A/T CON – America Superpower

By Tabitha Sleeger

**U.S. Allies do not support No-First-Use Policy**

*Paul Sonne, Gordon Lubold and Carol E. Lee 2016. (Sonne – Reporter at The Wall Street Journal. Lubold - Pentagon reporter, The Wall Street Journal. Lee – Reporter at the Wall Street Journal and White House correspondent) “‘No First Use’ Nuclear Policy Proposal Assailed by U.S. Cabinet Officials, Allies” Wall Street Journal. April 12, 2016.* [*https://www.wsj.com/articles/no-first-use-nuclear-policyproposal-assailed-by-u-s-cabinet-officials-allies-1471042014*](https://www.wsj.com/articles/no-first-use-nuclear-policyproposal-assailed-by-u-s-cabinet-officials-allies-1471042014)

The possibility of a “No First Use” declaration—which would see the U.S. explicitly rule out a first strike with a nuclear weapon in any conflict—met resistance at a National Security Council meeting in July, where the Obama administration reviewed possible nuclear disarmament initiatives it could roll out before the end of the president’s term. During the discussions, Mr. Kerry cited concerns raised by U.S. allies that rely on the American nuclear triad for their security, according to people familiar with the talks. The U.K., France, Japan and South Korea have expressed reservations about a “No First Use” declaration, people familiar with their positions said. Germany has also raised concerns, one of the people said.

**No President Has Ever Supported No-First-Use**

*Rebeccah Heinrichs 2020 (Senior Fellows at the Hudson Institute) “Reject 'No First Use' Nuclear Policy | Opinion” Newsweek. August 24, 2020* [*https://www.newsweek.com/reject-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-opinion-1527037*](https://www.newsweek.com/reject-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-opinion-1527037)

There is an activist effort among nuclear idealists to mobilize public opinion and urge elected officials to pledge to support a policy of "no first use" (NFU). Put simply, an American president who would adopt a policy of NFU would be declaring that the United States will never be the first country to use a nuclear weapon in a war. No doubt these activists were thrilled to see Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden offer an enthusiastic recent embrace of NFU. But his position is not new; at a campaign event last year, Biden confirmed that he has supported NFU for more than 20 years. Reasonable observers may therefore ask: Why hasn't his desire been realized? The reality is that every single American president, Democrat and Republican alike, has rejected an NFU declaration because to do so would invite unacceptable risk that could yield catastrophic war—and for no tangible benefit at all.

**A/T “Trigger Happy” – First Use policy is only used in direst situations**

*John R. Harvey 2019 (Author) “ASSESSING THE RISKS OF A NUCLEAR ‘NO FIRST USE’ POLICY” War on the Rocks (National security for insiders by insiders). July 5, 2019* [*https://warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/*](https://warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/)

Every president since Dwight Eisenhower has viewed nuclear weapons not just as another weapon of war augmenting conventional arms, but as a special kind of weapon to be used only in the direst circumstances when vital U.S. security interests are at stake.

**A/T “America needs to be an example” – Other countries will not follow suit**

### Dominic Tierney 2016 (a professor of political science at Swarthmore College and a former contributing editor at The Atlantic. He is the author of The Right Way to Lose a War: America in an Age of Unwinnable Conflicts.) “Refusing to Nuke First: Why rejecting nuclear preemption reflects strength, not weakness” November 14, 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/09/nuclear-obama-north-korea-pakistan/499676/>

Viewed through a strategic—and perhaps more cynical—lens, the no-first-use doctrine also has a huge credibility problem. For the U.S. pledge to truly matter, a president who otherwise favors a nuclear first strike would have to decide not to press the button because of this policy. But in an extreme national crisis—one involving, say, North Korean nuclear missiles—a president is unlikely to feel bound by America’s former assurance. After all, if a country is willing to use nuclear weapons, it’s also willing to break a promise.

**Invites Unwanted, Strategic Non-nuclear Attacks**

### Rebeccah Heinrichs 2020 (Senior Fellows at the Hudson Institute) “Reject 'No First Use' Nuclear Policy | Opinion” Newsweek. August 24, 2020 <https://www.newsweek.com/reject-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-opinion-1527037>

First, adopting an NFU policy invites a strategic non-nuclear attack against the American people, our allies and our interests. An NFU declaration broadcasts to America's enemies that they can proceed with a chemical weapons attack on U.S. forces and their families, can proceed with a biological attack on an American city and can proceed with an overwhelming conventional attack against critical U.S. assets, all without fear of nuclear retaliation. Any would-be enemy could carry out an infinite number of attacks short of a nuclear attack, while the NFU-endorsing U.S. president assures their safety from our nuclear weapon arsenal.

