



UPDATING U.S. DETERRENCE CONCEPTS AND OPERATIONAL PLANNING

REASSURING ALLIES, DETERRING LEGACY THREATS, AND DISSUADING NUCLEAR “WANNABES”



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The Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Inc. (IFPA), now in its thirty-third year, provides innovative ideas and assesses options and strategies to meet the security challenges/threats of the post 9/11 era. IFPA conducts studies, workshops, and conferences on national security and foreign policy issues and produces innovative reports, briefings, and publications. IFPA's products and services help government policy-makers, military and industry leaders, and the broader public policy communities make informed decisions in a complex and dynamic global environment. With core staff offices in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Washington, D.C., the Institute maintains a global network of research advisors and consultants.

As the Obama administration settles into office, a variety of pressing foreign policy issues and national security challenges require focused attention and innovative thinking. Among the potentially more contentious are those relating to the future of U.S. deterrence planning. Against the backdrop of a global movement to abolish nuclear weapons, beginning with unilateral cuts in the U.S. arsenal, and in view of the looming NATO debate over a new Strategic Concept which will focus in part on nuclear weapons issues, the new administration will be faced with a lack of consensus within expert circles over how best to modernize and possibly reduce further America's nuclear deployments, while retaining crucially-needed infrastructure and expertise. Public opinion in the United States is decidedly mixed about the nuclear "enterprise," with some Americans urging nuclear abolition or at the very least a significant draw-down of operational weapons and deployments, and others maintaining the need to modernize U.S. nuclear forces, as other nuclear nations are doing. Indeed, all the established nuclear powers—with the notable exception of the United States—are modernizing and enhancing their existing nuclear arsenals, while other nations and even non-state actors are expressing new interest in developing or acquiring their own nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities. The reasons for this are varied and complex, and in many cases context specific. Suffice it, here, to note that state and some non-state actors generally seem to aspire to acquire nuclear weapons either to deter existential threats or to create an asymmetrical option to thwart external efforts to impose regime change. In addition, the political shadow that nuclear weapons cast on the international stage and in the regional theater context remains a powerful incentive for leaderships who have decided to cross the nuclear threshold or may be considering their proliferation options. Certainly, both North Korea's withdrawal from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Iran's apparent desire to develop a national nuclear weapons capacity reflect such motivations. Moreover, this nuclear weapons renaissance raises real questions about the wisdom and feasibility of taking unilateral steps to reduce (not to mention eliminate) the U.S. nuclear "footprint" *unless* such measures can be portrayed as necessary to transform the U.S. nuclear enterprise in a way that strengthens the overall basis for American defense and deterrence planning in and for the post-Iraq era.

Even if the goal of a global nuclear ban may be a desirable, long-term objective, the current reality is that nuclear weapons continue to be perceived as a useful means of influencing (and assuring) global and regional security. Indeed, this was the essence of the findings of the bipartisan, Congressionally-mandated commission on the strategic posture of the United States that was chaired by former secretaries of defense James R. Schlesinger and William J. Perry, whose interim report, issued in December 2008, contended that the United States will need a nuclear deterrent for the indefinite future.¹ However, this does not mean that the deterrence paradigm upon which we relied during the Cold War and into the post-Soviet era can or should be sustained without change. Indeed, from IFPA's recent assessments of extended deterrence, non-and counter-proliferation policies, and Allied/coalition partner strategic planning, it is apparent that the United

1 The Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, The Honorable William J. Perry and The Honorable James R. Schlesinger, Chairmen, Interim Report released on December 15, 2008, and found at: http://www.usip.org/strategic_posture/interim.html.

States needs to think more comprehensively about deterrence and the ways in which it can be sustained and operationalized in specific global and regional contexts, going beyond the changes proposed in the Bush administration's Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), released in December 2001, to incorporate innovative thinking about dissuasion, prevention, and crisis management.² As the Obama administration crafts its own NPR, probably sooner than later, it is likely that it will be seeking new ideas to transform and update the U.S. nuclear enterprise, in part to take account of these broader deterrence-planning considerations. It is also probable that the Obama NPR will strive to do so by relying on a smaller number of operational nuclear weapons and a new strategic paradigm that places far greater emphasis on arms control frameworks and cooperative threat reduction (CTR) regimes than did the previous administration.

Two key questions that the new administration will face, in this regard, are whether deterrence, as it has been understood, remains relevant to U.S. security planning, and, if it does, how can it best be implemented to give the President and his Secretary of Defense (i.e., the National Command Authority, or NCA) credible options for meeting and dealing with regional challenges and legacy (nuclear) threats. From our recent work on security planning for a new era, we believe, as do the members of the Perry-Schlesinger commission, that deterrence as a construct remains valid for U.S. security planning, but that its underlying assumptions have changed dramatically since the Cold War, certainly with respect to less than legacy threats, and against the backdrop of the so-called "revolution in military affairs (RMA)." To be fair, the Bush NPR also recognized the need to update U.S. deterrence planning, and it laid out the basis for a new framework consisting of (1) strategic nuclear and non-nuclear forces; (2) active and passive defenses; and (3) a responsive infrastructure capable of adapting quickly to a dynamic security setting. Without question, the Bush NPR was on the right track in recognizing that the assumptions behind U.S. deterrence planning had changed since the Cold War, especially with respect to Allied/coalition partner reassurance, counter-proliferation needs, and requirements for countering the use of non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Until the Bush administration's NPR, deterrence considerations rested largely on coercive concepts, with the threat of overwhelming retaliation using nuclear weapons being the essence of deterrence thought. With its enunciation of a "New Strategic Triad," however, the Bush administration sought to set in place a broader and more credible set of options, incorporating active and passive defense considerations, including consequence management (CM) techniques, into its deterrence framework as a way to move U.S. deterrence planning away from its more single-minded coercive moorings. By including defensive components and recognizing that the widely-held, tacit taboo against nuclear use may end as new nuclear powers come on scene, the Bush NPR was largely trying to strengthen U.S. deterrence planning by establishing a force posture that would complicate enemy attack calculations and send the message that the

2 See: Jacquelyn K. Davis and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., *Iran with Nuclear Weapons: Anticipating the Consequences for U.S. Policy*, An IFPA Assessment, Released in September 2008; and James Schoff, *Deterring Abandonment: The U.S.-Japan Alliance and the Future of Extended Deterrence*, An IFPA Assessment, released in January 2009. Both can be found at the IFPA website at: <http://www.ifpa.org>.

redundancy and survivability of America's critical strategic infrastructure would allow the United States to emerge from a nuclear or other WMD attack able to retaliate and protect its interests.

Yet, while this New Strategic Triad provided a conceptual basis for updating U.S. deterrence planning, in retrospect it did so to some extent at the expense of America's nuclear force posture by embracing the "conventional deterrence" notion embodied in the "Global Strike" concept. As a result, the Bush NPR, perhaps unwittingly, seems to have promoted the view that nuclear weapons and long-range conventional strike forces maybe interchangeable, rather than reinforcing, assets. It is important, of course, to broaden our deterrence-planning framework to embrace credible escalatory options, especially to include non-nuclear strike options, but the tendency among operational planners since the NPR was released has been to emphasize its non-nuclear Global Strike aspects at the expense of nuclear weapons themselves. This non-nuclear emphasis, in turn, has affected not only efforts to modernize the U.S. nuclear arsenal, but also the very notion of deterrence itself. In the 21st century, however, until we find the psychological and moral equivalent to deterrence via nuclear weapons, nations will continue to rely on or seek nuclear weapons to assure their fundamental security. The challenge going forward, then, is to devise an appropriate force structure capable of deterring legacy threats, dissuading regional proliferators, and reassuring regional allies and coalition partners, while maintaining the capacity to mitigate the consequences of an enemy (nuclear) attack and having in hand the capabilities necessary to defeat a nuclear adversary should it come to that.

