Indian scholar Rajesh Rajagopalan, “that such proposals are ideologically-driven short-cuts to demonstrate ‘resolve’ rather than a careful response to India’s strategic problems.”

Impact: No-first-use policies can be ignored, leading to conflict; nuclear conflict is devastating.

Krajick, Kevin. “Even a limited India-Pakistan Nuclear War would bring global famine, says study.” Earth Institute, Columbia University. 3/16/20.
<https://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2020/03/16/even-limited-india-pakistan-nuclear-war-would-bring-global-famine/>

In addition to direct death and destruction, the authors say that firestorms following the bombings would launch some 5 million tons of soot toward the stratosphere. There, it would spread globally and remain, absorbing sunlight and lowering global mean temperatures by about 1.8 degrees C (3.25 F) for at least five years. The scientists project that this would in turn cause production of the world’s four main cereal crops—maize, wheat, soybeans and rice—to plummet an average 11 percent over that period, with tapering effects lasting another five to 10 years.

“Even this regional, limited war would have devastating indirect implications worldwide,” said Jonas Jägermeyr, a postdoctoral scientist at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies who led the study. “It would exceed the largest famine in documented history.”

According to the study, crops would be hardest hit in the northerly breadbasket regions of the United States, Canada, Europe, Russia and China. But paradoxically, southerly regions would suffer much more hunger. That is because many developed nations in the north produce huge surpluses, which are largely exported to nations in the Global South that are barely able to feed themselves. If these surpluses were to dry up, the effects would ripple out through the global trade system. The authors estimate that some 70

largely poor countries with a cumulative population of 1.3 billion people would then see food supplies drop more than 20 percent.

Analysis: No-first-use is not legally binding, nor can it physically stop a country that chooses to act preemptively with its nuclear arsenal. Conflicts like the one between India and Pakistan demonstrate that countries can easily discard such agreements when things escalate. The impact of a country choosing to disregard its no-first-use policy would be devastating, and largely unexpected, likely leaving more destruction.

CON: No first use emboldens Iran

Argument: Iran will take advantage of a less powerful U.S. nuclear policy.

Warrant: No-first-use will embolden U.S. enemies

De Vries, Lianne. "No-first use: A categorical mistake." FutureNato. 10/5/16.

<http://futurenato.org/articles/no-first-use-a-categorical-mistake/>

US nuclear capability serves an umbrella role that extends over both Europe and the Pacific. If the United States were to institute a second-strike only policy, this could signal a weakness and disengagement in its traditional domain of influence and partnership that could embolden adversaries. This would increase the motivation for potential adversaries to challenge the United States with any offensive action short of nuclear launch, including the use of biological and chemical weapons. For in its core, declaring no-first use undermines the deterrent strength of the nuclear capability. Deterrence only works if the enemy *believes* Washington's threat is real, and not just a bluff. This is why the Cold War balance persisted as long as it did: both sides believed the other's threat was credible. What a no first-use policy would really do, is undermine America's trump card and degrade its credibility.

Keeping in mind America's umbrella role in international security, this imprudent step would come at a time when China and Russia are expanding their military capability and asserting themselves more aggressively regionally. Due to China's staggering defense investments, relations between China and the United States are set to become more competitive. In the near future China could plausibly take on and overpower the United States conventionally. Rather than dissuading China and other nations, this policy would embolden them.

Warrant: Iran is nearly capable of building nuclear weapons

Ward, Alex. "What Iran stockpiling uranium for a nuclear bomb is really about." Vox.

3/5/20 <https://www.vox.com/2020/3/4/21164499/iran-nuclear-bomb-weapon-iaea-uranium>

Iran may be getting close to having enough nuclear material to make a single bomb if it chooses to do so. Although experts estimate it would still take Iran roughly a year to actually build a bomb (which it has long said it does not want to do), it's still a worrying development.

It's also a predictable one — in fact, it's what many experts warned was likely to happen if President Donald Trump withdrew the US from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

On Tuesday, the International Atomic Energy Agency — the United Nations' nuclear watchdog — wrote in a confidential report seen by the Associated Press that Iran has nearly [tripled its stockpile of low-enriched uranium](#), from 820 pounds last November to 2,250 pounds (just over a ton) in February. That [confirms previous statements by the organization](#) earlier this year.

To make a weapon, the [Arms Control Association](#) estimates Iran would need more than 2,300 pounds of uranium enriched to over 90 percent purity. That's the level required for weapons-grade uranium. Based on the IAEA's report, Iran's stockpile is enriched to under 5 percent — far away from that level.

In other words, Iran has almost enough of the raw material needed to potentially make a bomb, but that material would still need to be enriched to a far higher level than it currently is to make an effective explosive. And that enrichment process takes time.

Warrant: Tensions with Iran are high, experts fear conflict is on the way

Afrasiabi, Kaveh. "A nuclear war in the Persian Gulf." Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

7/2/19. <https://thebulletin.org/2019/07/a-nuclear-war-in-the-persian-gulf/>

Tensions between the United States and Iran are spiraling toward a military confrontation that carries a real possibility that the United States will use nuclear weapons. Iran's assortment of asymmetrical capabilities—all constructed to be effective against the United States—nearly assures such a confrontation. The current [US nuclear posture](#) leaves the Trump administration at least open to the use of tactical nuclear weapons in conventional theaters. Some in the current administration may well think it to be in the best interest of the United States to seek a quick and decisive victory in the oil hub of the Persian Gulf—and to do so by using its nuclear arsenal.

We believe there is a heightened possibility of a US-Iran war triggering a US nuclear strike for the following reasons:

The sanction regime set against the Iranian economy is so brutal that it is likely to force Iran to take an action that will require a US military response. Unless the United States backs down from its present self-declared “economic warfare” against Iran, this will likely escalate to an open warfare between the two countries.

Analysis: Tensions between the United States and Iran have been spiraling towards conflict for a while, even before President Trump took office. With the United States choosing to take a policy of no-first-use, this could embolden Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons, and potentially even lead to then choosing to use them.

CON: No first use will drive US allies to China

Argument: No-first-use will isolate US allies, and drive them to China's sphere of influence, weakening U.S. soft power.

Warrant: U.S. allies across the globe, but particularly in Asia, are upset with the United States' consideration of a no-first-use policy

Rogin, Josh. "U.S. allies unite to block Obama's nuclear legacy." Washington Post. 8/14/16. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/allies-unite-to-block-an-obama-legacy/2016/08/14/cdb8d8e4-60b9-11e6-8e45-477372e89d78_story.html

President Obama's last-minute drive for a foreign-policy legacy is making U.S. allies nervous about their own security. Several allied governments have lobbied the administration not to change U.S. nuclear-weapons policy by promising never to be the first to use them in a conflict.

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.)

Warrant: China presents an appealing alternative for East Asian nations feeling isolated by a U.S. no-first-use policy

Lee, Geun. "China's Soft Power and Changing Balance of Power in East Asia." Asia Foundation. August 2010.

<https://www.asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/7.LEEGeun.pdf>

Joseph Nye and many others also suggest "the power to be emulated" when referring to soft power. The argument goes as follows: America has a good democratic political system as well as free market system full of innovative energy. Its education system is an envy of all the other countries. Therefore many countries take the US as a model to emulate. Such a strong power to be emulated naturally attracts others. However, emulation does not always lead to attraction. During the Cold War era, Korea emulated the Japanese economic and education systems to modernize its society and economy. Yet, Korea was structurally attracted to the US as the US provided Korea with more opportunities for prosperity and security. In essence, what matters in manufacturing attraction in international balance of power system is opportunity for prosperity and security. If China offers more opportunities for prosperity and security, countries will naturally be attracted to the Chinese magnet. On the other hand, if the US offers more opportunities, the magnetic force runs the other way. Therefore, a genuine analysis of balance of soft power between China and the US is not much different from an analysis of their economic and security potentials now and in the future.

Impact: Increased Chinese soft power could contend with U.S. hegemony, hurt developing nations.

McGiffert, Carola. "Chinese Soft Power and its Implications for the United States."

Center for Strategic and International Studies. March 2009. <https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs->

public/legacy_files/files/media/csis/pubs/090403_mcgiffert_chinesesoftpower_web.pdf

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Analysis: Countries that feel alienated by the United States’ choice to adopt a policy of no-first-use may turn to China for support. In doing so, that risks hurting the United States’ soft power, pushing countries into China’s sphere of influence.

CON: Increases the odds of conventional war.

Argument: Decreased nuclear deterrence will lead the U.S. into more conventional wars

Uniqueness: A pillar of America's defense relies upon nuclear weapons

C. Todd, 4-1-2019, "4 Things to Know About the U.S. Nuclear Deterrence Strategy," U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE. 1 April, 2019. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.
<https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/1801797/4-things-to-know-about-the-us-nuclear-deterrence-strategy/>

Nuclear deterrence is a top priority within the U.S. military. "It's our singular, most important mission," Dunford told lawmakers. "Nuclear deterrence is the bedrock of U.S. national security," Trachtenberg said. "Our nuclear deterrent underwrites all U.S. military operations and diplomacy across the globe. It is the backstop and foundation of our national defense. A strong nuclear deterrent also contributes to U.S. non-proliferation goals by limiting the incentive for allies to have their own nuclear weapons." Nuclear deterrence means that when the U.S. has nuclear weapons, it tempers in some fashion the activities of potential adversaries around the globe — helping to ensure those adversaries don't make dangerous miscalculations about what they can get away with based on what they think the U.S. is capable of or willing to do in response.

