

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

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SL: 76 Years Ago Today

The Takeaway:

- Today marks the 76th anniversary of the U.S. bombing of Hiroshima. In honor of this tragic remembrance, this week's Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief explores some key issues in the fight to make sure that nuclear weapons are never used again.
- Billions in spending on new nuclear weapons, an arms race with China and Russia, successes on New START, failures on Open Skies, First Use, Sole Authority — these, and more, are some of the key battlegrounds in the struggle against nuclear weapons.
- But this issue is about more than policy specifics. It's about peace. It's about safety. It's about justice — justice, especially, for the BIPOC who bear the brunt of the suffering of the use of these terrible weapons.

The Fight For A Nuclear Weapon-Free World

76 years ago today, at 8:16 am local time, the United States dropped a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. An estimated 70,000 people were instantly killed. Three days later, 40,000 more were added to that nightmarish toll when the United States dropped a second bomb on Nagasaki. All told, hundreds of thousands of lives were taken.

This week, Win Without War joined 120 organizations in calling on the Olympic Committee to hold a moment of silence in memory of the victims of that [atrocity](#). For our part, we will honor their memories in the same way we do every day: continuing to struggle for a nuclear weapon-free world.

No Money for New Nukes

One key battle in that fight is going on right now as a part of the annual appropriations and authorization processes. Last week, we [explored](#) at length how the Senate Armed Services Committee voted to increase the Pentagon budget by \$37 billion. One thing we didn't mention is that they also gave their full support for funding for dangerous new nuclear weapons programs. One, the so-called Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) program is an expected \$268 billion program to completely overhaul and replace existing Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs). That's right, instead of drawing *down* the U.S. nuclear arsenal, Congress, in alliance with the defense industry, is on track to spend hundreds of billions of dollars to [make new ones](#).

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And over in the Department of Self-Owens: SASC *also* [signed off on](#) plans to develop nuclear sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCM-N). Beginning with George Bush Sr., four successive presidential administrations agreed that arming conventional Navy ships with nuclear-armed cruise missiles is both unnecessary and dangerous. Then came Donald Trump, who revived the program. And now, despite having the chance to kill it, it risks moving forward under President Biden. Earlier this year, we joined more than 70 organizations calling to [cancel](#) this program instead.

The good news: the House energy and water and defense appropriations bills (where the money is spent, as opposed to where the programs are authorized) [do not include money](#) for SLCM-N. And over in the Senate, while appropriators unfortunately funded this weapon, they did so with the [caveat](#) that the administration must certify that there are “operational requirements” for them. In other words, with significant grassroots pressure and allies in key places, we may yet be able to keep this weapon out of the nuclear arsenal.

Only Diplomacy Can End an Arms Race

Recently, [news broke](#) that the government of China appears to be significantly expanding its number of nuclear silos. Unsurprisingly, this sparked a wave of fearmongering and calls for hostile action from the expected sources in the nuclear weapons lobby, Congress, the media, and beyond. Let’s be clear: this is not a good development, by any means. But it’s also no reason to start running to the ramparts. The United States has a vastly larger nuclear arsenal and China has had nuclear weapons for decades. This development doesn’t present an immediate threat. Moreover, we’ve seen time and again that other countries actually develop their nuclear arsenals in *response* to perceived threats from others, including the United States. Aggressive rhetoric, China-bashing, building new weapons of our own — not to mention our refusal to commit to not launching a “[first strike](#)” — are perfect fuel for an arms race that leaves us all less safe. If there’s one thing we know from the history of nuclear proliferation, it’s that our best threat to mitigate any threat of nuclear weapons use from other countries like China is to stop the [new Cold War](#) posturing and focus on diplomacy toward [mutual weapons reduction](#) instead.

A Spotty Record

While the developments on the Hill and China revelations have brought these critical nuclear weapons issues to the headlines, they’re not the only ongoing fights. Here’s a quick rundown of some key areas — in some progress has been made, in some, it’s been lost, and in all, the struggle continues on:

- **New START** — In February of this year, President Biden made the right choice to extend the [New START agreement](#), which commits the United States and Russia to mutual limits on their nuclear arsenals, by five more years. And in more positive news, the administration is working to [restart discussions](#) with Russia.