Moreover, as suggested above, as more nations seek or attain nuclear status, we may very well be entering an era in which nuclear "non-use" is ending. This means that the risk of deterrence failures is growing, and with it questions about the ability of the United States to control the escalation chain in a crisis situation. During the Cold War, escalation dominance was presumed to lie with the United States, or at least that it could be managed in the U.S.-Soviet context because the stakes of escalation were such that both states were putatively deterred from nuclear weapons use (against the other). Today, however, the same may not be true with respect to North Korea and Iran, let alone in the context of a Taiwan contingency, or with respect to India and Pakistan in a crisis over Kashmir. Deterrence failures in the regional context may result from an accident, a deliberate calculation, or the intervention of a third party (e.g., Israel or Taiwan) in a crisis contingency. However, regardless of their origins, the consequences might very well be an escalatory exchange that ultimately draws the United States into a regional nuclear conflict.

COMPOUND ESCALATION AND CATALYTIC WARFARE: KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN U.S. DETERRENCE PLANNING

Without a doubt, deterrence planning is destined to be more complex in the 21st century and to involve numerous players. As such, it may increasingly entail considerations related to compound escalation, which involves the manipulation of seemingly unrelated issues to raise the stakes for an adversary, or catalytic warfare, a term first coined by the late deterrence theorist Dr. Herman Kahn to refer to the "notion that some third party or nation might for its own reasons deliberately

start a war between two major powers.”³ According to Kahn, “the widespread diffusion of nuclear weapons would make many nations able, and in some cases also create the pressure, to aggravate an on-going crisis, or even touch off a war between two other powers for purposes of their own.”⁴ Israel, for example, perceiving an existential threat from Iran, could instigate military action, whereupon Iran, in turn, might retaliate against Israel and broaden the conflict to attack U.S. interests in the region or even America itself, using Hezbollah assets or possibly its own long-range missiles armed with nuclear weapons. Without overstating the likelihood for catalytic warfare along these lines, other possibilities could include contingencies tied to the India-Pakistan rivalry or to cross-strait tensions between China and Taiwan. Each of these cases suggests, moreover, that escalation dominance can no longer be presumed to reside with the United States, as regional actors look to nuclear weapons and/or contemplate their acquisition to provide an asymmetric capability for use against a “regional aggressor” or against the superior (conventional) forces of the United States. For this reason, the art of managing third party expectations and options in a crisis is destined to become a more important aspect of U.S. deterrence planning, and it will require new approaches to reassuring allies and with respect to “signaling” our strategic intent and interests to real and potential adversaries.

4

In this context, there is no question of the need for more innovative thinking on how best to counter Iran’s future capacity to implement a strategy of compound escalation by using nuclear weapons first in a conventional warfare scenario, by widening the scope of violence to target U.S. coalition partners in the region, or by relying on proxy forces using irregular warfare (IW) tactics and strategies. In terms of escalation management, the challenges that a nuclear Iran or an Iran on the brink of acquiring a nuclear capability would present are numerous and complex. The same is true of North Korea, which might decide to use nuclear weapons first in a variety of crisis scenarios. In both instances, however, deterring an adversary from attacking the United States directly may have a better chance of success than efforts to deter it from using nuclear weapons or other WMD against our allies. The obvious purpose of extended deterrence is to reinforce the belief in the mind of the adversary that an attack on an ally is tantamount to an attack on the United States. If the United States *and* the ally became less vulnerable to attack because of a deterrence strategy based on denial, extended deterrence inevitably would be strengthened. Thus, while deterring an enemy attack against the United States itself must remain a central focus of U.S. deterrence planning, other considerations, including the need to dissuade leaderships from taking proliferation decisions in the first place and to reassure anxious allies and coalition partners, remain crucially important elements in U.S. deterrence planning as well, and underscore the particular need for a strategic defense component, composed of active and passive defensive measures and technologies.

It is also quite possible in the current strategic setting that the United States is as likely to be “deterred” as it is to be the one seeking to deter. As noted above, all nuclear nations except the

3 Herman Kahn, *Thinking the Unthinkable*, (New York: Horizon Press, 1962), 57.

4 *Ibid.*, 217

United States are modernizing, and the emergence of new nuclear “wannabes” has the potential to undermine the NPT regime and to open the door to new proliferation-related and operational planning challenges. At the same time, many of these nuclear aspirant nations have the capacity to implement escalation strategies using asymmetric means that are more difficult to detect and/or disrupt, relying, for example, on terrorist actors, such as Hezbollah, to strike at U.S. interests, with plausible deniability being retained by the state sponsor. The key point here is that emerging nuclear powers and legacy (nuclear) challengers (i.e., Russia and China) have options for deterring U.S. nuclear weapons use short of directly threatening the American homeland themselves. China could implement a cyber attack focused on U.S. command and control assets, or using other means, electromagnetic pulse (EMP) technologies, for example, target American intelligence and other satellites in an effort to disrupt the U.S. capacity to respond, let alone identify with certainty the source of the attack. This means that U.S. deterrence planning for the future must consider escalation management and counter-proliferation much more seriously than it has in the past, and with a wider array of deployment scenarios in mind. More specifically, it must plan for contingencies in which nuclear weapons use may in fact occur, but not necessarily as part of an “assured destruction” paradigm.

TAILORED DETERRENCE AND LEGACY CHALLENGES

Crucial to this line of thinking is the notion of tailoring deterrence for different strategic contexts. In other words, as numerous deterrence theorists have underscored, we need to understand the psychology of prospective adversaries and the terrain in which they operate in order to hold at risk those things that are most valued by their leaderships. This is particularly true in the contexts of Iran and North Korea, both of which may seek nuclear weapons to deter regime change and to establish themselves as major regional powers. In each case, deterrence planning requires an in-depth understanding of the political, cultural, religious, and strategic environments within which these potential adversaries operate. This implies as well the need to develop deterrence concepts and force structures appropriate to the unique circumstances of each situation. In the case of non-state actors, targeting the enabling structures of state and other sponsors may provide one avenue for delineating a viable set of deterrence options. Probably just as important, would be the development of a spectrum of capabilities to provide a range of kinetic (i.e., military strike) and non-kinetic (i.e., non-military strike) options to disrupt and/or destroy terrorist networks and related infrastructures. This highlights the need for non-military (as well as military) deterrence tools and for Interagency collaboration in identifying effective options for specific contingencies. In this context, the Department of Treasury’s efforts to “target” Iranian businesses and banking ventures associated with Iran’s nuclear programs are illustrative of the creative use of non-military tools to help dissuade Iran’s (nuclear) weaponization.