Warrant: Deterrence is critical for global peace- historical precedent shows

Miller, Franklin C. 08-22-2016. "The Dangers of No First Use" Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. 22 Aug. 2016. Web. 6 Oct. 2020. <https://thebulletin.org/2016/08/the-dangers-of-no-first-use/>

There is no doubt that the US nuclear deterrent has prevented war and the escalation of war in the past. For example, there is considerable evidence from the 1991 First Gulf War that the US nuclear deterrent helped to prevent Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein from escalating to the use of Iraqi chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction—possibly saving tens of thousands of US and allied lives. A US pledge of no-first-use now would encourage current and future opponents to believe that they need not fear the US nuclear deterrent in response to their potential massive use of military force against us or our allies—including the use of advanced conventional weapons, and chemical and biological weapons.

Warrant: No-first-use will embolden U.S. enemies

De Vries, Lianne. “No-first use: A categorical mistake.” FutureNato. 10/5/16.

<http://future nato.org/articles/no-first-use-a-categorical-mistake/>

US nuclear capability serves an umbrella role that extends over both Europe and the Pacific. If the United States were to institute a second-strike only policy, this could signal a weakness and disengagement in its traditional domain of influence and partnership that could embolden adversaries. This would increase the motivation for potential adversaries to challenge the United States with any offensive action short of nuclear launch, including the use of biological and chemical weapons. For in its core, declaring no-first use undermines the deterrent strength of the nuclear capability. Deterrence only works if the enemy *believes* Washington’s threat is real, and not just a bluff. This is why the Cold War balance persisted as long as it did: both sides believed the other’s threat was credible. What a no first-use policy would really do, is undermine America’s trump card and degrade its credibility.

Keeping in mind America’s umbrella role in international security, this imprudent step would come at a time when China and Russia are expanding their military capability and asserting themselves more aggressively regionally. Due to China’s staggering defense

investments, relations between China and the United States are set to become more competitive. In the near future China could plausibly take on and overpower the United States conventionally. Rather than dissuading China and other nations, this policy would embolden them.

Impact: NFU policy could increase the chances of a devastating nuclear war

Department of Defense. 1-4-2019. "Dangers of a Nuclear No Use First

Policy" Department of Defense. 1 April 2019. Web. 6 Oct. 2020.

<https://media.defense.gov/2019/Apr/01/2002108002/-1/-1/1/DANGERS-OF-A-NO-FIRST-USE-POLICY.PDF>

Advocates argue that a U.S. no first use policy would reduce the risk of nuclear war.

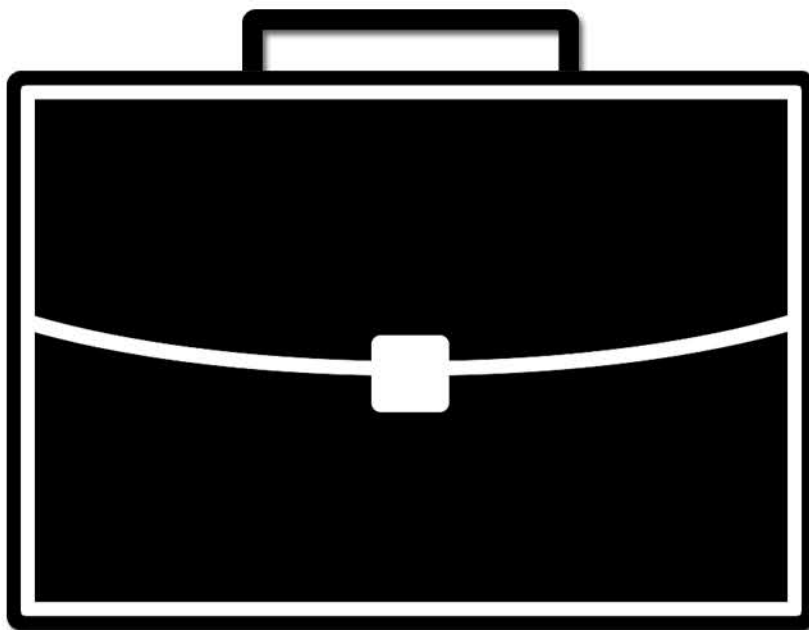
However, **adoption of such a policy could increase the likelihood of devastating conflict, including one that escalates to nuclear war, by incentivizing non-nuclear strategic attack on, and coercion of, the U.S. or our allies and partners.** Such a policy may change how adversaries and allies view the credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrent and our resolve to use it when our vital interests are threatened. Operational scenarios exist in which the U.S. would consider first use. Retaining a degree of ambiguity and refraining from a no first use policy creates uncertainty in the mind of potential adversaries and reinforces deterrence of aggression by ensuring adversaries cannot predict what specific actions will lead to a U.S. nuclear response. Implementing a no first use policy could undermine the U.S. ability to deter Russian, Chinese, and North Korean aggression, especially with respect to their growing capability to carry out nonnuclear strategic attacks

Analysis: Without the looming threat of a U.S. strike, countries will be more likely to act in ways that trend towards conventional war. Especially in the era of military adventurism, this is likely to lead to heightened tensions, and inevitably, conflict between the U.S. and its enemies.

Champion Briefs

Nov/Dec 2020

Public Forum Brief



Con Responses to
Pro Arguments

A/2: Harms Soft Power

Answer: Soft power is unnecessary

De-link: Multilateral actions constrain freedom of movement

James A. Helis. Air University of the US Army. MULTILATERALISM AND UNILATERALISM.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12027.14?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

One of the main advantages of unilateral approaches to problems is that they provide maximum freedom of action. While allies and partners can bring extra capabilities to the table, they often bring constraints on how their tools can be used. Those who contribute to an enterprise normally expect to have a say in how it will operate. A common problem in UN military operations in the 1990s was the “phone home syndrome,” under which commanders of forces assigned to UN operations had to seek approval from authorities in their home capital before accepting orders from the coalition commander. Unilateralists also point to the limitations that the NATO allies placed on air operations during the Kosovo campaign as an example of how multilateral approaches can be inefficient and reduce the effectiveness of American capabilities by restricting how they will be used.

Impact Comparison: Many allies preffer US unilateral action because it gets results

Mary Beth D. Nikitin (Specialist in Nonproliferation). Congressional Research Service.
Arms Control and Nonproliferation: A Catalog of Treaties and Agreements. July 15, 2013. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RL33865.pdf>

Similarly, some in the Bush Administration argued that some formal, multilateral arms control regimes went too far in restraining U.S. options without limiting the forces of potential adversaries. Instead, the Administration preferred, when necessary, that the United States take unilateral military action or join in ad hoc coalitions to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Analysis: This block delinks the impact of the pro argument by illustrating that soft power is not actually essential for foreign policy outcomes and that sometimes unilateralism is better.

Answer: Soft power is less important than core security interests

Warrant: Medicare for all will stimulate job growth

James A. Helis. Air University of the US Army. MULTILATERALISM AND UNILATERALISM.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12027.14?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Unilateralists and multilateralists agree that there is little room for compromise on such fundamental issues as survival interests. Time constraints may also limit the ability of the United States to drum up allies. Threats that are immediate and pose a serious threat to survival or vital interests may force the U.S.'s hand.

Warrant: Multilateralists agree that in a time of threat against vital survival interests unilateralism is best

James A. Helis. Air University of the US Army. MULTILATERALISM AND UNILATERALISM.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12027.14?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Unilateralists also point to the limitations that the NATO allies placed on air operations during the Kosovo campaign as an example of how multilateral approaches can be inefficient and reduce the effectiveness of American capabilities by restricting how they will be used. **Multilateralists acknowledge that there are circumstances in which the United States should not rule out acting unilaterally, particularly when vital survival interests are at stake.**

Analysis: This is good because it allows you to easily outweigh your opponent's points. Even if we lose some soft power, security concerns are far more paramount.

A/2: Alternatives Don't Work - Sanctions

Answer: Sanctions DO work

Warrant: Sanctions worked in Libya

Masters, Jonathan. "What Are Economic Sanctions?" Council on Foreign Relations.

Council on Foreign Relations, 08 Apr. 2015. Web. 07 Dec. 2015.

<<http://www.cfr.org/sanctions/economic-sanctions/p36259>>.

"Meanwhile, experts cite several best practices in developing sanctions policy: Develop a well-rounded approach. An effective strategy often links punitive measures, like sanctions and the threat of military action, with positive inducements, like financial aid. **Some point to the Libya strategy adopted by the United States and its allies in the late 1990s and early 2000s that balanced diplomatic carrots and sticks to persuade then-Libyan President Muammar al-Qaddafi to forswear WMDs and stop supporting terrorism.**"

Warrant: Sanctions impose serious economic costs, example Russia

Rankin, Jennifer. "As Tensions in Ukraine Mount, Could Tougher Sanctions against Russia

Work?" Theguardian.com. Guardian News and Media, 05 May 2014. Web.

<<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/04/tensions-ukraine-mount-sanctions-russia-work>>.

The effects [of sanctions] would cascade down the economy, as banks and firms struggled to raise funds to roll over debts worth \$193bn that need to be refinanced this year. "If they can't refinance then it means higher interest rates, it means less investment, it means less and less growth, and more capital flight and pressure on the

rouble," said Timothy Ash of Standard Bank. This scenario spells deeper pain for an economy already hurting. Despite Putin's drive to stop wealthy Russians squirrelling away their riches in foreign countries, the country has been hemorrhaging capital. Almost \$64bn was moved out in the first three months of 2014, as much as in the whole of 2013. Since the start of the year, stock markets have lost 14% of their value and the rouble is down 8% against the dollar. Russia's credit rating has been downgraded to one notch above junk and growth is expected to stall completely this year. This for a population used to average annual growth as high as 7% in Putin's first two terms.

Analysis: This block shows tangible examples of when sanctions have been used for concrete policy objectives, weakening the case for nuclear strength.

Answer: There are other non-nuclear options such as naming and shaming

Warrant: Naming and shaming has been shown to increase human rights outcomes

Amanda Murdie, Kansas State University. "Shaming and Blaming: Using Event Data to Assess the Impact of Human Rights INGOs". International Studies Quarterly. 2012.

