

Reduce the Nuclear Weapons Threat Before It's Too Late

The time for action is now. If nuclear weapons are ever used again, a dangerous escalation is likely to follow. A nuclear winter could ensue, risking billions of casualties and a global environmental crisis. The Trump administration, supported by Congress, should explicitly recommit to the vision of a nuclear weapons free world that President Obama articulated early in his presidency. Instead, Trump and his allies are increasing Pentagon spending, including for nuclear weapons development and production, while cutting nonproliferation programs.

Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine cries out for diplomatic intervention not only to end that atrocity, but also to prevent possible escalation up to and including nuclear war. Both countries have said bilateral nuclear arms reduction talks should still be pursued regardless of the war, but with no progress at this time, the only remaining nuclear weapons treaty, New START, will expire next February. Trump has muddied the waters by insisting China should be part of arms reduction talks, which it rejects, as its arsenal, while growing, is still dwarfed by those of the U.S. and Russia. Recently, the crisis provoked by Israel's illegal attack on Iran demonstrates the need for nuclear restraint by all.

Spend On Human Needs, Not a New Nuclear Arms Race

Money saved by forgoing another costly nuclear arms race could go to addressing real security threats like climate change and pandemics, and toward supporting critical human needs like healthcare, unemployment programs, housing, education, and more — all of which are slated for deep cuts in Trump's proposed budget.

The Trump administration must bring sanity to nuclear weapons spending by making cuts to the modernization program with a [price tag estimated at more than \\$2 trillion over thirty years](#).¹ Instead, Trump is proposing sharp increases, including \$5.5 billion annual increase in the National Nuclear Security Agency budget — many of whose employees were fired in the reckless Elon Musk DOGE rampage, only to be restored when it was discovered their jobs are critical to nuclear safety.

- **In the House, cosponsor [H.R.1888](#), the Nuclear Weapons Abolition and Economic Conversion Act, by Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton.** Also known as “Warheads to Windmills,” the bill seeks to convert nuclear weapons industry resources and personnel to purposes relating to addressing the climate crisis. **In the Senate, introduce and support** a similar effort.
- **Invest in reducing nuclear threats through smart nonproliferation science** and diplomacy instead of new nuclear weapons spending that increases the threat of nuclear war.

New Nuclear Weapons Are Destabilizing and Dangerous

Plans are underway for a new nuclear Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) dubbed the Sentinel. More properly the Money Pit Missile, this exorbitant boondoggle is meant to replace the Minuteman III missiles housed in underground silos in Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska, Montana and North Dakota. The most generously estimated [\\$141 billion price tag](#)² is already much higher than anticipated, with experts affirming end costs will be much higher because the existing missile silos cannot be retrofitted, so the program has had to restructure to dig new silos. Flight testing has already been delayed until at least 2028.

Furthermore, Northrop Grumman, the main contractor, has a history of graft, influence buying, and cost overruns. Questions have been raised about [subsidies from Utah taxpayers to Northrop Grumman](#),³ which built a new headquarters and manufacturing facility in the state, and there was recently a fire at the main manufacturing plant. While the existing Minuteman III missiles can be maintained, a better solution would be to scrap the ICBM leg of the nuclear triad altogether, as it acts as a target — a nuclear sponge — for those living in states where silos are located.

Billions are also going into a new nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM-N). Despite the Biden administration's 2022 Nuclear Posture Review declaring it “[no longer necessary](#)”⁴ and recommending

cancellation, the Trump budget proposal for 2026 and beyond includes funding of this unnecessary and provocative weapon. So-called “low yield” nuclear weapons — a misleading term, as the yield is comparable to the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which killed hundreds of thousands of people — as well as expansion of plutonium “pits” — the explosive triggers for thermonuclear weapons— are other in the works nuclear expansions that pose a serious risk of escalation.

During his second week in office, Trump proposed a Golden Dome “[missile defense](#)” [scheme](#),⁵ which is misguided and unlikely to work. It will cost hundreds of billions of dollars, and likely accelerate the new arms race, including the possibility of weapons in space.

- **Cancel all funding for the new Sentinel ICBM, destabilizing nuclear-armed Sea-Launched Cruise Missile (SLCM-N), and Golden Dome.**

Adopting a No-First-Use Policy Would Keep Our Communities Safer

Military leaders such as General James E. Cartwright, who spent years in charge of our nuclear forces, argue [there is no need for a policy of first use of nuclear weapons](#)⁶ because modern threats can all be addressed by the U.S.’s economic, diplomatic, and conventional tools.

- **Cosponsor the Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2025, by Senator Ed Markey, [S.192](#), and by Rep. Ted Lieu, [H.R.669](#), to restrict the first-use strike of nuclear weapons.**

Arms Control Agreements Make A More Peaceful, Secure World

Since they represent over 90% of global nuclear warhead stockpiles, the U.S. and Russia have a special responsibility to cut their bloated arsenals. As John Gilbert, senior science fellow with the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation’s Scientists Working Group, [points out](#),⁷ “Arms control, historically, did a great deal to make threats and the understanding of threats a lot more predictable,” providing stability and security.

New START, the only remaining nuclear weapons treaty between Moscow and Washington, should not be allowed to expire next February. Additionally, the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) enjoys the support of a majority of the world’s nations and brings a long-needed global justice and equity perspective to nuclear policy. The U.S. should support the TPNW and join with other nuclear states to take concrete steps towards denuclearization.

- **Cosponsor [S.Res.61](#), by Senator Ed Markey, and [H.R.100](#), by Rep. Bill Foster, expressing support for continued arms control agreements with Russia and China.**
- **In the House, cosponsor [H.Res.317](#), by Rep. Jim McGovern, to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race by engaging in global diplomacy. In the Senate, introduce and support a similar effort.**

¹ *Projected Costs of U.S. Nuclear Forces, 2025 to 2034*, Congressional Budget Office, April 2025

² Losey, Stephen, *Pentagon keeps commitment to Sentinel nuclear missile as costs balloon*, Defense News, July 8, 2024

³ Barnes, Taylor, *Utah Refuses to Share Details of Nuclear Weapons Plant Subsidy*, Inkstick Media, February 6, 2023

⁴ Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, *2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America – Including the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review and the 2022 Missile Defense Review*, Department of Defense, October 27, 2022

⁵ *Trump’s Misguided “Golden Dome” Gambit*, Arms Control Association, March 25, 2025

⁶ Cartwright, James, and Bruce Blair, *End the First-Use Policy for Nuclear Weapons*, NY Times, August 14, 2016

⁷ Kirby, Jen, *The treaties that make the world safer are struggling*, Vox, January 5, 2023