Essentially, in recognizing that a “one size fits all” deterrence footprint is no longer adequate to the task at hand, U.S. deterrence planning may need to depart more fully from the long-held assumption that the forces necessary to deter Russia could be used to deter regional actors and challenges emanating from what defense analysts describe as “lesser-included contingencies.” To be fair, the

Bush NPR recognized that fact and provided a conceptual framework for integrating nuclear and non-nuclear options, together with a mix of offensive strike and defensive capabilities, into U.S. strategic and operational planning (i.e., the Combatant Commands' or CoComs' Operational Plans). Indeed, in contingencies involving anything less than “vital” U.S. interests, the idea of using non-nuclear *strategic* capabilities to implement operational strategies makes more sense, especially if such capabilities really do give the NCA viable options—short of the first-use of nuclear weapons—in a crisis situation. And even in the context of legacy threats, strategic Global Strike options make sense, so long as the United States retains as well a credible nuclear force posture that is perceived (by allies and adversaries alike) to be capable of being employed should vital U.S. national interests dictate their threatened or actual use. While the number of contingencies in which the use of U.S. nuclear weapons might be seriously considered may have diminished, it is also clear that some nuclear forces will still be needed to shape the strategic perspectives of leaderships of other states. Notably, in this regard, from our analysis of Allied/coalition partner deterrence requirements, it is apparent that the notion of the U.S. “nuclear umbrella” still is considered critical, and that any American effort to walk away from its “extended deterrence” obligations could possibly foster proliferation decisions in a hand-full of Allied countries (such as Japan) that could “go nuclear” fairly quickly. Turkey remains of a country of concern in this regard as well.

If the notion of tailored deterrence is key to 21st century deterrence planning, so, too, is the recognition that while deterrence must be regionally focused, it must still have global relevance. In other words, how we deal with North Korea will have implications and “lessons-learned” for how we deal with an Iranian leadership on the brink of crossing the nuclear threshold. This is evident from IFPA’s recent assessments of nuclear trends in both countries, as is the fact that U.S. partners and potential adversaries are watching us very closely, and are deriving lessons for themselves from innovations in U.S. defense and deterrence planning. Indeed, there is some evidence that Iran’s pursuit of nuclear weapons follows to some extent from North Korea’s defiance in the Six-Party Talks, and that the Iranian leadership perceives nuclear weapons as one way to deter U.S. attempts to bring down the regime in Tehran. Likewise, as Japan and the United States engage in operational planning discussions about North Korea and Taiwan, Japanese policy elites are striving to assess the degree to which NATO’s extended deterrence experiences and formats—particularly, the deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons on European soil and NATO’s nuclear consultations on an Alliance-wide level—may apply to future U.S.-Japanese security cooperation that might include a more explicit link to forward-deployed U.S. nuclear forces and shared nuclear decision-making. This is occurring, as will be discussed below, at a time when the NATO allies themselves are about to embark on their own new assessment of defense and deterrence planning for the new era, including the ongoing utility of NATO nuclear forces.

ALLIED REASSURANCE: A CRITICAL ASPECT OF NON-PROLIFERATION PLANNING

U.S. efforts to reassure allies and coalition partners of America’s interest in their security remains a cornerstone both of non-proliferation policy and of U.S. efforts to mitigate the consequences

of an adversary's nuclear strike. Central to American efforts in this regard is the extended deterrence guarantee that the United States provides to U.S. allies in NATO and to Japan and South Korea as part of a bilateral treaty commitment to each country. In NATO, this commitment was embodied in the Washington Treaty's collective defense concept (Article 5) and manifested in the forward deployment of American troops for the defense of Europe against a Soviet-Warsaw Pact attack. In so far as nuclear strategy is concerned, this meant the possible first-use of nuclear weapons by NATO if the Soviet-Warsaw Pact attack could not be halted and reversed by conventional means alone. The U.S. extended deterrence commitment to NATO-Europe was also given substance by the peacetime basing of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe and the sharing of the nuclear mission with several NATO-European allies. NATO's nuclear-capable or dual-capable aircraft—DCA, as they came to be called-- remain an integral aspect of the Alliance's concepts of "shared risks" and "burden-sharing."

No such formula was put into place in Asia, which in any case lacked a multilateral framework comparable to that of NATO. Instead, for Japan and South Korea, the U.S. extended deterrence guarantee was explicitly tied to the bilateral U.S. security relationships that were developed with each country and were made manifest in the forward deployment of American forces. As in NATO, these were regarded by their host governments as "trip-wire forces" necessary to ensure the steadfast nature of the U.S. commitment to come to their defense in a crisis, even one where nuclear escalation was possible.⁵ In South Korea, the United States deployed as it still does a sizable contingent of U.S. Army and Air Force troops to deter a renewed North Korean attack and to signal U.S. resolve to escalate to whatever level might be necessary to repel such an attack, thereby underscoring America's extended deterrent commitment to the Republic of Korea (ROK). In Japan, the United States Navy has home-ported one of its aircraft carriers at Yokosuka, while the Marines deployed forces on Okinawa, the Army at Camp Zama, and the Air Force at bases near Tokyo and Misawa, to reinforce the notion of extended deterrence. That said, the extended deterrence concept has not always seemed convincing to U.S. allies, and, were it not for the forward deployment of American troops, the willingness of the United States to put itself at risk to protect Allied interests would probably have been more widely questioned than it has been to date. Nonetheless, despite the fact that some U.S. allies, such as France and Israel, chose to go down the nuclear path themselves, most NATO nations, Japan, and even the ROK, despite

5 The United States deployed nuclear weapons in South Korea for some 33 years, starting in 1958, to deter a North Korean and/or Chinese attack against the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the south. However, in 1977, as part of a Carter administration's Nuclear Posture Review, the American nuclear "footprint" in South Korea was substantially reduced. In 1991, as part of President George Herbert Walker Bush's Nuclear Initiative, all U.S. nuclear weapons were withdrawn from South Korea. The situation in Japan was quite different, first because of its defeat in World War II, and based on its constitution that renounced the production, stationing, and deployment of nuclear weapons on Japanese soil. Nevertheless, when it was still an "occupied" power, the United States deployed nuclear weapons components on three Japanese islands: Chichi Jima, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. They were withdrawn from Chichi Jima and Iwo Jima in 1968, when these two islands reverted to Japanese control, and from Okinawa in 1972, when it also reverted to Japanese control.

putting into place the capacity for exercising a nuclear option should political and/or strategic circumstances change, have been satisfied that they shared with the United States a common threat perception and trusted that the United States would come to their defense if necessary.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, however, that satisfaction and trust is no longer a given, and divergent threat perceptions have given rise to contending approaches to dealing with would-be proliferators and legacy challenges. Consequently, reassuring and discouraging a nuclear cascade of allies, or former allies, has emerged as a crucial element of deterrence planning, and, in the absence of consensus about the nature of the threats that we are facing, that reassurance function has become more complex and subject to more varied interpretations than it was in the past. In the wake of Iraq and in the midst of the Afghanistan war, as the United States endeavors to “reset” its forces and transform its overseas (military) “footprint,” the forward deployment of U.S. troops may not be sufficient in itself to convince American allies that our commitment to extended deterrence remains credible, especially in the case of political differences over preferred ways for dealing with emerging threats and legacy challenges. This, in turn, may lead some U.S. allies or coalition partners to conclude that their interests would better be served by pursuing their own nuclear options. As the *Interim Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States*, previously cited, points out:

Our non-proliferation strategy will continue to depend upon U.S. *extended deterrence strategy* as one of its pillars. Our military capabilities, both nuclear and conventional, underwrite U.S. security guarantees to our allies, without which many of them would feel enormous pressures to create their own nuclear arsenals. So long as the United States maintains adequately strong conventional forces, it does not necessarily need to rely on nuclear weapons to deter the threat of a major conventional attack. But long-term U.S. superiority in the conventional military domain cannot be taken for granted and requires continuing attention and investment. Moreover, it is not adequate for deterring nuclear attack. The U.S. deterrent must be both visible and credible, not only to our possible adversaries, but to our allies as well.⁶

In Europe, divergent threat perspectives with respect to Russia and Iran, two of the key factors influencing NATO consideration of a new Strategic Concept, have divided the Alliance, and are fueling debate over strategy and expeditionary force missions within the broader context of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. In the meantime, the general failure of NATO nations with DCA and nuclear storage responsibilities to fund or implement critical decisions relating to nuclear training, certification, and platform modernization is setting the stage for a more profound Alliance debate about nuclear weapons. If NATO’s Afghanistan mission—the International Security Assistance Force or ISAF—has generated Alliance fatigue over so-called “out-of-area” deployments, at least pertaining to those that are perceived as peripheral to NATO’s core missions, it has also generated debate within the Alliance about what today constitutes an Article 5 collective defense mission

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

and the forces needed to implement it. This is a debate that is only likely to become more extensive in the context of the Alliance's development of a new Strategic Concept, a task most likely to be given to the North Atlantic Council (NAC) by heads of government at the April 2009, 60th anniversary NATO Summit.

