Weapons of Mass Debating
A Topic Proposal

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**Resolutions**

**Resolution A:** Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce the size and/or role of its arsenal(s) of weapons of mass destruction.

**Resolution B:** Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce the size and/or role of its arsenal(s) of biological, chemical, cyber, nuclear, and/or radiological weapons.

**Resolution C:** Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially change the size and/or role of its arsenal(s) of weapons of mass destruction.

**Resolution D:** Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

**Resolution E:** Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially change its nuclear weapon strategy.

**Resolution F:** Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially change its nuclear weapon policy.
Introduction • Timeliness • Interest

Weapons of mass destruction have been creating exciting policy debates for decades yet they have only been the subject of two high school resolutions (2001-2002 and 1964-1965). Debates with nuclear war and great power war impacts are not enough: students need to debate how to address the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These debates and skills students would have could not be more timely or engaging. Consider a few examples from the past year that showcase the interest in weapons of mass destruction debates and how they will feature new yearly controversies.

First, North Korea. This past summer saw the slow-burning fire of North Korea fueled and fanned with a few tweets and tests that captured public attention and earned large media attention. Ella Nilsen from Vox news cites, “a new poll ... shows 82 percent of Americans say they are afraid of nuclear war with North Korea....63 percent of voters polled believe the US is now likely to take nuclear action against [North Korea]” (Nilsen, 2017). Furthermore, the tensions with North Korea thrust multiple weapons of mass destruction threats into the minds and lives of Americans. Harriet Sinclair from Newsmax references an NBC News poll where, “[adults] were divided on the type of attacks that pose an immediate threat to the U.S: Thirty-four percent said they were concerned about terror attacks, while 32 percent feared nuclear action and 31 percent worried about cyber attacks” (Sinclair, 2017). This shows that concerns over North Korea have also brought concerns over other weapons of mass destruction issues to the forefront of peoples’ minds – this paper’s first draft was finalized when Hawaii received false signals that they were under a missile attack!
Second, Presidential comments. The nature of America’s use, understanding, and role of weapons of mass destruction is frequently debated at all levels of government, often initiated by 140-character ideas from President Trump. Jennifer Hansler from CNN writes, “President Donald Trump said that he just wants to have the US nuclear arsenal in "tip-top shape," pushing back on a report that he wanted to increase the stockpile tenfold. "I want modernization and total rehabilitation," Trump told reporters” (Hansler, 2017). Madeline Conway from Politico quotes John Tierney, the current executive director of the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, and his concern at this type of policymaking, “It is dangerous for the President-elect to use just 140 characters and announce a major change in U.S. nuclear weapons policy, which is nuanced, complex, and affects every single person on this planet … The potential consequences of changing U.S. nuclear weapons policy so drastically are simply unimaginable” (Conway, 2017). This shows that President Trump’s first term will likely be filled with controversies surrounding competing ideas about weapons of mass destruction policy and that social media, a popular force in students’ lives, will play a large role in communicating government policy and initiating debates.

Third, budget proposals. The next few years will decide the fate of America’s nuclear arsenal. Madeline Conway, again quoting John Tierney, writes, “Current plans already call for spending $1 trillion over the next three decades to modernize and maintain the U.S. nuclear arsenal, which the Pentagon has expressed concern about being able to afford. The President-elect will have to explain why any increase is necessary both financially and strategically” (Conway, 2017). Additionally, America’s approach to biological weapons will also likely change in the coming years. Daniel M. Gerstein from The Hill discusses how new FY2018 budget
changes “would eliminate a Department of Homeland Security laboratory dedicated to countering bioterrorism... The proposal to eliminate this lab without creating replacement capabilities elsewhere could place the U.S. at risk at a time when biotechnology proliferation is increasing access to the knowledge and capabilities for developing bioterror weapons” (Gerstein, 2017). This shows that as the federal government debates changing strategies and spending priorities, weapons of mass destruction issues will continue to evolve and that there will likely be a large body of available research on these competing approaches.

Fourth, treaty commitments. Classic nonproliferation debates have often involved the United States and Russia working together to limit their own arsenals, particularly in the area of nuclear weapons, exemplified by President Obama’s “New START” treaty with Russia (note that New START is up for reauthorization in February of 2021). However, Jonathan Landay and David Rohde of Reuters write, “In his first call as president with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, Donald Trump denounced a treaty that caps U.S. and Russian deployment of nuclear warheads as a bad deal for the United States ... When Putin raised the possibility of extending the 2010 treaty, known as New START ... Trump then told Putin the treaty was one of several bad deals negotiated by the Obama administration, saying that New START favored Russia” (Landay, 2017). Beyond bilateral treaties, there are many multilateral nonproliferation conventions that the United States is party to and unfortunately, many of those institutions are crumbling as well. Bonnie Jenkins, the Perry World House-Brookings Visiting Fellow, in an article titled “The Biological Weapons Convention at a crossroad” writes that, “Every five years, the BWC states parties gather at a Review Conference to discuss the convention’s operation and implementation. The most recent Review Conference, in November 2016, was a
disappointment ... there is no substantive program of work for the next five years.... The treaty is also facing significant challenges amid waning funds [that impact] the ability of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) to do its work” (Jenkins, 2017). This shows that 2020 and 2021 will be major years for determining how the United States approaches nonproliferation and the treaties and institutions necessary to ensure global solutions.
Range • Scope

Weapons of mass destruction debates will be appealing to students all over the country and provide controversies that will interest varsity and novice debaters. This topic can be understood and debated by novice debaters while challenging advanced debaters throughout the country because of its timeliness, literature base, and universal appeal.

Since the topic is discussed so often in the news media, the topic will be interesting and accessible to new debaters who can bring their current events discussions from class into their debates and vice versa. There will be strong affirmative and negative arguments that will be intuitive to new debaters both because of their linear progression and because of their discussion in media that the debaters will be exposed to. These factors culminate in a vibrant literature base that will support straightforward novice debates and more nuanced varsity debates. While the news media will run many stories about weapons of mass destruction, think tanks, dedicated arms control journals, and foreign affairs briefs will also be publishing about the massive changes in weapons policy under President Trump. Finally, weapons of mass destruction have a universal appeal as the high school topic in 2001-2002 and the college topic in 2009-2010 are frequently cited as debaters’ favorite topics for their 8 year careers! That popularity makes sense given the scope of weapons of mass destruction problem areas including nonproliferation, terrorism, international treaties and conventions, alliances, deterrence, and much more.
Quality • Material • Balance

This topic paper was inspired by John P. Caves Jr. and W. Seth Carus’ *The Future of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Their Nature and Role in 2030* in which they say:

“[In 2030] Nuclear weapons are likely to play a more significant role in the international security environment, and current constraints on the proliferation and use of chemical and biological weapons could diminish. There will be greater scope for WMD terrorism .... New forms of WMD— ... cyber weapons will probably be capable of inflicting such widespread disruption that the United States may become as reliant on the threat to impose unacceptable costs to deter large-scale cyber attack as it currently is to deter the use of WMD” (Caves, 2014).

