

**The Nuclear Option: Exploring Weapons of Mass Destruction Topics for High School Policy Debate, with an Emphasis on Nuclear Policies**

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**Presented to the**

**National Federation of State High School Associations**

**August 2018**

**Spokane, Washington**

## **Resolutions**

Resolution A: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially change its nuclear weapon strategy.

Resolution B: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially change its nuclear weapon policy.

Resolution C: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce the mission(s) of its nuclear weapons.

Resolution D: Resolved: The United States federal government should establish a foreign policy substantially increasing efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Resolution E: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce the size and/or role of its arsenal(s) of biological, chemical, cyber, nuclear, and/or radiological weapons.

Resolution F: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce the size and/or role of its arsenal(s) of weapons of mass destruction.

Note 2009-2010 college NDT-CEDA resolution: Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially reduce the size of its nuclear weapons arsenal, and/or substantially reduce and restrict the role and/or missions of its nuclear weapons arsenal.

Note 2001 high school policy resolution: Resolved: That the United States federal government should establish a foreign policy significantly limiting the use of weapons of mass destruction.

## **Introduction • Timeliness • Interest**

Weapons of mass destruction have been creating exciting policy debates for decades yet they have only been the subject of two high school resolutions (2001-2002 and 1964-1965).

Debates with nuclear war and great power war impacts are not enough: students need to debate how to address the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Students would have timely and engaging debates involving valuable skills in analyzing and deploying nuclear policy. Consider a few examples from the past year that showcase the interest in weapons of mass destruction debates and how they will feature current controversies.

First, North Korea, a controversy fueled and fanned by a few tweets, tests and talks that captured public and media attention. *Vox News* cites, "a new poll ... shows 82 percent of Americans say they are afraid of nuclear war with North Korea....63 percent of voters polled believe the US is now likely to take nuclear action against [North Korea]" (Nilsen, 2017). Concerns over North Korea have weapons of mass destruction issues at the forefront of peoples' minds. This paper's first draft was finalized when Hawaii received false signals that they were under a missile attack and the third draft shortly after President Trump and Kim Jong Un's talks.

Second, the President's informal statements, often 140-character proclamations from President Trump, have changed the debate on the nature of America's use, understanding, and role of weapons of mass destruction. *CNN* reports, "President Donald Trump said that he just wants to have the US nuclear arsenal in "tip-top shape," pushing back on a report that he wanted to increase the stockpile tenfold. "I want modernization and total rehabilitation" (Hansler, 2017). John Tierney, the current executive director of the Center for Arms Control and

Non-Proliferation, is concerned about this type of policymaking: “It is dangerous for the President-elect to use just 140 characters and announce a major change in U.S. nuclear weapons policy, which is nuanced, complex, and affects every single person on this planet” (Conway, 2017). President Trump’s first term will likely be filled with controversies over competing ideas about weapons of mass destruction policy and social media will play a large role in communicating government policy.

Third, budget proposals over the next few years will decide the fate of America’s nuclear arsenal. *Politico* reports: “Current plans already call for spending \$1 trillion over the next three decades to modernize and maintain the U.S. nuclear arsenal, which the Pentagon has expressed concern about being able to afford. The President-elect will have to explain why any increase is necessary both financially and strategically” (Conway, 2017). *The Hill* discusses how new FY2018 budget changes will change bioweapon policy,

“[The budget] would eliminate a Department of Homeland Security laboratory dedicated to countering bioterrorism... could place the U.S. at risk at a time when biotechnology proliferation is increasing access to the knowledge and capabilities for developing bioterror weapons” (Gerstein, 2017).

Fourth, treaty commitments are an important component of nonproliferation debates, exemplified by President Obama’s “New START” treaty (which is up for reauthorization in February of 2021) with Russia. However, Reuters writes, “In his first call as president with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, Donald Trump denounced a treaty that caps U.S. and Russian deployment of nuclear warheads as a bad deal for the United States ... When Putin raised the possibility of extending the 2010 treaty, known as New START ... Trump then told Putin the

treaty was one of several bad deals” (Landay, 2017). Bonnie Jenkins, the Perry World House-Brookings Visiting Fellow, in an article titled “The Biological Weapons Convention at a crossroad” writes that,

“Every five years, the BWC [Biological Weapons Convention] states parties gather at a Review Conference to discuss the convention’s operation and implementation. The most recent Review Conference, in November 2016, was a disappointment ... there is no substantive program of work for the next five years.... The treaty is also facing significant challenges amid waning funds [that impact] the ability of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) to do its work” (Jenkins, 2017).

2020 and 2021 will be major years for determining how the United States approaches nonproliferation and the treaties and institutions necessary to ensure global solutions.

Fifth, President Trump’s new nuclear weapons policy and strategy, outlined in his Nuclear Posture Review, has charted a drastically different course than his predecessors. *The Washington Post* describes our new nuclear weapons policy in great detail:

“The threats have changed dramatically since the last time the Pentagon updated its nuclear weapons policy, with ... North Korea... bringing the prospect of nuclear war back to the forefront of the American psyche for the first time since the Cold War. Trump's perceived volatility has raised more concerns among Americans about the president's exclusive authority to order a nuclear attack.... The policy unveiled Friday envisions the introduction of "low-yield nukes" on submarine-launched ballistic missiles. ... The new Pentagon policy also outlines longer-term plans to reintroduce a nuclear submarine-launched cruise missile called an SLCM (or "slick-em"), ....The Pentagon confirmed its

commitment to the modernization of the U.S. nuclear force that Obama approved in 2010 ... The military will introduce new bombers, submarines and intercontinental ballistic missiles, as well as a new cruise missile for the bomber. The Congressional Budget Office estimates the plan will cost about \$1.2 trillion over 30 years. After a draft of the new policy leaked in mid-January, disarmament advocates assailed the Trump administration for pursuing what they described as unnecessary new nuclear weapons that could start an arms race and increase the likelihood of nuclear war. Critics also accused the Defense Department of lowering the threshold for what might provoke a U.S. nuclear strike by mentioning cyberattacks in the list of non-nuclear strategic threats. ... [Bell] warned that Trump's boasting about an expanding U.S. nuclear arsenal could set off "a new nuclear arms race" (Sonne, 2018).

Finally, what is likely to change over the next few years? As the evidence has suggested, Congress will very likely debate the finer points of the new Nuclear Posture Review, decide on commitments to the BWC and CWC, chart a course toward increased U.S.-Russia diplomacy, and continue to try to negotiate with North Korea. All of these moves would be a book for the topic as they would inspire advanced policy analyses of the respective issues.

## **Range • Scope**

Weapons of mass destruction debates will be appealing to students all over the country and provide controversies that will interest varsity and novice debaters. This topic can be understood and debated by novice debaters while challenging advanced debaters because of its timeliness, literature base, and universal appeal.

Since the topic is discussed so often in the news media, the topic will be interesting and accessible to new debaters who can bring their current events discussions from class into their debates and vice versa. There will be strong affirmative and negative arguments that will be intuitive to new debaters both because of their linear progression and because of their constant presence in media. These factors culminate in a vibrant literature base that will support straightforward novice debates. Classic novice affirmative from 2001 have new angles but the same appeal now: CTBT, No First Use, FMCT, and U.S.-Russia dealert.

Think tanks, dedicated arms control journals, and foreign affairs briefs will be publishing about the changes in weapons policy under President Trump, which will provide opportunities for varsity debates willing to do high level research. Additionally, the international relations literature surrounding nuclear policy in particular provides rich research in critical philosophy that will distinguish varsity debates from novice debates. Advanced varsity affirmatives from 2009 may offer clever takes on those same four novice areas: critical CTBT, No First Use for cyber-attacks, conditioned acceptance of the FMCT, and U.S.-Russia negotiations over types and numbers of weapons in arsenals.

Finally, debaters who debated the 2001 high school topic or the 2009 college topic call the topic their favorite topic no matter if they were in their first year or eighth year of debate.

This universal appeal and popularity makes sense given the scope of weapons of mass destruction problem areas including nonproliferation, terrorism, international treaties and conventions, alliances, deterrence, and much more.



## Quality • Material • Balance

This topic paper was inspired by John P. Caves Jr. and W. Seth Carus' *The Future of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Their Nature and Role in 2030* in which they say:

“[In 2030] Nuclear weapons are likely to play a more significant role in the international security environment, and current constraints on the proliferation and use of chemical and biological weapons could diminish. There will be greater scope for WMD terrorism .... New forms of WMD—... cyber weapons will probably be capable of inflicting such widespread disruption that the United States may become as reliant on the threat to impose unacceptable costs to deter large-scale cyber attack as it currently is to deter the use of WMD” (Caves, 2014).

Debates over the use of weapons of mass destruction are not only high quality debates that we want our students to have but also they are vital to understand the impact of WMD decision-making. Scott Sagan, the Senior Fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, writes that Americans are wildly misinformed and unconcerned about initiating an American war that would kill millions of civilians:

“the majority of Americans do not consider the first use of nuclear weapons a taboo, and .... the majority of Americans ... were willing to kill 2 million Iranian civilians to save 20,000 U.S. soldiers.... the U.S. public is unlikely to serve as a serious constraint on any president who might consider using nuclear weapons in the crucible of war” (Sagan, 2017).

The resolutions proposed above cover a wide range of possibilities for the topic.

