

April 26, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

We the undersigned call on you to cosponsor H.R.921, Rep. Adam Smith's bill that would make it the policy of the United States to not use nuclear weapons first.

We live in a time of great uncertainty and danger, with a looming U.S.-Russian nuclear arms race, the imminent collapse of the INF Treaty, the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear agreement, stalled negotiations with North Korea, and doubts about the future of New START. Congress can reduce the risk of nuclear use by sending a clear message to the rest of the world: the United States will not use nuclear weapons first under any circumstances.

In early 2017, then-Vice President Biden [declared](#) that he and President Obama had reached the same conclusion:

*Given our non-nuclear capabilities and the nature of today's threats, it's hard to envision a plausible scenario in which the first use of nuclear weapons by the United States would be necessary. Or make sense. President Obama and I are confident we can deter—and defend ourselves and our Allies against—non-nuclear threats through other means.*

Former Secretary of Defense Bill Perry [agrees](#), stating in January 2018:

*We should declare a no-first use policy in order to set a global standard for nuclear deterrence and reinforce the axiom that a nuclear war can never be won and should not be fought.*

Gen. James Cartwright (USMC, ret.), former Vice Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former Director of U.S. Strategic Command, also [agrees](#). In 2016, he wrote:

*[A No-First-Use policy] would reduce the risk of a first strike against us during global crises. Leaders of other countries would be calmed by the knowledge that the United States viewed its own weapons as deterrents to nuclear warfare, not as tools of aggression.*

If the United States used a nuclear weapon first, that would significantly increase the risk that the other country would strike back with its own nuclear weapons. Moreover, once started, a nuclear exchange may not stay limited, and the United States will have opened the door to a catastrophic nuclear attack—putting the U.S. public at great risk.

Now is the time for the United States to put an end to Cold War thinking by declaring it will not use nuclear weapons first, moving us all toward a safer, more secure future. Please cosponsor H.R.921.

Sincerely,

Daryl Kimball  
Executive Director  
Arms Control Association

Cecili Williams  
Executive Director  
Beyond the Bomb

Rachel Bronson  
President  
*Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*

John Tierney  
Executive Director  
Council for a Livable World

Aftab Siddiqui  
President  
Dallas Peace & Justice Center

Hans Kristensen  
Director, Nuclear Information Project  
Federation of American Scientists

Diane Randall  
Executive Secretary  
Friends Committee on National Legislation

Derek Johnson  
Executive Director  
Global Zero

Elizabeth Beavers  
Associate Policy Director  
Indivisible

Ryan Costello  
Policy Director  
National Iranian American Council (NIAC) Action

Jay Coghlan  
Executive Director  
Nuclear Watch New Mexico

Glenn Carroll  
Coordinator  
Nuclear Watch South

Paul Kawika Martin  
Senior Director, Policy and Political Affairs  
Peace Action (formerly SANE/Freeze)

Jeanette Gottlieb  
President  
Peace Corps Iran Association Board of Directors

Cletus Stein  
Convener  
The Peace Farm

Jeff Carter  
Executive Director  
Physicians for Social Responsibility

Tom Collina  
Director of Policy  
Ploughshares Fund

Robert K. Musil  
President & CEO  
Rachel Carson Council

Marylia Kelley  
Executive Director  
Tri-Valley CAREs

Lisbeth Gronlund  
Senior Scientist & Co-Director, Global Security Program  
Union of Concerned Scientists

Carly Brook  
Nuclear Weapons Abolition Organizer  
Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility

Stephen Miles  
Director  
Win Without War

Caroline Dorminey  
Policy Director  
Women's Action for New Directions