

No First Use FAQs--Nuclear No First Use

From: <https://www.globalzero.org/no-first-use-faqs/>
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What does No-First-Use (NFU) actually mean?

No First Use is a commitment to never use nuclear weapons first under any circumstances, whether as a pre-emptive attack or first strike, or in response to non-nuclear attack of any kind.

Where do nuclear-armed countries stand on No First Use?

China is the only nuclear-armed country to have an unconditional NFU policy. India maintains a policy of NFU with exceptions for a response to chemical or biological attacks.

France, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States maintain policies that permit the first use of nuclear weapons in a conflict. Israel does not acknowledge the existence of its nuclear arsenal so has no publicly known position.

Why advocate for global NFU commitments now?

The world has never faced so many crises that could escalate to nuclear conflict. <<https://www.globalzero.org/crisis-response/nuclear-flashpoints/>>

In addition to the precarious situation on the Korean peninsula, we're running acceptably high risks of nuclear weapons use between NATO and Russia, India and Pakistan, and the United States and China. In fact right now the chances that nuclear weapons will be used, intentionally, accidentally, or due to miscalculation, are the highest they've been since the worst days of the Cold War.

Establishing global NFU commitments would immediately make the world safer by resolving uncertainty about what a nuclear-armed country might do in a crisis, which removes pressure and incentive for any one country to 'go nuclear' first in a crisis.

What are consequences of nuclear first use?

Any use of a nuclear weapon would invite massive retaliation.

A recent study by Global Zero

<<https://www.globalzero.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/estimatedfatalitiesfromrussiannuclearretaliation.pdf>> estimated U. S. fatalities due to a Russian retaliation to a U.S. nuclear first strike. It found 30% of the total population of the top 145 biggest cities in the United States 21 million Americans would die in a Russian nuclear counterattack. To put that in perspective, in the first 24 hours the U.S. death toll would be 50 times greater than all American casualties in World War II.

Not to mention the horrific aftermath of nuclear war. A 2014 study

<<https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/2013EF000205>> shows that so-called 'limited' nuclear war in South Asia, in which 100 nuclear weapons are used, would have global consequences. Millions of tons of smoke would be sent into the atmosphere, plunging temperatures and damaging the global food supply. Two billion people would be at risk of death by starvation. (Continued next column)

(From last column) No First Use FAQs

How are No First Use commitments a step toward the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons?

Global No First Use would be an important step toward making nuclear weapons irrelevant to national security. These policies would strip nuclear weapons of value in the eyes of military planners, enable future nuclear disarmament negotiations, and accelerate the dismantling of these weapons. It would also serve as a confidence-building measure that establishes greater trust among nuclear-armed countries and makes it easier to work together to reduce nuclear risks and ultimately eliminate all nuclear weapons.

No First Use in the United States

What does current United States policy say about the first use of nuclear weapons?

The 2018 U.S. Nuclear Posture Review (NPR

<[https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872886/-1/-1/1/2018-NUCLEAR-POSTURE-REVIEW-FINAL-](https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872886/-1/-1/1/2018-NUCLEAR-POSTURE-REVIEW-FINAL-REPORT.PDF)

[REPORT.PDF](https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872886/-1/-1/1/2018-NUCLEAR-POSTURE-REVIEW-FINAL-REPORT.PDF)>) maintains the policy that the United States would only consider the employment of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States, its allies, and partners. This loose language holds open the possibility that nuclear weapons would be used in an initial attack (which can be ordered by the president, whose authority to use nuclear weapons is virtually limitless) or in response to a conventional, biological, chemical or cyber attack.

Who would believe a U.S. NFU policy?

Making a NFU policy credible, establishing it as a commitment that other countries can count on, means going beyond simple declaratory statements. This would require meaningful changes to the kinds of nuclear weapons the United States builds and the way it deploys them. One tangible way to show your NFU policy means something is to take all nuclear weapons off high-alert, meaning they are no longer ready to launch instantly. Another is to eliminate all land-based nuclear missiles (also known as intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs), which are by definition nuclear first-strike weapons, and prioritize the kinds of systems that would be used only in response to a nuclear attack.

More recommendations for what the U.S. nuclear arsenal could look like under a guiding principle of NFU can be found in Global Zero's Alternative U.S. Nuclear Posture Review.

