

BACKGROUND ON BACK FROM THE BRINK CAMPAIGN 1-2023



The world currently has over 12,000 nuclear weapons, 90% in the stockpiles of the US and Russia. Most of these are in storage, but approximately 1500 of them in the US and 1500 in Russia are “operationally deployed”.

<https://fas.org/issues/nuclear-weapons/status-world-nuclear-forces/>

Of these deployed weapons, at least 1/3 are on “launch ready” or “high alert” status (also known as “hair trigger alert”). In the US, these include 400 land-based Minuteman land-based missiles and at least 100 submarine-based missiles (each of which carry an average of 4-5 bombs) which can be launched within minutes. Once launched, they cannot be disabled, recalled or intercepted.

<https://armscontrolcenter.org/fact-sheet-the-united-states-nuclear-arsenal/#:~:text=Each%20submarine%20can%20carry%20up,of%2090%20warheads%20per%20submarine.>

<https://armscontrolcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/US-1.pdf>

A single modern nuclear weapon of 300 kilotons could destroy a city the size of Madison and kill over 1/3 of its population.

<https://nuclearsecrecy.com/nukemap/>

Even a limited war involving less than 1% of the world’s nuclear stockpiles could result in the immediate deaths of 20 million people as well as climate disruption leading to agricultural failures and the starvation of 2 billion people.

<https://psr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/two-billion-at-risk.pdf>

President Putin has stepped back from his threats about the use of battlefield nuclear weapons in Ukraine. But the threat of a nuclear attack remains: if a leader feels cornered and desperate, if cyberterrorists gain control of nuclear command systems, if there is an error in human judgement or a flaw in technology leading to unintended launch of a weapon.

American foreign policy experts such as Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, William Perry and Sam Nunn have said that because of these risks, the safest route is to eliminate all nuclear weapons.

The **Back from the Brink** campaign began after the United Nations voted in 2017 for a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). **Back from the Brink** is a nationwide, grass-roots effort to urge the US to embrace the United Nations TPNW and take the following steps to make the world safer:

- Actively pursue a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.
- Renounce the option of using nuclear weapons first (*China has already done this*).
- End the sole, unchecked authority of any U.S. President to launch a nuclear attack.
- Take U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger (high) alert.
- Cancel the plan to replace the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal with enhanced weapons.

The **Back from the Brink Resolution** been endorsed by over 65 US cities and counties and hundreds of elected officials, religious and civic groups.

Speak with your faith community, civic group, environmental group, peace organization, civic leaders and elected officials about endorsing **Back from the Brink**. See <https://preventnuclearwar.org> to sign up your organization. Contact Physicians for Social Responsibility Wisconsin for more information. See <https://psr-wisconsin.org/>

Back from the Brink resolution Co-sponsors:

350 Madison, the Dane County Chapter of United Nations Association, the First Unitarian Society Social Justice Ministry, the Four Lakes Green Party, the Friends Meeting of Madison, the Interfaith Peace Working Group (IPWG), Physicians for Social Responsibility – Wisconsin, Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society Social Action Committee, Progressive Dane, the Raging Grannies of Madison/Dane County, Reverend Franz Rigert, Conference Minister of General Synod of United Church of Christ (UCC passed the resolution at the General Synod in June 2019), Veterans for Peace - Chapter 25, the Wisconsin Network for Peace, Justice and Sustainability and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.