



# FACT SHEET: U.S. NUCLEAR POLICY

## SUMMARY

The United States' role as a major nuclear superpower makes its nuclear posture an important statement to both allies and adversaries. The Trump administration has laid out its nuclear strategy in the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The Trump NPR incorrectly argues that the United States needs more and "more-usable" nuclear weapons in order to deter other countries from using nuclear weapons against the United States. The 2018 NPR also rolls back the United States' commitment to nuclear disarmament: the Trump administration has eschewed multilateral arms agreements like the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and New START. Paired with the 2018 NPR, this strategy pushes the United States and the world closer to the brink of nuclear war.

## BY THE NUMBERS

The FY19 Budget requests **\$24 billion** for the modernization of the nuclear arsenal.

Congress allocated less than **\$130 thousand** for Nonproliferation and Arms Control in Fiscal Year 2019.

Nearly **half** of the world's 14,570 nuclear weapons belong to the U.S.

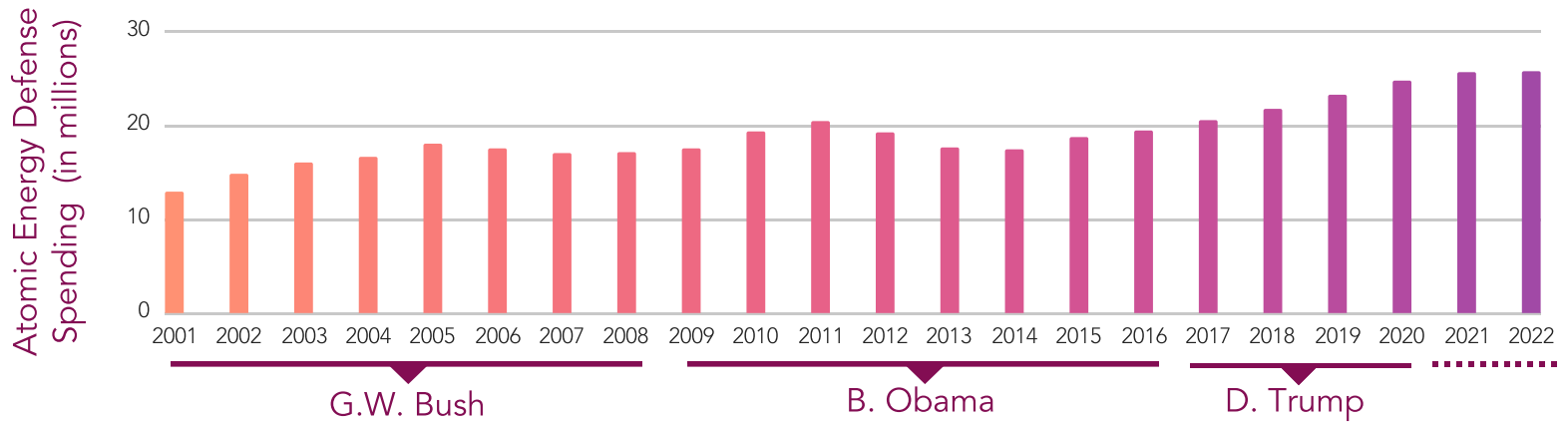
Nuclear-armed missiles on "hair trigger alert" can be launched in as few as **10 minutes**.

About **20%** of the United States' nuclear weapons are currently deployed across the globe.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Nuclear weapons do not make us safe.**  
While proponents of deterrence theory claim that nuclear weapons are necessary to prevent an attack, the reality is that the United States' nuclear arsenal puts us on a path to confrontation.
- 2 The United States' nuclear arsenal costs billions of dollars that could be better spent elsewhere.**  
The U.S. is spending billions to build the first new nuclear weapons since the Cold War. The FY19 budget requested \$24 billion for the modernization of the nuclear arsenal. Prioritizing nuclear weapons takes resources and funding away from peacekeeping and diplomacy efforts.
- 3 Launching a nuclear weapon is far too easy.**  
The 2018 NPR requested four new nuclear weapons systems, including one meant to be "more usable." Alarming, the president does not need congressional approval to launch a nuclear weapon. The lack of checks and balances on a nuclear launch and low threshold for their use is beyond dangerous.
- 4 The U.S. no longer leads on nuclear nonproliferation and arms control.**  
The U.S. has been a key part of arms control agreements for the past several decades. Since taking office, the Trump administration has either withdrawn the U.S. from multilateral arms control agreements or stalled their progress. This is a critically dangerous trend.