<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.mutex.gmu.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=8ce1663b-cd42-47bb-82fc-170405d0a457%40sessionmgr112&vid=1&hid=106>

It is important to note the importance of Indirect Targeting on increasing the impact of HRO shaming. However, HRO Presence (ln), as expected, does amplify this effect. As mentioned, this is as expected by Risse and Sikkink (1999) when they highlight the necessity of continued international attention. One way of illustrating this is by considering the impact of various values of Indirect Targeting and HRO Presence (ln) on changing the probability of Improvements in CIRI Physical Integrity Rights as HRO Shaming moves from its minimum to its maximum value in the sample. **As HRO Shaming**

changes from its minimum to its maximum value in the sample, with Indirect Targeting at its maximum value but HRO Presence (ln) at its minimum, there is an increase in the probability of improvement in the state's physical integrity rights by 86.4% (95% confidence interval (CI) from 39.0% to 99.9%). However, when both Indirect Targeting and HRO Presence (ln) are at their maximum values in the data set, a similar increase in HRO Shaming will increase the probability of improvement in the state's physical integrity rights by 94.2% (95% CI 62.7% to 99.9%).

Quantification: Naming and shaming has a quantifiable increase in coercive power

DeMeritt (University of North Texas). "International Organizations and Government Killing: Does Naming and Shaming Save Lives?" 10.1080/03050629.2012.726180. Accessed 12-17-15. Published 2012.
<http://lu4ld3lr5v.scholar.serialssolutions.com/?sid=google&auinit=JHR&aulast=D&eMeritt&atitle=International+Organizations+and+Government+Killing:+Does+Naming+and+Shaming+Save+Lives%3F&id=doi:10.1080/03050629.2012.726180&title=International+interactions&volume=38&issue=5&date=2012&spage=597&issn=0305-0629>

Figure 1 shows the relationship between HRO shaming and the probability of killing in the top panel, and the relationship between HRO shaming and the predicted natural log of civilian death tolls on the bottom. In both graphs, the solid black line captures the mean probability of killing, while the dashed lines represent a 95% confidence interval. In the top panel, the negative trend suggests that as HROs increasingly publicize atrocities, the targeted state is decreasingly likely to experience government killing. **In this sample, the likelihood of killing in the absence of HRO shaming is 14%, with a 95% confidence interval of (0.13, 0.15). Introducing an average level of shaming drops that likelihood to 12% (0.115, 0.125). From there, the decline in the likelihood of killing is exponential. Ultimately, a three-standard deviation increase above average HRO**

shaming corresponds to a 0.04% likelihood of killing (0.039, 0.049). In this sample, five HRO shaming events reduce the probability that civilians lose their lives to less than one half of 1%.

Analysis: This argument circumvents the pro's point by saying there are other nonviolent alternatives to sanctions. As long as there are any alternatives to nuclear first use, including naming and shaming, we should prioritize those.

A/2: Moral Leadership

Answer: Nuclear exchange satisfies just war theory

Warrant: The enhanced danger of WMDs overrides just war theory

BBC News. Against the Theory of the Just War.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/war/just/against.shtml>

“the existence of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction requires a different approach to the problem. These weapons can only be used for unrestricted war and so the condition of proportionality can't be met if they are used. Using these weapons guarantees civilian casualties, and thus breaks a basic rule of the conduct of war. Since these weapons can't be uninvented they render just war theory pointless. In recent times it has become possible to target such weapons quite precisely, so the problems above only apply to indiscriminate versions of such weapons the ethics of weapons of mass destruction are a different topic”

Example: Nuclear first strike can still be used as last resort

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. War.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/war/#2>“Just War Theory”

Traditional just war theory construes jus ad bellum and jus in bello as sets of principles, satisfying which is necessary and sufficient for a war's being permissible. Jus ad bellum typically comprises the following six principles: Just Cause: the war is an attempt to avert the right kind of injury. Legitimate Authority: the war is fought by an entity that has the authority to fight such wars. Right Intention: that entity intends to achieve the just cause, rather than using it as an excuse to achieve some wrongful end.

Reasonable Prospects of Success: the war is sufficiently likely to achieve its aims.

Proportionality: the morally weighted goods achieved by the war outweigh the morally weighted bads that it will cause. Last Resort (Necessity): there is no other less harmful way to achieve the just cause.

Analysis: This block is strong because it demonstrates the case in which nuclear first strikes can be used in ways fully compliant with the Aff's points on just war.

Answer: Nuclear situations are dangerous enough to warrant enhanced compromises

Warrant: Nuclear terrorism could devastate the United States

Charles Meade. RAND Corporation. Diffusing Armageddon (Book). 2006.

http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2006/RAND_T_R391.pdf

"A 2006 RAND study examined the likely costs in lives, property, dollars, and disruption following the detonation of a ten-kiloton device smuggled into the Port of Long beach in a shipping container. **Sixty thousand lives and six hundred thousand homes would be lost. One billion square feet of commercial property would be destroyed while three million people would be evacuated for three years.** The financial costs associated with all those consequences, when added to the costs of the damage to the port and surrounding infrastructure and worker's compensation claims, would total about \$1 trillion."

Turn: Doing nothing increases the odds of a catastrophic nuclear war

Dagobert Brito and Michael Intriligator. "Can Arms Races Lead to the Outbreak of War."
Journal of Conflict Resolution. 2013.
<https://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~fczagare/PSC%20504/Intriligator.pdf>

However, as we proved earlier $p_i(n+1) < p_i(n)$ does not imply that the aggregate probability of nuclear war will decrease. Sagan is arguing that because each additional nuclear power has a positive probability of starting an accidental or inadvertent nuclear war (in our model, that $O_i > 0$), **the aggregate probability of accidental or inadvertent nuclear war is increasing. It can be interpreted that Sagan is arguing that the term O_i is increasing in i -that is, that later entrants into the nuclear club will have a higher probability of accidental or inadvertent nuclear war.**

Analysis: This block is strong because it is a rational appeal to judges to eschew moral abstractions in favor of pragmatic facts and logic. Just war theory is fine in theory but in practice the stakes are too great to leave to academics in the ivory tower.

A/2: Cost Savings

Answer: Nuclear weapons are not so expensive

Warrant: Nuclear weapons are comparatively low cost

BBC News. Against the Theory of the Just War.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/war/just/against.shtml>

“Supporters of the Trump administration’s Nuclear Posture Review argue that even at its peak, spending on nuclear weapons will consume no more than 6 to 7 percent of total Pentagon spending. But even 6 percent of a budget as large as the Pentagon’s is an enormous amount of money. By comparison, the March 2013 congressionally mandated sequester reduced national defense spending (minus exempt military personnel accounts) by 7 percent. Military leaders and lawmakers repeatedly described the sequester as devastating.”

Example: Costs can be cut without NFU

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. War.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/war/#2>“Just War Theory”

The United States is planning to spend hundreds of billions of dollars over the next two decades to rebuild its nuclear arsenal. At the end of the process, the arsenal will look like the one the country has today, and will last another 50 years. But the spending plans face significant budgetary, programmatic, and political challenges. There’s a better way. It is not too late to pursue a different path. Now is the time to re-evaluate nuclear weapons spending plans before the largest investments are made. **The Minuteman III can be sustained beyond the missile’s expected retirement in the 2030 timeframe.**

Pursuing this approach would defer a decision on whether to build a costly new missile, freeing up billions to spend on other, higher priority Pentagon modernization programs. And doing so would still allow the ICBM force to provide the purported deterrent benefits that it provides today.

Analysis: This block is strong because it demonstrates that the Aff argument is nonunique and low impact. Nukes are not incredibly costly and cost savings can be found in other means.

Answer: Security concerns outweigh fiscal ones

Warrant: NFU invites nonnuclear attack

Rebecca Heinrichs. "Reject 'No First Use' Nuclear Policy." Hudson Institute 2019.

<https://www.hudson.org/research/16328-reject-no-first-use-nuclear-policy>

"First, adopting an NFU policy invites a strategic non-nuclear attack against the American people, our allies and our interests. An NFU declaration broadcasts to America's enemies that they can proceed with a chemical weapons attack on U.S. forces and their families, can proceed with a biological attack on an American city and can proceed with an overwhelming conventional attack against critical U.S. assets, all without fear of nuclear retaliation. Any would-be enemy could carry out an infinite number of attacks short of a nuclear attack, while the NFU-endorsing U.S. president assures their safety from our nuclear weapon arsenal.."

Warrant: NFU is especially unwise given the resurgence of Russia and rise of China

Rebecca Heinrichs. "Reject 'No First Use' Nuclear Policy." Hudson Institute 2019.

<https://www.hudson.org/research/16328-reject-no-first-use-nuclear-policy>

An NFU policy is especially unwise now, while the United States contends with not one, but two major power threats. **Both Russia and China are expanding their military capabilities and have acted in ways that demonstrate their willingness to attack sovereign nations and redraw borders.**

Analysis: This block is strong because it is likely to resonate well with the judge. It makes the persuasive case that some things matter more than saving some money – saving lives.

A/2: Collateral Damage

Answer: Deterrence of our enemies will be better accomplished through a No First Use Declaration.

Warrant: First Use is not as effective and countries will still be deterred even with an NFU Declaration.

Gerson, Michael S. "The Future of U.S. Nuclear Policy: The Case for No First Use". The Harvard Kennedy School: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. Feb 2011.
<https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/future-us-nuclear-policy-case-no-first-use>

Given U.S. conventional advantages, the threat of first use is unnecessary for deterrence and unlikely to be perceived as credible by current and potential adversaries..A nuclear first strike is fraught with risk and uncertainty. The United States can never be absolutely confident in its ability to fully neutralize the nuclear threat in a disarming first strike, and the possibility that even one or two nuclear weapons could survive and be used in retaliation against the U.S. homeland or on U.S. allies should temper proposals for a first strike.

