

August 4, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

Thank you for your courageous leadership on nuclear weapons issues. Your visionary Prague speech is the most important statement on this issue since the fall of the Berlin Wall. We were particularly pleased that you called for "an end to Cold War thinking" and declared that the United States will "reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy" and "seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

Now is the time to ensure that your administration's Nuclear Posture Review fully reflects your intentions.

In our view, a new U.S. nuclear weapons policy that meets the criteria you laid out in Prague would include these four principles:

1. The United States maintains nuclear weapons for the sole purpose of deterring the use of nuclear weapons against the United States or its allies.
2. The United States is eliminating the requirement that its nuclear weapons be capable of a rapid launch in response to a nuclear attack, and will not develop or exercise plans for such rapid launches. Instead, the United States will develop and exercise plans that allow the President to delay a nuclear response for days, and change U.S. operational and deployment practices accordingly. The United States will make Russia aware of this new policy, and urge it to make similar changes in its policy and practices.
3. A total U.S. stockpile of 500-1,000 nuclear warheads, including both strategic and tactical and deployed and non-deployed weapons, is sufficient for today's international security conditions, and would advance progress toward a world free of nuclear weapons by opening the way to multilateral nuclear arms reduction negotiations.
4. The United States will not develop or produce newly designed warheads, or modify existing warheads for the purpose of creating new military capabilities. To maintain a reliable, safe, and secure nuclear arsenal, the United States will continue to conduct a nuclear weapons surveillance program, assess the performance of non-nuclear components, and periodically repair or replace these components as part of life extension programs. During the life extension process, the United States will strictly limit changes in the nuclear explosive package.

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As you said in Prague, "We cannot succeed in this endeavor alone, but we can lead it, we can start it." We stand ready to help you in that effort.

Sincerely,

Ambassador George Bunn
Former U.S. Ambassador to the International Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and former General Counsel to the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency

Matthew Bunn
Associate Professor at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, former adviser to the Office of Science and Technology Policy

Lt. General Robert G. Gard, Jr. (USA, ret.)
Former President, National Defense University

Richard Garwin
IBM Fellow Emeritus at the Thomas J. Watson Research Center, and long-time government advisor on nuclear weapons, science, and security policy

Morton H. Halperin
Senior Advisor, Open Society Institute-Washington, DC, and former director of policy planning staff, State Department*

Jeffrey Lewis
Director, Nuclear Strategy Initiative, New America Foundation

Jan Lodal
Chairman, Lodal and Company, and former principal deputy under secretary of defense for policy and senior staff member of the National Security Council

Tom Schelling
Distinguished University Professor, School of Public Policy, University of Maryland, and 2005 Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics

John Steinbruner
Director, Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland

Frank von Hippel
Professor of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, and former assistant director for national security in the White House Office of Science and Technology

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cc: Vice President Joe Biden
The Honorable Antony Blinken, National Security Adviser to the Vice President
The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State
The Honorable Susan Rice, Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations
The Honorable James B. Steinberg, Deputy Secretary of State
The Honorable Ellen Tauscher, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security
The Honorable Rose Gottemoeller, Assistant Secretary of State for Verification, Compliance, and Implementation
The Honorable Robert J. Einhorn, Special Advisor for Nonproliferation and Arms Control
The Honorable Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense
The Honorable William J. Lynn III, Deputy Secretary of Defense
The Honorable Michèle Flournoy, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
The Honorable James Miller, Principle Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
The Honorable Michael Nacht, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs
Mr. Bradley H. Roberts, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Ballistic Missile Defense Policy
Rear Adm. Philip Davidson, Deputy Director for Strategy and Policy, Joint Staff J-5 Directorate
The Honorable Steven Chu, Secretary of Energy
The Honorable Daniel Poneman, Deputy Secretary of Energy
The Honorable Thomas D'Agostino, Under Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Security and Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration
General James L. Jones, USMC (ret.), Assistant to the President for National Security
The Honorable John Holdren, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology
The Honorable Thomas E. Donilon, Deputy National Security Advisor
Mr. Barry Pavel, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Defense Policy and Strategy
Mr. Gary Samore, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Counterproliferation Strategy