<<https://www.globalzero.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ANPR-Final.pdf>>

How would adoption of a NFU policy affect national security? Don't we need to keep all our options on the table to deter our enemies?

There exists no plausible circumstance in which the use of a nuclear weapon would be in the national security interests of the United States, American people, or U.S. allies. A nuclear counterattack following a U.S. first strike would be catastrophic, resulting in the deaths of millions of Americans and the total devastation of economic and social infrastructure.

(Continued page 2)

(From page 1) **No First Use FAQs**

Any first use against lesser threats, such as countries or terrorist groups with chemical and biological weapons, would be gratuitous; there are very effective alternative means of countering those threats.

There is little evidence to suggest nuclear weapons are effective in deterring non-nuclear attacks, including biological and chemical use. If the United States suffered a non-nuclear attack, it is difficult to imagine any president considering using nuclear weapons, destroying entire cities and killing hundreds of thousands of people, damaging the environment for generations, spreading deadly radiation possibly to uninvolved countries in retaliation.

Is there support for U.S. adoption of NFU?

There is growing momentum for NFU in the United States. A 2016 poll <https://today.yougov.com/topics/politics/articles-reports/2016/08/11/poll-results-nuclear-weapons> showed at least two-thirds of Americans support NFU. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Representative Adam Smith (D-WA9) have introduced the No First Use Act (S.1219/H.R.2603) which states, "It is the policy of the United States to not use nuclear weapons first."

A number of former senior-level military commanders and government officials support U.S. adoption of NFU, including former Vice Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General (ret.) James E. Cartwright

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/15/opinion/end-the-first-use-policy-for-nuclear-weapons.html>, Ambassador Thomas Pickering, and former Secretary of Defense William Perry <http://www.wjperryproject.org/notes-from-the-brink/two-minutes-to-midnight>.

How would adoption of No First Use affect U.S. commitments to its allies and partners? Would they be encouraged to develop their own nuclear arsenals?

NFU in no way reduces the ability of the United States to deter nuclear attacks on the U.S. or its allies. Allies would be able to rely on the superior capabilities of U.S. non-nuclear forces, which are sufficient to deal with threats to the U.S. and its allies, including biological or chemical weapons threats. A NFU policy would also help allay apprehensions among some allies about the U.S. using nuclear weapons first in a conflict. The first use of nuclear weapons against Russia or China would invite massive retaliation against the U.S. and its allies. First use against lesser threats like North Korea could result in blanketing allies or others uninvolved in the conflict with deadly radioactive fallout.

A 2016 Global Zero study https://www.globalzero.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/nfu_ally_proliferation.pdf that looked at the potential for a NFU policy to encourage proliferation by U.S. allies with extended deterrence agreements found no evidence that a country's decision to remain non-nuclear was based on its expectation that the United States would conduct a nuclear first strike on its behalf. The reliability of commitments to second-strike and conventional (non-nuclear) defense were found to be more important to extended deterrence. A move to develop nuclear weapons would also go against allied obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Is it true the U.S. President has the sole authority to order the launch of nuclear weapons? What effect does NFU have on that authority?

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(From last column) **No First Use FAQs**

Every American president has sole authority to order the launch of nuclear weapons. No one, not Congress, not the secretary of defense, not the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff can veto his or her decision. That means under the current system, one person has the power to start a nuclear war at any time, for any reason.

A legally-binding NFU policy would change that by making the first use of nuclear weapons illegal, clearly limiting the circumstances under which a president's nuclear launch order could be executed.

What can I do to make No First Use the policy of the United States?

Global Zero is working every day to make No First Use a reality all of the nuclear-armed countries of the world, including the United States. If you'd like to support the work of our experts and advocates, please chip in here https://secure.actblue.com/donate/forward2019?source=direct_link. Your donation will fund our work to educate policymakers, the public and the press, and help build a broad base of political support for this critical next step on the road to zero.

If you're interested in rolling up your sleeves and getting more involved, check out Beyond the Bomb <http://www.beyondthebomb.org/>, a grassroots organization building a people-powered movement to prevent nuclear war. You can sign the No First Use pledge to let your representatives know where you stand and get updates about key moments when your voice will make the biggest impact on your elected officials.

