

US NUKE POSTURE REVIEW MAKES GLOBAL THERMONUCLEAR WAR MORE NOT LESS, LIKELY

Written by John Hallam
Sunday, 14 January 2018 13:03 -

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PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT
HUMAN SURVIVAL PROJECT

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The leaked US Nuclear Posture Review, (NPR) already savaged by nuclear disarmament advocates, makes global thermonuclear war more, not less, likely and makes global nuclear arms racing more probable.

Couched in terms of increasing US and global security via nuclear deterrence, it lowers the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons (in the name of giving the US more 'options'), and reverses decades of commitment by a series of US Presidents starting with Ronald Reagan, to lowering the numbers of nuclear weapons in the world.

While a massively costly refurbishment of the US's nuclear weapons production infrastructure was commenced by the Obama administration, this NPR continues that process and suggests that instead of decreases to the US nuclear stockpile, further increases should be contemplated – notably the addition of a 'tactical' SLBM, and the retention of the large (1.2Mt) B83 weapon.

The NPR does nothing to satisfy or meet in any way Congressional and other critics, who suggest that major changes are needed in Presidential authority to launch nuclear weapons. Just days ago, 35 retired missile launch officers wrote a letter in which they opined that President Trump's authority to launch nuclear weapons might lead to nuclear war.

Nor does the NPR canvass demands by many nuclear weapons experts for a 'no-first-use' policy by the US, a policy that might at least persuade China, who already have such a policy, to retain it instead of replacing it by the same high-alert policy that the US itself currently has.

There are no suggestions in the NPR that would reduce the very real risk of false alarms and/or hacking, bringing about an accidental apocalypse – as has nearly taken place on upwards of a dozen terrifying occasions. Lowering of alert status, a move that would do much to reduce such risks, is dismissed as a move that would reduce the options available to the US during a crisis.

The suggested modernisations in nuclear command and control are actually likely to INCREASE the risk of nuclear command and control systems being hacked: One of the reasons for the retention of 'legacy' systems from the '70s and '80s is that in their extreme simplicity they are virtually un-hackable.

The NPR's dismissal of serious policy changes that might either reduce the risk of global thermonuclear war, or further the goal of elimination of nuclear weapons demonstrates contempt for the opinions of the rest of the world, particularly of those 122 nations that recently voted in the UN for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

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The NPR dramatically increases the risk of actual nuclear war – a war that would destroy what we call 'civilisation' in its first milliseconds, and would place human survival in question.

And finally the NPR is likely to persuade other governments – notably those of China and Russia – to increase THEIR emphasis on nuclear weapons, leading to a global nuclear arms race. As Donald Trump himself said 'let it be an arms race, then'. Now he will get one.

Australia should:

- Dissociate itself from this dangerous and destabilising document
- Make its own commitment to global nuclear disarmament as a matter of existential priority and urgency, crystal-clear.
- Support moves to reduce nuclear risk, especially at the upcoming High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament in May, and at the UNSC meeting on WMD on 18 January.
- Sign and ratify the TPNW and vigorously urge others to do likewise.

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