**Resolution A: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially change its nuclear weapon strategy,** and **Resolution B: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially change its nuclear weapon policy.** These topics are similar if not identical as the research in the definitions section finds little difference between “nuclear weapon strategy” and “nuclear weapon policy.” These resolutions are this author’s preferred resolutions as they allow students to debate the easiest, richest, and most salient areas of weapons of mass destruction. Affirmatives would be able to debate the implementation of or the reversal of President Trump’s proposals in his Nuclear Posture Review as well as any other standing nuclear strategies/policies. A reader mentioned that the word “change” can be dangerous in a resolution because it encourages bidirectionality and blurs the lines between the affirmative and negative. Bidirectionality carries a bad reputation because it usually destroys topics but that would not be the case here. First, the two core negative positions, the deterrence disadvantage and the allies disadvantage, will still link to every affirmative regardless of which direction the affirmative goes. The same would likely be said for many of the generic counterplans. Second, these resolutions situate the most salient component of the weapons of mass destruction topic – nuclear weapons – at the center and provide a way to access debate over the other parts of the topic. Most of the affirmatives on the other topics would gravitate towards the nuclear but nuclear policy and strategy allow debates over if nuclear weapons should be used to deter cyber-attacks or terrorism. Finally, these resolutions try to capture the best aspects of the 2001 and 2009 topics to create a dynamic topic for our current time. 2001’s “use” verb created a topic about literally that, the use of nuclear weapons

and while that is still a pressing concern, there are so many more detailed concerns that are encompassed by “policy” and “strategy.”

**Resolution C: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce the mission(s) of its nuclear weapons.** This topic is intended to be similar to Resolutions A and B but uses “missions” instead if that is a preferable term.

**Resolution D: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.** Here the affirmative would be debating proliferation of these weapons and how the United States could act on those issues. There is a concern that there would be little – or nothing – for the negative to say against an affirmative that strengthened the BWC and/or the CWC.

**Resolution E: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce the size and/or role of its arsenal(s) of weapons of mass destruction.** This was the first resolution that inspired this topic, similar to the Caves and Carus quote above. It prompts students to debate about United States’ weapons, while potentially debating about what “weapons of mass destruction” means in an evolving climate.

**Resolution F: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce the size and/or role of its arsenal(s) of biological, chemical, cyber, nuclear, and/or radiological weapons.** Here “weapons of mass destruction” is defined as included “cyber” weapons, which is perhaps even a step beyond Caves and Carus and would be a major departure from the previous high school weapons topic but would allow students to debate cybersecurity, which has been frequently present in the news. Both of these resolutions relied on the premise that

the United States could reduce our arsenal of or role of these weapons but there is almost no research on United States strategic planning for the use of biological or chemical threats – or offensive cyber weapons for that matter – because the United States simply does not do that. As a party of both the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the United States does not possess an arsenal of biological or chemical weapons. Additionally, the term “arsenal” is not used in combination with descriptions of the United States cyber programs so it is unclear if there is a cyber-arsenal. Finally, as cyber security is a topic that has been proposed as its own resolution, it is likely that including cyber along with the other weapons could be too large of a topic.

The next two sections outline the respective balanced ground provided by the topic to the affirmative and negative. Affirmative and negative arguments were included if they would be usable under most if not all of the proposed resolutions.

## **Balance: Affirmative Arguments**

There are numerous possible affirmatives for weapons of mass destruction and this section will explore possible controversy areas that affirmatives could build cases around. What is so exciting about the weapons of mass destruction topic area is that the topic controversies are so balanced because there are strong arguments for and against possible policy changes. Possible affirmatives such as new START reauthorization/extension, or BWC funds/leadership, and fiscal reductions have all been discussed above. What follows are a few select passages on potentially significant affirmative areas.

Please consider that if it is decided that there are too many affirmatives in a single weapons category that that could inform resolution wording – perhaps the topic should just focus on nuclear. Furthermore, if there are affirmatives that stray too far from the mean, they could be eliminated with a resolution wording that listed specific weapons.

It is relevant to explain the methodology behind this research. All of these pieces of evidence are from 2016-2018, were found through google using basic search terms of “United States should” and different topic words, and were on the first or second page of google results sorted from within a year. This was intended to insure that controversy areas were current, and would continue to be timely and relevant for the 2019-2020 academic year. Finally, these pieces of evidence were selected as starting points to begin talking about potential affirmatives and sometimes, what the negative might say against a likely affirmative.

### **No First Use**

The first affirmative area is for the United States to publically declare a no first use policy (NFU) which would communicate that the United States would never use nuclear

weapons before being attacked with nuclear weapons. Different presidential administrations have explored making such a declaration and NFU is frequently discussed by major think tanks and nonproliferation experts such as this piece of evidence by Bruce Blair. Please also note that the literature bears out many different possible NFU affirmatives from the bold, classic proposal Blair outlines below the nuanced, specific proposal of not using nuclear weapons to deter chemical and biological attacks.

“[Trump] has unchecked authority to order a preventive nuclear strike against any nation he wants with a single verbal direction .... If he gave the green light using his nuclear codes, a launch order the length of a tweet would be transmitted and carried out within a few minutes. .... nuclear commanders at all levels would obey such an order, despite deep misgivings about its wisdom and legality. .... the United States should officially adopt a policy of no first use ...eliminate “use or lose” weapons such as the vulnerable silo-based missile force, and make big improvements in nuclear command-and-control to increase warning and decision time. That, not the weapons, should be the centerpiece of our trillion-dollar program of nuclear modernization” (Blair, 2017).

No First Use affirmatives would also address the exciting intersection of the use of nuclear weapons to deter cyber, chemical, or terrorist attacks. Thus, this nuclear affirmative area would allow discussion and debate on other major weapons of mass destruction issues.

### **Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)**

The second affirmative area is the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) which attempts to eliminate all nuclear explosions, namely tests. Again different administrations have flirted with accession but the United States has failed to take necessary action for the treaty to enter into force. While this is an international treaty, this evidence below from Edward Ifft, a veteran diplomat who has negotiated and implemented numerous nuclear arms control agreements, is very clear and concise on how the United States must act to save the treaty.

“The fate of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is closely connected to US attitudes toward the treaty, .... Impressive progress has been made in the ability to verify the CTBT in recent years.... Questions remain in the minds of opponents regarding the treaty's possible effect on the US nuclear stockpile, as well as the treaty's overall relationship to nonproliferation. The new Trump administration will need to decide how to proceed on this crucial piece of unfinished business. In addition to finally ratifying the treaty, other options are possible” (Ifft, 2017).

Additionally, the evidence points out that the affirmative could have multiple approaches to approaching the CTBT.

### **Overall Nuclear Weapons Strategy**

The third affirmative area is really a large category of affirmatives of how the United States could change their overarching nuclear strategy, which would obviously be part of Resolutions A and B but also most of the other resolutions as well. President Trump has already initiated an overhaul through the Nuclear Posture Review:

“[T]his year, the Trump Administration launched a comprehensive re-examination of U.S. nuclear weapons policy...known as the Nuclear Posture Review .... Every Administration since the end of the Cold War has undertaken similarly comprehensive reviews. The Trump NPR offers a unique opportunity to reassess and re-evaluate some of the wrongheaded assumptions that guide the current U.S. nuclear weapons posture, strengthen U.S. nuclear deterrence, and contribute to building a consensus on the needs for a 21st-century nuclear arsenal” (Dodge, 2017).

The draft of President Trump’s Nuclear Posture Review has already been released and most analysts mark its departure from President Obama’s policy. The new policy would include: robust modernization program for nuclear delivery systems, development of the Long-Range Stand-Off weapon, tactical nuclear weapon deployment, extending the life of the B-61 gravity bomb, redesigning the F-35 to carry nuclear weapons, investing in preserving dominance of the nuclear triad, developing nuclear-armed sea-launch cruise missiles, stricter enforcement of the

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, increasing research on new missiles, and abandoning the CTBT. Dodge concludes in a separate article:

“The 2018 NPR declares the Trump administration’s nuclear weapons policy, but it is just a start. The most important part of any strategy is its implementation... provides funding for the nuclear forces—operations and maintenance costs, as well as the cost of implementing all other recommendations of the NPR” (Dodge, 2018).

### **Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT)**

The fourth affirmative area is the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) which attempts to eliminate the production of fissile material, or material for nuclear explosive devices. Prior to the Obama Administration the United States blocked progress on the treaty but President Obama reversed course and pressed for a renegotiation. This evidence below from Daryl Kimball, Executive Director of the Arms Control Association, discusses the benefits of the FMCT and how the new U.S. led draft of the treaty is important.

“In an effort in January to break the years-long dispute blocking the start of negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Nigeria, the CD president at the time, circulated an informal draft proposal for talks on fissile material issues formulated by the United States and backed by several other governments.

To date, the proposal has not obtained the necessary consensus support in the 65-country CD, which is based in Geneva.

The new proposal calls for the establishment of a working group to “negotiate an internationally and effectively verifiable treaty dealing with fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices,” according to diplomatic sources. This formula would allow for talks on a treaty that would not only verifiably halt the further production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, but also take into account existing stockpiles of fissile materials for use in nuclear arms” (Kimball, 2016).

### **U.S.-Russia Cooperation**

The fifth affirmative area is United States cooperation with Russia which could include almost any joint counter proliferation effort begun by the United States. This evidence below



from Richard Weitz, a senior fellow and director of the Center for Political-Military Affairs at Hudson Institute, hints at possible threads that could be pursued for multiple different affirmatives in the nuclear, chemical, and cyber strands of the topic.

“Though bilateral and multinational partnerships, Moscow and Washington can develop safer and more secure commercial nuclear technologies. Such work can be done on a bilateral basis, such as through their underutilized bilateral civil nuclear security cooperation agreement, or via regional or multilateral approaches such as the World Association of Nuclear Operators.

Russia and the United States can also collaborate more closely in support of the new IAEA nuclear fuel bank ... Russian officials say they are willing to consider the “Action Plans,” adopted without Russia’s presence, at the last Nuclear Security Summit. The Plans offer proposed agendas for the UN, the IAEA, INTERPOL, the GICNT, and the Global Partnership. ...