Russia comments on nuclear war statement

Moscow praises Nuclear Five unity on atomic war & arms races: January 3, 2022

<https://www.rt.com/russia/545070-nuclear-arms-war-statement/>

A joint statement by China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US on the unacceptability of nuclear weapon use is an important milestone, which comes amid an extremely tense international security situation, Moscow has said.

The release was issued by the group of nuclear-armed countries on Monday, with the signees saying they "*affirm that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.*" They also stressed that nuclear armaments "*should serve defensive purposes, deter aggression, and prevent war*" rather than be used to start such a conflict.

The declaration was praised by Russia's Foreign Ministry, which said it was an important development for international security.

"*Russia firmly believes that there can be no winners in a nuclear war and it should never be unleashed. We have consistently promoted the idea of confirming this principle by all the Nuclear 5 nations,*" Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in a statement.

(Continued page 3)

Our Mission

The Boundary Peace Initiative represents people of diverse backgrounds officially brought together in 2002 because of our mutual concern for the rise in world conflict. Our mandate is to participate in multilateral non-violent conflict resolution in support of global human rights, ecological and environmental sustainability and international law through education, sharing of information, dialogue and activism locally and globally. We encourage and seek your participation in our mutual work for true peace based on social justice, equality, accountability, integrity, honour, respect, etc in order to build a better world today and future generations.

BPI web site: www.boundarypeaceinitiative.org
For info contact Laura at (250) 444-0524 or (250) 442-0434 or email: L4peace@telus.net.

(From page 2) **Russia comments**

Moscow was the main driver behind the statement, Zakharova revealed, adding that it was originally designed to be unveiled during the 10th conference on non-proliferation. The meeting was set to kick off in New York on Tuesday, but it has been postponed due to the corona virus situation in the United States.

The rare demonstration of unity shown by the nuclear powers is very important amid the deteriorating international security situation, Zakharova noted, expressing hopes that the statement will contribute to global stability.

“We hope that in the current complicated international security environment, the approval of such a political statement by the leaders of the nuclear powers will help to reduce the level of international tension and curb the arms race,” she said.

United Nations International Days of Action

January 24th: International Day of Education
January 27th: International Day of Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust

The opposite of love is not hate, its indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, its indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, its indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, its indifference.

Elie Wiesel

Politicians who took us to war should have been given the guns and told to settle their differences themselves instead of organizing nothing better than legalized mass murder.

Harry Patch, World War I veteran

Reflections on Black Lives Matter 1

By: Robert M. Macrae, Castlegar, BC

The notion of human races is a lie. There was a “genetic bottleneck” 70,000 years ago when the human population was catastrophically reduced to 5,000. All humans alive today descended from those 5,000 survivors. We’re one family.

Even with common ancestry, the divine commandment: “love thy neighbour as thyself,” and the US Declaration of Independence self-evident truth: all people are created equal and endowed with unalienable rights, discrimination based on skin colour continues.

In *The Abolitionists* (2013) the writers explain that in the fifty years following American independence, all northern states had outlawed slavery and southern states were close behind not because slavery was immoral, rather it was unprofitable.

Slavery became profitable in 1793 with the cotton gin, a machine that allowed cotton to be processed profitably, although it remained labour intensive to grow. Between 1790 and 1861, the start of the American Civil War, the number of African slaves in America more than quadrupled from 700,000 to four million as American cotton production expanded to supply two-thirds of the global market.

Cotton created unimaginable profits that stimulated demand for farm and textile machinery, shipping, warehousing and distribution throughout the US and Great Britain. Slavery was the foundation of the global cotton industry and the American economy. Slaves were the single most valuable asset in the US economy worth more than all American manufacturing, railroad, steamships, and other transportation combined.

Cotton wasn't the first global commodity built on slave labour. As described by Adam Hochschild in *Bury the Chains* (2005), by 1660, Barbados, a very small island, generated more revenue from sugar than all commodities from all other British colonies including the thirteen American colonies, the rest of British North America, and India.

By the late 1600s, Caribbean sugar plantations had devoured Barbados's Indigenous people who were replaced with African slaves to keep profits flowing. At the expense of millions of black lives, many, many, fortunes were generated, and remain, for British landlords. From their posh country estates, noble ladies and gentlemen oversaw the accumulation of blood profits extracted from black lives that mattered only to their bottom line. The profiteers did their heartless math. It was more lucrative to work African slaves to an early death and purchase replacements than treat their workers humanely.

