

Letter to ScoMo, Dutton, Marise Payne re No First Use of Nuclear Weapons

Written by John Hallam
Thursday, 12 August 2021 14:23 -

Â **NO FIRST USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS** **URGING AUSTRALIA TO SUPPORT NUCLEAR NO-FIRST USE POLICIES AND POSTURES**

PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT
HUMAN SURVIVAL PROJECT

Scott Morrison, Prime Minister
Senator Marise Payne, Foreign Minister
Peter Dutton MP, Minister for Defence
cc

Anthony Albanese
Senator Penny Wong
Senators/HoR members
DFAT

Dear Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Defence Minister Peter Dutton MP, and Foreign Minister Senator Marise Payne,

This is to urge the Australian Government to support the adoption by the US Biden administration, of policies of **Â No First UseÂ (NFU)**. Such policies and postures are already, with whatever caveats, in place in India and in China. In both **Â cases**, they seem to be built into actual force structures and postures, the recent flurry of news regarding silos construction in NW China notwithstanding.

Proposals for the adoption of **Â NFUÂ** policies, and their implementation through confidence-building and operational measures, are attracting increasing political, media and public attention.

This is reflected, for example, in an Open letter signed by 1200 prominent individuals including former prime ministers, generals, and diplomats, promoting **Â No First Use**, which was sent to Presidents Vladimir Putin and Joe Biden just prior to their June 16 Summit in Geneva.

http://baselpeaceoffice.org/sites/default/files/imce/articles/2021/open_letter_on_no_first_use_to_presidents_putin_biden_for_the_june_16_summit.pdf

In addition, there are initiatives supporting **Â No First UseÂ** policies in a number of legislative/parliamentary bodies including the US Congress and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

A letter has recently been sent to the Government of Japan, signed by nuclear weapons experts and former US defence secretary William Perry amongst others, urging that Government support the adoption by the Biden administration of a **Â No First UseÂ** policy.

<https://nofirstuse.global/2021/08/10/united-states-experts-call-on-japan-not-to-oppose-a-us-no-first-use-policy/#letter>

DFAT has expressed its concern over the growing risk of nuclear war, whether by deliberate intent, or (far more likely) via madness, miscalculation, malfunction, or malware.

With the Doomsday Clock at an unprecedented 100 minutes to metaphorical 'midnight', closer than it has ever been even in the depths of the Cold War, **Â concern** by DFAT over 'strategic

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stability' is well-placed. Australia must do more to reduce nuclear risks, worldwide and to ourselves.

<https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/current-time/>

In this context, the commencement of strategic stability talks by the US and Russian Governments, and the reaffirmation by Presidents Putin and Biden of the Reagan-Gorbachev statement of Geneva (1985) that 'A Nuclear War Cannot be Won and Must never be Fought' is very welcome.

A letter was also sent to participants in the Strategic Stability talks urging that they prioritise **No First Use**

<http://www.pndnsw.org.au/articles/flashpoints/455-memo-on-no-first-use-to-integrated-strategic-security-dialogue.html>

A wide menu of nuclear risk reduction measures ranging from de-alerting to data-sharing to improved or resumed mil to mil hotlines communication, to avoidance of potentially provocative military exercises with nuclear-capable forces, is on the website of the Abolition 2000 Working Group on Nuclear Risk Reduction.

<https://www.abolition2000.org/en/working-groups/nuclear-risk-reduction/>

In December 2020, that working group wrote to President-Elect Biden with a series of such recommendations:

<https://www.abolition2000.org/en/news/2020/12/25/usa-president-elect-biden-urged-to-take-action-on-nuclear-risk-reduction-and-disarmament/>

As Vice-President Biden said in Jan. 2017, "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." Biden wrote in March 2020 in Foreign Affairs article that: "I believe that the sole purpose of the US nuclear arsenal should be deterring and, if necessary, retaliating against a nuclear attack. As President, I will work to put that belief into practice, in consultation with the US military and US allies." The Democratic Platform he ran on for President also featured NFU.

There are crucial reasons that **No First Use** is the front-runner amongst nuclear risk reduction measures. They apply with equal force to Australia.

It is profoundly in Australia's interest to do what it can to decrease the risk of global or regional nuclear war. **NFU** would not mean an end to 'extended deterrence' only the type of deterrence which the US extends. Clinging to nuclear-war-initiating options simply prolongs and intensifies Australia's exposure to potential

global or regional nuclear war which

poses a critical existential risk to Australia. Nothing is more important than avoiding nuclear war.

There simply cannot

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Â more important geopolitical considerations than this. A First-Use posture does nothing to decrease that risk andÂ manifestlyÂ increases it.

At a very minimum, US ('joint') installations at Pine Gap and Northwest Cape will vanish in the first minutes of a large-scale nuclear confrontation, both because they are direct nuclear targets of the highest priority, and via HEMP. (High Altitude Electromagnetic Pulse).Â It is highly likely that,Â when

further escalation follows,Â

major Australian cities will also be targeted, putting at risk most of Australia's population.Â

No possible interpretation of Australia's national interests can risk such an outcome

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NFUÂ

postures and policies will do much to diminish the probability of this catastrophe. DiscouragingÂ

NFU

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will increase, not decrease, the likelihood of this outcome.

Support forÂ **No First Use**Â as well as for a wide menu of nuclear risk reduction measures, and for the abolition of nuclear weapons are more than profoundly in Australia's interest. They are of existential import for all Australians and for the whole world.

Signed:

(Institutional Affiliations for Identification purposes only)

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