Warrant: First Use policies actually increase the aggression of Nuclear Weapon States such as Russia.

Arbatov, Alexey. "Guarantee of Threat to Strategic Stability?"
Carnegie Moscow Center. 22 Mar 2019.
<https://carnegie.ru/2019/03/22/nuclear-deterrence-guarantee-or-threat-to-strategic-stability-pub-78663>

No matter how much the deterrence doctrine is used to justify such capabilities and proposals, they actually reduce the nuclear threshold and increase the likelihood of any armed clash between the superpowers escalating into a nuclear conflict with a subsequent exchange of mass nuclear strikes.

Analysis: No First Use declaration will actually help decrease the aggressions of enemies and nuclear weapon states. This in turn will deescalate conflicts and encourage more non-proliferation efforts which in turn continues to decrease the likelihood of attacks which would need a response.

Answer: US Declaration of NFU could bring more countries into non-proliferation making saving lives.

Warrant: No First Use policies would reassure countries of US intentions, lowering the chances of potential crisis to occur.

Manuzzi, AJ. "In Defense of No First Use". American University's Undergraduate Policy Magazine: World Mind Issue 5.1, Foreign Policy, Security. 2019. <https://www.theworldmind.org/home/2019/10/20/in-defense-of-no-first-use>

It is possible that U.S allies such as Japan, South Korea, and NATO would feel less secure if the U.S. adopted NFU. However, those feelings of insecurity are much more preferable to the alternative: the U.S. deploying nuclear weapons first against China, Russia, or North Korea, which would encourage retaliation and put these allies' very existence into question. **At the same time, it is possible that nonnuclear countries and those with few nuclear weapons but a fear of the U.S. could be reassured by the fact that the U.S. viewed its nuclear weapons as instruments of deterrence, not aggression, and maybe**

those states would agree to collaborate on arms control and disarmament measures with the U.S. serving as a responsible partner. At the very least, it may decrease the likelihood of a first strike against the U.S. in the midst of a crisis, according to former defense leaders.

Warrant: First Use Policies actually endanger and increase tensions and NFU declaration will reinforce and encourage multilateral non-proliferation progress.

Cartwright, James E.; Blair, Bruce. "End the First-Use Policy for Nuclear Weapons" New York Times. 14 Aug 2016.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/15/opinion/end-the-first-use-policy-for-nuclear-weapons.html>

Using nuclear weapons first against Russia and China would endanger our and our allies' very survival by encouraging full-scale retaliation. Any first use against lesser threats, such as countries or terrorist groups with chemical and biological weapons, would be gratuitous; there are alternative means of countering those threats. But beyond reducing those dangers, ruling out first use would also bring myriad benefits. To start, it would reduce the risk of a first strike against us during global crises. Leaders of other countries would be calmed by the knowledge that the United States viewed its own weapons as deterrents to nuclear warfare, not as tools of aggression. Beyond those benefits, we believe a no-first-use policy could catalyze multilateral negotiations to reduce nuclear arms, discourage nonnuclear states from developing them and reinforce the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Analysis: A No First Use Declaration does more to help foreign relations and reduce tensions rather than embolden enemies. Those allies who may be concerned with a NFU really have more to worry about in a retaliatory strike to a NFU. By Declaring No First Use, the United

states will strengthen its position, save the lives of millions of innocents, and also bring other countries on board with non-proliferation.

A/2: Sole Authority

Answer: Sole Authority is not necessary in deterring aggressions.

Warrant: Nuclear First Use options are no longer necessary and would give credibility to US intentions.

Tierney, John; Bell, Alexander, et al. "No First Use: Myths vs.

Realities". Centers for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. 2020.

<https://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/no-first-use/no-first-use-myths-vs-realities/>

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.

Eventually, Washington could reevaluate the necessity of the ICBM force altogether. **In the near-term, even if allies and adversaries are skeptical of a U.S. NFU policy at first, the commitment will create an incentive and opportunity for an adversary to communicate directly with the United States to confirm its intentions and reduce the risk of miscalculation in a crisis.**

Warrant: NFU Declaration will demonstrate the restraint needed to reduce the tensions and restore political trust.

tytti erästö and petr topychkanov*. “Insights on Peace and

Security TOWARDS GREATER NUCLEAR RESTRAINT: RAISING THE THRESHOLD FOR NUCLEAR WEAPON USE”. SIPRI: Insights On Peace and Security. June 2020.
https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/sipriinsight2006_2.pdf

The effectiveness of nuclear deterrence essentially depends on a state convincing an adversary of its own readiness to use nuclear weapons. To be stable, however, deterrence relationships also depend on the exercise of the utmost restraint with regard to the actual use of nuclear weapons. Moreover, Russia and China have for a longer period been concerned about what they see as an emerging US capability for preventive nuclear strikes with the help of missile defenses and advanced conventional weapons. Both states have sought to hedge against this perceived threat by strengthening their strategic deterrence capabilities. All these developments reflect increasing uncertainty regarding the threat of first use of nuclear weapons, which has already fueled new armament dynamics. While the possibility of first use has always challenged the assumption of strategic stability based on nuclear deterrence, today such concerns are heightened by technological developments and the resurgence of political tensions between the major NWS. This uncertainty has been further accentuated by the erosion of the US–Russian nuclear arms control architecture, leading to a loss of transparency, verification mechanisms and channels of communication between the two largest NWS. Given the enormous risks related to nuclear weapon use, any signals of weakened restraint are bound to raise serious concerns. In addition to the potentially increased likelihood of nuclear weapon use by a given state, mere perceptions about such lack of restraint by others can create instability by incentivizing further armament development and raising alert levels.

Warrant: Declaration of NFU would build credibility and trust.

Bell, Alexandra and Stowe-Thurston, Abigail. "The US Should Be Strengthening Deterrence. The Opposite Is Happening." Defense One. 16 May 2019. [HTTPS://WWW.DEFENSEONE.COM/IDEAS/2019/05/US-SHOULD-BESTRENGTHENING-DETERRENCE-OPPOSITE-HAPPENING/157067/](https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2019/05/us-should-bestrengthening-deterrence-opposite-happening/157067/)

These arguments completely fail to account for the fact that **extended deterrence is about much more than nuclear weapons**. Forward deployments of U.S. conventional forces actually play the most immediate roles in deterring aggression against the United States and its allies. **Advanced conventional capabilities like precision-guided weapons, increasingly accurate intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance tools, and regional missile defenses all serve to deter aggression. More importantly, extended deterrence is about trust. For the concept to work, countries have to believe that the United States will come to their aid in a time of crisis.**

Analysis: With current developments of more strategic and less lethal conventional weapons, nuclear options, especially in a first use option, are not necessary and actually will decrease trust and capability of aiding our allies. Focus instead should be on restraint, building trust, and a No First Use Declaration will go a long way in establishing both of these.

Answer: Declaration of NFU has bipartisan

Warrant: There is Bipartisan agreement for NFU and opposing Sole Authority.

Choudhary, Deepika. "NO FIRST USE SUMMARY OF PUBLIC OPINION". Rethink Media: Media for Security, Rights and Democracy. 18 April 2019.

<https://rethinkmedia.org/sites/default/files/ReThink%20Media%20-%20P%26S%20Public%20Opinion%20-%20No%20First%20Use%200.pdf>

Americans overwhelmingly agree that the US nuclear arsenal is only for deterrence. 92% of Democrats and 88% of Republicans hold this view. † A strong majority of 79% of Americans are concerned about the President’s “sole authority” to launch a nuclear strike. Among the 79% that express this opinion, 71% see a No First Use (NFU) policy as a practical remedy. “Sole authority” is perceived as concentrating too much power in the hands of a single, fallible person. This data suggests that describing how a No First Use policy makes America safer or creates greater international stability would increase support for the policy. Noting that other countries have NFU policies may have a similar effect on public thinking . Pairing arguments about the pending price tag for nuclear “modernization” with No First Use likely strengthens support for adopting a NFU policy. † Strong majorities from both major parties (80% of Democrats; 64% of Republicans) favor bipartisan cooperation to “reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the world.” † A policy slate including No First Use, negotiated weapons reductions, and spending only what is required for deterrence is supported by 87% of Democrats and 54% of Republicans.

Warrant: No First Use policy that “ties the president’s hands” will make America safer.

Stowe, Thurston. “No First Use and the Myth of ‘Tying the President’s Hands’”. Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. 16 Aug 2019
<https://armscontrolcenter.org/no-first-use-and-the-myth-of-tying-the-presidents-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. 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.”**

Analysis: Sole Authority over first use options are not necessary to deter aggressions, and may in fact actually increase tensions and escalate uncertainty and instability. Implementing a NFU policy would demonstrate the US commitment to restraint, checks and balances, and alleviate the concerns by other Nuclear Weapons Countries about our intentions, restoring credibility and relations.

Answer: American Interests and safety are best served with an NFU declaration.

Warrant: NFU policies will strengthen US standing and safety, and live up to American ideals.

Doyle, James. “Nuclear No-First-Use (NFU) is Right for America.”

Real Clear Defense. 13 July 2016.

https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2016/07/13/nuclear_no-first-use_nfu_is_right_for_america_109556.html

“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.”

Warrant: An NFU policy would deligitimize Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), ensuring international support to respond to WMDs for US and ally safety.

Gompert, David; Watman, Kenneth; Wilkening, Dean. “US Nuclear

Declaratory Policy: The Question of Nuclear First Use.” Rand.

