

October XX

Senator Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Shaheen,

We are writing to express our deep concern about the North Korea crisis and the overall direction of U.S. nuclear weapons policy and spending plans. As a member of the Armed Services, Appropriations and Foreign Relations committees you have a unique and critical role, voice and vote on these issues.

We ask you to make these issues a high priority and do all you can to stimulate more thoughtful debate and discussion in the Senate and help build support for policies that reduce the role of nuclear weapons as an instrument of U.S. national security policy.

With regard to North Korea, we urge you to speak out forcefully in support of diplomacy and direct talks with North Korea as the only realistic option for avoiding a potentially devastating military conflict that could lead to nuclear war. We urge you to support your colleague, Senator Cardin's call for a "diplomatic surge." Furthermore, please urge President Trump to dial back the rhetoric and do all that can be done to calm tensions.

We don't believe that the problem is just "bad actors" with nuclear weapons but also the weapons themselves and the fact that we rely on human beings and systems to never fail. President Trump's intemperate behavior and rash judgement clearly demonstrate why no single person should have the ability and sole authority over nuclear weapons. To that end we encourage you to co-sponsor, S. 200, the *Restricting The First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act*, which would require a Congressional declaration of war before any president could order a nuclear first strike.

We are also quite concerned about U.S. plans to re-build the entire US nuclear arsenal at a cost that could exceed \$1 trillion over the next 30 years. A vigorous national debate on the role, value and costs of these proposed systems is needed and hard questions need to be asked – particularly given all of the other critical domestic and national security needs of the nation.

Moreover, we are troubled by reports that the Trump administration as part of its "Nuclear Posture Review" is considering recommending the development of more usable low-yield nuclear weapons and is also threatening to walk away from critical US-Russian nuclear arms control agreements that make the world a safer place.

Collectively, we bring a range of concerns and perspectives to this conversation but share a strong belief that the nuclear threat is increasing and much can be done to prevent a nuclear catastrophe - with potentially grave global human, ecological and economic consequences. Now more than ever Congress has a very critical role to play and we offer our support to you and your colleagues to help stimulate and shape a non-ideological debate, engage more of the public and fashion solutions that reduce nuclear risks and use our national treasure wisely.