



Montgomery
County Council

Committee: Directly to Council

Committee Review: N/A

Staff: David Kunes, Chief of Staff, Councilmember Hucker

Purpose: To introduce agenda item – no vote expected

Keywords: #backfromthebrink

AGENDA ITEM #2A

December 3, 2019

Introduction

SUBJECT

Resolution to formally join the “Back from the Brink” campaign that calls on the Trump Administration and the U.S. Congress to exercise global leadership in preventing nuclear war.

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

None

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- Action on resolution. Committee recommendation not applicable.

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

Since July 2017, organizations including the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the Union of Concerned Scientists, Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Federation of American Scientists, and governments including the State of California, the City of Los Angeles, the City of Washington, DC, the City of Baltimore and many others have joined the national “Back From the Brink” campaign to call on the United States to change key policies to reduce the risk of nuclear war.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Every U.S. President from President Reagan to President Obama has worked to reduce global nuclear stockpiles in an effort to ultimately eliminate these weapons. However, the Trump Administration this year announced that it plans to remove the U.S. from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, further risking an expensive nuclear arms race and a dangerous increase in the number of nuclear weapons around the globe.

This report contains:

Resolution text as introduced

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Resolution No.: _____
Introduced: December 3, 2019
Adopted: _____

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsor: Councilmember Tom Hucker
Cosponsors: Councilmembers Jawando, Katz, Albornoz and Glass

SUBJECT: Montgomery County Council Urges the Federal Government to Prevent Nuclear War

Background

1. Montgomery County residents paid an average of \$320 per capita in federal taxes that contributed to the cost of producing, deploying and maintaining nuclear weapons. Maryland taxpayers collectively paid an estimated \$1.47 billion in 2017 federal taxes toward our country's annual cost of nuclear weapons.
2. These tax dollars are spent every day to maintain weapons that should never be used while our Federal government fails to make proper investments in transportation including Metro, safe drinking water and infrastructure.
3. The use of even a tiny fraction of these weapons poses an intolerable risk to human survival with the potential to cause worldwide climate disruption and global famine.
4. A large scale nuclear war would kill hundreds of millions of people directly and cause unimaginable environmental damage, producing conditions wherein the vast majority of the human race would starve and humankind might possibly become extinct as a species.
5. Every U.S. President from President Reagan to President Obama has worked to reduce global nuclear stockpiles in an effort to ultimately eliminate these weapons of mass destruction. However, the Trump Administration announced in October that it plans to unilaterally remove the U.S. from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, further risking an expensive nuclear arms race and a dangerous increase in the number of nuclear weapons around the globe.
6. However, President Trump has repeatedly questioned why we cannot use nuclear weapons and has called for a substantial nuclear buildup. The Trump Administration's Nuclear Posture Review, released on February 2, 2018, manifests a commitment to an increasing and long-term reliance on nuclear arms and lowers the threshold for use of nuclear

weapons, emphasizing the role of such weapons in responding to “non-nuclear strategic attacks.”

7. The Congressional Research Service has projected that the United States could spend at least \$1.2 trillion on nuclear weapons programs and modernization over the next 30 years. This will exacerbate the dangers of nuclear war by fueling a new global arms race and will divert crucial resources needed to assure the well-being of the American people.
8. There is an alternative to this march to nuclear war: In July of 2017, 122 nations called for the elimination of all nuclear weapons by adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons of the United Nations, which would stigmatize and ban nuclear weapons just as chemical, biological and other indiscriminate weapons of war are banned.
9. Since July 2017, organizations including the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the Union of Concerned Scientists, Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Federation of American Scientists, and governments including the State of California, the City of Los Angeles, the City of Washington, DC, the City of Baltimore and many others have joined the national “Back From the Brink” campaign to call on the United States to change its policies to prevent nuclear war.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

The Montgomery County Council joins the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) and the “Back From the Brink” Campaign in calling on the Trump Administration and the U.S. Congress to exercise global leadership in preventing nuclear war by:

1. Renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first;
2. Taking U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert;
3. Canceling the new plan to replace the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal with enhanced weapons;
4. Supporting the U.S. entry into the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and
5. Requiring the U.S. to pursue a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Selena Mendy Singleton
Clerk of the Council