The Trump administration should keep an open mind about the international convention to suppress acts of chemical and biological terrorism that Moscow has placed under consideration ...U.S. support for the proposal, which is also backed by China and other countries, might catalyze new WMD cooperation. ... Russia and the United States should sustain public health collaboration against major natural diseases and keep studying the potential impact of emerging disruptive strategic technologies, such as cyber and outer space warfare. ...” (Weitz, 2017).

### **Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Reform**

The sixth affirmative area is Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) reform which could include almost any modification to the seminal biological weapons treaty. This evidence below from Gigi Kwik Gronvali, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, hints at different threads that could be pursued for multiple different affirmatives either pushing for more BWC members or for specific United Nations or treaty actions.

“The US government should continue to strongly support the Biological Weapons Convention and other international efforts that both prevent terrorism and promote the development of a global public health infrastructure....

This prohibition against biological weapons development should continue to be strengthened with vigorous US support to promote universal adoption of the treaty and with implementation support to other signatories. Other international agreements

intended to prevent terrorism, such as UN Resolution 1540, and measures such as the Global Health Security Agenda, which focus donor attention on areas where the global public health infrastructure needs to be strengthened, also should be actively promoted by the US government” (Gronvali, 2017).

### **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) Reform**

The seventh affirmative area is Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) reform which could include almost any modification to the seminal biological weapons treaty. This evidence below from Rebeccah Heinrichs, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, hints at the importance of strengthening enforcement and verification mechanisms for the CWC as well as hinting at possible negative arguments regarding deterrence.

“...Just as verification is a necessary condition to a useful arms-control deal, so is enforcement. ...“Rules must be binding. Violations must be punished. Words must mean something.” ...

The U.S. military strike against Syria’s Shayrat Airfield ... communicated to Syria and every other nation in possession of chemical weapons that the United States has the ability and the will to make it known that any use of chemical weapons is not worth the cost.

... They do care if we embarrass them by showcasing their weakness, and if we threaten their survival by using force. And the more credible the U.S. threat of force is, the less we will have to use it” (Heinrichs, 2017).

### **Cyber Security**

The eighth affirmative area is cyber security reform and cooperation, which could include almost any action with an allied country. This evidence below from Rustam Goychayev, a Nonproliferation & Policy Analyst at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, suggests further exploration into the Budapest Convention, coordinating allied countermeasures, and negative arguments about how cyber deterrence is significant.

“The U.S. can significantly enhance the effectiveness of its cyber deterrence posture by leveraging its long-standing alliances and international institutions. ... A logical

countermeasure to present-day cyber aggression, therefore, is to reinvest in these institutions and to integrate into them robust counter-cyber arrangements and capabilities. Wherever feasible, the U.S. should look to undertake its cyber deterrence actions together with allies, which will both isolate and increase the costs for would-be adversaries.

Serious consideration should also be given to the promotion of international partnership to assist U.S. allies and developing nations with cyber security and education. ... the United States has promoted international harmonization of substantive and procedural cybercrime laws through the Budapest Convention [...] Increased cooperation will assist law enforcement and diplomatic efforts to prosecute cyber crime and/or provide attribution to the national origin of the attackers. International partnership is essential to address obfuscation and use of proxies by States that engage in hostile cyber activities” (Goychayev, 2017).

It might seem like there are not a lot of Chemical or Biological affirmatives but Caves and Carus say, “Washington further needs to anticipate and prepare for the possible reemergence of chemical and biological warfare as novel and more effective forms of these weapons emerge from rapid advances in the life sciences over the next two decades.

Washington should assume that it will ... need to develop a mindset, approaches, and capabilities for recognizing and responding to unknown agent attacks” (Caves, 2014).

Please note the concerns from the previous section that affirmatives related to the BWC and CWC, if those affirmatives were topical under the selected resolution, might be too difficult for the negative to defeat.

## **Balance: Negative Arguments**

There are numerous possible negative strategies for engaging the weapons of mass destruction topic and this section will explore possible core generics that the negative could build strategies around. The “reduce” component of those resolutions ensures that disadvantages and counterplans have a clear direction of the topic with which to engage. The “change” component may seem like it creates a much larger resolution but there really are only two courses, reduce or increase and the core negative counterplan arguments will work regardless of the verb and the core negative disadvantage arguments will also likely still apply.

It is relevant to explain the methodology behind this research. All of these pieces of evidence are from the last six years, were found through internet sources without database access, and almost all of them were found in relation to affirmative articles discussed in the previous section. This was intended to insure that controversy areas were current, and would continue to be timely and relevant for the 2019-2020 academic year. These pieces of evidence are merely starting points to begin talking about potential arguments. Finally, only three core negative positions are discussed in this section as specific negative arguments were discussed in the affirmative section and general arguments such as consultation counterplans, condition counterplans, and more were hinted at throughout.

### **Deterrence**

The first negative argument is the deterrence disadvantage, which would isolate scenarios as to why decreasing the role/size of WMD would hurt the United States’ ability to deter conflicts. This evidence below from Justin Anderson, a senior policy analyst at the Science Applications International Corporation, explains how U.S. deterrence is important to allies:

Nuclear forces will also remain central to U.S. efforts to extend deterrence against nuclear and WMD-armed adversaries of U.S. allies, and to assure allies they are protected from these adversaries. ...

The depth and breadth of assurance requirements, however, is significant, requiring the United States to maintain a robust, visible, and global nuclear force. ... The force must also be visible (or have the capability of being observable when necessary) to friend and foe alike, providing a tangible demonstration of the United States' determination to extend the deterrent benefits of its nuclear force to its allies. ..." (Anderson, 2016).

This is the core of negative ground and negatives could innovate and creatively develop the disadvantage to emphasize different combinations of allies, security commitments, or more. Consider this evidence below from Greg Terryn, a Herbert Scoville Jr. Peace Fellow, that very clearly isolates both how affirmatives could link to this position and also potentially link turn this position:

"As the United States seeks to further reduce the role and size of its nuclear arsenal, it will be essential to reaffirm the strength and resolve of its extended deterrence commitments. Allies, especially those that feel directly threatened by nuclear-capable adversaries, could grow anxious that the reductions to the U.S. nuclear arsenal signify a fading commitment to their protection.

To assure these allies, the United States should make it clear that the quantity of deployed nuclear weapons is only one aspect of the U.S. commitment to their security.

...

Strategic deterrence in the 21st century is far more than just nuclear, although our nuclear deterrent remains the ultimate guarantor of our security. ....

This emphasis on the broader aspects of strategic deterrence should be conveyed to allies in need of assurances that the United States' extended deterrent is still credible and intact. In addition, the United States should keep its allies informed on the strength and validity of its retaliatory capability. ... This kind of information, in addition to conventional support, can be used to assure U.S. allies that a reduction to the U.S. nuclear force is not equivalent to a reduction in the U.S. ability to protect them" (Terryn, 2016).

It is worth noting that while this disadvantage obviously applies to the "reduce" resolutions and affirmatives under the "change" resolutions that do reduce but it would also apply to affirmatives that increase nuclear weapons through the implementation of proposals in the

Nuclear Posture Review. Consider this evidence below from Politico, that showcases the current nature of this controversy and shows how both how affirmatives could link to this position and also potentially link turn this position:

“... lower-yield weapons would enhance the credibility of the U.S. arsenal ... "Expanding flexible U.S. nuclear options now, to include low-yield options, is important for the preservation of credible deterrence against regional aggression.... They could also be used to deter large-scale non-nuclear attacks. ... prudent options for enhancing the flexibility and diversity of U.S. nuclear capabilities," ...

But arms control advocates caution that broadening the set of circumstances when the U.S. might use nuclear weapons runs the risk of increasing the likelihood of a nuclear conflict.

“This is a very dangerous sort of slide where we start to soften up the norm with [respect] to nuclear weapons,” ...It makes the likelihood of use accidentally or on purpose much more likely.”

Deputy Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan on Friday disputed that argument, .... Developing lower-yield nuclear weapons allows the U.S. to avoid the “limits” of a “one-size-fits-all” policy and does not grow the nuclear stockpile or break any treaty obligations, Shanahan said. And clarifying “longstanding policy” that nuclear weapons could be used to respond to a severe non-nuclear attack is “stabilizing” (Klimas, 2018).

## **International Relations**

The second negative disadvantage is the relations disadvantage, which could focus on various key relationships between the United States and allies or adversaries, likely Russia and/or China, and how arms measures might upset the balance in relations. This evidence below from Elbridge Colby, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy & Force Development, considers U.S.-Russia relations:

“...Yet nuclear weapons do actually play an important and possibly growing role in U.S.-Russian relations...there are actually scenarios—some quite cognizable and not implausible—in which nuclear weapons could be brandished in influential ways and even employed in a U.S.-Russian crisis or conflict.<sup>12</sup>

A first reason stems from perceptions of vulnerability. For the reality is that one of the sides may perceive the other side as being capable of a disarming or at least debilitating first strike, even if that judgment is erroneous. ....

A second reason that nuclear weapons could be used is that both Russia and the United States are capable of employing these arms in limited and relatively controlled ways. Such more discriminate usage has long been recognized as a potential way to gain value from nuclear weapons beyond threats of general use, .... It is therefore possible that a limited nuclear war could occur between the United States and Russia, though both sides would need to regard such a conflict as of the utmost danger given the profound difficulties and risks of seeking to control escalation and the fact that both sides can effectively destroy the other” (Colby, 2016).

## **Spending**

The third negative disadvantage is the spending disadvantage, which could take one of two forms: a funding surplus disadvantage that if the military cuts a specific program that could lead to them funding a different program that is bad or a simple spending disadvantage that if the military modernizes a part of the nuclear arsenal, that would cost a lot of money the government does not have. Representative Adam Smith of Washington has been an outspoken critic of President Trump’s initiative to spend more money on nuclear weapons and is quoted here:

“Trump pledged during the presidential campaign to overhaul the nuclear arsenal. He pressed ahead after taking office with an Obama-era strategy to develop, build and field new submarines armed with nuclear missiles; new nuclear-capable bomber aircraft; and a new fleet of land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles. Also in the works is an upgrade of communications systems that enable the president and the Pentagon to command and control the atomic arsenal.