2007.https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/2007/MR596.pdf

“Because this policy delegitimizes WMD first use, it should improve the US chances of successfully deterring WMD threats. Knowing that the United States considers WMD first use to be illegitimate, adversaries contemplating such use are apt to believe that the United States will respond with greater force, including possible nuclear retaliation, If WMD Attacks occur. In addition, **if no WMD first use is widely endorsed, the United States would have support in the international community to respond to WMD attacks with nuclear weapons, further enhancing the credibility of US Retaliatory threats, as well as softening the international reaction against the United States if it ever had to carry out such a threat.**

Analysis: American interests of safety and non-proliferation are best met by declaring an No First Use Policy. Modeling and demonstrating our commitment to human rights through this policy would garner respect from the international community and support for defense should the need arise. It would also put pressure on other nuclear weapons states to commit to non-proliferation efforts, and their own no first use policies making the world and the United States a safer place.

A/2: Foreign Relations and Global Stability

Answer: Allies support and will be safer with an NFU policy.

Warrant: Germany, and other NATO members, have long supported an NFU policy and is concerned that lack of one will reduce non-proliferation and increase nuclear options.

NATO. "Germany Raises No-First-Use Issue at NATO Meeting".

Arms Control Association. Nov 1998.

<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/1998-11/press-releases/germany-raises-first-use-issue-nato-meeting>

"Yet the new German government, which advocates a nuclear-free world, has voiced concerns that the nuclear powers' failure to take steps toward disarmament or reducing the role of nuclear weapons will reduce the incentive for non-nuclear-weapon states to forgo the nuclear option. No other NATO capitals have publicly endorsed the German position, although the idea of no-first-use is widely supported throughout the Canadian government, including by Foreign Affairs Minister Axworthy. In remarks to the Brussels meeting, Axworthy said that the alliance needs to "address the evident tension between what NATO allies say about proliferation and what we do about disarmament" and called nuclear weapons "far less important to Alliance strategy than they were in the 1980s and early 1990s." He also cautioned that NATO should be "circumspect about the political value we place on NATO nuclear forces, lest we furnish arguments proliferators can use to try and justify their own nuclear programs."

Warrant: Establishing better relations with Nuclear States like North Korea will increase the safety for our allies.

Chang, Ryan. "NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE NEED FOR A NO-FIRST-USE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND SOUTH KOREA FOR NORTH KOREA". SOUTHWESTERN JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW (Vol. 26:1) 2020.https://www.swlaw.edu/sites/default/files/2020-01/Chang_171-202_v26n1.pdf

The natural next step in thawing the relationship between the United States and North Korea would be for the United States to negotiate a no-first-use agreement with South Korea, similar in principle to the Sole Purpose Doctrine adopted by China, in which China pledged never to be the first to use nuclear weapons under any circumstance. Having a no-first-use policy may help defuse current tensions with North Korea and South Korea, bring the United States in line with international law, and provide diplomatic advantages for the United States-South Korean relationship.

The problem becomes more challenging when targeting mobile nuclear missiles because such a circumstance necessitates the attacker to expand the initial blast of an attack, which would ultimately lead to more unintended casualties. Given the unfathomable risks associated with nuclear war, prompted in large part by the difficulties in locating North Korea's nuclear facilities, the United States should never consider the use of nuclear weapons as a defensive measure.

Analysis: An NFU declaration is already supported by ally countries for a long time, even at the NATO level. Safety of our allies is also dependent upon peaceful foreign relations with countries like North Korea, as nuclear war would spread around the world.

Answer: Deterrence increases global security.

Warrant: NFU policy would deter and support non-proliferation for global safety.

Allison, Graham; et all. "The Utility of Nuclear Weapons and the

Strategy of No-First-Use". Harvard Kennedy School: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. 15 Nov 2017.

<https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/utility-nuclear-weapons-and-strategy-no-first-use>

This proposition - **that states should seek to minimize the first-use capacities of their nuclear arsenals** - has potentially profound implications for nuclear posture.. In the context of a strategy of NFU, nuclear forces need only survive survive an attack and be **capable of retaliation**. No other demands are placed upon them. **This means that all readiness measures associated with first use options are superfluous, unnecessary, and even undesirable**. Some categories of nuclear weapons - nonstrategic nuclear forces, for example - would become expendable. Following this logic still further, in this sort of nuclear environment, states might grow comfortable not only with NFU, but with the notion of no-early-second-use - retaliation does not need to be prompt in order to deter.If the time someday comes when the nuclear powers are truly interested in a meaningful embrace of NFU, this will be a significant step toward the marginalization of nuclear weapons. It will mean that their role in international politics and national policy is much more circumscribed. Once nuclear weapons have been restricted to the narrow purpose of neutralizing the nuclear weapons of others, a familiar logic comes into play: if the only purpose for nuclear weapons is deterrence, then if no one has them no one needs them.

Warrant: An NFU Policy will benefit the US and its allies in preventing accidental or deliberate use of nuclear weapons.

Gerson, Michael. "No First Use: The Next step for US nuclear Policy." International Security, Vol. 35, No. 2. Pp. 7–47.

2010.https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/ISEC_a_00018

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.

Analysis: Our allies have nothing to fear from an NFU policy, in fact many of them have voiced support for a NATO NFU policy already. Also, declaring an NFU policy would decrease likelihood of war with nuclear weapon states that will actually increase their safety as well as enact long term change in nuclear weapon strategies and armament globally.

A/2: Improved de-escalation

Answer: US NFU policies are the right thing to do, no matter what anyone else does.

Warrant: The United States has a moral obligation to do what it can no matter what anyone else does.

Tannenwald, Nina. "Life Beyond Arms Control: Moving toward a Global Regime of Nuclear Restraint and Responsibility." American Academy of Arts and Sciences: Daedalus. Spring 2020.
<https://www.amacad.org/publication/global-regime-nuclear-restraint-responsibility>

"Formal arms control has been an important tool of nuclear restraint and its loss will be felt. Likely someday, it will revive. In the meantime, **even without treaties, nuclear-armed states can take enormous steps, both unilaterally and cooperatively, to reduce the risk of nuclear war.** In the end, **it is in the fundamental interest of the United States to pursue measures of nuclear restraint and responsibility, jointly with Russia and China if possible, and unilaterally if necessary.** The United States could usefully begin by publicly reaffirming the importance of the seventy-four-year tradition of nonuse. **US leadership in demonstrating restraint and responsibility might help nudge the world toward a retreat from nuclear confrontation. Of course, it might not work, but the alternative of an unrestrained nuclear arms race, seems worse."**

Warrant: US and Nuclear Weapon State Decisions have global impacts.

Roberts, Brad. "Major Power Rivalry and Nuclear Risk Reduction."
Center for Global Security Research. May 2020.
<https://www.osti.gov/servlets/purl/1635770>

“In sum, Moscow and Washington have a lot to discuss when it comes to strategic issues. **The choices that leaders in both countries make will have a profound impact not only on their own security and bilateral relations but on the global scale.** In sum, at a time of intensifying major power rivalry, **it is both necessary and possible for the five NWS to take constructive action to manage and mitigate nuclear risks, and even to eliminate some.** They should find it relatively easy to pluck some low-hanging fruit by expanding existing dialogues for new purposes and by renewing a robust discourse among their nuclear policy communities. They would find it more difficult but also more rewarding to tackle in a more practical and constructive way the concerns and disagreements each has about developments in the strategic military postures of another. **All of these efforts could be reinforced and accelerated by a top-down P5 elaboration of an agreed set of principles for the cooperative pursuit of nuclear risk reduction. This would have the added benefit of engaging a much larger community of other states and other actors interested in reducing nuclear dangers.”**

Analysis: The United States, along with other nuclear weapons countries, have an obligation to the global community to take action and steps to do whatever they can to mitigate nuclear weapons use. The United States can, and should, take any unilateral approach it can, including a No First Use Declaration, in order to uphold the moral obligations and authority that it professes.

Answer: The United States should uphold International Humanitarian Laws

Warrant: International Humanitarian Laws apply to nuclear weapons.

Moxley, Charles J.; Burroughs, John; and Granoff, Jonathan.

“Nuclear Weapons and Compliance with International Humanitarian Law and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty”. Fordham International Law Journal Volume 34, Issue 4, Article 1. 2011.

<https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2290&context=ilj>

“Of central importance, **this body of law regulates threats as well as overt actions, making it unlawful for states-and individuals acting on behalf of states-to threaten actions that are contrary to IHL. This becomes of central significance to the policy of nuclear deterrence, which is founded on the threat to use nuclear weapons. IHL also includes vigorous provisions governing the potential exposure to criminal prosecution of individuals in the armed services, in government, and in industry who act on behalf of or in conjunction with states in matters involving weapons, including nuclear weapons.**”

Warrant: Testing and development of Nuclear weapons comes in conflict with IHL with the environmental impacts.

Nystuen, Gro; Bersagel, Annie; et all. “Nuclear Weapons under International Law”. Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights. October 2014.
<https://www.geneva-academy.ch/joomlatools-files/docmanfiles/Nuclear%20Weapons%20Under%20International%20Law.pdf>

“However, **resort to nuclear weapons presupposes their production, testing, stockpiling, transportation, and deployment before actual use in hostilities.** International law governs parts of this more complex regulatory object in ways that have, thus far, attracted less attention. But **though these states are not bound by multilateral treaty obligations that explicitly and comprehensively prohibit acquisition, transfer, production, development, or stockpiling, this does not mean that**

environmental law is irrelevant to these states' activities involving nuclear weapons. All stages of the 'life-cycle' of nuclear weapons may cause pollution of the environment, not only through radioactive substances but also through hazardous chemicals used in producing and maintaining these weapons. But the Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and Semipalatinsk Treaties (discussed further below) obligate states parties not to conduct nuclear tests and require them to prevent such tests in their territories. They do so regardless of test yield, and whether tests are conducted in the atmosphere or underground. Moreover, already under the 1959 Antarctic Treaty any activity involving nuclear weapons, such as their testing, stockpiling, deployment, or launching in or from Antarctica is prohibited; similar prohibitions apply by treaty to nuclear weapons in outer space⁴ and on the sea bed."

