

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 13, 2016

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

We applaud the vision that you laid out in your 2009 Prague address to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. Therefore, as your administration reviews potential initiatives to further reduce the danger from nuclear weapons, we write to urge you to adopt a clear policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons.

We are troubled by the current U.S. and Russian launch-under-attack postures, which significantly increase the risk of catastrophic miscalculation and full-scale nuclear war. This problem is exacerbated by our current nuclear weapons policy, which is a dangerous and outdated vestige of the Cold War practice of leaving the nuclear option “on the table” to respond to certain non-nuclear threats to our homeland and our allies.

As you know, were the United States to exercise its contingency plans to use nuclear weapons first in a conflict against a nuclear-armed adversary, a full-scale nuclear exchange could ensue, killing thousands of civilians. For the security and safety of the world, military options that can spiral towards mutually assured destruction should not be on the table.

Shifting to a no-first-use policy is the right thing for today’s 21<sup>st</sup> century security needs. Moreover, this new policy would not undermine our nation’s ability to protect our allies, including Japan, South Korea, and our NATO allies in Europe. The United States has and will retain overwhelming conventional land, sea, and air forces to counter any non-nuclear attack on their territory. Furthermore, given the indiscriminate nature of nuclear weapons, it would be unwise for a U.S. President to use nuclear weapons – for the first time in more than seven decades – to deal with a non-nuclear threat.

A clear no-first-use policy also has a number of benefits, including:

- Reducing the risk of miscalculation by adversaries by alleviating concerns about U.S. intentions.
- Raising the bar for nuclear weapons use by any nuclear-armed state.
- Minimizing the need for “first strike” weapons, including the next-generation nuclear-armed cruise missile and intercontinental ballistic missiles, which could generate significant cost savings and lead other nuclear-armed states to make similar calculations.

Your visit to Hiroshima and pledge to “end the logic of fear” gave the world renewed hope that the United States would take meaningful steps to reduce the nuclear threat. We believe now is the time to make this policy change and urge you to move forward without delay. Thank you in

advance for your consideration and we look forward to working with you in the final months of your administration.

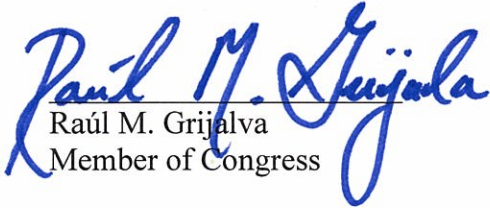
Sincerely,



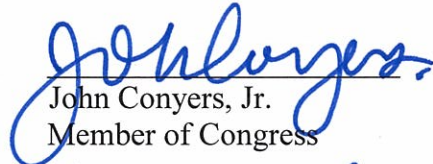
Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



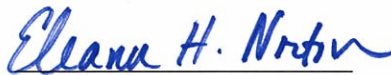
Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



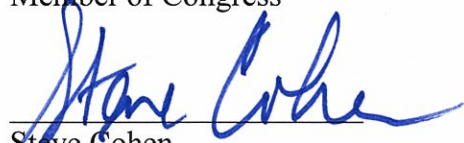
John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress



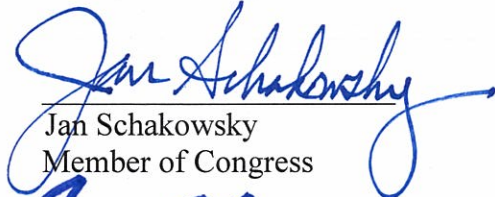
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



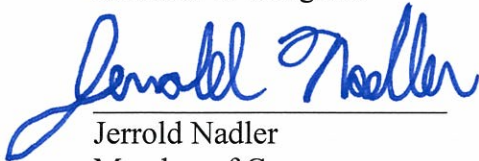
Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



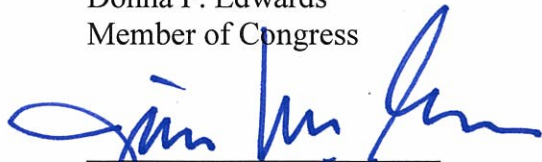
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



Donna F. Edwards  
Member of Congress



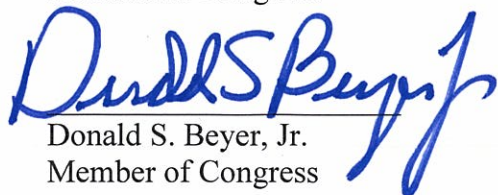
Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



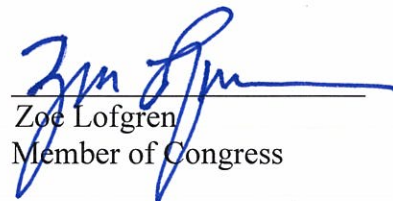
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer, Jr.  
Member of Congress

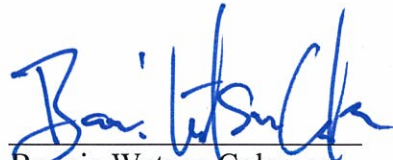


Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress





Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress



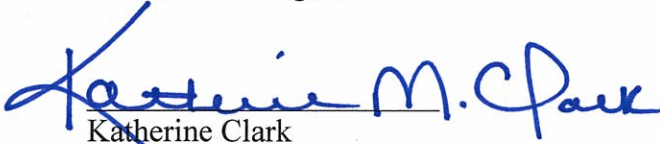
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress



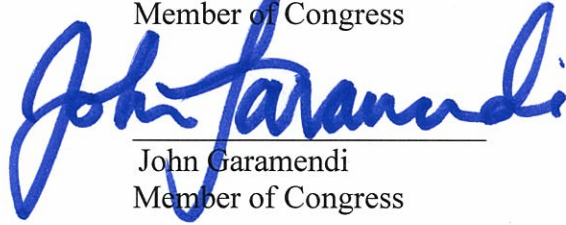
Sam Farr  
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress



Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress



John Garamendi  
Member of Congress