U.S. military spending is currently constrained by a 2011 law that caps the annual budgets of federal agencies at predetermined levels. Lawmakers have fashioned temporary measures to get around the thresholds and boost the Pentagon’s budget above the capped amount, but never to the consistent levels senior military leaders say they need.

Rep. Adam Smith of Washington, the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, said in a statement that the numbers projected by CBO are sobering.

“Congress still doesn’t seem to have any answers as to how we will pay for this effort, or what the trade-offs with other national security efforts will be if we maintain an arsenal

of over 4,000 nuclear weapons and expand our capacity to produce more,” said Smith, who along with Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Ind., asked for the report” (PBS, 2017).



## Definitions

### **substantially**

Means 95% -

Substantial = 95 % reduction

“That the superpowers bear primary responsibility for reducing their arsenals has been the most consistent theme in Chinese positions on NACD. China maintained that as the two superpowers hold the largest nuclear and conventional arsenals, they should take the lead in halting the testing, production and deployment of all types of nuclear weapons, drastically reducing and destroying such weapons deployed at home and abroad. Indeed, Beijing laid out specific targets as preconditions for itself and other medium-sized NWS to participate in nuclear disarmament. In June 1982 China first spelled out a ‘50-percent reduction’ as such a precondition. This position was later amended to an unspecified ‘substantial reduction’ as the superpowers appeared to be approaching and even bypassing this target. Recent Chinese positions have implied that ‘substantial reduction’ means that the United States and Russia should reduce their nuclear arsenals to a level comparable to that of the medium-size NWS, which would require a cut-down of 95 per cent or more in their arsenals (Krause, 2012).”

Means 50% -

“Mr. Cohen To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures Her Majesty's Government are taking to reduce their nuclear weapons arsenal following the ending of the cold war. Mr. Aitken The Government have already announced substantial reductions in the

United Kingdom's nuclear forces and weapons, including a cut of more than 50 per cent. in our sub-strategic stockpile (UN, 1994).”

Means about 30% -

“The Legal Impact of the START I Treaty on the U.S.-Soviet Nuclear Disarmament Process. A legal evaluation of its impact on U.S.-Soviet bilateral nuclear disarmament clearly shows that the START I Treaty constitutes a significant development to this end. Indeed, the fact that both parties are obliged to reduce through elimination and conversion their lethal strategic offensive nuclear arms by approximately 7,000 strategic nuclear warheads, which at the time of the signature of the treaty numbered about 23,000 leads to the conclusion that the START I Treaty requires a substantial reduction in the U.S.-Soviet strategic nuclear arsenals. Despite these reductions, both parties will still have deployed nearly 16,000 strategic nuclear warheads, which are more than enough to destroy not only themselves, but civilization itself many times over in a U.S.-Soviet nuclear war” (Athanasopoulos, 2000).

“The end of the Cold War and the new security situation have made possible the substantial reduction of nuclear weapons, and then complete prohibition and thorough destruction of such weapons. Pushing forward nuclear disarmament process and constantly reducing the role of nuclear weapons in international political affairs and national security policies is of great significance to improve international security environment and promote nuclear non-proliferation process. In this regard, nuclear- weapon states bear special and primary responsibilities. It is out of date to stick to the Cold War mentality, advocate pre-emptive

strategy, list other countries as targets of nuclear strike, lower the threshold of using nuclear weapons, and develop new types of nuclear weapons for specific purposes” (Yan, 2005).

## **change**

Attitudes and principles –

“Noun 1. policy change - a major change in attitude or principle or point of view  
policy change - a major change in attitude or principle or point of view; "an about-face on foreign policy" (The Free Dictionary).

Replace –

“1 a : to make different in some particular : alter never bothered to change the will

b : to make radically different : transform can't change human nature

c : to give a different position, course, or direction to changed his residence from Ohio to California

2 a : to replace with another let's change the subject

b : to make a shift from one to another : switch always changes sides in an argument

c : to exchange for an equivalent sum of money (as in smaller denominations or in a foreign currency) change a 20-dollar bill

d : to undergo a modification of foliage changing color

e : to put fresh clothes or covering on change a bed” (Merriam Webster).

Non continuation of current policy –

“According to the revised version of the ‘advocacy coalition’ approach, situations ‘in which all major [issue] coalitions view a continuation of the current situation as unacceptable’ (Sabatier 1998: 119) are likely to lead to policy compromise. By definition, compromise is not a full policy reversal but something in-between a U-turn change and the unchanged continuation of the current policy. Such limited reversals may play out as full reversals of some programme part (with continuation of the remaining programme), a downscaling of the entire programme or large parts of it, or some compromise along its time dimension (see previous section). It is impossible to provide an exhaustive list of costs, as ingenious political entrepreneurs will come up with new ideas as to how government policy might be frustrated, delayed, or burdened with considerable financial or image costs. To name just a few such strategies, opponents may use appeals to courts, parliamentary obstruction, testimonials of moral authorities or celebrities, peaceful mass demonstrations, violent activism, or whatever they consider useful and is available to them. We thus need to rely on the qualitative analysis of the cases to specify whether such costs had been inflicted or not. Clearly, this bears the dangers of ex-post rationalization in case of policy change and ignorance of similar costs in other situations. Still, sidelining the measurement problem for now, in line with the ‘advocacy coalition’ expectations, we conjecture:

H8: Partial policy change by an acting government is more likely when policy continuity is heavily challenged by a vital opposition” (Muller, 2017).

## **reduce**

Reduce is the best term in the context of nuclear weapons –

“There is broad agreement that yesterday's nuclear doctrines are no longer appropriate for today's realities. If President Barack Obama wants to fulfill his promise to "dramatically reduce" U.S. and Russian arsenals, restore leadership needed to strengthen the nonproliferation system, and make the elimination of nuclear weapons "a central element of U.S. nuclear policy," he should redefine and radically reduce the role of nuclear weapons.

There is no conceivable circumstance that requires or could justify the use of nuclear weapons to deal with a non-nuclear threat. Given the United States' conventional military edge and the twin threats of proliferation and terrorism, nuclear weapons are a greater security liability than an asset” (Kimball, 2009).

Contextual definition that discusses different affirmatives –

“What further steps could nuclear weapon states take to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security policies? There are compelling reasons for renewed efforts by nuclear weapon states to reduce the size of their nuclear arsenals and the role of their nuclear weapons. Participants discussed no-first use pledges, the de-alerting of nuclear weapons, the importance of numerical reductions and proposals to consolidate tactical nuclear weapons. Some participants argued that the priority should be those steps agreed at the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences” (Store, no date).

More contextual definitions referencing different affirmatives –

“In his 5 April 2009 speech in Prague, US President Barack Obama promised that ‘to put an end to Cold War thinking, we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and urge others to do the same’. The forthcoming Nuclear Posture Review (NPR),

mandated by Congress, provides the administration an opportunity to honour that commitment. To reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategy, however, the next NPR must abandon the long-standing US policy of threatening to use its nuclear weapons first in a variety of military scenarios. This basic step was not taken in the George W. Bush administration's 2001 NPR, despite its claim to institute 'a major change in our approach to the role of nuclear offensive forces in our deterrent strategy' and call to 'both reduce our dependence on nuclear weapons and improve our ability to deter attack in the face of proliferating [weapons of mass destruction (WMD)] capabilities'. Indeed, the 2001 NPR contradicted these stated ambitions by maintaining that nuclear weapons were still necessary to 'provide credible military options to deter a wide range of threats, including WMD and large-scale conventional military force'.

Is the threat of the first use of US nuclear weapons still necessary to deter the use of non-nuclear WMD (that is, chemical and biological weapons), and to deter the use of large-scale conventional military force? Or can Washington move toward a policy of no-first-use, limiting the role of nuclear weapons to deter the use of other states' nuclear weapons against the United States and its friends and allies? Previous analyses of the appropriate role and missions for US nuclear forces, including earlier official nuclear posture reviews, have been too narrow, focusing exclusively on the contribution of nuclear weapons to deterrence and not examining the effects of the American nuclear posture and declaratory policy on the wider set of US and allied objectives regarding non-proliferation and nuclear terrorism. Because of this focus, previous government and academic analyses have both exaggerated the potential military and diplomatic costs of a no-first-use doctrine and have seriously underestimated its potential

benefits. There were strong and obvious reasons why Washington maintained and advertised a range of first-use options throughout the Cold War: NATO faced a massive conventional threat from the Warsaw Pact and the United States and its allies in East Asia were confronted by the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China and North Korea. But these options are no longer necessary. Examination of the costs and benefits suggests that the United States should, after appropriate consultation with allies, move toward adopting a nuclear-weapons no-first-use declaratory policy by stating that 'the role of US nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear weapons use by other nuclear-weapons states against the United States, our allies, and our armed forces, and to be able respond, with an appropriate range of nuclear retaliation options, if necessary, in the event that deterrence fails'" (Sagan, 2009).

Works with size and role –

"An essential means of doing so is an NPT Review Conference next year that sets the world's major powers on a path to taking concrete actions to reduce the number and role of nuclear weapons in their military postures, and to creating a deliberate process to accomplish elimination of the weapons in the foreseeable future.

That in turn, he argued, would greatly facilitate mobilisation of governments to contain the spread of nuclear weapons and the capability to make them.

"This could make a real difference with respect to Iran and the potential for a further nuclearisation of Middle East politics," Burroughs said" (Deen, 2009).