Analysis: International Humanitarian Laws clearly lay out that nuclear weapons are a threat to life and safety as well as the environment, and thereby human life. It is imperative that the United States not only take the lead in No First Use to prevent wars, but also to comply with humanitarian laws and efforts through denuclearization and de-escalation through NFU. This will in turn lead to reducing nuclear armaments to comply with the environmental humanitarian laws as well.

A/2: International Leadership

Answer: Even if unenforceable, NFU is not meaningless.

Warrant: A Declaration of NFU will establish a model of expectations and behavior that first use is unnecessary.

Tannenwald, Nina. "It's Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy" Texas National Security Review. Vol 2 Issue 3. 1 Aug 2019.
<https://tnsr.org/roundtable/its-time-for-a-u-s-no-first-use-nuclear-policy/>

"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.

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.**

Warrant: US NFU would increase security, reduce miscalculations, and restore commitments and progress on nonproliferation.

Tierney, John; Bell, Alexander; Et al. "No First Use: Frequently Asked Questions." Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. 2020. <https://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/no-first-use/no-first-use-frequently-asked-questions/>

What are the benefits of a No First Use policy?

“Adopting an NFU policy would enhance U.S. and allied security by minimizing ambiguity about how the United States thinks about and intends to use its nuclear weapons. Clarifying that the U.S. nuclear arsenal is only for deterrence would reduce the risk of adversaries miscalculating U.S. intentions and unintentionally escalating a crisis.

On the international stage, adopting an NFU policy will demonstrate that the United States is reducing the role of nuclear weapons in its strategy and policy at a time when non-nuclear weapons states are increasingly frustrated that nuclear-armed states are not making satisfactory progress on their commitments to work toward disarmament under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.”

Analysis: Just because there is not enforcement mechanism in place for a US NFU Policy it does not negate the importance of the gesture in regaining our leadership role in the Non-Proliferation efforts. In fact, the effort and commitment will demonstrate the willingness of the United States to mitigate risks, ensure global safety, and model non-proliferation efforts for others to follow.

Answer: Just because they are unenforceable doesn't mean that this declaration shouldn't be made.

Warrant-Non-Unique: Current Nuclear Treaties already are unenforceable.

Pifer, Steven. “10 Years after Obama’s Nuclear-free vision, the US and Russia head in the opposite direction.” Brookings.Edu.

4 April 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/04/04/10-years-after-obamas-nuclear-free-vision-the-us-and-russia-head-in-the-opposite-direction/>

In any event, matters took a different course than Obama had hoped. **Following signature of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) in April 2010, he called for negotiations with Russia to**

further reduce strategic nuclear weapons and bring in non-strategic nuclear weapons. That raised the possibility that, for the first time ever, the two countries might negotiate limits on their entire nuclear arsenals. Moscow chose not to engage in further bilateral negotiations—in part because Washington proved unready to discuss limits on missile defense or conventional strike systems. The Russians also sought a multilateral negotiation, though they have never offered a proposal or explained how one treaty could limit forces as disparate as those of the United States and Russia (4000 to 4500 nuclear weapons each) and China and France (less than 300 each).

Warrant: Even though the START program wasn't enforceable the US demonstrated leadership and commitment to the non-proliferation.

Obama, Barack. "Remarks by President Obama and President Medvedev of Russia at New START Treaty Signing Ceremony and Press Conference". The White House :President Barack Obama. 8 April 2010.
<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2010/04/08/remarks-president-obama-and-president-medvedev-russia-new-start-treaty-signing-cere>

Together, we've stopped that drift, and proven the benefits of cooperation. **Today is an important milestone for nuclear security and non-proliferation, and for U.S.-Russia relations. It fulfills our common objective to negotiate a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. It includes significant reductions in the nuclear weapons that we will deploy.** It cuts our delivery vehicles by roughly half. It includes a comprehensive verification regime, which allows us to further build trust. **It enables both sides the flexibility to protect our security, as well as America's unwavering commitment to the security of our European allies.** And I look forward to working with the United States Senate to achieve ratification for this important treaty later this year. **Finally, this day demonstrates the determination of the United States and Russia --**

the two nations that hold over 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons -- to pursue responsible global leadership. Together, we are keeping our commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which must be the foundation for global non-proliferation.

Analysis: If the United States wants to regain credibility and reinforce it's leadership role in Nuclear Proliferation efforts, it is necessary to Declare an NFU policy. This will demonstrate the acceptance of responsibility in our roles in non-proliferation, live up to past treaties and commitments, while also ensuring safety for our allies.

A/2: Our military is powerful enough without nuclear first use

Disadvantage: We spend too much on the military

Warrant: US military spending is a waste

Weissman, Robert. "Perspective: Should U.S. Military Spending Be Reduced?"
Timesfreepress.Com, 8 Feb. 2020,
<https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/opinion/freepress-commentary/story/2020/feb/08/perspective-should-us-military-spending-be-reduced/515157/>.

Pentagon spending is, literally, out of control — and it is making America weaker, not stronger. It's time — past time — for a fundamental reorientation of the federal government's spending, with Pentagon spending slimmed and the resultant savings reallocated to address domestic and humanitarian priorities. The almost three-quarters of a billion dollars in the annual Pentagon budget doesn't reflect any reasonable assessment of national security threats, common sense priority setting or any kind of honest reckoning with the costs and benefits of an additional billion dollars for war fighting. **The result is that we are wasting hundreds of billions of dollars, fueling endless war and diverting money from other vital needs.** The Pentagon eats up more of the federal government's discretionary budget — \$738 billion for the current fiscal year — than all other discretionary spending combined. Think about that for a moment: The Pentagon has been gifted more resources than our diplomatic and peace-building agencies, more than the Environmental Protection Agency, more than our education and housing programs and more than we spend on scientific research combined.

Warrant: There is no threat to the US to warrant this spending

Artiga-Valencia, Robert. "The U.S. Spends More on Its Military Than 144 Countries Combined." National Priorities Project, 18 July 2019, <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/blog/2019/07/18/us-spends-more-its-military-176-countries-combined/>.

Both of these numbers are stark increases from last year's differences. Yet, there appears to be no clear threat to the US that would warrant such a dramatic increase in spending. So let's think about how this \$121.1 billion, which could have instead provided 11 million veterans with decent healthcare according to our budget trade offs tool, is being spent. We're running 800 military bases in 80 different countries, most of which are generally unsupervised in their carbon emissions — so not only are we making the world less safe with our enormous military presence, but we are also literally in the process of making our world uninhabitable. As a result of our military actions overseas, at least 244,000 Afghan, Iraqi, and Pakistani civilians have been killed in horrific ways, including tens of thousands of children. These are at least 244,000 more reasons to have a conversation about what exactly we celebrate every year on Memorial Day.

Analysis: This is a good response because it shows that the US already spends too much on the military. This means that our current spending is not sustainable and will not be able to take the place of a nuclear arsenal. We ought to reduce our military spending in general, and thus we cannot rely on it to defend us any more.

Answer: Nuclear weapons take up a lot of our military spending

Warrant: Trump is engaging in a new expensive arms race

Sanger, David E. "Trump Budget Calls for New Nuclear Warheads and 2 Types of Missiles." The New York Times, 10 Feb. 2020. NYTimes.com, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/us/politics/trump-budget-nuclear-missiles.html>.

The Trump administration has begun to put a price tag on its growing arms race with Russia and China, and the early numbers indicate that restoring nuclear weapons to a central role in American military strategy will cost tens of billions of dollars over the next decade. In the 2021 budget released on Monday, the administration revealed for the first time that it intended to create a new submarine-launched nuclear warhead, named the W93. Its development is part of a proposed 19 percent increase this year, to \$19.8 billion, for the National Nuclear Security Administration, the Energy Department agency that maintains the nuclear stockpile and develops new nuclear warheads. More tellingly, that is a jump of more than 50 percent since 2017, President Trump's first year in office.

Warrant: Trump is increasing spending on modernizing our nuclear arsenal

Mehta, Aaron. "Trump Seeks \$46 Billion for Nuclear Weapons Programs in Budget Request." Defense News, 10 Feb. 2020, <https://www.defensenews.com/smr/federal-budget/2020/02/10/trump-budget-requests-46-billion-for-nuclear-weapons-programs/>.

The Trump administration's fiscal 2021 budget includes a major increase in nuclear weapons spending from both the Defense Department and the agency in charge of managing nuclear warheads. Overall spending on nuclear modernization by the Pentagon sits at \$28.9 billion in the request, while funding for the National Nuclear Security Administration comes in at \$19.8 billion, an almost 20 percent increase for the semiautonomous agency within the Department of Energy from FY20 numbers. Of

that funding for NNSA, \$15.6 billion is for the weapons accounts. Another \$1.7 billion goes to the naval reactors account, 2.2 percent above the FY20 enacted level. That supports three modernization efforts: the Columbia-Class Reactor System Development, the Land-based S8G Prototype Refueling Overhaul, and the Spent Fuel Handling Recapitalization Project **Combined, the Trump budget requests almost \$46 billion for nuclear weapons programs.**

Analysis: Nuclear weapons are one of the largest expenditures of the US military. This means that the pro cannot prove that we can reduce our spending on nuclear weapons and expect the rest of our military to be strong enough to defend us. If we reduced the versatility of our nukes, we would have much weaker force.

A/2: NFU decreases the odds of miscalculation

De-Link: We have systems in place to stop miscalculation

Warrant: We are moving missiles from prompt launch positions

Moniz, Ernest. Three Steps to Avert an Accidental Nuclear War | Analysis | NTI. 1 Feb. 2018, <https://www.nti.org/analysis/opinions/three-steps-avert-accidental-nuclear-war/>.