For many NATO nations, especially the newer members, as well as the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, the notion of extended deterrence, as delineated in the shared risks associated with NATO's nuclear deployment concept, remains a critical aspect of NATO Article 5 planning. It continues, moreover, to be an important disincentive for nations considering their own nuclear option. However, a number of factors of late have combined to raise questions about the ongoing credibility of extended deterrence—a phenomenon that, as noted above, is not new to deterrence planning, but which can not be papered over as easily as it once could be given the current lack of a solid U.S.-Allied consensus on the nature of the threats we are facing. On the European side, attitudes regarding the utility of nuclear weapons and deterrence are colored by differing views with respect to the challenges presented by Russia and Iran and about the role that NATO nuclear weapons can or should play in opening a new arms control dialogue with the Russians (to address, for example, the issue of Russia's nuclear weapons deployments targeted against NATO Europe).

Reconciling Alliance perspectives on nuclear weapons will not be easy. For most allies, NATO's nuclear weapons remain existential capabilities, whose political importance by far transcends any possible operational value. Deterrence of conventional or nuclear war was the key objective of a NATO force posture that never really came to grips with the operational use of nuclear weapons. The dual notions of a tripwire (conventional) force deployed in Europe and an operational pause before nuclear weapons use continue to inform Alliance thinking about nuclear weapons. However, over time and against the changes that have taken place in the global strategic environment, the idea of using nuclear weapons to defend Alliance interests seems further than ever from the political reality that shapes much of NATO member decision-making. If anything, there is an emerging consensus among the DCA-deploying countries in favor of lengthening operational readiness requirements for nuclear mission platforms. In this context, there is also a new impetus to adopt a more comprehensive vision of deterrence planning in and for the Alliance, with some nations convinced of the need to extend NATO deterrence planning to counter non-nuclear WMD use, and others convinced of the requirement to diversify capabilities and tailor possible response options, along the lines of that suggested by the Bush administration's NPR.

Complicating NATO consideration of the nuclear issue is the need to do so in both the High-Level Group (HLG) framework and in a broader Alliance forum to take into account the perspectives of all NATO nations. Key questions for Alliance leaders in this regard include: What is NATO's new strategic mission, and how can it be framed to have the same kind of politically compelling argument that the notion of shared deterrence did in NATO's earlier history? Some NATO members, such as Turkey and the newer NATO nations, are very clear in identifying Article 5 and nuclear weapons as a core NATO mission. However, delineating Article 5 missions will be

more difficult in the emerging security environment, given the prominence of non-state actor threats, the emergence of new technologies and requirements for waging irregular warfare, and a tendency within Alliance countries to shy away from explicit and concrete discussion of deterrence, nuclear weapons doctrine, and the military concepts of preemption, first-use, and NATO's Flexible Response strategy. Increasingly, according to at least one NATO perspective, it is essential to address these issues and to clarify NATO's declaratory policy so as to reinforce the credibility of the Alliance's deterrence posture. This can only be accomplished, however, if the United States does it first on a national basis, and then goes on to play a leading role in NATO's consideration of the issues involved.

As noted earlier, moreover, the NATO discussion is being followed closely in Japan for its lessons and implications for Japanese defense and security planning. This reinforces the need for a new deterrence framework that is globally relevant and regionally tailored. However, such an effort will create difficulties of its own, as any U.S. re-evaluation of its deterrence framework will have to take into account the diversity of opinion that exists between the Services and the Pentagon's civilian leadership (and within the rest of the Interagency community, to the extent that they still think about such issues) regarding the future role of nuclear weapons deployments in NATO-Europe. Militarily, the missions assigned to these weapons can be undertaken by means other than DCA (including both nuclear and, in some instances, non-nuclear capabilities), but the durability of political arguments in support of NATO's on-shore deployments persists in NATO capitals. The real challenge is to find a solution to NATO's deterrence requirements that fulfills the political function of the current DCA posture, while sustaining the Alliance reassurance function (and, by extension, the non-/counter-proliferation mission) that these deployments also are meant to serve. However, in this context, it is also important to note that the relevance of NATO's nuclear weapons to security and stability in Europe can only be sustained if member governments understand fully the consequences of their choices—something that NATO and Supreme Headquarters Allied Planning Europe (SHAPE) officials question, especially when they see DCA-deploying countries opting out of training and exercises, and backing away from budgetary commitments to underwrite necessary modernizations or to procure new-generation capabilities.

Symbols have always been important to the Alliance and to the concept of deterrence, and for many years the American emphasis on forward-deployed forces in Europe and Asia was seen as emblematic (and proof) of the U.S. extended deterrence commitment. In Europe, the deployment of V and VII Corps Headquarters was perceived as the substance of that commitment, while in Asia the deployment of 100,000 forces was explicitly identified as the key to operational planning and to the credibility of American commitments to Japan and South Korea. The 100,000 level of forward-deployed U.S. forces was considered to be necessary to implement operational plans, but it also had a profound political and psychological importance in relation to counter-proliferation and deterrence planning. Hence, when the Bush administration began to de-emphasize the 100,000-troop threshold in Asia and discount the two major theaters of war (MTW)-construct in 2001, and as U.S. military personnel were moved out of Korea along with

planned re-deployments from Japan and Europe as part of the Pentagon's Global Posture Review (GPR), suspicions of a global U.S. retreat grew in alliance capitals in Europe and Asia. Despite U.S. efforts to characterize global troop re-deployments in the context of military transformation and modernization, these tangible symbols of the extended deterrence construct have been devalued, leaving us with the dilemma of how to convey and signal our deterrence commitments and the credibility of extended deterrence at a time when more and more U.S. forward deployed assets are being drawn back to the continental United States (CONUS). One answer to this dilemma lies in the development of a well considered strategic communications/information operations (IO) roadmap designed to reassure allies and to convey the seriousness of our intentions to prospective adversaries. Specifically, this IO roadmap should highlight the capabilities of U.S. forces in the region and demonstrate their potential through realistic training exercises with allies.