Quantifiable –

Proponents of a plan to rid the world of nuclear weapons proposed yesterday that Russia and the United States agree to an interim step in which they each cut their arsenals to 1,000 strategic warheads by 2018 (see GSN, June 29). The "Global Zero" international advocacy group recommended that the two leading nuclear powers negotiate such an accord after agreeing on a replacement pact for the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, expected by the end of this year. Under the terms of the 2002 Moscow Treaty, each side anticipates deploying between 1,700 and 2,200 deployed strategic warheads by the end of 2012. Unofficial reports have indicated that U.S. and Russian negotiators might agree to reduce their respective deployed forces to a level of 1,500 weapons under a START replacement pact (see GSN, June 22). The outlines of such an agreement are to be in place prior to a July 6-8 summit in Moscow between U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. A next step should be to reduce warhead counts to an even 1,000 on each side, according to the organization. "The second phase we've talked about with 1,000 would include not simply deployed weapons but also those that were in stockpiles," said U.S. Ambassador Richard Burt, a former START negotiator who sits on a commission overseeing the Global Zero effort. The United States currently maintains a nondeployed reserve stockpile of roughly 2,000 strategic warheads, in addition to its 2,200 operationally deployed weapons, according to Hans Kristensen, who directs the Federation of American Scientists' Nuclear Information Project. By contrast, the "vast majority" of Russia's estimated 2,790 strategic warheads are believed to be operationally deployed, but exactly how many might be in reserve is unknown, he said. Even if all 1,000 strategic weapons remaining on each side under a follow-on treaty were operationally deployed, the reductions would be significant, Burt suggested. "We are talking about a fairly



substantial reduction, but one that we think is realistic and plausible," he said at a press conference yesterday. "Still, at this stage, we recognize you've got to build up confidence and trust (Grossman, 2009)."

Reductions require treaty commitments –

“Informal or non-legally binding arms control arrangements are generally not subject to legislative approval to bring them into force. However, the Congress has severely restricted the use of non-legally binding arrangements to reduce US military forces. In 1993, the Congress amended the Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Act to prevent the President from reducing or limiting "the Armed Forces or armaments of the US in a militarily significant manner, except pursuant to the treaty-making power of the President..., or unless authorised by the enactment of further affirmative legislation".<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the Defense Authorization Act of 1993 prohibits the President from reducing US strategic forces below their authorised START levels except if the START II Treaty enters into force. Thus, the President's ability to reduce US forces or armaments by use of informal agreements without Congressional approval is severely limited” (Kartchner, 2002)

### **size (of its arsenal)**

Size means number of weapons –

“The number of nuclear weapons in the world has declined significantly since the Cold War: down from a peak of approximately 70,300 in 1986 to an estimated 14,550 in late-2017.

Government officials often portray that accomplishment as a result of current arms control agreements, but the overwhelming portion of the reduction happened in the 1990s. Moreover,

comparing today's inventory with that of the 1950s is like comparing apples and oranges; today's forces are vastly more capable. The pace of reduction has slowed significantly. Instead of planning for nuclear disarmament, the nuclear-armed states appear to plan to retain large arsenals for the indefinite future.

Despite progress in reducing Cold War nuclear arsenals, the world's combined inventory of nuclear warheads remains at a very high level: approximately 14,550 warheads as of end-2017. Of these, roughly 9,450 are in the military stockpiles (the rest are awaiting dismantlement), of which more than 3,900 warheads are deployed with operational forces, of which nearly 1,800 US, Russian, British and French warheads are on high alert, ready for use on short notice.

Approximately 93 percent of all nuclear warheads are owned by Russia and the United States who each have roughly 4,000-4,300 warheads in their military stockpiles; no other nuclear-armed state sees a need for more than a few hundred nuclear weapons for national security:

The United States, Russia and the United Kingdom are reducing their warhead inventories, but the pace of reduction is slowing compared with the past 25 years. France and Israel have relatively stable inventories, while China, Pakistan, India and North Korea are increasing their warhead inventories.

All the nuclear weapon states continue to modernize their remaining nuclear forces and appear committed to retaining nuclear weapons for the indefinite future. For an overview of global modernization programs, see this 2014 article. Individual country profiles are available from the FAS Nuclear Notebook.

The exact number of nuclear weapons in each country's possession is a closely held national secret. Despite this limitation, however, publicly available information, careful analysis of historical records, and occasional leaks make it possible to make best estimates about the size and composition of the national nuclear weapon stockpiles" (Kristensen, 2017).

Size is numbers –

"For almost half a century, the world's most powerful nuclear states have been locked in a military stalemate known as mutual assured destruction (MAD). By the early 1960s, the nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union had grown to such a point that neither country could entirely destroy the other's retaliatory force by launching first, even with a surprise attack. Starting a nuclear war was therefore tantamount to committing suicide" (Lieber, 2006).

Reduction in size excludes modernization –

" At the same time as we reduce the number of weapons in our nuclear arsenal, we must also refashion it, developing new conventional offensive and defensive systems more appropriate for deterring the potential adversaries we face. And we must ensure the safety and reliability of our nuclear weapons.

Taken together, this "new triad" of reduced offensive nuclear forces, advanced conventional capabilities, and a range of new defenses (ballistic missile defense, cruise missile defense, space defense, and cyber-defense) supported by a revitalized defense infrastructure, will form the basis of a new approach to deterrence" (Rumsfeld, 2002).

**and/or**

One or both –

“The legal phrase “and/or,” indicating that you can either choose between two alternatives or choose both of them, has proved irresistible in other contexts and is now widely acceptable though it irritates some readers as jargon. However, you can logically use it only when you are discussing choices which may or may not both be done: “Bring chips and/or beer.” It’s very much overused where simple “or” would do, and it would be wrong to say, “you can get to the campus for this morning’s meeting on a bike and/or in a car.” Choosing one eliminates the possibility of the other, so this isn’t an and/or situation” (Brains, 2008).

**size**

numbers of everything –

“According to an article in the June 25th edition of Newsweek, President Bush was stunned when he was told in May of the size of the US nuclear arsenal. Bush was quoted as saying, “I had no idea we had so many weapons.” Like Bush, most Americans might be surprised to learn that, “The U.S. nuclear arsenal today includes 5,400 warheads loaded on intercontinental ballistic missiles at land and sea; an additional 1,750 nuclear bombs and cruise missiles ready to be launched from B-2 and B-52 bombers; a further 1,670 nuclear weapons classified as “tactical.” And just in case, an additional 10,000 or so nuclear warheads held in bunkers around the United States as a “hedge” against future surprises” (Krieger, 2001).

Arsenal totals 9900 weapons –

“Kristensen estimates that today’s nuclear arsenal includes approximately 9,900 weapons. Of the total, roughly 4,600 are operationally deployed on delivery systems including land-based ICBMs, submarine-based missiles and aircraft-delivered bombs, Kristensen said” (Grossman, 2007).

### **role (of its arsenal)**

Three roles related to deterrence –

“Within this more flexible portfolio, nuclear weapons are less prominent, but they continue to be vital. The policies of successive U.S. administrations have shown a marked continuity in the purposes assigned to nuclear forces. U.S. nuclear forces have served, and continue to serve, to: 1) deter acts of aggression involving nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction; 2) help deter, in concert with general-purpose forces, major conventional attacks; and 3) support deterrence by holding at risk key targets that cannot be threatened effectively by non-nuclear weapons. Because of their immense destructive power, nuclear weapons, as recognized in the 2006 National Security Strategy, deter in a way that simply cannot be duplicated by other weapons. From the beginning, the U.S. nuclear arsenal has defended not only the United States and its military forces, but also, and importantly, U.S. allies in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere. The nuclear forces play in the deterrence of attack against allies remains an essential instrument of U.S. nonproliferation policy by significantly reducing the incentives of a number of allied countries to acquire nuclear weapons of their own. Nuclear forces continue to be a key element in U.S. alliances with other countries, for example, NATO

allies, Japan, South Korea, and Australia. In general, U.S. nuclear forces act as a counterbalance to the military capabilities of hostile states that endanger international order” (Bodman, 2008).

Works well with limitations and allows for negative disadvantage ground –

“The mission(s) and role(s) for nuclear weapons. Should the employment of nuclear weapons be limited to deterring and if necessary responding to nuclear attacks? Or are there other legitimate missions for nuclear weapons, e.g. to preempt or retaliate against the use of chemical or biological weapons attacks? Would the United States ever use nuclear weapons first? What role, if any, exists for tactical nuclear weapons? Does uncertainty over the strategic direction of China or Russia materially affect these questions?” (Cirincione, 2008).

Includes deterrence –

“During the Cold War, the U. S. nuclear deterrent had two basic missions: deterrence of nuclear attack (by threatening swift, effective retaliation), and deterrence against overwhelming conventional attack against North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries by the Warsaw Pact. In the post-Cold War era, the first mission has been updated to include deterrence of attacks that employ other weapons of mass destruction (WMD)” (Bailey, 2007).

Deterrence of WMD’s –

“Current U.S. policy is to retain the option of using nuclear weapons for military purposes other than deterring nuclear attack, including: • Deterring, responding to, and even preempting conventional, chemical, or biological attacks • Destroying chemical or biological agents • Deterring or responding to other unspecified threats to U.S. vital interests However, giving

nuclear weapons roles beyond deterring nuclear attack is both unnecessary and counterproductive. Those roles add little or nothing to the deterrence of non-nuclear attacks provided by U.S. conventional forces or to the U.S. ability to counter or respond to such attacks” (Blair, 2008).

