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Chuck Watson response to [alternative view from Pavel Podvig published November 8th, 2023](#):

In an interesting coincidence, the respected ex-pat Russian researcher Pavel Podvig published a piece today (November 8th) arguing just the opposite of what I am suggesting here, saying he thought the risk had decreased at least a little recently due to the overwhelmingly negative response to what he and many others perceived as nuclear threats by Russia with respect to Ukraine. (If they were threats, or reminders about the risk of a direct US-Russia confrontation I think is debatable, but that's a longer discussion). All things being equal I would agree with him that the risk has decreased (and I do agree that, in reference to Ukraine, the risk of a nuclear confrontation over Ukraine itself has decreased significantly in recent weeks). However, with all due respect (and I have a lot), while he mentions Russian nuclear doctrine and posture, he does not discuss US doctrine and posture, which in comparison seems to be lowering the nuclear use threshold, especially by the forward deployment of more usable nuclear systems and moving to modernize high-yield, "area" weapons instead of retiring them and/or negotiating their multilateral limitation. Indeed, in the diplomatic realm, we are doing the opposite of risk reduction, moving away from a treaty based arms control framework.

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