

Back from the Brink: Bringing Communities Together to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

We call on the United States to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by:

- actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.
- renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first;
- ending the sole, unchecked authority of any president to launch a nuclear attack;
- taking US nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert;
- cancelling the plan to replace its entire arsenal with enhanced weapons; and

Maine Endorsing Organizations

Health

American Academy of Pediatrics Maine Chapter
Maine Academy of Family Physicians
Maine AllCare
Maine Medical Association
Maine Nurse Practitioners Association
Maine Public Health Association
Physicians for Social Responsibility Maine Chapter

Faith

Allen Avenue Unitarian
Universalist Church
Congregation Bet Ha'am
First Parish Portland
Pax Christi Maine
Portland Friends
The Church of Universal
Fellowship

Maine Municipalities

Bangor
Hallowell
Portland

Peace

Global Network against Nuclear Power & Weapons in Space
Maine Peace Action Committee
Maine Peace Fund
Peace Action Maine
Peace & Justice Center of Eastern Maine
Greater Brunswick PeaceWorks
Veterans for Peace Tom Sturtevant Chapter

Social Justice

Resources for Organizing and Social Change
Elders for Future Generations

Environmental

Maine Rivers
Toxics Action Center

Endorsing organizations and individuals support this effort and have agreed to have their names included in communications to policy makers and in educating the public.

For more information or to endorse, please go to <https://psrmaine.org/2021/03/16/back-from-the-brink/> **or contact PSR Maine directly** info@psrmaine.org.

What is Back from the Brink?

In 2017, 122 nations completed negotiations and adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which calls for the elimination of all nuclear weapons. The US is not one of them.

PSR Maine, in collaboration with PSR National, Union of Concerned Scientists, Veterans for Peace, Sierra Club, Pax Christi, National Resources Defense Council, Hip Hop Caucus and over 400 organizations all over the country, is using the Back from the Brink statement as a tool to educate the public about the urgent humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and to urge elected officials to prevent nuclear war through policy changes and diplomacy.

We call on the United States to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by:

- **actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.**

The United States—like Britain, China, France, and Russia—is already obligated under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to take concrete steps toward eliminating its nuclear arsenal. Most recently, the creation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was approved in July 2017 by 122 countries and has now been ratified by 66 countries. The United States refused to even participate in the negotiating process, exhibiting blatant disregard for most of the world—as well as its own long-standing treaty obligations under the NPT.

- **renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first;**

The United States should renounce its current first use policy. A “no first use” declaration would reduce the incentive for an adversary to decide to use its nuclear arsenal first for fear that it might otherwise be destroyed by the United States.

- **ending the sole, unchecked authority of any president to launch a nuclear attack;**

Presidential sole authority is an artifact of the Cold War, but this system is risky and unjustified; no single individual should be able to make such a momentous decision. The process can be changed to include multiple decision-makers in authorizing the use of nuclear weapons.

- **taking U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert;**

Several hundred missiles (of the U.S. stockpile) in underground silos, are ready to be launched in minutes. Hair-trigger alert or launch on warning allows the US to launch these missiles quickly in response to warning of an incoming attack and can be launched within minutes after a presidential order. This practice increases the risk of a nuclear war starting in response to false alarm, and there have been numerous close calls over the past 40 years as a result of human errors and system failures.

- **cancelling the plan to replace its entire arsenal with enhanced weapons; and**

Over the next 30 years, the United States plans to spend more than a trillion dollars to replace its entire nuclear arsenal and the bombers, missiles, and submarines that deliver them. Such a tremendous investment of money and effort sends the wrong message to the rest of the world by making it clear that the United States continues to see its nuclear arsenal as central to its security and intends to keep it so for the foreseeable future.