Committing to allied security, dissuading adversaries from challenging the US, and defeating enemies through threats of nuclear strikes –

“The Role of Nuclear Weapons in Deterrence. The Bush Administration has emphasized that nuclear weapons “continue to be essential to our security, and that of our friends and allies.”<sup>25</sup> Nuclear weapons remain the only weapons in the U.S. arsenal that can hold at risk the full range of targets valued by an adversary. As a result, they continue to play a key role in U.S. deterrent strategy. During the Cold War, and in the past decade, U.S. policy often viewed nuclear weapons apart from the rest of the U.S. military establishment, with nuclear weapons serving to deter a global nuclear conflict with the Soviet Union or Russia. In contrast with this traditional perspective, the Bush Administration has described a more comprehensive and integrated role for nuclear weapons. In its presentation outlining the results of the Nuclear Posture Review, the Administration argued that nuclear weapons, along with missile defenses and other elements of the U.S. military establishment, not only deter adversaries by promising an unacceptable amount of damage in response to an adversary’s attack, they can also assure allies and friends of the U.S. commitment to their security by providing an extended deterrent, dissuade potential adversaries from challenging the United States with nuclear weapons or other “asymmetrical threats” by convincing them that they can never negate the U.S. nuclear deterrent; and defeat enemies by holding at risk those targets that could not be destroyed with

other types of weapons.<sup>26</sup> According to former Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith, “linking nuclear forces to multiple defense policy goals, and not simply to deterrence, recognizes that these forces ... perform key missions in peacetime as well as in crisis or conflict.”<sup>27</sup> In addition to expanding the role of nuclear weapons beyond deterrence, the Bush Administration has altered the role of deterrence in U.S. national security strategy. It has stated, in several speeches and documents, that the United States may not be able to contain or deter the types of threats that are emerging today, such as those created by rogue nations or terrorists armed with weapons of mass destruction. Consequently, the United States must also be prepared to preempt these threats by launching strikes against adversaries before the adversary attacks the United States, its allies or its interests. Some analysts have concluded that, with this change in perspective, the Administration foresees the possible preemptive use of nuclear weapons against nations or groups that are not necessarily armed with their own nuclear weapons.<sup>28</sup> This would be a striking change in U.S. national security policy, with the United States possibly contemplating nuclear use early or at the start of a conflict, rather than in response to actions taken by the adversary.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, some have argued that, with its overwhelming conventional superiority, it would be difficult to imagine a scenario where the United States would have a military need to launch a preemptive strike with nuclear weapons in the opening phases of a conflict. Nevertheless, the United States has not ruled out this possibility. The idea that nuclear weapons can play a role that goes beyond threatening nuclear retaliation is not new to the Bush Administration. The Clinton Administration also stated that nuclear weapons can serve as “a guarantee of our security commitments to allies and a disincentive to those who would contemplate developing or otherwise acquiring their



own nuclear weapons.”<sup>30</sup> The key difference between the past and the future may be rhetorical — during the Cold War, the United States emphasized the role that nuclear weapons could play in deterring the Soviet Union before mentioning other possible objectives for U.S. nuclear policy; in the future, with the greatly reduced risk of global nuclear war, the other objectives may become more prominent in discussions of U.S. national security strategy” (Woolf, 2008).

Reduce role means reduce circumstances of use –

1. A Diminishing Role for Nuclear Weapons in Security Policies The 2002 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), issued by the Department of Defense (portions of which were made available to the public) sets the course for U.S. nuclear strategy that includes renewed emphasis on the role of nuclear weapons in military planning, contrary to the commitments to nuclear disarmament.<sup>12</sup> The document marks a significant retreat from the disarmament commitments made at the 2000 NPT Review Conference principally because it enlarges the circumstances under which nuclear weapons could be used.<sup>13</sup> The NPR spells out circumstances for nuclear weapons to be used in instances other than nuclear attack, including in retaliation for use of biological or chemical weapons and also calls for their use "in the event of surprising military developments" (Makhijani, 2003).

Roles for nuclear weapons are times of proposed use –

“Finally, policymakers in the U.S. and elsewhere should follow the commission's advice to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in the security policies of the nuclear powers. In recent years, several nuclear powers, including the U.S., Russia, and France, have talked about using nuclear weapons in a wider range of contingencies. For example, the U.S. and others, including India, have spoken about using nuclear weapons in response to a chemical or biological weapons attack. The U.S. has also suggested that nuclear weapons might be used first to destroy deeply buried WMD-related facilities. If the nuclear powers act as if nuclear weapons are becoming more and more useful and more and more indispensable to their national security strategies, then we can expect additional countries to want nuclear capabilities of their own. For the U.S., which has unrivaled conventional military capabilities today, it makes little sense to give others a reason to acquire a nuclear capability that can neutralize that conventional military superiority. The commission is right that it's time to review U.S. doctrine on the use of nuclear weapons and even to consider the idea of pledging not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. No-first-use, I know, is heresy in Washington, and certainly within administrations of both Republicans and Democrats. But I think it's high time that we took another look at that and the commission points us in that direction” (Einhorn, 2006).

## **use**

General definition –

“Those possessing nuclear weapons justify and utilize them as deterrents, albeit by varying approaches. For example, China, which espouses a no-first-nuclear-use doctrine and fields a much smaller nuclear force than Russia or the United States, relies on the threat of retaliatory

strikes to deter nuclear attacks upon it.<sup>28</sup> Russia and Pakistan, each facing one or more conventionally superior rivals, rely on their nuclear forces to deter large-scale conventional attack as well as nuclear strikes. They accordingly reserve their right to first use and are prepared (or preparing) to use tactical nuclear weapons to defeat superior conventional forces, as well as longer-range nuclear weapons to strike adversaries' strategic assets.<sup>29</sup> During the Cold War, Washington relied on a similar approach to deter what it feared were superior Soviet conventional forces poised to invade Western Europe. Though the United States currently has no conventional military peer, it still reserves the right of first use of its nuclear weapons and accords to those weapons the mission of deterring a wider range of adversary aggression than just nuclear weapon use, but within a narrower range of contingencies and with the explicit goal of further reducing its reliance on nuclear weapons" (Caves, 2014).

Peace, coercion, military –

"The U.S. nuclear arsenal plays three distinct but interrelated roles that presently cannot be fulfilled by any other type of weapon. First, the fundamental purpose of U.S. nuclear forces is political: to preserve peace, prevent coercion, and achieve our national objectives without use of military force. U.S. nuclear weapons help deter attacks from adversaries using all types of weapons of mass destruction. In other words, our objective is to use nuclear weapons politically to prevent our having to use military force. To be effective politically, our weapons must be appropriate to the threat, and the United States must be perceived as having both the will and the capability to employ nuclear weapons. The deterrent value of nuclear weapons may be affected by their potential for military use, which comprises the second role of U.S. nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons differ from all other types of weapons because of their

overwhelming, immediate destructive power. No other existing single weapon can deliver such force. Today's highly accurate, powerful conventional weapons can indeed threaten some, but not all, strategic military targets. Some targets— such as deeply buried targets where leadership, WMD, or other military targets might be bunkered—can be threatened with destruction only by nuclear weapons. Furthermore, conventional weapons have inherent limitations in their capability to threaten such targets. (See shaded box.) To help deter an aggressor from introducing WMD into a conflict, it may be important that the aggressor understand that there are no protected sanctuaries against potential U.S. retaliation. The third role of the U.S. nuclear arsenal is to help prevent nuclear proliferation by extending our deterrent—the nuclear umbrella. There are several countries which could, with little effort and time, develop their own nuclear weapons but do not because they trust in and rely on the U.S. nuclear deterrent” (Bailey, 2007).

### **Weapons of Mass Destruction**

UN/CBRN definition –

“For the purposes of this paper, weapons of mass destruction are defined as chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons. While it may seem unnecessary to make this observation, in actuality there are a variety of definitions of WMD in current use.<sup>1</sup> Here we chose to adopt the official United Nations (UN) definition, which is used for disarmament, diplomacy, and arms control treaties:

Atomic explosive weapons, radioactive material weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons and any weapons developed in the future which might have characteristics

comparable in destructive effect to those of the atomic bomb or other weapons mentioned above.<sup>2</sup>

As a practical matter, the UN definition is interpreted as applying to all CBRN weapons even if they are not necessarily lethal. Significantly, this definition originated in the late 1940s to support the UN disarmament agenda by identifying weapons categories that deserved special consideration for elimination or control. So far, the international community has rejected attempts to expand WMD beyond CBRN weapons. Mindful that the UN definition explicitly allows for the possibility of entirely new forms of WMD emerging in the future—that is, other than CBRN—we address the prospects for that occurring by 2030 later in this paper.” (Caves, 2014).

WMD should include cyber –

“As we learned more about the scope of what cyber weapons might be capable of in the future, we concluded that they need to at least be part of the conversation about what will constitute WMD. This arises not because the first-order effects of cyber weapons are necessarily more lethal or physically destructive than other candidates we considered but ultimately dismissed as new forms of WMD. They likely would not be, though the second and third order could be quite substantial in these regards. Rather, it is because the sheer scale of societal disruption that cyber weapons may be able to inflict by 2030 could have such strategic impact as to provoke strategic-level responses.

Societies in the 21st century will become increasingly vulnerable to forms of disruption, and such disruption may be as strategically important as destruction. They will become more

dependent on networked information systems as commercial and governmental entities alike are driven to achieve greater efficiencies. SCADA devices allowing wireless connection, monitoring, and control of virtually every aspect of modern life, including life-sustaining medical implants in the human body, will make modern societies, and the upper socioeconomic strata of developing nations, more vulnerable to information system attack than ever before. As with the life sciences, the rapid pace of change in information technology is expected to accord an advantage to the offense over the defense for the foreseeable future.

If the impacts of large-scale cyber attacks could be so great and our ability to defend against such attacks is so uncertain, it is reasonable to expect that we will become more dependent on the threat of an “overwhelming and unacceptable” response to deter such strikes, as Presidents have long been to deter the threat of traditional WMD attack. As the growing attention being paid to the challenge of “cross-domain deterrence” suggests, such deterrent threats should not be assumed to be limited to retaliation-in-kind. Of course, the effectiveness of such deterrence threats will depend to a large extent on our ability to attribute the source of cyber attacks, a major problem that will demand even greater focus going forward” (Caves, 2014).