Debates over the use of weapons of mass destruction are not only high quality debates that we want our students to have but they are vital to understand the impact of WMD decisionmaking. Scott Sagan, the Senior Fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, writes that Americans are wildly uninformed and unconcerned about initiating an American war that would kill millions of civilians: “the majority of Americans do not consider the first use of nuclear weapons a taboo, and .... the majority of Americans ... were willing to kill 2 million Iranian civilians to save 20,000 U.S. soldiers.... the U.S. public is unlikely to serve as a serious constraint on any president who might consider using nuclear weapons in the crucible of war” (Sagan, 2017).

A brief discussion on wording here to illustrate the differences between the resolutions proposed. First consider, Resolution A: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce the size and/or role of its arsenal(s) of weapons of mass destruction. This
was the first resolution that inspired this topic, similar to the Caves and Carus quote above. It prompts students to debate about United States’ weapons, while potentially debating about what “weapons of mass destruction” means in an evolving climate. Compare that to Resolution B: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce the size and/or role of its arsenal(s) of biological, chemical, cyber, nuclear, and/or radiological weapons. Here “weapons of mass destruction” is defined as included “cyber” weapons which is perhaps even a step beyond Caves and Carus and would be a major departure from the previous high school weapons topic but would allow students to debate cybersecurity which has been frequently present in the news. Both of these resolutions relied on the premise that the United States could reduce or arsenal of or role of these weapons but there is almost no research on United States strategic planning for the use of biological or chemical threats – or offensive cyber weapons for that matter – because the United States simply does not do that. As a party of both the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the United States does not possess an arsenal of biological or chemical weapons. That led to the next topic, Resolution C: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially change the size and/or role of its arsenal(s) of weapons of mass destruction. This resolution would allow the affirmative to choose to develop those offensive capabilities for those weapons and/or reduce the role of nuclear weapons in United States strategies. This made Resolution C far and away the largest topic on the list but research led to a potential middle ground to debate all of the different weapons issues. Resolution D: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Here the affirmative would be debating proliferation of these
weapons and how the United States could act on those issues. There is a concern that there would be very little for the negative to say against an affirmative that strengthened the BWC and/or the CWC. That led to the next two resolutions, Resolution E: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially change its nuclear weapon strategy, and Resolution F: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially change its nuclear weapon policy. Research indicates that these topics are largely the same as the research, as shown in the definitions section, finds little difference between “strategy” and “policy” when used with “nuclear weapon.” These resolutions are this author’s preferred resolutions as they allow students to debate the easiest, richest, and most salient areas of weapons of mass destruction. Affirmatives would be able to debate the implementation of or the reversal of President Trump’s proposals in his Nuclear Posture Review as well as any other standing nuclear strategies/policies.

The next two sections outline the respective balanced ground provided by the topic to the affirmative and negative. Affirmative and negative arguments were included if they would be usable under most if not all of the proposed resolutions.
Balance: Affirmative Arguments

There are numerous possible affirmatives for weapons of mass destruction and this section will explore possible controversy areas that affirmatives could build cases around. What is so exciting about the weapons of mass destruction topic area is that the affirmatives are so balanced, there are strong arguments for and against possible policy changes. Possible affirmatives such as new START reauthorization/extension, or BWC funds/leadership, and fiscal reductions have all been discussed above. What follows are a few select pieces of evidence on potentially significant affirmative areas.

Please consider that if it is decided that there are too many affirmatives in a single weapons category that that could inform resolution wording – perhaps the topic should just focus on nuclear. Furthermore, if there are affirmatives that stray too far from the mean, they could be eliminated with a resolution wording that listed specific weapons.

It is relevant to explain the methodology behind this research. All of these pieces of evidence are from 2016-2018, were found through google using basic search terms of “United States should” and different topic words, and were on the first or second page of google results sorted from within a year. This was intended to insure that controversy areas were current, and would continue to be timely and relevant for the 2019-2020 academic year. Finally, these pieces of evidence were selected as starting points to begin talking about potential affirmatives and sometimes, what the negative might say against a likely affirmative.

The first affirmative area is for the United States to publically declare a no first use policy (NFU) which would communicate that the United States would never use nuclear weapons before being attacked with nuclear weapons. Different presidential administrations
have explored making such a declaration and NFU is frequently discussed by major think tanks
and seminal nonproliferation experts such as this piece of evidence by Bruce Blair. Please also
note that the literature bears out many different possible NFU affirmative from the bold, classic
proposal Blair outlines to the nuanced, specific proposal of not using nuclear weapons to deter
chemical and biological attacks.


Yet Trump indulges in issuing such threats, and he has unchecked authority to order a preventive nuclear strike against any nation he wants with a single verbal direction to the Pentagon war room. Under the current nuclear strike protocol, he can consult any and all — or none — of his national security advisers, and no one can legally countermand his order. If he gave the green light using his nuclear codes, a launch order the length of a tweet would be transmitted and carried out within a few minutes. I could fire my missiles 60 seconds after receiving an order. There would be no recalling missiles fired from silos and submarines.

I believe the nuclear commanders at all levels would obey such an order, despite deep misgivings about its wisdom and legality. The military’s thorough subordination to civilian control and deeply ingrained attitude of deference to presidential direction; its well-greased and practiced protocols from top to bottom of the nuclear chain of command, geared to carry out his orders quickly (and to pressure a hesitant president to give the order) — as well as widespread ignorance among the rank and file about the dubious legality of striking first — leave little doubt in my mind that a presidential decision to strike a preventive blow, however misguided and reckless, would not be thwarted. It might be opposed strenuously by his advisers if they had a chance to weigh in, but in the end, they would acquiesce.

Which means there is a silver lining in having a president who is unfit to wield absolute power over the fate of the world: It has engendered serious and urgent proposals to strengthen checks and balances on nuclear decision-making. One prominent idea circulating in Congress, spearheaded by Democrats Ted Lieu and Edward Markey, is to require a congressional declaration of war with specific authorization for the deployment of nuclear weapons before a president could order their first use. Other proposals would require a consensus among additional top leaders for either first or second use.
To reinforce these steps, **the United States should officially adopt a policy of no first use** (and educate missileers about the illegality of preventive first use), **eliminate “use or lose” weapons such as the vulnerable silo-based missile force**, and make big improvements in nuclear command-and-control to increase warning and decision time. That, not the weapons, should be the centerpiece of our trillion-dollar program of nuclear modernization.

Please see David E. Sanger and William J. Broad’s 2018 article “Pentagon Suggests Countering Devastating Cyberattacks With Nuclear Arms,” for Trump’s suggestion that nuclear weapons should be used to deter cyber-attacks.

The second affirmative area is the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) which attempt to eliminate all nuclear explosions, namely tests. Again different administrations have flirted with accession but the United States has failed to take necessary action for the treaty to enter into force. While this is an international treaty, this piece of evidence is very clear and concise on how the United States must act to save the treaty and importantly that the affirmative could have multiple approaches to approaching the CTBT.


