

World War III? Into Uncharted Territory, Trump’s Authority to Use Nuclear Weapons: “Let it be An Arms Race. We will Outmatch Them...and Outlast Them All.”

By [Arms Control Association](#)

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We bring to the attention of GR readers this important text by Daryl G. Kimball, Executive Director of The Arms Control Association

With the inauguration of Donald J. Trump—with his confrontational style, disdain for expert advice, and penchant for Twitter-based policy making—several key foreign policy and nuclear security challenges have become more daunting.



Women leaders from our partner organizations Womens Action for New Directions, Global Zero and others, made the need to avoid a new nuclear arms race and avert nuclear war a concern at the historic Jan. 21 Womens March on Washington.

As commander-in-chief, Mr. Trump now has the authority to decide whether to use nuclear weapons in a crisis, despite entering the White House with no discernable strategy for managing today’s nuclear challenges.

What he has said so far is very troubling.

On [Dec. 22 Trump tweeted](#) that

“The United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes.” When questioned on this the next day in an MSNBC interview, he responded “Let it

be an arms race. We will outmatch them...and outlast them all.”

In the coming weeks and months, there will be policy reviews on nuclear weapons strategy and force requirements; missile defense; and options to deal with Iran and North Korea. This week, [Roll Call reported](#) that a blue-ribbon Pentagon advisory panel has urged the Trump administration to consider making the U.S. arsenal more capable of “tailored nuclear options for limited use.”What does this mean?

Among other things, hard-won nonproliferation and arms control successes secured under past Republican and Democratic administrations will be reconsidered and are at risk.

The U.S. nuclear testing moratorium, the policy against new types of nuclear weapons, the landmark 2015 Iran nuclear deal, and key U.S.-Russian nuclear arms reduction treaties cannot be taken for granted. The danger of possible confrontations over with China in the South China Sea, Iran in the Persian Gulf, North Korea, and even Russia in Europe are even higher.

Our team is working with urgency and determination to defend past gains, strengthen ties with coalition partners, exploit opportunities for progress, and raise public awareness in ways that hold our elected leaders to one of their most important responsibilities: *preventing proliferation and avoiding nuclear catastrophe*.

If you find our efforts important, please [become a member](#) or help us with a [special donation](#) at this critical time. We can't do this without our members and supporters.

Thank you,



Daryl G. Kimball,
Executive Director

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