**Weakens U.S.**

### Keith B. Payne 2016 (Keith Payne is President and co-founder of the National Institute for Public Policy, a nonprofit research center located in Fairfax, Virginia. At National Institute, he directs and participates in studies on U.S. strategic policy and force posture issues, arms control, BMD, and Russian foreign policy.) “Once Again: Why a "No-First-Use" Policy is a Bad, Very Bad Idea” July 6, 2016 Real Clare Defense. <https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2016/07/06/once_again_why_a_no-first-use_policy_is_a_bad_very_bad_idea_109520.html>

The fatal flaw of the warm and progressive-sounding NFU proposal is that it tells would-be aggressors that they do not have to fear US nuclear retaliation even if they attack us or our allies with advanced conventional, chemical, and/or biological weapons. They would risk US nuclear retaliation only if they attack with nuclear weapons. As long as they use non-nuclear forces, a US NFU policy would provide aggressors with a free pass to avoid the risk now posed by the US nuclear deterrent.

**China and Russia pose a threat and a reason for Nuclear First Use**

### Rebeccah Heinrichs 2020 (Senior Fellows at the Hudson Institute) “Reject 'No First Use' Nuclear Policy | Opinion” Newsweek. August 24, 2020 <https://www.newsweek.com/reject-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-opinion-1527037>

An NFU policy is especially unwise now, while the United States contends with not one, but two major power threats. Both Russia and China are expanding their military capabilities and have acted in ways that demonstrate their willingness to attack sovereign nations and redraw borders. Of the two, China poses the single greatest threat to America's national security and way of life. General Secretary Xi Jinping and his Chinese Communist Party (CCP) are now in the midst of a rapid modernization of their military. China has the most diverse missile force on the planet, and has launched more ballistic missiles for testing and training than the rest of the world combined. Nor has Beijing neglected its nuclear capabilities—although their efforts are furtive, we know the CCP is investing in a large force, with delivery systems capable of launching nuclear weapons. Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency Lt. General Robert P. Ashley, Jr. said in 2019 that the intelligence community believes China is likely to "at least double the size of its nuclear stockpile in the course of implementing the most rapid expansion and diversification of its nuclear arsenal in China's history." The number commonly cited for China's stockpile is around 300. But it is plausible that there are actually many more than 300, as one highly credible former government official confided to me.

**A/T “Current Policy is Vague” – Ambiguity is good for deterrence**

### Keith B. Payne 2016 (Keith Payne is President and co-founder of the National Institute for Public Policy, a nonprofit research center located in Fairfax, Virginia. At National Institute, he directs and participates in studies on U.S. strategic policy and force posture issues, arms control, BMD, and Russian foreign policy.) “Once Again: Why a "No-First-Use" Policy is a Bad, Very Bad Idea” July 6, 2016 Real Clare Defense. <https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2016/07/06/once_again_why_a_no-first-use_policy_is_a_bad_very_bad_idea_109520.html>

The Obama Administration reportedly is seriously considering adopting a “No-First-Use” (NFU) nuclear policy. A prospective NFU policy would be a US commitment never to be the first to use nuclear weapons—as opposed to existing policy that retains some ambiguity regarding when and if the US would use nuclear weapons. An NFU policy would eliminate that ambiguity for US adversaries. It sounds warm and progressive, and has long been a policy proposal of disarmament activists. NFU has, however, been rejected by all previous Democratic and Republican administrations for very sound reasons, most recently by the Obama Administration in 2010. The most important of these reasons is that retaining a degree of US nuclear ambiguity helps to deter war while adopting an NFU policy would undercut the deterrence of war.

**Ambiguity helps against current enemies and helped in WWII**

### Keith B. Payne 2016 (Keith Payne is President and co-founder of the National Institute for Public Policy, a nonprofit research center located in Fairfax, Virginia. At National Institute, he directs and participates in studies on U.S. strategic policy and force posture issues, arms control, BMD, and Russian foreign policy.) “Once Again: Why a "No-First-Use" Policy is a Bad, Very Bad Idea” July 6, 2016 Real Clare Defense. <https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2016/07/06/once_again_why_a_no-first-use_policy_is_a_bad_very_bad_idea_109520.html>

How so? Under the existing policy of ambiguity, potential aggressors such as Russia, China, North Korea or Iran must contemplate the reality that if they attack us or our allies, they risk possible US nuclear retaliation. There is no doubt whatsoever that this risk of possible US nuclear retaliation has deterred war and the escalation of conflicts. In fact, the percentage of the world population lost to war has fallen dramatically since US nuclear deterrence was established after World War II. That is an historic accomplishment.