### **Nuclear Weapons Arsenals**

Includes a stockpiles, delivery systems, infrastructure, fissile material –

“Meanwhile, the United States has been working to reduce all aspects of its nuclear weapons arsenal -- the size of its weapons stockpile, the number of its delivery systems, the size of its nuclear weapons infrastructure, and the amount of fissile material in its nuclear weapons programs -- to levels sufficient to meet its defense needs and those of its allies with as few

weapons as possible. The United States is also taking unprecedented steps toward reducing reliance upon nuclear weapons in its defense posture and military doctrine, important steps that are all too often misunderstood or overlooked” (Ford, 2007).

Three categories of the stockpile –

“The U.S. nuclear arsenal is divided into three levels of stockpile readiness. These are:

**Operationally Deployed:** These are active stockpile (fully operational) weapons and mated with delivery systems such that they are ready to be used in combat. All warheads counted under arms limitation agreements belong to this category. **Active Stockpile:** Fully operational weapons, available for immediate use, whether or not they are operationally deployed.

Reasons for an active stockpile weapon to not be operationally deployed include: Its assigned to a delivery system is not currently operational (in particular ballistic missile submarines spend one-third of their time not on patrol), It is a spare for deployed warheads (should a deployed warhead require maintenance, for example), and It is part of the responsive force -- an inventory of warheads that are kept in operational condition (tritium reservoirs installed, etc.) to permit immediate deployment (for example to upload the number of warheads on a ballistic missile, or reloads for bomber aircraft). **Inactive Reserve:** Weapons that are kept intact, but are not maintained in operational condition. This means that limited life components are removed from the weapons and may not be available to immediately return them to service. "Limited life components" principally mean tritium-containing components such as tritium reservoirs and neutron generator tubes. Some weapons currently in this category (e.g. the W84) will be dismantled” (Sublette, 2007).

## **missions**

The primary mission of the arsenal is counterforce targeting –

“Current Roles and Missions are Anachronistic and Obsolete Since the early 1960s, the primary military mission for U.S. nuclear weapons has been counterforce, that is, the attack of military, mostly nuclear, targets and the enemy’s leadership. The requirements for the counterforce mission perpetuate the most dangerous characteristics of nuclear forces, with weapons kept at high levels of alert, ready to launch upon warning of an enemy attack, and able to preemptively attack enemy forces. U.S. nuclear weapons and the threat they might be used not only served to deter the Soviet Union and other Cold War adversaries from embarking on a course of action considered hostile or contrary to U.S. security interests, but they were also used to try to coerce Cold War era adversaries into taking more compliant diplomatic positions. In other words, U.S. policymakers viewed nuclear weapons as not only essential to a nuclear deterrence strategy but also a "compellence" strategy designed to coerce, or intimidate. Because policymakers and military planners considered the credibility and superiority of U.S. nuclear forces to be essential to these objectives, U.S. governments built up U.S. nuclear arsenals and delivery capabilities. Unfortunately, even after two post-Cold War Nuclear Posture Reviews, the United States still has a nuclear force posture that calls for fewer operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons but still essentially retains the same basic roles and retains all of the essential characteristics it had during the Cold War. Current doctrine calls for: \* a nuclear arsenal and readiness posture capable of delivering a devastating counterforce attack against Russia, China, and other potential regional nuclear-armed foes. \* the possible use of nuclear weapons to defend U.S. forces and allies against massive conventional military attacks; and \*



the possible use of nuclear weapons to counter suspected chemical or biological weapons threats.” (Kimball, 2009).

It’s about deterrence –

“Current U.S. nuclear deterrence policy as set forth in a series of National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy documents from 2001 to 2008 can be summarized as calling for safe, credible, and reliable offensive nuclear forces and defensive measures capable of deterring attacks against the United States, its vital interests, allies, and friends. These deterrence forces are tailored to fit particular threats and respond to a broad array of challenges to international security. Four specific missions for our nuclear establishment include: (1) deter weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threats, (2) assure allies of our continuing commitment to their security, (3) dissuade potential adversaries from embarking on programs or activities that could threaten our vital interests, and (4) defeat threats that are not deterred” (Schlessinger, 2008).

“Missions for U.S. Nuclear Weapons ”The end of the Cold War has changed the dynamic but not the missions, requirements and assurance/dissuasion/deterrence. What has changed is the nature of asymmetrical warfare. Having said that, the underlying premise and value of nuclear weapons is to deter ... if deterrence fails ... employ.” -- Military Working Group Participant

“Although the strategic landscape has dramatically shifted since the end of the Cold War, the concept of deterrence and the need to deter adversaries from attacking our vital interests is just as important in the 21st Century as it was in the last century” -- General Kevin P. Chilton, STRATCOM Commander In descending order of consensus, participants at the working group identified the following missions for the U.S. nuclear deterrent: • Deter the use of weapons of

mass destruction (WMD) against the United States. All agree this should include nuclear weapons and most would include genetically-modified biological weapons (BW). There is a lack of consensus on whether this mission should extend to deterring the use of chemical weapons (CW) and catastrophic attacks on U.S. computers, infrastructure and satellites (“mass disruption” vs. “mass destruction”).

- Underwrite security guarantees and deter WMD attacks on U.S. allies. A credible extended deterrent is a critical nonproliferation tool vis-à-vis U.S. allies, in large part to prevent latent nuclear powers (e.g., Japan and South Korea) from becoming declared ones. There is uncertainty, however, surrounding the relative importance of nuclear weapons within the broader set of U.S. policies and capabilities that contribute to these security assurances: “assurances of the U.S. commitment rest on more than just nuclear weapons; U.S. conventional forces, basing arrangements, and treaty commitments all can contribute to the U.S. effort to assure its allies. Nuclear weapons are just part of the package, and then, only in the few cases of those nations who actually sit under the nuclear umbrella and desire protection (Japan, maybe Turkey).”
- Crisis stability at the major and regional-power level. Nuclear weapons cast a “long shadow” (fatal vision) on conflict and suppress escalatory pressures.
- Control intra-war escalation and war termination. The proven utility of nuclear weapons as a means to terminate a major conventional war (namely WW II), may not be applicable to 21st century conflict.
- Shape the international security environment. Nuclear weapons are a core requirement for the steady-state international security environment; they inhibit risk taking by those who possess them and those who are deterred by them; overwhelmingly superior U.S. nuclear forces may dissuade minor nuclear powers (e.g., China) from joining the ranks of nuclear superpowers.
- Preserving the status of the United States as a

nuclear power “second to none.” From a broader functional perspective, being “second to none” in nuclear capability is believed by many to be a critical element of U.S. global leadership and of how Americans view their international status. While a minimum deterrence strategy “worked” for the UK and France during the Cold War, it is still debatable whether the U.S. (or the American people) would embrace a minimum deterrence strategy with significantly-fewer nuclear weapons than Russia has. Virtually all agree that what constitutes “unacceptable damage” is much lower now than during the Cold War” (Murdock, 2008).

Mission is more specific than role –

“Those in Annapolis argued a mission is more specific than a role, thus its intent is narrower. Unlike the offensive role which encompasses a range of options, the actual mission of the old triad is to destroy high value enemy targets. There is no eluding this violent mission and the United States should remain committed to violent ends when protecting national interests. The research and development (R&D) mission started in the late 1940s continues today; it is the backbone of continued readiness for the armed forces. Modern technologies are required to support nuclear strategy; the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) under scrutiny today justifies the continued R&D mission. The old triad continues to have a strategic mission because it is a constant reminder of U.S. hegemony and power. Three different delivery systems with highly trained operators are a constant reminder, both positive and negative, to our neighbors of U.S. power. The mission of the old triad within the new is to preserve the perception of U.S. strength” (Welle, 2006).

### **Nuclear Weapons Strategy**

Same as Nuclear Weapons Policy, means reducing nukes –

“The Pentagon released a new nuclear arms policy Friday that calls for the introduction of two new types of weapons, effectively ending Obama-era efforts to reduce the size and scope of the U.S. arsenal and minimize the role of nuclear weapons in defense planning.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said in an introductory note to the new policy — the first update to the military's nuclear strategy since 2010 — that the changes reflect a need to "look reality in the eye" and "see the world as it is, not as we wish it to be."

The previous administration's policy hinged on what President Barack Obama called a moral obligation for the United States to lead by example in ridding the world of nuclear weapons. Officials in the Trump administration and the U.S. military argue that Obama's approach proved overly idealistic, particularly as relations with Moscow soured. Russia, China and North Korea, they say, all advanced their nuclear weapons capabilities instead of following suit” (Sonne, 2018).

President Trump reinterpreted it to mean increasing size of arsenal –

"Over the past decade, while the United States has led the world in these reductions, every one of our potential nuclear adversaries has been pursuing the exact opposite strategy," Deputy Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette said at a Pentagon news conference, explaining why the United States is changing course. "These powers are increasing the numbers and types of nuclear weapons in their arsenal.

The new nuclear weapons policy follows on Donald Trump's promise before taking office to expand and strengthen U.S. nuclear capabilities. President Trump also vowed during his State of the Union address Tuesday to build a nuclear arsenal "so strong and powerful that it will deter any acts of aggression" (Sonne, 2018).

Includes role, arsenal, and more [note that this article is defining President Trump's new Nuclear Weapons Strategy sometimes called his Nuclear Weapons Policy or NPR] –

“Arms control advocates are denouncing the Trump Administration’s draft Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), which calls for lowering the U.S. nuclear threshold and developing new classes of nuclear weapons.

