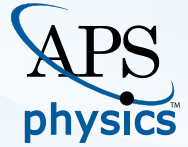




**PHYSICISTS COALITION
FOR NUCLEAR
THREAT REDUCTION**
physicistscoalition.org



1 June 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Biden:

As you and your Administration evaluate the current US nuclear posture and chart the direction for its future, we strongly urge you to adopt a policy of no-first-use (NFU) of nuclear weapons. Such a policy would be consistent with your goal of reducing the role of nuclear weapons in national security. It would assure the world and potential adversaries that the United States will not be the first to use nuclear weapons, reaffirming that the only situation in which the US would consider the use of nuclear weapons would be in response to a nuclear attack on itself or its allies. As you said in 2017, "...it's hard to envision a plausible scenario in which the first use of nuclear weapons by the United States would be necessary or make sense."

As the leadership of the [Physicists Coalition for Nuclear Threat Reduction](http://physicistscoalition.org), a national network of scientists committed to lowering the nuclear threat by educating the public and engaging policymakers, we believe that transitioning to a NFU posture would decrease the potential for nuclear war. A commitment to NFU would also demonstrate that the sole purpose of US nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attacks, making more credible the US interest in nuclear reductions.

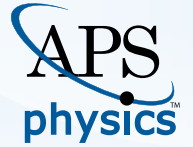
Ambiguity in the current US first-use policy increases the risk of nuclear war. It heightens the likelihood of an adversary nation launching a nuclear attack during a crisis in the mistaken belief that the United States is readying a first strike. Several "close calls" during the last 50 years demonstrate this risk. A clear NFU policy would increase our safety while preserving the expectation that an attack of any type against the United States, its allies, or its forces abroad would be responded to effectively.

The United States has always led by example. We can do so once again by encouraging other nuclear nations to shift to NFU postures. Only China has an unconditional NFU policy, and each additional country credibly committing to NFU reduces the possible routes to nuclear war. Moreover, the United States adopting a NFU policy signals our confidence in the strength and ability of the US conventional Armed Forces.

Adopting a no-first-use policy now would particularly reduce the likelihood of nuclear war with Russia, China, or North Korea. We encourage you to pursue this shift as a foundation for the new US nuclear posture. We would be happy to offer support on this issue.



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Sincerely,

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