

Nuclear modernization programs threaten to prolong the nuclear era

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In the latest issue of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, published by SAGE, experts from the United States, Russia, and China present global perspectives on ambitious nuclear modernization programs that the world's nuclear-armed countries have begun.

In the latest edition of the Bulletin's Global Forum, Georgetown University professor Matthew Kroenig argues that:

"Failure to modernize would not contribute to disarmament - but more than that, it would be irresponsible. A crippled US nuclear force would embolden enemies, frighten allies, generate international instability, and undermine US [national security](#). In other words, it would risk ruining the world that currently exists. Rather than preparing for an alternate reality, therefore, Washington needs to build the nuclear forces that it needs to deter threats to international peace and security in this reality. This means maintaining a robust nuclear posture and fully modernizing [nuclear forces](#), as planned."

Eugene Miasnikov, director of the [Center for Arms Control, Energy and Environmental Studies](#) in Dolgoprudny, Russia, comments that:

"The real question regarding modernization is how much is enough. Which sorts of modernization would create obstacles to further cuts? Which would be neutral? ... It is up to the American people to decide on the future size of their [nuclear arsenal](#) and how much modernization is required. But it is important to bear in mind that these decisions will

have profound effects on the rest of the world. These decisions might reduce international tensions, which would be conducive to further nuclear cuts. Or they might become a source of additional tension and trust."

And Lu Yin a colonel in China's People's Liberation Army and a researcher at the Institute for Strategic Studies at National Defense University in Beijing, writes that:

"Eliminating [nuclear weapons](#) does not appear feasible at this stage. Modernizations of nuclear arsenals are certain to go forward. But it's possible, and very important, to achieve a balance between [modernization](#) and disarmament. The United States and Russia must take the lead in establishing this balance - first by de-emphasizing nuclear weapons in their national security strategies so that the practical reasons for possessing nuclear weapons can gradually disappear, and second by reducing their arsenals. This would establish trust and set a good example for other nations."

More information: Matthew Kroenig, How best to approach nuclear modernization?: A US response:

bos.sagepub.com/content/71/3/16.full.pdf+html

Eugene Miasnikov, How best to approach nuclear modernization?: A Russian response: bos.sagepub.com/content/71/3/12.full.pdf+html

Lu Yin, How best to approach nuclear modernization?: A Chinese response: bos.sagepub.com/content/71/3/8.full.pdf+html

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