“At the Arms Control Association, our take is that the NPR constitutes unnecessary, unexecutable and unsafe overreach,” Kingston Reif, director for disarmament and threat reduction policy at the Arms Control Association said during a Jan. 23 press conference.

“Though there are elements of continuity with the policies of previous administrations, the document aligns with President Trump's more aggressive and impulsive nuclear notions and breaks with past efforts to reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons worldwide in several key areas.”

Arms control advocates took aim at three specific areas—one is that the new NPR seeks a greater role for nuclear weapons, another is that it calls for the development of new nuclear weapons and, third, that it walks away from American non-proliferation and disarmament commitments.

“What concerns me most directly is the talk of an expanded role for nuclear weapons,” Thomas Countryman, chairman of the board of the Arms Control Association, said.

“For years, the United States under successive Presidents of both parties as consistently narrowed the circumstances under which an American President would contemplate use of nuclear weapons. For the first time in a long time, instead there is an expansion, an explicit expansion of the circumstances under which the President would consider such uses. As Kingston noted, this includes responding to non-nuclear threats including that of a massive cyber attack.”

Joan Rohlfing, president of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, took aim at the Trump Administration’s decision to develop a low-yield warhead for submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) and potentially the development of new nuclear-tipped sea-based cruise missile.

“They haven't offered a satisfactory explanation for what is the military purpose, what is the rationale for why we need this new capability? So, rather than raising the bar for nuclear use as they assert in the review, I believe it lowers the bar and makes their use more likely,” Rohlfing said. “This is destabilizing, not stabilizing” (Majumdar, 2018).

Includes deterrence among many other aspects related to the overall posture of the nuclear arsenal –

“Leave it to The New York Times to misrepresent U.S. nuclear weapons strategy.

In its Oct. 26 editorial, the Times completely misses the point of possessing nuclear weapons: to deter large-scale attacks against the United States, assure our allies so that they won't develop their own nuclear capabilities, and win a nuclear war should the extreme circumstance demand it.

The Trump administration's 2018 Nuclear Posture Review has a unique opportunity to not only recognize these benefits, but also to put U.S. nuclear weapons policy on a sounder footing following years of neglect.

The Times' metric for destruction is the elimination of one-quarter of a given country's population. But the assumption that nuclear weapons are only good to kill civilian populations is faulty in the extreme.

Not only would deliberate targeting of civilians be immoral and a break with decades-old U.S. nuclear targeting policy, it would also unlikely deter countries like North Korea. The North Korean regime does not care about its population, it cares about its own survival.

The primary basis of our nuclear policy is not how many nukes we need to decimate enemy populations, but what kind of capabilities we need to deter and defend against enemy attacks.

Then, there is the qualitative element. Simply counting up our nuclear bombs tells us nothing about their quality or capability, including the quality and capability of the production complex that produces these warheads.

U.S. nuclear weapons are old, and our nuclear warhead modernization infrastructure is decrepit—unlike the massive and updated nuclear production complexes of Russia and China.

U.S. nuclear delivery platforms and nuclear warheads are overdue for both modernization and life extension programs.

According to a recent Congressional Budget Office report, over the next 30 years, nuclear weapon modernization and maintenance will cost \$1.2 trillion. As an annualized percentage of our defense budget, the nuclear program would swing between 5 and 8 percent.

This is a small price to pay for security from the only threat that the United States and its allies face—a threat that could totally destroy our way of life.

The third faulty premise in the Times editorial is that the more nuclear weapons the U.S. has, the more unsafe we will be.

This view supposes that because nukes are destructive, merely having any of them is dangerous. The logical endpoint of such thinking is to eliminate nuclear weapons from the world, which is a completely unrealistic goal given the world as we know it.

Other nations are increasing their reliance on nuclear weapons. Russia even thinks about using them pre-emptively in a regional conflict to de-escalate, since Russia cannot win a war of attrition.

Nuclear weapons have contributed to avoiding a war between the superpowers since the dawn of the nuclear age and have helped to assure U.S. allies of American support, which resulted in fewer states taking up nuclear arms.

A reliable nuclear deterrent, which can threaten our adversaries' nuclear capabilities while protecting our citizens and allies, is achievable, and must be maintained and modernized.



Nuclear weapons are not a needless expense as The New York Times portrays, but are instead vital to U.S. and allied national security.

By ensuring a sufficiently large and modern nuclear arsenal, and continuing to invest in missile defense, the Trump administration can demonstrate that a responsible nuclear posture enhances rather than detracts from our national security. The United States and allies deserve no less” (Dodge, 2017).

### **Nuclear Weapons Policy**

Means the Nuclear Posture Review and encompasses Nuclear Weapons Strategy –

“All that has created some uncertainty about how U.S. nuclear policies will change with a new administration led by a president who took office without experience in foreign policy or strategic thinking, let alone the complexities of nuclear weapons and deterrence. How his views and the changing strategic environment may alter the direction of U.S. nuclear policy will become clearer when the Department of Defense completes its Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), expected late this year or in early 2018.

Posture reviews have been completed by three presidents since 1994 and have proven to be consequential documents. Much of the work and details behind the policies are classified, although it is expected that an unclassified NPR Report will be made public, affecting how the United States, its president, and its nuclear capabilities are seen by allies and adversaries alike. More importantly, the review establishes a guide for decisions that underpin the management, maintenance, and modernization of the nuclear arsenal and influences how Congress views and funds the nuclear forces.

## Context Matters

One critical element of past nuclear posture reviews and likely this one as well is context. The first, completed under President Bill Clinton, was needed to define the purpose and possible role of nuclear weapons in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse. The resulting "lead but hedge" strategy provided a continuing rationale for nuclear weapons and sought to preserve capabilities against a future Russian threat" (Wolfstahl, 2017).

Includes modernization and weapons security –

"In the end, Trump will have to determine, drawing on input from his cabinet and national security team, any changes in nuclear weapons policy and how to frame those decisions in communicating to audiences at home and abroad. Some issues are ripe for support from both the left and the right in Congress, such as modernizing existing nuclear forces and ensuring the national laboratories have the skills and resources needed to monitor and keep the weapons safe, secure, and reliable.

Others, including pursuit of new nuclear weapons or broadening the conditions under which the president might use nuclear weapons, threatens to make nuclear policy yet another partisan battleground to the detriment of U.S. security policy and nonproliferation aspirations (Wolfstahl, 2017)".

Reduction of nuclear weapons –

"In his April 5 Prague speech, President Obama called for the United States to lead international efforts toward a world free of nuclear weapons. A new Council on Foreign Relations-sponsored Independent Task Force report, co-chaired by former secretary of defense William J. Perry and

former national security adviser Brent Scowcroft, says that while "the geopolitical conditions that would permit the global elimination of nuclear weapons do not currently exist," steps can be taken now to diminish the danger of nuclear proliferation and nuclear use.

The Task Force report, titled U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy, focuses on near-term policies to reduce nuclear weapons to the lowest possible level consistent with maintaining a credible deterrent, while also ensuring that the U.S. nuclear arsenal is safe, secure, and reliable for as long as it is needed. "The imperative before the Obama administration," the report says, "is to use all available tools to prevent the use and further acquisition of nuclear weapons." The Task Force is comprised of eminent leaders of the national security community and is directed by CFR Senior Fellow Charles D. Ferguson" (Ferguson, 2009).

Trump has radically expanded Nuclear Weapons Policy –

The new nuclear policy is significantly more hawkish than the posture adopted by the Obama administration, which sought to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in US defence.

Arms control advocates have voiced alarm at the new proposal to make smaller, more "usable" nuclear weapons, arguing it makes a nuclear war more likely, especially in view of what they see as Donald Trump's volatility and readiness to brandish the US arsenal in showdowns with the nation's adversaries.

The NPR also expands the circumstances in which the US might use its nuclear arsenal, to include a response to a non-nuclear attack that caused mass casualties, or was aimed at critical infrastructure or nuclear command and control sites.

The nuclear posture review (NPR), the first in eight years, is expected to be published after Donald Trump's State of the Union speech at the end of January" (Borger, 2018).

## Summary

**Resolutions:** the topic committee is advised to choose between verb phrases of “change Nuclear Weapons Policy/Strategy,” “reduce the size and/or role of,” “change the size and/or role of,” “increase its efforts to prevent the proliferation of,” or “establish a policy substantially limiting the proliferation of”. There is a choice of the object of the resolution being “weapons of mass destruction,” a list of specific weapons, and a single weapon.

**Timeliness:** counter proliferation policies are constantly evolving with new administrations and emerging world events. We can expect to see changes within this topic area as new policies are drafted and suggested, especially with the 2020 election.

**Scope:** the topic provides adequate ground on both sides of the debate as affirmatives will have a wide range of subareas to research while the negative will have several core topic generic arguments. Additionally there should be dynamic case debates as most affirmatives will have large literature bases for and against.

**Range:** the topic will allow for both novice and advanced debaters to expand knowledge and skill. Regional areas and debate leagues could create core topic novice case lists focusing on easily comprehensible affirmatives while more experienced debaters can take advantage of a large literature base that will encourage creative argumentation.

**Quality:** the debates on this topic will make debaters think about our nation’s arsenals of weapons of mass destruction and hopefully dispel the apathy and misunderstandings related to the use of these weapons. The purpose of policy debate is to train new policy makers and this topic taps into areas of vital concern for our leaders of tomorrow.

**Material:** the research on this topic will push debaters into journal research, think tank research, web research, while also forcing them to stay informed of current events in the news media. There should never be a lack of material for students to develop their arguments.

**Interest:** weapons of mass destruction are dangerous, intriguing, and of course interesting and debates over them have entertained and excited the debate community for decades.

**Balance:** this paper sought to illustrate the potential ground for affirmative and negative arguments. This topic should offer a rare return of a strong core of topic disadvantages that should create a more balanced topic.

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