

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write to you as the 2009 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) is being conducted by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Joint Staff. We share your vision of a nuclear weapons-free world, and we hope that the NPR will reflect this vision. As this document will have a significant impact on the direction of our nuclear policy, we hope that your personal involvement in crafting the NPR will help move us closer to the goal of nuclear disarmament.

You have always articulated a clear vision for disarmament, and we commend you for making this a cornerstone of your foreign policy. The drafting of the NPR is an ideal opportunity to advance progress toward a nuclear weapons free world, as the conclusions in the report will guide U.S. nuclear weapons policy for the next five to ten years. In your speech to the U.N. General Assembly, you said that the U.S. "will complete a Nuclear Posture Review that opens the door to deeper cuts and reduces the role of nuclear weapons." We believe there are several areas where the NPR can be effective in promoting steps toward nuclear disarmament by ending Cold War thinking:

Limiting the role and use of nuclear weapons: the posture review should state that the only role of nuclear weapons is to deter a possible nuclear attack by others.

No new nuclear weapons: the NPR should not press for any new nuclear warhead designs. Greater nuclear weapons capabilities are not beneficial to our national security and may undermine international nonproliferation efforts.

Taking U.S. nuclear weapons off of ready-to-launch nuclear status: a change in U.S. policy can help encourage Russia to follow suit.

Deeply reduce the size of our nuclear arsenal: with fewer roles, the arsenal can be reduced to between 500 and 1,000 nuclear warheads as a first step toward global nuclear disarmament.

We agree with you that the existence of more than 20,000 nuclear weapons is a threat to all peoples of all countries. The NPR is an opportunity to continue your commitment to dismantling these dangerous weapons. Past NPRs have maintained Cold War policies; as a result, efforts to reduce our weapons stockpile were stalled. We believe your leadership in the review process will further the agenda you laid out in your Prague speech, and we will work in Congress to push for further progress toward a world without nuclear weapons.

Sincerely,

Pete Stark
Member of Congress

To sign onto the letter please contact Brian Cook in my office (brian.cook@mail.house.gov or 5-5065).