DECLARATORY POLICY, STRATEGIC SIGNALING, AND INFORMATION OPERATIONS

Declaratory policy has always been an important aspect of deterrence planning, but, with the emergence of rogue nuclear powers, such as North Korea and possibly Iran, its importance is likely to increase. Indeed, with leaderships that may have little familiarity with the United States (compared, for example, to the Russians), it is probably more important than ever to take another look at U.S. declaratory policy and to devise a strategic communications strategy to help bolster deterrence in its global and regional manifestations. While strategic ambiguity once was presumed to be essential to credible deterrence planning, it may now be the better strategy to communicate more explicitly U.S. intentions in specific scenarios. A key purpose would be to strengthen U.S. alliance partnerships and to reassure coalition partners of America's willingness to come to their defense in scenarios where our vital interests are also at stake. At the strategic level, moreover, it is probably necessary to set forth a new declaratory policy aimed at containing prospective and emerging threats (such as a future nuclear Iran) while assuring allies, to blunt the psychological edge and political pressure associated with the nuclear programs and aspirations of Iran, North Korea, Russia, and China. In the cases of Japan and Israel, the former of which faces two prospective nuclear adversaries, the latter of which is situated in proximity to Iran (whose nuclear ambitions leave little question as to its intention to develop the option to produce a nuclear weapon), mechanisms and options exist to tighten the deterrence relationship with the United States. Specifically, with respect to Israel, which is an undeclared nuclear weapons state, the United States could explore the option of providing an explicit extended deterrence guarantee to Israel, while moving forward with plans to tighten the integration between Israeli and U.S. missile defense capabilities, early-warning systems, and intelligence-sharing. At the same time, the United States might also seek to tie Israel closer to NATO, although European resistance to this idea might only allow for discussion of enhanced "partnership" options.

Taking into account Iran's history, its regional aspirations, and its cultural ethnocentricity, it is likely that Iran can in fact be deterred (just as the Soviet Union was) if the threatened retaliation is perceived (by Iranian leaders) as credible and as capable of destroying Iranian culture, Persian civilization, and key elements of the state's power. This means that future U.S. discussion

of deterrence needs should be couched in such a way as to leave no doubt about American interests or intentions, including in a crisis, regarding our willingness to use nuclear weapons if circumstances dictate. Although there have been times when ambiguity has served us well, as in the case of how we might respond to non-nuclear WMD threats, countering Iran is a situation in which U.S. declaratory policy must be clear, concise, and leave no room for misinterpretation. By the same token, U.S. declaratory policy must not be unrealistic; in other words, we must be careful not to “promise” something that can not be delivered. Thus, for example, under the present circumstances in which U.S. deterrence forces reside in *Trident* missiles, intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) prompt-response capabilities, and air-delivered gravity bombs and nuclear-tipped missiles, the United States retains a diversified, but nevertheless *limited*, capacity to tailor strikes at the regional level and to contain collateral damage.

Moreover, a declaratory policy that affirms and specifies a U.S. commitment to respond to any Iranian aggression—nuclear, other WMD, or conventional—arguably could open debate among the Iranians about the utility of nuclear weapons. At the very least, it might have the effect of devaluing Iran’s acquisition of nuclear weapons if the perceived price to be paid included risking national assets or territory. Without question, one of the biggest challenges that we face is communicating intent to an Iranian regime that may not share our vision of deterrence dynamics. Lack of familiarity with Iran’s value structures and with the perspectives of key leaders makes this an even more daunting problem. As there currently is no direct communication between Iran and the United States (or Israel) regarding the other’s red lines, there is great danger of miscalculation and crisis escalation. This is one reason, among others, why the Israelis are building their own missile defense network and why they have launched a diplomatic offensive to strengthen ties with the United States (including potential integration into the U.S. and NATO missile defense architectures) and to explore the possibility of some type of more formal association with NATO. Some Israeli strategists have also proposed confidence-building measures (CBMs) similar to those put into place by India and Pakistan following their respective nuclear tests in 1998, and there is, in this regard, room to consider Iran-oriented threat reduction initiatives similar to those established by the United States for and in relation to Russia and the states of the former Soviet Union. There is little expectation, however, that the current regime in Tehran would be open to any such initiatives, unless it was subjected to intense international pressure to do so. Russia’s cooperation would also be necessary in this regard, and this poses an additional third-party problem for the United States in that Washington’s ability to constrain Russian action in Georgia demonstrated the limits of American power in relation to shaping decision-making in Putin’s Russia.

For Japan, shared deterrence planning is also a more attractive and feasible option now that the Japanese have decided to deploy their own missile defense capabilities and have initiated discussions with the United States on crisis contingency planning within the framework of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. The United States, as noted earlier, already has in place an extended deterrence commitment to Japan, and the home-porting of a U.S. Navy carrier strike group, together with F-15, rotational F-22, USMC, and U.S. Army (I Corps Headquarters) forces on the Japanese

islands lends substance to that commitment, despite persistent doubts among some in Japan about America's willingness to sustain sizable forward-deployed forces. Hence, as the United States modernizes and re-positions its conventional forces, it must do so in the context of a strategic public diplomacy plan that emphasizes the synergistic capacity of those American joint forces that remain in Japan, and America's desire to maintain sufficient forward capabilities for longer-term engagement with Japanese forces and to support U.S. security cooperation objectives. In the case of Japan, IFPA's research and analysis of extended deterrence underscores the inextricable link between America's nuclear umbrella and its conventional force posture in and around the Japanese islands, as well as the importance of conveying to the Japanese public that the transformation of U.S. military forces has yielded a new and impressive array of capabilities, some of which, like the Massive Ordnance Air Blast Bomb (MOAB), have the capacity to implement taskings once exclusively reserved for nuclear weapons.

NUCLEAR PROMPT-RESPONSE AND GLOBAL STRIKE OPTIONS

As noted earlier, thinking about deterrence, dissuasion, and assurance in ways that are more appropriate to the dynamics of the post-9/11 security landscape will require us to adapt deterrence options to meet new challenges while at the same time retaining a capacity to deal with legacy threats. Specifically, this will require greater efforts to integrate non-nuclear options and weapons capabilities into a broader deterrence framework that includes (as necessary) a strategic nuclear deterrence capability but provides as well additional options for dealing with regional threats that may or may not involve WMD use against operating forces or American allies and coalition partners. Doing so, however, should in no way degrade the nuclear component of America's deterrence posture, as nuclear weapons retain a deterrence quality of their own, and, in extremis, especially in the context of legacy challenges, the capacity to strike quickly, and with weapons capable of penetrating underground silos and/or defensive systems, remains the exclusive purview of nuclear technologies—at least for the time being. Taking weapons off “hair-trigger” alert status in peacetime may satisfy the new administration's appetite for threat reduction objectives, but for deterrence purposes, the capacity to re-constitute capabilities and thereby to threaten a time-urgent response in a crisis contingency remains an essential element of future deterrence planning, even if the numbers of such systems are reduced and/or if we go to a dyad comprised of two instead of three nuclear delivery platforms.

Reducing the number of operational U.S. nuclear weapons and/or moving to a dyad posture implies as well a change in U.S. targeting strategy, absent nuclear modernization. Instead of relying on a counterforce construct in which U.S. nuclear weapons target enemy weapons and related industrial infrastructure, a small U.S. nuclear posture perforce would move the United States back to a counter-value or anti-cities targeting strategy due to the limited number of warheads available to assign to specific targets and in light of on-going questions about the reliability of aging warheads (which in some cases has resulted in the need to assign multiple warhead to strategic targets). This would take us back to the mutual assured destruction (MAD) mindset and undermine the deterrence-by-denial strategy that the Bush NPR tried to introduce. In our view,

this is neither a viable construct for today's nuclear threats nor a politically wise path to pursue, as it would diminish further the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence guarantees and broaden the vulnerability of the United States to nuclear blackmail and/or missile threats. Other factors being equal, the most responsible way to go to lower warhead numbers without changing today's emphasis on low collateral damage and precision strikes would be for the United States to move ahead with modernization of its nuclear inventory. The Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) is, in our view, crucial to this objective, and Congressional efforts to tie a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to RRW modernization may be the only way to secure the necessary levels of political support for this aspect of U.S. nuclear modernization.⁷ If RRW modernization is considered critical to our ability to meet, contain, counter, and mitigate the effects of prospective threats and new challenges to U.S. security interests, then we need to set into place a construct for supporting nuclear modernization programs, based on a package of inducements that would appeal to skeptics and supporters alike. Elements of an RRW package conceivably should include a commitment to modernize the U.S. nuclear infrastructure (components of which are near collapse) and to provide precise evidence of how RRW development supports the objectives enshrined in the Moscow Treaty with respect to lowering the number of operationally-deployed nuclear warheads.⁸