## Atomic Energy Defense Spending by Administration

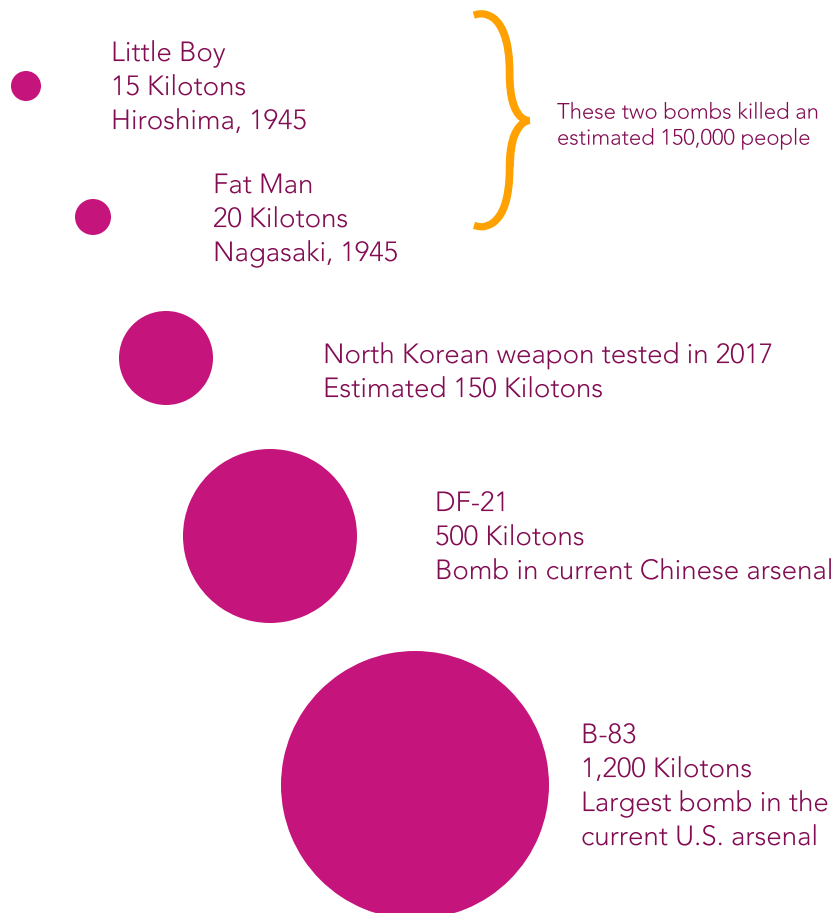


Source: [www.USGovernmentSpending.com](http://www.USGovernmentSpending.com)

## WAND'S VIEW

WAND works tirelessly to reduce the number and role of nuclear weapons in foreign policy. WAND strongly opposes the Trump administration's 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The Trump NPR puts the United States on the road to building the first new nuclear weapons since the Cold War and lowers the threshold for use of nuclear weapons. The Trump administration's nuclear strategy makes nuclear conflict more likely, will waste billions of dollars on unnecessary weapons, and risks escalating global tensions.

### Destructive Power of Nuclear Weapons: Then and Now



## WHAT IS THE NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW (NPR)?

The NPR is a U.S. strategy document that establishes nuclear policy, strategy, capabilities, and force posture. The NPR issued by the Trump administration argues that the U.S. needs more and "more usable" nuclear weapons to deter other countries from using nuclear weapons against the U.S. This nuclear posture review pushes the United States and the world closer to the brink of nuclear war.

The 2018 NPR shifts U.S. policy about the cases in which it would launch nuclear weapons. Under this NPR, the U.S. would consider using nuclear weapons to respond to "significant non-nuclear strategic attacks" which could include cyber or conventional attacks on the civilian population or infrastructure - or that of U.S. allies.

The 2018 NPR also walks back the United States' longstanding leadership roles on arms control and nonproliferation. Reduced funding and lack of action on arms control initiatives demonstrate that this administration is not committed to arms control. The global nuclear weapons risk reduction enterprise is facing significant challenges as a result.



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