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- **Amb. Jenkins confirmed** — The esteemed and skilled [Under Secretary Bonnie Jenkins](#) is now at the helm of State's Bureau of Arms Control and International Security.
- **National Atomic Veterans Day** — President Biden's [declared](#) July 16 as National Atomic Veterans Day. It's a symbolic but welcome recognition of the U.S. service-members who suffered as a result of U.S. nuclear arms detonations.
- **Open Skies** — In November 2020, Trump [withdrew](#) from the Open Skies Treaty that had built transparency and reduced tensions between the U.S., Russia, and Europe for years. Shamefully, President Biden has so far decided to stick with Trump on this one.
- **No First Use** — As its name implies, "[No First Use](#)" is a commitment that the United States would never use a nuclear weapon *first*, either as an initial attack, or as an escalation in an existing war. Biden has, rightfully, declared [his support](#) for No First Use in the past. But to translate that support into policy, Biden may need [a push](#).
- **Sole Authority** — The Trump presidency is [all the evidence](#) we should need that the authority to use the most deadly weapons ever invented in human history should not be held by the president alone. While grassroots movements and [leaders in Congress](#) have fought to end "sole authority," so far, not much has changed under Biden.

One chance to make progress on many of these issues, and others, comes in the form of the Biden administration's ongoing "Nuclear Posture Review" — an assessment and review of U.S. nuclear policy by the new administration. Last month, 22 members of Congress sent [a letter](#) calling to use this review as a chance to make the world safer from the threat of nuclear weapons.

A Simple Question

GBSD, SLCM-N, Sole Authority, Posture Review — it's easy here to get lost in the weeds of esoteric nuclear policy. But at its core, the issue here is basic. We have weapons that are designed to wreak untold destruction; that have already killed hundreds of thousands; that could, without exaggeration, end the world as we know it. Should we be making it more, or less, likely that those weapons will be used?

We know our answer. And we look forward to working with you as we fight to make it a reality.

Telling Their Stories, Fighting for Justice

One key question that often gets lost in the policy discussion on nuclear weapons is: who bears their deadly burden? The answer to this is unequivocal: Black people, Indigenous people, and other People of Color — from the "Downwinders" who still [suffer](#) the fallout of nuclear testing in the United States, to the Indigenous Marshallese who were [forced](#) from their land to make way for nuclear testing in the Pacific, to the Japanese — and even [U.S.](#) — civilians who [experienced](#) the atrocities at Hiroshima and Nagasaki themselves. Nuclear issues are racial justice issues. We invite you to read the stories of these survivors, in their own words, [here](#).

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These survivors are not only fighting to keep alive the memory of the devastation caused by nuclear weapons, but have long been at the forefront of the fight for peace and justice. From the Trinity site Downwinders demanding [reparations](#), to the uranium workers calling for [compensation](#), to the Hibakusha's appeal for a [nuclear ban treaty](#) — we follow the leadership of the victims and survivors of nuclear weapons as they struggle for justice and a nuclear weapons-free world.

BURIED LEDES

This week, **the Senate Foreign Relations Committee [brought](#) us one step closer to doing what should have been done long ago: repealing the outdated and dangerous 1991 and 2002 AUMFs.** Now, the Senate must follow suit.

This coming [Monday](#) is International Day of the World's Indigenous People. Nuclear testing, anti-Indigenous [coups](#), trade agreements that [destroy](#) Indigenous livelihoods — this is a reminder that U.S. foreign policy is an Indigenous rights issue.

Speaking of how U.S. foreign policy and white supremacy: **“It's time we finally talk about how racism [drives](#) U.S. policy toward Iran.”**

Last month's protests in Cuba received a great deal of attention from commentators in the United States — some genuine, much... not so much. But **“if the US really cared about freedom in Cuba, it would [end](#) its punishing sanctions.”**

One other source of human rights violations in Cuba that got little attention last month: the continued existence of the Guantanamo Bay detention center. This week, **75 members of Congress sent [a letter](#) to President Biden calling to finally close Guantanamo Bay.**

Let's be clear: no one is doubting that there are serious challenges between the United States and China. But **let's also remember the [dangers](#) of “threat inflation.”** The last thing we need is another Cold War.

Abortion is a right. Here or abroad. It's time we act like it. **[Read Reps. Schakowsky and Lee on their “Plan to Address this Critical Moment for Reproductive Freedom.”](#)**

U.S. weapons have long flowed into and spread violence in Mexico. Now, Mexico plans to sue. (Are we the only ones getting a certain “oh, how the tables have turned” sense of justice from that?)

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Siberian [heatwaves](#). Gulf stream [collapse](#). The Amazon at a [tipping point](#). Your weekly reminder that the climate crisis is here. And it will take radical change to prevent it from getting worse.

And finally, **enjoy the most dramatic [minute](#) in Olympics history** (and remember to breathe).