14

The essence of deterrence theory resides in the perceived credibility of a state's ability to implement a nuclear threat. Credibility and will, in other words, are key to the way in which nations perceive U.S. power and to how they will respond to escalatory threats. Up to now, however, the United States has not had the necessary flexibility to tailor options for different circumstances. Going forward, the United States will need to adjust the way in which it thinks about the deterrent roles of nuclear weapons compared to those of non-nuclear offensive strike and defensive weapons, and how each of these three legs of the New Strategic Triad can best be leveraged to deter potential nuclear proliferators who may be inclined to facilitate terrorist or other non-state

7 However, before agreeing to enter the CTBT, U.S. strategic planners must explore much more comprehensively all of its implications for the reliability of the future of the U.S. nuclear enterprise, and with respect to its impact on the U.S. nuclear infrastructure, including the expertise and knowledge that in the past was gleaned through nuclear testing. We must also be more certain of our ability to design, develop, and simulate warhead reliability and testing through nuclear simulation programs, and be ready to accept the attendant "risks" that a CTBT might convey in terms of nuclear modernization and deterrence credibility.

8 The Department of Energy (DoE) has long maintained that the nuclear infrastructure of the United States needs to be re-invigorated. Among the ideas to achieve that objective are those related to what had been called "Complex 2030." Complex 2030 constituted what in effect was a blueprint for how the United States ought to consolidate, upgrade, and modernize its nuclear weapons research, development, and engineering/production infrastructure. Without it, or a comparable plan, new weapons development in the United States will be compromised, as aging scientists leave the work force and nuclear engineering facilities are closed down. Transformation of the U.S. nuclear weapons industrial base was a central aspect of the Bush administration's Nuclear Posture Review. The problems identified at that time remain to be addressed by the Obama administration.

actor acquisition of nuclear weapons. This will require, in turn, a closer look at the command and control architectures, intelligence requirements, and strategic communications needs of America's nuclear/strategic weapons posture, to ensure that the messages/intentions conveyed by specific U.S. deployments or other activities (i.e., signaling) are properly received and understood by those targeted. In this context, tailored deterrence, including extended deterrence, may need to be personalized down to the level of a handful of key adversarial decision-makers.

The thinking behind the Bush NPR was that regional nuclear states, notably North Korea, and potential proliferators, such as Iran, could be deterred from taking military action against the United States itself because of the punitive threat of retaliation from U.S. conventional forces, backed up by the implicit threat of U.S. nuclear weapons use, if American conventional forces failed to deter or defeat enemy attacks against U.S. regional allies or coalition partners, American forces operating in regional settings, or against the United States itself. Such threats, however, especially after the first Gulf war, were neither perceived as credible nor capable of being implemented, based on the statements—including those of President George H.W. Bush—casting doubts about U.S. nuclear weapons use in such contingencies, and the unwillingness of the U.S. Congress to fund deterrence-related modernization programs.⁹ From our perspective, the key to deterrence in the 21st century global security setting is to update U.S. nuclear forces to provide enhanced targeting flexibility and reduced collateral damage options, and to combine those attributes with conventional Global Strike capabilities, such as the *Conventional Trident Modification* (CTM), and with missile defenses to put into place capabilities for a deterrence framework that offers broader strategic and operational planning options for dissuasion, crisis prevention, and perception management. Going forward in this way would give the National Command Authority a means to influence and prevent crises from escalating and, in a worst-case contingency, the ability to control more effectively the escalation dynamics of a particular crisis scenario. The problem was, and still is, that the capacity to implement tailored and selective targeting strategies remains limited because of a subsequent failure to identify and fund programs to implement the new U.S. deterrence strategy after the NPR was released. Indeed, what has *not* happened since the Bush NPR's enunciation is the implementation of both nuclear and non-nuclear programs to update America's strategic weapons inventory—something that is necessary if we ever want to reduce responsibly the numbers of older and high-yield nuclear weapons in the U.S. stockpile.

As the IFPA report on Iran points out, Iran's efforts to acquire and/or develop an indigenous nuclear weapons capability have profound consequences for U.S. strategic and operational

9 President Bush's reservations about threatening the use of nuclear weapons in regional WMD contingencies were made public in *A GulfWar Exclusive: President Bush Talking with David Frost*, Transcript no. 51, January 16, 1996, p.5, according to which he said, "it (nuclear weapons use) was not something that we really contemplated at all." A similar view was asserted earlier, in 1995, by retired USAF LTG Brent Scowcroft, who was President Bush's National Security Advisor. During a session of NBC's *Meet the Press*, hosted by the late Tim Russert, Scowcroft said that the United States had decided that it would not respond to Iraqi WMD use with nuclear weapons.

planning, crisis management, escalation dominance, and war termination policies. For that reason, and, again, to provide the National Command Authority with credible options in regional contingencies or in those in which vital U.S. national interests are not at stake, new capabilities are needed below the nuclear threshold that still would have a strategic impact. This goes to the heart of the “conventional deterrence” construct that was first raised as part of the NATO debate in the 1980s about the so-called Follow-on Forces Attack concept (FOFA)¹⁰ and the trade-offs between nuclear and non-nuclear deterrence considerations. Since FOFA days, the technologies for implementing global strikes using non-nuclear weapons that could hold at risk protected and/or buried targets have matured considerably, but their value for the deterrence construct has not been explained adequately, nor have ideas for their integration into strategic strike planning. With the articulation of the New Strategic Triad, and the enunciation of the Global Strike concept, the opportunity to do so existed, but was not realized, as the focus of attention quickly shifted to IW and post-9/11 contingency planning. Steps to correct this oversight remain a priority for U.S. deterrence planning, but we must also go beyond this to elaborate a new deterrence framework that can be tailored for specific contingencies and that can draw upon force posture options that offer a flexibility of means, to include coercive strike options, missile defenses, and consequence management capabilities.

10 The Follow-On Forces Attack Concept, or FOFA, was designed in the context of former Chief of the Army Staff General John Wickham’s work on Air-Land Battle doctrine, which was first released in Army FM 100-5 in 1982. In essence, Air-Land Battle doctrine was offensive in nature, and it emphasized that any future European battlefield would be non-linear—in other words, attacks might come simultaneously against forces engaged at the line of battle, in rear areas of the battlefield to interdict logistics and supplies, or against strategic target sets in Allied countries. To counter Soviet strategy, Air-Land Battle doctrine called for a synchronization of U.S. air and ground forces, to concentrate fires against Soviet/Warsaw Pact second echelon forces in an effort to delay, disrupt, and undercut the enemy’s momentum, and, hence, its ability to shape the battle conditions in which close operations were being conducted. In 1986, a new version of FM 100-5 was published. This version refined the concept of attacks against non-linear operations, and reflected the fact that NATO defense strategy had incorporated the notion of Follow-On Forces Attack into its planning. At NATO, Alliance members endorsed FOFA on the assumption that by doing so, NATO might be able to mount a successful conventional defense of the Alliance, without resort to (NATO’s) use of nuclear weapons, as had been provided by the MC 14-3 Flexible Response strategy (as a means of compensating for the lack of sufficient conventional forces to defend against a Soviet/Warsaw pact attack). Eventually, however, differences between the Army and the U.S. Air Force over battlefield air interdiction (BAI) and synchronization coordination served to undermine Air-Land Battle planning, and the first Gulf War’s emphasis on phased (and not synchronized) operations opened new Alliance interest in such concepts as Joint Forward Area Air Control (JFAAC) that were at odds with Air-Land Battle planning. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in effect ended the NATO flirtation with Air-Land Battle, although in the current environment, and because of the U.S. discussion of the New Strategic Triad, some of the ideas inherent in Air-Land Battle doctrine have been reincarnated in the strategic context.