Second, despite significant disagreements on many global issues, the U.S., Russia and other nuclear-armed nations must work together on areas of existential common interest -- chief among them, reducing the risk of a nuclear error. Once fired, a nuclear ballistic missile unfortunately cannot be recalled before it reaches its target. **Removing U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons from Cold War-era “prompt-launch” postures -- where they are ready to launch and hit their targets within minutes -- would eliminate “hair-triggers” and increase decision time for leaders. In doing so, Washington and Moscow would set an example for all states with nuclear weapons.** Military experts in each of these countries should be mandated by their leaders to explore this and other options that would give them more time to make fateful decisions about nuclear use.

Warrant: Treaties have reduced the odds of nuclear accident

Nurnberger, Lisa. Nuclear Weapons Solutions | Union of Concerned Scientists. Jan. 2020, <https://www.ucsusa.org/nuclear-weapons/solutions>.

A total of nine countries possess nuclear weapons. **Reducing the risk of nuclear war will require domestic policy changes within all those countries, as well as cooperation and**

verified agreements between them. Diplomacy has a strong track record. Multiple treaties and agreements—and decades of dialogue and cooperation—helped reduce US and Soviet arsenals from a high of 64,000 warheads in the 1980s to a total of around 8,000 today. The United States should build on those successes by extending the New START Treaty with Russia; committing to a “diplomacy first” approach with North Korea; and rejoining the Iran Deal, which limits Iran’s capacity to produce weapons-grade uranium.

Analysis: This is a good response because it shows that already there are reduced chances of miscalculation. This means that the odds of the impacts of this contention being triggered are very low. Thus, this allows the con to dismantle the pro’s argument and easily extend any offense to win the round.

Mitigation: Nuclear war is very unlikely because of mutually assured destruction

Warrant: Mutually assured destruction decreases the incentive to ever launch a nuke

Falken, Robert. “Mutually Assured Destruction: When The Only Winning Move Is Not to Play.” Farnam Street, 19 June 2017, <https://fs.blog/2017/06/mutually-assured-destruction/>.

By the 1960s, the concept of mutually assured destruction (hereafter referred to as MAD) was crystallized. Both the US and the USSR could bring about the end of humanity (including themselves), but neither wanted to. This led to a stalemate, essentially stating ‘I won’t if you don’t.’ For either to attack would mean their own destruction, defeating the purpose of war. Ironically enough, the concept of MAD has led to relative peace between countries with nuclear capabilities. Tension is still prevalent, as each must keep up with the developments of the other to ensure continued equality. During the Cold War, MAD was probably responsible for the lack of

serious conflict between the US and USSR. The US kept a fleet of airplanes airborne non-stop, ready to drop nuclear bombs on the USSR at a moment's notice, should they strike first. Even if the USSR tried to destroy the entire US, they would still be able to retaliate using airplanes. However, airplanes were logistically and financially difficult to sustain and the US began to look for alternatives. Ballistic missile submarines were adopted as a solution. Submarines are also operated by the UK, France, China, India, and Russia. While world peace is certainly a long way off, this nuclear fleet provides a semblance of global stability.

Warrant: The risks of nuclear war have gone down dramatically since the cold war

Castella, Tom de. "How Did We Forget about Mutually Assured Destruction?" BBC News, 15 Feb. 2012. www.bbc.com, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-17026538>.

The most serious stand-off today is not the US and Russia but the prospect of a nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan in which "tens of millions would die", Rogers suggests. And the danger in any of these regional disputes is that the US and Russia get sucked in and what began as a war between two neighbours goes global.

"The fear of nuclear war has diminished partly because the risk has receded significantly with the end of the Cold War," says Nick Bostrom, director of Oxford University's Future of Humanity Institute. "But another factor might be simple changes in risk fashion - it becoming more popular recently to worry about global warming, for example." **More immediate worries are terrorist attack, pandemic disease, and economic meltdown.**

Analysis: This is a good response because it shows that there is no chance the US would ever think of launching a nuclear weapon first even if we had the option to. Mutually assured destruction means that we will always fear for our own safety too much to launch a nuke. This takes out any possible offense for the pro's argument.

A/2: First use is a tool we should never use

Mitigation: Nuclear war is very unlikely because of mutually assured destruction

Warrant: Mutually assured destruction keeps nations from launching nukes

Jervis, Robert. "The Dustbin of History: Mutual Assured Destruction." *Foreign Policy*, 9 Nov. 2009, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/11/09/the-dustbin-of-history-mutual-assured-destruction/>.

It is a clue to the eventual demise of mutual assured destruction (MAD) that the term was coined by a critic who sought to highlight how ludicrous the concept was. In the 1960s, Donald Brennan — an analyst at the conservative Hudson Institute, who was making the case for ballistic missile defense — used the acronym MAD to ridicule the idea that in a nuclear war, or even a large conventional conflict, each side should be prepared to destroy the other's cities and society. Of course, this objective was not sensible, **but MAD proponents argued that was the point: The outcome would be so dreadful that both sides would be deterred from starting a nuclear war or even taking actions that might lead to it.** Throughout much of the Cold War, U.S. declaratory policy (i.e., what policymakers said in public) closely approximated MAD.

Warrant: The 1960s lead to a nuclear stalemate

Isaacs, Jeremy. "Nuclear Deterrence." *Atomic Archive*, 2020, <https://www.atomicarchive.com/history/cold-war/page-15.html>.

For a time after World War II, America held the upper hand with regards to nuclear superiority. It used this threat of "massive retaliation" as a means to deter Soviet aggression. By the late 1950s, the Soviet Union had built up a convincing nuclear arsenal

that could be delivered on the territory of the United States and Western Europe. **By the mid-1960s, unilateral deterrence gave way to "mutual deterrence," a situation of strategic stalemate. The superpowers would refrain from attacking each other because of the certainty of mutual assured destruction, better known as MAD. This theory is still a major part of the defense policies of the United States and Russia. Both superpowers recognized that the first requirement of an effective deterrent was that it should survive or "ride out" a surprise "counterforce" targeted attack without being decimated — a task made difficult by the ever increasing numbers of accurate delivery systems, "penetration aids," and multiple warheads.**

Analysis: This is a good response because it shows that the US would never attack first. In fact, this argument proves that no one will ever attack first because it means that no nation will ever want to suffer the consequences of engaging in nuclear war. This means that there is no impact to this argument because it depends on the fact that first use might ever happen.

Answer: First use is just for deterrence

Warrant: Our policies of first use have prevented war since 1945

Levine, Robert A. Uniform Deterrence of Nuclear First Use. RAND Corporation, Jan. 1993. www.rand.org,
https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR231.html.

This report proposes initial discussion of a United States-led international policy of Uniform Deterrence of Nuclear First Use (UD). The purpose of such a policy would be to preserve the "firebreak" between nuclear and all other types of weapons, which since 1945 has been the key to preventing nuclear combat. The report analyzes both the role of UD in achieving its primary objective of deterring first use, and implementation of punishment for first use (preferably non-nuclear punishment) if

deterrence fails. The discussion stresses the distinction between the deterrence of the use of nuclear weapons, which is the purpose of UD, and policies to discourage proliferation of the possession of nuclear weapons; but it contends that UD and anti-proliferation efforts should be complementary. **The primary conclusion is that although implementation after a failure of deterrence would be difficult, it would not be impossible, and that UD can materially decrease the likelihood of first use in many cases.** An open question is its acceptability, internationally and within the United States, which is why this report is an opening of discussion, not a closure.

Warrant: The main objective of nuclear weapons is deterrence

Oswalt, Maria. "No First Use Explained." Union of Concerned Scientists, 7 May 2020, <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/no-first-use-explained>.

However, China, Russia, and North Korea do not fall under the US negative security assurance. China and Russia are nuclear weapon states under the NPT, and North Korea withdrew from the treaty in 2003 and conducted its first nuclear test in 2006. This means that they could be targets for US nuclear weapons, including the United States launching weapons at them first. One noteworthy thing about today's landscape is that the Trump administration's NPR has significantly expanded the definition of "extreme." Both the Obama and Trump administration NPRs state that the United States "would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or its allies and partners." **However, the Obama version stated that use would be limited to "a narrow range of contingencies" and emphasized that the goal was to continue to "reduce the role of nuclear weapons in deterring non-nuclear attacks, with the objective of making deterrence of nuclear attack on the United States or our allies and partners the sole purpose of US nuclear weapons."**

Analysis: This is a good argument because it shows that even if in theory we might use nuclear weapons first in order to fight against an adversary, this will never actually occur. The whole point of having first use as an option is just for the optical effects it brings. This means that there is no probability for this argument since the policy never actually intends to use nuclear weapons first.

A/2: First use would provoke nuclear war

Mitigation: Nuclear war is very unlikely because of mutually assured destruction

Warrant: Mutually assured destruction means it is irrational to launch a nuke

Castella, Tom de. "How Did We Forget about Mutually Assured Destruction?" BBC News, 15 Feb. 2012. www.bbc.com, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-17026538>.

Today the notion of all-out nuclear war is rarely discussed. There are concerns about Iran and North Korea's nuclear programmes and fears that terrorists might get hold of a nuclear bomb. But **the fear of a war in which the aim is to wipe out the entire population of an enemy has startlingly diminished**. In 1962, the concept of mutually assured destruction started to play a major part in the defence policy of the US. President Kennedy's Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, set out in a speech to the American Bar Foundation a theory of flexible nuclear response. **In essence it meant stockpiling a huge nuclear arsenal. In the event of a Soviet attack the US would have enough nuclear firepower to survive a first wave of nuclear strikes and strike back. The response would be so massive that the enemy would suffer "assured destruction". Thus the true philosophy of nuclear deterrence was established. If the other side knew that initiating a nuclear strike would also inevitably lead to their own destruction, they would be irrational to press the button.**

Warrant: Under MAD, no government wants to use a nuke

Wilde, Robert. "What Is the Theory Behind Mutually Assured Destruction?" ThoughtCo, 20 June 2019, <https://www.thoughtco.com/mutually-assured-destruction-1221190>.

