

Nuclear Threat Reduction: Adopting a No-First-Use Policy Would Make the US Safer

ACTION

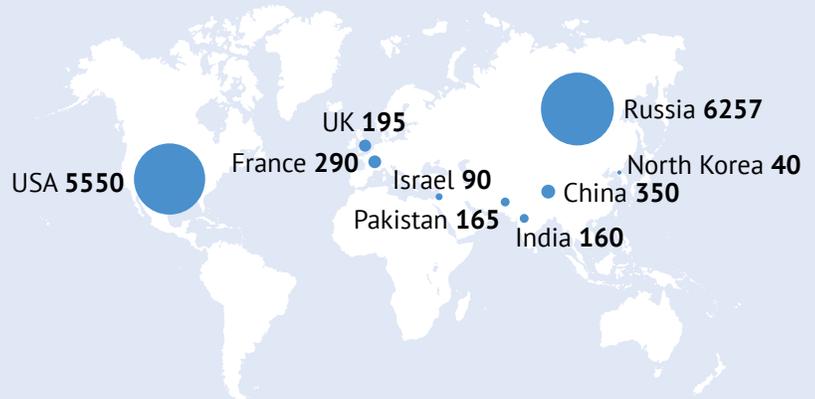
Members of Congress should cosponsor H.R.2603 / S.1219, the No First Use Act, which would establish that the sole purpose of US nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attacks.

Preventing Nuclear War Should Be a Top Priority

The current US nuclear posture reserves the option to use nuclear weapons first in a conflict at the sole discretion of the President. Nuclear war would have dire consequences for global health and the environment. Even a limited exchange of strategic nuclear weapons in populated areas would lead to indiscriminate mass-casualties, with the resulting firestorms potentially causing global climate change and wide-spread famines.

Figure Source: Hans M. Kristensen and Matt Korda, Federation of American Scientists, 2021

Estimated Global Nuclear Warhead Inventories, 2021



The Benefits of No-First-Use

- *Fewer scenarios leading to nuclear war:* By eliminating the possibility of the United States initiating a nuclear exchange, we reduce the number of routes for US involvement in a nuclear war.
- *Lead other nations to NFU:* The US credibly adopting a NFU policy can set an example for other nuclear powers and reduce nuclear tensions. Only China has an unconditional NFU policy, and each additional country credibly committing to NFU reduces the possible routes to nuclear war.
- *Reduced motive for pre-emptive attack:* With the exception of Russia, the US nuclear arsenal is massive compared to other nuclear-armed nations. This imbalance creates an environment where - during a non-nuclear conflict - other countries would feel pressure to launch nuclear weapons before a US nuclear strike can destroy their arsenal or command and control system. NFU reduces this escalatory pressure.

Common Misconceptions

- *Non-nuclear threats:* US conventional forces remain some of the most advanced and best-funded in the world. Our military, equipped with our powerful non-nuclear arsenal, is prepared to respond to the evolving non-nuclear threats of the modern world.
- *Extended deterrence:* An NFU doctrine does not conflict with our commitment to extend our nuclear umbrella to our allies. Instead, the sole purpose of our nuclear arsenal will be to deter nuclear attacks against the US and our allies through the threat of retaliation.
- *Verification:* The commitment of the US carries weight and can be made more credible by considering additional checks and balances to the use of nuclear weapons.

We ask that you cosponsor the *No First Use Act* to support its progress in Congress.