Following the US Civil War “forty acres and a mule” compensation for freed slaves was promised, but never delivered. This broken promise contrasted Lincoln’s Homestead Act gift of 160 acres to white settlers of the Great Plains. Instead of free land, freed slaves received Jim Crow which perpetuated cruelty and exploitation into the twenty-first century. (Continued page 4)

WHAT'S UP?

2022 has arrived and once again we must think of others and protect each other from a virus that has the power to shut down so much of what we think is vital to our lives. Somehow, war and threats of war continue to plague the world. The message for peace, socio-economic justice and environmental sustainability is needed now more than ever. The BPI invites you to join us as we work to educate and convince 'the powers that be' that it's wiser morally, economically and spiritually to stop the warring and the striving for more powerful weapons to begin working as one global family supporting and treating all with dignity and respect. As we are allowed we will organize events to explore ways to bring a living, breathing peace to life locally and globally. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Ed note: I ask forgiveness for the lateness of this issue. Besides the holidays and a cold I have had a family tragedy; my son-in-law died suddenly this week and I was delayed in getting this issue to you. Thank you for your understanding.

Voice your opinion to the Prime Minister and all MPs. Free postage: {Name of MP}, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Go to the Government of Canada website for MP contact information at <http://www.canada.gc.ca>

The BPI welcomes your input. Articles may not be common consensus of members. To submit articles contact Laura at **250-444-0524 or 250-442-0434** or email **L4peace@telus.net**.

The BPI is an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Peace Pledge Union, Stop Ecocide Canada, Abolition 2000 & CNANW and works with local and global peace, social justice and environmental groups.

(From page 3) Reflections on Black Lives Matter 1

In *The New Jim Crow* (2010), Michelle Alexander explains how the majority of contemporary, urban, African-American men are denied legal rights and face legal discrimination in employment, housing, access to education and public benefits. African-American men are targeted and far more likely to be convicted of offences that for whites result in warnings or dropped charges. Once labelled "criminal", even after prison, records cling, disadvantaging African-Americans disproportionately and for life.

There is an uninterrupted history in America of mercilessly bludgeoning those who peacefully seek civil rights. In *Red Summer* (2011) Cameron McWhirter describes how African-American soldiers returning from WWI aspired for the equality they witnessed in France; equality they felt was their entitlement in exchange for their military service. The response, the American Red Summer of 1919, was exceptionally violent anti-black riots and a spike in torturous lynchings that went unpunished, erased from popular history, and omitted from school curricula.

Opposition to Jim Crow in the 1950s inspired by Medgar Evers and Fannie Lou Hamer was swift and cruel: beatings, lynchings, assassinations.

More familiar is the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with more beatings, lynchings, assassinations, but also with paper changes.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X (1964) chronicles the life of an African-American who survives a hard childhood, poverty, early parental loss, little education, crime, imprisonment, religious conversion, to become an advocate for civil rights, and who suffered a violent death. Ironically, Malcolm X confidently prophesized justice for African-Americans by 2000.

In an essay written before his death last July, civil rights leader and US congressman John R. Lewis wrote, "We must put away our willingness to profit from the exploitation of others. Stand up for what you truly believe. Demonstrate that the way of peace, the way of love and nonviolence is the more excellent way. Let freedom ring. When historians write the story of the 21st century, let them say that it was your generation who laid down the heavy burdens of hate, and peace finally triumphed over violence, aggression and war. Walk with the wind and let the spirit of peace and the power of everlasting love be your guide.

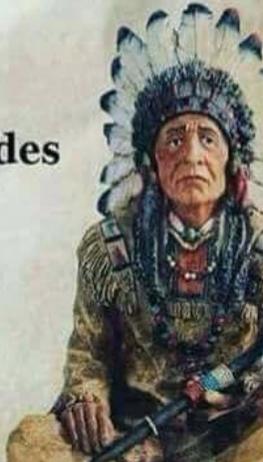
**No one owns the water.
No one owns the land.
No one owns the oceans.
No one owns the sand.**

These are given
by our Mother.

**The Planet provides
for free.**

Only by the hands
of the greedy,
does the Earth
require a fee.

Poet Christopher



Contributed by:
Walter Hoodikoff