



# **OPPORTUNITIES FOR SANER NUCLEAR POLICIES UNDER THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION**

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## WORKSHOP GOALS

- ▶ Overview of key opportunities to make progress in 2021
- ▶ What Biden and Congress are saying and should do
- ▶ Brief review of the political challenges ahead
- ▶ Ideas and discussion about the solutions we can propose and do to advance Back from the Brink Campaign goals

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# KEY DECISIONS AND DEBATES ON NUCLEAR POLICY IN 2021

- ▶ Key White House decisions and debates in the Congress this year will create vital opportunities for change.
- ▶ Strong public pressure is needed to achieve progress on:
  1. Revamping the costly nuclear modernization plan and budget.
  2. A nuclear posture review that could lead to a NFU policy.
  3. The start of U.S. talks with Russia on deeper nuclear arms cuts.
  4. A forward-looking disarmament action plan at the NPT RevCon.

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## 2021 OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Biden's election opens up possibilities for moving U.S. nuclear policy in a saner direction and getting the disarmament process on track. In 2020, Biden said:

*"As President, I will restore American leadership on arms control and nonproliferation as a central pillar of U.S. global leadership.*

*I will strengthen our alliances to keep the American people safe from nuclear and other global threats.*

*And I will work to bring us closer to a world without nuclear weapons, so that the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are never repeated."*

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# PERPETUAL CHALLENGES

- ▶ But the forces of the nuclear status quo remain strong. Republican and Democrats are part of the problem.

**Sen. Jon Tester (D-Montana) says:**

*He wants to see full modernization of the arsenal, including the new ICBMs, which are partly located in his home state.*

*ICBMs provide good “bang for the buck” in terms of deterring foreign adversaries.*

**Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wyoming) says:**

*“Our allies have opposed a no first use policy in part because it would cripple America’s nuclear umbrella.*

*This nuclear umbrella has upheld peace and security for decades.”*

*“America and her allies simply cannot afford further cuts or delays to our aging warheads and delivery systems. Any such cuts would amount to unilateral disarmament.”*



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# OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE “BACK FROM THE BRINK” GOALS

## ▶ 1. Reshaping the Costly Plan to Replace the U.S. Arsenal

### What Biden Has Said

The United States “does not need new nuclear weapons” and my administration “will work to maintain a strong, credible deterrent while reducing our reliance and excessive expenditure on nuclear weapons.” – 2019

### What Biden & Congress Should and Can Do

- ▶ Reevaluate excessive \$1.5 trillion, 25-year plan; pursue cost-effective, saner alternatives.
- ▶ Pause the new ICBM program (a.k.a. GBSD), cut Trump additions to the plan, phase-out ICBMs.
- ▶ ACA recommended cuts would save \$83 billion through 2030; freezing GBSD at 2021 spending level would save \$1 billion this year alone.

### Challenges to Overcome

- ▶ Narrow D-majority requires pressure on moderate Ds, leadership by POTUS, party unity.
- ▶ “ICBM Caucus” is strong; our D allies must unify, and we need to get moderate D support.

### Action Steps

- ▶ Contact MoCs in support of saner alternatives, pause GBSD program; phase-out ICBMs.
- ▶ Support forthcoming Markey/Khanna bill on GBSD; Van Hollen/Courtney bill on SLCM-N.

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# OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE “BACK FROM THE BRINK” GOALS

## ▶ 2. Renouncing Option of Using N-Weapons First

### What Biden Has Said

“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.” – 2017

### What Biden & Congress Should and Can Do

- ▶ As part of new nuclear policy review, “operationalize” Biden’s 2017 statement on NFU.
- ▶ Members of Congress can privately and publicly support adoption of a NFU policy.

### Challenges to Overcome

- ▶ Resistance to change inside administration and in Congress are powerful.
- ▶ U.S. allies will be nervous and will likely resist adoption of a NFU policy.

### Action Steps

- ▶ This is a presidential decision, but we can contact MoCs to call on Biden to adopt NFU; we can encourage support for Rep. Smith-Sen. Warren bill when and if re-introduced.