The fate of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is closely connected to **US attitudes toward the treaty**, which in turn depend upon US perceptions of how the treaty affects US security. There have been wild swings in these perceptions since the treaty was signed in 1996. **Impressive progress has been made in the ability to verify the CTBT in recent years**, both in the International Monitoring System and in the possible use of on-site inspections. **Questions remain in the minds of opponents regarding the treaty’s possible effect on the US nuclear stockpile**, as well as the treaty’s overall relationship to nonproliferation. The new Trump administration will need to decide how to proceed on this crucial piece of unfinished business. **In addition to finally ratifying the treaty, other options are possible.**
The third affirmative area is really a large category of affirmatives of how the United States could change their overarching nuclear strategy which would obviously be part of Resolutions E and F but also most of the other resolutions as well. President Trump has already initiated an overhaul through the Nuclear Posture Review:


This year, the Trump Administration launched a comprehensive re-examination of U.S. nuclear weapons policy. The process, known as the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), will result in a report to the President outlining steps to ensure that “the U.S. nuclear deterrent is safe, secure, effective, reliable and appropriately tailored to deter 21st-century threats and reassure our allies.”

*Every Administration since the end of the Cold War has undertaken similarly comprehensive reviews. The Trump NPR offers a unique opportunity to reassess and re-evaluate some of the wrongheaded assumptions that guide the current U.S. nuclear weapons posture, strengthen U.S. nuclear deterrence, and contribute to building a consensus on the needs for a 21st-century nuclear arsenal.*

The draft of President Trump’s Nuclear Posture Review has already been released and most analysts mark it’s departure from President Obama’s policy. Michaela Dodge wrote an article following up her previous one where she discusses some of the suggestions (which could be implemented as affirmatives under the “change” resolutions or reversed as affirmatives under the “change” or “reduce” resolutions). She writes that it would include: robust modernization program for nuclear delivery systems, development of the Long-Range Stand-Off weapon, tactical nuclear weapon deployment, extending the life of the B-61 gravity bomb, redesigning the F-35 to carry nuclear weapons, investing in preserving dominance of the nuclear triad, developing nuclear-armed sea-launch cruise missiles, stricter enforcement of the Intermediate-
Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, increasing research on new missiles, and abandoning the CTBT.

Dodge concludes:


The 2018 NPR declares the Trump administration’s nuclear weapons policy, but it is just a start. The most important part of any strategy is its implementation. Congress is a coequal partner to the executive branch. It can shape policies through the National Defense Authorization Act or other legislative acts. Most importantly, it provides funding for the nuclear forces—operations and maintenance costs, as well as the cost of implementing all other recommendations of the NPR. Congress also plays an important educational role. It should serve as a venue where nuances of nuclear-weapon policy can be discussed openly and transparently manner.

The fourth affirmative area is the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) which attempts to eliminate the production of fissile material, or material for nuclear explosive devices. Prior to the Obama Administration the United States blocked progress on the treaty but President Obama reversed course and pressed for a renegotiation. This piece of evidence talks about the benefits of the FMCT and how the new U.S. led draft of the treaty is important.


In an effort in January to break the years-long dispute blocking the start of negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Nigeria, the CD president at the time, circulated an informal draft proposal for talks on fissile material issues formulated by the United States and backed by several other governments. To date, the proposal has not obtained the necessary consensus support in the 65-country CD, which is based in Geneva.

The new proposal calls for the establishment of a working group to “negotiate an internationally and effectively verifiable treaty dealing with fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices,” according to diplomatic sources. This formula would allow for talks on a treaty that would not only verifiably halt the further production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, but also take into account existing stockpiles of fissile materials for use in nuclear arms.
The fifth affirmative area is United States cooperation with Russia which could include almost any joint counter proliferation effort begun by the United States. This piece of evidence hints at possible threads that could be pursued for multiple different affirmatives in the nuclear, chemical, and cyber strands of the topic.


Though bilateral and multinational partnerships, Moscow and Washington can develop safer and more secure commercial nuclear technologies. Such work can be done on a bilateral basis, such as through their underutilized bilateral civil nuclear security cooperation agreement, or via regional or multilateral approaches such as the World Association of Nuclear Operators.

Russia and the United States can also collaborate more closely in support of the new IAEA nuclear fuel bank in Kazakhstan. Such multinational nuclear fuel repositories could provide developing countries with reactor fuel in a safer, cheaper, and more secure way than if they tried to develop their own fuel-producing technologies, which can be misused to make nuclear weapons.

When bilateral relations improve, so will the possibility of renewed U.S.-Russian laboratory cooperation on nuclear security and nonproliferation issues.

Fortunately, Russian officials say they are willing to consider the “Action Plans,” adopted without Russia’s presence, at the last Nuclear Security Summit. The Plans offer proposed agendas for the UN, the IAEA, INTERPOL, the GICNT, and the Global Partnership.

Ulyanov suggested, “We are ready to support everything reasonable that was adopted at the Washington Summit.”

The Trump administration should keep an open mind about the international convention to suppress acts of chemical and biological terrorism that Moscow has placed under consideration before the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Even if Washington decides that the proposed convention would add little to existing agreements, U.S. support for the proposal, which is also backed by China and other countries, might catalyze new WMD cooperation. For its part, Russia needs to stop claiming that the United States is supporting chemical terrorism in the Middle East or building biological weapons labs in the former Soviet republics.

Finally, while expanding cooperation on these nonproliferation issues, Russia and the United States should sustain public health collaboration against major natural diseases and keep studying the potential impact of emerging disruptive strategic technologies,
such as cyber and outer space warfare. By doing so, Russia and the U.S. can make the world a safer place in 2017.

The sixth affirmative area is Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) reform which could include almost any modification to the seminal biological weapons treaty. This piece of evidence hints at different threads that could be pursued for multiple different affirmatives either pushing for more BWC members or for specific United Nations or treaty actions.


_The US government should continue to strongly support the Biological Weapons Convention_ and other international efforts that both prevent terrorism and promote the development of a global public health infrastructure.

The cornerstone of biological nonproliferation strategies is the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, commonly known as the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The BWC is the first agreement among nations that declared an entire category of weapons to be off limits. The moral force of the treaty has not prevented all of its signatories from developing biological weapons: For example, the Soviet Union, a signatory to the convention, established an enormous secret bioweapons program during the Cold War, and there are some current signatories that are highly likely to have offensive biological weapons programs. However, no country openly goes against the international norm to display an offensive biological weapons capability.

_This prohibition against biological weapons development should continue to be strengthened with vigorous US support to promote universal adoption of the treaty and with implementation support to other signatories. Other international agreements intended to prevent terrorism, such as UN Resolution 1540, and measures such as the Global Health Security Agenda, which focus donor attention on areas where the global public health infrastructure needs to be strengthened, also should be actively promoted by the US government._ The devastating Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia that killed 11,310 people in 2014-15 should be seen as a harbinger of what could happen again should public health infrastructure not be maintained throughout the world, and what could easily result from a deliberate bioattack.
The seventh affirmative area is Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) reform which could include almost any modification to the seminal biological weapons treaty. This piece of evidence hints at the importance of strengthening enforcement and verification mechanisms for the CWC as well as hinting at possible negative arguments regarding deterrence.