MISSILE DEFENSES AND CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Missile defenses have emerged as an essential element of a 21st century extended deterrence concept. Indeed, as discussed in IFPA’s assessments of Japan and Iran, and in the context of NATO planning, missile defenses and consequence management (CM) capabilities are essential to a new deterrence construct that takes a more holistic view of deterrence and specifically includes the notion of deterrence-by-denial. Thus, in addition to declaratory policy and strategic communications, CM capabilities and missile defense developments and deployments provide important operational, political, and psychological elements for influencing adversary calculations about proliferation, as well as with respect to strategic-operational planning.

Operationally, missile defenses are likely to influence enemy attack calculations by injecting greater uncertainty as to the prospects for success, and they have the potential to degrade missile attacks once they are launched. In this sense, missile defenses can contribute to crisis management and enhance the potential for escalation control in a regional situation. Psychologically, by their deployment missile defenses may have an important impact on enemy thinking about offensive operations, and the “end-game” with respect to nuclear escalation and the ultimate destruction of national territory, peoples, and cultural and religious icons. The deployment of missile defenses, either in the United States, on board U.S. Navy *Aegis* platforms, or in conjunction with more advanced interceptor and/or space-based capabilities, could influence profoundly and favorably for the United States and its allies the deterrence dynamics between American and adversary leaderships. Indeed, space is the new frontier for deterrence planning, and considerable thought and new resources need to be devoted to meeting and countering deterrence and defense challenges coming from, and in relation to, space.¹¹

17

SOME CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ABOUT DETERRENCE IN THE POST-IRAQ 21ST CENTURY SECURITY SETTING

Twenty-first-century deterrence planning is far more complex, demanding, and situation specific than deterrence was in the Cold War era. It demands new instruments to give it credibility, though it still needs to rely in part on nuclear weapons deployments, as nuclear weapons possess a unique deterrence quality of their own. This is not to say that efficiencies cannot be made in force posture, although each “leg” of the U.S. deterrence triad has something to offer, whether it is flexibility and signaling (as in the case of the manned bomber), the prompt-response capacity of intercontinental ballistic missiles, or the enhanced survivability inherent in submarine-launched ballistic missiles of our *Trident* force. Careful consideration of each of these deterrent elements needs to be given before taking decisions on future force posture. In this context, it is important to recall that the unintended consequences of decisions relating to deterrence modernization could be more profound for U.S. security planning than making choices about going to a “dyad”

11 For a more in depth discussion of space and future deterrence challenges, see: Independent Working Group Report, *Missile Defense, the Space Relationship and the Twenty-first Century*. January 2009, found at www.ifpa.org; and Space and U.S. Security: A Net Assessment, January 2009, found at www.ifpa.org.

force structure, unilaterally reducing U.S. DCA commitments in Europe, or even failing to go forward with the RRW program. As Secretary Robert Gates suggested in a speech in October 2008, the United States is the only nuclear power that is not modernizing its arsenal, and if we are to reduce our inventory numbers as many are proposing, we must still ensure that our remaining forces are survivable, safe, and perceived as credible, not only for broader deterrence purposes, but also as an integral part of extended deterrence.¹²

Likewise, we need to consider that our actions in relation to one element of our global deterrence posture have implications for other aspects of U.S. deterrence planning. Thus, for example, a unilateral U.S. decision to draw-down DCA assets in Europe, outside of the context of a new NATO Strategic Concept, could be viewed in Japan as another example of the American retreat from its global commitments. The Japanese, who are engaged in a dialogue with the United States on contingency planning and deterrence futures in and for Northeast Asia, have been closely following the NATO DCA discussion. As referenced earlier, the Japanese have signaled a desire to develop a consultative process similar to that of NATO's High-Level Group when it comes to a missile defense architecture for the region and in the context of North Korean and Taiwan contingency planning.

In addition to a tightened bilateral U.S.-Japan consultation process, the United States should also consider fostering multilateralism with Japan as a way to support Japanese security. In the very specific area of deterrence planning, this could usefully be done if the United States were to involve the Australians in missile defense discussions with the Japanese. Australia, by virtue of its Pine Gap Joint Defense Space Research Facility and its strategic base at Nurranger, already plays a role in U.S. deterrence planning, and it continues to expand security cooperation with Japan, in addition to their strong bilateral economic and diplomatic ties. Australia is also a U.S. missile defense partner, so it is not inconceivable that these two close American allies could work more closely together in a way that reinforces deterrence planning and, very explicitly, the extended deterrence concept.

U.S.-South Korean missile defense cooperation is also poised to grow, and although it may be unrealistic to expect Japan and South Korea to collaborate on missile defense planning, given the historic enmity between the two countries, the United States should try to foster closer cooperation between these two U.S. allies, as doing so can only enhance deterrence planning on and for the Korean peninsula. Indeed, in the spirit of tailoring deterrence, strong trilateral diplomatic and security cooperation among the United States, Japan, and South Korea might be particularly effective in deterring any future aggressive behavior by North Korea. Moreover, the situation on the Korean peninsula continues to be a significant factor in U.S. deterrence considerations, and how we deal with North Korea has very direct implications not only for Japan and extended deterrence, but also evidently with respect to Iran's strategic choices. Anyone looking at the Six-

12 Robert Gates, *Nuclear Weapons and Deterrence in the 21st Century*, Speech before the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 28, 2008.

Party Talks process and U.S. “engagement” with North Korea might easily conclude that North Korea’s nuclear “breakout” had no or few negative consequences for the regime, and the benefits that its nuclear status has conferred upon the regime in terms of negotiating leverage do indeed appear to have outweighed by far the costs to North Korea of its breakout from the NPT. Based in part on the North Korean experience, the regime in Tehran does appear to have concluded that an Iranian nuclear weapons capability could be realized before the United States (and the EU) could agree to more intrusive sanctions and that regime survivability would be enhanced as a result. Iran has tremendous “soft” power in the Persian Gulf region, and whether or not it actually crosses the nuclear threshold, Iran has already achieved what U.S. deterrence theorist Thomas Schelling once characterized as a “sloppy, asymmetrical” form of deterrence just by appearing to be on the nuclear path.¹³ Iran’s leadership might very well decide not to actually build a nuclear weapon, but instead to hold open this option. Equally plausible, Iran might also be more inclined to build nuclear weapons in the belief that a state armed with a nuclear weapon is less likely to be attacked. In this context, Iran might practice its own version of an assured destruction strategy, threatening to use nuclear weapons against any attack against Iranian interests. In contrast, a defensive deterrent would be a less likely choice for an Iranian leadership infused with an apocalyptic vision of the world, as espoused by the more radical mullahs in Iran. In that event, the United States might well be deterred by Iranian nuclear weapons to a greater extent than Iran would be deterred by the threatened use of nuclear weapons by America or Israel. Such propositions reinforce once again the need for new and more creative deterrence thinking for specific and unique regional settings.