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# OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE “BACK FROM THE BRINK” GOALS

## ▶ 3a. Pursuing Agreements to Cut and Eliminate N-Arsenals

### What Biden Admin. Has Said

“ [We] will use the time provided by a five-year extension of the New START Treaty to pursue with the Russian Federation ... arms control that addresses all of its nuclear weapons. We will also pursue arms control to reduce the dangers from China’s modern and growing nuclear arsenal.”  
– Sec. State Blinken, 2021

### What Biden Should and Can Do

- ▶ Deliver a high-level speech on U.S. goals; start regular, sustained talks with Russia by July.
- ▶ Re-up concept of 1/3 cut in current arsenal; agree to restrict missile defense; address tactical nuclear weapons; and agree to “non-deployment” freeze of INF systems.

### Challenges to Overcome

- ▶ Negotiations unlikely to begin until mid-2021, and they will be complex and difficult.
- ▶ No forum, other than “P5 Process” to engage in talks with China, U.K., France.

### Action Steps

- ▶ Urge MoCs to urge POTUS to achieve progress on in disarmament agenda.
- ▶ Urge President Biden to deliver speech reaffirming support for pursuit of world without nuclear weapons and pursuit of talks to achieve much deeper U.S. nuclear reductions.



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# OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE “BACK FROM THE BRINK” GOALS

## ▶ 3b. Agreements to Eliminate N-Arsenals: the NPT & TPNW

### What Biden Admin. Has Said: Not Much Yet

**On the NPT:** “The United States is committed to advancing the nonproliferation and disarmament goals of the NPT.” – Sec. State Blinken, 2021

**On the TPNW:** Nothing yet.

### What Biden Administration Should and Can Do

- ▶ State Dept. should detail U.S. disarmament and NPT goals; start talks with Russia.
- ▶ Reject negative Trump rhetoric on TPNW and adopt a more conciliatory approach.

### Challenges to Overcome

- ▶ NPT consensus very difficult to achieve; review conference may be delayed.
- ▶ No forum, other than “P5 Process” to engage in talks with China, U.K., France.

### Action Steps

- ▶ Urge Biden, in speech, to reaffirm support for world without n-weapons and a forward-looking action plan on disarmament steps at NPT RevCon.
- ▶ Recognize N-war cannot be won must never be fought, and welcome TPNW as good faith effort to achieve common goal of all nations.

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## 2021 ACTION STEPS TO ADVANCE “BACK FROM THE BRINK” GOALS

1. Call on MoC to demand pause of new ICBM program (a.k.a. GBSB), cut new Trump additions, phase-out ICBMs.
2. Contact MoCs to urge them to urge Biden to adopt NFU.
3. Urge MoCs to call on Biden to immediately begin talks to achieve much deeper cuts in Russian and U.S. arsenals.
4. Urge Biden speech supporting world without nukes, a new NPT action plan on disarmament, welcoming TPNW.

**THANK YOU! ITS DISCUSSION TIME ...**



# FOR MORE INFORMATION

*Nuclear Challenges for the New U.S. Administration: The First 100 Days and Beyond*, Jan. 2021

[www.armscontrol.org/reports](http://www.armscontrol.org/reports)

“Enough Already: No New ICBMs” by Daryl Kimball in *Arms Control Today*, March 2021

[www.armscontrol.org/act/focus](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/focus)

*US Nuclear Excess* report and web site

[www.usnuclearexcess.org](http://www.usnuclearexcess.org)

“Getting Back on Track to Zero Nuclear Weapons,” by Carol Giacomo  
in *Arms Control Today*, July/August 2020

<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2020-07/features/getting-back-track-zero-nuclear-weapons>

“A Turning Point in the Struggle Against the Bomb: The Nuclear Ban Treaty Ready to Go Into Effect,” by Daryl Kimball in *Just Security*, Oct. 27, 2020. On the TPNW and the NPT RevCon.

<https://www.justsecurity.org/73050/a-turning-point-in-the-struggle-against-the-bomb-the-nuclear-ban-treaty-ready-to-go-into-effect/>

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