The United States should not — cannot — permit their use, lest they become a normalized and conventional weapon of war. And to the Trump administration’s great credit, the United States demonstrated what we can and should do if they are used. Just as verification is a necessary condition to a useful arms-control deal, so is enforcement. For just as President Obama said in his famous 2009 disarmament speech in Prague: “Rules must be binding. Violations must be punished. Words must mean something.”

Obama proved unwilling to enforce this sentiment, but his successor certainly seems willing.

The U.S. military strike against Syria’s Shayrat Airfield in response to Assad’s most recent chemical-weapons attack was carefully planned, limited in its military objective, and brilliantly executed. It seems to have achieved its desired tactical and strategic outcomes. According to a Pentagon spokesman, Captain Jeff Davis, the attack “severely damaged or destroyed Syrian aircraft and support infrastructure and equipment at Shayrat Airfield, reducing the Syrian government’s ability to deliver chemical weapons.” It also communicated to Syria and every other nation in possession of chemical weapons that the United States has the ability and the will to make it known that any use of chemical weapons is not worth the cost.

Assad and those like him certainly don’t care about “international norms” let alone notions of what civilized nations deem inherently immoral. But they do care that the world not see them as weak, and they care about their own survival. They do care if we embarrass them by showcasing their weakness, and if we threaten their survival by using force. And the more credible the U.S. threat of force is, the less we will have to use it.

The eighth affirmative area is cyber security reform and cooperation which could include almost any action with an allied country. This piece of evidence suggests further
exploration into the Budapest Convention, coordinating allied countermeasures, and also negative arguments about how cyber deterrence is significant.


The U.S. can significantly enhance the effectiveness of its cyber deterrence posture by leveraging its long-standing alliances and international institutions. One of the strongest elements of U.S.-backed deterrence in the Cold War was the establishment and maintenance of largely unified international blocs, underpinned by principles of free trade, democratic values, and mutual defense. 3 These included, for instance, the mutual defense arrangements with Europe via NATO as well as with Japan and the Republic of Korea, which some argue would not have been possible without the high degree of complementary economic and political cooperation engendered in such institutions as the European Community (and then European Union), the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and bilateral arrangements with Japan and Korea. 4 This web of strong alliances and interlinkages amplified adversaries’ perceptions that there would be consequences for aggressive conduct and that these would be serious. It is likely no accident that a focus of recent Russian cyber disinformation campaigns appears to have been to stoke nationalist sentiment in U.S. allies, and to foment cynicism about and skepticism toward international institutions, particularly the European Union. 1 A logical countermeasure to present-day cyber aggression, therefore, is to reinvest in these institutions and to integrate into them robust counter-counter arrangements and capabilities. Wherever feasible, the U.S. should look to undertake its cyber deterrence actions together with allies, which will both isolate and increase the costs for would-be adversaries.

Serious consideration should also be given to the promotion of international partnership to assist U.S. allies and developing nations with cyber security and education. Cyber security is an international problem and will take international partnership and collaboration to solve. Christopher Painter, the former Coordinator for Cyber Issues at the State Department, stated, “International cooperation is critical to cybercrime investigations, which is why the United States has promoted international harmonization of substantive and procedural cybercrime laws through the Budapest Convention [...] and promoted donor partnerships to assist developing nations.” 2 Increased cooperation will assist law enforcement and diplomatic efforts to prosecute cyber crime and/or provide attribution to the national origin of the attackers.
International partnership is essential to address obfuscation and use of proxies by States that engage in hostile cyber activities. It might seem like there are not a lot of Chemical or Biological affirmatives but Caves and Carus say, “Washington further needs to anticipate and prepare for the possible reemergence of chemical and biological warfare as novel and more effective forms of these weapons emerge from rapid advances in the life sciences over the next two decades. Washington should assume that it will ... need to develop a mindset, approaches, and capabilities for recognizing and responding to unknown agent attacks” (Caves, 2014).

Please note the concerns from the previous section that affirmatives related to the BWC and CWC, if those affirmatives were topical under the selected resolution, might be too difficult for the negative to defeat.
**Balance: Negative Arguments**

There are numerous possible negative strategies for engaging the weapons of mass destruction topic and this section will explore possible core generics that the negative could build strategies around. The “reduce” component of those resolutions ensures that disadvantages and counterplans have a clear direction of the topic with which to engage. The “change” component may seem like it creates a much larger resolution but there really are only two courses, reduce or increase and the core negative counterplan arguments will work regardless of the verb and the core negative disadvantage arguments will also likely still apply.

It is relevant to explain the methodology behind this research. All of these pieces of evidence are from the last six years, were found through internet sources without database access, and almost all of them were found in relation to affirmative articles discussed in the previous section. This was intended to insure that controversy areas were current, and would continue to be timely and relevant for the 2019-2020 academic year. Finally, these pieces of evidence are merely starting points to begin talking about potential arguments.

The first negative generic is the deterrence disadvantage which would isolate scenarios as to why decreasing the role/size of WMD would hurt the United States’ ability to deter conflicts.

Justin Anderson and Darci McDonald, at the time of writing both were senior policy analysts at Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), June 2016, “21st Century Nuclear Arms Control: A Framework for the Next Generation of Treaty Negotiations . . . and Treaty Negotiators”, https://www.csis.org/analysis/project-nuclear-issues-journal

Nuclear forces will also remain central to U.S. efforts to extend deterrence against nuclear and WMD-armed adversaries of U.S. allies, and to assure allies they are protected from these adversaries. A significant number of U.S. allies and partners face nuclear-armed states that do not share, or are openly hostile to, their interests. For many of these allies and partners, nuclear threats are close at hand, cannot be fully deterred by the means available to them, and pose an existential threat to their survival.
Many of these states conclude that the best form of protection against nuclear blackmail and attack is provided by the United States extending a “nuclear umbrella” over their territory.

The depth and breadth of assurance requirements, however, is significant, requiring the United States to maintain a robust, visible, and global nuclear force. The force must be robust in terms of its top-to-bottom health, from the assembly of weapons in the laboratory to the continual planning and exercise of nuclear deterrence operations. In recent years, a number of key U.S. allies have taken a keen interest in the vitality of the force upon which they rely for protection against nuclear threats. The force must also be visible (or have the capability of being observable when necessary) to friend and foe alike, providing a tangible demonstration of the United States’ determination to extend the deterrent benefits of its nuclear force to its allies. Furthermore, given the U.S. government’s direct nuclear security guarantees to over 30 states (including members of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance [NATO] and key allies in the Asia Pacific), and the potential need to extend nuclear deterrence to other regions in the future, the U.S. nuclear force is necessarily a global force. It must be global in terms of its reach for potential employment and in terms of the scope of its ongoing deterrent operations (including, for example, aircraft permanently stationed in Europe and continuously present in the Pacific theater).