Tailoring the implementation of deterrence strategy to focus on networks, non-state organizations, and individual actors will be far more daunting than holding a sovereign state and its leadership accountable. Yet that is precisely what must be done in this age of al-Qaeda and Hezbollah, as the evidence is clear that some terrorist groups desire to attain WMD capabilities. In this context, U.S. deterrence planning would be significantly enhanced were the United States to improve its capacity for nuclear forensics and attribution. While America already supports significant forensic capabilities, more attention needs to be devoted to boosting future funding in this area. Iran has a practiced policy of “non-attribution,” but its sponsorship of nuclear or other WMD attacks would need to be proved before the United States would retaliate or seek to hold its leadership accountable. Attribution of origin, facilitated by the maturation of nuclear forensics technologies, could provide the United States with an important tool to establish such proof, and, by extension, help to dissuade nuclear technology transfers to Iranian proxies. At this point, however, the database that is required to undertake precise and accurate forensic analyses needs to be augmented. While promising developments on this front are on the horizon, programs applicable to this task must be given greater priority, as indicated by the gaps discovered in U.S. intelligence about the uranium

13 Quoted in Thomas Barnett, “Nuclear Ringtone: The Lasting Peace Provided by Nuclear Weapons,” *Scripps News*, September 7, 2007, found at: <http://www.scrippsnews.com/node/26648>.

hexafluoride that Libya turned over after renouncing its nuclear programs.¹⁴ Essentially it was only through a tedious process of eliminating other likely sources (as opposed to direct attribution) that the United States was eventually able to pinpoint Libya's uranium source.

As important as this effort is, it is less important to deterring legacy threats and emerging proliferators who exist in the state-centric context. Russia and China both are embarked on ambitious nuclear modernization programs, and because nuclear weapons remain central to these nations' perspectives of international relations, it is important that the United States retain the capacity to deter both. Deterring a rising Russia and a potentially recalcitrant China continue to require offensive nuclear forces, as both nations still emphasize classic deterrence planning. Damage limitation has never been a central aspect of either country's deterrence thought, and quantity—i.e., numbers of weapons deployed—remains an important psychological and operational aspect of Chinese and Russian nuclear planning. Thus, even if the United States determines that it can move to a “dyad” or if it decides to reduce weapons numbers across the board, it will still have to deploy enough nuclear weapons to convey to prospective adversaries, especially legacy challengers, that it retains adequate nuclear capacity to meet any and all operational contingency requirements. To cope with the most robust nuclear contingencies, then, having survivable second-strike forces will continue to be important, but for less advanced or expansive contingencies the importance of Global Strike assets would be more essential, so as to provide the NCA with options for not crossing the nuclear threshold even if an adversary had already done so.

Finally, in the new global security setting, Washington will also have to set priorities and synchronize policies in a way that has not been done for quite some time—perhaps not since Cold War days, when containment provided the strategic framework for U.S. and Allied policies. If it can do so while also setting in place stronger deterrent and defensive options both within the Arab Gulf region and in support of U.S. allies in Europe and Northeast Asia, the prospects for denying regional adversaries the opportunity to achieve regional predominance via the acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability will be significantly enhanced. If it can not, then the more worrisome scenarios involving a future nuclear Iran and North Korea are more likely to materialize, bringing with them the requirement for an even more robust and diverse set of diplomatic and military initiatives on the part of the United States and its regional allies and partner states.

However Washington ultimately chooses to deal with regional proliferation, it must realize that America's behavior will have global and regional implications. So, while the United States has

14 Both U-235 and PU-239 are enriched and purified when exposed to other elements and chemicals. The exact recipe for mixing together the elements with the additives can be used to “fingerprint” the origin of the fissile material. Nuclear forensics provide the ability to “identify a bomb's source from radioactive debris after it explodes. Building on Cold War techniques, the Pentagon has developed new methods for collecting samples from ground zero, measuring data such as isotopic ratios and the efficiency of the fuel burn in detonation, and comparing that information to known nuclear data to determine origin of the materials.” Graham T. Allison, “Nuclear Accountability: How to Deter States from Giving Terrorists Nukes,” *Technology Review*, July 2005, found at: <http://www.technologyreview.com/Energy/14597/>.

placed much of its credibility on the line in dealing with North Korea's nuclear proliferation by moving red lines and possibly rewarding bad behavior,¹⁵ North Korea's breakout from the NPT might eventually be seen as a far less profound development in comparison to the regional and global consequences of a future Iranian nuclear breakout, triggered in part by America's failure to halt North Korea's decision to "go nuclear." Indeed, Iran could emerge as *the* test case for breakout from the NPT, and the way in which the U.S. government deals with Iran will have implications far beyond the Middle East. As noted already, there is a danger of nuclear cascading, or wider proliferation, especially among Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia in the Near East, and among Taiwan, Japan, and the ROK in Northeast Asia. While we tend to view Iran as a bilateral issue, Iran views its actions as part of a larger tapestry designed to promote Iranian power and influence on the global stage. With this in mind, the need to develop a strategic framework for the greater Middle East/Persian Gulf region—one that reassures allies and coalition partners and that takes seriously the task of building partner military capacity (BPC), especially in niche areas—has become essential. The Gulf Security Initiative is a good first start, but more needs to be done, especially to persuade the Arab Gulf states to work together, and with Jordan and Egypt.

With respect to Japan, the reassurance notion of extended deterrence remains important to the U.S.-Japan security relationship. Moving ahead, however, the United States will need to reinforce its defense commitment to Tokyo, and, as discussed above, foster even closer defense cooperation with Japan, including in the missile defense realm, but also in the context of conventional forces modernization, intelligence-sharing, and space-oriented technology development. But the burden for strengthening deterrence does not fall exclusively on the United States, and Japan must also invest political and financial capital into the alliance if these efforts are to be successful. Extended deterrence is also being bolstered by missile defense deployments (or preparations for

15 In February 2007, the Bush administration signed, with its partners, an agreement with North Korea mandating, it was said, the dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear weapons programs. Even after North Korea's failure to meet the agreement's first deadline, requiring a transparent declaration of its nuclear programs and holdings, the Bush administration held to the outlines of the Six-Party framework agreement and moved forward in late 2007 to begin the process of removing North Korea from the State Department's terrorist watch list and to normalize relations. Since then, North Korean behavior and lack of compliance have raised new concerns about the DPRK's nuclear intentions, including with respect to a uranium-based program that the regime continues to deny as existing. Moreover, in the summer of 2007, there were signs that the regime in Pyongyang may have tried to transfer nuclear (reactor) technologies to Syria and/or missile components to Iran. Israel, subsequently, chose to strike a "facility in Syria," presumably to eliminate whatever may have been shipped from Pyongyang and/or to destroy what appears to have been a Syrian nuclear reactor plant. In August 2008, North Korea missed its first chance of being removed from the Department of State's terror watch list because of its "incomplete" information about its nuclear programs and due to its unwillingness to allow outside verification of its nuclear declaration, turned over in June as part of an agreement reached at the Six-Party Talks. Even as North Korea physically destroyed a cooling tower at its Yongbyon facility, in compliance with the agreement reached at the Six-Party Talks, it still has failed to answer specific questions about suspected nuclear activities, including how many weapons it has and the details of its involvement with Syria.

such deployments) in Israel, within NATO, and (increasingly) among the GCC states, together with plans for establishing a consultation process for missile defense-related operational contingencies. Indeed, implementing a deterrence-by-denial strategy appears to be an emerging element of future deterrence planning that can help reinforce the extended deterrence construct across geographic regions and within different political contexts. Taken together, these initiatives, in tandem with other aspects of deterrence planning reform discussed in this White Paper, highlight the types of adjustments that will be needed to put 21st century U.S. deterrence planning on a more solid footing.



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