Mutually Assured Destruction, or mutually assured deterrence (MAD), is a military theory that was developed to deter the use of nuclear weapons. The theory is based on the fact that nuclear weaponry is so devastating that no government wants to use them. Neither side will attack the other with their nuclear weapons because both sides are guaranteed to be totally destroyed in the conflict. No one will go to all-out nuclear war because no side can win and no side can survive. To many, mutually assured destruction helped prevent the Cold War from turning hot; to others, it is the most ludicrous theory humanity ever put into full-scale practice. The name and acronym of MAD come from physicist and polymath John von Neumann, a key member of the Atomic Energy Commission and a man who helped the US develop nuclear devices. A game theorist, von Neumann is credited with developing the equilibrium strategy and named it as he saw fit.

Analysis: This is a good response because it proves that the likelihood of a nuclear weapon ever being used first is so negligible that the impact of this argument should not even be considered. This mitigates the argument to such an extent that it is impossible for the pro to win on it. This means it clears the path to the ballot for any neg argument.

Non-unique: Other countries might go to war too

Warrant: Pakistan and India have powerful nuclear capacities which could lead to war

Toon, Owen B., et al. "Rapidly Expanding Nuclear Arsenals in Pakistan and India Portend Regional and Global Catastrophe." *Science Advances*, vol. 5, no. 10, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Oct. 2019, p. eaay5478.
advances.sciencemag.org, doi:10.1126/sciadv.aay5478.

Pakistan and India may have 400 to 500 nuclear weapons by 2025 with yields from tested 12- to 45-kt values to a few hundred kilotons. If India uses 100 strategic

weapons to attack urban centers and Pakistan uses 150, fatalities could reach 50 to 125 million people, and nuclear-ignited fires could release 16 to 36 Tg of black carbon in smoke, depending on yield. The smoke will rise into the upper troposphere, be self-lofted into the stratosphere, and spread globally within weeks. Surface sunlight will decline by 20 to 35%, cooling the global surface by 2° to 5°C and reducing precipitation by 15 to 30%, with larger regional impacts. Recovery takes more than 10 years. **Net primary productivity declines 15 to 30% on land and 5 to 15% in oceans threatening mass starvation and additional worldwide collateral fatalities.**

Warrant: North Korea has recently tested its nuclear capacities

Hauser, Kristin. "Scientist: Major Cyberattack Could Be as Bad as Nuclear War."

Futurism, 20 Aug. 2019, <https://futurism.com/the-byte/major-cyberattack-nuclear-war>.

North Korea may soon conduct its first underwater-launched ballistic missile test in about a year, a top South Korean military official said Wednesday, amid long-stalled nuclear talks between the North and the United States. In written remarks to lawmakers ahead of a confirmation hearing, Won In-choul, the nominee for chairman of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said North Korea has been repairing recent typhoon damage at its northeastern Sinpo shipyard, a place where it builds submarines. **Shortly after the repairs are complete, there is a chance it will carry out a submarine-launched ballistic missile test,** Won said. He said South Korea's military is keeping a close watch on developments there, according to a copy of his remarks provided by a lawmaker, Kang Dae-sik.

Analysis: This is a good response because it makes the whole argument nonunique. If the impact of the argument rests on the fact that there is a likelihood that the US will strike first, then this shows that this impact will occur either way given that other countries are likely to go

to nuclear war first. This means that the pro cannot get unique access to their impact because it is going to happen either way.

A/2: First use would isolate the US from allies

Turn: First use reassures our allies

Warrant: First use assures allies we will protect against adversaries

Downman, Maxwell. "Where Would Europe Stand on a U.S. No First Use Policy?"

Outrider, 2020, <https://outrider.org/nuclear-weapons/articles/where-would-europe-stand-us-no-first-use-policy/>.

In 2016, President Obama considered a U.S. pledge to never use nuclear weapons first. U.S. allies in Europe and East Asia reportedly opposed this move and sent high-level delegations to lobby in Washington. **Allies feared that without the threat of nuclear first use countries like Russia and North Korea—maybe even China—would push the boundary of acceptable behavior. There was also opposition to the policy change inside the U.S. government. In the end, the United States’ first use policy remained unchanged.** Still, support for a No First Use (NFU) policy has grown steadily in Democratic circles since President Obama left office. NFU has featured in campaign pledges from nine Democratic candidates, including Joe Biden, Elizabeth Warren, and Bernie Sanders. It's possible that the United States could have a NFU pledge after the 2020 election.

Warrant: The goal of our nuclear program is to reassure allies

Rose, Frank. "Reassuring Allies and Strengthening Strategic Stability: An Approach to Nuclear Modernization for Democrats." War on the Rocks, 16 Apr. 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/reassuring-allies-and-strengthening-strategic-stability-an-approach-to-nuclear-modernization-for-democrats/>.

In light of these developments, Democrats should support a balanced strategic nuclear modernization program that seeks to reassure allies and uphold strategic stability while also offering a viable alternative to the Trump administration's antipathy towards arms control. That means prioritizing weapon systems that give the United States the ability to defend its allies, reduce adversaries' incentives to conduct a first strike against the United States, and that do not lend themselves to nuclear arms-racing. On that note, we believe that the Obama administration got the strategic nuclear modernization program right when it agreed to "modernize or replace the triad of nuclear delivery systems: a heavy bomber and air-launched cruise missile, an ICBM, and a nuclear-powered submarine (SSBN) and Submarine launched ballistic missile (SLBM)."

Analysis: This is a good response because it shows that even if using a nuclear weapon would isolate the US from our allies, stating that we would never use it first would isolate us even more. That is to say, just saying that we might attack first makes allies believe we will protect them. This turns the link of the argument and makes it a reason to vote con.

Turn: First use creates a network of allies under our security umbrella

Warrant: First use deters adversarial attacks

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>.

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

Warrant: The security umbrella can make new allies

Adesnik, David, and Victor A. Utgoff. "Strengthening and Expanding the US Nuclear Umbrella to Dissuade Nuclear Proliferation." Homeland Security Digital Library, IDA Paper P-4356; Institute for Defense Analyses Paper P-4356, United States. Defense Threat Reduction Agency. Advanced Systems and Concepts Office, 1 July 2008, <https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=>.

Many experts and officials are concerned that a failure to stop North Korea from expanding and improving its nuclear weapons stocks and the continued apparent pursuit of nuclear weapons by Iran will spur substantial additional nuclear proliferation. **Much of this additional proliferation could be by concerned US allies and friends in Asia and the Middle East, and possibly even by NATO allies such as Turkey. This raises the question of whether strengthening the US nuclear umbrella that protects some US allies, and perhaps expanding that umbrella to cover other US allies and even new allies, could substitute for the independent nuclear forces they might otherwise**

create. This study explores this topic first by defining the nuclear umbrella -- more formally US extended nuclear deterrence (END) guarantees. Under these guarantees, the US 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. [...] The study then explores the general pros and cons for allies of accepting US END guarantees rather than establishing their own independent nuclear deterrent forces.

Analysis: This is a good response because it turns the link of the argument, making it a reason to vote for the con. This response proves that when the US has the option to launch a nuclear attack first, it allows us to reassure countries we will come to their rescue if attacked. This means we can turn these countries into our allies.

A/2: A policy of no first use is more democratic

Answer: No first use keeps democracy safe, preserves the American way.

Warrant: No first use puts the American people in harm's way.

Heinrichs, Rebecca. "Reject 'No First Use' Nuclear Policy." Newsweek. 8/24/20.

<https://www.newsweek.com/reject-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-opinion-1527037>

First, adopting an NFU policy invites a strategic non-nuclear attack against the American people, our allies and our interests. An NFU declaration broadcasts to America's enemies that they can proceed with a chemical weapons attack on U.S. forces and their families, can proceed with a biological attack on an American city and can proceed with an overwhelming conventional attack against critical U.S. assets, all without fear of nuclear retaliation. Any would-be enemy could carry out an infinite number of attacks short of a nuclear attack, while the NFU-endorsing U.S. president assures their safety from our nuclear weapon arsenal. An NFU policy is especially unwise now, while the United States contends with not one, but two major power threats. Both Russia and China are expanding their military capabilities and have acted in ways that demonstrate their willingness to attack sovereign nations and redraw borders.

Disadvantage: Crucial American alliances will crumble with a no first use policy

Heinrichs, Rebecca. "Reject 'No First Use' Nuclear Policy." Newsweek. 8/24/20.

<https://www.newsweek.com/reject-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-opinion-1527037>

Finally, adopting an NFU policy would cause allied nations, who have rightly forsworn nuclear weapons and who rely on the American nuclear umbrella, to doubt our assurances. And if allies and partners can no longer rely on our nuclear umbrella, they

will develop their own. The result of the nuclear idealists' efforts, zealous as their mission is to take the world down to zero nuclear weapons, could ironically result in precipitous nuclear proliferation.

President Obama, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for, in part, his denuclearization aspirations, eschewed an NFU declaration. Though he was ideologically motivated to pursue the idealist nuclear disarmament agenda, reality and the weight of responsibility to protect the American people won the day. It is inexplicable that his vice president, who has decades of experience grappling with the global threats and has had a front-row seat to these executive decisions, would still hold to the notion that NFU is good policy.

Impact: Conflicts are more likely without the U.S.' threat of first use.

King, Iain. "A commitment to never use nuclear weapons first will not make us safer."

The Hill. 12/26/19. <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/475965-a-commitment-to-never-use-nuclear-weapons-first-will-not-make-us-safer>

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.

Analysis: The most undemocratic outcome for the United States would be to enter another conflict. Unfortunately, absent the lingering threat of nuclear weapons, the U.S. would not be able to convince its allies or enemies that it deserves to be feared. This would ultimately result in more conflict, and more undemocratic outcomes for the American people. A policy of first use, in a sense, preserves the American way by preventing outcomes that would ultimately challenge our democracy more directly.