This is the core of negative ground and negatives could innovate and creatively develop the disadvantage to emphasize different combinations of allies, security commitments, or more. Consider this evidence that very clearly isolates both how affirmatives could link to this position and also potentially link turn this position:


As the United States seeks to further reduce the role and size of its nuclear arsenal, it will be essential to reaffirm the strength and resolve of its extended deterrence commitments. Allies, especially those that feel directly threatened by nuclear-capable adversaries, could grow anxious that the reductions to the U.S. nuclear arsenal signify a fading commitment to their protection.

To assure these allies, the United States should make it clear that the quantity of deployed nuclear weapons is only one aspect of the U.S. commitment to their security. As expressed by the Admiral Cecil Haney, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, during a House Subcommittee on Strategic Forces hearing:

Strategic deterrence in the 21st century is far more than just nuclear, although our nuclear deterrent remains the ultimate guarantor of our security. It includes a robust intelligence apparatus; space, cyber, conventional, and missile defense capabilities; and
comprehensive plans that link organizations and knit their capabilities together in a coherent way.36
This emphasis on the broader aspects of strategic deterrence should be conveyed to allies in need of assurances that the United States’ extended deterrent is still credible and intact. In addition, the United States should keep its allies informed on the strength and validity of its retaliatory capability. A declassified Department of Defense study from 2012 indicated that, even if Russia were to increase its nuclear arsenal well above the New START limit, it would be unable to hold the U.S. second-strike capability at risk, therefore gaining no military advantages.37 This kind of information, in addition to conventional support, can be used to assure U.S. allies that a reduction to the U.S. nuclear force is not equivalent to a reduction in the U.S. ability to protect them.

It is worth noting that while this disadvantage obviously applies to the “reduce” resolutions and affirmatives under the “change” resolutions that do reduce but it would also apply to affirmatives that increase nuclear weapons through the implementation of proposals in the Nuclear Posture Review. Consider this evidence that showcases the current nature of this controversy and shows how both how affirmatives could link to this position and also potentially link turn this position:


“We must look reality in the eye and see the world as it is, not as we wish it to be,” Mattis says, stressing that “in no way does this approach lower the nuclear threshold.” The lower-yield weapons would enhance the credibility of the U.S. arsenal, the review asserts.
"Expanding flexible U.S. nuclear options now, to include low-yield options, is important for the preservation of credible deterrence against regional aggression," the 10-page summary states.
They could also be used to deter large-scale non-nuclear attacks.
"These supplements to the planned nuclear force replacement program are prudent options for enhancing the flexibility and diversity of U.S. nuclear capabilities," the review says. "They are compliant with all treaties and agreements, and together, they will: provide a diverse set of characteristics enhancing our ability to tailor deterrence and assurance; expand the range of credible U.S. options for responding to nuclear or non-nuclear strategic attack; and, enhance deterrence by signaling to potential adversaries that their limited nuclear escalation offers no exploitable advantage."
But arms control advocates caution that broadening the set of circumstances when the U.S. might use nuclear weapons runs the risk of increasing the likelihood of a nuclear conflict. “This is a very dangerous sort of slide where we start to soften up the norm with [respect] to nuclear weapons,” said Beatrice Fihn, director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. “It makes the likelihood of use accidentally or on purpose much more likely.”

Deputy Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan on Friday disputed that argument, which has been widely expressed since a draft of the document leaked last month. At the Pentagon on Friday he argued that the review is a continuation of what U.S. nuclear policy has been since the Cold War. “Some will say that any additional capability, no matter how measured, increases the chances of using on of these weapons,” Shanahan told reporters. “On the contrary, it is the exact opposite.”

Developing lower-yield nuclear weapons allows the U.S. to avoid the “limits” of a “one-size-fits-all” policy and does not grow the nuclear stockpile or break any treaty obligations, Shanahan said. And clarifying “longstanding policy” that nuclear weapons could be used to respond to a severe non-nuclear attack is “stabilizing.”

The second negative generic is the relations disadvantage which could focus on various key relationships between the United States and allies or adversaries, likely Russia and/or China, and how arms measures might upset the balance in relations.


At first glance, the reality of mutual vulnerability might seem to cancel out the relevance of nuclear weapons in U.S.-Russian relations. If both sides can do the most grievous damage to each other under any realistic circumstances, many question whether it is plausible they would ever be used. Yet nuclear weapons do actually play an important and possibly growing role in U.S.-Russian relations, and not merely as a totem of political significance. Rather, there are actually scenarios—some quite cognizable and not implausible—in which nuclear weapons could be brandished in influential ways and even employed in a U.S.-Russian crisis or conflict.12

A first reason stems from perceptions of vulnerability. For the reality is that one of the sides may perceive the other side as being capable of a disarming or at least debilitating first strike, even if that judgment is erroneous. As discussed, this is particularly the case with respect to Russia, which evinces a profound fear that the United States is capable of creating new technologies and exploiting them in ways that would undermine
Moscow’s capability to survive a preemptive attack and launch a penetrating, sizable retaliatory strike. Even if that assessment is exaggerated or mistaken, which it almost certainly is, it has proven very hard for the United States to allay such concerns, despite earnest efforts to do so by senior U.S. government officials in recent years. This difficulty appears to stem, among other factors, from some combination of distrust, Russian paranoia, Moscow’s unwillingness to let Washington “off the hook” politically for its military advances, the necessary concealment of military capabilities as part of the effort to retain or attain military advantage, the difficulties of verification, Moscow’s imperfect early-warning systems, and a U.S. disinclination to bind itself for no real gain. Given this context, Russia, anxious that it may not have the luxury of waiting in the event of conflict (or, even worse, crisis), might feel impelled to posture and ready its forces for quicker and less deliberate employment. Moscow may judge that, should it come to blows with Washington, American capabilities are so great and so rapid in their effect that Russia’s options are too narrow and its time frame for effective action too compressed to allow for a posture designed to provide time for validated ascertainment, communication, and reflection. Russian leadership may assess that U.S. capabilities are so formidable that, if Russia does not strike harshly early in a conflict, it will leave itself supine to defeat. In such conditions the Russian leadership might judge that it must, in the canonical phrase, “use” its nuclear forces for decisive effect or lose them.13
While this type of scenario has long been acknowledged, the advent of new technologies relevant to the nuclear balance and their unpredictable scope and effect may exacerbate pressures toward consideration of usage along these lines. For instance, novel cyberwarfare, space/counterspace, and unmanned and autonomous capabilities may offer the possibility of improving targeting of crucial command and control and early-warning assets, and they may help in targeting delivery platforms as well. The uncertain extent and consequence of the integration of these capabilities may contribute to nervousness on the part of leaderships in crisis or conflict in ways that could contribute to their increased readiness to use their nuclear forces earlier or in larger numbers than in the absence of these new capabilities.14
A second reason that nuclear weapons could be used is that both Russia and the United States are capable of employing these arms in limited and relatively controlled ways. Such more discriminate usage has long been recognized as a potential way to gain value from nuclear weapons beyond threats of general use, the implementation of which would likely be tantamount to suicide. Such limited employment can be contemplated for purely “tactical” or military purposes, for instance in order to redress a deficiency in conventional military capability. Such use can also be contemplated to seek to manipulate risk by communicating in the most credible way—through actual use—that one is prepared to move closer to general war, in the hopes of persuading the other side that further escalation or continuation of its course is too perilous. The North Atlantic Alliance emphasized just such potential forms of employment during the Cold War through its Flexible Response doctrine to attempt to deter the Soviet bloc, especially once the USSR achieved the ability to strike the U.S. homeland during the 1960s.
Today it is Russia that has been more avid in exploring these forms of employment. In particular, Moscow appears to have developed a strategy of “escalating to deescalate” through so-called strategic conventional and, if necessary, nuclear strikes. Russia appears to envision such employment (or threatened employment) as important in the context of a conflict with the United States in which Moscow wants to terminate the war before Washington can bring to bear the full brunt of its superior non-nuclear forces. Just precisely how and when Russia would resort to such a dramatic move is unclear, and may well not be fully clear to Russian strategists and leaders themselves, but what seems evident is that Russia has thought through such an approach, possesses the capabilities to undertake it, and has exercised for its implementation. Meanwhile, the United States also possesses substantial capabilities for limited nuclear operations, though some of these are of diminishing effectiveness in light of improving Russian defenses, and has long planned for the ability to conduct such strikes. It is therefore possible that a limited nuclear war could occur between the United States and Russia, though both sides would need to regard such a conflict as of the utmost danger given the profound difficulties and risks of seeking to control escalation and the fact that both sides can effectively destroy the other.

