

No First Use

Resolve to Prevent the First Use of Nuclear Weapons by the United States

H.3211 (Rep. Higgins); S.2165 (Sen. Jehlen) malegislature.gov/Bills/191/SD1302

Why focus on First Use of Nuclear Weapons?

Using even a “small” Hiroshima-sized nuclear weapon will cause tens of thousands of civilian deaths -- this is not to be forgotten or overlooked. There is always the danger that first use by the United States escalates into a more general nuclear war. For example Russia, and likely other countries, have had automated launch systems (“dead-hand systems”) for responding to a nuclear strike in order to deter attacks.



What is “Nuclear Winter”?

A nuclear exchange would cause “Nuclear Winter”, where enough smoke and debris is lifted into the atmosphere to severely block out sunlight. According to Alan Robuck’s figures, just .0003 of the current world arsenal would cause a “mild” Nuclear Winter where 1 billion people would die in the first month. A general nuclear exchange could cause crops to fail worldwide for multiple years, starving to death most of the human population. Even if just the US fired most of its 6,000+ nuclear weapons, this would bring on some level of Nuclear Winter, threatening to kill much of the world’s population -- including us!

We came very close to a general nuclear war, and likely Nuclear Winter, during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. Many of us believe Nuclear Winter to be the biggest near-term threat to extinguishing most human life.

But doesn’t everybody know that the United States wouldn’t start a nuclear war?

No! Daniel Ellsberg, who was a leading US strategic war planner, documented 25 times that the US explicitly threatened a nuclear attack against various countries. For example, President Nixon had decided to use nuclear weapons on Vietnam, but the two- million-strong Vietnam Moratorium (a general strike by another name) on October 15, 1969 caused him to change his mind. (Daniel Ellsberg, *The Doomsday Machine / Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner*, 2017)

Would “taking nuclear weapons off the table” make us safer?

Yes! The fear of a United States nuclear attack makes an adversary more likely to fire their own weapons – both nuclear and conventional – in times of crisis so they aren’t destroyed by a US first strike.

Moreover, if a country sees a false warning of a US incoming attack, they are less likely to launch if the US has a credible No First Use policy.

How will passing this resolution help?

It calls upon Federal officials not to initiate the use of nuclear weapons, and for Massachusetts members of Congress to attach such legislation to any appropriate Congressional bills.

Massachusetts Peace and Justice Network



info@masspeaceaction.org ● 617-354-2169 ● 11 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138