The third negative generic is the spending disadvantage which could take one of two forms: a funding surplus disadvantage that if the military cuts a specific program that could lead to them funding a different program that is bad or a simple spending disadvantage that if the military modernizes a part of the nuclear arsenal, that would cost a lot of money the government does not have. Representative Adam Smith of Washington has been an outspoken critic of President Trump’s initiative to spend more money on nuclear weapons and is quoted here:


Trump pledged during the presidential campaign to overhaul the nuclear arsenal. He pressed ahead after taking office with an Obama-era strategy to develop, build and field new submarines armed with nuclear missiles; new nuclear-capable bomber aircraft; and a new fleet of land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles. Also in the works is an upgrade of communications systems that enable the president and the Pentagon to command and control the atomic arsenal. U.S. military spending is currently constrained by a 2011 law that caps the annual budgets of federal agencies at predetermined levels. Lawmakers have fashioned
temporary measures to get around the thresholds and boost the Pentagon’s budget above the capped amount, but never to the consistent levels senior military leaders say they need.

Rep. Adam Smith of Washington, the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, said in a statement that the numbers projected by CBO are sobering. “Congress still doesn’t seem to have any answers as to how we will pay for this effort, or what the trade-offs with other national security efforts will be if we maintain an arsenal of over 4,000 nuclear weapons and expand our capacity to produce more,” said Smith, who along with Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Ind., asked for the report.

The fourth negative generic is a large group in itself: condition and consultation counterplans that prioritize a certain relationship over that of the plan.

The fifth negative generic is another group of counterplans: multilateral or bilateral counterplans that do the plan if another country or group also does the plan.

The sixth negative generic is the civil military relations (CMR) disadvantage that if civilians give the military directives to reduce weapons, that will damage the relationship between civilians and the military.

The seventh negative generic is the security kritik that if actions are taken because of perceived threats, that creates a self-fulfilling prophecy.
Definitions

substantially

Means about 30% -

“The Legal Impact of the START I Treaty on the U.S.-Soviet Nuclear Disarmament Process. A legal evaluation of its impact on U.S.-Soviet bilateral nuclear disarmament clearly shows that the START I Treaty constitutes a significant development to this end. Indeed, the fact that both parties are obliged to reduce through elimination and conversion their lethal strategic offensive nuclear arms by approximately 7,000 strategic nuclear warheads, which at the time of the signature of the treaty numbered about 23,000 leads to the conclusion that the START I Treaty requires a substantial reduction in the U.S.-Soviet strategic nuclear arsenals. Despite these reductions, both parties will still have deployed nearly 16,000 strategic nuclear warheads, which are more than enough to destroy not only themselves, but civilization itself many times over in a U.S.-Soviet nuclear war” (Athanasopoulos, 2000).

“The end of the Cold War and the new security situation have made possible the substantial reduction of nuclear weapons, and then complete prohibition and thorough destruction of such weapons. Pushing forward nuclear disarmament process and constantly reducing the role of nuclear weapons in international political affairs and national security policies is of great significance to improve international security environment and promote nuclear non-proliferation process. In this regard, nuclear-weapon states bear special and primary responsibilities. It is out of date to stick to the Cold War mentality, advocate pre-emptive strategy, list other countries as targets of nuclear strike, lower the threshold of using nuclear weapons, and develop new types of nuclear weapons for specific purposes” (Yan, 2005).
Reduce

Reduce is the best term in the context of nuclear weapons –

“There is broad agreement that yesterday’s nuclear doctrines are no longer appropriate for today’s realities. If President Barack Obama wants to fulfill his promise to "dramatically reduce" U.S. and Russian arsenals, restore leadership needed to strengthen the nonproliferation system, and make the elimination of nuclear weapons "a central element of U.S. nuclear policy," he should redefine and radically reduce the role of nuclear weapons.

There is no conceivable circumstance that requires or could justify the use of nuclear weapons to deal with a non-nuclear threat. Given the United States’ conventional military edge and the twin threats of proliferation and terrorism, nuclear weapons are a greater security liability than an asset” (Kimball, 2009).

Contextual definition that discusses different affirmatives –

“What further steps could nuclear weapon states take to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security policies? There are compelling reasons for renewed efforts by nuclear weapon states to reduce the size of their nuclear arsenals and the role of their nuclear weapons. Participants discussed no-first use pledges, the de-alerting of nuclear weapons, the importance of numerical reductions and proposals to consolidate tactical nuclear weapons. Some participants argued that the priority should be those steps agreed at the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences” (Store, no date).

More contextual definitions referencing different affirmatives –
“In his 5 April 2009 speech in Prague, US President Barack Obama promised that ‘to put an end to Cold War thinking, we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and urge others to do the same’. The forthcoming Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), mandated by Congress, provides the administration an opportunity to honour that commitment. To reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategy, however, the next NPR must abandon the long-standing US policy of threatening to use its nuclear weapons first in a variety of military scenarios. This basic step was not taken in the George W. Bush administration’s 2001 NPR, despite its claim to institute ‘a major change in our approach to the role of nuclear offensive forces in our deterrent strategy’ and call to ‘both reduce our dependence on nuclear weapons and improve our ability to deter attack in the face of proliferating [weapons of mass destruction (WMD)] capabilities’. Indeed, the 2001 NPR contradicted these stated ambitions by maintaining that nuclear weapons were still necessary to ‘provide credible military options to deter a wide range of threats, including WMD and large-scale conventional military force’.

Is the threat of the first use of US nuclear weapons still necessary to deter the use of non-nuclear WMD (that is, chemical and biological weapons), and to deter the use of large-scale conventional military force? Or can Washington move toward a policy of no-first-use, limiting the role of nuclear weapons to deter the use of other states’ nuclear weapons against the United States and its friends and allies? Previous analyses of the appropriate role and missions for US nuclear forces, including earlier official nuclear posture reviews, have been too narrow, focusing exclusively on the contribution of nuclear weapons to deterrence and not examining the effects of the American nuclear posture and declaratory policy on the wider set of US and
allied objectives regarding non-proliferation and nuclear terrorism. Because of this focus, previous government and academic analyses have both exaggerated the potential military and diplomatic costs of a no-first-use doctrine and have seriously underestimated its potential benefits. There were strong and obvious reasons why Washington maintained and advertised a range of first-use options throughout the Cold War: NATO faced a massive conventional threat from the Warsaw Pact and the United States and its allies in East Asia were confronted by the Soviet Union, the People’s Republic of China and North Korea. But these options are no longer necessary. Examination of the costs and benefits suggests that the United States should, after appropriate consultation with allies, move toward adopting a nuclear-weapons no-first-use declaratory policy by stating that ‘the role of US nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear weapons use by other nuclear-weapons states against the United States, our allies, and our armed forces, and to be able respond, with an appropriate range of nuclear retaliation options, if necessary, in the event that deterrence fails’” (Sagan, 2009).

Works with size and role –

“An essential means of doing so is an NPT Review Conference next year that sets the world’s major powers on a path to taking concrete actions to reduce the number and role of nuclear weapons in their military postures, and to creating a deliberate process to accomplish elimination of the weapons in the foreseeable future.

That in turn, he argued, would greatly facilitate mobilisation of governments to contain the spread of nuclear weapons and the capability to make them.
“This could make a real difference with respect to Iran and the potential for a further nuclearisation of Middle East politics,” Burroughs said (Deen, 2009).

Size (of its arsenal)

Size means number of weapons –

“The number of nuclear weapons in the world has declined significantly since the Cold War: down from a peak of approximately 70,300 in 1986 to an estimated 14,550 in late-2017. Government officials often portray that accomplishment as a result of current arms control agreements, but the overwhelming portion of the reduction happened in the 1990s. Moreover, comparing today’s inventory with that of the 1950s is like comparing apples and oranges; today’s forces are vastly more capable. The pace of reduction has slowed significantly. Instead of planning for nuclear disarmament, the nuclear-armed states appear to plan to retain large arsenals for the indefinite future.

Despite progress in reducing Cold War nuclear arsenals, the world’s combined inventory of nuclear warheads remains at a very high level: approximately 14,550 warheads as of end-2017. Of these, roughly 9,450 are in the military stockpiles (the rest are awaiting dismantlement), of which more than 3,900 warheads are deployed with operational forces, of which nearly 1,800 US, Russian, British and French warheads are on high alert, ready for use on short notice. Approximately 93 percent of all nuclear warheads are owned by Russia and the United States who each have roughly 4,000-4,300 warheads in their military stockpiles; no other nuclear-armed state sees a need for more than a few hundred nuclear weapons for national security:
The United States, Russia and the United Kingdom are reducing their warhead inventories, but the pace of reduction is slowing compared with the past 25 years. France and Israel have relatively stable inventories, while China, Pakistan, India and North Korea are increasing their warhead inventories.

All the nuclear weapon states continue to modernize their remaining nuclear forces and appear committed to retaining nuclear weapons for the indefinite future. For an overview of global modernization programs, see this 2014 article. Individual country profiles are available from the FAS Nuclear Notebook.

The exact number of nuclear weapons in each country’s possession is a closely held national secret. Despite this limitation, however, publicly available information, careful analysis of historical records, and occasional leaks make it possible to make best estimates about the size and composition of the national nuclear weapon stockpiles” (Kristensen, 2017).

Size is numbers –

“For almost half a century, the world's most powerful nuclear states have been locked in a military stalemate known as mutual assured destruction (MAD). By the early 1960s, the nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union had grown that neither country could entirely destroy the other's retaliatory force by launching first, even with a surprise attack. Starting a nuclear war was therefore tantamount to committing suicide” (Lieber, 2006).

Reduction in size excludes modernization –
“At the same time as we reduce the number of weapons in our nuclear arsenal, we must also refashion it, developing new conventional offensive and defensive systems more appropriate for deterring the potential adversaries we face. And we must ensure the safety and reliability of our nuclear weapons.

Taken together, this "new triad" of reduced offensive nuclear forces, advanced conventional capabilities, and a range of new defenses (ballistic missile defense, cruise missile defense, space defense, and cyber-defense) supported by a revitalized defense infrastructure, will form the basis of a new approach to deterrence" (Rumsfeld, 2002).

role (of its arsenal)

Three roles related to deterrence –

“Within this more flexible portfolio, nuclear weapons are less prominent, but the they play continue to be vital. The policies of successive U.S. administrations have shown a marked continuity in the purposes assigned to nuclear forces. U.S. nuclear forces have served, and continue to serve, to: 1) deter acts of aggression involving nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction; 2) help deter, in concert with general-purpose forces, major conventional attacks; and 3) support deterrence by holding at risk key targets that cannot be threatened effectively by non-nuclear weapons. Because of their immense destructive power, nuclear weapons, as recognized in the 2006 National Security Strategy, deter in a way that simply cannot be duplicated by other weapons. From the beginning, the U.S. nuclear arsenal has defended not only the United States and its military forces, but also, and importantly, U.S. allies in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere. The nuclear forces play in the deterrence of attack against
allies remains an essential instrument of U.S. nonproliferation policy by significantly reducing the incentives of a number of allied countries to acquire nuclear weapons of their own. Nuclear forces continue to be a key element in U.S. alliances with other countries, for example, NATO allies, Japan, South Korea, and Australia. In general, U.S. nuclear forces act as a counterbalance to the military capabilities of hostile states that endanger international order” (Bodman, 2008).

Works well with limitations and allows for negative disadvantage ground –

“The mission(s) and role(s) for nuclear weapons. Should the employment of nuclear weapons be limited to deterring and if necessary responding to nuclear attacks? Or are there other legitimate missions for nuclear weapons, e.g. to preempt or retaliate against the use of chemical or biological weapons attacks? Would the United States ever use nuclear weapons first? What role, if any, exists for tactical nuclear weapons? Does uncertainty over the strategic direction of China or Russia materially affect these questions?” (Cirincione, 2008).

Includes deterrence –

“During the Cold War, the U. S. nuclear deterrent had two basic missions: deterrence of nuclear attack (by threatening swift, effective retaliation), and deterrence against overwhelming conventional attack against North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries by the Warsaw Pact. In the post-Cold War era, the first mission has been updated to include deterrence of attacks that employ other weapons of mass destruction (WMD)” (Bailey, 2007).

use

General definition –
“Those possessing nuclear weapons justify and utilize them as deterrents, albeit by varying approaches. For example, China, which espouses a no-first-nuclear-use doctrine and fields a much smaller nuclear force than Russia or the United States, relies on the threat of retaliatory strikes to deter nuclear attacks upon it.28 Russia and Pakistan, each facing one or more conventionally superior rivals, rely on their nuclear forces to deter large-scale conventional attack as well as nuclear strikes. They accordingly reserve their right to first use and are prepared (or preparing) to use tactical nuclear weapons to defeat superior conventional forces, as well as longer-range nuclear weapons to strike adversaries’ strategic assets.29 During the Cold War, Washington relied on a similar approach to deter what it feared were superior Soviet conventional forces poised to invade Western Europe. Though the United States currently has no conventional military peer, it still reserves the right of first use of its nuclear weapons and accords to those weapons the mission of deterring a wider range of adversary aggression than just nuclear weapon use, but within a narrower range of contingencies and with the explicit goal of further reducing its reliance on nuclear weapons” (Caves, 2014).

Peace, coercion, military –

“The U.S. nuclear arsenal plays three distinct but interrelated roles that presently cannot be fulfilled by any other type of weapon. First, the fundamental purpose of U.S. nuclear forces is political: to preserve peace, prevent coercion, and achieve our national objectives without use of military force. U.S. nuclear weapons help deter attacks from adversaries using all types of weapons of mass destruction. In other words, our objective is to use nuclear weapons politically to prevent our having to use military force. To be effective politically, our weapons must be appropriate to the threat, and the United States must be perceived as having both the
will and the capability to employ nuclear weapons. The deterrent value of nuclear weapons may be affected by their potential for military use, which comprises the second role of U.S. nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons differ from all other types of weapons because of their overwhelming, immediate destructive power. No other existing single weapon can deliver such force. Today’s highly accurate, powerful conventional weapons can indeed threaten some, but not all, strategic military targets. Some targets—such as deeply buried targets where leadership, WMD, or other military targets might be bunkered—can be threatened with destruction only by nuclear weapons. Furthermore, conventional weapons have inherent limitations in their capability to threaten such targets. (See shaded box.) To help deter an aggressor from introducing WMD into a conflict, it may be important that the aggressor understand that there are no protected sanctuaries against potential U.S. retaliation. The third role of the U.S. nuclear arsenal is to help prevent nuclear proliferation by extending our deterrent—the nuclear umbrella. There are several countries which could, with little effort and time, develop their own nuclear weapons but do not because they trust in and rely on the U.S. nuclear deterrent” (Bailey, 2007).

**Weapons of Mass destruction**

UN/CBRN definition –

“For the purposes of this paper, weapons of mass destruction are defined as chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons. While it may seem unnecessary to make this observation, in actuality there are a variety of definitions of WMD in current use.1 Here we
chose to adopt the official United Nations (UN) definition, which is used for disarmament, diplomacy, and arms control treaties:

Atomic explosive weapons, radioactive material weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons and any weapons developed in the future which might have characteristics comparable in destructive effect to those of the atomic bomb or other weapons mentioned above.2

As a practical matter, the UN definition is interpreted as applying to all CBRN weapons even if they are not necessarily lethal. Significantly, this definition originated in the late 1940s to support the UN disarmament agenda by identifying weapons categories that deserved special consideration for elimination or control. So far, the international community has rejected attempts to expand WMD beyond CBRN weapons. Mindful that the UN definition explicitly allows for the possibility of entirely new forms of WMD emerging in the future—that is, other than CBRN—we address the prospects for that occurring by 2030 later in this paper.” (Caves, 2014).

WMD should include cyber –

“As we learned more about the scope of what cyber weapons might be capable of in the future, we concluded that they need to at least be part of the conversation about what will constitute WMD. This arises not because the first-order effects of cyber weapons are necessarily more lethal or physically destructive than other candidates we considered but ultimately dismissed as new forms of WMD. They likely would not be, though the second and third order could be quite substantial in these regards. Rather, it is because the sheer scale of
societal disruption that cyber weapons may be able to inflict by 2030 could have such strategic impact as to provoke strategic-level responses.

Societies in the 21st century will become increasingly vulnerable to forms of disruption, and such disruption may be as strategically important as destruction. They will become more dependent on networked information systems as commercial and governmental entities alike are driven to achieve greater efficiencies. SCADA devices allowing wireless connection, monitoring, and control of virtually every aspect of modern life, including life-sustaining medical implants in the human body, will make modern societies, and the upper socioeconomic strata of developing nations, more vulnerable to information system attack than ever before. As with the life sciences, the rapid pace of change in information technology is expected to accord an advantage to the offense over the defense for the foreseeable future.

If the impacts of large-scale cyber attacks could be so great and our ability to defend against such attacks is so uncertain, it is reasonable to expect that we will become more dependent on the threat of an “overwhelming and unacceptable” response to deter such strikes, as Presidents have long been to deter the threat of traditional WMD attack. As the growing attention being paid to the challenge of “cross-domain deterrence” suggests, such deterrent threats should not be assumed to be limited to retaliation-in-kind. Of course, the effectiveness of such deterrence threats will depend to a large extent on our ability to attribute the source of cyber attacks, a major problem that will demand even greater focus going forward” (Caves, 2014).
Summary

Resolutions: the topic committee is advised to choose between verb phrases of “reduce the size and/or role of,” “change the size and/or role of,” “increase its efforts to prevent the proliferation of,” or “establish a policy substantially limiting the proliferation of”. There is a choice of the object of the resolution being “weapons of mass destruction,” a list of specific weapons, and a single weapon.

Timeliness: counter proliferation policies are constantly evolving with new administrations and emerging world events. We can expect to see changes within this topic area as new policies are drafted and suggested, especially with the 2020 election.

Scope: the topic provides adequate ground on both sides of the debate as affirmatives will have a wide range of subareas to research while the negative will have several core topic generic arguments. Additionally there should be dynamic case debates as most affirmatives will have large literature bases for and against.

Range: the topic will allow for both novice and advanced debaters to expand knowledge and skill. Regional areas and debate leagues could create core topic novice case lists focusing on easily comprehensible affirmatives while more experienced debaters can take advantage of a large literature base that will encourage creative argumentation.

Quality: the debates on this topic will make debaters think about our nation’s arsenals of weapons of mass destruction and hopefully dispel the apathy and misunderstandings related to the use of these weapons. The purpose of policy debate is to train new policy makers and this topic taps into areas of vital concern for our leaders of tomorrow.

Material: the research on this topic will push debaters into journal research, think tank research, web research, while also forcing them to stay informed of current events in the news media. There should never be a lack of material for students to develop their arguments.

Interest: weapons of mass destruction are dangerous, intriguing, and of course interesting and debates over them have entertained and excited the debate community for decades.

Balance: this paper sought to illustrate the potential ground for affirmative and negative arguments. This topic should offer a rare return of a strong core of topic disadvantages that should create a more balanced topic.
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